



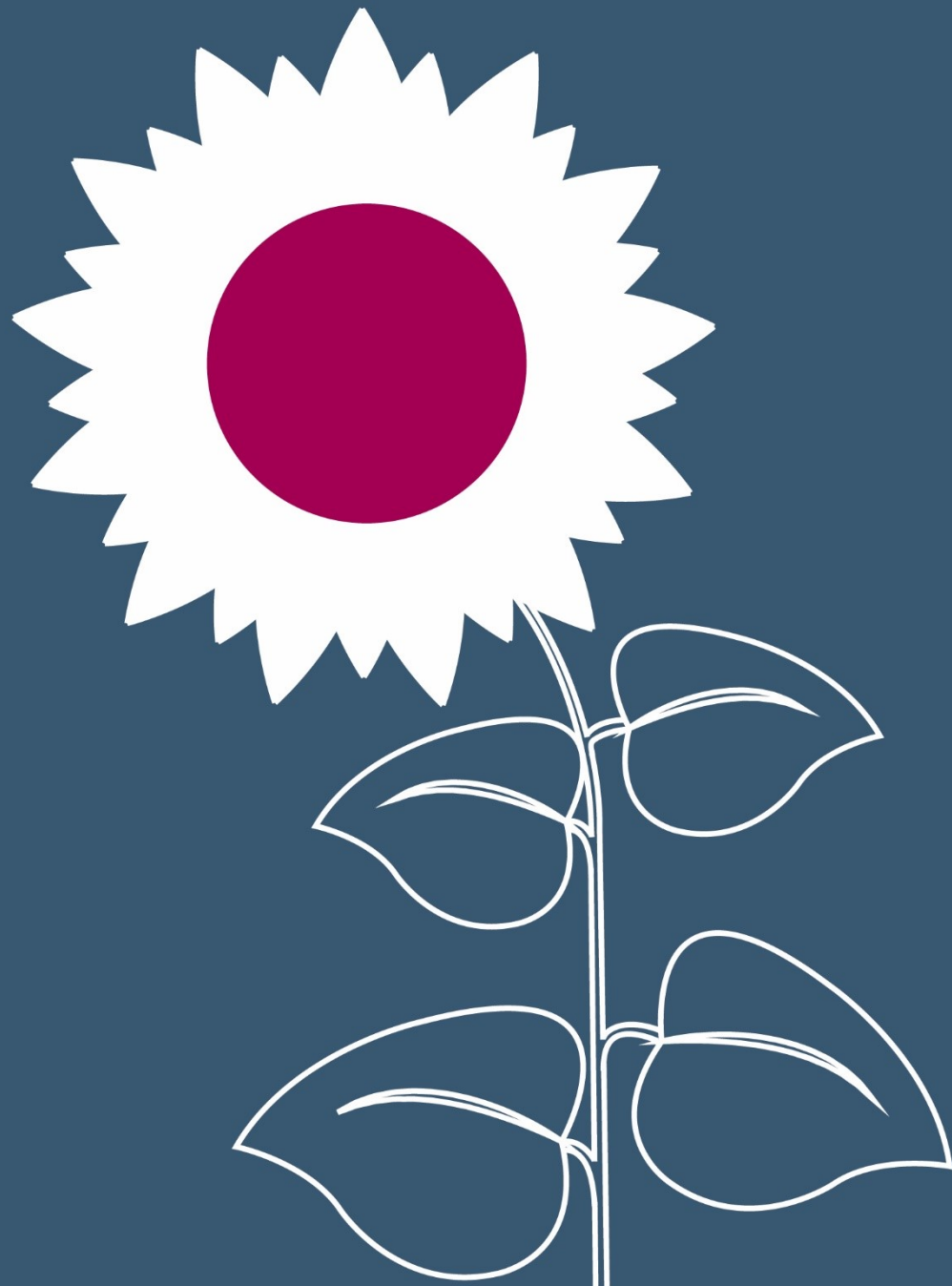
City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Culturally Appropriate Care and Support

Within Stoke-on-Trent Residential Services

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About

The purpose of this guide is to help anyone involved in the care and support of individuals to have a clearer understanding of culturally appropriate care and what that may mean to individuals they support. This may include care and staff, professionals and family carers.

In this guide, we have focused on supporting children with disabilities and emotional and behavioural difficulties. We have also considered the experiences of people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people who are LGBT+.

However, cultural identity or heritage can cover a whole range of areas in our lives. The principles of culturally appropriate care apply to anyone who requires support as we all experience our own culture individually. Supporting people in a person-centred way and considering all aspects of their lives is important.

A note about terminology. Terminology around race, ethnicity and sexuality evolves continuously. It is important that you learn about preferred terminology used in your organisation and with the individuals you support. It is also important to remain actively conscious of changes.

For the purpose of this document, we have used ‘people from ethnic minorities and backgrounds to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. This is in-line with current government guidance on how to write about ethnicity. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

We have also used the term LGBT+ to describe Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender. The 'plus' represents other sexual identities.

An individual's cultural identity can be based on a wide variety of influences, such as their ethnicity, nationality or religion. However, there are a wide range of influences, and cultural preferences that are expressed in many different ways. We must do everything reasonably practicable to make sure that people who use the service receive person-centred care and treatment that is appropriate, meets their needs and reflects their personal preferences, whatever they might be.

Introduction to culturally appropriate care

Culturally appropriate care (also called 'culturally competent care') is care that is sensitive to people's cultural identity or heritage. This includes the things you can see and the things you cannot see (also known as cultural values or beliefs).

If care is not sensitive to people's cultural identity or heritage, the impact can be devastating for the person and their sense of wellbeing.

Everyone is part of a culture, and everyone therefore has a cultural need to be met.

How to be sensitive to cultural identity or heritage in practice will vary from person to person. For some people ethnicity, nationality or religion will be important. For others it might be their sexuality, gender identity or other life experience or event.

You should never make assumptions or generalisations based on what you think you know, regardless of how well informed you may be. For example, not all Asian or African people like spicy food.

It is also important to understand that cultural identity can change over time. This is because life events and experiences can lead to someone changing their beliefs or reprioritising what is important to them. This may be more pertinent when someone has a progressive illness e.g., dementia, or if they are approaching the end of their life or has experienced a significant life event.

To provide care that is truly culturally appropriate, you must therefore be alert and responsive to the aspects of culture or heritage that a person identifies with (or doesn't identify with) or believes at the time that the care is being provided.

How a person thinks can depend on their life experiences and sometimes they have beliefs and views about other people that might not be right or reasonable.

This is known as 'unconscious bias's and includes when a person thinks:

- better of someone because they believe they're alike
- less of someone because that person is different to them, for example, they might be of a different race, religion or age

This means they could decide influenced by false beliefs or assumptions. Sometimes it's also called 'stereotyping'.

Everyone can think in a way that involves unconscious bias at some point, but it's important to be aware of it and not let it affect behaviour or decisions.

The Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of any of the following protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Race (ethnicity and nationality);
- Religion or belief;
- Sex or gender;
- Sexual orientation;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- A failure to provide culturally appropriate care could also be seen as a breach of the Equality Act 2010.

The Care Act 2014

If the service has been commissioned directly by the local authority, or if the person has arranged the service themselves after receiving information and advice from the local authority, you have a responsibility to promote individual Wellbeing.

The local authority will want to know how you have promoted the person's individual Wellbeing when they carry out a review of their Care and Support Plan.

Providing culturally appropriate care can undoubtedly have a positive impact on a person's sense of wellbeing in all categories. Likewise, providing care that is not sensitive to cultural identity and heritage can have a negative impact.

The table on the next page provides just a few examples to demonstrate how culturally appropriate care can have a positive impact on the different categories of individual Wellbeing.

Category of Wellbeing	The impact of culturally appropriate care on personal dignity
Personal dignity	<p>The person feels their cultural identity is recognised and valued;</p> <p>Cultural needs are met in line with individual preferences.</p>
Physical or mental health and emotional wellbeing	<p>The person feels happy, content and fulfilled;</p> <p>The person does not feel isolated or ostracised;</p> <p>Protection from abuse and neglect.</p>
Control over day to day life	<p>Protection from discrimination, organisational abuse and hate crime;</p> <p>Poor practices are challenged.</p>
Participation in work, education, training or recreation	<p>People are asked what is important to them and how they would like things to be done;</p> <p>People are given opportunities to say if something is not working for them or to change how they would like to be supported to meet a cultural need.</p>
Social and economic wellbeing	<p>Engaging in activities at home and in the community that are meaningful to cultural identity and heritage;</p> <p>Staff actively seek out events and activities that may be of cultural importance.</p>
Domestic, family and personal relationships	<p>The person feels part of their cultural community;</p> <p>Cultural identity is celebrated in the service.</p>
Suitability of living accommodation	<p>Families feel welcomed into the service;</p> <p>Families are encouraged to share information about cultural identity and heritage;</p> <p>Families help staff to understand how best to meet cultural needs.</p>
Contribution to society	<p>People are encouraged to have items of cultural importance in their rooms;</p> <p>Nothing about the way the accommodation is decorated devalues cultural identity or heritage.</p>

Anti-discriminatory recording

Anti-discriminatory recording is an important part of culturally appropriate care.

For guidance about referring to or writing about ethnicity, see GOV.UK: Writing about ethnicity.

Examples of culturally appropriate care

The following are some examples of culturally appropriate care that you may need to provide. Remember, this will vary from person to person and generalisations should not be made:

Area of potential need	Examples of culturally appropriate care
Food and drink	<p>If someone follows a Kosher or Halal diet, food may need to be prepared differently to avoid cross contamination;</p> <p>Food may need to be presented in a certain way;</p> <p>Certain utensils may need to be provided, and some people may prefer to eat with their hands;</p> <p>If someone is from a culture where it is polite to refuse food the first time they are offered, you may need to offer the food 2 or 3 times;</p> <p>People may wish to change their clothes before or after eating or to wash their hands and face;</p> <p>Communication.</p>
Use the right language - learn some key words and phrases	<p>Use interpreters and advocates to support communication needs;</p> <p>Provide literature or access to TV shows with subtitles or in a language that the person can understand.</p>
Religion and spirituality	<p>Providing religious or spiritual items like pictures, prayer beads, spiritual statues or holy books;</p> <p>Support to attend church, gurdwaras, mosques or temples. This may include allowing time before or after a service to talk with their religious community;</p> <p>To access online services as an alternative to face-to-face services;</p> <p>Support to pray at certain times, and have a suitable space to do so;</p> <p>Support to eat at different times or a different diet during religious festivals like Ramadan or Chinese New Year;</p> <p>Support to ensure hair / beard is maintained in line with cultural expectations;</p> <p>To arrange for a local priest or religious leader to visit the home.</p>

Health care	<p>Checking if medicines contain ingredients such as gelatine or other animal products. These may not be suitable for people following a Kosher or Halal diet and will also not be suitable for vegetarians or vegans;</p> <p>Reviewing medication timings with a GP to support the person to take part in Ramadan or another cultural event where the effectiveness of the medication could impact their ability to engage in the cultural event;</p> <p>Consulting with a GP to support someone to take complementary or alternative medicines in line with their cultural beliefs. For example, Kola Nut or Miswak;</p> <p>Clothes and personal presentation.</p>
Personal and shared space	<p>Supporting people to dress in line with their culture. This could be everyday or for family visits or special events.</p> <p>Supporting people to personalise their room with objects that are important to them;</p> <p>To decorate and furnish shared spaces in ways that promote the culture of people living there and do not cause offence.</p>
Activities	<p>Watching particular TV shows or listening to important music;</p> <p>Playing a particular game with cultural importance;</p> <p>Arranging entertainment such as Bollywood events or dancers.</p>
Community connections	<p>Support to visit a community event like a carnival, Mela or art event;</p> <p>Support to volunteer in a charity shop or at a charity event;</p> <p>Support to fundraise for a charity closely associated with someone's culture.</p>
Emotional support	<p>Supporting someone to talk about past events and memories if they want to, or facilitating access to emotional support to deal with traumatic experiences.</p>
Hygiene	<p>Supporting someone to bring in or staff to support using the appropriate hygiene products.</p> <p>For example, shampoo for right hair type or using a flannel to shower. Having a shower not a wash.</p>

Understanding someone's cultural needs

Cultural needs should be recorded on the person's individual care or support plan, along with information about how individuals and the wider service should meet those needs.

Everyone is personally responsible for making sure they understand the cultural needs of a person before providing them with support. This will involve reading the individual care or support plan but could also involve doing some independent research into specific cultural practices, to increase your knowledge, understanding and confidence. However, when doing so remember not to make generalisations or assumptions.

Reviewing cultural needs

Because cultural needs can change over time, it is important that these needs are reviewed regularly.

These reviews do not have to be formal and can be a simple conversation with the person (or their representative if they lack the capacity to make decisions about their needs) to obtain their views on the matter.

These conversations should identify:

- Whether there has been a change in cultural need;
- What action the service may need to take to adapt to any changes;
- How well the service is meeting cultural needs;
- Any improvements that need to be made to how cultural needs are being met;
- If a person's cultural needs change, their individual care or support plan should be updated to reflect this and all staff supporting the person must quickly be made aware of the changes;
- Talking about culture and cultural needs;

Everyone should:

- Ask questions about cultural needs, especially if unsure;
- Try to understand and meet people's preferences at all times;
- Be curious about what the important things are to help people live their fullest lives.

Top tips

- Encourage people to be open about their cultural identity and heritage;
- Provide a safe and secure space for the person to express their views openly and honestly;
- Do not just ask about needs around religion or nationality, remember things like age, family, neurodiversity, religion, disability, gender and sexuality can all be important aspects of a person's culture;
- Ask people about their preferences often, in recognition that cultural needs can change over time;
- Ask people if they are happy about how their cultural needs are being met.

If the person cannot communicate their cultural needs

If the person is finding it difficult to understand what is being asked of them, or if you cannot understand what they are telling you, you must not assume they do not have capacity to make decisions about how their cultural needs are met. Instead, you must explore available options to support communication. Depending on the specific circumstances, this could include involving a family member or friend who understands their communication needs, or arranging for an advocate, interpreter or Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).

When involving family members, be aware of any potential conflict or disagreement between their views and those of the person.

Respecting and celebrating cultural identity

Respecting cultural identity

You must be respectful of other people's cultural needs, identity and beliefs, even when these may be in direct conflict with your own personal beliefs. This is called a non-judgmental and non-biased approach.

This applies to the cultural identity and beliefs of the people being supported by the service, and also of colleagues.

You must never act in a way that could make anyone else feel that their cultural identity or belief is wrong, misplaced or not important. Neither must anyone else act in such a way towards you.

Such behaviour is discriminatory. If you witness such behaviour you must report it.

Celebrating cultural identity

Wherever possible a proactive approach should be taken to celebrating cultural identity.

The staff team should be aware of, and encourage people to participate in:

- Local events that are taking place, such as festivals, carnivals etc.;
- Religious and cultural events of importance, such as Ramadan, Chinese New Year and Pride;
- Other activities that may be of interest, such as TV shows, radio broadcasts or podcasts.

Disagreement with family members

The involvement of family members is normally invaluable in supporting the service to understand cultural needs and provide good culturally appropriate support.

However, the preferences expressed, and daily choices made by the person using the service may sometimes be out of sync with the information provided by their family. This can lead to disagreement and/or conflict between the person and their family, or between the family and the service.

The risk of conflict increases when the person has chosen not to engage in an aspect of cultural practice that is very important to their family, wants to do something that is not in line with strict religious protocol or wants to be part of a culture that their family does not approve of.

Examples:

- The person is Muslim and wants to eat pork products.
- The person identifies as LGBT+ and wants to attend a Pride festival.
- In these circumstances, all reasonable attempts should be made to talk through differences and find a resolution that works best for the person being supported.
- It is important to remember that the service is supporting the person, not the family member. If the person has the capacity to make their own decision about how to meet their cultural needs, their wishes are paramount and of utmost importance.
- If a person appears to have changed their cultural preferences to something not in line with their previous beliefs, you must consider whether the Mental Capacity Act 2005 applies. An example of this could be if a person from a Muslim culture says they now want to start eating pork products.
- If the person has capacity, they have simply changed their mind and their wishes should be respected.

- If the person lacks capacity, you must always apply the best interest's principle, as set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 before deciding the best way to provide support.
- If the circumstances are complex or the disagreement persists, it may be necessary to seek the support of a social worker or other professional to work through the issues and determine what is in the person's best interests. In extreme cases, where disagreement persists, professionals may decide to take the matter to the Court of Protection for a resolution.

In-service culture clashes

Sometimes the views and beliefs held by a person using the service may be so different to the views and beliefs expressed by other people being supported by the same service, that a clash can be anticipated.

It is important to be aware of any differing views and beliefs and to take steps to minimise potential risk of culture clashes that could have a negative impact on either party.

Supporting individuals from ethnic minority groups and backgrounds

When supporting young people or staff from an ethnic minority group, we should focus on the whole person and holistic support; rather than relying on diagnosis or narrow assessments of care needs.

We should think of what flexibility we have in our provision and creative responses; meeting the needs of an individual within the context of their life experience.

We should focus on the cultural complexity and competency; attitudes towards illness and disability and challenging stereotypes.

Building community capacity and drawing on the strengths of the people being supported, their families, and their communities.

We should foster a commitment to support learning and development; creating opportunities for people to learn and develop

Supporting relationships and people who are LGBT+

Within some cultures some people who receive support are deprived of the opportunity to develop their sexual identity, expression, and relationships, or enjoy family life in the same way as anyone else. Barriers can include: Staff lack of knowledge about the law and people's rights. Staff or family personal, cultural or religious beliefs. Shared accommodation and lack of privacy These barriers can increase for someone who is LGBT+.

Regional cultures and traditions

Each person's accent and dialect can be a source of great pride and an important expression of cultural identity.

Other people can use this information to help work out where we are from and may say things like "Are you a northerner?" or "You sound like you're a southerner".

Even in a small country like England, there's a range of words for the same thing. For example:

What do you call a narrow walkway between two buildings?

- Alley, alleyway, twitten, ginnel, gennel, snicket, vennel, eight-foot.

What do you call potatoes?

- Potatoes, spuds, tatties, chips.

What do you call a baby/child?

- Babby, bairn, nipper, infant, kiddie, tot, pickney.

Similar with food it's important not to make assumptions as some terminology can be widely accepted but offensive to some.

e.g. 'A' is a black Caribbean woman who enjoys food such as rice and peas, plantain and fried eggs for breakfast, cabbage with sweet pepper and onion steamed together. On Sundays, she enjoys a roast dinner.

Supporting staff cultural competence to support our young people

A culturally inclusive environment involves more than just acknowledging diversity. It requires intentional design and representation. Creating physical spaces that reflect and respect diverse cultures helps children feel a sense of belonging. Incorporating diverse materials, books, and resources that represent different cultural backgrounds ensures that children can see themselves and their cultures represented positively. Organizing multicultural events, celebrations, and activities promotes cross-cultural interactions and fosters a sense of unity among children from different backgrounds.

As with most things supporting your staff to be culturally aware starts with you. Learn about yourself. Get started by exploring your own historical roots, beliefs and values.

1. Learn about different cultures;
2. Interact with diverse groups;
3. Attend diversity-focused conferences and training;
4. Lobby your department.

Challenges for practitioners

One of the biggest challenges for social care professionals is about whether or not they view cultural competence as achievable or as idealistic. It could be argued that a practitioner can never achieve cultural 'competence' because of the fluid nature of what is perceived as 'cultural', and that what we ought to strive for is cultural consciousness.

In addition to this, there is the view that cultural competence promotes 'othering' by assuming that social care professionals will be from the dominant or majority culture.

Whatever the perceived or actual challenges associated with cultural competence, social care professionals are required to acknowledge the importance of it in their engagement with service users and also recognise their professional commitment of 'respect for diversities' and promotion of social justice and human rights.

Tips for developing culturally competent social care practitioners:

- Encourage staff to spend some time getting to know their colleague, do not rush meetings and interventions.
- Be continually aware of the social care values you have signed up to as a practitioner.
- Be self-aware – remember your personal cultural values and beliefs.
- Remember the service user or colleague is the expert of their experience, adopt a position of 'not knowing' and be ready to learn.
- Reflect on the power of language. Language empowers and can also leave a person wounded.
- Encourage staff not make assumptions about service users or colleagues because they perceive that they come from a similar background to another person you know.
- Resist tokenism or simple 'box ticking' as a means of evidencing your cultural competence.
- Be flexible, not rigid, particularly when using existing frameworks and tools.
- Access training and guidance to stay current.