

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness

Unit code: F1E1 33

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed for those who provide basic advice: ie Type 1 advice on housing law to service users in a housing and/or advice setting. Candidates may be working, either as volunteers or in paid employment, for an agency or organisation which offers housing law advice. The Unit will normally be delivered as part of the Professional Development Award: Housing Law Advice, level 6.

The candidate will develop basic knowledge of the legislation relating to homelessness and of local authority provision for homeless persons. In particular, this Unit focuses on helping the candidate to identify when the local authority has a duty to provide a homeless applicant with permanent accommodation.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Identify the main issues relating to homelessness.
- 2 Identify current legislation on homelessness.
- 3 Describe the role of the local authority in supporting homeless persons.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 6: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Entry is at the discretion of the centre. No prior knowledge is required for this Unit. It would, however, it would be beneficial for candidates to be working for, or planning to work for, an agency or organisation which offers housing advice.

Core Skills: There are no opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

This Unit forms part of the PDA Housing Law Advice level 6. It is, however, a free-standing Unit and may be used as such for an induction programme.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: This Unit is assessed holistically by one instrument of assessment consisting of a series of questions which could include multiple choice questions. This assessment should focus on the four 'tests' or 'hurdles' relating to homelessness.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Identify the main issues relating to homelessness

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Definition of homelessness (technical definition contained in legislation)
- ◆ Explanation of ‘threatened with homelessness’
- ◆ Social issues relating to homelessness
- ◆ Priority Need categories and explanation of ‘vulnerable person’ in housing terms
- ◆ Correct stages in assessing a homeless persons application

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe what is meant by being homeless
- ◆ identify the technical definition of homelessness contained in legislation
- ◆ explain the term ‘threatened with homelessness’
- ◆ identify the main social issues that impact on homelessness
- ◆ outline the meaning of the term ‘in priority need’ and ‘vulnerable in housing terms’
- ◆ identify the most common priority need categories

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome is assessed holistically with Outcomes 2 and 3. Evidence may be presented by a series of short answer questions, which may be multiple choice questions.

Outcome 2

Identify current legislation relating to homelessness

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Overview of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- ◆ Specific sections of the Act relevant to one group of homeless clients
- ◆ Purpose of these sections and how they affect the application for a specific client

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ identify the relevant section of housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended
- ◆ identify key sections of the act that relate to housing advice for one group of clients
- ◆ describe (in broad terms) the purpose of this act in relation to homelessness for one type of client

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome is assessed holistically with Outcomes 1 and 3. Evidence may be presented by a series of short answer questions which may be multiple choice questions.

Outcome 3

Describe the role of the local authority in supporting homeless persons

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Remit of the local authority
- ◆ Duties of the Local authority
- ◆ Four tests or 'hurdles' used by the local authority to determine duties owed to applicant
- ◆ Homeless Person's Application

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe the role of the local authority with regard to homelessness
- ◆ describe the duties of the local authority
- ◆ identify the four tests or 'hurdles' relating to homelessness
- ◆ identify the essential elements of a homeless person's application

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome is assessed holistically with Outcomes 1 and 2. Evidence may be presented by a series of short answer questions which may be multiple choice questions.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	F1E1 33
Unit title:	Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness
Superclass category:	HE
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History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit has been designed to reflect the requirements of the Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Services developed by Homepoint and Communities Scotland for workers engaged in providing advice on a range of housing issues and, in particular, housing law advice in the specific areas of homelessness, security of tenure, repair and disrepair and housing-related financial issues. This Unit will form part of a suite of Units and qualifications based on these standards.

This Unit provides a basic introduction to what is meant by homelessness, to the legislation relating to homelessness, and to the provision by the local authority for homeless persons.

The approach to teaching and learning should be to introduce the candidate to the broad issues relating to Homelessness in the context of housing law. The topic of homelessness should be introduced by explaining how the focus on homelessness for housing advisers is centred on helping the trainee identify when the local authority has a duty to provide a homeless applicant with permanent accommodation. The teaching should be structured around the ‘four hurdles’ identified in Outcomes 1 and 3.

Where possible, the teaching should focus on the aspects of homelessness that are relevant to the agency/organisation where advice will be given. Opportunities should be provided to put the knowledge in a context that is, or will become, familiar to the candidate.

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 introduces the candidate to the concept of homelessness and to the most common circumstances of homeless clients.

Candidates should be made aware of the more common reasons for, and situations that can cause homelessness. These may vary in different situations.

If someone is roofless, sleeping rough or on a friend’s floor, it is usually apparent that he/she is homeless within the meaning of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. A person may also be homeless if, although he/she has a home, it would not be reasonable to live there, because, for example, there is a risk of violence, or their safety is at risk.

Outcome 2

For Outcome 2 candidates are required to name the current legislation and sections of that legislation, and to show that they understand the purpose of relevant legislation relating to homelessness. This is only required at a very basic level.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness

Outcome 3

Outcome 3 gives the candidate the opportunity to learn about the role of the local authority and its responsibility to meet the legal requirements set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act to provide housing for homeless persons. Candidates should be able to explain the role of the local authority and the provision that it makes for homeless persons. They should be made aware that not all local authorities operate in the same way.

Candidates should be able to describe the types of options that the local authority can offer to homeless persons. They should be able to distinguish between temporary and permanent accommodation and to explain how temporary accommodation must be provided by the local authority while the case is assessed.

They should be able to describe the ‘four hurdles’:

- ◆ homelessness — technical definition contained in legislation
- ◆ in Priority Need
- ◆ intentionally homeless
- ◆ whether homeless applicants have a local connection

They should be able to identify how to make a homeless person’s application.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit could be delivered by traditional classroom methods but could also be delivered on-line. It would be beneficial for candidates to develop their knowledge through actual examples, using case studies and scenarios.

It is important that scenarios and case studies are relevant to the context that the candidates work in, and candidates should be encouraged to relate theory to examples of their own practice.

All three Outcomes could be assessed jointly by a single test. This should be comprised of between 10 and 20 short answer questions.

The following websites could be useful:

- ◆ www.cab.org.uk
- ◆ www.shelter.org.uk
- ◆ www.leavinghome.info
- ◆ www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk
- ◆ www.communitiesscotland.org.uk

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There may be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill in communication although there is no automatic certification in this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness

Open learning

This Unit may be delivered in an open learning or electronic format where appropriate.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Homelessness

This Unit aims to give you basic knowledge on the most common issues relating to housing. This will help you to provide information to clients if you are working in a housing or advice setting.

The Unit provides a broad overview and focuses on what is meant by homelessness and what information may be available/useful to clients (eg tenants, mortgage holders) who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. You will learn about the 'four hurdles of homelessness'. You will also learn about the key pieces of legislation which are designed to help people facing homelessness and the role of local authorities in providing for the homeless.

On completion, you could go on to study the more specialised Unit *Housing Law for Advisors: Homelessness* or other Units in the suite of Units which make up the Professional Development Awards in Housing law Advice at levels 6 (introductory level) and 7 (advanced).

The Unit can be taken alone or may be taken as part of the PDA Housing Law Advice level 6.

For assessment you will require to answer a number of short questions, which may be multiple choice.

This Unit has been developed from the Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Services developed by Communities Scotland.