

CACHE Level 2

Certificate in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care

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Workbook 1

Section 1: Understand the role of the social care worker

In this section, you will learn about the role and working relationships of the adult social care worker. You will learn about the importance of working within the job role and agreed ways of working. You will look at the importance of partnership working and how to build effective working relationships with partners.

Introduction to adult social care

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 1 and 2.

Did you know?



Around 1.5 million people work in adult social care in the UK (www.gov.uk 2012). They provide personal and practical support, helping people to live independent lives and making sure that they have dignity, choice and control.

Care employers can be large organisations – such as councils or agencies – or small companies or individuals. Hours can be flexible – part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent. Roles can be paid or voluntary.

People can work in a variety of settings. For example, staff may:

- be employed in a residential or nursing home – to support residents in a safe and homely environment
- work in day centres or specialist drop-in centres – maybe offering support, social and skills-based activities
- work in supported housing – helping residents live independently in a home or hostel, providing emergency support and security
- provide support and care in someone's home – employed by a council, agency, the family or the individual themselves
- work in the community – supporting resources such as libraries and leisure facilities

There are a wide variety of roles within the adult social care sector. These include:

- care workers, senior care workers and managers
- social workers, counsellors and housing officers
- occupational therapists and technicians (who supply and maintain equipment)
- GPs, nurses and specialist nurses
- speech and language therapists
- physiotherapists, chiropodists, dieticians

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- psychologists and psychiatrists
- advocates (taking intermediary roles to help to coordinate care)
- dementia care advisors
- cleaners and maintenance workers
- activity coordinators
- community support and outreach workers

Adult social care services are used by a wide variety of people – usually referred to as individuals or service users. Some need only short-term care while others need long-term, complex support. The main reasons that care is needed are old age and/or any form of disability or impairment that affects someone's ability to enjoy an 'ordinary' life. For example, support may be needed because of:

- dementia
- age-related conditions
- physical disabilities
- sensory impairments
- learning difficulties – including autistic spectrum disorders
- mental ill health
- long-term medical conditions

These workbooks provide knowledge and information relevant to work in the adult social care sector.

Working and personal relationships

People maintain a variety of relationships; some are work relationships and some are personal, and it is important to know the difference between the two.

Working relationships are based on the needs and expectations of other people. These other people may be colleagues, individuals or employers. At work we are required to act in a professional manner at all times, for example:

- treating everyone with respect
- remaining calm and polite even when under pressure
- keeping all information confidential – e.g. personal or medical details about individuals

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- keeping our own personal issues, views and problems to ourselves whilst at work
- following policies and procedures – e.g. about duties and responsibilities, health and safety, fire safety, line management, training, uniform, food safety
- using equipment correctly and reporting faults and problems
- keeping records
- reporting to more senior staff

In the adult social care setting, working relationships could be formed with:

- colleagues
- other healthcare professionals and support workers
- individuals, customers, patients or clients – and their friends and families
- employers
- inspectors and managers who monitor the level of care

As an adult social care worker, you will be involved in care activities for the individuals you work with. In personal relationships, people try to look after each other's needs and expectations; it is a two-way process. There is knowledge and awareness of emotional needs and personal history, personal details are often openly discussed, and people become very involved with each other. Personal relationships are close and intimate relationships between partners, friends or family members.

In an adult social care setting, it is not unusual for members of staff to form bonds with individuals or with one other, especially when they see each other often and build genuine relationships. However, it is important to remember that these are primarily working relationships. It is in everyone's best interests to have professional working relationships so that they can handle the inevitable challenges at work, and keep their working and personal lives separate.



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Knowledge Activity 1:

1) Describe a working relationship that you have with someone, maybe your own GP. How do you react to them? How do they treat you? What do they do and say to meet your needs and expectations?

2) Describe a personal relationship that you have. How do you treat each other? How do you speak to each other? Give an example of how you look after one other.

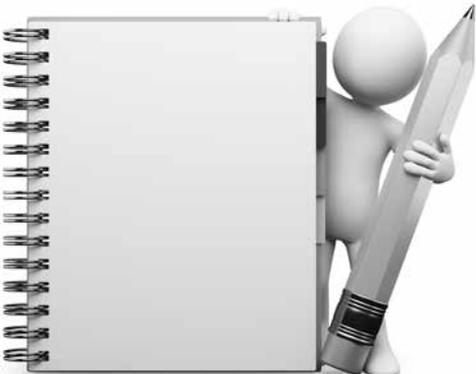
3) In an adult social care setting, who would you have a working relationship with? List four examples.

1.

2.

3.

4.



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Working to a specific job role

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

It is important to establish the details of a job role so that everyone knows what is expected. This protects the individual, the staff member and the employer, and ensures that the level of care is consistent and of a high standard.

When people work within the scope of their job role:

- the individual will be looked after correctly and receive a good standard of care
- the staff member will know what is expected of them and be protected from unreasonable requests
- the risk of accidents and injury will be reduced for everyone
- the employer is able to comply with regulations and legislation, and avoid the need for disciplinary procedures and dismissals
- colleagues will find it easier to work together and deliver a consistent standard of care

Did you know?



Employers produce 'job descriptions' which set out the job role and responsibilities. Job descriptions are used to tell people about the job when they apply and/or in induction or other training.

Here is a typical job description for a community care worker who looks after people in their own homes:

Community Care Worker Job Description

Personal care is provided in a way that maintains and respects the privacy, dignity and lifestyle of the individual receiving care. The agency works with several groups of individuals including the elderly and people dealing with mental health, learning and physical disabilities. Care workers will be required to work alone or meet other care workers at specific times to carry out double-handed calls for individuals with more complex needs. The specific tasks that care workers will be required to carry out are as follows:

- Assistance with personal care to include: bathing, washing, shaving, oral hygiene, hair care, dressing and undressing.
- Assistance with all toilet and continence requirements.

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- Assistance with the monitoring and supervision of medication, including the application of topical creams in line with the company's policies.
- Assistance with other health-related activities including companionship and arranging medical appointments.
- Assistance with handling the individuals money, such as collecting pensions and the payment of bills (including shopping) in accordance with the company's policies.
- Assistance with the cooking of light meals, preparing snacks and the provision of beverages in line with the company's policies.
- Assistance with the delivery and serving of 'meals on wheels' when required.
- Assistance with light general household domestic duties including laundry and ironing.
- Transporting individuals to local amenities.
- Assistance with pet care, including feeding and walking pets.
- Regular attendance of staff meetings.
- Returning and collecting medication systems (such as Nomad boxes).

It is your duty as a care worker to provide care and support in the least intrusive ways at all times. All individuals and their representatives must be treated with courtesy and addressed in a professional manner.

As a care worker you must be sensitive and responsive to the race, culture, religion, age, disability, gender and sexuality of the individuals receiving care and their representatives.

Care workers must carry out their jobs **with** the assistance of the individuals and **not for them**; this is an essential part of encouraging independence and motivation in order to work in line with the National Care Standards and company policies. All care workers will work towards a professional status; initially care workers are required to complete an induction course and, following a satisfactory probation period, further professional qualifications may be offered.

Care workers must, at all times, adhere to the confidentiality policy and complete in a legible manner the individuals' contact/observation sheets on every visit made. Completing documentation is a legal requirement and failure to do so will be followed-up and acted upon.

No medical or nursing tasks are undertaken by the agency.

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If staff members do not work within the agreed limits of their job roles, they may put themselves, individuals and the employers at risk. For example:

- staff members could injure themselves if they take on heavy lifting that is not covered in their job roles and for which they do not have specialist equipment and training
- individuals could receive inadequate and inappropriate care
- if there is an accident (involving people or property) the employer could be sued or fined if they have not fulfilled their obligation to provide a duty of care
- individuals may not comply with regulations or the law.

Agreed ways of working

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 4 and 5.

People working in adult social care often work in intimate and personal situations with individuals, e.g. helping with bathing, dressing and going to the toilet. The usual social rules and inhibitions don't apply so it can be difficult for people receiving care as well as those providing it.

To help everyone and make sure that there is a good and consistent standard of care, organisations set out **agreed ways of working**. The employer sets out how they want their staff to work and how each situation should be dealt with; these will be covered in the induction and training sessions, and in ongoing reviews.

The agreed ways of working are there to support staff, individuals and the employer. Designed by the organisation, they will be very detailed and will cover areas such as:

- the responsibilities and limits of the relationship between the care worker and the individual
- how to document the individual's daily care needs
- exact procedures to be followed – e.g. for bathing and toileting
- how to deal with various situations – e.g. when an individual is upset or embarrassed or when there are religious or cultural issues that need to be followed
- when staff can work alone and when they need to ask for assistance
- the handover procedures so that different staff members can provide good continuity of care and be aware of new issues and problems

Each individual will have a care plan that states the agreed ways of working with them. This will cover subjects such as: lifting techniques to be used; bathing and toileting requirements and preferences; food preferences and allergies; notes from healthcare professionals about medication.

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By following the agreed ways of working, staff can offer a consistent and high standard of care, and enable the individual to maintain dignity, independence and self-respect. Agreed ways of working will be designed to also comply with legislation, national guidelines and the organisation's policies and procedures, so by following these, care workers help to protect themselves and the organisation from any criticism and legal action.

Agreed ways of working need to be full and up to date so that:

- care workers carry out care activities correctly, safely and effectively
- the quality of care for the individual is consistent and maintained at the right standard
- care activities are carried out in accordance with legislation, guidelines and best practice

Knowledge Activity 2: Describe the 'agreed way of working' for one care activity you might be involved in as a care worker.



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Partnership working

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 6, 7, 8 and 9.

People with many different skills work in the adult social care sector. People with different roles have to work together to provide care and it is important to have good working partnerships. Care workers also need good working partnerships with the individuals and their families and friends.

Larger organisations may have formal guidelines about how to manage partnership working, or there may be informal arrangements, for example when a care worker works directly for an individual and their family.

The importance of working in partnership with others

One individual may have several helpers and healthcare professionals involved in their care, such as: family members; friends; care workers who call in to do bathing and general care; doctors and nurses from the GP surgery who attend to medical treatment; an occupational therapist who helps develop skills and provide equipment for independent living; a chiropodist to keep feet in good order; a dietician; or hospice nurses and specialist staff in the case of terminal illness.

It is important that all of the different people involved in the care of an individual work together as a team and provide 'joined up' service and support. Working together with an individual means that:

- all aspects/requirements of the care plan are covered and the individual's care needs are met
- changes can be discussed and agreed, to make sure that the care plan is accurate and up to date
- everyone knows their role
- people know who to approach when there is a query or a problem



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Partnership working in an adult social care setting can be improved by:

- having agreed ways of working – usually set out by the main care organisation following discussions with the individual and the care partners, and often set down in a care plan – this ensures everyone involved knows what needs to be done, when and how
- all care workers and others following these established procedures – this ensures that everyone provides the same type and level of care
- keeping the care plan up to date – this ensures that the whole team can see the individual's progress or changes in requirements
- having a clear note of responsibilities – this ensures all care workers and others know what they are responsible for
- partners communicating with each other – e.g. face-to-face, via notes on or with the care plan, emails, telephone conversations or during formal meetings – this ensures that everyone keeps up to date with what is happening and any issues can be sorted out quickly

Did you know?



Information needs to be shared on a need-to-know basis and confidentiality must be protected, even if a care worker works directly for the individual. Organisations (such as care agencies or local councils) will have guidelines and policies about how to share information, to make sure that the right people receive and share the right information.

Resolving conflicts within partnership working

From time to time there are bound to be disagreements between the partners working in an adult social care situation. The relationships are often long term, so there will be many challenges and changes along the way. Here are some examples of when conflict could arise:

1) The individual wants more or less independence

The individual might insist on dressing themselves, something that the care worker wants to encourage. However, the individual may take a very long time, which will make the care worker late for their next appointment.

Alternatively, the individual might refuse to do things for themselves, and expect the care worker to do more and more even though they are physically and mentally able to do these things for themselves. The care worker wants to give support and care, but they have a set amount of time and list of jobs that they must do in that time.

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2) The family disagrees with parts of the care plan

Even if there is an agreed way of working, close family or friends might disagree with parts of the plan and try to interfere.

3) Healthcare professionals disagree about how something should be done

A healthcare professional may disagree with another about the care given. For example, one district nurse might dress a wound when another would leave it without a dressing.

4) Discussions about the agreed ways of working

The individual and care professionals working together to provide the care will have discussions and disagreements about what can and should be provided. For example, there might be disagreements about what time is allocated to an individual, and how this time should be used.

People working in the adult social care sector need to develop a range of skills and approaches to be able to resolve conflicts. It is important to resolve disagreements and conflicts so that care professionals and individuals can establish ways to meet care needs. When communication is ineffective, relationships break down. This can happen suddenly or slowly over a long period of time.

Productive, positive working relationships are based on several important factors, including:

- clear lines of communication – so that people know where to go to ask questions, or report and discuss issues
- openness – giving and receiving correct and appropriate information
- mutual trust and respect – where everyone listens to each other, and acknowledges feelings and opinions



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Several skills are needed when resolving conflicts:

Good listening skills

When resolving conflicts, an important skill to have is to listen to the other person and understand what they are saying. By using 'active listening skills', people can show that the issues are understood and being taken seriously.

Active listening skills include:

- using eye contact
- nodding the head in agreement
- actively focusing on what is being said
- repeating back key information in a summary of what has been said

Good speaking skills

Speech needs to be clear and calm so that people can understand what is happening and avoid becoming too emotional. Facts and information need to be discussed very calmly.

When having a discussion, it helps to:

- plan what is going to be said, making a few notes or headlines to help
- use a clear, strong voice – there may be background noise, or some people may have hearing difficulties
- speak slowly – most people speed up when nervous so it is important to slow down so that listeners can follow what is being said
- use simple language – good English is not difficult English. Speakers need to use simple words whenever possible, and avoid slang and local sayings. This will help to ensure that everyone understands what is being said
- face people and let them read the face and lips whilst speaking – this helps everyone, especially anyone who lip-reads or has language differences
- find a different way of saying something if someone asks for it to be repeated. Just saying the same thing again and again does not usually help people understand, try to find a different way of expressing the point
- be aware of the tone of the voice – a sharp tone will indicate anger, whereas a gentler tone will indicate sensitivity and understanding



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Good body language

A huge number of messages are sent non-verbally. How people stand, how close they stand to others, eye contact, fidgeting and hand movements all send messages. In conflict situations, people need to be as unthreatening as possible to defuse any anger and frustration. They also need to be confident and assertive – standing or sitting up straight and using open palms to indicate openness.

Good negotiation skills

Negotiation between working partners is usually the most effective way to resolve disagreements. The main aims are to:

- **ensure that good relationships are the first priority** – everyone has to work together afterwards, so be courteous and polite to maintain mutual respect
- **keep the people and the problems separate** – by separating the problems from the people involved, real issues can be debated without spoiling the working relationship – everyone has something valid to say
- **listen first, talk second** – it is important to understand the other person's point of view before we can defend our own position and put our own points across
- **set out the facts that are under discussion** – it helps to be very clear about what issues need to be resolved and not be distracted by other issues
- **explore alternative solutions together** – comments need to be constructive and positive so that the care partners can increase understanding and knowledge, and develop better working relationships

Approaches that can be used when resolving conflicts include:

- **negotiation** – using good listening and speaking skills, the individual and care partners can discuss possible solutions and agree on changes
- **taking practical steps to remove the cause of the problem** – e.g. installing special equipment to ease a situation
- **mediation** – having an impartial person acting as a mediator between two parties who disagree



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Knowledge Activity 3: Choose three examples of when conflict can arise in working partnerships in care and make a few notes about how you would deal with each situation.

1.

2.

3.

Support and advice

There is lots of support and advice available for care workers. It is a good idea to seek extra support and information when, for example:

- staff do not have enough knowledge, experience or confidence to be able to negotiate with partners or resolve conflicts on their own – they may just want to check a few details
- staff have to deal with a new problem or situation that they have never come across before
- staff feel that they are being asked to do something or make a decision that is not covered by their job role or agreed ways of working
- someone makes, or is likely to make, a complaint
- there has been abuse – physical or verbal
- a new treatment or procedure is introduced
- staff believe that other people need to be involved in a discussion – particularly if they do not have the authority to make a decision alone



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For support and advice on partnership working, people can consult:

- colleagues – their experience may be really useful
- supervisors and managers – especially if negotiations need to be made at a higher level
- the organisation's policies, procedures and records – these guidelines will show the usual actions to be taken, and give contact details of the relevant care-providing partners
- various external organisations – e.g. social services, the local council, GP services, local NHS and care providers or the Care Quality Commission (CQC). These usually have websites, leaflets and staff who are able to provide general or specific information

For support and advice on conflict resolution, people can consult:

- colleagues – they will probably have experienced similar situations and be able to offer good advice
- supervisors and managers – they can help with legal and professional matters and can support staff by guiding them through the procedures and policies
- the organisation's policies and procedures – these will set out the standard procedures that need to be followed
- external organisations – e.g. CQC, social services, trade unions, carers' organisations

It is best practice to approach the line manager or supervisor first when support and advice are needed. They will usually have a personal interest, understand the organisation, know the parties involved and be in a good position to give information, advice and support.

Summary

In this section, you have learned about:

- working relationships in social care settings and how they differ from personal relationships
- the importance of detailed and up-to-date agreed ways of working and following these in practice
- the importance of partnership working in social care and how to improve partnership working and resolve any conflicts

DIGNITY

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