# 5 Key Principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005

The MCA is underpinned by five key principles, these are as follows;

* **Assume capacity -** The first principle says that:

*‘A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks Capacity’.*

* **Support people to make their own decisions -** The second principle says that:

*'A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success’.*

* **People can make unwise decisions -** The third principle says that:

*'A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an unwise decision’.*

* **Best Interests -** The fourth principle says that:

*‘An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must, be done, or made, in their best interests’.*

* **Limit restrictions to the least restrictive option -** The fifth principle says that:

*‘Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the persons rights and freedom of action’.*

These key principles must inform everything you do when you are providing care or treatment for someone who lacks capacity.