



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Competency Framework for the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Workforce

The Competency Framework for the IAA Workforce (the framework) sets out the standards that should be used to inform practice for those involved in providing information and/or advice and/or assistance for care and support.

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The *Competency Framework for the IAA Workforce* (the framework) sets out the standards that should be used to inform practice for those involved in providing information and/or advice and/or assistance for care and support. The framework is not mandatory but is intended to be a useful tool that helps local authorities develop the competence of their workers and meet their statutory obligations.

Introduction

The roles of the 'social services practitioner' (SSP) and other 'information, advice and assistance' (IAA) personnel

The social services practitioner

Social services practitioners carry out what could broadly be described as a social work assistance role, giving advice and completing various aspects of care and support planning (assessment, planning and review).

The broader IAA role

There is an additional broader IAA role, within the IAA service. The service can vary significantly, both across and within local authorities, in its design and infrastructure. It can include a range of different directorates, for example social services, housing and corporate services, as well as joint health and social care provision. Workers must respond to a wide range of requests and are the first point of contact for those enquiring about care and support.

Using the outcomes approach in practice, through [skilled conversations](#), IAA workers will clarify people's thinking and explore their dilemmas to understand what matters most to them and how best to help them by either:

Giving information – this involves supporting people by providing good-quality information that helps them to make informed decisions about their well-being. This can include information about how the social care system works, the availability of services that may help their well-being and how to access them, direct payments, or information about carers' assessments.

Providing advice – this is a step up from the simple provision of information, in that it involves working with people to discuss the options available to find the best solutions for them. To provide advice, local-authority staff need an understanding of people's situations. This is done by carrying out a proportionate assessment.

Providing assistance – if someone is unable to address an enquirer's needs by providing information or advice, assistance will involve another person taking action with the enquirer to access care and support, or assisting a carer to access support. This may lead the enquirer onward to receiving, or being offered, a full statutory assessment to determine their eligibility for more formal care and support.

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Codes of Practice

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act) provided the basis for a new statutory framework for social care in Wales. The principles of the Act are:

- voice and control
- prevention and early intervention
- well-being
- co-production
- multi-agency working.

The IAA service is an important contribution to meeting these principles. Under the Act local authorities must provide a service that offers:

- accessible information on care and support
- advice that is appropriate, and follows a proportionate assessment
- assistance that enables people to access the appropriate care and support, including preventative and early intervention services.

Important

The Code of Practice for Part 2 of the Act (General Functions) states that the IAA service is central to the success of the transition to the care and support system under the Act. Through the provision of high-quality timely information, advice and assistance, people of all ages can be better supported to explore options for meeting their care and support needs to achieve the outcomes that are important to them.

In particular, the Code of Practice^[1] requires local authorities to:

- provide information and advice on:
 - how the care and support system operates in the local authority area
 - the types of care and support available
 - how to access the care and support available
 - how to raise concerns about the well-being of a person who appears to have needs for care and support
- proactively promote early intervention and prevention
- be open and welcoming with an emphasis on advocacy and co-production
- have staff trained in safeguarding protocols.

In relation to the staffing of the IAA service, the Code of Practice^[2] requires local authorities to:

- establish a team that reflects a mix of skills and experience from a range of professionals and sectors
- develop a workforce training plan which should cover front line staff working within the information, advice and assistance service and the wider workforce
- ensure that staff have received training in the National Assessment and Eligibility Tool and must be able to determine the need for family, friends or others to advocate on the individual's behalf.

Part 3 of the Code of Practice^[3] makes specific requirements in relation to the assessment of needs.

- all practitioners undertaking assessments must be suitably skilled, trained and qualified in undertaking assessments. Appropriate levels of qualification for carrying out these activities include:
 - either a registered social work or social care practitioner holding a professional qualification at level 5 or above;
 - or a person holding a social care qualification at level 4 or above, which includes knowledge and skills of undertaking person centred assessment, under the supervision of a registered social work or social care practitioner.
- a local authority will also need to be satisfied that all staff undertaking these activities have the skills, knowledge, and competence to work with children and young people, adults and carers, as appropriate.

[1] Part 2 of the Code of Practice, paragraphs 303, 308-310, 326 and 331

[2] Part 2 of the Code of Practice, paragraphs 385 – 388

[3] Part 3 of the Code of Practice: assessment requirements

What is the Competency Framework for the IAA Workforce?

The standards in the framework can be used by organisations, employers and learning providers to:

- map their current training, learning and development to make sure all topics are covered sufficiently
- commission or develop training, learning and development
- measure and continually develop the competence of workers / students / volunteers involved in IAA services
- ensure statutory responsibilities are being met in relation to the education and qualification attainment of the broader IAA workforce
- review and/or develop policies and procedures
- review and/or develop job descriptions and specifications.

Resources to support the framework

There are two qualifications available for those workers who carry out the 'social services practitioner' role, both of which cover all the standards of the framework:

- Open University HE Certificate in Social Care Practice (Wales)
- City and Guilds Level 4 Social Services Practitioner

For those who are carrying out roles that don't include involvement in care and support planning (assessment, planning and review), a range of learning modules currently being developed, which will be freely accessible to local authorities and any other agencies involved in providing information, advice and assistance to meet people's needs. These learning resources will be available for delivery by in-house managers and trainers, commissioned learning providers or accessed through learning providers offering the social

services practitioner qualification. The learning resources are currently being edited and we are working to make these available as soon as possible. We will update this page with the link when they are available.

Please note, the content and details of the training, learning and development for each standard differ across all levels to reflect roles, responsibilities and what people need to know and do.

It's anticipated that any training, learning and development would be delivered within the context of current national regulations and national and local policy and guidance.

What is in the competency framework?

The framework has seven sections:

[Section 1. Legislation](#)

PDF 362KB

[Section 2. Professional practice](#)

PDF 292KB

[Section 3. Theories and models and their relationship to person/child centred practice and rights-based approaches](#)

PDF 276KB

[Section 4. Factors that contribute to individuals and/or carers needing care and support](#)

PDF 438KB

[Section 5. The assessment and care and support planning process](#)

PDF 419KB

[Section 6. Safeguarding individuals](#)

PDF 356KB

[Section 7. Support the use of electronic assistive technology](#)

PDF 278KB

Each section is broken down into a series of learning outcomes and standards. The standards can be either knowledge or practice.

There is some **indicative** mapping against the roles of 'information, advice and assistance'. **Each local authority and/or agency should, however, make a judgement against the roles and functions of their workers.**

How to use the framework

Local authorities should map the roles of their IAA workforce against the standards to establish which would apply to individual workers. Those who are carrying out the full social services practitioner role would be expected to meet all of the standards.

The standards identified for each worker should then be used to measure their competency and develop a learning and support programme to meet any gaps. This would ensure a robust process for all of those who form part of the IAA workforce.

What types of evidence can be used to demonstrate achievement of the standards?

A range of evidence can be used, such as:

- qualification attainment, for example the level 4 Social Services Practitioner
- training course attendance followed by reflection on learning
- observations
- feedback from others, such as individuals who use services / customers, colleagues, mentors etc.
- probation, supervision and appraisal records

There is no expectation that workers need to repeat learning, once they have shown they have met the identified standards. But, local authorities may want to consider using some of the practice standards to inform supervision and appraisal processes to make sure practice continues to meet expectations. Continuing professional development (CPD) is important for all workers regardless of their role.

Signing off evidence

A range of people can sign to confirm identified standards have been met, for example the person's line manager, a workforce lead or a learning provider. Local authority learning and development teams can offer advice, guidance and support for signing off these standards.

The final declaration should be completed by the worker and their line manager.

Contact us

If you have a question or if you can't find what you are looking for [get in touch with us.](#)