



Gwneud i bob cyswllt gyfrif  
Making every contact count



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# Knowledge and Skill Framework for Making Every Contact Count in Wales

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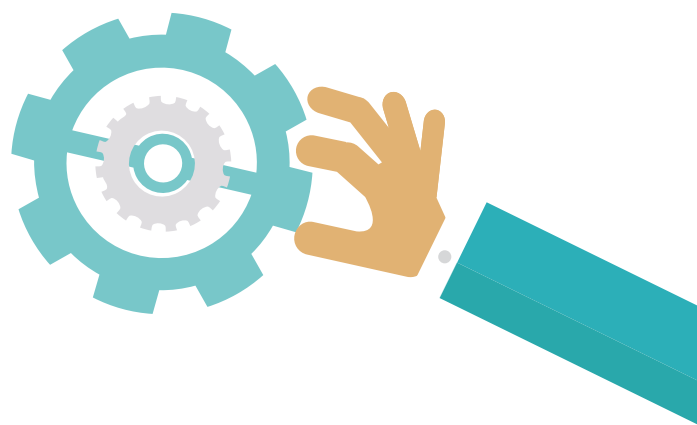


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# Contents

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1.	<b>Foreword</b>	2
2.	<b>Background</b>	3
3.	<b>Foundation for Making Every Contact Count</b>	4
4.	<b>MECC Knowledge and Skills Framework</b>	5
5.	<b>Framework to support MECC</b>	6
6.	<b>Underpinning Knowledge and Skills</b>	8
7.	<b>Level 1 MECC Competencies: Brief Advice and Healthy Chat</b>	9
8.	<b>Level 2 MECC Competencies: Brief Interventions</b>	12
9.	<b>References</b>	14



# 1 Foreword

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an approach to addressing health-harming behaviours that attempts to use the thousands of every day conversations and interactions people have with public sector workers to help improve and protect health and well-being.

Close to half the burden of disease in developed countries like ours is down to the four key health-harming behaviours – smoking, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and poor diet (Kings Fund, 2012). Making Every Contact Count towards reducing this burden of disease is critical not only for the health and wellbeing of individuals but also for society, as it attempts to meet increasing healthcare needs.

Developing and enhancing the preventative role of staff aligns closely with one of the NHS Wales' Core Principles:

*'We focus on wellbeing and prevention. We strive to improve health and remove inequities by working together with the people of Wales so as to ensure their wellbeing now and in future years and generations (2016).*

It also contributes to each of the other core principles of putting patients/service users first; continuously learning and improving care; working in partnership and as a team; and valuing those that work for the NHS.

Many staff already routinely address and support lifestyle behaviour change as part of their practice. Making Every Contact Count is a systematic approach to encourage and support more staff to have more of these conversations and to have more effective conversations.

Excellent work is taking place across Wales ensuring that people working in key roles have the skills and confidence to talk to people about making changes to improve their health and wellbeing.

This framework is designed to build on current good practice and support the development of innovation by identifying the essential knowledge and skills that underpin effective conversations in a range of situations. It will support the development of consistent and high quality training that is tailored to local need.

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Public Health Wales NHS Trust  
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**Acknowledgement:** Some content in this paper draws on publications developed by Public Health England and Health Education England; NHS Yorkshire and the Humber Competence Framework; Kent, Surrey and Sussex Competency Framework. We are grateful also to colleagues across Wales for informing the development of this document.

## 2 Background

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is the term used widely to describe the mechanism of brief advice and behaviour change interventions. It is an approach that supports public facing workers to use opportunities during routine contacts to enable people to consider their health and wellbeing, and healthy behaviour changes to help maintain or improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing. This involves initiating a brief conversation, and where appropriate directing patients/clients to local services for more support and help, or making 'unsupported' changes to health-harming behaviours.

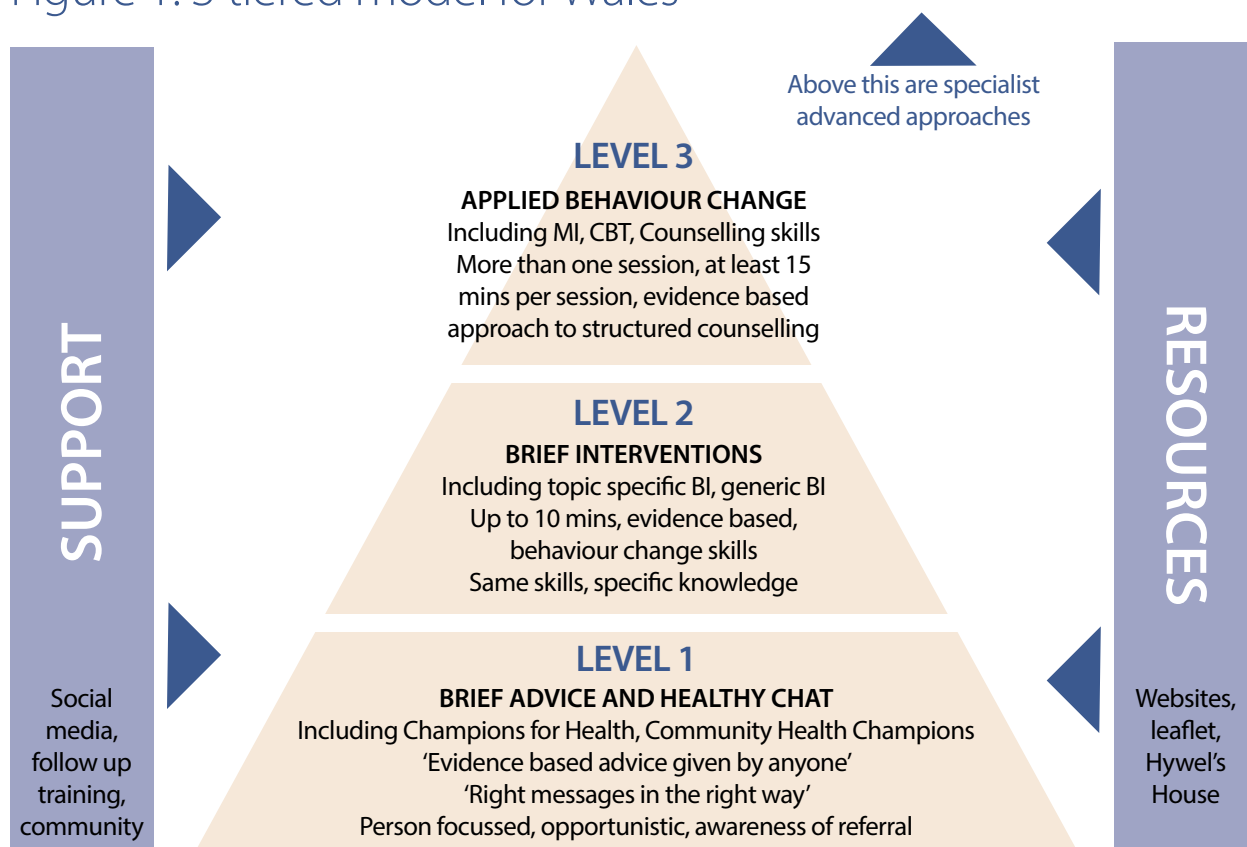
MECC is a holistic approach that uses the day to day interactions and longer term relationships that health professionals have with their patients to support them to make healthier choices.

Non-communicable diseases (NCD's), including cardiovascular diseases (CVD's), diabetes, obesity, cancer and respiratory diseases are a major cause of death and disability in the UK and worldwide (World Health Organization, (WHO), 2003). Modifiable risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol, high blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI and high sugar levels independently and often in combination, are the major causes of these diseases. These risks can be reduced by encouraging and supporting individuals to make changes to improve their mental wellbeing and reduce health harming behaviours such as smoking, unhealthy eating, physical inactivity and drinking more than the guideline amount of alcohol.

A mapping exercise undertaken by the all Wales MECC working group in 2015 to inform the *All Wales System to deliver MECC* found that work is being undertaken at national level, and all local public health teams are involved in some activity relating to MECC. There was local variation in the strategic focus and development of the work but a number of common areas of work were identified which would benefit from a 'once for Wales' approach. The development of a knowledge and skills framework for MECC aligned to the 3 tier model adopted for MECC in Wales (Figure 1.) was identified as one of these elements.

This framework is based on documents developed by Public Health England (PHE) and Health Education England (HEE) as one of a suite of MECC publications (2016). Elements drawn from the 2016 documents are reused here under the terms of the Open Government License v3.0.

Figure 1. 3 tiered model for Wales



### 3 Foundation for Making Every Contact Count

Four elements are recognised as conducive to the effectiveness of MECC and MECC programmes:

#### 1. Organisational readiness:

Supporting development of local leadership, governance arrangements and pathways for MECC, based on a clear recognition of the value and importance of seizing opportunities to have conversations designed to change health harming behaviours.

#### 2. Staff readiness:

Supporting managers and service leads to champion and implement MECC, enabling staff to develop an awareness of why MECC is everyone's responsibility.

#### 3. Training:

The delivery of training frontline staff to enable them to feel confident and equipped with MECC skills; to engage in healthy conversations and signpost to support services where necessary.

#### 4. Delivery:

The delivery of a MECC intervention to patients, clients and colleagues.

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## 4 MECC Knowledge and Skills Framework

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This Knowledge and Skills Framework outlines the essential knowledge and skills required at each of the tiers in the three tiered model in Figure 1. It is informed by NICE guidance, the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), National Occupational Standards (NOS) and National Workforce Competence (NWC).

The framework is designed to inform training needs assessment as well as the development and evaluation of appropriate training and support. It can be used by those involved in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services as well as by individuals interested in their own professional development.

This knowledge and skills framework identifies the set of abilities that empower staff working particularly in health services, but also potentially in other organisations, to recognise the role they have in promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting behaviour change and contributing to reducing the risk of chronic disease.

Recognising the knowledge and skills needed and developing approaches to realise this is a key element in systematically seizing more opportunities for these types of conversation, and building momentum.

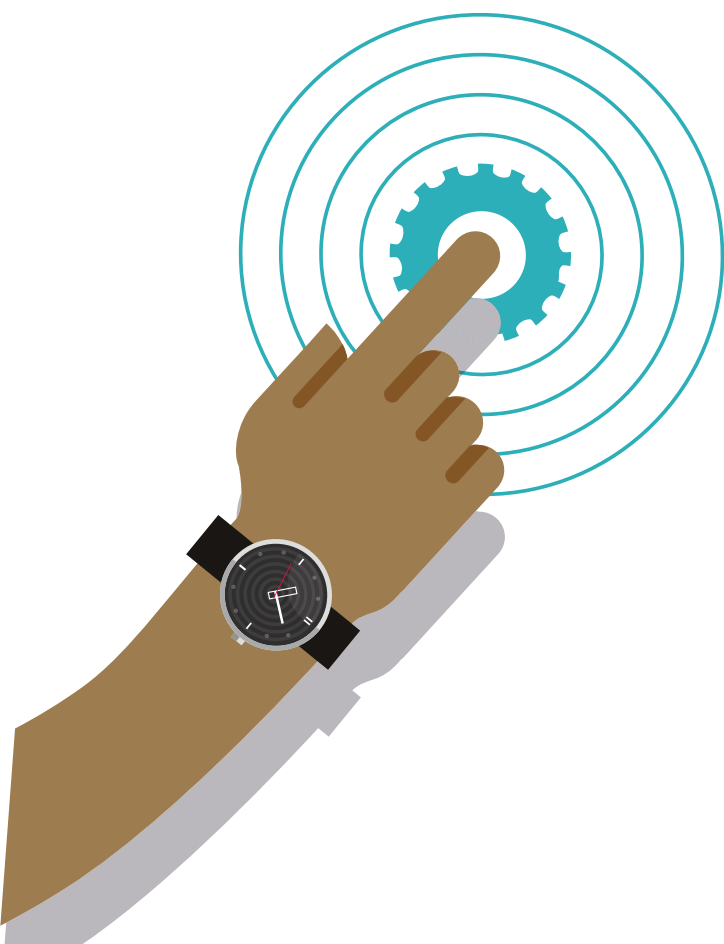
The framework provides a mechanism to ensure systematic, measurable and evidenced development of the workforce. It also acknowledges the complexity and the challenging factors affecting health and wellbeing behaviour and operates from the premise of starting from where the person is and considers behaviour change in the context of the wider and social determinants of health.

## 5 Framework to support MECC

The framework is a supportive mechanism that provides the infrastructure to facilitate workforce development activities and strategies that deliver the public health and NHS policies, strategies and related outcomes designed to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations.

The framework outlines the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of the 3 tiered model required for effective practice at: Level 1 brief advice and healthy chat; Level 2 brief intervention; Level 3 applied behaviour change, this level signposts more specialist, advanced and behaviour specific approaches that have their own recognised competences.

The basis for the knowledge and skills framework are drawn from existing competences developed by Skills for Health and other skills bodies. The competences identified are not exhaustive, they are designed to assist to identify the level of knowledge and skills required to deliver services, and present the range of knowledge, skills and performance that is associated with prevention and lifestyle behaviour change.



LEVEL 1 brief advice and healthy chat	LEVEL 2 brief intervention	LEVEL 3 applied behaviour change
The worker is able to engage with individuals and use basic skills of awareness, engagement and communication to introduce the idea of lifestyle change and to motivate individuals to consider/think about making a change to their lifestyle behaviours	The worker is able to select and use brief lifestyle behaviour change techniques – brief interventions that help individuals take action about their lifestyle behaviour choices which may include stopping, starting, decreasing or increasing lifestyle behaviour activities	Specialist advanced or lifestyle and behaviour specific behaviour change approaches to support individuals.
1.1 Recognise public health is everyone's business	2.1 Select and implement appropriate brief lifestyle intervention or signpost	3.1 Specialist/advance or lifestyle and behaviour specific approaches include motivational interviewing, cognitive behaviour therapies (CBT), counselling and solutions focused therapies
1.2 Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and wellbeing of individuals	2.2 Enable individuals to change their behaviour to improve their own health and wellbeing	
1.3 Start a healthy conversation with an individual about their health behaviours and/or lifestyle	2.3 Undertake brief intervention	
1.4 Support individuals to make informed choices about their health and lifestyle	2.4 Recording MECC activities	
1.5 Support and enable individuals to access appropriate information to manage their health behaviours and self care needs		
1.6 Provide a opportunistic brief intervention		

## 6 Underpinning Knowledge and Skills

The MECC approach is based on workforce competence and achievement of skill. These build from a core underpinning knowledge set and cascade out to locally defined learning.

These set out the core underpinning knowledge that practitioners should be aware of and the skills required to have a healthy brief advice and healthy chat conversation.

It is acknowledged that the opportunities to deliver MECC within individual roles will differ by professional groups where it will need to be tailored to maximise impact.

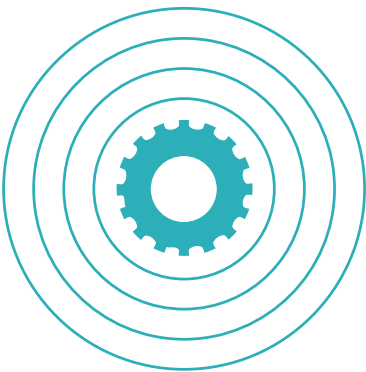


## 7 Level 1 MECC Competencies: Brief Advice and Healthy Chat

Level 1 MECC Competencies	
Brief Advice and Healthy Chat	
Overarching Competence	Learning Outcomes
Competence 1.1 - Knowledge  Recognise public health is everyone's business	Knowledge of definitions of health, wellbeing and public health
	Understanding of population health vs individual health
	Understanding the wider determinants of health, the role of health inequality and know the things that affect health and wellbeing
	Know the major cause of premature death, long term conditions and poor health and the link to behaviour i.e. individual determinants
	Understand the origins of MECC, the NICE guidance and MECC's aims
	Hold a core knowledge of MECC messages around healthy eating and healthy weight, physical activity, alcohol, smoking, emotional wellbeing and mental health and immunisation
Competence 1.2 - Knowledge  Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and wellbeing of individuals	Understand the importance of confidentiality, health and safety, equality and diversity
	Understand your own role, scope and responsibilities and from whom assistance and advice should be sought if necessary
	Understand the importance of checking the validity of advice and information and how to ensure accuracy, currency, sufficiency and relevance of advice and information
	Know opportunities to start a health conversation
Competence 1.3 – Skill  Start a healthy conversation with an individual about their health behaviours and/or lifestyle	Understand how to ask questions, listen carefully and summarise back and obtain clear information from an individual
	Understand the level of information to provide to individuals (i.e. know what to say)
	Ask – Know how to raise the issue with simple questions during appropriate day to day contact with someone
	Assess – Know how to check individuals knowledge
	Understand how to communicate advice and information effectively both through speaking and writing
	Understand how different individuals react to information

Level 1 MECC Competencies	
Brief Advice and Healthy Chat	
Overarching Competence	Learning Outcomes
Competence 1.4 – Skill  Support individuals to make informed choices about their health and lifestyle	Know that health and illness is affected by people's perceptions and is different in different societies and groups i.e. culture and social context
	Know the kinds of misinformation that people may have about health and wellbeing and the affect of this on their behaviour
	Know the different arguments that people have against promoting health and wellbeing and how to use counter-arguments
	Know how to communicate in a way that is appropriate to the individual, encourages an open and frank exchange of views
	Acknowledges an individuals right to make their own decisions and helps them make them
	Know how to encourage individuals to identify their views about health and wellbeing
	Advise – Know how to give messages about healthy lifestyle change and tips to achieve them
Competence 1.5 – Knowledge and Skill  Support and enable individuals to access appropriate information to manage their health behaviours and self care needs	Know how to help individuals identify the support available within their own support groups
	Know how to develop and present a reasoned case when providing advice to others
	Understand the importance of confirming the recipients understanding of information and advice provided and how to do this
	Know how to communicate in a way that is open to the range of issues an individual may wish to explore
	Know how to provide clear, up-to-date and relevant information to individuals
Competence 1.6 – Skill  Provide a opportunistic brief intervention	Assist – Know how to share information
	Know how to assess readiness to change i.e. is this the right opportunity?
	Know about the importance of change (benefits and disadvantages of changing)
	Know how to provide clear, up-to-date and relevant information to individuals about the things that they can do to improve their health and wellbeing

Level 1 MECC Competencies	
Brief Advice and Healthy Chat	
Overarching Competence	Learning Outcomes
	Ask – Know how to raise the issue with simple questions during day to day contact with someone
	Assess – Know how to check knowledge and assess readiness to change
	Advise – Know how to give messages about healthy lifestyle change and tips to achieve them
	Assist – Know how to share information



## 8 Level 2 MECC Competencies: Brief Interventions

The following outline the core underpinning knowledge and the skills required to undertake brief intervention.

Level 2 MECC Competencies	
Brief Interventions	
Overarching Competence	Learning Outcomes
Competence 2.1 – Knowledge and Skill  Select and implement appropriate brief lifestyle intervention or signpost	Know how to apply negotiating and influencing skills with others to promote health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities
	Encourage individuals to identify their knowledge and skills about health and wellbeing and any gaps in these i.e. Ask – Know how to raise the issue with simple questions during day to day contact with someone  Assess – Know how to check knowledge and assess readiness to change
Competence 2.2 – Skill  Enable individuals to change their behaviour to improve their own health and wellbeing	Understand how individuals can assess how their behaviour is affecting their health and wellbeing
	Understand the importance of motivation and confidence in behaviour change and how to assess e.g. use of tools
	Know how to encourage individuals to identify the things that are affecting their health and wellbeing
	Know how to encourage individuals to identify changes to their behaviour that might benefit their health and wellbeing
Competence 2.3 – Skill  Undertake brief intervention	Know how to encourage individuals to take responsibility for changing their own behaviour
	Assess – Know how to check knowledge and readiness to change
	Know the contributions of different agencies to promoting individuals' health and wellbeing and how to contact these agencies
	Understand the importance of keeping your knowledge updated
	Demonstrate how to enable individuals to access appropriate support

Level 2 MECC Competencies	
Brief Interventions	
Overarching Competence	Learning Outcomes
	Know how to provide clear, up to date information about other people and agencies who might be able to help individuals improve their health and wellbeing
	Have information availability of other support networks and agencies (e.g. methods of contacting, opening times etc.)
	Know how to provide information on availability of other support networks and agencies
	Assist – Know how to share information or encourage people to contact relevant support networks, agencies or organisations
	Recognise the importance of seeking feedback on the quality and relevance of the advice and information provided
Competence 2.4 – Skill Recording MECC activities	Understand the importance of recording MECC contact for individual and practitioners benefit
	Know how to record MECC data as appropriate recognising confidentiality and consent

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