



Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Support learning in a Social Services Practice Context (SCQF level 10)

Unit code: HA6W 37

Superclass: PM

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Unit purpose

This Unit will enable learners to support learning in a practice context based on legislation, policy and guidance relevant to social services. Learners will develop their ability to model good practice and enable learners to operate within professional boundaries and in the context of their own field of professional practice.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Critically analyse the skills, knowledge and values that underpin good practice.
- 2 Support learners to act within the responsibility, accountability and authority of their role.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 10: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 10)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Learners should have well developed communication and inter-personal skills and be able to demonstrate their ability to critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in their disciplines. This may be demonstrated by: relevant professional qualifications at SCQF level 9 (or equivalent) or above with relevant experience in a social services or other related setting. Acceptance of relevant equivalent qualifications and experience will be at the discretion of the centre.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for 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.

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.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

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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.

Outcome 1

Critically analyse the skills, knowledge and values that underpin good practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Current legislation, policy and guidance
- ◆ Theoretical and practice models
- ◆ Codes of Practice
- ◆ Skills for practice
- ◆ Practice standards and service delivery

Outcome 2

Support learners to act within the responsibility, accountability and authority of their role.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Methods of enabling learners to practice accountably
- ◆ Implications for practice of legislation, policy and guidance
- ◆ Modelling of good practice

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 prepare and complete a critical reflection of up to 1,500 words covering the following Evidence Requirements.

Where this Unit forms part of a Group Award as in the PDA Practice Learning, centres have the discretion to assess these Evidence Requirements through the detail provided in the learner's application to undertake the award.

- ◆ Undertake a desk top review of two pieces of current legislation that have impacted on agency policies, and guidance relevant in own area of practice.
- ◆ Critically evaluate two theoretical practice models relevant to own area of practice.
- ◆ Critically review current Codes of Practice and their relevance to service delivery.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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The second part of the assessment is an observation of the learner with their learner(s) and a professional discussion, which covers the following Evidence Requirements:

- ◆ Demonstrate ability to model best practice in an observed situation.
- ◆ Compare and contrast two current methods of supporting learners to be accountable for their practice.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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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 suitable for learners from a range of occupational and professional situations within social services. Examples include first line managers supervising staff, people in a variety of posts delivering training courses to staff, those supervising learners in practice learning and workplace assessors. This list is not exhaustive but provides a flavour of the diversity of people who might wish to access this Unit from a social services setting. The Unit is designed to enable learners to recognise the range of legislative, policy and guidance knowledge to be considered in order to ensure that the learner understands the practice context in which they are placed and is enabled to practice in a professional manner.

It will enable learners to recognise and critically appraise the impact of legislation, policy and guidance in order to implement good practice for themselves and for learners. This may require learners to step back from their immediate practice context in order to enter their educator role and encourage learners to develop critical appraisal skills.

The knowledge and skills obtained from the Outcomes of this Unit will ensure that learners support learners within a practice context which is underpinned by specific legislative, policy and guidance, for example Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968: Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003: Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011: Twenty First Century Review — Changing Lives (2006): The Keys to Life (2013): GIRFEC National Practice Model.

Learners need to demonstrate their ability to identify, clearly state and convey, in a way that takes account of the learners' stage and style of learning, a broad practice context. Learners need to demonstrate their ability to encourage learners to seek out material relevant to their specific practice area and which relates to the legislative and policy context. Learners also need to support their learners, to critically, appraise both positive and negative impacts of legislation and policy, for example debates on risk of serious offences through The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 or the named person in the Children & Young Persons (Scotland) Act 2014.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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The Unit includes skills in critical analysis of the legislative, policy and guidance in a social services practice context for the purpose of appraisal of good practice. Critical analysis, development and critical evaluation of learning materials relating to the development of professional role for use with learners of different styles and abilities; in utilising methods to develop learners' own critical analytical skills relating to practice context; and in critically reflective evaluation of progress from practitioner to educator.

On successful completion of the Unit, learners will be able to critically analyse and use a range of legislation, policy and guidance essential for good practice and essential for learners in developing responsible, accountable and professional practice in a specific practice context. Learners will be able to critically analyse and provide reflective commentary on the methods used to develop learners' critical analytical abilities.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit involves learners in a significant amount of experiential learning. Learners are required to critically analyse and critically reflect on this experience and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development.

It is anticipated, that the facilitation of learning for this Unit will be through a range of approaches including face-to-face inputs, blended and other forms of directed and self-directed learning.

The delivery mechanisms adopted by centres should be flexible to allow comprehensive access and participation, including distance and e-learning. An Outcomes-based approach, centred round the learning needs of the individual, may best meet the requirement for flexible delivery.

The delivery of the Unit must take account of its practical nature and of the occupational and professional backgrounds of learners. At the outset, centres should make learners aware of the requirements of the Unit, including the need to gather evidence, critically analyse and report on their experiences. They should also inform learners at the outset about the type of evidence they will have to provide in order to complete the Unit successfully. It is likely that delivery will consist of some initial orientation and briefing sessions after which learners will manage their learning independently to a significant extent. Centres should make suitable arrangements to support and guide learners throughout. This could involve regular meetings with learners on an individual basis, or in groups, or through e-learning materials.

The Outcomes of this Unit will enable learners to apply knowledge, models and methods from a range of sources available on line at:

<http://www.gov.scot>, <http://www.iriss.org.uk>, <http://www.scie.org.uk>,
<http://www.ssk.org.uk>, <http://www.continuouslearningframework.com>, and
www.ssk.org.uk)

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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From contributors, eg Knowles, M: Davis R & Gordon G, learners will also develop their own knowledge base drawn from their employing agency policy and procedures and national legislation and policy relevant to their social service setting.

In their report published in 2015 IRISS note the following key points:

- ◆ Supervision is an essential component of practice in social work and social care, not just for frontline staff, but at all levels in an organisation
- ◆ Effective supervision provides a safe space for workers to reflect on their practice, as well as to develop skills and knowledge
- ◆ The delivery of supervision is heavily dependent on the organisational context
- ◆ While the evidence base on supervision is limited, the available evidence points to good supervision being associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment and retention of staff
- ◆ The dynamics of supervision can be extremely complex, and delivering effective supervision is a skilled task which requires support and training for supervisors

<http://www.iriss.org.uk/category/resource-categories/iriss-insights>

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.

Learners should demonstrate that they have achieved the Unit Outcomes by gathering evidence from a range of sources. As far as possible for most learners the evidence should be 'naturally occurring' during the course of their day-to-day activity. Where learners are not able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, appropriate supplementary assessment activity such as role-play may be used, or centres can develop simulation. The approach aims to encourage learners to critically reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Evidence can be generated using different types of instruments of assessment. The following are suggestions only; there may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners. The professional performance improvements that learners have achieved, as a result of participating in this learning and related practical activities. The critical evaluation, review of their own, and of their learner's experiences of the learning environment. The application of current relevant theories methodologies, and standards, that enhance the learning environment.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Assessment for this Unit is a critical investigation, which focuses on understanding the impact of legislation policy and guidance to their role in practice learning. The evidence produced by learners should demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to each Outcome.

The first part of the assessment should be a critical reflection of up to 1,500 words covering the following Evidence Requirements:

- ◆ Undertake a desk top review of two pieces of current legislation that have impacted on agency policies, and guidance relevant in own area of practice.
- ◆ Critically evaluate two theoretical practice models relevant to own area of practice.
- ◆ Critically review current Codes of Practice and their relevance to service delivery.

The second part of the assessment is an observation of the learner with their learner(s) and a professional discussion which covers the following Evidence Requirements:

- ◆ Demonstrate ability to model best practice in an observed situation.
- ◆ Compare and contrast two current methods of supporting learners to be accountable for their practice.

This part of the assessment should be a direct observation of the learner working with their learner recorded on an agreed pro forma which identifies method(s) of learning used, specific skills observed and feedback from learner and a professional discussion with the learner.

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.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

All elements of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6, namely Planning and Organising, Critical Thinking, and Reviewing and Evaluating could be developed and enhanced.

Support in developing an effective research strategy for accessing and critically evaluating paper based and electronic sources of complex information will be of value. The production and discussion of initial draft documents for the completed range of evidence is a useful way to ensure the development of skills in presentation and collation of relevant materials.

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Although communication skills are not formally assessed learners should be expected to produce and present written work to a professional standard, and to communicate essential ideas and concepts effectively.

Terminology and spelling used in annotation should be technically accurate. As such, opportunities exist to develop *Communication* at SCQF level 6. The availability of suitable software to support an effective professional presentation could further assist the development of Core Skills *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

Learners may have the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of *Working with Others* as they undertake group work, and one to one supervision with their learner. Learners should be made aware of techniques to put subjects at ease, or to create appropriate environments, using reflective listening and non-verbal communication, including making eye contact and relaxed body language. They should know how to initiate actions confidently and in a way that progresses communication and they should continually modify and adapt their approach to produce desired effects.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Support learning in a Social Services Practice Context (SCQF level 10)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

In this Unit you have to achieve two Outcomes these cover a range of effective skills in supporting the learning of others in a social services context. They will involve you in demonstrating good practice in the application of appropriate legislation, policy and guidance. You will demonstrate critical evaluation of the areas of social services legislation, policy and guidance which in turn are relevant to enabling learners to develop a critical awareness of their responsibilities and accountabilities as professional workers within the social services practice context. You will enable learners to develop their critical appraisal skills in order to demonstrate critical awareness of the positive and negative implications of legislation, policy and guidance for practice.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide you with a critical understanding of how to identify, develop and manage learning opportunities relating to the legislative, policy and guidance context of social services practice.

You will be supported, to develop your own critical evaluation skills in relation to the responsibilities and accountabilities of your professional role and to clarify your own thinking about issues of good practice.

You will be, assisted to develop skills to enable learners to develop their own critical appraisal skills and critically evaluate their progress in demonstrating their own accountability for good practice as developing professionals.

You will also, be assisted to critically reflect on your own development from practitioner to educator.

On successful completion of this Unit, you will be able to create and manage a thorough and effective learning programme relating to legislation, policy and guidance in the social services practice context, which takes critical account of the impact of this context. You will be able to demonstrate good practice and you will have developed your own critical analysis of good practice within this practice context. You will have developed skills to assist learners to, critically appraise the legislative, policy and guidance context in order to develop their sense of responsibility and accountability for good practice as professional social services workers.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can demonstrate good practice in the application of legislation, policy and guidance and that you can critically appraise and make use of materials and methods with learners to develop their professional role in relation to legislation, policy and guidance in the social services practice context. That you are able to, critically evaluate your learners' progress towards responsible, accountable and critically aware practice.

General information for learners (cont)

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It is important that you gather this evidence from your ongoing practice with learners and build a collection of evidence of your work. This tool should offer you flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Outcomes. Your collection of evidence will be unique, although, it will be able to meet a required set of minimum content criteria as advised by the centre and will include evidence of knowledge, values and skills.

You can use evidence from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through the facilitation of group supervision, or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events.