

## What the latest research says about the changing role of learning and development

For those with a focus on learning cultures and the changing role of learning and development, learning analysts Towards Maturity's *Bridging the Divide 2018* report highlights the attitudes towards learning and development within the workforce and the current challenges faced by L&D professionals.

Whilst this research is based on L&D within different sectors, many of the themes in the report are easily identifiable in social work.

### Key findings include:

“The attitude of today's L&D professional towards their learners is shifting. Out goes the image of the learner as ‘recipient’ – ready to soak up whatever is selected and provided for them, and in comes the concept of the learner as ‘customer’ – self-directed, purposeful and confident in using technology to find things out as and when they need to.”

“With ring-fenced study time in short supply, 31% of learners are looking for

learning that is broken down into short, bite-sized content that they can access quickly and easily. They want to be able to refer to job aids, read short articles and case studies or watch short videos.”

“Workers expect resources available at their point of need, learning integrated into their workflow and the culture of trust and support that fosters continuous performance improvement.”

“High performing learning organisations share responsibility for learning and development with other key stakeholders. Learning becomes integrated into the workplace for all and becomes the norm. Individuals at all levels become self-directed learners and are learning continuously through their working life.”

[Read the full report from Towards Maturity here.](#)



### IN THIS ISSUE:



- 01** What the latest research says about the changing role of learning and development
- 02** Community Care Inform content updates
- 03** Community Care Inform research identifies barriers to social workers using evidence and research in practice
- 04** A reminder of Community Care Inform's KSS tool and how it can help your team
- 04** Have you seen our supported learning programme yet?
- 05** CASE STUDY: Middlesbrough Council: improving workforce learning in response to local safeguarding review
- 06** Meet Community Care Inform's research specialist
- 07** Meet the Community Care Inform team

# Community Care Inform content updates

Community Care Inform published or updated almost 200 pieces of content in 2018, across our two sites. The table below outlines a selection of this new or updated content, grouped by subject area, with links to our topic-based hub pages to give you easy access to this guidance. For information on other topics or areas you are interested in, contact your client partner or the helpdesk on 020 3915 9444 or [ccinformhelpdesk@markallengroup.com](mailto:ccinformhelpdesk@markallengroup.com)

On Community Care Inform Children	On Community Care Inform Adults
<p><b><a href="#">Adoption knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New or updated pieces of content added to existing hub, including guidance on matching, contact, and placing BAME children.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Care Act knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New guidance on what the act requires in relation to strengths-based practice plus practice lessons from the key cases of R (JF) and R (Davey) v Oxfordshire.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Child sexual abuse knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New hub with a wide range of practice guidance, research and group learning resources. Includes risk factors, signs and indicators, working with partner agencies and supporting children to speak about abuse, with case studies and survivor perspectives throughout.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Continuing healthcare</a></b> New practice guidance on maximising the social care impact within continuing healthcare plus updated legal guidance on the CHC framework and the definition of a primary health need to take account of the revised national framework.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Direct work knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New hub including quick reference tips to check before a visit, in-depth guidance on carrying out direct work and writing it up, a directory of tools and a learn as a group activity to develop skills and confidence.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Dementia knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New content added to existing hub including lessons from research, guidance on assessment, care planning and review, and guidance on safeguarding.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Disabled children knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New pieces of content added to existing hub including practice and legal guidance on safeguarding disabled children and advice on working with speech, language and communication needs.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Disability knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New guidance on working with adults with foetal alcohol spectrum disorders, plus updated guidance on self-directed support and messages from research in relation to personalisation and co-production.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Domestic abuse knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New pieces added to the existing hub, including working with the police, situations involving families with substance misuse and mental health problems alongside domestic abuse and messages from research.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Domestic abuse knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New pieces added to the existing hub, including working with the police, situations involving families with substance misuse and mental health problems alongside domestic abuse and messages from research.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Knowledge and skills statement</a></b> Guidance for practitioners on meeting the standards set out in the government's post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practitioners.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Legal updates</a></b> Our digest of the Mental Health Act 1983 was updated to take account of new provisions on removing people to a place of safety, while we also provided updated guidance on case law in relation to best interests decisions and serious medical treatment under the Mental Capacity Act.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Legal updates</a></b> Our digests of the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Education and Adoption Act 2016 were updated as sections of new legislation came into force, while our guide on section 20 of the Children Act was updated to take account of new case law.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Management knowledge and practice hub</a></b> Updated guidance on managing support workers and newly qualified social workers on the assessed and supported year in employment.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Management knowledge and practice hub</a></b> Updated guidance on managing support workers and newly qualified social workers on the assessed and supported year in employment.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Mental capacity, deprivation of liberty and best interests knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New content added to existing hub including guidance on giving written and oral evidence to the Court of Protection and the interface between the Mental Health Act 1983 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, plus a summary of a key court judgment on best interests in relation to the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, An NHS Trust v Y (by his litigation friend the Official Solicitor) [2018] UKSC 46.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Neglect knowledge and practice hub</a></b> Quick guides and in-depth material on thresholds and risk assessment updated and new research added.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Mental health knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New content added to expanding hub including working with carers of adults with mental health needs, supporting people to manage debt and the role of forensic social workers plus updated guidance on writing a social circumstances report for a mental health tribunal.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Podcasts</a></b> New episodes from our learn on the go series including: social work with transgender people; poverty and the child protection system; parental alienation; criminal exploitation and county lines; strengths-based practice and motivational interviewing.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Podcasts</a></b> New episodes from our learn on the go series including: social work with transgender people; poverty and the child protection system; parental alienation; criminal exploitation and county lines; strengths-based practice and motivational interviewing.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Practice education knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New videos on oppressive and anti-oppressive practice and working with a struggling student added to existing hub of resources and ideas for practice educators.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Practice education knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New videos on oppressive and anti-oppressive practice and working with a struggling student added to existing hub of resources and ideas for practice educators.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Relationship-based practice: videos of practice scenarios with commentary and reflective questions</a></b> Scenarios include talking to a young person in care, a parent about alcohol misuse, and to a victim and perpetrator of domestic abuse.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Relationship-based practice: videos of practice scenarios with commentary and reflective questions</a></b> Scenarios include talking to a young person in care, a parent about alcohol misuse, and to a victim and perpetrator of domestic abuse.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Safeguarding knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New guidance on disguised compliance, writing chronologies and pre-birth risk assessments, plus updated advice on fabricated and induced illness and research lessons in relation to working with fathers.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Safeguarding knowledge and practice hub</a></b> New guidance on working with adults who are affected by scams and on applying the law on safeguarding in Wales.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Strengths-based practice knowledge and practice hub</a></b> This hub brings together information and guidance on approaches such as motivational interviewing, solution-focused practice, systemic practice, Signs of Safety, three conversations and local area co-ordination.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Strengths-based practice knowledge and practice hub</a></b> This hub brings together information and guidance on approaches such as motivational interviewing, solution-focused practice, Signs of Safety, three conversations and local area co-ordination.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Welfare rights guides</a></b> Updated guidance on the full list of welfare benefits.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Welfare rights guides</a></b> Updated guidance on the full list of welfare benefits.</p>
<p><b><a href="#">Working Together guidance</a></b> Guidance for practitioners to the 2018 update of Working Together to Safeguard Children, linking to information on how this version has changed from the 2015 iteration of the statutory guidance.</p>	

# Community Care Inform research identifies barriers to social workers using evidence and research in practice



Over the past year, Community Care Inform has been working with local authority partners to help them gain a better understanding of how social workers are using the research, case law and legal and practice guidance on Inform in their decision making.

Using surveys and interviews with social workers and their line managers, the findings from this research (with two good-rated local authorities) highlighted:

- While social workers and managers were generally comfortable with how risk was being managed within cases and with the quality of practice, this was not because social workers were consistently using research and evidence of best practice. Instead, they were relying mostly on experience and feedback from managers and colleagues to help with their decision making.
- The impact of this was social workers feeling less confident in their decision making and higher workloads for frontline managers, on whom practitioners were reliant for support.
- The most common barrier to using research and evidence in decision making was competing priorities. Social workers

felt the time spent on finding research and evidence could not be justified when caseloads were high.

Based on this small-scale study and our experience of how social workers use Community Care Inform, these are our **tips for senior leaders to embed research and evidence into social worker decision making:**

1. Don't look at the issue in isolation or as one only related to learning and development budgets. It must be part of supervision, audit, organisational structures, retention strategies and social work methodologies.
2. Ask yourself how you will know if social workers are using research and evidence in their decision making. Think of your existing data collection systems – can they be adapted to include indicators that give you information on this?
3. What are your metrics for success? Incorporate questions around research and evidence into audit systems, analysis of court cases and feedback from social workers and service users. Ask managers to classify the proportion of their direct reports who are

regularly using research and evidence in their day-to-day decision making.

4. Consider the variety of learning options you provide – if time is short and your department is under-resourced then full training days may be unfeasible and costly. Can micro-learning options be utilised such as quick quizzes, podcasts to listen to on drives between visits, videos to watch on commutes, printouts to read over a coffee or devoting 10 minutes to learning in group supervision discussions?
5. If research is a departmental priority, how will this be demonstrated to your staff and how can you incentivise them to fit it into their day? Consider options such as protected time for research, team learning days out, monthly learning topics, and incorporating learning into requirements for promotion or reward systems for those who are researching and evidencing their practice consistently.
6. Find ways for social workers to understand their own learning needs and knowledge gaps – online quizzes and role plays can often be effective.

[Read the full article.](#)

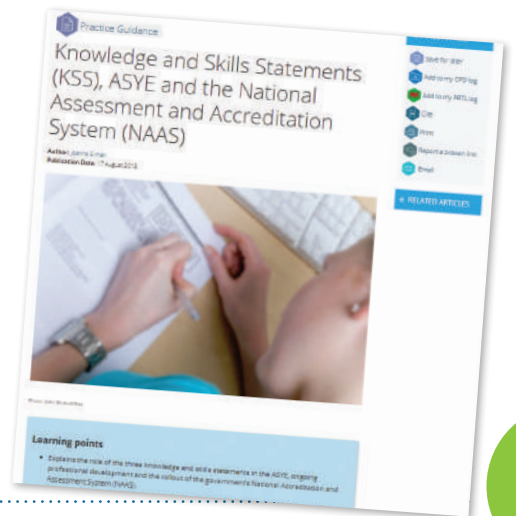
# A reminder of the Community Care KSS tool and how it can help your team

Inform Children's practice guides, interactive learning tools, research reviews and legal content are ideal for newly qualified social workers in their ASYE, practitioners seeking accreditation, and anyone else wanting to develop and evidence their knowledge and skills against the government's *Post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practitioners (KSS)*.

Within **our new KSS tool** we have mapped the KSS standards to the most relevant resources to help you meet each part of

the statement. Click on the section you're interested in to go to the resource map for that part of the statement.

*For more information about the KSS and how it fits into the ASYE, accreditation and the other knowledge and skills statements, please see this [quick guide](#). The map is also available in [printable PDF form here](#). If there is anything else you would like to be able to find on *Community Care Inform to help you with the KSS, ASYE or accreditation, do let us know.**



## Have you seen our supported learning programme yet?

Community Care Inform's supported learning programme has been designed to support time-poor practitioners understand their own knowledge gaps and feel motivated and empowered to learn.

As well as supporting practitioners, we are now working with several authorities who are using the tool to:

- help build a strategic, evidence-based approach to improving quality
- understand how their workforce approaches decision making and thresholds in complex cases
- support managers to target the most urgent learning needs
- help prepare councils for NAAS

Some of the feedback we have had so far includes:

“ A really helpful way of finding out how limited my knowledge is on this subject. I was surprised to see how many assumptions I made about what I thought I knew and this will help me check things out.”

**Independent child protection chair**

“ I like this way of learning as I can do this in bite-sized pieces when I have the time. I have found that learning little and often works better for me.”

**Team manager**



“ We were looking for an effective method of encouraging all our practitioners to take responsibility for their learning and we felt Community Care Inform's supported learning offered an accessible way of doing this. Many of us were surprised by what we learnt and challenged by the results. As a result of the feedback from practitioners and the data we concluded the learning was really significant.”

**Director**

“ Having responsibility for practice development I found the supported learning tool was a straightforward way to bring learning to the whole social care workforce, not just social workers. It was flexible and the variety of different learning options meant more people were encouraged to develop their understanding on CSE.”

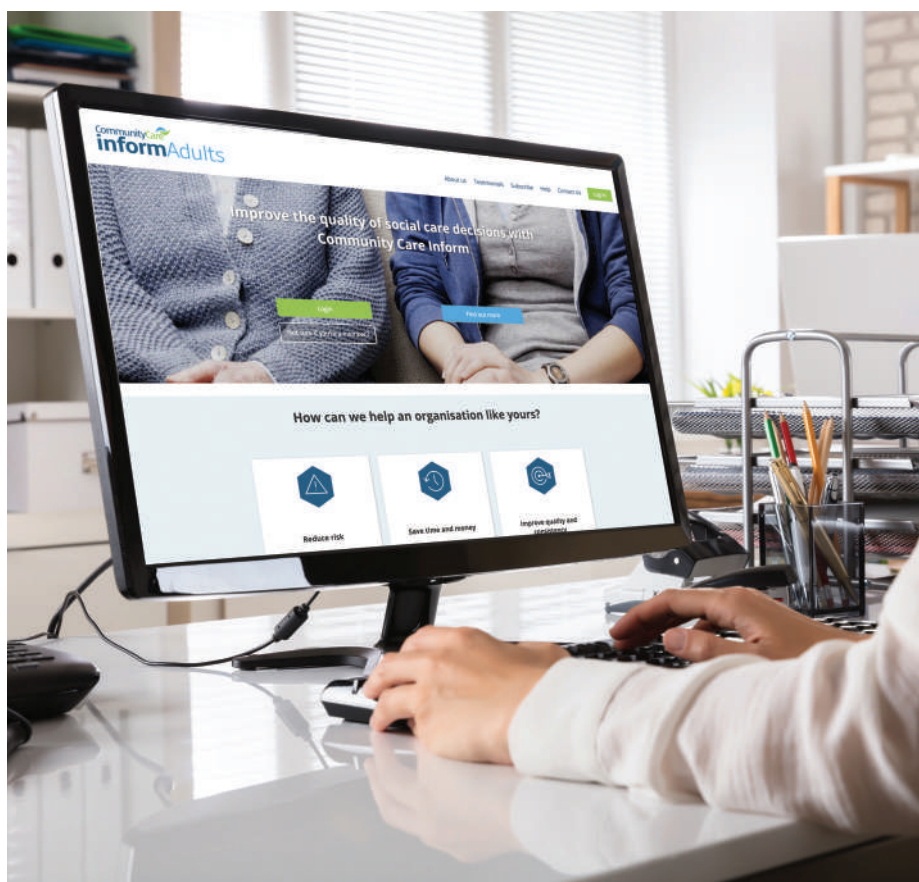
**Principal social worker**

**See an example of a supported learning programme in action on page 5.**

*Find out more by reading our [guide to supported learning](#) or speaking to your client partner.*



# CASE STUDY Middlesbrough Council: improving workforce learning in response to local safeguarding review



## The challenges/goal of the local authority:

Following a safeguarding adults review into a Hartlepool case in which a vulnerable adult was murdered by two teenage girls, Middlesbrough was challenged by Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure its adults' workforce was compliant with the Mental Capacity Act.

## The process:

Middlesbrough launched the Inform supported learning tool. The whole workforce was encouraged to complete the Inform online mental capacity quiz over two weeks. Following this they were directed to the mental capacity content on Community Care Inform and were then encouraged to repeat the quiz to enable the senior management team to monitor the impact and knowledge levels in this area.

## The outcome:

137 people completed the test and scored an average of 54% on the first attempt, but by their final attempt the average score had increased to 77%. In the month in which supported learning was launched, staff accessed 13 pieces of Inform content each, compared with just six per month before launch. Supported learning enabled

the authority to demonstrably respond to a requirement for mental capacity training in a robust, cost-effective and timely way. They now see this process as a fundamental part of their workforce development plan.

“As part of my CPD I definitely look more at things around the MCA to refresh my knowledge. Where there were things that I didn't know that I thought I should know I focused my CPD on those areas. You do [in practice] a certain amount of learning on the MCA and then you move on to something else and you think you've got a good grasp of it – but this was a reminder that you need to keep refreshing your knowledge of the legislation.”

**(Social worker)**

“The main thing was that I didn't know as much as I thought I did. Until I looked at some of the answers I hadn't realised that I'd answered a few incorrectly. It reaffirmed that it's always important to check rather than assume that you know something and that it's quite valuable for me because it's a long time since I've done something like the quiz.”

**(Team manager)**

Senior management and workforce development views of the quiz and of supported learning were very positive.

Following the move from a licence subscription to a whole-workforce subscription (extending access to all adult social care teams and including access to supported learning) Jackie Simms, business partner adults and children's social care, said that things improved significantly and cited the positive engagement between the council and Inform client partner, Rebekkah Tabern, and the support of director Erik Scollay, in bringing this about.

“It's been a very different experience with supported learning. Some of that has been to do with the ongoing work with Rebekkah, who has been spending a lot of time with us. I've also had very different engagement with senior managers with this model. Erik is very keen on this approach because it gives us very quick wins.”

**Jackie Simms, business partner adults and children's social care**



Erik said that supported learning provided a clear way of testing knowledge and demonstrating this to the council's political leadership.

“What supported learning allows me to do on a very simple level is that if councillors ask me what we are doing to improve the social worker's knowledge on mental capacity following the safeguarding adults review then I can say we have tested their knowledge, most of them have done it and that knowledge is now being fed through into our training strategy.”

**Erik Scollay, director of adult social services**



## What next?

Following this project, Jackie was clear that the quiz was the first stage in a process of improving and deepening knowledge about mental capacity in the workforce, including working further with Community Care Inform Adults to develop a case scenario that will test decision making on mental capacity assessment.

  
**Middlesbrough**  
moving forward

# Meet Community Care Inform's research specialist

**We're delighted to introduce Heather Macleod, an independent research specialist who has ten years' experience working with us in the social care sector. Her methodical, logical approach has ensured we are able to gain invaluable insights, whether in our own project commissions, or when we are working with local authorities to determine their learning cultures and assess the adoption and impact of Community Care Inform on their workforce, quality of practice and client outcomes.**

Hello, I'm Heather Macleod. I specialise in market research and have been working with the Community Care team since 2009.

Over the last year or so I have undertaken independent research in conjunction with ten local authorities to establish the impact of Community Care Inform on their teams. As part of this, my team and I have spoken to over 200 social workers and associated colleagues who have access to the Inform tool. As a result of this research, local authorities have been able to measure the impact of their subscription. We have been able to inform key stakeholders about the extent to which Community Care Inform helps their employees work more efficiently, how much time using Inform saves them, how using Inform impacts on their confidence and whether it has supported the quality of their assessments and managing their caseloads. We have also been able to share insights and feedback from low or non-users as to why they are not logging in and using the online resource more frequently, and are able to offer practical guidance on what could be done to support them to avail themselves of this invaluable tool and ultimately use it more frequently and efficiently.

Since I began working with Community Care I have attended Community Care Live on numerous occasions, sometimes simply to immerse myself in the sector at this wonderful flagship event, but often to present the results of the research projects I have been commissioned to undertake. Whatever the reason for my attendance though, it has always proved an invaluable opportunity to meet with and speak face-to-face with social workers to find out more about the needs, successes and challenges they face on a day-to-day basis.

By recently becoming freelance I am now able to focus on the research projects which I find most interesting, which is most certainly the case working in this rewarding sector. I am delighted to be embarking on a new project in the coming weeks, concentrating on learning cultures within organisations. This research will not only focus on how Inform fits into the mix, but also the wider organisational context, so whether I have already worked with you and your teams or not, I very much hope the opportunity presents itself where I can be of service to you again in future, or perhaps meet with you at a forthcoming Community Care event. Until then, I wish you every success in all your endeavours for 2019.



# Meet the Community Care Inform team

## Meet our customer success team

Our customer success team are available to answer all your queries about using Community Care Inform and help you and your practitioners find what you need. Contact them at:

[ccinformhelpdesk@markallengroup.com](mailto:ccinformhelpdesk@markallengroup.com) | 020 3915 9444



**Chloe Roberts**

Customer success team leader  
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**Bethany Foy**

Customer success team manager  
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**Kirsty Meades**

Customer success executive  
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**Daniel Jarvis**

Customer success executive  
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## Meet the Inform partnerships team

Our partnerships team are here to help maximise the impact of Inform on your organisation and support you in delivering your social work learning and development strategies.

You can contact the team on the numbers below and also engage with them on Twitter.




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Constantly Creating Improvement

