

Qualification Unit

This unit forms part of a regulated qualification.

Unit Title: Autism and Neurodiversity in Adult Social Care

Unit Reference Number: T/652/0869

Level: Five (5)

Credit Value: Seven (7)

Minimum Guided Learning Hours: 35

Learning Outcome (The Learner will):	Assessment Criterion (The Learner can):
1. Understand autism and neurodiversity as strategic considerations in adult social care	1.1 Critically examine current perspectives on autism and neurodiversity, including neuro-affirming and social models
	1.2 Analyse how autistic and neurodivergent adults may experience adult social care systems, environments and processes
	1.3 Analyse structural, procedural and attitudinal factors that can create barriers or exclusion within services
	1.4 Evaluate the relationship between neurodiversity, equality, human rights and social justice in adult care contexts
	1.5 Evaluate the implications of relevant legislation, national policy and ethical principles for leadership decision-making
2. Understand how leadership and organisational approach influence inclusion and accessibility	2.1 Evaluate the influence of leadership values and behaviours on organisational responsiveness to neurodiversity
	2.2 Analyse how organisational priorities, systems and governance arrangements affect accessibility and inclusion
	2.3 Analyse how leadership approaches shape communication, engagement and trust with autistic and neurodivergent adults

	2.4 Evaluate the contribution of inclusive leadership to improved experiences, outcomes and confidence in services
3. Be able to lead organisational approaches that support autistic and neurodivergent adults	3.1 Review organisational arrangements to identify strengths and limitations in supporting neurodivergent adults
	3.2 Design and implement changes that improve accessibility, flexibility and responsiveness across services
	3.3 Lead the adoption of reasonable adjustments and inclusive communication practices at organisational level
	3.4 Apply neurodiversity-informed approaches to decision-making relating to risk, safeguarding and capacity
	3.5 Work collaboratively with autistic and neurodiverse adults and others to shape and refine service approaches
4. Be able to lead, evaluate and improve trauma-informed practice	4.1 Analyse current and future workforce capability requirements in relation to autism and neurodiversity
	4.2 Implement leadership, supervision and development approaches that build organisational confidence and competence
	4.3 Evaluate the effect of organisational approaches on the experiences and outcomes of autistic and neurodivergent adults
	4.4 Use evidence, feedback and learning to inform organisational review and development
	4.5 Lead improvement activity, including partnership working, to enhance long-term inclusion and sustainability

Indicative Content	
LO1	<p>AC1.1</p> <p>Evolution of thinking about autism and neurodiversity</p> <p>Comparison of medical, deficit-based, social and neuro-affirming perspectives</p> <p>Strengths, capabilities and differences associated with neurodivergence</p> <p>How language, labels and assumptions influence service design and professional behaviour</p> <p>Implications of different perspectives for leadership judgement and organisational priorities</p>

	<p>AC1.2 Service access and navigation from a neurodivergent perspective Sensory, communication and environmental factors within adult care services Experiences of assessment, review and decision-making processes Impact of inflexible systems on autonomy, trust and engagement How organisational processes can unintentionally exclude or overwhelm</p> <p>AC1.3 Organisational norms and expectations that disadvantage neurodivergent people Procedural rigidity versus flexible, personalised approaches Attitudes, bias and misunderstanding within organisations Barriers arising from commissioning, funding or performance frameworks Intersections between neurodiversity and other forms of marginalisation</p> <p>AC1.4 Neurodiversity as a matter of inclusion and citizenship Equality duties and rights-based approaches in adult social care Tensions between protection, autonomy and choice Impact of exclusion on wellbeing, independence and participation Leadership responsibility in promoting fairness and dignity</p> <p>AC1.5 Legal frameworks affecting autistic and neurodivergent adults Ethical principles relevant to leadership decisions Balancing organisational risk with individual rights Accountability, transparency and defensible decision-making Consequences of poor leadership decisions for individuals and organisations</p>
LO2	<p>AC2.1 How leadership beliefs shape organisational culture Modelling inclusive and respectful behaviour Visible and invisible leadership signals Alignment between stated values and everyday decisions Leadership credibility and trust</p> <p>AC2.2 Organisational priorities and resource allocation How systems can privilege efficiency over inclusion Governance and accountability mechanisms Decision-making pathways and whose voices are heard Impact of system design on lived experience</p> <p>AC2.3 Communication styles and organisational tone Transparency and predictability in decision-making Responsiveness to feedback and challenge Relationship-building with autistic and neurodivergent adults Repairing trust when services fall short</p> <p>AC2.4 Links between leadership approach and service experience Impact on engagement, continuity and satisfaction Organisational reputation and confidence Long-term benefits of inclusive leadership</p>

	Risks of exclusionary or compliance-driven leadership
LO3	<p>AC3.1 Mapping existing organisational approaches Identifying inconsistencies and gaps Use of feedback and reflective review Involving autistic people in evaluation Prioritising areas for change</p> <p>AC3.2 Translating insight into organisational action Designing flexible systems and processes Managing change at organisational level Communicating change clearly and consistently Monitoring implementation</p> <p>AC3.3 Understanding reasonable adjustments at organisational scale Communication accessibility across systems and processes Avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches Supporting consistency across teams Reviewing effectiveness of adjustments</p> <p>AC3.4 Understanding how neurodivergence affects risk perception and decision-making Avoiding over-protective or restrictive responses Balancing safety with autonomy and dignity Reflective decision-making in complex situations Learning from challenge and review</p> <p>AC3.5 Co-production principles at organisational level Valuing lived experience as expertise Shared problem-solving and design Managing differing perspectives constructively Sustaining meaningful involvement</p>
LO4	<p>AC4.1 Current workforce knowledge and confidence Future capability needs Role clarity and accountability Organisational learning priorities Risks of insufficient capability</p> <p>AC4.2 Leadership approaches that support learning and reflection Supervision as a space for challenge and growth Building confidence rather than compliance Supporting emotional and cognitive demands on staff Sustaining capability over time</p> <p>AC4.3 Defining meaningful outcomes from a neurodivergent perspective Qualitative and quantitative evidence</p>

Experience, engagement and independence
Organisational learning from success and failure
Avoiding tokenistic evaluation

AC4.4

Sources of evidence and insight
Learning from complaints, concerns and compliments
Reflective organisational review
Balancing evidence with professional judgement
Making learning visible

AC4.5

Continuous improvement approaches
Working across organisational boundaries
Learning with and from partners
Embedding improvement into everyday leadership
Sustaining inclusive practice over time

Assessment Requirements

This unit must be assessed in line with Open Awards' assessment requirements and Skills for Care & Development assessment principles. Assessment must be work-based and grounded in the learner's real work practice within an adult social care setting.

Learners must generate evidence that demonstrates full achievement of all learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria for each unit.

Learning Outcomes 1 and 2 focus primarily on analysis and evaluation of knowledge, but evidence must show clear application to workplace contexts.

Learning Outcomes 3 and 4 require evidence of active leadership or influence within the learner's work setting.

While some knowledge evidence may be generated outside of the workplace, final assessment decisions must confirm that knowledge and understanding have been applied effectively in the real work environment, in line with Skills for Care expectations.

Assessment evidence may include a range of methods, selected to ensure validity and reliability, including but not limited to:

- Direct observation of practice in the workplace
- Reflective accounts demonstrating application of learning to practice
- Professional discussion to explore understanding, reasoning and decision-making
- Work-based documentation relevant to the learner's role (e.g. policies, procedures, plans, audits, reports)
- Witness testimony from managers, colleagues or relevant professionals
- Feedback from individuals, staff or partner organisations, where appropriate.

Where learning outcomes require demonstration of competence, direct observation of practice should form the primary source of evidence. Observation should normally take place in person in the learner's work setting.

All assessment evidence must be valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable, and

clearly attributable to the learner. Assessors must ensure that evidence is fit for purpose, reflects the learner's role and level of responsibility, and demonstrates both knowledge and effective practice, where required.

Evidence must be clearly attributable to the learner and reflect their role, responsibilities and level of autonomy within the adult social care setting.

Confidential, sensitive or personal information must not be included in learner portfolios. Such evidence may be referenced, anonymised or summarised in line with organisational policies, data protection legislation and Open Awards requirements.

Assessment decisions must be made by an appropriately qualified assessor and are subject to internal and external quality assurance in accordance with Open Awards policies and procedures and Skills for Care expectations.