

Defensible Decision-Making

For Adult Social Care Staff

Staff working within Adult Social Care make many decisions, with and in relation to adults and carers, on behalf of the local authority. The current climate focuses on 'new' conversations with citizens, to promote and maximise independence, self-reliance and resilience. Mirroring this approach practitioners are required to exercise increased professional autonomy in their decision making. It remains imperative that staff do not lose sight of the legal framework and what constitutes a defensible decision, as their practice is guided by local models, policies and procedures.

Many decisions are complex and staff have to collect, weigh up and consider information from a wide range of sources in order to assess an individual's needs and desired outcomes. Within the context of decreasing budgets for funded care and support, staff must demonstrate that they have balanced competing pressures including the need to keep both the adult and carer at the heart of the process and ensure that decisions promote wellbeing. Whether the job role is senior practitioner, social worker, occupational therapist, social work or OT assistant, staff and their managers need to be competent to make and record robust, well-evidenced professional judgements and decisions that withstand legal scrutiny.

This updated and refreshed one day training programme enables staff to develop the underpinning knowledge, core skills and confidence in relation to defensible, as opposed to defensive, decision-making. We use a broad range of teaching strategies to address different learning styles and build in opportunities for peer support and challenge. We model a strengths based approach, encouraging staff to take responsibility for their continuing professional development.

We work alongside our customers to fully understand the local context and priorities and to ensure relevance, currency and credibility with the workforce. Our programme becomes customised based on key themes including:

- Accessing and drawing on different types of evidence;
- Cognitive bias – awareness of and how to mitigate;
- Distinguishing fact and opinion;
- Legal literacy – knowing your legal framework and learning from legal challenges under Care Act 2014;
- Risk enablement
- Peer review - How defensible was your decision?
- Working smarter

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