



Update from Eleanor Ramsay

It has been over a year since I took up post of Qualifications Manager for Care Scotland and I think it is fair to say that there is never a dull moment.

I have travelled across Scotland, meeting many of our stakeholders, course providers and candidates, and I am always impressed with their commitment to the delivery of our awards.

I wanted to highlight some of the news from SQA and give you an update on some of the projects that we are working on.

The first piece of news is very sad for us as a sector but a very good and well deserved career progression for the individual. Karen Crawford is moving on within SQA to a promoted post in SQA Accreditation.

Karen has played a pivotal role in the quality of service that we have delivered to all of you as stakeholders. I am sure most of you at some time have contacted Karen for the answer to a question, and found that she always knew the answer, and that answer was always given in her gentle, unassuming but confident manner.

I am sure, too, that all of us wish Karen well in her future career, and I would like to publicly thank Karen for her support, mentoring and loyalty during my time as Qualifications Manager with Care Scotland.

Most of you will also know that Anton Colella Chief Executive of SQA has moved on to take up post with the Institute of Chartered Accountants and SQA are pleased to confirm that the Board have appointed Dr Janet Brown as Chief Executive. Dr Brown is currently Managing Director of Industries at Scottish Enterprise and will take up her new post in SQA in early 2007. In the meantime, Tom Drake will continue as SQA's interim Chief Executive.

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Update from Eleanor Ramsay *Continued from front cover*

In terms of project development, we are currently in consultation with the Social Services sector about the development of a blended HND incorporating Early Education and Childcare and Social Care. A copy of the scoping exercise undertaken by LMG Associates is on the Care Scotland website, and we would encourage you to comment on this proposal. I will be able to update you on the progress of this project in the May 2007 bulletin.

Finally, Care Scotland is working with the West of Scotland Learning Network to develop the Practice Learning awards into SQA qualifications. Although primarily developed for the West, these awards will be nationally available for use in other Network areas and to other appropriate sectors within social services and health.

Scottish Prison Service to introduce Youth Justice Services level 3 SVQ for staff

The Scottish Prison Service has become the second training provider in Scotland to gain formal approval for delivery of the new Youth Justice Services level 3 SVQ.

The SVQ (YJSL3) is nationally recognised by employers across the Justice sector, and for a considerable period of time, the SPS College has been working with staff at Cornton Vale and Polmont to gain formal approval to offer the qualification to staff working with young people.

The National Occupational Standards for Youth Justice Services, which were approved in the summer of 2002 following extensive work involving all of the main interests in Youth Justice, describe good practice for staff working with children and young people who have offended or who are at risk of offending. This includes staff working both in the community and in secure settings.

This work has progressed in partnership with representatives from Skills for Justice and the Scottish Qualifications Authority, and represents a significant investment in terms of time and resources.



Left-right – Dick Winterton, Chief Executive (Skills for Justice), Liz Hislop, Skills for Justice, Sue Brooks, Governor in charge at Cornton Vale, Bill Miller, Governor in charge at Polmont Young Offenders.

Tom McMurchie, the SPS's Head of Training, said, 'We are very proud that the SPS has received approval from the Scottish Qualification Authority to offer the Youth Justice Services Level 3 Award to our staff.'

This success will be marked by a formal launch of the qualification and shortly thereafter approximately 24 staff from HMYOI Polmont and HMP/YOI Cornton Vale are set to be the first candidates working towards achieving the SVQ.

Update on Early Education and Childcare

Sarah Sayers, SQA's External Verifier for Early Years and Playwork, rounds up the latest developments

HNC Early Education and Childcare

The majority of further education colleges delivered and assessed the new HNC over the 2005–06 session. All centres who requested an external moderation visit were visited.

Samples of Graded Unit assessments from all but one of the colleges delivering the new HNC were centrally moderated in June this year. The majority of candidates performed well, and most projects were of a good to high standard. Some centres continue to have difficulty in awarding marks that reflect the evidence requirements of the Unit specification. A suggested marking scheme will be available in the future from the Care Scotland website or from external verifiers.

The date for submission of the projects was again given late last session. However the greatest majority of colleges managed to submit their candidates' work in time for the central event. We plan to give this session's date for submission much earlier.

There will be visiting external verification during the 2006–07 session, and approximately a third of centres will receive external verification visits.

PDA Certificate in Early Education and Childcare (SCQF level 8)

Centres are now delivering and assessing this new award. We hope to hold the first central verification event for the Graded Unit in summer 2007.

Assessment exemplars are already or will soon be available on the secure section of the SQA website.

SVQs in Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD)

The new SVQs have generally been welcomed by the sector. People feel that the new SVQs are more flexible and more relevant to the extended range of roles and responsibilities of the worker in early education and childcare.

External Verifiers in Childcare have produced helpful hints and innovative ideas to assist centres to meet the requirements of the Assessment Strategy for holistic assessment. These will be available on the Care Scotland website in due

course. In the meantime, the team of External Verifiers can provide examples on request.

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has scrutinised the CCLD level 4 Units and identified four from the list of optional Units that can provide a total of 40 management credits at SCQF level 8. To register as a manager/lead practitioner with SSSC, a total of 60 management credits at SCQF level 8 is required.

These mandatory Units have been recognised as management Units providing 10 credits each:

- **DR7L 04** (CCLD 401) Establish and Develop Working Relationships
- **DT1L 04** (CCLD 402) Support Policies, Procedures and Practices to Safeguard Children and Ensure Their Inclusion and Well-being.

These optional Units have been identified as management Units worth 10 credits each:

- **DR47 04** (CCLD 413) Develop and Implement Operational Plans for Your Area of Responsibility
- **DR59 04** (CCLD 416) Assess Quality Assurance Schemes Against Agreed Criteria
- **DR66 04** (CCLD 418) Co-ordinate and Support the Revision of Policies, Procedures and Practice for Registration and Inspection
- **DR75 04** (CCLD 425) Provide Leadership in Your Area of Responsibility.

To register at manager/lead practitioner level, candidates must complete these optional Units in addition to the mandatory Units.

Some centres have expressed concerns about meeting the evidence requirements of Unit DR59 04 (CCLD 416) Assess Quality Assurance Schemes Against Agreed Criteria. This Unit looks at quality assurance in early education and childcare settings, and most candidates with managerial responsibilities will be required to assess their own centre's quality assurance criteria. External Verifiers have developed guidance for meeting the evidence requirements of this Unit and for including it in a holistic approach to assessment.

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Update on **Early Education and Childcare** *Continued*

Early Education and Childcare Events

Care Scotland is hoping to host two events to bring together centres delivering and assessing the new SVQs Children's Care, Learning and Development early next year.

NC Group Award Early Education and Childcare Both visiting and central verification for this award are planned for the 2006–07 session. We aim to visit 50% of centres delivering and assessing the award. Visits are expected to begin in 2007.

The central event is expected to take place in summer 2007, and the proposed Unit for central verification is DM41 12 Play in Early Education and Childcare.

Skills for Work Early Education and Childcare Intermediate 1 and 2

We are now in the second year of the Skills for Work Pilot. All centres delivering and assessing the courses will receive both development visits and external verification visits during this session. External verification visits are expected to begin in 2007.

National Assessment Bank (NAB) assessments for Unit DM83 10 Child Development have been slightly amended for this session, a NAB is now available for Unit DM5X 11 Child Development and Health.

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Winning an SSSC Care Accolade

Cora Learning won an award in this year's SSSC Care Accolades. Here, **John Watson** (Recruitment Project Manager) and **Carla Findlay** (Learning and Development Manager) describe how they did it.

Cora Learning won one of the 2006 Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Care Accolades for the best initiative to 'Recruit and Retain Staff for Organisations with fewer than 100 employees'. The initiative was to recruit and train 50 people to become Residential Child Care Workers in advance of the opening of the new Secure Unit being built at St Philip's Plains, Airdrie. We used the Scottish Executive's safer selection toolkit.

Winning for us meant recognition for some important work that we had been pioneering to ensure safer recruitment of staff working with young people. The Award gives added importance to this approach and hopefully encouragement to other organisations contemplating taking on board some of Kate Skinner's Toolkit suggestions produced by the Scottish Executive in 2002 to introduce more robust systems for recruitment.

What we won the Care Accolade Award for was recruiting 50 trainees to staff a brand new Secure Unit for young people in St Philip's Plains.

We offered eight months paid study and work experience, with travel and food provided. The trainees were able to work towards an HNC in Social Care delivered by SIRCC (Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care from Langside College) and the SVQ level 3 in Health and Social Care delivered and assessed by the Cora Learning team, based on work placements at St Mary's Kenmure Secure Unit. All the trainees were guaranteed interviews for the permanent posts at the end of the eight months.



Pictured above:

Left to right – Corrine Thompson (Trainee), Willie McFadyen (Head of St Philip's Secure Unit), Janice Gould (Learning and Development Officer), Brian Mallon (Chair of Cora Learning Board), John Watson (Project Manager), Carla Findlay (Learning and Development Manager), Mike Haggerty (SQA – sponsors of the event).

746 people applied for a trainee post, following extensive advertising in the regional and local press, radio, websites, and a series of open events where people considering a career change could come and talk to Cora staff. The selection process and application forms were based around the use of capabilities identified in the Toolkit for Residential Child Care Workers and supplemented by National Occupational Standards. Many people who applied did not necessarily have either the academic qualifications or work experience, but they were asked to describe their motivation, experience of young people and team work, and say what they had to offer. Their answers were then scored against the capabilities.

SSSC recognition has validated what the managers of the project had been enthusing about: that the process has a robust and wider importance. For the many candidates who have been through the process, it means that they can consider themselves pioneers in something that will become increasingly commonplace. Feedback from candidates, both informal and recorded on an anonymous questionnaire, suggests that the process has been well received: words such as 'enjoyable' and 'fun' being used frequently to describe it — after the event!

Most importantly we hope that this process will mean that the young people in care at St Philip's Secure Unit will experience leading-edge levels of

care and support. It was the well-being of young people that drove the process.

Having £25 million spent on two new Secure Units will count for little without the right staff. The shortage of staff with SSSC registerable qualifications and experience in Secure Care meant that Cora Learning had to recruit and train people who could then apply for the jobs in the new Units.

160 applicants were shortlisted, and they were invited to a two-part Assessment Centre, where they watched part of a Who Cares? video 'Welcome to our World', which provides insights into issues and experiences facing young people in care. Candidates were then asked to write about the video, the issues it raised, their responses to them, and then they discussed it in a group, observed by young people supported by Who Cares? Candidates then undertook a 20 minute Safe Care interview which tested their values, and then undertook a computer-based personality profile. All candidates were scored against the capabilities for a child care worker. The top 100 scoring candidates were invited back to a detailed screening interview. Academic certificates had to be produced, and sick records and disclosure statements had to be verified. They were then interviewed by a panel of four, including a young person who had the same scoring rights as staff.

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Winning an SSSC Care Accolade *Continued*

The top 50 were then invited to visit St Mary's to see if being in a special Secure Unit environment was acceptable to them before asking them to accept the Trainee position.

To apply for the SSSC Care Accolades Award we had to complete a description of what we did.

We were invited to Dundee in May, to make a presentation and face questioning from a panel. Our presentation highlighted the robustness of the selection system, but also as to how the process had also been designed to ensure that potential candidates could be as confident as possible that the career and type of work was what they wanted.

The whole recruitment and training programme was described by Corrine, one of the former trainees, when we were interviewed by the SSSC at Dundee in May. 'After being away from learning for some years,' she said, 'the support and combination of theory and practice really helped me enjoy my return to learning. The support from staff and other trainees encouraged me to complete and made the financial sacrifice worthwhile'. Most importantly she explained how satisfying she now found the work with the young people.

We also highlighted in our presentation how staff would continue with training and development once appointed. One of the benefits of using capabilities to measure candidates is that their Learning and Development needs are clearly identified, and an on-going CPD programme can be put in place.

Another aspect of our approach that we highlighted was how equal opportunities had driven the process. As we wanted to attract as wide a range of applicants, we needed to be inclusive, and because we were looking for potential and not experience, we had to devise a process that placed

everybody at the same starting point. Processes had to be entirely objective and evidence-based. For example, we used numbers to identify candidates, which provided only relevant, and not personal, information to Panel members.

Obviously, our presentation at Dundee was effective, because when we went to Aberdeen on a beautiful sunny day on 2 June for the Award Ceremony, we were declared the winners for our category.

The process for which we won the Award was started for St Philip's Secure Unit, but was then used for the Good Shepherd Secure Unit, Bishopton which opened in August 2006.

Over time, the range of capabilities has increased with job types, as has the range of exercises used to assess candidates. The process has been time-consuming, but the scale has been large — over 900 people have been assessed and over 275 posts filled (across the two Secure Units).

The quality of trainees and staff appointed is regarded as very high and, at what is still an early stage, we are pleased that staff turnover from the training programme has been remarkably low.

We were also pleased to be asked to run a Recruitment Assessment Centre for another care organisation that had seen our process at a Scottish Executive safer selection working party.

Most importantly of all though, is the knowledge that young people are receiving care provided by people who have been selected and trained to focus on them and their needs, to make a difference to their lives, and who continue to receive training and development.

This has to be 'good news' for young people.

Care Scotland attended **The Gathering Event** held at the SECC in June

We ran a competition for the chance to see the Rolling Stones at Hampden Park. Sue Harper, from Rosemount Lifelong Learning, was the lucky winner. Sue is presented with her prize by Karen Crawford and Tony Hamilton.



Qualification Support Teams: Social Care and Early Education and Childcare

by Ann Adrian, External Verifier

The inaugural meetings of the Qualification Support Teams for Social Care and Early Education and Childcare took place at Glasgow College of Nautical Studies on 3 May 2006. Both Teams included representatives from relevant and interested sectors of the Care community, including further education colleges, Scottish Social Service Council, the Care Commission, Voluntary organisations, and higher education institutions.

The purpose of a Support Team is to make and manage on-going improvements to qualifications in the area it covers. The remit that has been agreed for these teams is to:

- Monitor, evaluate and address issues arising from the delivery, assessment and modernisation of the revised HN group award (including practitioner comment on specific Units).
- Advise on the development of SQA resources/ events that exemplify national standards.
- Oversee the development of commissioned resources/events.
- Participate in/facilitate quality networks for large uptake awards.
- Monitor the operation of quality assurance processes.
- Liaise with key stakeholders — employers, HEIs, Sector Skills Councils, professional bodies and candidates — to maintain and enhance recognition.
- Monitor the uptake of the group awards and Units nationally, and assist in the promotion of the HN group awards to stakeholders, including candidates.
- Keep abreast of related developments.
- Update relevant SQA NQ/SVQ panels on activities and progress.
- Position the qualification for five-yearly review.

It was acknowledged by the teams that an essential element of their success would be good communication lines to SQA, candidates, the Care sector and other stakeholders, and with this in mind they reviewed the appropriate information

required to fulfil the remit. Tasks suggested included gathering statistical information on entries and completions to monitor national uptake of both awards, reviewing Unit comment forms from centres delivering awards (and acting on suggestions if required), reviewing and progressing comments from SQA's HN Quality Sub Group, liaising with QSTs for other specialist areas within Care Scotland to ensure consistency in Graded Units, the need for working examples of integration from centres delivering the awards, and provision of teaching packs and additional assessment exemplars.

These tasks need mechanisms to enable progression and the members emphasised the importance of disseminating the output to the sector.

One task that was progressed by the Social Care Team at their most recent meeting is the review of descriptors from the mandatory section of the HN award. Each Unit Descriptor was assigned to particular members, and those involved have a commitment to review and update the content of the Assessment Guidelines and Evidence Requirements. A good deal of work has been completed to date, and the final comments will be with External Verifier Pat Tonner by the end of November 2006.

The Early Education and Childcare team indicated at their initial meeting that they see the same tasks being part of their initial work for the group. They also feel there is a need for a guidance booklet for supervisors to encourage new student supervisors. It would outline the student's placement requirements and the commitment and work required by supervisors to support them through the award.

An agreed priority for both teams is the production of guidelines for delivering the Graded Unit. It would outline good practice for delivery, assessment and marking. These guidelines will include information on topics such as second attempts, remediation and marking schedules.

NHS Scotland VQ Support Network

An informal network of NHS Scotland S/NVQ approved centres got together in October 2005, and has since met four times. The group's key sponsor is the Scottish Executive Health Department, and it plans to meet three times per year. Its main aim is to ensure a positive impact on the delivery of S/NVQs across all NHS Scotland. As well as that, the group is:

- acting as a forum to encourage sharing and adopting best practice
- ensuring a wide variety of S/NVQs are represented, eg clinical and non-clinical
- maintaining links with other similar networks
- supporting continuous improvement and shared learning across all NHS Scotland approved centres.

Over 20 health boards across NHS Scotland are represented in the group, which also includes SQA, City & Guilds, and the sector skills council for healthcare 'Skills for Health'. These organisations have been very supportive to the group. The group meetings are available on video conference for members who want to dial in.

Various projects are being supported within the group which include:

- developing A/V unit assessor training packs
- developing a quality assurance and procedure manual specifically for NHS Scotland centres
- working with SQA to design a Professional Development Workshop for NHS Scotland assessors and verifiers
- organising an NHS Scotland assessor and verifier conference for early next year
- involvement with the Skills for Health project to 'Develop new approaches to assessment'.

Although this is not a formal policy development group, the group has advised and provided opinion on national issues. This includes the proposed NHS Scotland Career Framework and the regulation of healthcare support staff.

If you would like to know more about this group please contact **0141 314 4012** or **0131 244 3068**.

Achieving the Challenge Project draws to a close

The Achieving the Challenge projects, supported by the Scottish Executive and European Social Fund, are nearing an end. They assist in funding Scottish social care workers towards SVQs related to their SSSC registration requirements.

In fact the last activity for the Objective 3 area (Central Belt, Borders, and the North East of Scotland) occurred on 31 August 2006. The funding for the Highlands & Islands Objective 1 area continues until 31 December 2006, as this part of the programme began six months later.

Although final completion information for the Objective 3 area is still being received, more than 850 people have benefited from the programme — the original target was 450. The projects in this area

funded three separate rounds of candidates, in June 2005, November 2005 and March 2006. The vast majority of candidates are being processed by SQA.

The Objective 1 programme has funded two rounds of candidates in July 2005 and July 2006, with a total of 330 beneficiaries (the initial target was 200). Again the majority of candidates are being processed by SQA.

Candidates from the first two phases of registration (adult residential care workers, residential child care workers, and managers of adult day care services) were eligible for selection and could undertake whatever level of SVQ was relevant to their registration and capabilities.

The Objective 3 project has now closed both for applications and for claims. The Objective 1 project is closed for application but continues to receive claims from selected candidates. The Objective 3 projects expect to report positive final completion rates during the coming months, followed by the Objective 1 project at the beginning of 2007.

National Qualifications Update

The Care sector is a dynamic one in terms of practice and training initiatives. Representatives from schools, colleges, training providers and employers have participated in a consultation to determine the future direction of SQA qualifications in Care. There are full details on the NQ Care page of the SQA website. This is a summary of the developments that are now underway.

National Certificate Group Award: Health and Social Care

In response to feedback, we are proposing that a National Certificate Group Award will be developed along the lines proposed in the consultation. It will be implemented in August 2007.

- The mandatory section will consist of the component Units of the revised Higher Course, plus three Units from either Mental Health Care or Care Practice.
- Nine Units should be completed at SCQF level 6.
- Additional Units suggested by respondents, including some SVQ level 2 Units and additional work experience Units will be considered for inclusion.
- Accepted programmes within the proposed Group Award will be specified for:
 - access to university Nursing courses
 - SSSC Support Worker registration.
- We will investigate the feasibility of the development of a Group Award at level 5 (Intermediate 2) in Health and Social Care.
- Entry and exit level of the Core Skills for the Group Award will be set by individual centres. These may be included as options within the Award or as additions.
- Any of the optional Units that are in need of revision and/or updating will be revised.

Question Paper Courses in Care

In response to feedback, we propose that:

- The development of the revised Courses will proceed.
- The design team should consider comments received on minor aspects of content and demand.

- The Courses will be developed and implemented for August 2007.
- The Units proposed for inclusion as free-standing Units in the Catalogue of National Qualifications should be revised and included.
- The proposals on structure and content of the final Question Papers be adopted.
- The weightings for internal and external assessment will be adopted.
- There will be two final question papers at Higher level.

Skills for Work: Health and Social Care (Higher)

The development of a Higher Skills for Work Course in Health and Social Care has been approved for implementation in August 2007. This Course is intended to complement the Higher question paper Care Course and its development has influenced the revision of the Care Higher.

The Higher Skills for Work Course will emphasise:

- the skills and qualities required to work in the Care sector
- the importance of equal opportunities — both in terms of providers of care and those in receipt of care
- visits to and from care establishments
- the importance of health issues
- simulation exercises and the option of including a short placement.



Pictured above:

Left to right standing – Julie Freemantle, Asset skills, Moira Weir, Supporting People Enabling Unit, Wendy Johnston, SSSC, Eleanor Ramsay, SQA, Ella Simpson, The Rock Trust, Heather Dall, Supporting people at Scottish Executive, Neil Falconer, Penumbra.

Seating – Dave Bramley, Chartered Institute of Housing, Professor Cherry Rowlings (Chair) Learning and Development Committee Member SSSC, Sylvia Barrett, Bield Housing Association.

Housing Support Qualifications Advisory Group (HSQAG)

Wendy Johnston, Project Officer — Housing with SSSC describes the progress made by stakeholders in the Housing Support Qualifications Advisory Group (HSQAG)

After extensive consultation in spring last year, the qualification requirements for registration of workers in housing support services were publicised in October 2005. The Housing Support Qualifications Advisory Group was set up in October 2005 to respond to issues identified during consultation — in particular, the fact that there is no current qualification for workers in housing support services.

Members represented Bield Housing Association, Scottish Executive, Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project, Women's Aid, Supporting People Enabling Unit, Asset Skills (sector skills council for Housing), housing support service providers on behalf of Community Care Providers Scotland, SSSC, and three awarding bodies — SQA, City and Guilds and Chartered Institute of Housing.

At the end of last year, the group highlighted to the SSSC the benefits of including HNCs in Social Care that had been completed by candidates before 2005 in the requirements for registration. The SSSC agreed the remedy of augmenting the HNC with the three mandatory SVQ level 3 Units. This has been publicised in the registration requirements since May 2006.

Drawing on the suite of units for Health and Social Care vocational qualifications, the group has finalised Skills Sets for Housing Support at SVQ levels 2, 3 and 4, to give guidance to individuals selecting Units, considering moving into housing support, or using the qualifications for continuous development. The Skills Sets leaflets will be available at the beginning of December 2006 from SSSC.

Having reviewed the content and coverage of the new HNC Social Care and available materials, including the SVQ Units, members felt that the best response to meet the needs of workers in housing support services is to develop two new optional units for the HNC Social Care. Learning outcomes for the SCQF level 7 units have been drafted for consideration by the Care Scotland Stakeholders Group.

One Unit will cover general housing support, and the second will cover homelessness. Both will examine relevant social policies, including the Supporting People funding framework and housing legislation, with references and links to the mandatory HNC Social Care Unit, 'Social Policy and its Application to Social Services Provision'.

The group is keen to develop distance and e-learning materials for these new Units, and assist in any way with making the new HNC Social Care accessible by distance or e-learning. This will help candidates to combine work and study, and avoid disruption of services.

Now that the Housing Support Qualifications Advisory Group has achieved its aims, it had its last meeting on 25 September 2006.

Professor Cherry Rowlings, SSSC member and chair of the group, said, 'This Group had an ambitious work plan which I'm delighted to say we've fulfilled. We've delivered on our remit, and the members of this multi-disciplinary group have learned a great deal from one another in the process. I'm confident that when they're available, the new Units will equip those working in housing support services with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to meet the needs of tenants, and carry out the complex and responsible work required of them in a competent and safe manner. I want to thank all the members for participating and for shaping an exciting education for the housing support workforce.'

For more information on the work of the group contact **Wendy Johnston** on: **wendy.johnston@sssc.uk.com** or on **01382 207186**, or access qualifications criteria for registration on the SSSC website: **www.sssc.uk.com/registration**

New qualifications to support workplace learning

The Scottish Practice Learning Project (SPLP) is currently leading work on the development of a major new set of qualifications for people working in social services and related professions who are supporting learning in the workplace. These will be called the Practice Learning Qualifications (Social Services) or PLQ(SS).

The framework for the PLQ(SS) was developed by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute). You can download it from www.splp.uk.com

With the support of the Scottish Executive, funding work is now being undertaken on developing the core content areas of the qualifications. These will form the basis of programmes to be delivered through the four regional Learning Networks.

Arrangements for delivery of the PLQ(SS) through Learning Network partnerships are being discussed within the networks, and decisions are still to be made as to who will be programme providers in each area. This could be a local university, college or the Scottish Qualifications Authority in partnership with employers. The new qualifications should be ready for delivery in 2007. All development work so far has been undertaken through a collaborative approach that has included a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, academic institutions and service users and carers.

All social service staff registered with the SSSC are now required to provide evidence that they have 'contributed to the learning and development of others' as part of their post-registration training and learning (PRTL), irrespective of their grade or position in their organisation. This underpins the development of learning cultures and learning organisations in social services. It also helps establish a sense of professional leadership and accountability for practice at all levels, and the key role played by continuing professional development (CPD) in the development of a confident and competent workforce. The PLQ(SS) will be the first new qualification to be approved by the SSSC under its Rules and Requirements for Specialist Training for Social Service Workers in Scotland.

At each level of the PLQ(SS) there is a standard for 'demonstrating appropriate leadership skills'. This will underpin the concept of professional leadership as relevant to all staff, not just managers. The PLQ(SS) will require the development of portfolios of knowledge and skills — this is seen as a basis for on-going work and development once a qualification has been obtained.

There are four stages of qualification within the PLQ(SS), set at SCQF levels level 7 to 11. The framework consists of a set of eight standards with associated learning outcomes for the appropriate level. Depending on their experience and role within their organisation, workers will be able to undertake the PLQ(SS) at whatever stage is most appropriate for them.

Arrangements will be in place for recognition of prior learning (RPL) so that people who already have experience of supporting learning, such as SVQ assessors, can put that experience towards the new qualification.

Those who are new to practice learning will be able to undertake programmes in their local area, including distance and e-learning.

The four-staged approach will allow everyone, including service-users, carers, and all social service workers, to gain academic credits for the part they play in supporting learning in the workplace.

SPLP has been receiving positive feedback from many employers, and the PLQ(SS) is starting to appear in staff training and development strategies and in plans to support practice learning. SPLP will continue to endeavour to keep stakeholders informed of developments through its bulletins, newsletter and website.

A briefing sheet on the PLQ(SS) with Frequently Asked Questions is also now available on the SPLP website. For more information on the PLQ(SS) visit www.splp.uk.com or e-mail sheila.lockhart@sssc.uk.com

A version of this article first appeared in Care Appointments magazine. For a wide range of articles, all the latest sector news stories as well as jobs, courses, events and live discussions, simply visit www.careappointments.co.uk

Congratulations to the first SVQ level 2 Children's Care, Learning and Development achiever

The first candidate has achieved the level 2 Children's Care Learning and Development SVQ. Here, **Joyce Moyes**, centre manager of training provider Coralshore, explains how it was done.

Coralshore is a local company in Dundee that provides training in childcare and gives assistance in a variety of ways to businesses. We are online training providers, and are a Skillseeker and Modern Apprenticeship Centre, which allows us to provide funded training for 16-24 year olds.

When the new Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD) SVQ was introduced last November, we reviewed our assessment plans and devised a new strategy based on Tony Buzan's mind-mapping system as a format for taking the qualification forward.

Our assessment planning is based on a very simple formula which now allows us to include many performance criteria and knowledge statements from a number of Units and elements. We carry out only around five observations for the whole qualification. This kind of integration is of great benefit to the candidates, as it allows them to make sense of the how the qualification incorporates all aspects of their roles as carers, which reinforces the very ethos of a work-based qualification.

The workload for the candidate is greatly reduced — without reducing the importance of the learning process. It has been very successful and has resulted in one of our candidates, Christina Duncan, from Abacus Day Nursery in Auchterarder, Perthshire,



Left-right – Joyce Moyes, Christina Duncan and Debbie Corstorphine, Assessor.

being the first to complete her CCLD level 2 in Scotland. 'I thought it was quite good the way the qualification was set out, I liked the way it all linked together as it made it easier to understand and complete,' Christina said.

With the old childcare qualification, our anticipated finishing time for a level 2 candidate was around 12 – 15 months. This had been reduced to approximately 9 months with the new CCLD award.

Care Skillseekers Projects wins the double

A project that proves young people can care is achieving great things, as **Jenny Hatton**, of the Lanarkshire Assessment Centre, reports.

The Lanarkshire Assessment Centre is delighted that its Skillseekers Project has been awarded a Scottish Social Services Council Care Accolade and a COSLA Award.

The programme, which started in 2003, has now helped 25 young people under the age of 18 achieve careers in social work. We recognised that, often, young people are supporting the care of relatives with illness and disability, and that this experience was a sound footing for employment in Social Care. The programme has challenged the notion that to work in Care employees have to be mature adults, and has shown young people do have the values and attitudes that shape good carers.

Employers' attitudes to the potential of young people to work in the Care sector have changed positively. This is illustrated by some quotes we've had from managers:

"I thought the skillseeker was maybe too young for this type of work. However, I am pleased with her progress and I am delighted to have made her a permanent member of staff."

"My initial views of the programme are very positive, although I did have reservations as to the age and lack of life experience of some of the trainees."

The Project is a two-year programme, and begins with a comprehensive induction that includes basic first aid, food hygiene, and moving and handling.



Back row left-right – Caroline Deerin Residential & Day Care Manager OPS, Harry Stevenson, Executive Director of Social Work, Val Miller Co-Ordinator of Skillseekers Programme, Jenny Hatton Assessment Centre Manager, 4 Skillseekers are – Michelle Brown, Colleen Gordon, Joanne Rooney and Robert Aitken.

The Skillseekers are placed in Older Peoples Services (Residential and Day Care), and then fully trained in the core caring skills and the skills and knowledge required for completing the Health & Social Care Level 3 SVQ.

The programmes were rigorously evaluated, and performance improvements were implemented which resulted in reducing the length of time taken to secure employment from 73 weeks (2003 intake) to 27 weeks (2005 intake). Everybody is a winner — the young people get a meaningful career with an excellent employer; the Council wins by securing this source of high quality recruits, and effectively challenges age discrimination; and the older people win because they enjoy having these young people around and benefit from the quality of care provided.

The project is easily replicated. Contact **Jenny Hatton** for more details on **01698 527486** or e-mail jenny.hatton@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

The National Review of Early Years and Child Care

The National Review of Early Years and Child Care and the Scottish Executive response to the review were launched on 10 August 2006.

The review has produced a strong message about the need to ensure that people working in the early years and child care services have appropriate skills and competences. The Ministerial vision underlying it is of children who are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included.

The review reported on the work of the steering group and of subgroups of professionals and stakeholders in the sector. It looked at work streams and at issues that challenge this workforce both now and in the future, including:

- defining the roles and responsibilities that will be required to deliver an agreed set of outcomes for children
- the type of qualifications and training that will be required to support this
- considering how the profile of the sector can be raised to ensure good recruitment and retention, and how good workforce planning can offer flexible and consistent quality services and provide career pathways for the workforce.

The Minister has signalled he does not intend changing the qualifications required by practitioners and support workers to register with the SSSC, but that from 2011 the qualifications requirements for managers/lead practitioners will be amended to reflect a new leadership qualification at level 9.

Officers from the SSSC will be working closely with stakeholders to ensure the proposals of the review are implemented successfully. The review includes a consultation for the sector. To view the report, the Executive response and the practitioner consultation follow the links:

www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2006/07/10140823/0
www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2006/08/09121758/0
www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2006/08/09081744/0

For further information on the SSSC's work in relation to this contact **Frances Scott** at frances.scott@sssc.uk.com

Closing the skills gap

If you are an employer and are concerned about the availability of training courses or levels of funding for training, then Sector Skills Agreements should be good news for you.

Sector Skills Agreements (SSA) are fundamentally altering the way skills are demanded, delivered and developed throughout the UK. By mapping out exactly what skills employers need their workforce to have, and how these skills are supplied, Sector Skills Agreements will ensure the UK has the skilled workforce it needs.

Sector Skills Agreements between employers and education and training suppliers will set out how to work with key partners to shape the necessary supply of training to close skills gaps.

They are backed by the network of sector skills councils, which includes the SSSC as part of Skills for Care and Development, but are signed up to by everyone who supplies, funds and plans education and training.

The agreements will enable government, employers, employee representatives and organisations who plan, fund and support education and training to work together to tackle skills provision around a common set of objectives. Each agreement will lay out resource requirements and the types and levels of courses required.

Skills for Care and Development has now begun work on the SSA for the social services sector, which is due to be completed by December 2007.

Mike Docherty, SSSC Learning and Development Adviser, and Lead Officer for the SSA work in Scotland, said: 'Developing a Sector Skills Agreement involving employers, training providers and funding bodies will take around 18 months.'

'The final agreement has the potential to make significant improvements to the supply of skilled staff to the sector. The involvement of employers is key to this work as they know better than most what the sector's skills needs are.'

For more information contact **Mike Docherty** at mike.docherty@sssc.uk.com

PDA in Autistic Spectrum Disorders Update

Neil Turner on the latest developments in the new qualification for people working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

In the May edition I described the creation of the new Professional Development Award in Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (SCQF level 7). In this update I will focus on how my centre, The Ochil Social Care Consortium and our partner the Scottish Society for Autism (SSA) have begun to implement these awards.

The award comprises three core units:

- **HN Unit:**
Working with Autism
- **HN Unit:**
Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- **SVQ Unit HSC369:**
Support Individuals with Specific Communication Needs

plus one SVQ unit from an option group.

Given that SSA staff are undertaking their level 3 SVQ as part of their development it seemed obvious that the SVQ component of the award should be included in their SVQ pathway. So, within their SVQ, all candidates working with adults are assessed for units HSC369 and HSC328: Contribute to Care Planning and Review. Candidates on the Children & Young People route undertake HSC369 and the unit HSC36: Contribute to the Assessment of Children and Young Peoples' Needs and the Development of Care Plans. This means that, at the



Linda Fullerton and David Harkins

end of their SVQ, candidates have already completed the SVQ component of the PDA. They can then undertake the two core HN units to gain the PDA.

Two autism practitioners have now completed the HN component — Linda Fullerton from SSA Central Services in Alloa, and Margaret-Anne Hamill from SSA New Ridgepark, Lanark.

Linda is pictured here with her assessor David Harkins from the SSA Qualifications Working Group. Margaret-Anne is pictured with her assessor Alison Briers. Alison has recently taken up a new post within the Autism Resource Centre in Glasgow as Training and Service Standards Co-ordinator. As part of their external provision the Scottish Society for Autism will offer the PDA through this valuable resource at the beginning of 2007.

The ARC (<http://www.ixseed.org.uk/arc/>) is a partnership between Greater Glasgow Health Board (GGHB), Glasgow City Council, The National Autistic Society, the Scottish Society for Autism and the Strathclyde Society for Autism.

Neil Turner,
Centre Contact, Ochil Social Care Consortium
Qualifications Consultant, Scottish Society for Autism
Mobile: 07919 550974, email: turnern9@aol.com

Full details of the award are available in the Care Scotland section of the SQA website



Margaret-Anne Hamill and Alison Briers

Celebrating Achievement

The 5th awards ceremony celebrating the achievement of a range of qualifications for Glasgow City Council Social Work Services' staff took place on 19 September 2006. This year, 253 members of staff from Social Work Services attended the ceremony in Glasgow's City Chambers to receive their Certificate of Achievement. The Certificates were presented to staff from Residential, Day Care and Fieldwork Services who had successfully completed the Health and Social Care SVQs at levels 3 and 4, Registered Managers Award, Return to Learn and First Line Management qualifications.

David Comley, Director of Social Work Services, opened the Awards Ceremony, and this was followed by speeches from Councillor John McKenzie, Executive Member for Glasgow City Council Social Care Services, Carole Wilkinson, Chief Executive of the Scottish Social Services Council, and Eleanor Ramsay, Qualifications Manager, Scottish Qualifications Authority.

After the opening speeches Councillor McKenzie presented the Certificates of Achievement to the 253 successful members of staff.

The Learning and Development Section within Glasgow City Council Social Work Services delivers the SVQs and the First Line Management Programme. The Return to Learn Programme has been developed by the Workers Education Association (WEA) and UNISON and is delivered by a partnership between WEA, UNISON, Glasgow City Council Social Work Services and the Scottish Executive.

The achievement of these qualifications is evidence of staff's commitment, and of Glasgow City Council Social Work Services' policy on staff development through providing learning and development opportunities for staff registration.

Tony Mackie, Principal Officer for Learning and Development said, 'The achievements celebrated today reflect the commitment that staff have to developing and improving the services provided to the people of Glasgow. Without the fantastic effort and commitment of staff within the Learning and Development Section this level of success could not happen'.

Forthcoming Events

6 February 2007

Launch of Health SVQs

Stirling Management Centre

Quality Networks (Health and Social Care & Childcare)

Details to be confirmed

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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