

SQA EARLY YEARS NEWSLETTER

Revised HNC in Early Years Care and Education: work to date

SQA has been working on the revision of the HNC in Early Years Care and Education since December last year. A steering group comprising representatives from the FE and HE sectors, employer interests and the Scottish Social Services Council (the regulatory body) was formed in December and has had six meetings so far. Two information seminars were held in the spring, one for representatives of the FE sector and one for employers. These were both well attended and a further seminar will be held in autumn 2003. More details of this event will follow.

A writers group has also been formed, and work on the new Units and HNC framework is continuing. We will be sending out a postal questionnaire to consult

with all stakeholders — your views will be welcomed. This questionnaire will also contain a draft version of the revised HNC framework, as well as brief details of the proposed Units.

National Development Officer

As announced at the seminars in the spring, a new National Development Officer post for Early Years Care and Education has been created by SQA. The role of the NDO will be to look at the possible development of a National Certificate for Early Years Care and Education. The new NDO will be consulting widely with stakeholders on this issue.

As a result of our advertising, Julie Brechin from Stevenson College has been appointed and will start on 27 October. She will be home-based but contactable initially at SQA on 0141-242 2206.

Early Years information on SQA's website

A new Early Years section will soon be added to the Care Scotland page of SQA's website. Please visit www.sqa.org.uk and click on '**Care Scotland**' for details. Information about all aspects of Early Years Care and Education will be posted here as soon as it's available. Please check back regularly.

SVQs

Early Years Care and Education

The accreditation periods for the SVQs in Early Years at levels 2 and 3 have been extended for two more years until 2005. Meanwhile, the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) has been commissioned to oversee the revision of the National Occupational Standards for levels 2, 3 and 4. The first meeting of a UK-wide steering group was held in July 2003.

Running concurrently with this is a review of Playwork level 3 being undertaken by SkillsActive UK (formerly SPRITO).

Also just announced is a joint project between SkillsActive and NDNA that will seek to identify areas of commonality and overlap between the National Occupational Standards for Early Years Care and Education and Playwork. The first meeting of this group was held in late July.

SQA is participating in all three of these projects. Regular updates on progress will be placed on the website.

Classroom Assistants

We are very pleased to confirm that two new SVQs for Classroom Assistants at levels 2 and 3 were accredited by SQA in February and are now available.

The new SVQs are based on National Occupational Standards developed by the Local Government NTO (now the Employers' Organisation), and will complement SQA's other provision for the sector, particularly the PDA for Classroom Assistants.

With these SVQs, employers and candidates now have a further work-based route to acquiring the skills and knowledge they require to work effectively in schools, supporting the learning of children from the ages of 5 to 16. The SVQ route will open up further opportunities for candidates to advance their skills and competence.

- SVQ Classroom Assistants level 2 is designed for new recruits to the profession and for people who might wish to enter the profession. It will be particularly appropriate for those classroom assistants whose responsibilities are limited in scope. It is similar in content and level to the PDA Certificate for Classroom Assistants, and can be seen as a work-based alternative which may be more appropriate for some candidates.
- SVQ Classroom Assistants level 3 is designed for experienced classroom assistants and those whose job role calls for competence across a wide range of responsibilities. It will also provide a progression route for holders of the PDA Certificate whose job roles call for more specialised skills or a greater range of competence.

SQA is in negotiation with the Employers' Organisation and CoSLA to arrange a launch/implementation event to be held in the autumn. Further information will be issued as soon as it is available.

Playwork and Early Years — joint project

It is well recognised that staff in Early Years and in Playwork are increasingly being required to work across a range of different settings and with different age groups — people who work like this are now being called ‘portfolio’ workers because they develop a portfolio of job roles and the associated knowledge and skills. It is important that these workers, as well as employers and regulators, are clear about job roles and qualification requirements. It’s also important that, where there are common functions, these are recognised in standards and qualifications structures. This could mean less need for repetitive and unnecessary training whilst not losing the essential core of either occupation’s role and purpose.

The DfES is funding a project to identify and define areas of difference and commonality between the national occupational standards in Playwork and in Early Years. In particular the project will explore the potential for developing some common Units underpinned by common values. It is not intended that Units — or assumptions, values and principles — that are unique and central to either Playwork or Early Years will be in any way compromised.

This work will take place in parallel with the independent review of the level 3 and 4 standards in Playwork and level 2, 3 and 4 Early Years. Results of the project will be incorporated into these reviews by sector steering groups. The project is being managed by SPRITO with a cross-sector steering group.

- look out for consultation events in the autumn
- contact **Sue Hook** at SPRITO, by email: **sue@playwork.org.uk**, or telephone: **01449 678977**
- contact **Lynette Lee** at NDNA, by email: **lynette.lee@ndna.org.uk**, or telephone: **0870 774 4244**
- visit **www.playwork.org.uk** for more bulletins and details

Playwork

Sprito Scotland has recently attained Sector Skills Council status and will be renamed SkillsActive UK. Further details are available at the Sprito Scotland website: **www.spritoscotland.org.uk**.

SVQs

The SVQ at level 2 for Playwork was re-accredited in March this year, and work has now begun to review and revise the National Occupational Standards for level 3. SQA is a member of the UK-wide steering group that is overseeing this development. The projected timescale is to have the revised standards completed by summer 2004. The project will also be looking at whether there is a need for a dedicated

qualification at level 4 — at present, senior practitioners, supervisors and managers of play settings who want to do an advanced SVQ can opt for the SVQ in Early Years Care and Education level 4, the management strand of which has a Playwork pathway.

Further information will be included in future editions of the newsletter.

Scottish Progression Award

A new Scottish Progression Award, Accessing Playwork, has been accredited by SQA and is now available. SQA invites centres to seek approval to offer this SPA.

The award is intended for candidates who are either new to, or considering entering, the Playwork sector. The Scottish Progression Award: Accessing Playwork is designed to provide a nationally certificated qualification for those interested in Playwork as a career.

The award consists of four mandatory Units:

- D2KM 10** Child Development: Birth to Young Adulthood 0.5 credit
- D31E 11** Promoting Play 0.5 credit
- D36T 11** Promoting Positive Behaviour in Children 1.0 credit
- D36V 11** Child Protection: an Introduction 0.5 credit

and 2.5 credits taken from the optional section:

- D2KJ 11** Children and Young People with Special Needs 1.0 credit
- D055 10** Accident and Emergency Procedures 1.0 credit
- D75J 11** Creative and Aesthetic Experiences for Children 1.0 credit
- D282 11** Food Hygiene 0.5 credit

To achieve the SPA, candidates need 4.5 credits.

National Qualifications Diet 2003

Early Years Care and Education Higher

We have just completed this year's round of examinations and are very pleased to report a substantial increase in uptake for the Higher in Early Years Care and Education. The number of centres with candidates for the Higher has doubled that of 2002, the first year in which the qualification was available. Candidate entries have increased three-fold and we are very encouraged by this level of interest. The entries showed a broad range of candidate ability and, overall, the standard of performance was high.

The annual report by the Principal Assessor will be posted on SQA's website in the near future.

Project-based National Courses (PBNCs)

We would like to reiterate our advice to centres of August 2002. Implementation of the SGA for Early Years is deferred pending the outcome of the National Qualifications Review. We advised centres then to consider very carefully whether to offer the two PBNCs (which are also under review). The component Units are freely available, and it may be that centres will wish to continue to use these without submitting candidates for the external assessment component.

If you are considering offering PBNCs this session, please contact **Anne Boyd** on **0141-242 2198** or **Tom Stannage** on **0141-242 2187**.

All PBNCs and SGAs are currently under review, and a consultation on their future will take place in September. This will be led by Tom Stannage, and consultation papers will be issued shortly. We would greatly welcome your views on this important review.

As part of the wider development of a Scottish Group Award (SGAs) for Early Years, two PBNCs were developed:

- Experiential Approaches in Early Years Care and Education
- Curriculum Approaches in Early Years Care and Education

The individual Units that make up these Courses have been available as stand-alone Units to centres for some time, and many centres are opting to include these and other Units in college programmes below HNC level.

Diet 2003 saw one centre offer the Experiential Approaches in Early Years Care and Education for the first time with a small group of students as part of a wider access to teaching programme.

If you have any queries or questions regarding this or any other matter relating to National Qualifications, please contact **Anne Boyd**, Qualifications Manager for Early Years, on **0141-242 2198** or **Tom Stannage**, Qualifications Manager (NQ) on **0141-242 2187**.

Regulation of the Child Care Workforce

Regulation and registration of the sector workforce is now the responsibility of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The Council has appointed Frances Scott as the lead officer for the early years workforce, and consultation on qualification requirements for

entry to the register, plus any potential CPD requirements, is to take place in the Autumn. There is more information on the SSSC website:

www.sssc.uk.com.

Changes at SQA

The Development Division at SQA is undergoing a re-structure to ensure Fitness for Purpose.

This will result in two new departments:

- National Qualifications
- Higher National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (HN/SVQ)

This means that staff remits are being re-aligned with changes expected to take place from 1 October 2003.

For the wider Early Education and Child Care sector, lead officer responsibilities will be as follows:

- Anne Boyd, Qualifications Manager (HN/SVQ):
SVQs Classroom Assistants; SVQs Playwork; SVQs Youth Work; HNQs Supporting Learning Needs; PDAs and SPAs Classroom Assistants, Learning Support, Playwork

- Carla Findlay, Qualifications Manager for Care Scotland: SVQs Early Years Care and Education; HNC and PDA Child Care and Education. Care Scotland is also responsible for Social Care and Health.

- Tom Stannage, Qualifications Manager (NQ):
National Courses, Higher in Early Years Care and Education; Scottish Group Awards

All three Qualifications Managers are highly experienced and well-known to the sector and look forward to continuing to support the diverse parts of the sector.



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October 2003