

Mental Health Social Work CPD Development Programme

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Programme Overview Coventry City Council Pre-AMHP and MHSW 2026

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Our Approach

All our courses use case examples and peer based critical reflection to explore ideas. Multi-agency Policy, Protocols and Practitioner Guidance document will be used and embedded into each course, and the use of risk assessments and analysis tools will be explored, as will methods of case review to enable better, more personal, outcomes for the individual.

Active learning with a practical focus will be used throughout all our sessions, with an emphasis on how to apply the knowledge from the sessions to practice. Learning outcomes and content, across our domestic abuse programmes, reflect current practice, policy, law and guidance, and are designed to support application to mental health social work practice and the AMHP role.

This training is delivered using an online interactive classroom approach and all delegates will be expected to take part to ensure an effective adult learning experience. Using whiteboards and breakout rooms, a combination of learning methods will be used throughout the day, including trainer presentation and group work in the form of case studies and reflection dilemmas to support application to practice. Local templates and expectations will be embedded in the programme where required and appropriate.

Delegate Resources Required

All delegates will need a laptop with a functioning Mic and Camera to allow effective participation. Laptops should have an up-to-date Browser such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. Where possible delegates should be using the MS Teams App and have ensured it is fully updated. For health and safety reasons we do not permit delegates to take part in training solely via a Smartphone as this can create eyestrain and is not viable for using the resources we provide as part of the training.

We require the email addresses of delegates 7 days prior to the training. We host the training to ensure we can use all the features of our interactive approach. Delegates will receive a meeting invite 5-7 days before the programme is due to take place (subject to receiving details in good time).

Based on our experience over the last 18 months, we emphasis the following to ensure delegates safety is maintained and the opportunities to engage in the training is maximised:

- All delegates have a Mic, Camera & up-to-date browser to enable participation.
- All delegates know participation is mandatory, it's not a webinar!
- All delegates know they must not drive while training and they must follow Covid-secure protocols. We will inform you of any breaches to these critical health & safety procedures and reserve the right to ask delegates to leave.
- All delegates are encouraged to join the team at least 1 day before training.
- L&D make us aware of any additional learning needs (e.g.: dyslexia, sight/hearing impairments) and any adjustments we can make.
- Registers are provided in editable XLS format and tell us the person's role & remit (e.g., Manager, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Nurse, Adult or Children's Social Care) so that we can tailor our examples to the delegates in the room.

Wherever possible work emails should be used, if the authority provides private emails for candidates, they should have sought the relevant consent in advance from relevant delegates to share this information, as per organisational GDPR arrangements. Private email addresses can be removed from our system by request as per our GDPR and Privacy Policies (these can be accessed via our website www.dcc-i.co.uk or a copy provided on request).

Programme Values Statement

This programme is grounded in a clear set of values that shape how learning is designed, delivered, and experienced. At its heart, this programme starts from the belief that social work matters, and that mental health social work brings a distinct, vital contribution grounded in rights, relationships, and social context. We value professional judgement, critical thinking, and curiosity over compliance or formulaic practice.

We recognise that social workers practise within complex systems that can blur roles, constrain professional voice, and place pressure on identity. This programme creates space to pause, reflect, and reconnect with purpose, rather than adding to performance or productivity demands. Learning here is reflective, relational, and strengths-based. Participants are treated as experienced professionals who bring knowledge, insight, and lived understanding to the learning space. Peer discussion is used to support sense-making, not consensus.

We are committed to neurodiversity-affirming and inclusive learning. There is no single way to engage, reflect, or participate. Choice, flexibility, and psychological safety are intentionally built in so learners can work in ways that are sustainable and authentic.

Above all, this programme values professional integrity, supporting social workers to practise in ways that are ethically grounded, defensible, and aligned with their values, even when systems make that difficult.

Neurodiversity (ND) & Accessibility

This module has been designed with neurodiversity-affirming and accessibility principles in mind. We recognise that social workers, like the people they work with, think, process, and engage in different ways. There is no single “right” way to learn, reflect, or participate.

[#NDBelongsinSocialWork](#) [#NDInclusion](#) [#ADHDUK](#)

Our approach

- **Multiple ways in:** Content is offered through reading, reflection prompts, peer discussion, and optional journalling so learners can engage in ways that suit their cognitive style, energy, and capacity.
- **Choice and flexibility:** Colleagues are encouraged to choose which optional readings to engage with, how deeply to reflect, and whether to process learning individually or with others.
- **Psychological safety:** Reflection and peer discussion activities are designed as sense-making spaces, not performance or assessment exercises. Uncertainty, disagreement, and partial understanding are expected and valued.
- **Clarity over volume:** Materials are structured, signposted, and chunked to support focus and reduce cognitive overload. Learners are not expected to read everything.

Practical accessibility notes

- You are welcome to take breaks, skim sections, or return to materials later
- Written reflections can be brief, bullet-pointed, or informal
- Peer discussions can be observed quietly as well as actively contributed to
- There is no requirement to disclose neurodivergence or personal needs

A strengths-based stance

Neurodivergent ways of thinking, including ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and others, bring strengths to social work, such as creativity, pattern-spotting, empathy, and critical questioning. This programme aims to support those strengths rather than require learners to mask or conform.

If you need to adapt how you engage with this module to make it work for you, or need us to provide materials in a particular way, please let us know - it is entirely valid and encouraged.

Introduction to the Programme:

This programme includes a four-day online training programme designed to strengthen the knowledge and practice of Mental Health Social Workers, including those preparing for or considering the Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) training pathway. The programme will also be open to participants from other local authorities across the region, fostering a broader exchange of perspectives and experiences. Delivered virtually between April and October 2026, each session will focus on a key area of practice: Anti-Discriminatory Practice, Risk and Risk Management, Models of Mental Illness, and Interviewing in a Suitable Manner.

Pre-AMHP Pathway: Module Workbook

A dedicated workbook will accompany the programme, offering structured guidance and reflective activities tailored to those on the AMHP pathway. By completing this blended learning bolt-on, participants will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of core mental health frameworks, enhanced their critical thinking and critically reflect on their decision-making skills, with the aim of developing greater confidence in applying legal frameworks, ethical, inclusive, and evidence-informed approaches as a precursor to commencing the full AMHP training programme.

Workbook Structure

Each participant will receive a comprehensive workbook designed to complement the training sessions and support continued learning beyond the training days. The workbook will be structured consistently across all four topics, with tailored content for each session.

- **Section 1: Welcome and Induction**
 - Overview of the training programme
 - Learning objectives for the session
 - How to use the workbook
 - Space for personal goals and reflections

- **Section 2: Key Concepts and Frameworks**
 - Definitions and theoretical models relevant to the topic
 - Diagrams, charts, and visual aids to support understanding
 - Summary of relevant legislation, policy, and guidance

- **Section 3: Practice-Based Scenarios**
 - Case studies and vignettes for group discussion
 - Prompts for critical thinking and ethical reflection
 - Suggested questions for supervision or team discussion

- **Section 4: Tools and Techniques**
 - Practical tools, templates, and checklists
 - Communication strategies and interviewing tips
 - Risk assessment or decision-making frameworks (where applicable)

- **Section 5: Reflective Practice**
 - Guided reflection exercises
 - Journaling prompts linked to the topic
 - Space for personal insights and learning points
- **Section 6: Further Learning and Resources**
 - Recommended reading and multimedia resources
 - Links to relevant legislation, research, and best practice
 - Suggestions for CPD and follow-up activities

Classroom Programme Overview:

Each training day will focus on a distinct topic, allowing participants to engage deeply with the material and apply learning to their practice. The sessions will be interactive, reflective, and grounded in real-world scenarios relevant to mental health social work.

Who Should Attend

- Mental Health Social Workers currently in practice
- Practitioners considering AMHP training
- Staff from regional local authorities with an interest in mental health practice.

Learning Environment

The training will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams in a dynamic, supportive, and inclusive environment. Each session will be fully interactive, making full use of the platform's features—including breakout rooms, live polls, shared whiteboards, and chat-based Q&A—to engage participants and accommodate a range of learning styles.

The structure will blend short presentations with collaborative group work, real-world case studies, and reflective exercises. This approach is designed to foster open discussion, critical thinking, and shared learning, ensuring that all participants—whether new to the subject or preparing for the AMHP pathway—feel included, heard, and supported throughout.

Session 1: Anti-discriminatory Practice

This session will explore the principles and application of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in mental health social work. Participants will examine how structural inequalities, unconscious bias, and intersectionality impact service users and influence professional decision-making.

The session will include case studies and reflective exercises to support ethical and inclusive practice.

Key Areas:

- Understanding discrimination and oppression in mental health contexts
- Cultural competence and intersectionality
- Legal and ethical frameworks
- Strategies for promoting equity in practice

Session 2: Risk & Risk Management

This session will focus on assessing and managing risk in complex mental health scenarios. Participants will explore the balance between risk enablement and safeguarding, and how to apply defensible decision-making in high-pressure environments.

Key Areas:

- Types of risk in mental health settings and within the MHA context.
- Risk assessment tools and frameworks
- Collaborative risk management
- Recording and communicating risk decisions

Session 3: Models of Mental Illness

This session will provide an overview of key models used to understand mental illness, including medical, psychological, and social approaches. Participants will critically evaluate how these models influence assessment, intervention, and multi-agency working.

Key Areas:

- Overview of medical, psychological, and social models
- Strengths and limitations of each model
- Impact on service user experience and outcomes
- Integrating models in practice

Session 4: Section 13 – Interviewing in a Suitable Manner & Whole Circumstances.

This session will develop participants' skills in conducting interviews that are person-centred, trauma-informed, and legally sound. Emphasis will be placed on communication strategies that build trust and elicit meaningful information in a respectful and ethical way.

Key Areas:

- Principles of effective interviewing
- Adapting communication to diverse needs
- Trauma-informed and rights-based approaches
- Interviewing in the context of Mental Health Act assessments