



Hello from Eleanor Ramsay

As the new Qualifications Manager for Care Scotland I wanted to say 'Hello' and tell you how much I am looking forward to working with the Care sector on qualifications development.

Many of you will know that my background is in social work and that I have spent the last 10 years working as a lecturer and then as a manager in further education. My beliefs about education and training are very much set around breaking down barriers for people accessing educational opportunities. My memories of being a young Social Worker supported by colleagues, many of whom had no formal qualifications but had a wealth of practice experience, keep these beliefs firmly in focus.

It is an exciting time to be involved in qualifications development in a growing and diverse workforce. I am looking forward to the challenge of working with the current workforce in terms of qualifications and CPD that is relevant to their job role. It is equally exciting to be involved in looking to the future and planning for future employee and employer needs.

I know that my predecessors have worked hard to ensure that there are very strong relationships between the Care Scotland team and our customers, and I'd like to continue and strengthen these relationships. The credibility of our qualifications depends on their ability to meet a diverse range of needs and reflect current legislative trends. We can only continue to do this with open dialogue.

I think the challenge for us all is to work together across Health, Social Care and Early Education and Childcare to find common links in terms of knowledge, skills and values. I look forward to this challenge!

Eleanor Ramsay
Qualifications Manager



CareScotland

bulletin november 2005

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A word from the new External Moderator for Health and Social Care

Since taking up the 'hot seat' as the latest full-time External Moderator for Health and Social Care, I have been visiting centres from Stornoway to Selkirk, meeting candidates, assessors and verifiers as the sector gets to grips with the new Health and Social Care awards. The new qualifications have been enthusiastically welcomed and the first successful candidates have completed in what seems like record time. The vision of a fully-qualified workforce seems much less daunting now.

This is also an exciting time for centres as they prepare for the introduction of the revised HNC Social Care, and I look forward to working with colleagues as they deliver this qualification which is unique in having both Higher National and SVQ Units in the one award.

Although I, and all the External Moderators, work for the Moderation and Approvals section of SQA, we liaise very closely with Care Scotland, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with Eleanor Ramsay, Care Scotland Manager and Karen Crawford, Qualifications Officer on the development of new and revised awards in Care. Readers will be pleased to know that Carla Findlay will be joining the team of part-time External Moderators — a warm welcome to Carla.

The post of full-time External Moderator is varied and challenging, and no two days are ever quite the same. I look forward to meeting you all as I travel around the country. My contact details are:

Tel: 01698 811612
Mobile: 07899 843974
E-mail: pat.tonner@sqa.org.uk

An update from the new External Moderator for Early Education and Childcare

Appointment of full-time External Moderator

Sarah Sayers was appointed as full-time External Moderator for Childcare in April this year.

Many people in the Childcare sector know Sarah already — she has been Senior Moderator for Childcare since 1999.

'I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work full-time and focus my undivided attention on the sector at a time when so many new awards in Early Education and Childcare are being introduced,' Sarah said on her appointment.

Sarah's contact details are:

Tel: 01356 650314
Mobile: 07833 366548
E-mail: sarah.sayers@sqa.org.uk

HNC Early Education and Childcare

The new HNC has had its first year of delivery and assessment. There was no visiting external moderation during 2004–05, but during 2005–06, all centres delivering the new HNC will receive a visit by an External Moderator.

A sample of Graded Unit assessments from all colleges delivering the new awards were centrally or postally moderated in June this year. The majority of candidates performed well, and most projects were of a good to high standard. The deadline for submitting the projects was given too late this year for all candidates to finish in time, but we are planning to give you sufficient advance notice of next session's date for submission.

We hope that most centres will offer the new HNC from August 2005. The content of the award is

up-to-date and aims to meet workplace demands and SSSC registration requirements across a wide range of early education and childcare settings. Assessment Exemplars are available for all mandatory Units from the secure section of our website. There are also open learning packs available to purchase for optional Units: Working with Children 0–3 Years; Facilitating Playwork Opportunities; and Supporting Children Learning through an Additional Language. For information on prices and ordering these packs, please phone SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000.

PDA Early Education and Childcare

The new PDA: Certificate in Early Education and Childcare (SCQF level 8) has been validated and information can be found on the Care Scotland pages of SQA's website.

SVQs in Early Years Care and Education

SVQs in Early Years Care and Education levels 2, 3 and 4 will cease to be current from 31 Oct 2005. Entries will be accepted until that date, and candidates will then have two, three or four years to complete (depending on the level of the qualification they are taking).

The first self-reflective studies for SVQ level 4 Unit D97Y 04 (EYD7) were independently assessed at a central event in June this year. Many candidates provided extremely good studies, fully meeting the requirements of the SVQ standards. The central event was held to ensure standardisation of assessors' decisions.

SVQs Children's Care, Learning and Development

The new SVQs in Children's Care, Learning and Development are close to finalisation — centres will be able to deliver them from 1 Nov 2005. We have commissioned practitioners who are currently delivering and assessing the SVQs Early Years Care and Education levels 2, 3 and 4 to provide Assessment Guidance for each level of the new SVQs. We are also developing new formats for recording and tracking evidence. Launch events are planned for December 2005 and probably for early in the new year.

NC Group Award Early Education and Childcare

The new award was launched in January 2005. There are 13 mandatory SQA credits at SCQF level 6, and five optional SQA credits at SCQF levels 5 and 6. Some support materials for the mandatory Units have been developed and are available from the Scottish Further Education Unit. NABs have also been developed for mandatory and optional Units and these are available from SQA on the secure website. Your centre contact would be able to access this for you. It is probable that this award will be centrally moderated with other National Qualifications.

Intermediate 1 and 2 Skills for Work Courses

Skills for Work Courses are designed to help candidates to develop:

- skills and knowledge in a broad vocational area
- Core Skills
- an understanding of the workplace
- positive attitudes to learning
- skills and attitudes for employability

These qualifications were launched in May 2005. Centres throughout Scotland will be piloting them during 2005/2006. Some schools have achieved independent approval from SQA. Other schools are working with local childcare partnership providers and/or with colleges of further education.

Consultation with Disclosure Scotland has confirmed that there is no age limit for meeting disclosure requirements, which means that all school pupils who will be in contact with children in early education and childcare settings will need to apply for a Disclosure Scotland record.

Each Course consists of four SQA credits at either SCQF level 4 (Intermediate 1) or level 5 (Intermediate 2). There are three mandatory Units at each level and one optional Unit. Pupils should be capable of Standard Grade at General level for an Intermediate 1 Course, and Standard Grade at Credit level for an Intermediate 2 Course.

Support materials are available from SFEU, and NABs can be obtained from SQA.

Working in partnership

Dorothy Johnson from *Cumbernauld College* shares her experience of co-ordinating the development of learning and teaching materials in the spirit of collaboration.

It is at an exciting time for training in the Care sector. There are a number of new and challenging qualifications that meet both the needs of learners and the workforce development requirements of the sector. These developments also provide a welcome opportunity to bring our learning and teaching materials up-to-date with current practice, and to update our learning and teaching methodologies.

As a member of the HNC Early Education and Childcare steering group, I started to work with fellow members in January 2004 developing the new learning and teaching materials. At Cumbernauld we are more than happy to be involved with others to share resources and expertise, and eventually a group of 10 colleges from across Scotland came together to develop both assessment and teaching materials.

A meeting with Colleges Open Learning Exchange Group (COLEG) provided us with invaluable support in developing an approach that met both our own needs and COLEG's. This ensured and enhanced the quality of the learning resources created. Development moved forward quickly as together we developed our project plan and peers reviewed the material. This was passed to COLEG central services, who undertook the task of creating the final packs that are now available to the sector.

Flushed with enthusiasm, and with the arrival of the new HNC Social Care, I phoned some colleges to see if they were keen to join forces and develop Learning and Teaching materials for this programme. I have now just completed working with 14 colleges to develop learning resources to support the implementation of the HNC Social Care. The group concentrated their efforts on the

mandatory section because SQA had already developed packs to support the option Units.

The development of these materials was supported by COLEG/HNC modernisation funding. They will be shared with the BlendEd project, one of the SFEFC-funded e-Learning Transformation Projects, which means the sector will benefit from paper-based materials in the short term, and the BlendEd learning project materials in the future. The group was also supported by a member of the eMerge Team and by an SQA verifier. The eMerge Mentor, who is also a member of staff at Cumbernauld College, is working alongside COLEG to create online learning resources for the Graded Unit. These have a core Element and sections designed specifically for the HNC Social Care and HNC Early Education and Childcare. The group also undertook cross-matching exercises between Units and the SVQ Health and Social Care Units that are included as part of the award to streamline assessment.

Throughout the project SQA have been extremely supportive, and the direct responses to key questions, concerns and queries have been invaluable. Already, we have had discussions about the benefits of cross-matching sheets at the outset, and how some minor alterations in the wording of HNC Units would allow integration and joint assessment with the SVQ Units to take place smoothly and efficiently.

The benefits of working together are enormous and the experience has been good fun, although hard work! It also provided the group with a real opportunity to discuss learning and teaching, share best practice, and to meet like-minded colleagues. We now have an HNC programme with learning resources developed at an early stage, reducing pressure and stress on staff engaged in first time delivery. Partnership working would not have been possible without everyone's genuine commitment to the project and interest in benefits to the student. Thanks to everyone who has been involved.

RMA Barnardo's Scotland, in partnership with MJH Training, celebrated with Registered Managers Award (RMA) candidate Rosie Wattie, Children's Services Manager at 16+ Aberdeenshire, when she completed her award in six months.

This would have been a significant achievement for any busy manager, but at the same time Rosie was planning her eldest daughter's wedding. She claimed that working on her portfolio helped her to cope with the stress of wedding planning — we wonder if her family saw it this way!

New qualifications in Health and Social Care

The new SVQs in Health and Social Care and the revised HNC Social Care are now up and running and have been well received by centres. A number of new centres have been approved to offer these qualifications for the first time, particularly Housing Associations and Home Care Service providers. Three non-college centres are also approved for the HNC Social Care, and a number of others are seeking approval for HN Units.

The PDA Advanced Certificate in Supervising and Managing Personal Social Services has now been revised and a new qualification has been validated — PDA: Certificate in Care Services Management (SCQF level 8). This PDA contains 64 SCQF credits at SCQF level 8, and we hope that this means it will meet the SSSC registration requirements for management qualifications. Please note that this award was referred to as the 'Diploma in Care Service Management' in the previous bulletin dated May 2005.

Two new Professional Development Awards have been developed for those working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

- PDA: Certificate in Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (SCQF level 7) builds on the SVQ in Health and Social Care at level 3, and allows professional development opportunities for candidates who have completed this SVQ or the HNC in Social Care. It can also provide development opportunities for other professionals/carers working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The Units can also be delivered as stand-alone, and could be used for Continuous Professional Development.
- PDA: Certificate in Managing the Support of Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (SCQF level 8) was developed to meet the needs of managers and senior practitioners with responsibility for people who work with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. It can also provide development opportunities for other professionals who manage people who work with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

SVQ success — the first for Alzheimer Scotland as an SQA approved centre!



We are happy to announce that Margaret White, Care Worker with Motherwell Day Care Centre in Lanarkshire, completed her SVQ in Care at level 2 in October 2004. Having only taken 10 months to complete, this was a fantastic achievement for Margaret, given that she

was more than apprehensive in the beginning about going ahead. She is glad, however, that she had faith in her abilities and has reached the finish line with magnificent results.

It is also an achievement for Alzheimer Scotland, as Margaret is the first candidate registered with the organisation, given their new status as an SQA approved centre, to complete an award. Since Margaret's success a further four people have completed SVQs:

- Maureen Kenmuir, Day Care Worker, North Lanarkshire Services, SVQ in Care level 2
- John Farquhar, Day Care Worker, North Lanarkshire Services, SVQ in Care level 2
- Linda Williamson, Day Care Worker, North Lanarkshire Services, SVQ in Care level 2
- Teresa Straczynska, Service Manager, Polish and Ukrainian Service, Lothian, SVQ in Care level 4

Innovative Partnership Working in Dundee

The Dundee Social Care Training and Recruitment Academy, was set up in 2004 by Dundee City Council, Dundee College, and independent sector employers. The key aim was to encourage a wider range of people to train and work as social care workers.

The age profile of the social care workforce in the Dundee City Council Social Work Department highlighted a serious need to recruit new staff to replace the number of people aged 55–64 likely to leave the social care sector in the next five years. In addition, the number of school leavers entering the labour market is also falling because of declining birth rates. The Social Work Department estimates that around 20% of those young people who do enter the sector do not stay.

The Social Work Department has identified a steep decline in the number of applications for social care jobs — from 400 responses for a job advertisement two years ago to down to only 8 recently.

The project involved Dundee City Council Social Work Department and Dundee College in a collaborative partnership with SVQ assessors and employers providing placements.

- The programme provided a one-year, full-time course that integrated National Units with SVQ level 2 Units. The National Units were taught at the College the first two terms with placements, and SVQ assessment took place in the second and third terms.
- Trainees received on-going support from College tutors and other staff, SVQ assessors, employers, the Project Manager and fellow trainees.
- The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council covered course fees, and those trainees who qualified received bursaries and/or childcare assistance.

Overall, the collaborative working between the Social Work Department and Dundee College was ground-breaking, and the relevant heads of department at the Council and College have now met to discuss scope for broader collaboration. Both sides have a better perspective of what each has to offer, and their joint provision of recruitment and training is far more effective than either was able to achieve before the project.

Before the Academy was developed the College had often struggled to source placements through the personal goodwill of former colleagues. The project addressed this by formalising links with employers, and the Academy Project Manager sourced placements with employers who were more committed to supporting their trainees.

One of the most impressive aspects of the partnership working is the degree to which the project evolved as it progressed. Partners were able to co-operate to overcome issues and act upon opportunities. As a result all the partners are now clearer and more committed on the way to achieve ever more success in the future.

The first cohort of trainees was a 'cross-section of the community', as intended, and included people from the targeted disadvantaged groups. There were lone parents, two people who had recently finished studying, unemployed people, and generally people who have experienced barriers to education, training and employment. Nearly all were residents of Dundee. Importantly, the project also attracted a high proportion of trainees who may not have considered working in the Care sector without the Academy's marketing and promise of a guaranteed job.

Although most similar projects aim to attract only disadvantaged groups, the Council and College had the flexibility to select a mix of people that would potentially reflect, for example, the gender balance of service users.

Some 11 out of 25 trainees completed both the SVQ and the NQ and were therefore eligible for a guaranteed job (44%). Of those, five had already found permanent jobs through their own initiative by the end of the course, and two enrolled on an HNC course to help them access more advanced jobs. Four were offered the 'guaranteed job' — a six-month, full time contract.

Even the person with no bursary who withdrew found work in the sector soon after she withdrew because she now had certificates and evidence of practical experience. She had unsuccessfully looked for a job in the sector for over a year before starting the course.

The number of non-completers still looking for a job in the sector suggests that a less demanding entry-level route might be a useful option.

All the trainees interviewed said they would recommend the project — even those who had withdrawn.

One of the wider aims of providing a cross-section of the community among social care workers is to obtain a gender balance that better reflects service users. This programme, despite being full-time, had more success with women.

Anecdotally, this difference appears to be related to men being less familiar with the Care sector and more uncomfortable with aspects of it. More research may be required into their needs to take part in the sector more easily.

The main benefit of the project envisaged for employers was access to part-qualified staff to speed them on their way to registration of all their staff.

Those employers who were involved in placements rather than in taking on graduates from the Academy found several benefits from the placement experience and all those we spoke to were keen to be involved in future.

If the Academy project grows and expands, over time there may be a broader range of social care workers with more skills making a noticeable difference to the quality of social care provision in Dundee. In the longer term, this is likely to contribute to a more qualified workforce and increased registration among care providers. This will ultimately improve the level of social care for consumers in Dundee.

My experience as an SVQ candidate in a unique situation

We all know that SVQs can be daunting, but it's not all bad news. Teresa Straczynska, Service Manager of Polish and Ukrainian Support Services for Alzheimer Scotland, reports on her personal experience.

The Alzheimer Scotland, Polish and Ukrainian Support Service is a unique service for several reasons:

- It is the only service in Scotland which supports Polish and Ukrainian people and their carers.
- It is the only service in Alzheimer Scotland which supports the whole community and not just those with dementia.
- It is the only service which supports a white minority.

The Polish community is the largest and oldest community in Scotland — people in their 70s, 80s and 90s. It is a community who settled here after the war because they were unable to return to their homeland. They set up their own networks of support and did not require (or ask for) support from statutory organisations and thus have become somewhat invisible.

However, their own networks have now broken down because of the age of the community, and they now require real and immediate support from statutory organisations.

Doing the SVQ

In October 2003 I received my file and Units for SVQ Care level 4. Prior to this there had been several meetings to familiarise the group who were doing SVQ Care level 4 with the SVQ system.

On receiving the pack I looked through it and three things struck me:

- The language used in the Units. I already knew about PCs, ranges and knowledge points, but I found the language very difficult to understand.
- Looking through the headings for each of the Units I felt I was not doing some of the things required and therefore I would not be able to complete the SVQ.
- While reading through the Units I realised that many of them required observation. The service users I work with spoke Polish and very little English. How could these observations be carried out to the satisfaction of my Assessor?

Most of the observations which were carried out by my Assessor, who does not speak or understand Polish, consisted of observing materials, ie letters and other materials which were sent out from the office. When speaking to clients who did not have a great knowledge of English we could rely on the services of Katarzyna Sinclair (Polish Volunteer Co-ordinator), who works in the project, to act as an interpreter. This could only happen if we were speaking to people we both knew.

In November 2003 a meeting was arranged for the candidates to meet their assessors, sign contracts and have the opportunity to discuss any further issues. On that day I met my Assessor, Carol Hutton. I found out that she was an experienced Assessor within the SVQ system and this immediately put my mind at rest. Right away, we signed the contract, had a look at the Units, discussed where I should start, and planned the first Unit.

We arranged our first meeting to discuss this Unit just before Christmas 2003. I left this meeting feeling more confident because I had nearly completed one Unit and it had not been too difficult.

Throughout the whole SVQ the language was a problem, although it did get easier. As time went

on I changed my way of working. To begin with I wrote the reflective accounts as stories and then added the PCs, range items, knowledge evidence and Outcomes. This made the accounts quite long and took up a lot of time. Later, as I became more experienced, I chose the topic and worked along with the PCs etc, and this shortened the accounts and took less time.

As I was doing the SVQ I thought it took a long time. I also felt I was not learning anything new. However, I now see it has given me an opportunity to reflect on my work and to consider how to improve my practice and that of those in my team. I was apprehensive about doing the SVQ because I had done no written work for many years. However, I enjoyed doing the work and feel that I have regained confidence in my writing skills.

I had also not been really aware of how many different tasks I did and how my work was going. The SVQ gave me an opportunity to reflect not only on the standard of my work but also to realise how much work was done in the service, not just by myself, but also by my colleagues.

I have come away with a feeling of great achievement, not just in the completion of the SVQ, but in the work of the service.

ACTAN Conference 2005

The 2005 ACTAN (Association of Care Training and Networks) conference will be held on November 14-16 at the Hilton Hotel, Glasgow.

SQA is delighted to be the major sponsor of this event which attracts upwards of 250 delegates from all parts of the UK.

The theme this year — New Recruits, New Awards, New Energy — reflects the exciting new developments in the field of Health and Social Care that have resulted in the new National Occupational Standards and the now familiar SVQ/NVQ awards.

The programme is designed to celebrate the success of the new qualifications, and one of the highlights will be a presentation by Anton Colella, SQA's Chief Executive, to a group of candidates who have successfully completed at levels 2, 3 and 4.

This will follow a presentation by Care Scotland, where the Qualifications Manager Eleanor Ramsay will introduce a successful candidate, an Assessor and an Internal Verifier, who will describe their role in the process. The full-time External Verifier Pat Tonner will talk about her experience of visiting centres in the first six months of the awards.

Other workshops include the Scottish Network for Internal Verifiers presentation of the Jigsaw — a holistic approach to gathering evidence for the SVQ, the new HNC/SVQ, Routes to Recruitment, and methods of supporting candidates with specific learning needs.

The keynote speakers, who will include a representative from the Scottish Parliament, will talk about recruitment and the progress being made in the retention of staff — not only in the sector but within organisations — and the conference will close by looking at the way forward for the Health and Social Care workforce.

Celebrating success

East Park in the Maryhill area of Glasgow, provides education and accommodation services to children and young people with multiple disabilities. They recently held an awards ceremony to celebrate the achievements of staff from across the organisation. East Park is committed to providing the support and resources necessary to help staff meet the registration requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council, and has sought approval to offer SVQs as well as the HNC Social Care, to be delivered under a supported, flexible and tailored model.

Among the 40 staff being recognised at the ceremony were 16 Support Workers and Learning Support Workers who have completed the SVQ level 3 Caring for Children and Young People, or Promoting Independence, and five staff who have completed the HNC in Social Care by day release with SIRCC at Langside College.

Also being recognised were the 12 Managers and Team Leaders from across East Park who have worked as Assessors, Independent Assessors or Internal Verifiers, and many who have achieved

their A1 Assessor Awards since East Park was approved as an SQA Centre in April 2004.

East Park wanted to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of all those involved in achieving and helping others to achieve the qualifications. The SQA centre has been supported well since its approval last year, and it is important to acknowledge the advice and guidance provided by Care Scotland, in particular Margaret Graham, our External Verifier during this period.



Home care staff complete SVQ Health and Social Care at level 2

Eight Home Care staff achieved their SVQ level 2 Health and Social Care award through Midlothian and Borders SVQ Assessment Centre. They all completed within six months, and their verdict on the award was that it was easy to understand and follow and they now felt more confident in their practice.

Home Care staff are probably the most isolated of Social Care workers, working on their own in the community, and this can make assessment difficult. However, the assessors — either managers or peripatetic assessors — said the language used in the SVQ was much improved and it was now simpler to relate to work roles.



They were able to assess holistically, and candidates could achieve in a shorter time than with the old SVQ.

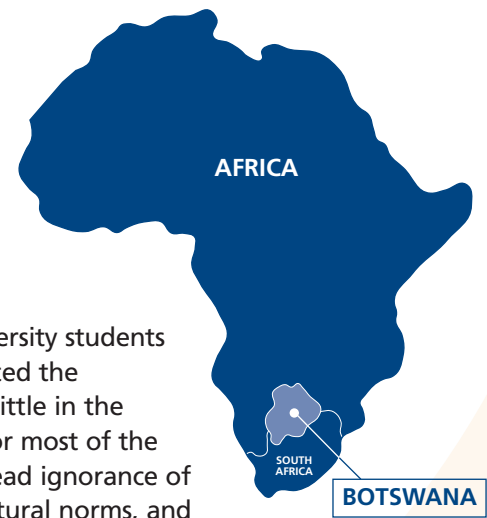
Scottish Borders Council

- Catherine Dickson — Assessor Maureen Sansom
- Donna Jardine — Assessor Maureen Sansom
- Janice Wightman — Assessor Katharine Wright
- Nicola Wilson — Assessor Katharine Wright

Midlothian Council

- Esther Balloch — Assessor Sam Craig
- Nayani Joshi — Assessor Sam Craig
- Yvonne Mackenzie — Assessor Sam Craig
- Carole McLean — Assessor Sam Craig

A first-hand view of qualification development in Botswana



Beautiful and unspoiled Botswana — is developing its Health and Social Care education in the face of its HIV/AIDS epidemic. Margaret Graham, External Verifier with SQA, went there to help, and reports on her experiences.

As the plane came in to land in Botswana I was struck by two things — the vast emptiness stretching out beneath and the richness of it all. The bright red earth, the green of the vegetation — a land on first sight that is ripe for development and yet there are few houses and nothing you could call a city. There is a sense of the land that time forgot, and I couldn't help wondering how long it can stay that way.

Anyone who has read the No 1 Ladies Detective Agency (those who have not yet discovered it should do so now) will identify with my excitement as we headed for Molepolole Road and my hotel, which was to be home for the next two weeks.

Now that in itself was an interesting journey. It is four kilometres from the airport to the hotel and there is only one drawback — there are no signposts and few street names, so unless you know where you are going and how to get there you face a challenge. However, one hour after leaving the airport we finally found my hotel nearby.

My driver and instant friend is Brigitte, from Frankfurt, who is in Botswana for two years to develop a series of courses in Health and Social Care which will be taught in the technical colleges. I am here as her Consultant, and in two weeks need to decide with her where to start and what should be on offer to meet the care provision needs the country is beginning to identify.

As I unpacked my suddenly inadequate selection of clothes into the equally inadequate wardrobe, I switched on the television and was caught almost immediately by the programme that came on. Young people were discussing what they should be told about HIV/AIDS by their parents and teachers. They were articulate and angry. The adult presenter was patronising and dismissive. Suddenly the enormity of the job they face here seemed almost overwhelming.

The statistics are frightening — one in three of the population is HIV positive. The latest figures estimate

that 80% of the university students have already contracted the disease, and there is little in the way of medical aid for most of the population. Widespread ignorance of the disease, some cultural norms, and the low status of women, make the problem worse.

At the end of my two weeks we have designed outline programmes for Foundation, Certificate, Advanced Certificate and Diploma courses; written three Units as examples to give the social workers and health professionals an idea of the level and content to expect from the training programmes; and outlined possible job descriptions for workers at each of the levels.

Perhaps even more importantly, we have designed a Unit on HIV/AIDS that will be taught to every student in all colleges from the end of this year, with the aim of starting to help the young people to understand what has happened and how it can change if they change.

This is not a poor country; the diamonds discovered following independence in 1966 ensured this. It is developing rapidly and new industry, housing, shopping malls, and all that goes with these things, are more and more in evidence. Despite this, Botswana remains highly dependent on neighbouring South Africa for most things, including foodstuffs. There is little large-scale farming here — although cattle are revered (an individual's wealth is still measured in cattle) and meat is plentiful and very cheap, they grow little in the way of fruit or vegetables, and while beef production is large scale and commercialised in the south of the country, it has not expanded out of this area.

And so my time here drew to a close. I can honestly say I am in love with Botswana — the climate is wonderful the people are happy and friendly; the expat community have made me welcome and entertained me well. I have seen animals in their natural habitat — the giraffe were awesome, the impala and the kudu were graceful, the zebra, warthogs, wildebeest, ostrich and all the others have given me wonderful memories of my safari. And I've helped develop some much-needed training and qualifications.

I simply can't wait for my next trip.

Health Care update

The revision of the HNC Health Care is nearing completion, and the qualification should go for validation towards the end of the year. It is hoped that the revised award will continue to offer advanced entry to the Branch programme of the Diploma of Higher Education in Nursing for candidates who undertake an extended clinical placement.

The HNC Allied Health Professions: Diagnostic Imaging, and HNC Allied Health Professions: Radiotherapy are in the final stages of development and will be available very soon. The other pathways, including Speech and Language Therapy, and Physiotherapy, are still in the development stage. The core Units for these awards have been successfully validated.

The SVQs in Operating Department Support and Practice are entering the lapsing stage and have been replaced by the following qualifications:

- SVQ Health: (Perioperative Care Support) at level 2
- SVQ Health: (Perioperative Care — Anaesthetic/PACU Support) at level 3

- SVQ Health (Perioperative Care — Surgical Support) at level 3

These SVQs are now available. Information can be found on the Care Scotland pages at: www.sqa.org.uk.

There is also an SVQ in Support Services in Health Care at level 2 for support staff in the following areas — porters and security staff, housekeeping staff (eg cleaners and catering assistants), admin workers (eg appointment clerks and records staff). Again, there is more information on the Care Scotland pages at: www.sqa.org.uk.

More SVQs in Health

A vast range of specialist Units at all levels have been developed by Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council, and a number of qualifications frameworks have been proposed. We are currently consulting the sector on the appropriateness of these frameworks for Scotland, and hope to accredit further SVQs in Health in the near future.

Congratulations to the first SVQ level 4 Health and Social Care (Adults) achiever

Mary McCahon, Housing Support Manager for Blue Triangle Housing Association, is the first person in Scotland to achieve the new SVQ level 4 Health and Social Care (Adults).

Ian Batt, Operations Director of Blue Triangle said: 'As a major provider of housing support in Scotland, we are proud that one of our staff has the distinction of being the first in Scotland to be awarded the SVQ level 4 Health and Social Care (Adults), and congratulate Mary for her application in achieving this award.'

'Blue Triangle is delighted with our partnership with the UK Centre for Continuing Professional Development. This is pivotal in addressing the professional development agenda for our staff, as it relates to the Scottish Social Services Council framework.'

Brendan Harris, Chief Executive of the UKCCPD, congratulates Mary on her achievement:

'We have developed a system of support tools to ensure candidates can focus their energies on the award,' he explains. 'However, the only person who can achieve the award is the candidate. Mary has worked hard, shown enthusiasm and has been well supported by her organisation.'

Mary said that she had thoroughly enjoyed doing the SVQ. She felt the quality of her work with her client group of 16–25 year-old people had improved, as well as her understanding of work with other agencies and the legislation under which she works. Mary said she had great support from her Assessor and 'the time flew by'.

'Best' use of training for work



Bestworks started their first Training for Work Course, as training providers for Scottish Enterprise, in January 2001 at Haymarket House Edinburgh. Since then the course has been extended to Aberdeen with great success. Bestworks Training has now enabled over 300 clients gain work in the Care sector through the TfW scheme.

It has been rewarding to know that many participants who completed the Course have gone on to undertake SVQs to further their careers.


Having achieved this success the company decided to apply to the Scottish Qualifications Authority to become an SQA accredited centre. The application was accepted and in 2004 Bestworks Training started delivering SVQ level 2, level 3 and Modern Apprentices in Care. The company now delivers the Health and Social Care award across Scotland.

To further extend the company's activities in training it was a logical step to apply to become a Branded Training Centre with LearnDirect Scotland. In August 2005 the company was awarded this status at a ceremony at Haymarket House.

Contact us

Care Scotland helpline

If you would like more detailed information about any of the qualifications listed inside: HNCs, SVQs, SPAs, PDAs — or have a general centre enquiry, contact us at:


 0141-242 2344

or

 carescotland@sqa.org.uk

NHS helpline

For qualifications relevant to workers in the NHS (not just Care), contact the NHS helpline:


 0141-242 2364

or

 nhs@sqa.org.uk

NQ helpline

For enquiries related to National Qualifications in the Care area, contact Tom Stannage on:

 0141-242 2343

SSSC helpline

For enquiries relating to registration requirements set by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), please contact them directly on:

 0845 60 30 891

or

 enquiries@sssc.uk.com