

Adult Social Services and Housing

Practice Frameworks and Standards



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Introduction

Our vision in Adult Social Care is to:

“Promote wellbeing by helping people in North Somerset to be as independent as possible for as long as possible.”

We are also aligning our vision to that of Social Care Future:

“We all want to live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us.”

Our Practice Framework outlines the key approaches our adult social care practitioners should adopt when working with people and communities and the specific standards they are expected to meet.

Our Practice Framework

Our Practice Framework sets out complementary and interrelated 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.

You can read our full Practice Framework using the following links:

[Members of the public](#)

[Our Staff \(includes links to internal resources\)](#)

Our Practice Standards

Our Practice Standards have been developed regionally in partnership with the South West PSW Network. They have been adopted in various forms by local authorities throughout the South West and help ensure a consistent approach to quality assurance regionally, and in line with our Practice Framework

Our standards set out in detail what good looks like and how we should be practising in line with our Practice Framework. They describe the standards to which we will hold ourselves accountable, and outline what people can expect when they work in partnership with us. They should be read in conjunction with profession specific standards for social work, occupational therapy and other professions practising in adult social care.

The standards are laid out in a similar style to Think Local Act Personal's Making it real 'I' and 'we' statements' to ensure we keep people and their wellbeing at the heart of our work.

A huge thank you to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council where these standards originated and to Somerset Council, on which our standards are based.

Quality Assurance and Team Assurance processes

To ensure that teams are supported to practice in line with our Practice Framework and Practice Standards, we have developed a collaborative quality assurance process which explores the practice in each of our teams.

Each team in the directorate responsible for professional practice in line with the Care Act 2014, i.e. those teams comprising primarily of social workers, occupational therapists, other registered professionals and adult social care workers, will have the opportunity to reflect on their practice in line with the Practice Framework and Standards in collaboration with the Principal Social Worker, Principal Occupational Therapist and the Quality Assurance Team.

Each team's practice will be reviewed on an annual basis. During this process, we will seek feedback from people who draw on support and our partners, and we will undertake an agreed number of casefile audits.

Full details of our refreshed Learning Together Team Audit process can be found [here](#).

Our 10 Practice Standards

The 10 standards set out the way we work with the people of North Somerset and the behaviours, skills, and approaches we demonstrate. It is the responsibility of all our staff at all levels of the organisation - from directors to frontline practitioners - to embrace, promote and model the approaches outlined in this framework.

- Standard 1 Working with people
- Standard 2 Case recording
- Standard 3 Strengths-based assessments
- Standard 4 Working with risk
- Standard 5 Personalised care and support planning
- Standard 6 Reviewing care and support plans
- Standard 7 Decision making
- Standard 8 Safeguarding people
- Standard 9 Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Standard 10 Supervision

Standard 1 – Working with people

What people can expect:

“I feel fully involved in my social care conversations and any arrangements.”

“I am listened to and my views and wishes are understood and respected.”

“I am kept informed and updated along the way and I know who to contact and how to contact them.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Staff listen, are thorough, explain everything clearly and make sure we understand processes.”

“Staff take their time and are patient and considerate.”

“We are treated with respect.”

“We are listened listen about what we want and need. Staff get back to us.”

“We are involved in decision and asked for our input from start to finish.”

Our standards

- We will endeavour to build positive relationships, to work as equals, being open and transparent about power inequalities, and, through honest conversations, nurture relationships based on trust, kindness and respect.
- We will communicate clearly in a way that invites people to be fully involved, listening hard to understand lived experiences, narratives, culture and wishes, and to discover what matters to people, so that their voice is at the centre of all we do and can be evidenced in records and documents.
- We will ensure all written letters and documents are clear and precise, avoiding confusion or misinformation. We use plain jargon free language, or other accessible methods of communication, to support people to understand what is being explained or discussed, making sure they have the right information, at the right time, to empower people to make informed decisions.

- We will celebrate the individual strengths of each person and their close networks, through listening to how they have managed and survived, and how they want to live.
- We will ensure people know who to contact and how to contact them, in a way that works for them. We respond to people promptly, keep them informed and updated on progress or changes, and seek to resolve any disagreements quickly.

Standard 2 – Case recording

What people can expect:

“I have records kept about me and my social care needs that are accurate, concise and relevant. They are written respectfully and they are clear enough that I don’t have to tell my story more than once.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Staff provide all the information we need to be kept in the loop.”

“We have access to all the information and forms needed.”

“Information is available and communicated to the family.”

“Regular communication, such as letters and emails are very much appreciated.”

Our standards

- Our case recording standards apply to all records we keep and to our written communication and documentation, including case notes, assessments, support plans, letters and emails.
- We will ensure all our recording is of a good standard, including grammar and spelling. They are written in plain language with no abbreviations or acronyms.
- We will ensure records are always person-centred and capture the wishes, feelings, views and culture of the person, and/or relevant others throughout.
- We are accountable for all our professional decisions by ensuring all decision making is defensible and clearly recorded. We ensure our records are accurate, objective, and clearly define between fact and professional opinion, with valid supporting evidence.
- We ensure our case notes are written within 48 hours of the contact.
- We utilise case summaries, transfer summaries and closure summaries at relevant intervals to ensure clear summaries for colleagues and prevent the need for people to have to retell their stories.

- We maintain records within the legal frameworks of Data Protection Act 1998, GDPR and Caldicott principles, legal professional privilege and Accessible information standards.
- We document a clear rationale for key decisions made.

Standard 3 – Strengths-based assessments

What people can expect:

“I am supported by people who see me as a unique person with strengths, abilities and aspirations.”

“The people supporting me listen carefully, so they understand what matters to me”

“I am empowered to be independent and live a life I want, for example having support to manage my health and wellbeing in a way that makes sense to me.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Staff who focus on individual care and don’t generalise.”

“Being supported to live independently.”

“Staff who listen and understand what is needed.”

Our standards

- We make assessments that seek to understand the person’s lived experiences, culture, needs, wishes, preferences, and outcomes, and that are proportionate to the person’s presenting circumstances.
- We recognise that people and families are experts in their own lives. We engage with people in conversations with therapeutic use of self and with awareness of power inequalities and privilege.
- We focus on what is strong in the person’s life, including strengths that have enabled them to survive, and the impact their care and/or support needs have on their wellbeing.
- We aim to understand the person’s aspirations, their relationships, culture, their lived experiences including experiences of trauma and oppression, and explore opportunities to sustain and develop networks of support.
- We aim to prevent, reduce and delay needs wherever possible, encouraging people to identify their own solutions, and seeking local support networks and community options as well as formal provision.

- We involve specially trained staff where necessary for specialist assessments, such as for deafblind assessments or autism.
- We take a whole family approach, including exploring the impact of the person's needs on children, carers and others in their network. We are alert to where there could be safeguarding concerns.
- We clearly identify a person's care and support needs in our assessment and care plan documents, including the impact of unmet needs, and provide them with a copy in a format that is accessible for them. We are clear which needs are eligible for Council funded support and those which are not, and why.

Standard 4 – Working with risk

What people can expect:

“I am supported and enabled to consider any risks I may be taking or deciding to take. People working with me enable me to explore what could go wrong and what to do if nothing does go wrong, so that I can decide if it is a risk worth taking.”

“I am supported by those around me to have a balanced approach to my rights and taking risks.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Practitioners who are knowledgeable and calm and talk options through so we can understand what support is available and make informed decisions.”

“The views and knowledge of me and my family are taken into account when decisions are being made.”

Our standards

- We recognise that taking risks is part of life and can bring positive outcomes through approaching risk in a strengths-based way. Helping people to understand risks can empower them to make informed choices. We co-produce risk assessments and action plans, capturing the wishes, feelings, and views of the person, and/or relevant others.
- We discuss and explore risk throughout our assessment conversations, support planning, and reviews. We use risk assessment tools, where needed and useful, to support understanding and ensure robust, proportionate and appropriate recording.
- We ensure that we review relevant history and speak with other professionals and people in the person’s networks to identify incidents, patterns, or concerns where the nature of risks relate to the person or others. This includes those in the support network, adults at risk, and children.

- We ensure, where risks are identified, that the person's mental capacity to make a specific decision in relation to risks is evidenced in their records. This includes their right to take risks, even if we feel it is unwise.
- We work together with the person, their circle of support (including care providers and other professionals) as appropriate to minimise, share and manage risks. This enables a balanced approach to risk, rights, choice, and control that focuses on the outcomes for the individual person. We acknowledge and record that where residual risks remain, everything possible has been done to mitigate risks, and review risks regularly

Standard 5 – Personalised care and support planning

What people can expect:

“I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and personal goals. I am in control of planning my care and support. If I need help with this, people who know and care about me are involved. I am valued for the contribution that I make to my community. I have a place I can call home, not just a ‘bed’ or somewhere that provides me with care.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Care and support that is decided with us and not for us.”

“Understanding what I need to be independent and working with me to achieve that.”

“Enabling us to live as we want with adaptations and care to support us.”

“Helping us to live our best life.”

Our standards

- We will take active steps to invite people to feel safe in their interactions with us and aim to build trust. We recognise that this can take time and will work at the person’s pace. We will seek to understand how people have survived, and continue to survive, their lived experiences of adversity, oppression and trauma, and how these experiences can impact on forming and maintaining relationships.
- We are clear that our role in support planning is to meet people’s eligible needs under the appropriate legislation, e.g., Care Act 2014 S.10, Mental Health Act S.117, National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care
- We believe in supporting people to lead meaningful lives and working with them to find ways to meet their needs, rather than focusing on the provision of services. Alongside developing a care and support plan to meet eligible

needs, we are creative and do not just focus on eligible care and support needs.

- We develop care and support plans, in plain language or other accessible formats, linking them, where necessary, with other plans, (such as the care plans of carers or family members, or Education, Health and Care plans).
- We ensure people are informed of the personal budget agreed for them, the outcomes it is linked to, and their own financial contribution.
- We focus on helping people meet their outcomes and aspirations creatively, rather than focusing on time and task-based activities.
- We always give people a copy of their plan and share it with relevant others with the persons consent.

Standard 6 – Reviewing care and support plans

What people can expect:

“I have a review of my care and support plan 6-8 weeks after it has commenced, and then at least every 12 months.”

“I can request a review sooner when there is a change in my needs or circumstances, my outcomes, or my plan.”

“I am supported through conversations to review my care and support needs, personal outcomes and plan how effectively they are meeting my personal aspirations.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Regular follow ups as needed and care and support that is adapted if it’s not working.”

“Thorough information and everything explained.”

“Care and support that is personal.”

Our standards

- We have person centred, outcome focused review conversations, that are accessible and proportionate to the person and their needs.
- We reflect on what is working, what is not working and what may need to change during our review conversations. We consider whether the person’s outcomes have been met and whether new outcomes need to be explored.
- We ensure the person is at the centre of their review, involving people of their choice, advocates and/or the relevant person’s representative where appropriate and relevant.
- We ensure that, where a person’s circumstances and/or needs and budget have changed significantly, a reassessment is carried out.

- We consider the quality of care that is commissioned for the person, asking them and ourselves 'is it of good quality?' We are all responsible for reviewing the quality of care and support and reporting any concerns.
- We ensure review conversations take place 6 – 8 weeks after a support plan is first implemented, and then as required for the individual's circumstances, ensuring that reviews are no longer than 12 months apart. We recognise that reviews can prevent escalating needs, risk and crisis situations.

Standard 7 – Decision making

[Standard 7 Quality Assurance audit link](#)

What people can expect:

“I have the information I need when I need it to help me make decisions. No decision will be made about me without me. When a decision is made on my behalf it is made considering my views and wishes and made in my best interests. I am supported to make decisions by people who see things from my point of view, with concern for what matters to me, my wellbeing and health.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“To be given all the information and support to understand it”.

“Help with filling out all the forms”.

“Practitioners that talk through everything and make decisions with us”.

“Information and advice available in accessible ways which helps us stay as well as possible”.

Our standards

- We support people's right to make their own choices, ensuring they have all relevant information at the right time to enable them to make well informed decisions even if others may think they are unwise. We explore any risks around specific decisions with the person and record these and our discussions on the relevant risk assessments.
- We assume people have the mental capacity to make specific decisions unless it is established that they do not. Where a person does not have mental capacity to make specific decisions, we ensure that a suitable person or advocate is engaged at the earliest opportunity to ensure the persons voice is heard, and we ensure that any decisions made on behalf of a person who lacks capacity are person centred, the least restrictive of their rights and freedoms, and always in their best interests.

- We facilitate supported decision making by ensuring the use of advocacy and person-centred approaches relevant to the person's needs, for example, communication support such as communication aids/tools, interpreters, speech and language therapy. We consider factors such as time, place, support and confidentiality.
- We ensure mental capacity assessments always follow the 5 principles, and are clearly evidenced and recorded, in the person's records.
- We ensure that differing views, disputes, or disagreements are clearly recorded and resolution and / or mediation is sought as soon as possible. We follow relevant practice guidance and refer to formal dispute resolution where necessary through the appropriate service e.g. Local Government Ombudsman, Office of the Public Guardian or Court of Protection.
- We use professional curiosity, critical thinking and analysis to make sense of a person's situation, understand what is happening, or has happened, and the implications for them. We critically reflect and analyse available evidence to inform decisions and communicate/record a clear rationale for decisions. Management support /oversight is sought when necessary.
- We ensure best interest decisions are made by the appropriate decision maker relevant to the specific decision, taking into account past wishes, advance decisions and ensuring that the decision maker has the necessary authority to make such a decision, e.g. relevant professional, Lasting Power of Attorney, Court of Protection.
- We ensure decision making is inclusive. Decision-making considers equality, protected characteristics, rights, social justice and is within relevant legal or policy frameworks. Decision-making is also consistent with the principles of the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care; respect, reasonableness, minimising harm, inclusiveness, accountability, flexibility, proportionality and community.

Standard 8 – Safeguarding people

What people can expect:

“I am asked what I want the outcomes to be from the safeguarding work, and my views directly inform what happens.”

“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs, and what I can do to seek help. I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I am sure that the professionals will work in my interests, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.”

“I get help so that I can take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want. I know that staff treat personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary.”

“I am confident that professionals will work together, and with me, to get the best result for me. I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Being safe and secure in the community.”

“Everything explained clearly in a way I understand.”

“People that listen and work together to achieve a positive outcome.”

“Staff that keep us informed.”

“To ensure I know and understand the reasons for actions being taken.”

Our standards

- We are all responsible for recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns for adults or children in line with local procedures and legislative duties. We take a whole family approach to safeguarding considering the needs of others who may also be at risk. We make sure that when an alleged perpetrator is a child, an adult at risk, or a carer, their needs are also addressed

- We seek to understand what will enable the person to feel safe by using a trauma informed, strengths-based approach and ensuring there is focus on what the person can do to keep themselves safe. We seek views of others and record clearly where this isn't possible or safe. Making Safeguarding Personal informs how we work with people.
- We actively facilitate advocacy when needed for enquiry work, meetings, planning, or reviews, to assist the person to be involved and where possible, to make decisions.
- We ensure professional involvement in a person's life is proportionate and provide the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented, whilst maintaining professional curiosity throughout.
- We ensure the person's desired outcomes are identified early and encourage people to make their own decisions.
- We take a shared responsibility for exploring and managing risk, developing 'keeping safe' strategies, and co-producing person-centred risk assessments and plans.
- We make sure that where any protective actions are declined, they are recorded with clear reasons and shared with the person and relevant others.

Standard 9 – Equality, diversity and inclusion

What people can expect:

“I feel valued and included for the contribution that I make to my local community. I am treated with dignity and respect. I feel welcome and safe in my local community and can join in community life and activities that are important to me. I feel safe in my home which is designed so that I can be as independent as possible. I can keep in touch and meet up with people who are important to me, including family, friends and people who share my interests, identity and culture. I am supported by people who listen carefully, so they know what matters to me and how to support me to live the life I want”

What people in North Somerset have said matters to them:

“Being able to give back to the community and be a valued part of it.”

“Knowing who to ask when we need help.”

“Practitioners who understand the importance of family and community and support us to be a part of it.”

“Practitioners that see us as a whole family and not the individual needs of each member.”

Our standards

- We make no assumptions and work with all people as individuals with dignity and respect. We are acutely aware that individuals will have diverse lived experiences that may include experiences of oppression and trauma. We take an anti-oppressive, anti-racist and trauma informed approach to working with people.
 - We work flexibly, thinking about how we can work differently with people and reflecting critically on our use of self.
 - We demonstrate anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice and we do not support or accept discrimination to or from others.
-

- We use critically informed reflection to mitigate bias. We are committed to continuous personal learning to inform how we develop and deliver services.
- We commit to an inclusive culture, which is reflected in our practice and direct work with people and the communities within which we work, recognising identity as integral to a person's wellbeing.
- We are committed to developing an environment which attracts and retains a workforce that is diverse and reflective of our communities, understanding that the more differences we have, the greater our ability to connect with the people we work with.
- We are committed to working in an environment which actively seeks meaningful feedback, where we continuously learn and where quality is genuinely improved on this basis of listening to others.

Standard 10 – Supervision Standards

[Standard 10 Quality Assurance audit link](#)

What people can expect:

“I am supported by people who see me as a unique person with strengths, abilities and aspirations. I am supported by people who listen carefully so they know what matters to me and how to support me to live the life I want.”

“I am supported to make decisions by people who see things from my point of view, with concern for what matters to me, my wellbeing and health. I have considerate support delivered by competent people.”

What our staff and managers can expect:

“Regular supervision that has wellbeing at its core, facilitates critical reflection, is person-centred, realistic and purposeful.”

“Supervision ensures people remain at the heart of the conversation.”

“It ensures accountability, performance management, continued professional development, and a positive learning culture.”

“Staff and managers continue to develop professional, organisational and personal capabilities which promote and maintain the quality and effectiveness of their work.”

Our standards

- We ensure supervision is valuable and a priority for both supervisees and supervisors. Supervisors demonstrate compassionate leadership, anti-oppressive and anti-racist and trauma informed approaches to supervision.
- We ensure all staff receive regular, practice-focused supervision in accordance with our supervision policy.
- We ensure supervision includes:
 - staff wellbeing and feedback from supervisee
 - recognition of strengths and successes
 - quality critical reflection of practice/performance

- continued professional development plan
- workload and progress against agreed priorities
- cross reference to (professional) competency frameworks
- records any management/HR data or issues including performance management, professional registration and annual leave etc
- We make and keep written supervision records, using the templates and tools provided. They are signed and shared by both supervisor and supervisee and kept in a secure file.
- We ensure that all staff critically reflect on their practice/performance and that this is evidenced and recorded in supervision notes, alongside the key learning and practice development taken forward.
- We ensure a high quality of supervision by regularly asking staff about their experience, receiving assurance and oversight through annual audits led by the Principal Social Worker, Principal Occupational Therapist and Strategic managers.

Feedback

We value your feedback and welcome both compliments and areas for development. [You can send us feedback through our website](#). If you have any concerns about any action or decision taken by Adult Social Services and Housing, you should initially talk to the person you normally talk to. You can also contact our complaints manager at:

Complaints Manager,

Adult Social Services and Housing,
Town Hall,
Walliscote Grove Road,
Weston super Mare,
BS23 1UJ

Telephone: 01275 882171

Email: complaints.manager@n-somerset.gov.uk

Accessible information

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read, and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require Council information in languages other than English. Please email adultspolicy@n-somerset.gov.uk or ring 01934 888 888.