



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

**Unit code:** H2X7 34

**Superclass:** EC

**Publication date:** November 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit has been developed to introduce the role of the domestic abuse advocate as part of Scotland's commitment to addressing domestic abuse. The Unit defines the role of the advocate and the skills and competencies involved in working with high risk domestic abuse clients. It is designed to set the context for the work of the advocate, and enables the candidate to apply their knowledge and skills to address high risk abuse clients.

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

- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of the role of a domestic abuse advocate.
- ◆ Identify the skills and qualities required of an advocate.
- ◆ Identify the principles of multi-agency partnership working.
- ◆ Describe the impact on the advocate of working with high risk domestic abuse clients.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should work in the domestic abuse sector in a capacity that allows them to demonstrate the Evidence Requirements for this Unit through work activities, and it is assumed that they will have prior knowledge of the dynamics of domestic abuse.

Candidates should have good communication skills, both written and oral and be able to use IT proficiently. We recommend these core skills to be at SCQF level 5.

This can be evidenced by the course application process/interview and/or by an employer's reference. Entry will be at the discretion of the delivering centre.

## **General information (cont)**

### **Credit points and level**

1 Higher National Unit credit(s) at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*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.*

### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components 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.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

**Unit code:** H2X7 34

### Outcome 1

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of a domestic abuse advocate.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Scope and principles.
- ◆ The context of the domestic abuse advocate's role.
- ◆ The work of the domestic abuse advocate.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify the scope and principles of the advocate's role
- ◆ describe where the advocate's role fits within the wider context of the domestic abuse sector
- ◆ identify what the advocate role involves
- ◆ demonstrate how the work of the advocate is applied in practice

### Outcome 2

Identify the skills and qualities required of a domestic abuse advocate.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Theories of change.
- ◆ Motivational interviewing.
- ◆ Listening skills.
- ◆ Qualities and attributes.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ evaluate a model of change in relation to their work practice
- ◆ describe motivational interviewing techniques in relation to their work practice
- ◆ evaluate listening skills
- ◆ identify qualities and attributes that are fundamental to the advocate's role

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

**Unit title:** Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

### Outcome 3

Identify the principles of multi-agency partnership working.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Multi-agency partnership structures.
- ◆ Barriers and benefits of partnership working.
- ◆ Negotiation skills.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify different partnership types and how these relate to their practice
- ◆ describe the benefits of partnership working
- ◆ describe the barriers to partnership working
- ◆ identify techniques to overcome the barriers to partnership working
- ◆ evaluate negotiation skills in relation to their work practice

### Outcome 4

Describe the impact on the domestic abuse advocate of working with high risk domestic abuse clients.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Implications of working with high risk domestic abuse clients.
- ◆ Vicarious trauma.
- ◆ Safety and self care techniques.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify the implications for the advocate of working with high risk domestic abuse clients
- ◆ describe vicarious trauma
- ◆ identify how safety and self care techniques can be incorporated into their practice

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

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

The domestic abuse advocate has a specialised role working with clients who are at high risk of serious harm or homicide. The role is highly specialised, and entails the provision of intensive support to support clients in achieving long-term safety.

Advocates require a wide-range of skills and knowledge to enable them to identify and address immediate safety concerns, and to implement practical plans that will protect clients and their children. Advocates are independent, but work within a multi-agency context alongside both statutory and voluntary agencies, to offer the widest range of options and solutions.

Key elements of the advocacy role include the application of various skills, risk management knowledge and an understanding of the criminal justice and civil legal system. This Unit is part of a Professional Development Award that is designed to provide a formal and nationally recognised qualification for domestic abuse advocates that covers each of these elements.

By undertaking this Unit candidates should gain an understanding of the advocacy role, what it entails, and the skills required.

This Unit is suitable for those who are:

- ◆ currently working as an independent domestic abuse advocate or domestic abuse practitioner
- ◆ about to start work as an independent domestic abuse advocate or domestic abuse practitioner
- ◆ a manager of a domestic abuse service with a caseload

### Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit should be delivered as part of a Professional Development Award in domestic abuse advocacy. This would be part of a holistic course that covers the role, skills and knowledge required of a domestic abuse advocate. The course would be delivered primarily in-room using a variety of training methods, and supported by comprehensive materials for candidates. There is potential to offer a blended learning environment by offering some on-line learning opportunities.

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

**Unit title:** Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

### Outcome 1

The emphasis of this Outcome is to provide context for the role of the domestic abuse advocate, including the roots of advocacy and the Duluth Power and Control Model. Candidates would benefit from an overview and plenary discussion about the development of the independent advocacy role in the UK/US and how this links to the Scottish context, with a focus on the national definitions of domestic abuse and the Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate.

Consideration should be given to how the advocacy role fits within the wider domestic abuse sector in Scotland, how the work of the advocate dovetails and complements the work of other existing and established services, and also how it relates to a co-ordinated approach to addressing abuse. The key features of the advocacy role should be clearly set out, for example, the focus on high risk and the need to remain independent from other agencies. This could be illustrated using CAADA's Charter for Services.

The different aspects of the role should be broken down in an interactive session, with emphasis placed on how these relate to their own practice, in particular the skills and knowledge required to fulfil each function required of the role, such as risk assessing, safety planning, etc. Candidates should have an opportunity to discuss and compare individual and institutional advocacy, explore what each means and how they can use it to perform their role effectively.

### Outcome 2

It is recommended that candidates are encouraged to identify, and be given an opportunity to practice, the different skills required of a domestic abuse advocate. It will be helpful to provide an overview of models that illustrate change processes such as Prochaska and DiClemente's Cycle of Change, and how this relates to methods for motivating clients, such as Miller and Rollnick's Motivational Interviewing. Effective listening techniques should also be discussed, and candidates should be given an opportunity to discuss how good listening skills can impact on their interaction with clients.

The qualities and attributes required of a domestic abuse advocate should be explored, for example, candidates could be introduced to 'pro-social modelling' as an approach to facilitate their relationship with clients and colleagues, and to address change positively. Particular emphasis should also be placed on assertiveness and empathy and how these relate to their work with clients. An opportunity to practice and reflect on all of these skills in the training room is recommended, for example, using role play to draw out these skills and to encourage peer assessment and feedback.

### Outcome 3

Emphasis should be placed on the need for the advocate to work within a multi-agency context as part of a co-ordinated approach to domestic abuse. Different multi-agency structures should be identified, with comparisons made between operational and strategic partnerships and how each of these relate to the work of the advocate.

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

### Unit title: Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

In an interactive exercise, the benefits of partnership working should be explored, as well as the barriers that may hinder collaborative working, and how to overcome these — specifically the skills and techniques advocates can apply to build effective working relationships. Links can be made to the skills and qualities covered in Outcome 2, and negotiation should be introduced here as a valuable tool for advocates. Understanding effective approaches to negotiation is valuable, and candidates should have an opportunity to practice and reflect on negotiation skills in the training room, using a role play exercise.

#### Outcome 4

Consideration should be given to the potential implications of working with high risk domestic abuse clients, particularly implications for safety and also the susceptibility to Vicarious Trauma (VT). Following an overview of VT, candidates should be able to recognise the key features and how it differs from other stress-related conditions.

Emphasis should be placed on self-care for advocates, and candidates should be encouraged to consider what techniques can be applied by individual advocates and their managers to mitigate the impact of VT. Other safety implications can be explored in a plenary discussion, including lone working policies, risk assessing, etc and candidates should be given an opportunity to discuss what they have in place already and what they could put into practice to improve the safety of their working practice and to keep a healthy work-life balance.

### Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Assessment of this unit should be carried out by the candidates submitting assignments that include reflective accounts, ranging from a maximum of 200 to 1,000 words each, based on real work activities (where possible) and in-room exercises. They would also have to answer a number of short response questions.

Assignments could be assessed electronically using a web-based system where tutors can provide feedback electronically to the candidate, or it could be assessed via a paper-based system where candidates submit written assignments.

### Assessment Guidelines

#### Outcome 1

It is recommended that candidates define the scope and context of the advocacy role, and this will include a description of how advocacy work compares to other areas of work within the domestic abuse sector. It would be useful to provide a reflective account (of no more than 1,000 words) of the different aspects of an advocate's work and answer short response questions on their role, in particular candidates should be able to describe the difference between individual and institutional advocacy and what this means in practice.

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

**Unit title:** Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

### **Outcome 2**

It is recommended that candidates provide a reflective and evaluative account (of no more than 500 words) of the use of all the different advocacy skills and qualities in context, with particular emphasis on how they can use these with clients to address safety issues. This would include the stages of change, motivational interviewing, listening skills and pro-social modelling, and other relevant skills and attributes. Ideally candidates would submit a reflection from real-life application of some of these skills, suggesting how they will build on these skills to facilitate their own practice.

### **Outcome 3**

It is recommended that candidates answer short response questions to identify how the advocacy role fits within a multi-agency context by identifying different types of partnership structures (strategic and operational) and describing how they relate to their work. They should be able to describe some benefits and barriers to partnership work and identify how these could be overcome, for example, by drawing upon the skills covered in Outcome 2. Candidates should provide a reflective account (of no more than 500 words) of negotiation skills, preferably using a real-life example from their practice.

### **Outcome 4**

It is recommended that candidates identify potential safety and self-care implications of their work and evaluate what this means to their practice. In particular, candidates should be able to provide a reflective description (of no more than 200 words) of Vicarious Trauma (VT), examples of techniques that can help prevent and mitigate the effects of VT, and answer short response questions to identify a variety of safety and self-care techniques that they might put in place at an individual and organisational level.

## **Online and Distance Learning**

Whilst the majority of this course would be delivered through in-room learning, an emphasis should be placed on blended learning as the assignments and supporting materials could be delivered through a web-based learning package.



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

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### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

You will be given opportunities to develop your Core Skills in the following areas although these will not be certificated:

**Communication:** written communication skills could be developed through the production of assignments. Oral communication skills may be demonstrated and developed within in-room exercises and through reflective consideration on how this relates to practice. Communication skills will be practiced and developed through in-room discussion and assignment writing.

**Working with Others:** could be developed through working as part of a team, within the training and work context, such as participating in group exercises, and interactions with other staff involved in the delivery of the course. It can also be developed by working with clients and colleagues.

**Problem Solving:** could be developed through reflective evaluations of how you applied skills to practice. Problem solving methods used in assessing risk and applying safety planning could also develop Problem Solving skills.

**Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** could be developed through using information technology to participate in the course and submit assignments.

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Role and Skills of a Domestic Abuse Advocate

This Unit has been designed as part of the Professional Development Award for Domestic Abuse Advocacy. It will be useful to you if you are:

- ◆ currently working as an independent domestic abuse advocate or domestic abuse practitioner
- ◆ about to start work as an independent domestic abuse advocate or domestic abuse practitioner
- ◆ a manager of a domestic abuse service with a caseload

In this particular Unit you will learn about the advocacy role itself and the key skills required to fulfil that role within a multi-agency context. You will have an opportunity to practice and reflect on these skills. Special emphasis is placed on the impact of working with high-risk domestic abuse and methods of self-care.

On completion of the Unit you will be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate an understanding of the role of a domestic abuse advocate
- ◆ identify the skills and qualities required of an advocate
- ◆ identify the principles of multi-agency partnership working
- ◆ describe the impact on the advocate of working with high risk clients

You will be assessed on these Outcomes by submitting assignments that will include a number of written reflective accounts about your work practice (ranging from a maximum of 200–1,000 words) as well as answering short response questions.