



Advanced Clinical Practice: Capabilities framework when working with people who have a learning disability and/or autism

Summary Briefing Paper

Introduction and background

In recent years, the learning disabilities and autism workforce has been the focus of much attention, not least as a result of the national Transforming Care Programme which aims to develop health and care services so that people with a learning disability and/or autism can live as independently as possible, with the right support, and close to home.

The launch of the NHS Long Term Plan (2019) provided further focus on actions the NHS will take to strengthen its contribution to tackle health inequalities, including mechanisms to ensure that people with a learning disability and/or autism get better support. It sets out actions to improve understanding the needs of people with a learning disability and/or autism, to improve their health and wellbeing and to tackle the causes of morbidity and preventable deaths.

What is the purpose of the framework?

The framework describes advanced clinical practice i.e. practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy, complex decision making and management of risks. The purpose of the 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 who have a learning disability and/or autism.

The framework comprises 19 capabilities grouped into 5 Domains:

Domain A. Personalised and collaborative working

Domain B. Health and wellbeing

Domain C. Personalised care and support

Domain D. Risk, legislation and safeguarding

Domain 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 services and/or education and training
- Support training needs analysis and the assessment of capabilities.



Who is the framework for?

The framework describes advanced clinical practice for Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and nursing staff working with people who have a learning disability and/or autism. The AHPs who may have specialist roles when working with people who have a learning disability and/or autism include:

- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Dietitians
- Arts Therapists (Art, Drama and Music)
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Orthoptists

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 multi-professional teams to be clear about the requirements of their roles (and/or training needs) and can be used by people who have a learning disability and/or autism, friends and carers to better understand the capabilities they can expect from those providing services.

How was the framework developed?

The framework was commissioned by Health Education England. Project delivery was led by Skills for Health, guided by a steering group including Health Education England, NHS England, Skills for Health and a range of key stakeholder organisations including Royal Colleges, NHS Trusts, voluntary sector organisations and professional bodies.

A diverse range of organisations and individuals were able to provide comments or feedback as part of a consultation process. Based on analysis of the consultation, and following further consultation with the steering group, a final draft of the framework was completed at the end of 2019.

What is the impact of the framework?

The framework outlines what good governance of services for people with a learning disability and/or autism should include. The framework will have a range of uses by different organisations, including employers and commissioners, as it can be used to underpin commissioning, workforce planning, education and training, as well as the development of career pathways and new ways of working.

The aim is for this framework to become the standard against which service and workforce quality will be measured. Ultimately, we hope the framework will support the development of a skilled and effective workforce that is able to reduce the health and social inequalities that people experience.

Further information

The full framework is available at:

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/learningdisabilityandautismframeworks