



Scottish Qualifications Authority sponsors ACTAN

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) was the main sponsor of ACTAN's (Association of Care Training and Assessment Networks) annual conference in the Hilton Hotel, Glasgow on 14 until 16 November, 2005.

The conference welcomed over 300 delegates from across the United Kingdom, Isle of Man and the Channel Isles.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority supported the conference planning team throughout the year by working with the planning group and supporting it financially and in kind with equipment and human resources.

The conference itself was a great success. Anton Colella, Chief Executive of SQA, opened it by welcoming the delegates to Scotland.



The conference theme focused on the development and implementation of the new standards in Health and Social Care. SQA has accredited SVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4, and the team at Care Scotland were asked to give a keynote presentation on the implementation and our experiences of the new qualifications to date. We decided to focus on the process of assessment and use a candidate, an assessor, an internal verifier and an external verifier to demonstrate the experiences of the new qualifications.

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SQA's Head of Communications, Mike Haggerty, presented 16 candidates who had completed their qualifications in 2005 with their certificates. Those candidates were:

Helen Valance, East Ayrshire Assessment Centre, who achieved Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Charris Gillingham, Lanarkshire Assessment Centre, who achieved Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Mary McCahon, The UK Centre for Continuing Professional Development (UKCCPD, — who achieved Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 4.

Yvonne Duffy, UKCCPD, Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Elaine Gallagher, Glasgow College of Nautical Studies, Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Amanda Watson, Aberdeen Council, Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Anne Alexander, Tell Organisation, Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Don Ross, Cora Learning, Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) at level 3.

Anne Cairns, Bestworks, Health and Social Care at level 2.

Millie Crawford, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS), Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

Tracy Gordon, Cora Learning, Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) at level 3.

Carol Gilmour, Barnardos Scotland, Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) at level 3.

Margaret Donnelly, Oilean, Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) at level 3.

Deby Magee, Oilean, Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) at level 3.

Rona Crighton, Fife Council, Health and Social Care at level 2.

Jane Peat, Fife Council, Health and Social Care at level 2.

The candidates were also presented with a diary and a clock, and had lunch with the delegates afterwards.

The conference delegates had a range of workshop events on holistic assessment and good practice in delivery of training in the Care area.

The Care Scotland team would like to thank the ACTAN executive for their hospitality during the three days and are looking forward to attending future events.

New developments in Perioperative SVQs at levels 2 and 3

By **Marion Gates**, External Moderator, Perioperative Care.

The Perioperative Area comprises three very different but fully integrated specialisms: Anaesthetics, Surgery, and Recovery. All three share a common foundation level of skills and have their own advanced skills.

During the past few years Registered Practitioners (Nurses and Operating Department Practitioners) in the Perioperative team have had opportunities to take on advanced roles. This year will see the start of training for at least two further advanced roles:

Anaesthetic Practitioner and First Assistant.

The qualifications are restricted to the Registered members of the Perioperative team.

Previously, the Support Worker in the team was limited to SVQ level 2. This was restrictive to both the development of the individual and to the service needs, so the restriction was removed when the new SVQs were accredited in 2005. Perioperative Support at level 2 was updated from, and replaced, the previous Operating Department Support at level 2. (There are still 10 mandatory Units).

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New developments in Perioperative SVQs at levels 2 and 3 *Continued*

The old Operating Department Practice at level 3 has not been directly replaced — the qualification for registration with the Health Professions Council as an ODP is now the Diploma of Operating Department Practice, which in Scotland is run by Glasgow Caledonian University.

There are however two new level 3 SVQs in Perioperative Support: Anaesthetic/PACU (Post Anaesthetic Care Unit) and Surgical Support. Each has 12 mandatory Units. Candidates who achieve Surgical Support can then access six additional accredited Units, which cover the 'scrubbed' role.

In August 2005 I was appointed as Education Coordinator/SVQ Lead for Theatre and Anaesthetics throughout Lothian Health. I have been a work-based assessor and internal verifier for twelve years, and an external verifier for four years. My main job role is to introduce and develop these new SVQs, not only for Lothian Health but also for use in our partnerships with Fife Acute Hospitals and others.

Utilising the knowledge and experience gained in my various SVQ roles, I devised a course to be run over 26 weeks, in the first instance for level 2. The course began in October 2005 and has 16 candidates, who are on schedule for completing within the 26 weeks.

There are six full study days, and assessments are limited to two Units every five weeks. The next full course is due to start on 10 April this year.

At St. John's Hospital in Livingston there are 19 candidates who are undertaking level 2. All of these candidates are very experienced members of

the team who have worked in the perioperative area for many years. There is a high level of skill, knowledge, ability and motivation in producing evidence for assessment. Approximately 15 of the candidates will be completed by the end of March.

The course for the two level 3 awards started in January, with a total of 16 candidates who are all qualified at level 2. This is a pilot group — Lothian has 13 candidates undertaking Anaesthetic/PACU, and Fife Acute has three undertaking Surgical Support with the definite intention of accessing the additional 'scrubbed' Units. Again, this course runs over 26 weeks, with assessments limited to two Units every four to five weeks. As level 3 has 12 Units, there are eight full study days and also four hours' protected study time a week for each candidate.

All 16 are progressing well, and they are a well-motivated, enthusiastic group. The title for the team member qualified at level 3 will be Perioperative Assistant.

In the Perioperative area there are many trainees undertaking a variety of qualifications that require input from the Registered members of the team. Feedback from assessors, internal verifiers and candidates to this structured approach is very positive as it provides realistic timing for achievement of the award while still fulfilling their clinical commitment.

This is an exciting and challenging time in the Perioperative area as we unlock the potential of these team members and offer them advanced roles.



Of the level 3 pilot group who started in January.

From the left

Back row, Julie Inglis, Lorraine Turner, Will Watson, Brian Stoddart, Raymond Hamilton, Rona Murphy, Angela McDonald.

Seated

Sandra Tait, Tricia Thorburn, Andrena Weddell, Mary Harley, Wendy Smith, Ballie Munro.

In front

Leon Burnett and Darnell Taylor.

(NB: Louise Cotterill is in the group but was at her daughter's wedding on the day the photo was taken.)

SCQF and the Health sector

In October 2005, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) was pleased to announce the start of a new educational project on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Marie Cerinus began a two-year secondment (from NHS Lanarkshire and her post as Organisational Development Manager) as 'SCQF post holder' to lead on the implementation of SCQF in the Health sector. The post is match-funded by NES and the SCQF partners.

The key objective of the project is to establish the concepts and principles of the SCQF in the Health sector by:

- showing how SCQF can make a positive contribution to the core functions of the Health sector
- seeking interconnectedness between SCQF, the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework of Agenda for Change (KSF), and Health sector competence and careers frameworks
- communicating information on SCQF through published materials, guidance, and facilitated discussion and debate at consultative meetings and conferences.

The project aims to:

- ensure as many Health sector qualifications and education and training programmes as possible are incorporated in the SCQF
- further develop the recognition of Health sector work-based learning in the SCQF
- seek credit transfer of formal and informal learning for Health sector staff wherever appropriate

Initially the project is focusing on the NHS in Scotland, and opportunities to involve both the independent and voluntary sectors are being sought. Although the project is at an early stage, there have already been developments:

An initial conference at which both the SCQF and KSF were presented was held on December 7 in Dunblane. There were 150 delegates from the health and education sectors, and there was an opportunity to identify key actions for the SCQF project. These included:

- establishing a strong network nationwide to support the implementation of SCQF in the Health sector
- providing more information on the SCQF to the Health sector and more information on the KSF to the education sector
- developing an approach that links competences, careers, KSF and SCQF
- seeking a range of opportunities for credit rating learning, particularly for prior learning and work-based learning

A conference report has been prepared, and will be placed on the SCQF and NES websites in the near future.

A leaflet about the SCQF has been designed for widespread use across the NHS. These are currently being circulated via the Heads of Learning and Development in each NHS Board area.

Meetings are being held across the NHS in Scotland between the NES/SCQF post holder and NHS Heads of Learning and Development (and others) to raise awareness of the SCQF and to explore its potential for the NHS in Scotland.

Three regional 'Masterclasses' were hosted in March 2006 for invited delegates from NHS Boards to explore the SCQF in more detail and to inform future project work streams.

Further information is available from either Marie Cerinus (NES/SCQF Post Holder) on **0131-220 8066**; e-mail: marie.cerinus@nes.scot.nhs.uk or Angela McCulloch (Project Administrator) on **0131-220 8073** e-mail: angela.mcculloch@nes.scot.nhs.uk.

External Verifier update

In the latest of her regular reports, full-time External Verifier Pat Tonner brings you up to date with some of the latest developments in Health and Social Care.

It is now one year since I took up the 'hot seat' as the full-time Verifier. Time has passed so quickly! I look forward to another eventful year visiting centres and providing advice and guidance on the full range of qualifications now available. The landscape is constantly changing for the External Verifier, as new qualifications are developed, new centres are being approved to offer SQA awards, and existing centres are working in partnership or merging to form larger centres. As more and more existing staff in care are achieving awards, Continuing Professional Development is now high on the agenda. The recently launched Skillsets and option Units from the HNC Social Care are possible routes for centres to consider.

Health and Social Care SVQs (levels 2, 3 and 4)
The new Health and Social Care SVQs have been extremely well received by centres. Assessors find that the new standards lend themselves extremely well to holistic assessment. Candidates find the new standards easy to understand and, as a result, are completing their awards in a shorter time. Centres are also developing effective strategies for internal verification and the use of expert witness testimony.

HNC Social Care

The revised HNC Social Care is now running in colleges and other centres. The first group of candidates have completed their HNC qualification. The HNC is being delivered in innovative ways, utilising new technology and the wealth of resources available on the internet.

The revised HNC presents a number of challenges for centres as it now contains not only SVQ Units, but also a Graded Unit which integrates the knowledge and skills of the component Units of

the HNC in a practical assignment. The assignment is awarded a grade of A, B or C, and replaces the award of merit in individual Units. The Graded Unit will be centrally moderated by SQA in early June to ensure that national standards are being maintained.

Exemplar assessment materials for freestanding Units are available on the secure section of the website. Your centre contact should be able to access these. However, integrated assessment is recommended, wherever possible.

New SVQs in Health Care

New SVQs at level 3 for a range of support workers in healthcare settings are in the process of being finalised. These should be available to centres in the forthcoming months. The new SVQs in Perioperative Care are now available on the Care Scotland website. These replace the SVQs in Operating Department Support, which are now in the lapsing period. Exemplar materials are currently being prepared and will be available on the Care Scotland website.

Assessor and Verifier awards

These awards will now be externally moderated in the vocational area in which they are being undertaken. This means that the Care EVs will externally verify these awards when done by Health and Social Care assessors and verifiers.

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New Child Care SVQs launched

A new range of SVQs in Children's Care, Learning and Development was launched by Skills for Care and Development (the Sector Skills Council) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority at events in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The new SVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4 replace Vocational Qualifications in Early Years Care and Education, and reflect the changing face of the Early Education and Child Care sector.

The SVQs cover working with children in a variety of settings, as well as working with parents, and extend the age range covered to 16.

Early education and child care is an important part of the social services workforce, with an estimated 30,000 workers. A high proportion of these workers are qualified, but there are still gaps.

The new SVQs will benefit competent, experienced workers who currently have no qualifications, as well as workers who want to add Units from new awards to their existing qualifications and update their practice.

The SVQ level 4 award will be particularly important for managers in early education and child care services, who are due to begin registering with the SSSC from October 2006. Launching the SVQs, Chief Executive of the SSSC, Carole Wilkinson, said the SSSC had a major

interest in ensuring that workers in child care received good quality, training and education and were given every opportunity to learn and develop.

'These awards chime well with the aspirations of For Scotland's Children, help meet the policy objectives of regulation; and they move us in the direction of raising standards, raising the sector's profile, professionalising the workforce, and sending strong messages about how well-trained and qualified workers deliver high quality services,' she said.

Sarah Sayers, SQA's Senior Verifier in Child Care, said it was important that Child Care SVQ assessment centres fully met the requirements of the assessment strategy for the new awards.

'The assessment strategy explains very clearly how the awards should be assessed, who may assess and internally verify the award, and what methods of providing evidence of competence and knowledge are acceptable, valid and reliable,' she said.

Further information is available from www.sqa.org.uk/carescotland

Disclosure Scotland — update from last bulletin

In our last Bulletin, our External Verifier for Early Years reported on a number of projects in both HN/SVQ and NQ. There seemed to be some confusion caused by comment on the need for Disclosure Scotland checks to be carried out on students who were undertaking the Skills for Work Course.

Most of our Bulletin readers will be well aware of the need for safe recruitment procedures that incorporate Disclosure checks when recruiting students onto a course where they are involved in the care and protection of vulnerable individuals, including children.

Most of our centres will already have procedures in place that have been developed complying with local authority, voluntary and independent sector employers who provide placement experience for students. These procedures will follow legislative drivers in relation to protection of individuals and safe recruitment.

This guidance for centres has now been inserted into the Skills for Work programme to provide clarity to centres that are less familiar with this process.

Millie strikes gold

Millie Crawford, a Support Worker with RNIB Scotland, was named as the Scottish Colleges' Candidate of the Year at the Scottish Qualifications Authority's 2005 annual awards in Glasgow.

The award recognises candidates in employment or working with training providers who have achieved SQA qualifications and can show how the qualifications have broadened their knowledge, contributed to their personal development, and benefited the local community.

Millie, who works in the Clydebank area, was the judges' unanimous choice for the Gold award. Despite a gap of over 35 years since she undertook any formal learning, she has become the first person in Scotland to achieve the new SVQ in Health and Social Care (Adults) at level 3.

SQA Chief Executive, Anton Colella, said the standard of entries had been superb. 'We felt, however, that Millie was an outstanding mature candidate who is an example to those wishing to overcome many different barriers to returning to training after a long time.'

Having left school without qualifications, Millie began her career as a Cook in Charge at the Auchentoshan Adult Training centre in Clydebank before working as a nursing auxiliary at St Margaret's Hospice.

She then spent six years as a Home Carer with West Dunbartonshire Council before working as a nursing auxiliary at the Beatson Cancer Unit in Glasgow.

She joined the RNIB in April 2004 and now works as part of a team providing intensive support to adults with physical and learning disabilities, visual impairments and early-onset dementia in the Dunbartonshire area.

Millie said: 'Everyone has been very supportive, particularly my manager Heather Muldoon and SVQ assessor Brian Clunie from the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector.

'I have always cared for people, I'm very committed, and this gives you recognition for the work you have done. Now I'm keen to do other qualifications, particularly the assessor and advocacy qualifications, and my ambition is to become a social work assistant.'



Millie receives her award from Sarah Mitchell of publishers Leckie & Leckie at the SQA Annual Awards.

Safe recruiting for candidates and students

Centres should adhere to local authority guidelines where students come into contact with children and/or adults at risk while working towards achievement of their Skills for Work Course. It is important to recognise that school authorities and staff remain responsible for the students undertaking these Courses. It is also important that there are robust child protection policies and procedures in place which students should be made aware of and be required to comply with. Where a student is appropriately supervised at all times, a Disclosure Scotland check would not normally be required. However, you should consult local authority guidelines or, where appropriate, the local authority child protection officer.

National Qualifications in Care

It's all go for National Qualifications in Health, Social and Child Care. SQA's major Portfolio Review consultation carried out in 2003–04 has enabled us to begin to carry out a review of all our qualifications and to put in place a rolling programme of implementation over the next few years.

Early Education and Childcare

The National Certificate Group Award (NCGA) in Early Education and Childcare launched in February 2005 has been extremely well received with 14 centres entering just over 500 candidates — excellent numbers for a new qualification. A number of new Units were developed for it, and a large number were completely revised.

As can be expected with such a large-scale development, there have been a few teething problems, with one or two of the optional Units at Intermediate 2 requiring some reworking — any amendments made should be available for delivery in August 2006. There have also been some issues with National Assessment Bank packs. Where these require amendments this will be done after the Easter break. Centres are free to develop their own assessments and submit for prior verification.

A consultation on the structure of the Group Award will take place in the Autumn. This NC Group Award was developed before SQA's national Portfolio Review consultation. At present, candidates must achieve 18 credits to gain the NCGA, allowing six placement credits to be included in the mandatory section. However, the overwhelming feedback from the Portfolio Review consultation was that NCGAs should have 12 credits. If it is decided that the Early Education and Childcare NCGA should have the same structure as the other new NCGAs, we will have to decide which Units should be deleted from the mandatory section and placed in the optional section. The Portfolio Review also includes a 'scoping' of all National Units, allowing us to look at all provision in the Childcare sector and to revise or delete out-of-date Units.

The Early Years Care and Education (Higher) (C00R 12) Course was also revised and renamed Early Education and Childcare (Higher) C215 12. Entry figures currently stand at around 820 — an

increase of 160 over 2005. A new project-assessed Course, Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher) (C06L 12) was also developed. Entry figures for this Course stand at 132 — again an excellent number for a new Course.

Skills for Work

The new Skills for Work Courses were initiated by the Scottish Executive. They are intended to sit alongside Standard Grade and Intermediate Courses in the choice columns for S3/4 pupils in schools, but are delivered through local authority and college partnerships. Skills for Work Courses in Early Education and Childcare at Intermediate 1 and 2 were introduced as part of the Phase 1 Pilot in August 2005, and to date they have been a great success. A number of new partnerships have sought approval to offer these Courses in August 2006.

Health and Social Care

Question paper-assessed Courses

When the Scottish Executive initiated the major review of all National Qualifications in 2001, the question paper-assessed Care Courses were considered only to require minor adjustments. As a result a few Units at each level were amended and assessment was reduced. The amendments to the Higher Units have, however, apparently led to an overload of content, and a number of issues have been left unresolved.

As well as this, as the Courses at each level have bedded in. We have very clear feedback from a number of stakeholders that the Intermediate 2 Course does not adequately prepare candidates for Higher — the gap between them is too big — and that both Intermediate 1 and 2 are 'too easy'. We have, therefore, begun to revise Courses with a view to implementation in 2007.

National Certificate Group Award

We are also developing a new National Certificate Group Award at Higher level in Health and Social Care. This will be in line with design criteria developed from the Portfolio Review consultation. The design principles indicate that for an award at Higher:

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National Qualifications in Care *Continued*

- the National Certificate will be at SCQF level 6
- the Units within must make up to a total of 72 SCQF points
- the Group Award will contain at least 50% of level 6 SCQF Units
- the mandatory section of the award will be at least 50% of the award
- it will provide opportunities for candidates to develop all five Core skills
- it will have up to three External Assessment Credits
- it will be linked to the National Occupational Standards for Care

Project-based National Courses (PBNs)

The Mental Health Higher Course (X06G) was revised in 2004, and the Care Issues for Society was 'split' into two separate Courses in the same year. These are Care Issues for Society: Child Care (C06F) and Care Issues for Society: Older People (C06H). Health and Safety in Care Settings Intermediate 2 (C01E) and Care Practice Higher (C01F) are currently being reviewed. Revised Courses should be available for implementation in August 2007.

Support Material initiatives at Care Scotland

Two exciting new initiatives at Care Scotland are proving popular with both students/candidates and tutors/lecturers alike.

The first, the development of a series of Open Learning Packs, is designed to support HNC studies in Social Care and in Early Education and Childcare. The second initiative, started in the latter part of 2005, is the development of Teaching and Learning packs for the PDA in Early Education and Childcare.

Both HNCs have recently been reviewed in line with SQA's modernising agenda for Higher National Qualifications. The packs cover the Learning Outcomes for all the mandatory Units and several of the optional Units. They have been written by specialists in their fields, and draw from current research and practice. Written in the form of study notes — a section for each Learning Outcome — the content includes essential information on key themes in the Unit, a variety of formative activities to help towards assessment, comments which indicate whether the student is on the right lines, and assessment exemplars. The packs are spiral bound for ease of use, and are attractively illustrated. Packs are competitively priced at £17 plus a small handling charge.

Care Scotland's Eleanor Ramsay explains the thinking behind the venture: 'We at SQA are committed to supporting our customers to deliver awards. These materials have been produced in collaboration with the Care sector, and the goal is to assist with standardisation and quality of delivery'.

Since the materials are self-contained, centres can now offer a wider range of optional Units, even if they have no specialist in a particular field. Students can study individually or in small groups, but with tutorial support. The materials also suit class-based learning — the information and activities can be adapted to suit particular circumstances. The packs will also develop Core Skills in areas such as Communication, Working with Others, and Problem Solving.

So far 10 packs have been published, and another six are nearing completion. There are plans to add to the range of titles over the coming year.

The development of Teaching and Learning packs for the PDA in Early Education and Childcare draws on the expertise of a number of FE college lecturers across Scotland. They have devised their own learning materials in their specialist area and have a history of co-operating in the development of teaching-learning resources. It provides an ideal opportunity for Care Scotland to make such support materials available on a wider scale. Lecturers have met on several occasions with Care Scotland staff and an external consultant, initially to develop a plan of action and explore the processes of producing materials for publication rather than just for their own or colleagues' use. The project is co-ordinated by Dorothy Johnson of Cumbernauld College.

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Support Material initiatives at Care Scotland *Continued*

The opportunity to meet and plan has meant that many of the pitfalls associated with producing materials for publication have been avoided. Writing for publication is a completely different task from producing materials for our own use. For a start, the materials have to be able to speak for themselves, there has to be complete clarity, and they have to provide a level of guidance that suits both experienced tutors and novices. Information has to be both current and relevant, reflecting policy, research and practice. Copyright laws have to be adhered to, not only with respect to published texts and journal articles, but also materials on the web.

The Teaching and Learning packs are designed to support individual Units. They contain general guidance for tutors/lecturers, a series of session notes for the different topics involved, outlines for PowerPoint or OHP presentations, student handouts to support class-based and self-directed learning and suggestions for further reading — in short, everything a busy tutor needs to deliver that particular Unit.

Materials will be presented in loose-leaf binders so that tutors can add to and customise them. The emphasis is on promoting the skills and knowledge required by PDA candidates at managerial or senior practitioner level — skills such as teamwork, leadership, research and enhanced communication. The innovative activities in the packs reflect this emphasis.

A further advantage is that projects and activities undertaken by PDA candidates can add to the fund of topic-based resources available to future students. These include things like factsheets, handouts and website searches. It is expected that the first set of packs will be published around the Autumn of 2006. The development of these packs is partially funded by the European Social Fund. They will be free to all SQA approved centres.

Eleanor is delighted that Care Scotland has been able to develop these materials. The standard is excellent and this is down to the commitment and expertise of our writers and our editor, Alice Bradley.

At last, qualifications specific to those who work with people with **Autistic Spectrum Disorders**

A long-standing gap in our portfolio of qualifications has been filled. Now, as Neil Turner, Qualifications Consultant for the Scottish Society for Autism, reports, those who work with people with ASD have the opportunity to get a qualification that matches their work as closely as possible.

Having been involved in SVQ assessment since 1992 and the field of Autistic Spectrum Disorder for 20 years, I have often wished that we had more specific Units on ASD. While those of us involved with ASD-specific services have always evidenced the generic Units, there was a need to give candidates a stronger endorsement of their practice and training.

As part of my consultancy work with the Scottish Society for Autism (SSA), I was invited to a meeting

in July 2004 with their Director of Adult Services, Isobel Sutherland, and Dr Linda Green, who had just been awarded a Scottish Executive tender to develop Professional Development Awards (PDAs) for people who support individuals with ASD.

As a Centre Contact and part of the SSA group that had previously written the HN Unit Working with Autism, the Director supported my involvement in the reference group for the awards. This group included representatives from the Executive, the SSSC, SQA (Karen Crawford — Care Scotland), and Health, along with Charlene Tait from Strathclyde University, and Bert Lawrie from the VSA in Aberdeen and an experienced External Verifier.

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At last, qualifications specific to those who work with people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders *Continued*

What followed was a very positive experience, from the focused inter-agency workings of the group, through the consultation process, and finally to the successful validation of the PDAs by a panel of ASD-associated professionals.

My own centre, the Ochil Social Care Consortium, then built on our existing partnership with the SSA, and planned towards approval to offer the PDA 'Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders'. We were already approved to offer the SVQ component, so I contacted Karen Crawford at Care Scotland to seek support in developing systems to support the HN element of the PDA. She referred me to Pat Tonner, full-time External Verifier, who organised a development visit during which she provided us with all we needed to know to prepare for the PDA approval application.

During this process we created a comprehensive knowledge-based programme for candidates, which has been cross-referenced to the HN/SVQ core and several optional SVQ Units within the PDA.

We gained approval in December 2005, and now offer assessment for the complete PDA, a 28-week programme, or the HN component alone (for example, if an individual has already achieved the appropriate SVQ Units) run over 20 weeks. The HN Units can also be undertaken individually. Placements can be provided within the SSA to ensure candidates have opportunities to generate evidence, or assessors could be provided to assess candidates in their own workplace, if they are already supporting individuals with ASD. The first group of candidates will start their assessment in April 2006.

The VSA, whose Training Officer Bert Lawrie was on the Design Team, also have approval to offer the PDA, and will be commencing assessment in Autumn 2006.

Myself and Charlene Tait (of the National Centre for Autism Studies, Strathclyde University) are currently developing a knowledge pack for the PDA 'Managing the support of individuals with ASD'.

Charlene has 16 years' experience in ASD, and has delivered training across the SCQF as well as developing and delivering non-accredited ASD training to a wide range of professional groups and parents. As part of this project, two managers from the SSA are undertaking a pilot of the HN component of this award to provide assessment materials for future candidates. This work is funded by the Scottish Executive, and we anticipate that both the knowledge pack and assessment materials will ultimately be available through SQA.

I honestly feel that these are important new qualifications which will have a positive impact, not only on those providing support, but ultimately on the lives of individuals with ASD.

Practitioners within the field, as well as other professionals who come into contact with individuals with ASD, now have the opportunity to develop or consolidate their knowledge and practice through undertaking either ASD-specific HN Units or complete PDAs.

My thanks to all involved for making it happen.

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Full details of the awards are available in the Care Scotland section of the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk/carescotland).

Supporting and informing qualification development — the key role of stakeholders

Care Scotland's Eleanor Ramsay writes here with an overview of the key roles stakeholders play in developing and maintaining Care qualifications.

Care Scotland at SQA has, for a number of years, worked hard to develop and maintain strong links with those in the Care sector — we believe that the strength of our qualifications depends on open and dynamic communication. Because it is essential that we establish demand for any new or revised qualification, we engage with our stakeholders to measure potential uptake, identifying current, intermediate and long-term skills trends.

We also need to benchmark our qualifications against the National Occupational Standards, and the Care standards and codes of practice issues by regulatory bodies such as the Scottish Social Services Council.

Our work has, for a number of years, been supported by a stakeholder group. The group aims to offer the Care Scotland team advice, information and guidance on key occupational issues. They also help the Care Scotland team make decisions on each qualification at its development phase and throughout its lifespan.

The group's activities include giving feedback on the current suite of qualifications and on areas where review may be required; advising on the implementation and review of National Occupational Standards; contributing intelligence on new and changing skills being introduced to the Care sector; contributing updates on development and issues in members' own area of interest; providing feedback on the effectiveness of qualifications in relation to improving standards of practice in the Care sector; identifying gaps in the Care Scotland qualifications portfolio.

Once we have established the need for development or revision of a qualification we convene a Qualification Design Team. This, too, involves stakeholders — the team is made up of representatives from course providers, professional

bodies, regulatory bodies (such as the SSSC), employers, and, if possible, service users.

The group has to define the scope of the development or revision required. It needs to analyse labour market intelligence and stakeholders' consultation responses, and prepare a detailed project plan that includes timescales and milestones such as operational sign-off, launch and implementation dates.

Once the aims and objectives of the qualification have been established, the content of individual Units will be discussed. Unit writers are either part of the Design Team or are commissioned from our stakeholder network.

Following the validation or accreditation process, the qualification will be launched and implemented. This is not the end of our stakeholder involvement, however. It is important to monitor each qualification in terms of how it is meeting stated aims and objectives. SQA is keen that each qualification is reviewed regularly and that stakeholders are able to feed back on any strength that it has in meeting its stated objectives and on any minor changes that need to be made.

To this end a Qualification Support Team is convened so that the process of feedback is formalised.

We hope that those who have an interest in qualifications for the Care sector are reading this piece and thinking 'I or my organisation has something to contribute to this process'.

We are indebted to our current colleagues who commit time and good will to support our work. However, we are always keen to hear from new people or organisations who feel they have something to contribute.

If you are interested in representing your organisation on our stakeholder groups, please contact us.

VSA in-house HNC Social Care

Written by Bert Lawrie

VSA, a city-based voluntary organisation founded in 1870, provides fieldwork, day care and residential services for older people in need of care, children and adults with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems, and care for families and children experiencing problems.

Linn Moor Residential School is an independent residential school administered by VSA and registered to take up to 30 students aged 5–18. We were faced with the need to train and qualify 120 staff with a Higher National Certificate (HNC) and 100 staff with Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 3 to meet the SSSC registration requirements by 2009. As well as our day-time staff we also have dedicated night staff as well as weekend workers. Many of our staff have opted to work shift patterns that suit their families and domestic needs, and existing HN providers, when asked, were not able to offer our staff a flexible HN programme.

In November 2004 we were approved to offer the HNC in Social Care and became the first voluntary organisation to deliver an HNC. Our strategy as an organisation is to offer a flexible approach, offering the award to staff working on a 24-hour shift pattern, seven days a week. This flexible approach to delivery of the HNC was something that other providers were unable to offer us.

In January 2005 we appointed a dedicated HNC Co-ordinator. A full-time SVQ assessor works with the HNC Co-ordinator to ensure an integrated approach to the HN and SVQ Units. We currently have two HNC cohorts, 25 candidates in total.

Our initiative is trying to improve the overall standard of care that staff deliver to the children. Whilst working on their HNC, candidates are introduced to a much broader agenda, learning about the roles of the SSSC, Care Commission, and National Care Standards. They also come to understand the importance of relevant legislation

and how this underpins the work they do. The main theme of the HNC is to link the theory to practice, and to enable our candidates to understand the 'why' behind what they do in the workplace, implementing the theory and developing good practice.

By developing and delivering our own HNC we have been able to tailor the HNC curriculum to meet the needs of our candidates and client group. Candidates meet monthly for a tutorial which is supported by a monthly study day and ad hoc individual meetings with the HNC Co-ordinator.

As well as the core Units, our candidates complete optional Units that are relevant to their work, eg the Autism Unit, so they can make clear links between the content of the Unit and their work. Using an Open Learning study pack, a set text and additional resources, candidates complete a workbook on each Unit. The workbooks form the basis of the knowledge which they need to complete the assessments.

We have also cross-referenced the candidate workbooks and the assessments to the SVQ Units. When candidates later begin the SVQ, they can 'claim' knowledge evidence for the work they have already done for the HNC. This minimises repetition, and again helps them link theory to practice.

Rather than individual assessments on each Unit, the candidates complete four integrated assessments. This holistic approach also helps them to relate the knowledge to their workplace.

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Cohort 1 has completed the workbooks that provide the underpinning knowledge for the four integrated assessments; they will shortly begin work on the final Graded Unit. Cohort 2 is currently completing the workbooks and will begin their assessments shortly. We are currently planning a third cohort to begin their studies in late May.

As well as the HNC, we are about to offer our staff who meet the academic requirement for Childcare registration, but don't have a Care qualification, an opportunity to undertake the newly-developed PDA in Autism (as detailed in the story 'At last, qualifications specific to those who work with people with Autism Spectrum Disorders' on page 10).

A significant advantage of our in-house HNC is that it is delivered on site. Managers are kept up to date about the programme and the progress of candidates, both informally and formally through Course Committee meetings. Feedback from managers has been very positive, and any issues are dealt with in a positive and professional manner. Candidates have said that they are now much more aware of the reasons behind work practice, eg behavioural support strategies, models of practice and the importance of accountability and anti-discriminatory practice. We have also fostered a working relationship with the Behavioural Support Advisor at Linn Moor, and we are working together to extend the implementation of Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-Handicapped Children (TEACCH) at the school, as the candidates have to evidence this as part of their Case Study and Graded Unit.

We are delivering a qualification which has been specifically tailored to meet the needs of our agency — especially the service users and our candidates. The method of delivery is flexible, causing minimal disruption whilst affording the candidates the level of support which they need. The delivery of the HNC is very much a team effort — it is not taught in isolation from the 'real world'. Contact with managers and other professionals makes the HNC at Linn Moor a living thing that can be a force for change within the organisation. Our main theme is linking theory to practice, to improve the quality of care that we deliver.

Each candidate meets with the HNC Co-ordinator before the start of the course to discuss their individual needs and, where necessary, they are given the opportunity to develop their Core Skills prior to the start of the course. We also, where appropriate, allow candidates to take a 'slow track' option, enabling them to complete the course over two or three years.

We think our in-house HNC is an innovative training programme as it challenges current thinking on how qualifications can be delivered; and it enables candidates to link theory to their own work practice and thus raise standards of care. Our design of HNC has ensured equality of opportunity and diversity by giving each eligible employee the chance to achieve the qualification through a flexible route and relevant design.

PA Training success

PA Training's successful candidates in SVQ levels 2 and 3 in Early Years Care and Education being presented with their certificates at a presentation evening held at The County Hotel, Dalkeith, on 23 November 2005. Sarah Sayers, Senior External

Moderator, from the Scottish Qualifications Authority presented the certificates and Brian Hermiston from Scottish Enterprise Borders attended the event.

First certificates in Scotland for the revised HNC in Social Care

The new HNC has reached a landmark — the first awards have been completed, as Brendan Harris, Chief Executive of the UK Centre for Continuing Professional Development, writes:

The new HNC provides an excellent means of integrating theory and practice. At the UKCCPD, we were pleased to be able to offer this way for the Care Sector to improve practice and achieve SSSC registration targets.

Staff from Kibble Education and Care Centre, from the Men Can Care ESF project, and from NCH Scotland, were among our first candidates. We were delighted to certificate these candidates for both their HNC in Social Care and their SVQ. We believe they were the first in Scotland to achieve the revised HNC in Social Care.

Completion of both awards in a twelve-month period is very significant for employers because staff replacement remains the most significant cost for any employer. A programme that gives both awards within one year is therefore very cost-effective. It also makes best use of the candidates' own learning, efforts and time. At the UK Centre we are able to do this by working in partnership with employers to offer the course at times that suit them without the constraints of academic calendars.

Candidates are experienced care workers who bring a wealth of experience in care with them and are able to meet the demands of an intensive period of academic study. The assessment schedule for the course is integrated to allow candidates to make clear links between theory and practice. As candidates are being assessed for the SVQ alongside the HNC, we are able to maximise the opportunities to cross-refer the common areas of knowledge.

The External Moderator's visit was very helpful and assured us (as well as SQA!) that we have been doing the right things. We now know that we have laid the foundation of a very productive combination of HNC and SVQ. We start our next cohorts of candidates in April and September with renewed confidence and energy.

We are piloting a Distance Learning HNC, which will also combine with the SVQ. As in our intensive programme, we expect this to give employers a cost-effective way to offer both qualifications, thus meeting their registration targets.

The experienced teaching staff at the UK Centre welcomed the revised HNC Social Care with great enthusiasm. It provides an up-to-date, flexible and relevant learning experience.



ORCHA — the unique journey

*By Allan Keir, Chairman of ORCHA and OTC,
Executive Committee Member of Scottish Care.*

This is the story of a unique journey undertaken by a group of residential care homes in Angus.

Let me start at the beginning, or as near as I can remember. When government reorganisation came about in the early 90s, it led to the care homes in Angus being separated from their parent organisation TORCH (Tayside Organisation Residential Care Homes) and founding their own grouping ORCHA (Organisation Registered Care Homes Angus). Like a number of such groups it was primarily a support group where members would gather together on a monthly basis to discuss mutual problems and help find solutions.

I joined the group in May 1998 when I purchased a home in Angus, and acceded to the chairmanship when the then chairperson retired in February 1999. If I'd known then what I know now I might have vociferously declined.

A method of training all our staff was already under discussion at the time, and Angus Council had been approached to contribute seed-corn funding for the project. Over a two-year period, £2,350 per home per year was allocated on the understanding that each home would contribute £1,000 and their time to the training initiative. A provider was selected to train the substantial number of workplace assessors that the project would need, and their candidates.

Our next step, at the suggestion of Angus Council, was to apply for ESF joint funding to move the project along. The money would be used to train the assessors and verifiers, allowing us to train and assess candidates for the SVQ programme. It would also allow us to set up an office and to train a centre contact — an essential when setting up an SVQ centre. We would use the Council's contribution as the matched part of the application.

Funding was approved and the project was off and running, and what a roller-coaster ride it was to prove.

After spending months building up the confidence of our older staff members in their ability to undertake and achieve an SVQ, we were forced into changing our training provider because of dissatisfaction with their ability to deliver the high standards we required. This decision led to our candidates being removed and relocated to Angus College. In the meantime, underpinning knowledge courses in Manual Handling, First Aid, and Food Hygiene for staff were commenced in August 1999.

By the end of 1999 a training company, Orcha Training Company (OTC) had been formed, and I took over the chairmanship of that also. Mrs Val Reilly, who had experience of setting up and running such programmes with Dundee Chamber of Commerce, was employed to be our central contact with SQA.

By April 2000 more than 500 staff training days had been undertaken, with a further 1750 by the next April. The money allocated to each provider for training was held and administered through the office that had been set up with the ESF funding. After an immense amount of hard work, our procedures for the setting up of the SVQ centre finally gained approval in August 2000. Running side-by-side with this work was the need to document training materials and our procedures for delivering the SVQ Care at levels 2 and 3, the D32 and D33 awards, and the National Progression Awards. Approval for these awards was sought and granted in September 2000.

Care home managers and owners took part in training courses to allow them to deliver to Care Workers training in manual handling and challenging behaviour, and to deal with the issue of older people suffering abuse. One of our trainees, we believe, was the first in Scotland to achieve Advanced Training Instructor status with their training company. The aim was to train 28 workplace assessors — two per workplace — for each of the 14 homes that were part of the company. A further 14 internal verifiers would also be trained. Some of these would also be assessors.

Work continued apace, with the number of staff training at SVQ levels 2 and 3 rising steadily.

We do not tout for business from outside the group, but if approached we make training places available, providing this does not lead to a dilution of our standards.

We are very proud of the fact that the centre was accorded the almost unheard-of honour of being allowed to self-certificate our candidates following our first External Verifier visit. This feat, I am told, normally takes around four years to achieve and certainly reflects the quality of the centre.

The group has been asked on a number of occasions to give presentations to other groups who wish to follow our example. This service we have been pleased to provide because we remember how invaluable this type of advice would have been, had it been available, to us at the outset.

Our next move was to apply to Scottish Enterprise Tayside for a contract to deliver the Skillseeker awards in the 16–18 and 19–24 age groups, and the Modern Apprenticeship for ages 19–25.

Our underpinning knowledge courses now involved First Aid, Food Hygiene, Dementia Awareness, Continence Awareness, Care and Prevention of Pressure Areas, Challenging Behaviour, Abuse of the Elderly for Care Workers and Manual Handling. Other courses were provided from time to time. The standard Food Hygiene and Workplace First Aid courses, each taking four days, were delivered. Fire Training, Dysphagia, Drug Administration, Care Planning, Blind Awareness, Hearing Loss, and Palliative Care — our External Verifier commented on one visit that this was the most comprehensive underpinning knowledge programme he had ever seen a centre deliver.

Because we negotiate with trainers for a course cost price, rather than a candidate price, we can fill each course and achieve substantial savings. Our forte is that we provide a full and varied range of training courses for our staff at less cost than others require for a basic SVQ. Since the company is set up to provide training for our combined staff, we only look for it to break even. In most cases it makes a modest profit which is

ploughed back into funding training for the over-25s, for whom there is little or no funding.

The training company was responsible for accessing a substantial number of places for the Angus homes through the recent Achieving the Challenge training initiative, and this, plus our other funding streams, means we currently have over 100 candidates.

Dorothy Graham, an internal verifier and assessor of immense experience, was employed as our senior peripatetic assessor and internal verifier to oversee the continual upgrading and training of our assessors.

We've had a significant impact through bringing training issues to the fore in discussions with the Scottish Social Services Council. It has taken part in consultations on the true cost of training, SCQF, APEL and the Quality Agenda, among other things.

We are represented on the steering committee of the recently-formed Tayforth Learning Network, and work very hard to (hopefully) ensure that quality training is provided to a broad spectrum of care staff.

We won a bronze award in 2001 for an SQA centre. Almost two-thirds of the homes under our wing are currently Investors In People. One home, only the second in Scotland, won a commendation in 2002 in the National Training Awards. It also won the inaugural Tayside award for Excellence in Skills and Training in 2003. Each of the training company's homes has achieved Scottish Quality Management Systems status.

All this has brought about a closer working relationship with Angus Council Social Work Department, and a new feeling of trust between the Council and the providers. There's a greater number of trained care workers — some homes are approaching 100% trained staff. It has meant greater staff satisfaction, with staff more likely to ask what training opportunities are available. Care staff are more aware of their contribution to the safety and care of their residents and of what may be construed as unintentional abuse.

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Christie and Co representatives have told us that the involvement of the Association and training company has meant that homes in Angus attract a premium because they achieve such a high standard of regulatory compliance.

We've had our fair share of disappointments, knock-backs and backward steps, but we've soldiered on. Has it been worth it? Of course it has. The care of our residents, their wellbeing and protection must come before any other consideration. Our staff show greater confidence and satisfaction in their job role. The training, along with the Regulation of Care Act 2000, has given staff for the first time a clear career

progression. Care, instead of being regarded as a job of low esteem, is now being regarded as a career option. What fills me with an immense feeling of pride is that a significant number have used the SVQ route to fulfil their dream of going on to nursing college. Others have been given the confidence to advance to a senior role with the intention of moving on up into management.

In some cases it has led to a significant reduction in staff turnover.

Has it been easy? No, it certainly has not, but then if it were easy, everyone would be doing it!



Lewis

Alyson Steel has returned to Care Scotland on a part-time basis, looking after her new baby in her remaining time. Lewis, born on 23rd July, weighed a healthy 8lbs 9oz.

Alyson says, 'Lewis is such a good baby and was sleeping through the night from five weeks old. He has just cut his first tooth and is crawling around, being very nosey and mischievous. I'm really enjoying being a mum, he truly is a gift.'

Forthcoming Events

Care Scotland staff will be in attendance at these events with our stand and material, and we would really like to see you.

6 June

Pavilion — Drugs and Alcohol Today
Crowne Plaza Hotel

19, 20, 21 June

The Gathering Voluntary Sector
Conference
SECC Glasgow

5 and 6 June

SIRCC Annual Conference
Aviemore Highland Resort

19 and 20 October

SSSC Annual Conference
Edinburgh International
Conference Centre

Quality Networks — TBC

Other Events

SSSC Event

2 June

Care Accolades 2006 Awards Ceremony
Marcliffe of Pitfodels, Aberdeen

We've moved!

Please note our new address:

Care Scotland

Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
GLASGOW
G2 8DQ

Telephone: 0845 213 5471

Website: www.sqa.org.uk/carescotland

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:


 0845 213 5471

or

 carescotland@sqa.org.uk

NHS helpline

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

 0845 213 5472

or

 nhs@sqa.org.uk

NQ helpline

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

 0845 213 5502

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



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