

Milton Keynes Council

Mental Capacity Act - Application to Practice

This case study explores how Milton Keynes council used the Workforce Development Innovation Fund to develop understanding of the Mental Capacity Act in their area.

Background

Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire County Councils worked together with two local hospices, to share best practice and develop and deliver a training programme around the Mental Capacity Act.

Feedback from two local groups (MKOB and B MCA) and the QCF End of Life Award Programme in both areas, suggested that current MCA training for care staff did not leave them with a high level of confidence when applying the learning in practice. Feedback found that existing training was more theoretical and lacked a practical approach relevant to different care settings.

Consultation with the two local hospices found that one of their main concerns was the application of the Mental Capacity Act with someone reaching their end of life.

Collectively all organisations, which included representatives from care homes and domiciliary care agencies, identified a need for more practical training to be developed around the Mental Capacity Act in End of Life care.

We know from CQC, quality monitoring and the Courts, that although adult social care staff have training in Mental Capacity Act awareness, there is still a gap in applying this knowledge into daily practice.

Jane Fryer – Independent Trainer

What we wanted to achieve

The aim of the project was to equip managers and care workers across the Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire area with a more practical understanding as to how to apply the Mental Capacity Act in day to day practice.

The project wanted to develop and test a set of practical materials to aid participants on the End of Life Award Programme to bridge the gap between Mental Capacity Act theory and practice.

The project aimed to provide training for 80 care staff and managers across the two areas. Training materials would then be made available to others to use in their own learning and development sessions.



As the assessor on the last 2 Level 3 award in End of Life Care programmes it was very evident from the additional ‘Advance Care Planning’ module, that learners found it difficult to put their Mental Capacity Act knowledge into practice and what it actually meant in their daily work whilst assessing capacity.



Caroline Post - QCF assessor

What we did

The taught element and training materials were developed by an experienced Mental Capacity Act trainer in consultation with the training staff from the two local hospices. The MCA expert trainers had already worked together to develop the End of Life QCF Award Programme and so had the background knowledge of any issues and ideas how to fix them.

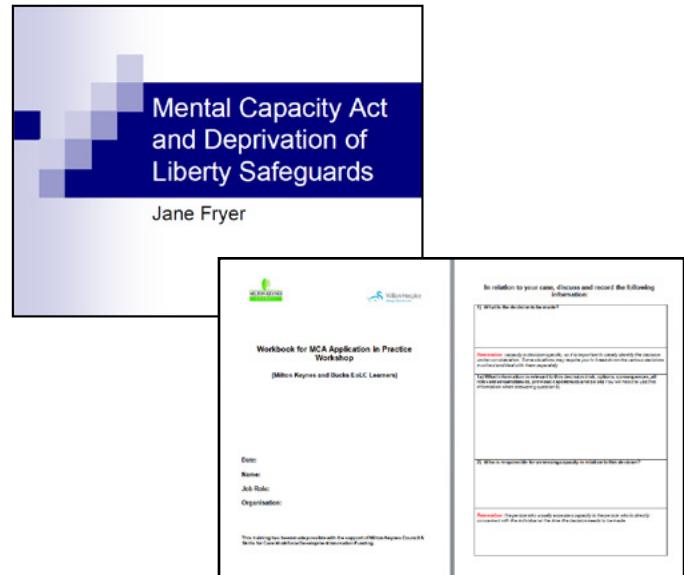
The local authority partners were responsible for the coordination of the project including things such as booking venues, printing and advertising the project.

In terms of training materials, the first steps were to develop:

- MCA assessment tool
- Materials for the learners portfolios
- Pre course knowledge questionnaire cross referenced with the existing MCA01 unit
- Pre and post course evaluation forms and scoring sheets
- Development of a workbook
- Training materials
- E-elca e learning

At a meeting attended by the partners it was decided that there was a need for a short concise working document which would reflect the practical application of MCA in everyday practice. This workbook, including an assessment tool, would enable learners to understand how to interpret the MCA principles in practice every day in the workplace. It would be in plain English and offer prompts to help with decision making around MCA.

Materials were developed with the trainer (in conjunction with Council and Hospice MCA experts) who was able to interpret the principles and put this into an easy read way for the learners to understand and work through, cutting though the jargon.



The training sessions were carried out based around the materials developed. In total 56 people attended the training and 53 completed (from an initial sign up of 70 attendees).

The course consisted of a half-day recap on MCA and then a full day on application in practice. The workbook was used on the full day, and the candidates also brought a case study to use.

Importantly pre course evaluation took place to assess the level of knowledge within the group and they were encouraged to use the SCIE e learning before the half day refresher workshop. Every participant then brought with them a real life scenario to the full day workshop. They were divided into small groups and the main focus of the day was working through each scenario with the support of the new workbook and the simple tools contained in it. The completion of a post course questionnaire identified that participants felt significantly more confident following the training.

This pilot was targeted at care staff from organisations that had previously participated in the EoLC level 3 award programmes run in both Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire.

It was the specific feedback from this particular programme, delivered over several years, about the continuing unease about applying MCA to advance care planning that drove us to apply for Innovation funding in order to develop a solution.

The project was also evaluated with regards to the benefits staff felt from attending. Surveys were completed before and after the workshops, and qualitative feedback was given through an already established End of Life forum run by the hospices, who agreed to discuss improvements in care provision as a result of the training.

What we achieved

Throughout the project, 53 people completed the training course.

Participants feedback post training included:

“Made me realise the actions we are already putting in place are good and appropriate”

“With information gained I would feel confident to challenge decisions where before I wouldn’t”

“Practical session to carry out assessment very useful”

“Building a case study and working through was excellent and allowed time for reflection.”

“Good practical level of training that is often not included.”

(Anonymous, Training Course Participants, Homecare Workers, Team leaders and Managers.)

The project has resulted in the production of a range of training materials that staff could take back to their workplace and share with their teams:

- MCA Workbook , including assessment tool
- DOLS guide
- MCA guide
- Presentation

Other organisations can also use the materials to aid their own learning and development. They can be downloaded [here](#).

The materials developed were well received by all participants and the event evaluation identifies that participants felt considerably more confident about this subject and how to apply it in practice than when they started.

We developed a practical tool (workbook) that mapped across to the QCF unit but was developed based on the learners bringing along to the workshop a real case scenario which they then used to work through the practical tool.

Jane Fryer - Independent trainer

What we learnt

We found that having a project coordinator was vital to maintain targets and deadlines and to act as a communication link between all parties. Using experience trainers who already had knowledge and understanding to develop the training materials also meant that we saved time and money in the earlier stages of the project.

One of the challenges the learners found was the commitment required to complete the workbook in terms of work/ home life balance. Participants were required to do learning at home which some found difficult, however overall we gained positive feedback from the course.

This project was funded by the Workforce Development Innovation Fund. It aims to fund projects that are innovative in their approach to influencing workforce development in the longer term.

You can find out more about the fund on the Skills for Care [website](#).

For more information please contact

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Skills for Care Recommends

The Mental Capacity Act is an important for all of those working in adult social care. From inducting new colleagues to their longer-term development, Skills for Care resources can help

Mental Capacity Act

Our webpage includes information and support around the Mental Capacity Act. It links to resources that can support employers to develop the knowledge of their staff in the Mental Capacity Act.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/MCA

Safeguarding

Our webpage highlights practical resources to support employers in the issue of Safeguarding and to develop the skills and knowledge of their staff.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/safeguarding

Dementia

Our webpage hosts a number of resources to support employers and employees when working with people with dementia.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/dementia

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