

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

**Unit code:** F1E2 33

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed as an introductory Unit for those who provide advice on housing, and in particular housing law, to service users in a housing or advice setting. Candidates may be working, either as volunteers or in paid employment. This Unit prepares candidates for front-line work giving housing advice. It could be used as part of an induction training programme for those working in the Housing or Advice sectors. This Unit will normally be delivered as part of the Professional Development Award Housing Law Advice level 6.

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

- 1 Outline the key housing information required by service users.
- 2 Describe ways of providing housing information to service users.
- 3 Outline key legislation relating to housing in Scotland.

**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, be beneficial for candidates to be working in 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.

**Assessment:** This Unit is assessed holistically by one instrument of assessment consisting of short answer questions. These may be multiple choice questions.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

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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**

Outline the key housing information required by service users

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Legal information
- ◆ Security of tenure
- ◆ Key social issues
- ◆ Sources for facilitating information to resolve social problems
- ◆ Key financial issues
- ◆ Sources for facilitating issues relating to financial difficulties
- ◆ Unlawful discrimination and equality of opportunity in relation to Housing

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ identify the key types of legal information required by service users
- ◆ outline what is meant by security of tenure
- ◆ identify the key social issues relating to housing and the resources/sources for assistance
- ◆ identify the key financial problems and the sources/resources for assistance
- ◆ demonstrate an understanding of unlawful discrimination in Housing

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Outcome 1 is assessed with Outcomes 2 and 3 by a series of short answer questions which could include multiple choice questions.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

### **Outcome 2**

Describe ways of providing information to service users

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Role of housing adviser
- ◆ Boundaries of role
- ◆ Distinction between active information and passive information
- ◆ Oral and written information
- ◆ Signposting
- ◆ Working definition of advice:
  - listening to clients
  - diagnosing the problem
  - giving information
  - advising on the options available
  - taking action on behalf of clients
  - negotiating on their behalf
  - representing clients' cases at tribunals and courts
  - referral where appropriate
  - enabling or empowering individuals to take control of their own situation

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ describe the role of the housing adviser
- ◆ identify the boundaries of the role
- ◆ describe what is meant by active information and passive information
- ◆ describe types of oral and written information relating to housing advice
- ◆ outline what is meant by signposting
- ◆ list ways that advice can be given

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Outcome 2 is assessed with Outcomes 1 and 3 by a series of short answer questions which could include multiple choice questions.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

### **Outcome 3**

Outline key legislation relating to housing in Scotland

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Housing (Scotland) Acts 1987 as amended by Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- ◆ Housing (Scotland) Act 1988
- ◆ Mortgage Rights (Scotland) Act 2002
- ◆ Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ name the key housing acts which relate to homelessness
- ◆ give a brief description of the purpose of one piece of legislation relating to housing in Scotland
- ◆ outline the terminology associated with one piece of legislation

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Outcome 3 is assessed with Outcomes 1 and 2 by a series of short answer questions which could include multiple choice questions.

## Administrative Information

<b>Unit code:</b>	F1E2 33
<b>Unit title:</b>	Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues
<b>Superclass category:</b>	HE
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### History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

**Source:** SQA

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

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 forms part of the PDA Housing Law Advice level 6.

This is an introductory Unit and therefore the candidate is only expected to acquire knowledge and understanding of the broad areas of housing issues that may relate to the work of service users. This Unit is aligned to Type 1 of the Housing standards defined by Homepoint and Communities Scotland. The specific needs of service users may vary depending on the nature of the agency/organisation, and candidates should be made aware of this.

#### **Outcome 1**

This Outcome requires a 'broad brush' approach to meet the needs of Type 1 staff. More detailed aspects of legal information, security of tenure, social issues and financial are dealt with in depth in the Units of the PDA Housing Law for Advisors which are designed for Type 2 and Type 3 level staff.

The candidate should be made aware of his/her limitations of responsibility and the boundaries within the service, and should therefore know about sources for help, relating to social issues and financial issues. By understanding these boundaries, the candidate should see that the role of the housing adviser is a facilitating role.

The Outcome highlights the main areas/issues with which front line staff may be presented. A detailed knowledge is not required. Candidates should be encouraged to explore the key issues, at a basic level, of housing eligibility, finance (including arrears etc), security of tenure as well as a range of social issues which may affect service users. Issues relating to unlawful discrimination should also be explored as it relates to Housing eg, gender, age, marital status, race, disability.

#### **Outcome 2**

Candidates will require to show that they understand the role of the housing adviser. This should include having an overview of how the housing adviser requires to be polite, confident, reassuring and how he/she should be able to demonstrate a knowledge of all housing matters, including the related legal implications. The importance of special qualities for advisers, such as good communication skills and good interpersonal skills — should be stressed.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

Housing advisers should be aware that they have limitations and should know where and when to refer clients for specialist information and support. Again, the approach should be general and not detailed, as these matters are covered more fully in the Unit *Housing Law Advice: Housing Issues*.

The ideas of active and passive information should be explored, and, candidates should be encouraged to look for ways of providing active information.

Candidates should be made aware that the needs of clients/ service users may vary in the different agencies and organisations. They should be able to identify the most common types of advice required for their own agency/organisation.

They should be able to describe the working definition for advice and the sequence of advice, and to recognise that not all stages of this advice are required for all clients — ie that all clients/service users are different.

#### **Outcome 3**

This relates to legislation. Candidates should be introduced to the legal terminology and to the key items of the three main Acts and their relevance to the issues relating to clients/service users. These needs may vary in different organisations.

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

#### **Outcome 1**

Candidates should be given opportunities to learn from practitioners in the sector. Talks from experienced housing advisers and field workers/specialists would help to broaden the candidate's knowledge. A log book or diary could be used to build up a realistic account of the adviser's work. This would help to give an understanding of the role.

#### **Outcome 2**

Talks from guest speakers could add interest. Videos, scenarios, simple case studies and role play could also enrich the programme.

It should be acknowledged that not all agencies/organisations cover all issues, and materials used should be tailored to suit the particular organisation.

Outcomes 1 and 2 could be delivered together.

#### **Outcome 3**

This Outcome could be delivered in a classroom situation but it also offers opportunities for self study.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

**For all Outcomes**, it is important that examples and case studies are presented in a context that is familiar to the candidate. They should deal with areas of advice that are most common for the organisation/agency and that the candidate can relate to. By using familiar situations, candidates should be encouraged to relate theory to examples of their own practice.

The following websites may be useful:

- ◆ [www.cab.org.uk](http://www.cab.org.uk)
- ◆ [www.scotland.shelter.org.uk](http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk)
- ◆ [www.leavinghome.info](http://www.leavinghome.info)
- ◆ [www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk)
- ◆ [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)

All three Outcomes should be assessed jointly by a series of short answer questions which could be multiple choice questions. The assessment should be closed-book.

### *Opportunities for developing Core Skills*

There may be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills in Communication and Working with Others although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills.

### **Open learning**

This Unit could be delivered by Open Learning or in 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).



## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title:** Housing Law for Advisors: Introduction to Housing Issues

This Unit aims to give you the basic knowledge on housing issues. This information will be of use if you require to give housing advice and information as part of your job.

The Unit highlights the most common issues relating to housing raised by service users (eg tenants). It is designed to give you a basic understanding of these issues to help you in your work. The Unit also covers the role of the advisor and the main pieces of legislation relating to housing.

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

There is one assessment, and you will have to answer short questions covering all three Outcomes. These may be multiple choice.

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