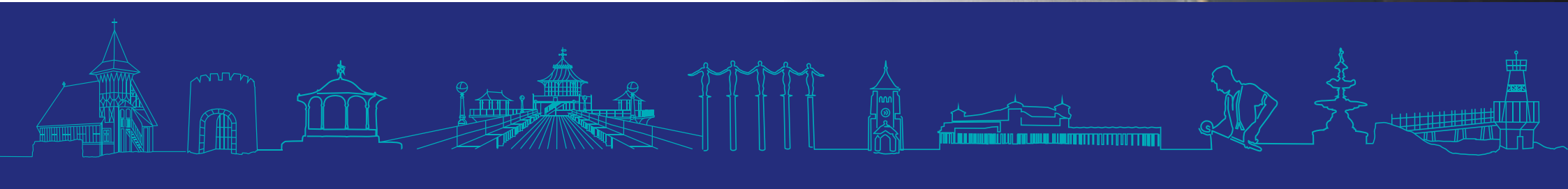


North Somerset Council **Adult Social Services Practice Framework**

“Your Strengths, Your Rights, Your Goals.”

Effective date: 1 January 2024



Our Practice Framework

Our framework sets out complementary and inter-related approaches our practitioners and leaders should adopt to ensure that the work we do across our teams and services is underpinned by shared values, principles, beliefs and terminology. It also helps ensure decision making takes account of research evidence, practice wisdom and lived experience.

Our practitioners draw from an eclectic range of models, theories and approaches to achieve positive outcomes for a diverse range of people facing a variety of challenges. It is not possible to list or define all of the approaches practitioners draw upon in their practice. However, this framework outlines the main “umbrella” approaches we expect our leaders, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, and Adult Social Care Workers to consider and adopt in their work.



North Somerset Council’s Vision and Values

This Practice Framework reflects North Somerset Council’s vision to be an open, fair, greener North Somerset, and builds upon North Somerset Council’s core values:

- We act with integrity.
- We respect each other.
- We innovate.
- We care.
- We collaborate.

Climate considerations

Wherever possible, Adult Social Care practitioners are encouraged to think of ways to reduce their carbon footprint and minimise climate impact. This may include using public transport, reducing journeys and making use of digital resources and remote communication methods where appropriate and proportionate. However, to build relationships, keep people safe, and include people in decision making, there are times when we must visit people in their own homes and maintain regular in-person contact.

Our Vision for Adult Social Services

In 2018 North Somerset Council (NSC) published its vision for Adult Social Care setting out how it would **promote wellbeing by helping people in North Somerset to be as independent as possible for as long possible.**

To deliver our vision we will work closely with people with care and support needs, their families, partner agencies and the voluntary and community sector. Our aim is to empower communities, build relationships and strengthen networks to achieve the best possible outcomes for people with care and support needs.

The framework also incorporates the NSC Adult Social Services strapline voted upon by Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Adult Social Care Workers during a celebration of social care practice held during the Covid 19 pandemic: **“Your Strengths, Your Rights, Your Goals”**

This strapline condenses and reflects the following key approaches and is applicable not only to the people we support, but also to the practitioners we employ.

Our Key Approaches

Strengths Based Practice

We recognise that all people, regardless of their problems, have a wide range of individual and collective strengths to draw upon.

We look beyond the challenges people face; we see people with care and support needs as unique individuals who play an integral role in their families and communities, each with their own life history, abilities, and aspirations.

Practitioners should take an appropriate and proportionate amount of time to build a trusting relationship and understand people's unique strengths, focussing on what matters to them and the goals they want to achieve. We aim to support people with care and support needs and their families to problem solve and coproduce care and support plans which go beyond eligible needs, and instead focus on strengths and outcomes.

Tools and further reading:

- Strengths Based Approach Practice Framework and Handbook (DHSC)
- Strength-based working: Learning Pathway (Research in Practice)
- Care Act Guidance on Strengths Based Practice, SCIE

Anti-racist and Anti-discriminatory Practice

We are committed to actively challenging racism and discrimination in all forms. We will take steps to ensure Adult Social Services is accessible to all members of the community regardless of their background or individual characteristics. We are committed to practising in a way which responds to inequality and oppression by challenging systems and behaviours which are discriminatory in nature. We recognise that discrimination and oppression are prevalent in society and occur at personal, structural and cultural levels. People's experiences of discrimination involve a complex interplay between different characteristics, such as sexuality, class, ethnicity, race, disability and gender. People who use adult social services often experience discrimination and barriers related to at least one or more of these characteristics which may limit their opportunities or ability to engage with support. We will seek to understand people's lived experiences and take all reasonable steps to make our support accessible and culturally responsive.

By applying relevant legislative frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 we will challenge discrimination in all forms while celebrating diversity and difference in our communities, promoting social justice, and maximising opportunities for adults with care and support needs to engage with support.

Further reading and resources:

- Equality and Diversity, Research in Practice
- Intersectionality and Older People: Video Resources, Research in Practice
- An Introduction to Cultural Competence in Social Care, Research in Practice
- A report on the 'Anti-racism in Social Work' activities across the UK (between 27/05/20-26/09/21), BASW

Relationship-Based Practice

We recognise that effective relationships are key to achieving positive outcomes for people with care and support needs. Building positive relationships often takes time, assertive engagement, skill and tenacity. This is particularly true where people's trust has been abused in the past. We recognise that each person's situation is unique, multi-faceted and complex and we will take the time necessary to get to know people in the context of their cultural background, communities, social networks, and past life experiences.

Relationships are the foundation of positive interventions and are dependent on trust. We will always be clear, transparent, honest and respectful in our interactions to help build trusting relationships.

Further reading and resources:

- Supporting Relationships in a Strengths-Based Way, Research in Practice

Person-centred practice

We recognise that people with care and support needs must be at the heart of decision making. No decisions should be taken without fully involving the person affected in the decision-making process. We understand that we don't always know what is best; people are experts in their own experience and are equal partners in planning their care and support alongside family members and carers (where appropriate).

We will take positive risks to help people achieve their goals and aspirations in line with their expressed wishes and feelings. Our decision making will be guided by person-centred legal frameworks such as the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2014.

We will ensure people have access to the support, advocacy, information and advice they need, in the most appropriate format, to be fully involved in decision making about their care and support.

Further reading and resources:

- Think Local Act Personal's "Making it Real" Framework.



Positive Risk Taking

Positive risk taking involves taking carefully considered risks that create positive outcomes for people with care and support needs, such as improved wellbeing and promotion of independence and dignity. Risk enablement is an important way of enabling individuals to have control over their lives. We will promote positive risk taking and support individuals to make well-informed and balanced decisions which support their goals, choices and aspirations. While keeping people safe is important, we recognise that it is rarely the right decision to keep someone safe at the expense of their personal autonomy, dignity, human rights and emotional wellbeing.

- Promoting positive approaches to risk across organisations: Strategic Briefing (2021), Research in Practice
- Risk Enablement, Research in Practice

Trauma Informed Practice

We seek to understand and respond to the impact of adversity and trauma on people's lives. We recognise that people with care and support needs and their families may be living with the lasting impact of adversity and trauma, and that the way we interact with individuals can potentially trigger a trauma response.

The impact of past life experiences can affect the way people approach their relationships and interactions with others. We will take steps to support people to feel safe enough in their interactions with us to build trust, and to help people overcome any barriers to forming effective relationships. We will seek to understand how people have overcome adversity or trauma in the past to build upon this resilience and inform future care planning.

We will do this by promoting the following principles:

- **Safety:** We will strive to ensure the physical and emotional safety of those we work with and alongside.
- **Choice and clarity:** We will cultivate meaningful choice and a voice in the decision-making process of the organisation, its services and those we aim to help.
- **Collaboration:** We will recognise the value of overcoming challenges and improving the systems through obtaining feedback, participation and

a commitment to work through challenges and competing demands.

- **Trustworthiness:** We ensure transparency exists across our culture, with the objective of building trust and confidence with those we work with, our colleagues and our wider community.
- **Empowerment:** We make sincere efforts across the organisation to share power, to collaborate effectively and put people with care and support needs at the heart of decision making.
- **Inclusivity:** We actively seek to recognise and address inequalities, oppression and exclusion. People’s diverse needs are identified (e.g. gender, age, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, cultural) and responded to sensitively and with humility.

Further reading and resources:

- Trauma Informed Practice, Online Learning Resource, Research in Practice
- Scottish Government Toolkit
- North Somerset Adversity and Trauma Film
- BNSSG, Principles for Trauma Informed Practice Document
- BNSSG, Trauma Informed System, Knowledge and Skills Framework, Implementation Toolkit
- South Gloucestershire Resource Library

Evidence Informed Practice

We are committed to ensuring decision making takes account of the best available research, building on existing partnerships with higher education institutes, organisational membership of Research in Practice, and our engagement in the ConnectED project. We fully support the aim of bridging the gap between research and practice by understanding and overcoming cultural, professional and systemic barriers.

We think that robust evidence of what works should underpin strategic and operational decision making. We are committed to supporting research opportunities for our practitioners, so they can contribute to the existing evidence base. While research evidence is important, we recognise that in adult social care, we must balance this with practice wisdom, lived experience and professional values.

Further reading and resources:

- Supporting evidence-informed practice with children and families, young people and adults, Research in Practice

Compassionate Leadership

We aim to create a visible leadership culture which delivers high-quality, effective, and compassionate supervision and support.

Our leaders and managers should model the approaches outlined in this framework in their interactions. The quality of the supervisory relationship is fundamental to the quality of the support we provide and the outcomes we achieve.

Our leaders and managers should be assertive, setting out high expectations for practitioners, supported by clear standards, frameworks and guidance. Their approach should be consultative, flexible and warm, while being prepared to respectfully challenge and offer direction when necessary.

Our aim is to create a culture of high support and high challenge which promotes:

- a focus on staff wellbeing and promoting a good work/life balance
- a commitment to quality assurance focussing on outcomes and high-quality performance
- leadership behaviours characterised by support, compassion and inclusion for the workforce and people who use our services
- a focus on continuous learning and development, career progression, critical reflection, quality improvement and innovation

- collaboration, teamworking and support within adult social services and with our partners.

Further reading and resources:

- Leading with Compassion, Supervisor’s Briefing, Research in Practice
- Leading with Compassion – What does the Evidence Say? Webinar, Research in Practice
- New resources to support practice supervisors and the implementation of the post-qualifying standards, Research in Practice



Critically Reflective Practice

Critical reflection is at the heart of the supervision and support provided to our Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Adult Social Care Workers. We must consider and review our experiences and the work we have undertaken to make positive changes in relation to our systems and future actions and interventions. A continuous cycle of reflection, conceptualisation, planning, and action enables us to continually develop and improve our practice. Critical reflection relies upon self-awareness and reflexivity as we apply different models, theories and approaches to our work.

Further reading and resources:

- Critically Reflective Practice, Research in Practice
- Adult Social Services Supervision Policy, North Somerset Council
- New resources to support practice supervisors and the implementation of the post-qualifying standards, Research in Practice

Coproduction

Coproduction is a key aspect of person-centred and strengths-based care. It is an approach which recognises people with lived experience as experts in their own lives and equal partners in care and support planning. Personalised care planning is a form of coproduction at an individual level. However, coproduction can also be applied more broadly, for example to strategic decision making, policy development and service design, where we choose to work in partnership with other agencies, such as health, the police and the voluntary and community sector, as well as people with lived experience.

Genuine coproduction is when social care practitioners come together with partner agencies and/or people with lived experience who have shared objectives to work together to reach a collective outcome. The approach is built on the principle that those who are most affected by a service are best placed to help design it.

Coproduction is not the only way to include people with lived experience in decision making. Other options include codesign, engagement, participation and consultation. Sometimes, due to the nature of projects or other systemic barriers, other forms of engagement may be adopted. However, coproduction is usually the most inclusive and equal way of involving people with lived experience

in achieving shared objectives. We will therefore consider how coproduction can be applied in our practice and to projects, and work towards adopting this approach wherever possible.

Further reading and resources:

- Coproduction and Strength Based Practice, Leader’s Briefing, Research in Practice
- Community Capacity and Coproduction – Building a Shared Future: Leader’s Forum 2020, Research in Practice

Human Rights Based Approach

Promoting Human Rights is fundamental to social work and social care practice. We are committed to ensuring that people’s rights are upheld, promoted and respected. The Human Rights Act 1998 brings the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law and underpins all other legal frameworks. Many of our decisions directly impact on people’s human rights, such as Article 5, the right to liberty and security, or Article 8, the right to respect for a private and family life. We must carefully consider the potential impact of our decisions and interventions on people’s human rights, and take all reasonable steps to ensure that people’s human rights are respected.

We will achieve this by adopting the Scottish Human Rights Commission’s PANEL principles:

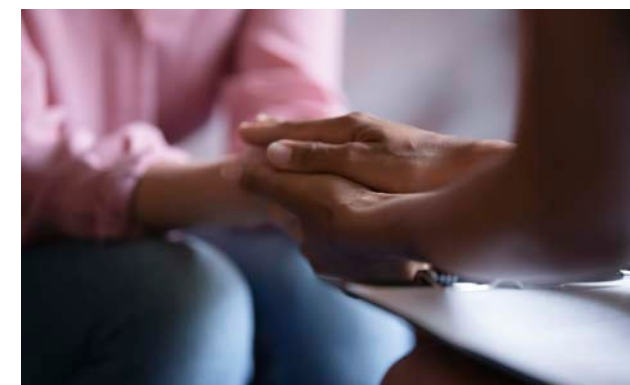
- **Participation** – We will ensure everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect them.
- **Accountability** – We will monitor how people’s rights are affected by the support we provide. We will provide clear systems which enable people to challenge decisions they don’t agree with, and offer remedies when we get things wrong.
- **Non-discrimination** – We will take positive steps to support people who experience barriers, to realise their rights.
- **Empowerment** – We will take steps to ensure everyone understands and is aware of their rights, and has access to advocacy where appropriate, so they can be actively involved in decisions about their care and support.
- **Legality** – Our approaches will be grounded in key legislative frameworks such as the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Mental Health Act 1983 and the Equality Act 2010, all of which are underpinned by the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Further reading and resources:
- Embedding Human Rights in Adult Social Care – Research in Practice
- Embedding human rights in assessment for care and support: Frontline Briefing (2020) – Research in Practice

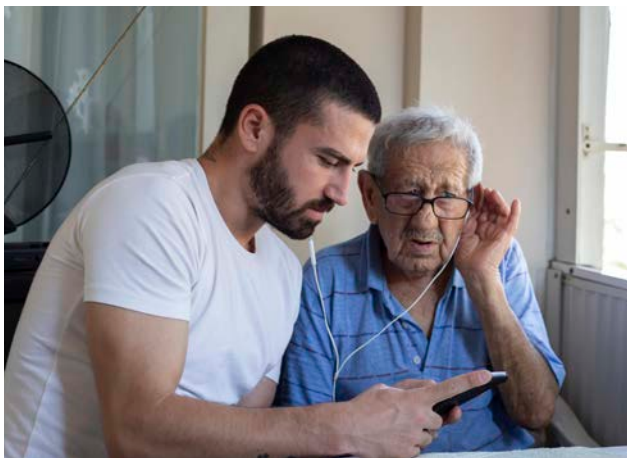
Our responsibilities

It is the responsibility of staff at all levels of the organisation, from the Director of Adult Social Services to frontline practitioners, to embrace, promote and model the approaches outlined in this framework.

We are all accountable for our practice and our professional decision making. As our actions and interventions should be underpinned by these approaches, all staff should ensure they are confident in adopting them by participating in, and where appropriate delivering, relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions. This might include training, forums, bitesize learning, reflective supervision and self-directed study.

The Adult Services Learning and Development Team will ensure that opportunities to learn and develop in the areas outlined above are made available when designing its delivery programme.





What do we hope to achieve?

By adopting these approaches, we want the people who access support from Adult Social Services, to report a consistently high level of person-centred care and support. We want people to be as safe as possible while taking positive risks to achieve their individual goals and desired outcomes. Ultimately, we want to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Outcome Based Accountability – how will we know we've made a difference?

Our Quality Assurance Framework adopts a model of "Outcome Based Accountability" which focusses on outcomes by asking four simple questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- What difference did we make?
- What should we do differently in future?

We would expect to see the approaches outlined in this framework making a positive difference to the lives of people who use Adult Social Services in

North Somerset. Positive outcomes should be reflected in the following areas:

- Learning Together Audits.
- Supervision Audits.
- Thematic Audits.
- Supervision Discussions.
- Feedback from people with lived experience.
- Compliments and complaints.
- Feedback from practitioners and colleagues.
- Feedback from other directorates.
- Feedback from partner agencies.
- Performance data.
- CQC Assurance feedback.
- Practice Observations.
- Submissions to the Eligibility and Resource Forum.

This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For all enquiries please contact the Strategy, Policy and Development Team
01275 888 712 • richard.orson@n-somerset.gov.uk