



**Safeguarding  
Adults Board**  
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

**Leicester**  
**Safeguarding**  
Adults Board

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP  
TO KEEP ADULTS SAFE

**The Mental Capacity  
Act and safeguarding  
adults: what good  
looks like.**

Building Communities of  
Practice (CoP) in your area



**All about the  
Mental  
Capacity Act  
2005 and  
safeguarding  
adults in a  
bitesize series:**

**Click on a topic  
to go straight  
there.**

**Contents**

Why this topic?	2
What is a Community of Practice (CoP)	2
Why is it a good idea?	2
What do I need to start a CoP?	3
Tools and resources	3
How can I tell if our CoP is successful?	4
Case studies	5
How the Safeguarding Adults Boards can support you	6
Tell us about it	6

## Why this topic?

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) is a complex topic and staff can benefit from sharing case detail in a safe space amongst staff who are also completing MCA assessments. It is a good idea to carve out time in busy schedules to reflect on MCA assessments you have completed and share with colleagues what went well, what didn't go so well and explore why to enhance your practice. Other colleagues can support and problem solve. This builds confidence and instills knowledge on this difficult area of work and continuing professional development.

## What is a Community of Practice?

*"Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis."*

They are a method of sharing knowledge and helping colleagues share ideas, question and learn.



## What defines members of a Community of Practice?

- A common purpose
- Support and encouragement
- Sharing of ideas
- Shared challenges
- Wanting the best for people who use our services and from practice
- Willingness to learn from one another
- Willingness to ask tough questions in a safe space.
- Patience, flexibility and support

*A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who "share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."*



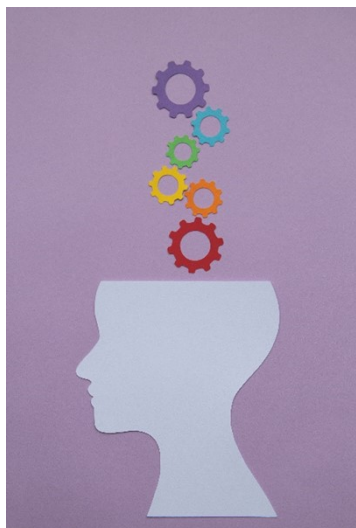
## Why are Community of Practices a good idea?

A CoP is about creating a 'doing and learning environment' for a network of individuals with common problems or interests who get together to:

explore ways of working    identify common solutions    share good practice and ideas    learn

According to Wenger (1998), communities of practice provide five critical functions. They:

1. Educate by collecting and sharing information related to questions and issues of practice
2. Support by organizing interactions and collaboration among members
3. Cultivate by assisting groups to start and sustain their learning
4. Encourage by promoting the work of members through discussion and sharing
5. Integrate by encouraging members to use their new knowledge for real change in their own work.



<b>Problem solving</b>	How can rethinking the role of X support a more inclusive approach?
<b>Requests for information</b>	Where can I find an example of X
<b>Seeking experiences</b>	Has anyone had a similar experience?
<b>Reusing assets</b>	I have information from a similar session I facilitated. You are welcome to use these materials and resources.
<b>Coordination and synergy</b>	Can we combine our X to achieve Y
<b>Discussing developments</b>	What do you think of X
<b>Documentation projects</b>	We have set up something like this before, let's record the process
<b>Visits</b>	Can we visit your X to see a working example
<b>Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps</b>	Who knows what already – what are we missing?

Adapted from Wenger, McDermott & Snyder

## What do I need to start a Community of Practice?





**Many communities of practice rely on face-to-face meetings as well as web-based collaborative environments to communicate, connect and conduct community activities.**



**A community of practice for educators typically has a finite life span, and moves through a series of predictable and overlapping phases:**



 You do not necessarily have to create something new – you can adapt existing team or service meetings to find sections periodically to focus on MCA discussions. Communities of practice are not called that in all organisations. They may be known under various names Network, Forums, Groups etc. You may already have one. In fact, communities of practice are everywhere. They may be multi-agency or single agency, organisational wide or within services and teams.

 Time is a challenge for most communities, members have to handle competing priorities. Theoretically, time should not be an issue if the interest is there, but practically it remains a constant challenge. Because time is at such a premium, a key principle of community cultivation is to ensure “high value for time” for all those who invest themselves.



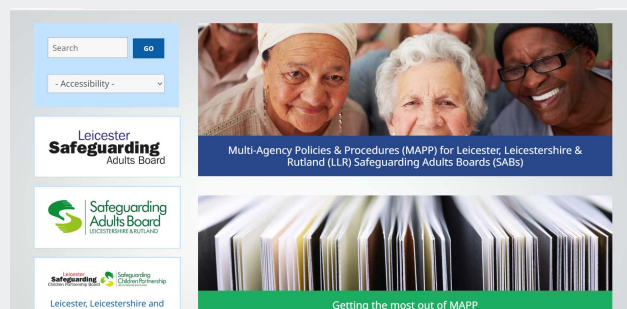
## Tools useful for creating a Community of Practice

- Microsoft Teams – popular for video and audio conferences and chat logs with interactive elements and sharing screens.
- Polls, surveys and forms to gauge consensus, ask opinions or check in
- Storytelling
- Social media hashtags
- Intranet chat forums or team spaces (ensure secure space)
- SharePoint spaces or One Drives to share documents - build a library of resources which can be added to and shared with new members
- Memorandum of understanding for the group
- One page profiles to get introductions from your members and understand the level of experience of group members and encourage networking.
- For large group it is recommended a facilitator or moderator helps organise meetings or guides discussions.



### Use the Safeguarding Adults Boards MCA resources as discussion points

- ✓ MCA procedures
- ✓ Self neglect and hoarding guidance
- ✓ MCA How to guides
- ✓ MCA what good looks like series
- ✓ 7-minute briefings
- ✓ Learning from reviews in Leicester and Leicestershire
- ✓ YouTube channel
- ✓ Safeguarding Matters publications
- ✓ Safeguarding Matters live event recordings





# How can I tell if my Community of Practice is successful?

- Ongoing attendance/ recruitment of members
- Tapping into the expertise of local and international experts
- Addressing details of practice
- Establishing the right rhythm and mix of activities for your group.
- Having visible support of organisational leaders, but without micro-management
- Accessing adequate resources in order to reduce barriers to participation.



Why focus on communities of practice?		
	for members	for organizations
short-term value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• help with challenges</li><li>• access to expertise</li><li>• confidence</li><li>• fun with colleagues</li><li>• meaningful work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• problem solving</li><li>• time saving</li><li>• knowledge sharing</li><li>• synergies across sectors/districts</li><li>• reuse of resources</li></ul>
long-term value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• personal development</li><li>• enhanced reputation</li><li>• professional identity</li><li>• networking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strategic capabilities</li><li>• keeping up-to-date</li><li>• innovation</li><li>• retention of talents</li><li>• new strategies</li></ul>
From: Wenger's <i>Cultivating Communities of Practice: a quick start-up guide</i>		

## Case Study

The Safeguarding Adults Boards run an MCA Provider Forum to support understanding and awareness of the MCA and include presentations, requirements of decision makers, code of practice, signposting to resources and templates, case studies and practical tasks to work through and build confidence in using MCA within the workplace.

These are held four times over the year in different venues across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. There is an expectation that at least one member of staff from a provider organisation attends at least one of these sessions and feedback into their organisation at a minimum; however, staff are welcome to attend more than one session and bring more members of staff with along subject to spaces being available. Spaces at events vary from 50-150 places due to venue restrictions.

During the sessions staff will:

- Understand the requirements of the Act
- When you need to complete an MCA
- Be supported to complete a capacity assessment
- Discuss and share local best practice / ways of working
- Network with other providers across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

The first forum was hosted in Leicester by Ann Forde, Quality Assurance & Compliance Manager at Leicester City Council. Ann has a wealth of experience in supporting services to meet both regulatory and contractual obligations. During the session Ann shares assessment templates, local guides and her experiences as well as providing a question and answer session. Subsequent sessions will be supported by Ann Forde, Leicester City Council, Caroline Bysouth-Rose, Rutland County Council and Natalie X Smith, Leicestershire County Council.

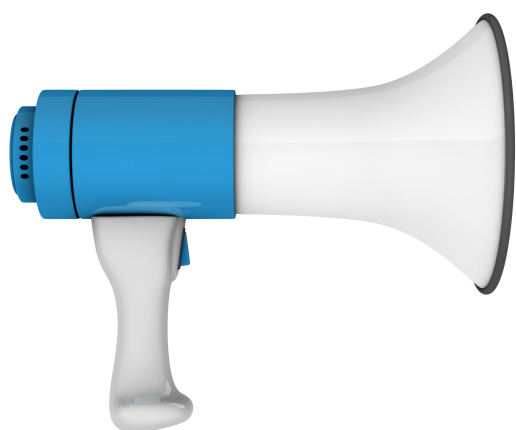
# How the Safeguarding Adults Boards can support your Community of Practice?

The Safeguarding Adults Boards can:

- ✓ Help connect you to other CoPs in organisations,
- ✓ Signpost to our new and existing resources and procedures.
- ✓ Link you up with other board members who also have communities of practice so you can share knowledge and best practice.
- ✓ Recommend experts in the field.
- ✓ Pick up on recurring themes/ areas across agencies and provide multi-agency training or additional resources.
- ✓ Share learning from local and national Safeguarding Adults Reviews.
- ✓ Can keep a running list of communities of practice happening across the area and coordinate coming together periodically as whole area events.

## Tell us about it!

We'd love to hear if you've started a community of practice in your organisation themed around the Mental Capacity Act. We would welcome case studies we can share as success stories for our Safeguarding Matters publication. Feel something isn't working quite right or something's missing? What topics do people struggle with over and over again? Is there a resource which you've found elsewhere which would be good for us to adapt for local use? Let us know and the Safeguarding Adults Board's Learning and Development Group can review requests for producing multi-agency resources or training.



To contact our Safeguarding Adults Board offices please email



**LSAB@leicester.gov.uk (Leicester city);**



**lrspbo@leics.gov.uk (Leicestershire and Rutland)**

Resources cited to create this document:

- Communities of Practice | Knowledge and Library Services
- Home - Community of Practice webpage
- Introduction to Communities of Practice - Wenger-Trayner
- How to build a Community of Practice (with examples)

### Other topics in this "MCA What Good Looks Like" series include...

- About Capacity, the Act and the Court of Protection
- Assessment Forms and Expected Standards
- Best Interest Decision Making Process
- Next of Kin, Living Wills, Attorneys, Deputies and Office of the Public Guardian... and more!