

Housing National Occupational Standards

H3 25 Work within appropriate boundaries with customers (SQA Unit Code F7E5 04)

Unit Summary

This unit is for all those who work directly with customers who may have additional needs, as well as working with their carers and families. Customers with additional needs could include those with mental health needs, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or those needing specialist support. Customers could be of any age and in all settings and situations. The term 'customer' is used in this unit to denote that the customers concerned are service users/clients rather than other practitioners or others with whom you might have a working relationship.

Performance criteria

You must show that:

- 1 you fully explore and acknowledge the customer's and your own expectations and understanding of contact with customers, their family and friends
- 2 you take the necessary action promptly in situations which require immediate action
- 3 you establish and maintain a productive dialogue with customers, their family or friends
- 4 you check the customer's understanding of discussions in a manner which is sensitive and appropriate to their needs
- 5 you deal with challenging behaviour in a way which is sensitive to the customer, sustains your own role and is within organisational and legislative requirements
- 6 you clearly outline the purpose and nature of continuing contact and agree this with customers
- 7 you negotiate the frequency and method of your contact with customers consistent with the your role, organisation and legislative requirements, with customers who are free to make such agreements
- 8 you provide the level of emotional support sufficient to meet those needs which provide the focus for contact with the customer
- 9 you actively encourage and support customers in expressing their perspectives, needs, wishes, values and feelings towards yourself and organisation
- 10 you maintain the level and type of contact appropriate to the customers' needs and that meets agreements made with the customer

- 11 you clearly and accurately summarise the outcomes of work achieved with customers and significant others, and compare these with original agreements and purposes
- 12 you offer the customer support to access services provided by other practitioners or organisations

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- (a) how customer and situation-specific legislation, guidelines, policies and procedures inform and guide the establishment of a relationship between the customer, the worker and the organisation
- (b) how the rights and duties within legislation and judicial frameworks influence the sustaining and developing of a relationship between the customer, worker and organisation
- (c) the limits and boundaries to your duties, responsibilities and power and why it is important to explain these to the customer
- (d) the customer's rights and how these should inform and influence the formation of a relationship between the customer and yourself
- (e) why it is important to encourage customers to express their perspectives, values and feelings
- (f) why it is important to review the initial and any subsequent agreement and outcomes with the customer, and provide customers with positive feedback on their achievements
- (g) methods of establishing contact which are likely to maximise productive engagement with customers and minimise unproductive intervention
- (h) how to deal with difficult and challenging behaviour
- (i) how to sustain and develop working relationships as goals and expectations change
- (j) how to explore feelings and perceptions which affect the maintenance of a working relationship
- (k) the potential resources and support systems available in the local community and customers' network
- (l) complaints and appeals procedures which customers can utilise
- (m) the ways in which feelings of anger and frustration can be displaced from their original source to those in authority and how you can deal with this e.g. reflecting back
- (n) reasons why the customer's initial expectations of the working relationship may not be realised and how you can overcome the customer's feelings of 'being let down'

- (o) how customers can develop dependency on the relationship, the impact of disengaging in these situations and how you can facilitate the process
- (p) ways of recognising feelings of anger and loss and helping customers to deal with them constructively
- (q) how to review working relationships with customers
- (r) how to evaluate objectives, achievements and shortfalls with customers, families and friends
- (s) how to empower customers to make effective working relationships in the future