

## Social work's approach to CPD must innovate to be more effective

In an age where children are taught using tablets, apps and cloud-based technology, it seems odd that most social work learning remains dependent on resource-intensive, face-to-face courses and long, text-heavy documents.

This approach is not best suited to an environment where training budgets have been slashed and caseloads remain so high that attending full-day courses is seen as a luxury. But research also suggests it may not be the most effective way to learn.

Here at Community Care Inform we have spent the past two and a half years looking at what supports effective social work learning cultures, which included conducting research with social workers in partner authorities. Our findings seemed to point to the existence of three types of social worker:

1. The first seeks information proactively, basing practice on the latest research, legislation and best practice advice.
2. The second, often more experienced, would like to do more research and training but feel they don't have the

time, and their learning is now solely 'on-the-job'.

3. The third tends to rely on their manager to provide or direct them to information or make the final decision in cases.

### Evidence

We also looked at the extensive body of research in the learning sector on the methods that seem to be the most effective when it comes to learning and retaining information over the long-term.

Mosher and Gottfredson's work identified five moments when people learn (2010):

- learning for the first time
- learning more (ie building on knowledge)
- applying learning
- when things go wrong (ie problem solving)
- when things change

They argue that while most workplace learning is focused on the first two moments, it is during the last three moments when learning is most effective and retained for longer.

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A wide-ranging literature review in the US (Dunlosky, J et al 2013) looked at 10 different methods of learning among university students to try and find the most effective for long-term retention of information.

They found the two most effective methods were:

- regular testing (including practice testing) that contained some kind of feedback
- learning that was spaced out over longer periods of time. For example, one particular study showed students who either read or were taught Spanish words with a month between the sessions showed better long-term retention of the information compared to those who did the learning over six days, back-to-back.

More recently, Norwegian research (Fagerstrøm et al, 2017) looked at the impact of micro-learning (delivering learning in small chunks at the learner's convenience) and gamification (using techniques from games, such as point scoring and competition) on the education of health workers. It found those who used micro-learning, in the form of a mobile app with flip cards, increased their knowledge on key legislation compared to those who had face-to-face training sessions.

These findings were the basis of our supported learning programme, which is now

being used by our premium partner local authorities.

### Our approach

Our supported learning quizzes use a bank of questions, but no more than 10 are delivered at any one time, meaning the quiz takes, on average, about five minutes to complete and can be taken repeatedly. Those getting more than 70% correct are eligible for a certificate.

Partners have used the quizzes as part of their systematic learning programmes. A chosen topic would be kicked off with all social workers asked to complete the relevant quiz. Data from this quiz was used to determine common knowledge gaps and to structure learning sessions over the next one to three months. Social workers were then asked to complete the quiz again at the end of the topic focus.

Community Care Inform has done qualitative interviews with some of the social workers as part of our evaluation of the approach.

The findings suggest that this approach appears to be effective at creating a more proactive learner.

Page views of all Inform content increased by between 300-420% during these topic focused months. While usage then declined,

the usage of content related to that topic remained elevated compared with previous usage.

The scores on quizzes consistently increased between first and last attempts.

Though many confessed they couldn't remember a lot of the information a month after taking the final quiz, what did seem to remain was an acute awareness of the possibility of knowledge gaps.

In other surveys we've done, online learning is often rated quite low by both social workers and their managers as an effective method of learning. But now, following this work, I would argue this is just because we haven't experimented enough with elements such as micro-learning, nor perhaps understood the power of embedding these into the workflow of a social worker and a social work department.

*Judy Cooper is the former editor of Community Care and is now a digital content strategy consultant.*

*The full version of this article, including references, is available at <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2019/03/28/social-works-approach-cpd-must-innovate-effective/>*

## Community Care Inform – Content updates

The table below outlines a selection of new or updated content, grouped by subject area. You can use the headings to find the content on our sites. 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			
Content Title	Date	Expert Contributors	Description
<b>Social media</b>	12/02/2019	Claudia Megele and Jenny Simpson	Transcript of a podcast on social media, so people who prefer to read content can still access important learning.
<b>Learn on the go podcast: fabricated or induced illness</b>	25/02/2019	Gretchen Precey and Dr Paul Davis	The episode covers what FI is, the signs it might be taking place, why mothers are typically the perpetrators of FI, and how social workers can work effectively with doctors.
Community Care Inform Adults' content			
Content Title	Date	Expert Contributors	Description
<b>Deprivation of liberty in hospital settings: quick guide</b>	01/05/2019	Tim Spencer-Lane	This replaces another quick guide we had on the same subject because there has been more case law on this issue and it is a complex subject for practitioners to get their head around. It uses case law to explain how to identify when the level and intensity of restraint used in a hospital amounts to a deprivation of liberty; when hospital treatment engages Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights; and how to apply the acid test in different hospital settings. You'll find it on the mental capacity, deprivation of liberty and best interests knowledge and practice hub.
<b>Working with looked-after teenagers</b>	23/05/2019	Catherine Goodall	In depth guide covering the challenges of being and coming into care during adolescence, transition to adulthood and transition assessments and practical tools to support communication with young people.

# New animated explainer video to help with challenging CSA cases



We know that protecting and supporting children and families when there is suspected or disclosed child sexual abuse (CSA) can be an especially challenging area of practice, and one where social workers often lack confidence. Last year, to help address this, we worked with the Centre for expertise on child sexual abuse and a specialist team in East Sussex to produce a range of resources, focused on the key practice issues social workers told us they struggle with, and published an extensive new knowledge and practice hub on CSA in December 2018 ([ccinform.co.uk/knowledge-hubs/child-sexual-abuse-knowledge-and-practice-hub](http://ccinform.co.uk/knowledge-hubs/child-sexual-abuse-knowledge-and-practice-hub)).

The hub includes guidance on the disclosure process, how to speak to children about sexual abuse, multi-agency working and harmful sexual behaviour by siblings. Survivor and parents' perspectives, case studies and messages from research are included throughout. There are group learning activities, a supported learning quiz to check current knowledge, podcasts and a video about the criminal justice process.



In March, we added a new piece of multimedia content – an interactive exercise and animated explainer video ([ccinform.co.uk/learning-tools/perpetration-the-preconditions-for-sexually-abusive-behaviour](http://ccinform.co.uk/learning-tools/perpetration-the-preconditions-for-sexually-abusive-behaviour)) that individuals or teams/groups can use to get a better understanding of perpetrator behaviour and protecting children at risk. It is based on David Finkelhor's model of 'pre-conditions' to sexual offending which are visualised as a number of hurdles that must be cleared in a set order. It was produced in collaboration with Michael Huggett, a mental health nurse and researcher specialising in this area.

As well as a learning tool for teams, practitioners can use the animation when supporting non-abusing parents and carers to help them understand the motivators and drivers of abusive behaviour, how perpetrators overcome their knowledge that abuse is wrong, and how a child and other family members might be 'groomed'.

To access the animation, click on the Child sexual abuse knowledge and practice hub from the Inform Children homepage, and then the button for 'Multimedia learning – Understanding perpetration: Finkelhor's model'. Or search the site for 'Finkelhor'.

*If there's anything else you'd like to see that would help practitioners with CSA cases, contact [ccinformhelpdesk@markallengroup.com](mailto:ccinformhelpdesk@markallengroup.com)*

# The National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) and how Community Care Inform can support your workforce

The rollout of the government's plans to accredit child and family social workers is gathering pace.

While the scale and speed of accreditation has reduced significantly since the system was first announced – the DfE originally said all children's social workers would be assessed by 2020 - in March a further 33 councils were awarded grants to help them start implementing NAAS with their social workers, bringing the total number of 'early adopters' to 53. At the end of May, 300 social workers had gone through the assessment process.

## What is NAAS?

Accreditation is part of government reforms to drive improvement in children's social care. Social workers are assessed against the relevant knowledge and skills statement (KSS) for their level and achieve accreditation if they meet the standard.

The DfE published the KSS to create "a national post-qualifying standard for child and family expertise... a consistent benchmark to which all local authorities will be encouraged to align their performance management systems", as well as a "clear career pathway for social workers".

Accreditation is currently voluntary, although the government has said it expects the latest early adopters to assess 20-30% of their workforce within a one-year time period.

## How does the assessment and accreditation process work?

The first stage of NAAS is 'employer endorsement': managers need to be confident that a practitioner or supervisor is working at the standard required by their KSS.

Participating employers use an online portal to register endorsed social workers for the assessments and see how their workforce is performing in NAAS.

## The three levels of accredited status

**Child and family practitioners** are frontline workers.

**Practice supervisors'** "primary function is to supervise the practice and decision-making of child and family practitioners, and to develop the skills of individuals and teams". Likely to have "substantial experience" of the statutory system.

**Practice leaders** will usually be assistant directors; large local authorities may have more than one practice leader. Their accreditation is not part of the current rollout.



Endorsed practitioners and supervisors receive a date for a half-day assessment centre in their region, and access to practice questions. At the assessment centre, there are five elements:

- 'General' knowledge questions: for both practitioners and supervisors, multiple-choice questions testing knowledge of the practitioner level KSS
- Applied knowledge: longer multiple-choice questions, based on case examples, which require the social worker to apply their knowledge and skills analytically
- Simulated scenarios: assessed role play with a professional actor in two practice scenarios. For practice supervisors, this will involve a supervisory situation
- Reflective discussion about the scenarios

and how the social worker approached them

- Written exercise linked to the scenarios

## How does this link to other CPD?

As the KSS are now the post-qualifying standard, and also the benchmark for ASYE assessment, some early adopter councils are using grants to develop their wider CPD framework, appraisal, pay and progression pathways, incorporating the KSS and NAAS.

## How can CC Inform help your workforce?

For the practitioner and supervisor statements, we have mapped the most relevant resources so that social workers can refresh and fill in identified gaps in their knowledge and skills. This can be used as part of self-assessment and targeted learning towards endorsement. Social workers at organisations with a Premium Partner licence can use the supported learning quizzes to practice doing online multiple-choice questions and be signposted to appropriate resources based on their existing knowledge.

*Our guide to the KSS, NAAS and ASYE also provides an accessible summary of the frameworks. You can find links to all these resources at [ccinform.co.uk/KSS](http://ccinform.co.uk/KSS)*

# Meet Community Care Inform's legal editor



**We're delighted to introduce Tim Spencer-Lane, a lawyer who specialises in mental capacity, mental health and social care law. As you'll see from his biography, Tim is a leading expert in these areas, so having him come on board at Community Care Inform is a major coup. Tim made an impression as soon as he joined us, rapidly turning around new guides and updates of existing content and prompting a substantial increase in usage of legal resources.**

Hello, I'm Tim Spencer-Lane and in January I joined the Community Care Inform team as a legal editor, primarily on Inform Adults.

So far, I have been producing guidance on areas including the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court, deprivation of liberty in general hospitals, and summaries and analyses of recent case law, while checking content on mental capacity and mental health by Inform's other authors.

This corresponds with my areas of specialism. I am currently on secondment to the Government Legal Department where I am the legal adviser to the Department of Health and Social Care, working primarily on the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019, which just recently became law. This work built on my leadership of the review of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) as a lawyer for the Law Commission. The new act,

which is likely to come into force next year, will replace the DoLS with a new system for authorising deprivations of liberty, the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).

Prior to this, I led the Law Commission's review of adult social care law, which reported in 2011 and formed the basis of the Care Act 2014 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. I also led the three-year review of health and social care professional regulation, which informed the establishment of the new regulator, Social Work England.

I will now be working on the code of practice and secondary legislation under the LPS and the government's programme to implement the legislation. Alongside this I will be producing guidance for Inform Adults on what the LPS means for practice and how it will differ from your responsibilities under DoLS, which I hope you will find useful.

Alongside my practice, I spend a lot of time writing, training and delivering talks on these areas of law, often for a social work audience.

I am the author of the *Care Act Manual* (second edition 2015, Sweet and Maxwell), which provides a reference guide to the legislation. I am also a senior lecturer at Kingston University where I teach on the best interests assessor and adult safeguarding courses. I am also an associate lecturer at the Open University, where I teach social work law.

I really enjoy sharing knowledge and learning with social workers through my teaching and writing, which is why I was delighted to start working with Community Care Inform.

I hope you continue to find the guidance on Inform useful and I look forward to hearing any feedback on our legal content.

## Meet the Community Care Inform 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



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# Community Care Inform – Group Learning content

There are a wide range of group learning tools available on both Inform Adults and Inform Children – below is just a small selection of what both sites have to offer:

Group learning tools on Inform Children					
Name of exercise	Format	Learning objective	Minimum duration	Notes	What you need
Child trafficking – risk indicators and identifying victims	Webinar	Outlines how social workers can navigate the different duties and agencies involved, and the steps to take while maintaining a child protection focus.	1 hour	The webinar covers: spotting the signs of child trafficking in referrals and children you work with, understanding the particular vulnerabilities of children who have been trafficked from other countries and cultures and ways to support them.	Big screen/projector with sound and internet connection to access the video.
Developing your emotional resilience	Webinar	Help individuals and managers learn techniques that will help develop their emotional resilience to improve practice.	1 hour 10 minutes	This webinar gives practical advice on how to build your own emotional resilience and answers questions from frontline social workers and managers about making best use of supervision, achieving work-life balance and tools that can make a difference. The webinar presentation lasts 40 minutes, with a further 20 minutes of questions from practitioners. Alternatively, you can have your own discussion based on the key points you picked out from the webinar. You can stop the webinar at any time to discuss and reflect on the points raised.	Big screen/projector with sound and internet connection to access the video.
Jenny Molloy on living with neglect	Video	Hear from a service user's perspective about living with neglect.	Length of video is 06:56 minutes	This short compelling film provides first-hand experience of what life was like living with neglect. It also provides advice on what social workers should consider in neglect cases.	This can be viewed independently at a personal computer, or used in a wider learning group context, which would require a big screen and internet connection to watch the video.
Talking to a perpetrator about domestic abuse	Video	Observe two different versions of the same scenario and what impact each approach has on the father.	Two videos: Length of video A is 03:58 minutes. The length of video B is 04:14 minutes	Providing two versions of the same scenario gives practitioners a chance to consider the differences in approach and the impact these conversations can have on a service user. This tool includes a comparison summary and questions to consider for practice.	This can be viewed independently at a personal computer, or used in a wider learning group context, which would require a big screen, internet connection to watch the videos and a facilitator.
Talking to a young person about contact	Video	Observe two different versions of the same scenario and what impact each approach has on the young person.	Two videos: Length of video A is 03:19 minutes. The length of video B is 04:39 minutes	Providing two versions of the same scenario gives practitioners a chance to consider the differences in approach and the impact these conversations can have on a service user. This tool includes a comparison summary and questions to consider for practice.	This can be viewed independently at a personal computer, or used in a wider learning group context, which would require a big screen, internet connection to watch the videos and a facilitator.
Criminal exploitation and county lines	Podcast	How young people get involved in gangs and the different signs they are being exploited.	35 minutes	This podcast looks at the latest research findings in this area and what it means for your practice. You can listen to the whole podcast in one go or play specific sections, with discussion afterwards. Each section has a time stamp so you can easily navigate to that point in the podcast. There are key points from the experts that can be used for discussion.	Audio, facilitator.
Social media	Podcast	The ethical and legal issues of social workers looking at the social media of service users.	30 minutes	You can listen to the whole podcast in one go or play specific sections, with discussion afterwards. Each section has a time stamp so you can easily navigate to that point in the podcast. As well as definitions of different social media, there are points from the experts and a case study that can be used for group discussion.	Audio, facilitator.
Contact with birth families – a trauma model approach	Learn as a group	Develop practice and critical thinking about contact for children in care.	90 minutes	This 'learn as a group' session provides seven activities (as well as a summary discussion & further reading) including video and audio clips which introduce key concepts. The clips are taken from a webinar by Norma Howes, a social worker, psychologist and psychotherapist, who trains social workers, police, health and education staff on all aspects of childhood trauma and abuse.	Facilitator to run the session. If possible, project or show on a large screen so the group can watch the webinar clips/listen to the audio. If this isn't possible, you can play the clips from a laptop and just listen to the audio and read the activities from the page. You will also need a white board or flipchart and marker pens for the activities. Individual notebooks would also be helpful. Preparation for this session is needed and provided on the page.
Baby P: would you have spotted the signs?	Learn as a group	Reflect on how you consider risk holistically and approach thresholds for different interventions.	45 minutes	This discussion takes you through different stages of the case with multiple choice options at each decision point. There are click-to-reveal boxes for each decision to show child protection trainer Perdeep Gill's comments.	Big screen and internet connection.
Analysis and decision-making	Learn as a group	Improve analysis and decision-making skills by reflecting on facts and opinion, how risks and strengths are identified and understood, avoiding confirmation bias. The session suggests a model for testing hypotheses and considering plausible options for a family.	90 minutes	Provides a slide show and facilitator notes for leading a group discussion. The session is designed for between three and ten practitioners. It links to the popular guide to analysis and decision-making. You need to nominate one social worker in advance of the session to think of a family they are working with where they would like the help and support of others and be prepared to discuss them in the session. They will need to give a five-minute description of the family and share a genogram.	Whiteboard or flipchart/paper and pens. Print off the facilitator notes. If you have a big screen available, you can click through the slides to introduce the activities and give the group some key points. However you can still run the session successfully from the notes.

## Group learning tools on Inform Adults

Name of exercise	Format	Learning objective	Minimum duration	Notes	What you need
More confident court work	Webinar	Improving court skills.	65 minutes	The webinar presentation lasts 45 minutes. You can stop the webinar at any time to discuss and reflect on the points raised. After the presentation there are 20 minutes of questions on the recording, which you can listen to for further learning. Alternatively, you can have your own discussion based on the key points you picked out from the webinar.	Big screen, facilitator.
Difficult conversations under the Care Act	Webinar	How to act in a legally defensible manner, particularly when dealing with issues arising from resource constraints within local authorities.	90 minutes	The webinar presentation lasts for almost 1hr 10 minutes followed by 20 minutes of questions. You can stop the webinar at any time to discuss and reflect on the points raised. As well as further learning from questions, you can have your own discussion based on the key points you have picked out from the webinar.	Big screen, facilitator.
Eligibility criteria under the Care Act	Webinar	The practice implications of the eligibility threshold for care and support and what the regulations and guidance under the act require of social workers in implementing it.	60 minutes	The webinar presentation lasts for 35 minutes and then there are 25 minutes of questions. There were too many questions for the expert to answer and so she brought them together into a document afterwards. The link to the document is on the page. These questions cover the practice dilemmas that social workers might face when implementing the act, including interpreting the new eligibility criteria, assessment, resource allocation and carers' eligibility for support.	Big screen, facilitator.
Assessment training exercise for best interests assessors	Learning exercises	How to carry out a best interests assessment using the balance-sheet approach.	90 minutes	There are three exercises and groups (or individuals) should spend 20-30 minutes on each.	Big screen, facilitator.
Improving relationships between GPs and social workers	Learning exercises	How to develop constructive relationships between social workers and GPs.	One 4hr session or two 2hr sessions	Four group activities designed to be used in a multi-disciplinary training session. There is an overview document that provides some background information on the training materials and gives an overview of how they should be used.	Big screen, facilitator.
How to give evidence at a coroner's court inquest	Video	How being prepared makes you a better witness.	25 minutes	The video is based on a real inquest but is not a true representation of the evidence that was given. The video is in two parts, the first shows an unprepared social worker giving his evidence and the second shows a prepared social worker. Throughout the video, pop-up annotations provide tips on presenting evidence.	Big screen, facilitator.
Working with service users as experts by experience	Video	Developing more effective service user involvement.	40 minutes	First there is a six-minute video explaining how Mersey Care Mental Health Trust benefits from working with experts by experience. Then the group is asked to share their thoughts on the video, this is followed by discussion points on how the group feels it could develop more effective service user involvement.	Big screen, facilitator.
Strengths-based practice	Podcast	How to use a strengths-based approach in your practice and the kind of questions you can use in conversations.	30 minutes	You can listen to the whole podcast in one go or play specific sections, with discussion afterwards. Each section has a time stamp so you can easily navigate to that point on the podcast. As well as key points and points for practice from the two experts, there are two interactive exercises.	Audio, facilitator.
Motivational interviewing	Podcast	What motivational interviewing is and how to use the approach in social work practice.	30 minutes and 50 minutes	There are two podcasts in this episode. The first discusses what motivational interviewing (MI) is, the research base behind it and some of the possible drawbacks or issues with the approach. The second includes two scenarios, one showing a non-MI approach, the other showing MI in action. Two learning exercises accompany the second podcast. You can listen to both podcasts in one go or at separate times. With both you can play specific sections, with discussion afterwards. Each section has a time stamp so you can easily navigate to that point in the podcast.	Audio, facilitator.
A practical analysis of a mental capacity assessment	Case study	How to apply the principle of taking all practicable steps to help a person make a decision in a particular case; and what to consider when assessing whether a person is able to understand, retain or weigh information and communicate their decision.	50 minutes	This case study, written by a local authority mental capacity and DoLS lead, applies a step-by-step approach to a mental capacity assessment. At times the author hypothetically explores what actions may have been required if the circumstances were different. There is an analysis of how the case was handled by an MCA/DoLS trainer and the case study can be used by a group to discuss and reflect on what they would have done in this situation.	Big screen, facilitator.

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