1 **NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE**
2 **EXCELLENCE**

3 # Guideline scope

4 # Social work for adults with complex needs

5 The Department of Health and Social Care has asked NICE to develop a
6 guideline on social work for adults with complex needs.

7 The guideline will be developed using the methods and processes outlined in
8 developing NICE guidelines: the manual.

9 This guideline will also be used to develop the NICE quality standard for social
10 work for adults with complex needs.

11 # 1 Why the guideline is needed

12 People with complex needs, including learning disabilities and mental health
13 needs often experience difficulties in their daily lives and in their relationships
14 with other people and social institutions.

15 Social workers, in partnership with adults who have complex needs, use
16 relationship-based practice and strengths-based approaches to enable people
17 to meet their goals. Personalised communication and the application of
18 professional values, including empathy, empowerment and understanding,
19 enable people to be heard, have more control, choice and autonomy.

20 Social work includes long-term services or support to maintain quality of life,
21 and short-term support to reduce the need for ongoing support. These are
22 intended to improve social outcomes, as defined by the Care Act 2014.

23 The Department of Health and Social Care's framework and handbook
24 outlines a strength-based model to guide social workers in practice,
25 supervision and quality assurance. This guideline will evaluate approaches in
26 this model that are relevant to adults with complex needs.

1　**Key facts and figures**

2　• [The 2019 King's Fund Social care 360 report](#) found that local authorities

3　received 1.84 million new requests for social care support in 2017/18,

4　nearly three-quarters (1.32 million) from older adults. Requests for support

5　have risen by 2% since 2015/16, with the rise mainly among working age

6　adults.

7　• But the report showed that the number of people receiving social care is

8　falling. Between 2009/10 and 2013/14, the number of adults receiving

9　publicly funded social care fell by 400,000.

10　• Total local authority expenditure on adult social care in 2017/18 was

11　£21.3 billion. This has risen since 2013/14, but is still £700 million below

12　the level of spending in 2010/11, despite increasing demand. Self-funded

13　spending on care has been estimated at nearly £11 billion a year.

14　• About 1.5 million people are employed in social care jobs in England,

15　including just over 30,000 registered social workers. There are around

16　20,500 social worker jobs in the adult social care sector and about 3,700

17　social workers are approved mental health practitioners.

18　• Disabilities, including serious mental illness and intellectual disabilities, are

19　associated with increased risk of preventable secondary conditions, earlier

20　onset of conditions associated with ageing, and premature mortality.

21　**Current practice**

22　Adults with complex needs may receive social care at home, in residential or

23　nursing homes, or through short-term reablement support to help them regain

24　independence after a health crisis or hospital admission. It may be delivered

25　by various organisations, but social workers in local authorities or in integrated

26　health and social care services have statutory duties to assess the person's

27　needs and plan and coordinate care.

28　The [Care Quality Commission State of care report 2017/18](#) notes that most

29　people in England receive a good quality of adult social care. Nearly

30　two-thirds of people using social care services are very satisfied with the

31　support they have received, and this figure is unchanged in recent years.

1   But the report shows significant variation in quality, access, and workforce

2   recruitment and retention. In 2018, 21% of adult social care services and 30%

3   of NHS mental health services were rated as requiring improvement. People

4   from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups report lower levels of satisfaction

5   than those from white ethnic groups. And the number of formal complaints is

6   increasing, with many being about systemic issues rather than individual

7   incidents.

8   With an increasing need for social care, variation in provision and stretched

9   resources, it is vital to ensure commissioning and delivery is informed by the

10 best available evidence about effective ways of working. The [Chief Social

11 Worker for Adults' annual report: 2018 to 2019](#) identified knowing what works

12 and developing a better evidence base for social work practice as priorities.

13 This guideline will support these priorities.

14 **Policy, legislation, regulation and commissioning**

15 Legislation particularly relevant to this guideline includes:

16 • [Human Rights Act 1998](#)

17 • Mental Health Acts [1983](#) and [2007](#)

18 • [Care Act 2014](#) and [Care Act Statutory Guidance](#) (2018)

19 • [Health and Social Care (National Data Guardian) Act 2018](#)

20 • [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) as well as the [Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act

21 2019](#)

22 **2   Who the guideline is for**

23 This guideline is for:

24 • registered social workers

25 • approved mental health professionals

26 • social work supervisors and managers

27 • social work academics, educators and practice educators

28 • health and social care staff who support people with complex needs

1 • adults with complex needs (including learning disabilities and mental health

2 difficulties) their families or carers, and the public.

3 NICE guidelines cover health and care in England. Decisions on how they

4 apply in other UK countries are made by ministers in the Welsh Government,

5 Scottish Government, and Northern Ireland Executive.

6 *Equality considerations*

7 NICE will carry out an equality impact assessment during scoping. The

8 assessment will:

9 • list equality issues identified, and how they have been addressed

10 • explain why any groups are excluded from the scope.

11 # 3   What the guideline will cover

12 ## 3.1   Who is the focus?

13 **Groups that will be covered**

14 People aged 18 or older with complex needs.

15 For the purpose of this guideline adults with complex needs are defined as

16 people needing a high level of support with many aspects of their daily life and

17 relying on a range of health and social care services. This may be because of

18 illness, disability or a combination of these. Complex needs may be present

19 from birth, or may develop after illness or injury or as people get older. (Based

20 on a definition of complex needs by the Think Local Act Personal partnership).

21 ## 3.2   Settings

22 All settings where social work is provided for adults with complex needs.

1   *3.3   Activities, services or aspects of care*

2   **Key areas that will be covered**

3   When developing the guideline we will look at evidence in the areas below as

4   long as the work is led or delivered by a registered social worker. It may not

5   be possible to make recommendations in all the areas.

6   1   Social work assessment and care planning – models and approaches to

7   assessment, care planning and review in:

8   − needs assessment

9   − risk assessment

10   − supporting people to plan for the future, including considering

11   changing needs, wishes and capabilities

12   − preventing an escalation of need, or providing urgent support if needs

13   escalate

14   − the role of social workers within multidisciplinary teams and how they

15   communicate, support and work with others.

16   2   Individual or family casework approaches to support the person and their

17   family and carers in:

18   − problem solving, for example through restorative practice, family

19   group conferencing and building positive relationships

20   − promoting self-esteem and confidence by building on strengths and

21   developing coping strategies

22   − complex risk planning using signs of safety and wellbeing with people

23   who are at high risk or are experiencing uncertainty, including working

24   with people who have the capacity to understand the risks they are

25   facing and are refusing support

26   − coping with changing life situations and learning new approaches to

27   existing, new or emerging difficulties

28   − enabling positive risk-taking to promote independence

29   − helping people to connect with their local communities by using

30   neighbourhood networks and local area coordination, including peer

31   support.

Areas that will not be covered

1 Organisation of services.

2 Recommendations specific to particular disabilities or health conditions, although we will keep in mind any contexts stakeholders raise as relevant to this guideline.

3 Topics already covered by related NICE guidance, unless there are specific issues related to social work for adults with complex needs.

Related NICE guidance

Published

- [Post-traumatic stress disorder](#) (2018) NICE guideline NG116
- [Decision-making and mental capacity](#) (2018) NICE guideline NG108
- [Preventing suicide in community and custodial settings](#) (2018) NICE guideline NG105
- [Dementia: assessment, management and support for people living with dementia and their carers](#) (2018) NICE guideline NG97
- [Care and support of people growing older with learning disabilities](#) (2018) NICE guideline NG96
- [Learning disabilities and behaviour that challenges: service design and delivery](#) (2018) NICE guideline NG93
- [Intermediate care including reablement](#) (2017) NICE guideline NG74
- [Mental health of adults in contact with the criminal justice system](#) (2017) NICE guideline NG66
- [Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: community health and social care services](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG58
- [Physical health of people in prison](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG57
- [Multimorbidity: clinical assessment and management](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG56
- [Mental health problems in people with learning disabilities: prevention, assessment and management](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG54
- [Transition between inpatient mental health settings and community or care home settings](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG53

- [Community engagement: improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG44
- [Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG43
- [Autism spectrum disorder in adults: diagnosis and management](#) (2016) NICE guideline CG142
- [Older people: independence and mental wellbeing](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG32
- [Care of dying adults in the last days of life](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG31
- [Transition between inpatient hospital settings and community or care home settings for adults with social care needs](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG27
- [Older people with social care needs and multiple long-term conditions](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG22
- [Home care: delivering personal care and practical support to older people living in their own homes](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG21
- [Challenging behaviour and learning disabilities: prevention and interventions for people with learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG11
- [Violence and aggression: short-term management in mental health, health and community settings](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG10
- [Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working](#) (2014) NICE public health guideline PH50
- [Psychosis and schizophrenia in adults: prevention and management](#) (2014) NICE guideline CG178
- [Common mental health problems: identification and pathways to care](#) (2011) NICE guideline CG123
- [Coexisting severe mental illness (psychosis) and substance misuse: assessment and management in healthcare settings](#) (2011) NICE guideline CG120
- [Depression in adults with a chronic physical health problem: recognition and management](#) (2009) NICE guideline CG91
- [Mental wellbeing in over 65s: occupational therapy and physical activity interventions](#) (2008) NICE guideline PH16

1   *In development*

2   • End of life care – service delivery. NICE guideline. Publication expected

3   October 2019

4   • Carers: provision of support for adult carers. NICE guideline. Publication

5   expected January 2020

6   • Depression in adults: treatment and management NICE guideline.

7   Publication expected February 2020 (update of Depression in adults:

8   recognition and management)

9   • Safeguarding adults in care homes NICE guideline. Publication expected

10   October 2020

11   • Self-harm in over 8s: short- and long-term management and prevention of

12   recurrence NICE guideline. Publication expected January 2022 (update of

13   Self-harm in over 8s: short-term management and prevention of recurrence

14   and Self-harm in over 8s: long-term management)

15   **NICE guidance about the experience of people using NHS and social**

16   **care services**

17   NICE has produced the following guidance on the experience of people using

18   the NHS and social care services. This guideline will not include additional

19   recommendations on these topics unless there are specific issues related to

20   social work for adults with complex needs:

21   • People's experience in adult social care services (2018) NICE guideline

22   NG86

23   • Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community

24   (2017) NICE guideline NG67

25   • Medicines optimisation (2015) NICE guideline NG5

26   • Patient experience in adult NHS services (2012) NICE guideline CG138

27   • Service user experience in adult mental health (2011) NICE guideline

28   CG136

29   • Medicines adherence (2009) NICE guideline CG76

1 *3.4   Economic aspects*

2 We will take economic aspects into account when making recommendations.

3 We will develop an economic plan that states for each review question (or key

4 area in the scope) whether economic considerations are relevant, and if so

5 whether this is an area that should be prioritised for economic modelling and

6 analysis. We will review the economic evidence and carry out economic

7 analyses, using an NHS, individual or societal perspective, as appropriate.

8 *3.5   Key issues and draft questions*

9 While writing this scope, we have identified the following key issues and draft

10 questions related to them:

11 When developing the guideline we will look at evidence in the areas and draft

12 questions below as long as the work is led or delivered by a registered social

13 worker.

14 1   Social work assessment and care planning – models and approaches to

15   assessment, care planning and review

16   1.1 Needs assessment:

17   – What is the effectiveness of social work approaches to assessing and

18   reviewing complex care and support needs (including strengths-based

19   approaches)?

20   – In the opinion of everyone involved, what works well and what could

21   be improved about social work assessments of complex care and

22   support needs?

23   1.2 Risk assessment:

24   – What is the effectiveness of social work approaches to assessing and

25   reviewing risk with adults with complex needs?

26   – In the opinion of everyone involved, what works well and what could

27   be improved about risk assessment with adults with complex needs?

28   1.3 Supporting people to plan for the future, including considering

29   changing needs, wishes and capabilities:

1 – What is the effectiveness of case management and care planning
2 approaches in social work to support future planning (in relation to
3 changing needs, wishes and capabilities)?
4 – In the opinion everyone involved, what works well and what can be
5 improved about case management and care planning approaches in
6 social work to support future planning (in relation to changing needs,
7 wishes and capabilities)?
8 1.4 Preventing an escalation of need, or providing urgent support if
9 needs escalate:
10 – What is the effectiveness of case management and care planning to
11 prevent the escalation of need, or to provide urgent support if needs
12 do escalate?
13 – In the opinion of everyone involved, what works well and what can be
14 improved about case management and care planning to prevent the
15 escalation of need, or to provide urgent support if needs do escalate?
16 1.5 The role of social workers within multidisciplinary teams and how
17 they communicate, support and work with others:
18 – What is the effectiveness of integrated working among registered
19 social workers and other practitioners to support adults with complex
20 needs?
21 – In the opinion of everyone involved, what are the facilitators and
22 barriers to integrated working between registered social workers and
23 other practitioners to support adults with complex needs?
24 2 Individual or family casework approaches to support the person or family
25 and carers
26 2.1 Individual or family casework to support problem solving, promoting
27 self-esteem and confidence, complex risk planning, coping with
28 changing life situations and enabling positive risk-taking to promote
29 independence:
30 – What is the effectiveness of social work approaches to individual and
31 family casework for adults with complex needs?

1   – In the opinion of everyone involved, what works well and what could

2   be improved about social work approaches to individual and family

3   casework for adults with complex needs?

4   2.2 Helping people to connect with local communities:

5   – What is the effectiveness of social and community support

6   approaches (including peer support) in promoting social inclusion of

7   adults with complex needs?

8   – In the opinion of everyone involved, what works well and what could

9   be improved about social and community support (including peer

10   support) to promote social inclusion for adults with complex needs?

11

12 The key issues and draft questions will be used to develop more detailed

13 review questions, which guide the systematic review of the literature.

14 ## *3.6   Main outcomes*

15 The main outcomes that will be considered when searching for and assessing

16 the evidence are:

17 • person focused:

18   – quality of life (both health- and social-care related)

19   – wellbeing

20   – independence

21   – ability to carry out activities of daily living

22   – experience of services

23   – participation and inclusion (including progress into employment)

24   – self-efficacy and resilience

25   – personal goal attainment

26   – social capital (range of social contact that provides access to social,

27   emotional or practical support)

28   – communication

29   – morbidity

30   – mortality

31 • social work approach focused:

1   – reduction in crises

2   – timeliness (this could relate to timing to prevent an escalation of need,

3   timing to address current need, or timing to provide urgent support if

4   needs do escalate)

5   – access

6   – continuity of care and support.

7

8   The exact list of outcomes to be considered for each topic are context

9   dependent and will be discussed when detailed review questions are

10 formulated.

4   NICE quality standards and NICE Pathways
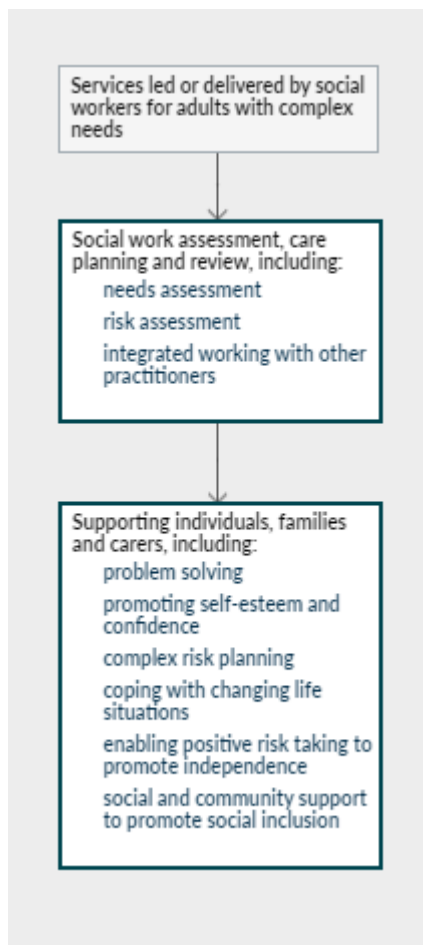
4.1   NICE quality standards

NICE quality standards that may need to be revised or updated when this guideline is published

- Social work for adults with complex needs. NICE quality standard. Publication date to be confirmed

4.2   NICE Pathways

NICE Pathways bring together everything we have said on a topic in an interactive flowchart. When this guideline is published, the recommendations will be included in the NICE Pathway on social work for adults with complex needs (in development).

An outline based on this scope is included below. It will be adapted, and more detail added as the recommendations are written during guideline development.

1

2 # 5 Further information

This is the draft scope for consultation with registered stakeholders. The consultation dates are 21 October to 18 November 2019.

The guideline is expected to be published in January 2022.

You can follow progress of the guideline.

Our website has information about how NICE guidelines are developed.

3