

National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Communication Skills for Care Support Workers (intermediate 1)

NUMBER 7140388

COURSE

SUMMARY

The aim of the unit is for the candidate to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effective communication in a Health or Social Care setting. The objectives of the unit are to introduce the candidate to the concept of communication and to the variety of forms communication may take. The candidate will identify and explain barriers to communication in the workplace setting and consider ways of overcoming such difficulties. The candidate will describe the role of the worker in promoting effective communication and have the opportunity to enhance their own communication skills.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe a range of communication methods relevant to a care setting.
- 2 Identify possible barriers to effective communication within a care setting.
- 3 Explain skills required for effective communication within a care setting.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

There is no recommended entry level for this unit.

CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit at Intermediate 1.

CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

Administrative Information

Superclass: KB

Publication date: Session 1998-1999

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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National unit specification: statement of standards

UNIT Communication Skills for Care Support Workers (Intermediate 1)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Describe a range of communication methods relevant to a care setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) The essential aspects of effective communication are correctly identified.
- b) The description of oral communication within a care setting is comprehensive in terms of advantages and disadvantages.
- c) A range of non-verbal communication is correctly identified.
- d) The need for consistency between oral and non verbal communications as accurately described.
- e) The identification of written communication methods within a care setting is comprehensive in terms of their advantages and disadvantages.

Note on range for the outcome

Oral communication: listening skills; effective questioning; appropriate use of words; tone and pace; giving and receiving messages; face to face and via the telephone.

Non verbal communication: body language; touch; dress.

Written communication: messages; report writing; electronic mail.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence of achievement in this unit can be provided in written format and/or orally, to ensure all outcomes, performance criteria, and range items are covered.

OUTCOME 2

Identify possible barriers to effective communication within a care setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Possible barriers to effective communication are identified.
- b) The explanation of possible barriers on individual service users are comprehensively described.
- c) The effects of communication barriers on individual service users are comprehensively described.
- d) The effects of communication barriers on service providers are comprehensively described.

Note on range for the outcome

Barriers: environmental factors; physical factors; attitudes; altered mental states; violent or aggressive behaviour; lack of skills eg. I.T.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Communication Skills for Care Support Workers (Intermediate 1)

Evidence Requirements

Written and/or oral evidence to cover all performance criteria and the range statement.

OUTCOME 3

Explain skills required for effective communication within a care setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) The characteristics required to establish good communication relationships are identified.
- b) The identification and description of skills required for effective communication is accurate.
- c) The description of the role of the care support worker in promoting effective communication is valid within the care setting.
- d) The description of the ways to overcome barriers to effective communication is valid within the candidate's role in a care setting.

Evidence Requirements

Written and/or oral evidence to cover all performance criteria and to meet the outcome.

National unit specification: support notes

UNIT Communication Skills for Care Support Workers (Intermediate 1)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

This unit is a component unit of the Professional Development Award: Certificate in Care Support Practice.

GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

The unit is aimed at support staff working in a Health or Social setting, eg. physiotherapist assistants, occupational therapy assistants, home support workers etc., enabling development in communication skills when working with both other staff members, service users and their carers. The definition of communication being the giving and receiving of information.

For outcomes 1 and 2, the candidate should consider the processes of communication, the relationship between the sender and the receiver of the messages, the level of understanding that exists between them and any barriers to communication.

The purpose(s) of communication should be considered ie. identifications of sender and receiver; the content and purpose of the message and its destination.

Different forms of communication, their advantages and disadvantages should be considered. Forms of communication should include speech, non-verbal communication and the conscious and unconscious use of body language, sign language, use of symbols, third party interpretation, written communication such as letters, reports, memos and case/care notes, the use of telephones and electronic mail.

Physical and environmental barriers to the use of the different forms of communication should be explored and ways of overcoming them, for example, a visually impaired person could have written instructions in large type or transcribed into Braille, interviews with hearing impaired person who lip reads should be held in well lit interview room. Candidates should be encouraged to look for examples from their own work area.

The potential difficulties in dealing with violent or aggressive situations should be explored and candidates should establish their employer's policies in this area.

For outcome 3, the skills necessary for effective communication should be considered and include reading, writing, talking, listening and, increasingly, the use of information technology. Interpersonal skills including empathy, non judgmental attitudes and active listening should be discussed. Ways of acquiring and using these skills should be explored as should any barriers to their acquisition or use.

GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

It is envisaged that candidates of this unit will come with a variety of learning needs and experience therefore the teaching input should be flexible enough to address this.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication Skills for Care Support Workers (Intermediate 1)

For outcome 1, the notion that communication is an activity involving the giving and receiving of information could be explored. Communication is a two way process involving at least two people and to be successful involves both the effective giving and the effective reception of information.

A range of communication forms relevant to a care setting could be explored and candidates encouraged to consider their advantages and disadvantages eg. speech: some advantages are that it is immediate and can convey emotion as well as information, some disadvantages are that there may be speech or hearing impairments, language differences etc.

The use of telephone, fax and electronic mail could be discussed and the candidates could practice effective and accurate message giving and taking.

Non verbal communication and the importance and relevance of body language should be highlighted.

For outcome 3 the skills involved in communication are based on reading, writing, talking and listening. Candidates could be given examples of good/poor communications and helped identify the essential aspects which make them effective or not. An element of role play could be introduced to allow the candidate to practice their listening and questioning skills.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

For outcome 1 candidates could be set a series of short answer questions focusing on the identification and description of the variety of communication methods relevant to the care setting.

For outcome 2 candidates could be set a selection of case studies covering a variety of barriers to effective communication. The candidate would be expected to correctly identify these barriers and suggest practical ways they could be overcome.

The assessment for outcome 3 could include an element of role play which allows the candidate to demonstrate their interpersonal and communication skills.

There is scope for integrating much of this assessment with other units within the Professional Development Award: Certificate in Care Support Practice such as the unit “Workplace Practice for Care Support Workers”.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication Skills for Care Support Workers (Intermediate 1)

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements* (SQA, 1998).