



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders  
(SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** DM6D 34

**Superclass:** PN

**Publication date:** April 2005

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to specify the practice requirements and the underpinning knowledge for learners to effectively support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

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

- ◆ Support a positive environment that builds on the strengths and realistic expectations of individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- ◆ Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to function socially.
- ◆ Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to cope with anxiety, distress and the impact of change.

### Credit points and level

1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

### Recommended entry to the Unit

Learners should have good communication skills, both written and oral. These can be evidenced either by the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications or by the completion of a pre-course interview part of which could take the form of a written assignment. The skills to undertake this Unit could also be demonstrated through an employer's reference or the process of application and interview. In addition to proven communication skills learners should preferably have undertaken some real work experience, paid or voluntary.

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

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### **Core Skills**

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit Specification.

### **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. Learners undertaking this Unit as part of the HNC Social Services award may be able to link their assessment to one of the two existing Case studies, Research Project and/or Reflective Account that form part of the Integrated Assessment Approach.

This Unit is part of the PDA Certificate: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. This qualification builds upon the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare/Children and Young People at SCQF level 7 and many learners taking this qualification and Unit may already have achieved the SVQ qualification. The Unit can also be taken alongside the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare/Children and Young People at SCQF level 7 if a learner is collecting evidence whilst working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. In order to achieve this Unit, learners will have to collect evidence when working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, therefore learners will need to have access to children, young people or adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

### **Equality and inclusion**

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

### Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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. Learners 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

Support a positive environment that builds on the strengths and realistic expectations of individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

##### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Facilitate low arousal environments
- ◆ Modify environments to support individuals with ASD
- ◆ Provide safe, secure, consistent and inclusive environments
- ◆ Introduce changes into environments

#### Outcome 2

Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to function socially.

##### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Value and respect the differing and unique experiences and qualities of individuals with ASD
- ◆ Work positively with individuals using a holistic, empathetic approach
- ◆ Support the growth, development and social functioning of individuals with ASD
- ◆ Support individuals with ASD to communicate more effectively
- ◆ Work collaboratively with individuals, key people and others to maximise the individual's behavioural, social and communication functioning

#### Outcome 3

Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to cope with anxiety, distress and the impact of change.

##### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Support individuals in ways that minimise anxiety and distress
- ◆ Plan with individuals how to manage change
- ◆ Support individuals through the change process

## Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ facilitate and modify the environment to support individuals with ASD, ensuring that the environment is safe, secure, consistent and inclusive.
- ◆ introduce changes in the environment in ways that minimise the anxieties of individuals and the disruption of normal routines and practice.
- ◆ apply relevant knowledge and understanding whilst supporting a positive environment for individuals with ASD.
- ◆ work positively with and use (and support individuals to use) existing and new interests, skills and abilities to facilitate communication and social functioning.
- ◆ contribute to the assessment of risks for activities to promote the development and social functioning of individuals with ASD.
- ◆ communicate effectively, using appropriate cues and equipment, in the individuals' preferred method of communication.
- ◆ apply relevant knowledge and understanding whilst supporting individuals with ASD.
- ◆ structure their work with individuals in ways which make life more predictable, aids communication and helps to promote choice and personal autonomy for individuals with ASD.
- ◆ contribute to the assessment of risks for activities to promote the development and social functioning of individuals with ASD.
- ◆ prepare individuals in advance for any predicted changes and provide active support to enable individuals and key people to identify issues associated with change.
- ◆ work with individuals to promote choice and extend their range of options and coping strategies in ways that are likely to minimise anxiety and distress.
- ◆ apply relevant knowledge and understanding whilst supporting individuals with ASD to cope with anxiety, distress and the impact of change.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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 is primarily designed for learners who work with individuals diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). However it can be used for learners who have not yet worked with individuals with ASD but who are interested in working with this client group, in which case the learner needs to be able collect the evidence in real work settings with individuals with ASD.

This Unit is part of the PDA Certificate: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The Unit may also be used as a stand-alone Unit, or could usefully form part of a professional development programme. This Unit also forms part of the HNC Social Services. To achieve the Unit learners will have to collect evidence when working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, therefore learners will need to have access to children, young people or adults diagnosed as being on the Autistic Spectrum.

The knowledge required to underpin the practice should be gained from observations of practice; reflective accounts and may be supported by answers to oral and written questions, written assignments and projects.

#### Outcome 1

Learners should know and be able to demonstrate how to facilitate low arousal environments ensuring that the environment is reassuring, calm, organised, focused, structured to reduce and manage aversive experiences, promotes the predictability of events and allows for relaxation and therapeutic intervention. They should also be able to modify the environment to support individuals with ASD by reducing clutter, noise and distraction; facilitating inclusion and supporting the specific needs and anxieties of the individuals. Safety and security of individuals with ASD is always important so the environment needs to be safe, secure, consistent and inclusive. The learner should, however, take account of any restrictions, risks and the health, safety and security of individuals. Finally, the learner should be able to introduce changes in the environment in ways that minimise the anxieties of individuals and the disruption of normal routines and practice.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes(cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### Outcome 2

Learners should know about and be able to demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ work positively with the individuals using a holistic, empathetic approach which takes account of all aspects of their lives, behaviour and functioning and that:
  - enhances their motivation
  - communicate more effectively
  - reduce their levels of anxiety
  - understand the different functioning of individuals who do not have ASD.
- ◆ use, and support individuals to use, their interests and naturally occurring events and situations, appropriate aids, rehearsal procedures, approaches and interventions to support individuals to:
  - build on their strengths
  - discovers their potential
  - minimises regression due to low expectations
  - function more effectively socially.
- ◆ help individuals to develop new skills and abilities that will enable them to communicate and function socially.
- ◆ encourage individuals to try new and potentially stressful activities in a supportive, safe and secure environment that is not confrontational.
- ◆ identify and access information about the communication and language needs of individuals.
- ◆ use the individuals' preferred method of language and communication, allowing sufficient time between communications for the individual to process and respond the information
- ◆ structure their communications with individuals with ASD:
  - logically and literally, avoiding communications that require individuals to make inferences about the actual meaning
  - in ways that make life more predictable; help to promote choice and personal autonomy and prepare individuals for and enables them to communicate in new and changing situations and environments.
- ◆ use verbal and non-verbal cues to identify:
  - whether individuals have understood the communication
  - increased levels of stress and anxiety in the individuals.
- ◆ safely and correctly set up and use, and/or help individuals to safely and correctly set up and use, communication aids and specific communication equipment.
- ◆ work in partnership with individuals, key people and others within and outside their organisation to contribute to:
  - assessing the individual's needs
  - identifying and managing risks
  - developing and reviewing holistic person centred development plans for individuals with ASD
  - implement approaches that build on the individual's existing abilities and maximise the individual's potential
  - contribute to evaluating the impact of interventions, therapies and approaches on individuals with ASD.
- ◆ reflect on own practice and seek additional help, advice and support:
  - in areas that are outside their experience and competence to deal with to enable them to cope with anxieties, stress and distress.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes(cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### Outcome 3

Learners should know about and be able to demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ use frameworks and procedures to enable individuals to cope in social situations prepare individuals in advance for any predicted changes.
- ◆ structure their work with individuals in ways which make life more predictable, aids communication and helps to promote choice and personal autonomy.
- ◆ take appropriate action when an individual's anxiety levels are likely to present a risk to themselves, others, the learner and the environment.
- ◆ provide active support to enable individuals and key people to identify and communicate:
  - any changes that have taken place or are about to take place and the likely impact of the change
  - their preferences associated with the change
  - any methods they can use or need to develop to cope with and manage the change
  - any risks associated with the change.
- ◆ work with individuals to promote choice and extend their range of options and behaviour in ways that are likely to minimise anxiety and distress.
- ◆ support individuals to adapt to change and transitions in ways that are likely to cause minimum anxiety and distress.

### Guidance on the knowledge and understanding of ASD

Learners should have, and be able to apply the relevant knowledge about values; legislation and organisational policy and procedures; different aspects of ASD; the impact of ASD on the lives of individuals and others with whom they are associated; supporting individuals with ASD and developing their own practice when working with individuals with ASD, their parents, carers and other key people.

### How to value, respect and ensure that the rights and choices of individuals with ASD are met including:

- ◆ The rights and responsibilities of individuals with ASD
- ◆ Methods and ways of supporting individuals with ASD that:
  - support equality and diversity
  - are effective when dealing with, and challenging discrimination when working.
  - with individuals with ASD, key people and others
  - promote communication with individuals with ASD.

### Legislation and organisational policy and procedures that are applicable to working with individuals with ASD, including:

- ◆ Current local and national legislation and organisational requirements
- ◆ Procedures and practices for working with individuals with ASD

## Higher National Unit Support Notes(cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### **The different aspects of ASD, including:**

- ◆ The history of autistic spectrum disorder and conditions
- ◆ ASD and the problems with social skills and relationships
- ◆ Language and in communicating with others and with thinking and behaving flexibly
- ◆ How Social Communication Impairments and Sensory Processing affect individuals
- ◆ The interventions and approaches that are used to support individuals with ASD
- ◆ How ASD:
  - impacts on the lives of individuals
  - can affect the all aspects of the individual's identity, including their self-esteem and self-image and daily and social functioning
  - impacts on parents, families, carers and other key people in the individual's life (ie those people who are key to an individual's health and social well-being).
- ◆ The importance, contents and processes involved in developing holistic person centred development plans for individuals with ASD.
- ◆ How to positively promote all aspects of the individuals with ASD identity, self-esteem and self-image.
- ◆ Types of environments that are appropriate to individuals with ASD including those with high functioning ASD and Aspergers.
- ◆ How to introduce and support individuals with transitions between activities and localities.
- ◆ The types of communication that is helpful and that which is less helpful for individuals with ASD.
- ◆ The reasons for, and how to minimise anxiety for the individuals with ASD with whom the learner works.

### **How to develop practice when working with individuals with ASD, their parents, carers and other key people, including:**

- ◆ the types of issues that might arise when working with individuals with ASD, parents, families, carers and other key people in the individual's life and others with whom the learner might work, how to deal with these and who to refer to for issues outside the learner's scope.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes(cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

It is recommended that learners collect the evidence for each of the Outcomes whilst undertaking their normal working practices (or within an appropriate work placement) with individuals with ASD. If someone who is not working with children young people or adults with ASD wishes to undertake this Unit, they will need to have access to a relevant work placement where support is available from appropriately qualified/experienced staff in the specialised area of Autism to allow them to collect the evidence against the Outcomes.

The context in which the practice requirements could be met may include health and social care settings, educational settings, recreational and leisure settings and community settings where the learner is able to work with individuals with ASD.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

To achieve this Unit you need to demonstrate competence against the practice Outcomes whilst working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in a real work setting (usually within the learner's own working environment or within an appropriate work placement).

Evidence should be gathered wherever possible from naturally occurring events in the workplace. The evidence generated for the PDA will be in the form of direct observations of practice and reflective accounts and may be supported by answers to questions. The knowledge required to underpin the practice should be gained from observations of practice and reflective accounts and may be supported by answers to oral and written questions, written assignments and projects.

Learners undertaking this Unit as part of the HNC Social Services award may be able to link their assessment to one of the two existing Case studies, Research Project and/or Reflective Account that form part of the Integrated Assessment Approach.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Learners will have opportunities to develop the following Core Skills:

**Communication (Oral Communication):** Given the communication needs of children, young people and adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorders this Unit should provide numerous opportunities for learners to collect evidence for the oral communication Core Skill when being observed and through reflective accounts and diary entries.

**Communication (Written Communication):** Working in any context where the well being of individuals is being supported necessitates the use of written communication to convey information about individuals, events, plans etc. Therefore, when completing this Unit learners should be able to collect evidence for written communication.

**Communication and Information Technology (ICT):** Although the use of information technology is not a requirement of the Unit, some organisations use information technology systems to input records and reports, for processing other information and to retrieve information about individuals. In this instance learners should be able to collect evidence towards this Unit. Learners may also use information technology to produce their assessments.

**Working with Others:** This is central to the Unit and one of the Outcomes is specifically targeted at multi-disciplinary team working and working with others within your own and in other organisation. Throughout the Unit it is expected that learners will be working in partnership with the individuals with ASD and where relevant their carers and key people in their lives.

**Problem solving (Critical Thinking; Planning and Organising; Reviewing and Evaluating):** Critical Thinking; Planning and Organising; Reviewing and Evaluating are all critical when working with individuals with ASD and the need to carry out these skills is integral to the Unit. Therefore evidence should be able to be collected when completing the Unit.

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Support notes updated to reflect changes in sector.	June 2016

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## **General information for learners**

### **Unit title:** Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

This Unit outlines the essentials of practice when working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The Unit will be assessed in real work settings with children, young people or adults diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

You need to be able to work with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders within your own work setting (or in another realistic work setting) and when supporting individuals with ASD outside the original setting.

The Unit has three Outcomes. The first Outcome requires you develop an appropriate environment for people with ASD. The second relates to supporting the social functioning of individuals with ASD including their communication needs and preference. Outcome 3 requires that you are able to support individuals through stress, distress and change and the impact it has on individuals with ASD. All Outcomes require that you demonstrate your competence in practice with the knowledge being assessed throughout the practice or, where applied knowledge is unclear, through to oral and written questions, written assignments and projects.