

Capabilities Statement for Social Work with Adults who have Learning Disability

Easy Read

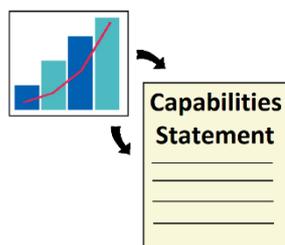
Introduction



This document is called a *Capabilities Statement* and it shows what social workers need to know and be able to do to make positive changes in the lives of adults with learning disability.



It is aimed at **all social workers**



The Statement has come about from the British Association of Social Workers talking to adults with learning disability, social workers, carers, and other people who work with adults with learning disability



'*Capabilities*' means something that someone can do.



This statement explains all the things a social worker needs to be able to do to support people with learning disabilities



This statement is very important because there has not been anything like before for social workers

1.5 Million



There are over 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK



Social workers support people with learning disabilities in lots of different ways



The 'good social worker' in learning disability is a social worker who has the right character and who knows what is needed by people with learning disability



They must be able to use this in their work to get the best results for people with learning disability



This is important now because some care is not good enough and people with learning disabilities sometimes face abuse



How this document came about



This document called the *Capabilities Statement* was made by a group of people with learning disabilities, their family, friends and carers; social workers, and professionals, with support from the British Association of Social Workers (BASW)



Everybody in the group worked together to think about what is needed for people with learning disability to have good care



They also asked other people for their ideas AND



- Also did an online survey AND



- We talked to people with learning disabilities and carers about what they want to social workers to be able to do to meet their needs.



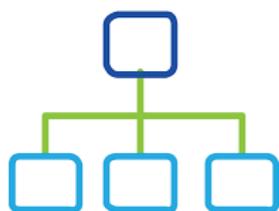
Who is this *Capabilities Statement* for?



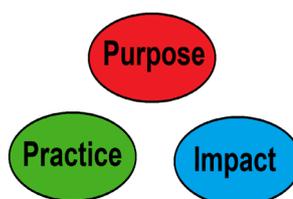
This document is for anyone who is a social worker working with people with learning disabilities



It will also help people with a learning disability and their families to know what to expect from social workers



Structure of the Capabilities Statement



The Capabilities Statement is structured around three headings: Purpose, Practice, and Impact.



- **The Purpose** section describes how social workers should think about what is right and wrong, and how they should deal with people's rights



- **The Practice** section describes the practical skills that social workers need. It also explains what social workers need to know about people with learning disabilities, their families, carers, and how services are set up



- **The Impact** section talks about how social workers need to be professional, organised and good leaders

Purpose

Section 1: Purpose



The part of the Capabilities Statement explains how social workers should deal with human rights of adult with learning disability



Recognising strengths and empowering people



Social workers must believe that people with learning disabilities are skilled at lots of things



Social workers should support and make it possible for people with learning disability to use their life-skills and choose things for themselves



This includes everyday things such as: what to eat, wear and where to go. It also includes big choices about where to live, relationships, care, education, and health



Social workers should:



- Include people with learning disabilities when decisions about their care are being made.



- They should also include their friends, families and carers where possible.



- Social workers should make it possible for adults with learning disability to use their own their own strengths and abilities in their lives



- Social workers should make it possible for adults with learning disability to make their own decisions when this is safe to do so



Promoting people's rights



Social workers should always protect the human rights of adults with learning disability. Social workers should believe that this one main part of their jobs



Social workers should:



- Understand human rights laws and how people with learning disability can have their rights abused



- Understand the abuse that people with learning disabilities might face in home, in the community, in their accommodation, or even by services



- Work to stop abuse



Making sure people are treated with dignity



Social workers should:



- Listen to people with learning disabilities and act on what they want



- Try and understand how people with learning disability express their feelings. Social workers should also know how adults with learning disability communicate



- Make sure other people listen to people with learning disabilities and their friends, families and carers



Section 2: Practice



This section is about what social workers need to know to make positive changes for people with learning disability.



Understanding what learning disability means



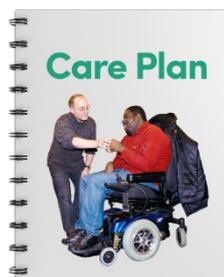
Social workers should:



- Know how to use the social model of disability.



The social model says that people with learning disabilities are not limited by their medical condition, they are limited by barriers in society.



- Social workers should understand that the way people understand and think about learning disability can affect the care they give



Understanding and improving health for people with learning disabilities



People with learning disabilities get less help with their health than other people. When they are ill, they don't always get the help they need.



Social workers should:



- Understand why adult with learning disability don't always get the help they need with their help



- Make it possible for people with learning disabilities to get their voices heard to get the help with their health they need



- Understand how to use communication technology



Knowledge and skills in safeguarding



Social workers need to:



- Understand the law and protect people as it says in the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005



- Understand how to judge the safety of a person's care and housing



- Ensure that if people are at risk, then they are involved in the decisions about the care that they need to be safe



Knowing and following the Law



Social workers should



- Understand the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Mental Health Act 1983, and the Children Act 1989



- Improve their understandings of the law by having training often



- Think about how the law works with peoples understanding of what is right and wrong



Knowledge of life changes



A life change is when someone goes from one stage of their life to another, for example, from being a child to being an adult.



Social workers should:



- Understand that when people with learning disability become adults, then different laws applies to them than when they were children. The laws that social workers need to know are: Children and Families Act 2014, the Care Act 2014, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005



- Social workers should make sure that services for people moving from children to adult services is person-centred



- Social workers should speak up if they don't think people are getting good enough support



Assessment, support and care planning



Social workers should



- Give people with learning disabilities copies of assessments and care plans in easy read format



- Social workers should make sure people's care plans help them lead the best lives they want



Supporting family, friends and carers



Social Workers should:



- Understand and follow the law to support carers



- Social workers should work with family, friends and carers to develop good relationships based on openness and honesty.



- Social worker should provide easy to read information about money and other things that people with learning disability need to make decisions about



Communication skills



Social workers should:



- Understand that some people with learning disabilities like to communicate differently



- Social workers should avoid jargon when they talk or write to people with learning disability



Mental capacity



Social workers should



- Know how mental capacity and human rights and support people to make their own decisions



- Understand the '*Mental Capacity Act 2005*' and the meaning of 'deprivation of liberty'



These are to make sure people can make their own decisions if they can't, people who step in make decisions in their best interest



Working together



Social Workers should:



- Understand how to make decisions about care and services with adults with learning disability. This is sometimes called 'co-production'



- Social workers should make sure that people with learning disabilities are included in planning and delivering social work services and training



Relationships in social work



Adults with learning disabilities who helped make this *Capabilities Statement* said that there were 3 really important points about the relationships between social workers and them.



Building relationships

Social workers should be friendly, listen, respect people's feelings, and communicate well.



Keeping relationships

Social workers should take the time to visit people, listen to them and understand their feelings and need



Ending relationships

People with learning disabilities often have to change social workers.

Here is some advice about how social workers can make sure that the change happens properly:



- writing letters



- visiting them to explain the end of the relationship



- Giving them copies of their care plan and explaining the work that the new social worker will do



Social workers should:



- talk face to face as much as possible

BIG
words

- use bold text, and little colour in writing



- use simple language
- be professional
- Get feedback from people with learning disabilities and their careers, colleagues, and managers

Impact

Section 3: Impact



This section is about how social workers can make positive change for adults with learning disability. It talks about being professional, being a good leader and understanding how services are arranged for people with learning disability.



Understanding learning disability services



Social workers need to understand and be able to tell people with learning disabilities how learning disability services are set up.



Social workers should:



- Understand how national policy affects local services



- Think about how different organisations affect the care that adults with learning disability receive



Being responsible



Social workers should:



- Meet with their boss often and try to improve



- Social workers should think about how being a social worker gives them power, and use that power to help adults with learning disability



Managing yourself and your skills



Social workers should:



- Regularly think about their skills and if there are any gaps that they need to fill to improve



- Plan their professional training regularly

