

Core Capabilities Framework for Supporting Autistic People

Summary Briefing Paper

Introduction and background

It is estimated that there are over 700,000 autistic people in the UK, equivalent to around 1.1% of the population. Many of these people and their families at one time or another, face a battle to get the right information, support and care. When skills, knowledge and understanding are lacking in the public service workforce this can create fundamental barriers for many autistic people in accessing the services we all need.

In 2009, the Autism Act put a duty on the Government to produce a strategy for autistic adults. A key duty in the Autism Act statutory guidance is provision of training for all frontline public service staff, in line with their job role, and developing specialist training for staff in health and social care.

What is the purpose of the framework?

This framework describes what is required for supporting autistic people in a range of settings, from those who need a basic understanding of autism, to the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of those who are experts and lead services for autistic people.

The framework is relevant to all autistic people, including children, young people and adults and comprises 19 capabilities grouped into 5 Domains. Within the capabilities, there are 3 tiers, each for a particular 'target audience':

Domains	Tiers
A. Understanding autism	Tier 1 People who require a general understanding of autism and the support autistic people may need.
B. Personalised support	
C. Physical and mental health	Tier 2 People with responsibility for providing care and support for an autistic person or people, but who could seek support from others for complex management or complex decision-making.
D. Risk, legislation and safeguarding	
E. Leadership and management, education and research	Tier 3 Health, social care and other professionals with a high degree of autonomy, able to provide care and support in complex situations and/or may also lead services for autistic people.

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 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 autistic people, 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, working in collaboration with Skills for Care, The National Autistic Society and Opening Minds Training & Consultancy Ltd.

The framework development was guided by a steering group which included autistic people and people with autistic family members. The steering group comprised representatives of a range of stakeholder organisations including voluntary sector organisations, service commissioners, higher education institutions, regulators, professional bodies and royal colleges.

Development of the framework involved coproduction with autistic people of all ages and their families in a spirit of collaboration and used ideas from engagement events to ensure co-authorship during every stage of drafting the framework.

What is the impact of the framework?

Autistic people have a right to access good quality healthcare and public services. Autistic people generally have more health problems than other people and a higher risk of premature death.

Health, social care and other public service staff need the capabilities to support and encourage autistic people to optimise their opportunities and their physical and mental health. They need to promote and implement reasonable adjustments, remove barriers to access and enable the needs of autistic people to be met.

Employers, Universities, and care providers in health, social care and other sectors will find this framework important and helpful in planning their education and training. 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