

Core Capabilities Framework for Supporting People with a Learning Disability

Summary Briefing Paper

Introduction and background

Since the original 'Learning Disabilities Core Skills Education and Training Framework' was published, the learning disability workforce has been the focus of much attention, not least as a result of the national Transforming Care Programme which aims to improve health and care services so that everyone can live in the community, with the right support, and close to home. The Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) Programme has also highlighted the persistence of preventable health inequalities and that people with a learning disability die, on average, 15-20 years sooner than people without a learning disability.

The launch of the NHS Long Term Plan (2019) has provided additional focus on action the NHS will take to strengthen its contribution to prevention and health inequalities, including mechanisms to ensure that people with a learning disability and/or autism get better support.


Developing the workforce to meet these aims requires a review of roles and associated education and training.

What is the purpose of the framework?

This framework describes what is required for supporting people with a learning disability in a range of settings, from those who need a general awareness of learning disability, to the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of those who are experts and lead services for people with a learning disability.

The framework is relevant to all people with a learning disability, including children, young people and adults and comprises 25 capabilities grouped into 5 Domains. Within the capabilities, there are 3 tiers, each for a particular 'target audience':

Domains	Tiers
A. Understanding learning disability	Tier 1 Those that require general awareness of people with a learning disability and the support they need. Tier 2 Health and social care staff and others with responsibility for providing care and support for a person or people with a learning disability, but who would seek support from others for complex management or complex decision-making. Tier 3 Health, social care and other professionals with a high degree of autonomy, able to provide care in complex situations and/or may also lead services for people with a learning disability.
B. Health and wellbeing	
C. Personalised care and support	
D. Risk, legislation and safeguarding	
E. Leadership and management, education and research	



Use of the framework can support all aspects of workforce development including enabling individuals and organisations to:

- Identify key capabilities required for a job role, team or service.
- Plan the content of education and training
- Commission education and training
- Support training needs analysis and the assessment of capabilities.

Who is the framework for?

The framework should be of particular value to:

- Managers in organisations / individual employers
- Service commissioners
- Education and training providers

The framework also enables workers and teams to be clear about the requirements of their roles (and/or training needs) and can be used by people with a learning disability, friends and carers to better understand the capabilities they can expect from those providing services.

How was the framework developed?

This is an update of the original 'Learning Disabilities Core Skills Education and Training Framework' previously published in 2016. This updated framework was jointly commissioned by Health Education England and NHS England (Learning Disability Programme).

Project delivery was led by Skills for Health. The framework review and development was guided by a steering group representing key stakeholders, including British Institute of Learning Disabilities, Care England, Health Education England, Mencap, NHS England, Skills for Care, Skills for Health and VODG (Voluntary Organisations Disability Group).

What is the impact of the framework?

People with a learning disability have a right to access good quality healthcare. People with a learning disability generally have more health problems than other people and a higher risk of premature death. Health and social care staff need the capabilities to support and encourage people with a learning disability to optimise their physical and mental health. They need to promote and implement reasonable adjustments, remove barriers to access and enable the health needs of people with a learning disability to be met.

This updated framework provides additional emphasis on:

- Health promotion and raising awareness of health conditions.
- Reasonable adjustments, addressing health inequalities and avoiding premature mortality

The purpose of this framework is to support development and planning of the current and future workforce, to inform the design of curricula and the delivery of education and training programmes – working in partnership with people with a learning disability.

The aim is for this framework to become the standard against which service and workforce quality will be measured.

Further information

The full framework and an easy read version are available at:

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/learningdisabilityandautismframeworks