



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Decision-Making and the Referral Process

Unit code: FW6E 37

Superclass: EC

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is intended to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for candidates to make decisions about children referred, to identify children who require compulsory measures of supervision and where necessary produce grounds of referral to Children's Hearings.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Critically analyse the factors which indicate risk for children.
- 2 Analyse decision-making in relation to referrals received.
- 3 Produce appropriate grounds of referral.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Because of the specialised nature of this Unit (and others linked to the Professional Development Award for Children's Reporter Practice) all candidates must be employed by SCRA. In most cases this will be in the role of the Children's Reporter. For those candidates who are not employed in the role of Children's Reporter but employed by SCRA, case studies will be used to enable the candidate to achieve the Evidence Requirements for this Unit. Candidates will find it beneficial to have a background/experience in the field of law, social work and/or education.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 10: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 10*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

General information

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Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving* and *Communication* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components. Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes in this Unit specification.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment

Assessment for this Unit could take the form of written papers, casework and/or oral evidence and can be undertaken during a suitable course of study or in the candidate's work context. Assessment may be completed in time set aside from work or in the candidate's own time.

All evidence should be relevant to the role of the Children's Reporter in delivering services to children, young people and their families.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Outcomes will be assessed holistically. Evidence Requirements and Assessment Guidelines for these Outcomes will appear after Outcome 3.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Critically analyse the factors which indicate risk for children.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Critically analyse current risk assessment tools for children
- ◆ Evaluate current assessment frameworks used by other agencies
- ◆ Analyse types of risk factors for children

Outcome 2

Analyse decision-making in relation to referrals received.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Explain what constitutes a referral
- ◆ Analyse and apply current framework for decision-making by reporters at both initial and final decision stage
- ◆ Apply current law and protocols governing provision of reports by other agencies
- ◆ Apply case management system in relation to referrals received
- ◆ Apply practice instruction, current legislation and case law to decision-making in relation to referrals received
- ◆ Explain timescales for notifying decisions
- ◆ Explain who is to be notified of decisions and when it is appropriate to withhold information

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Decision-Making and the Referral Process

Outcome 3

Produce appropriate grounds of referral.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Analyse which conditions of referral to apply to case
- ◆ Evaluate information received from other parties
- ◆ Apply principle of fairness to drafting grounds of referral
- ◆ Statements of fact not evidence
- ◆ Relevancy of statements of fact
- ◆ Specification of statements of fact
- ◆ Apply practice instruction in relation to drafting grounds of referral
- ◆ Use of clear and succinct language in statements of fact
- ◆ Apply current legislation and case law to drafting grounds of referral

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Candidates will need to provide written or oral evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills in the form of:

- (a) A report equivalent to 2,500–3,000 words. Candidates should:
- Critically analyse risk assessment tools for children by considering one particular tool or by a comparison of different tools.
 - Evaluate assessment frameworks of other agencies by considering one particular framework or by a comparison of different frameworks.
 - Analysis of five different types of risk factors for children.
 - Explain what constitutes a referral.
 - Explain the different conditions of referral.
 - Explain who is to be notified of decisions and the timescales for notifying them.
 - Explain when it is appropriate to withhold information.

Candidates should undertake research and quote current best practice where relevant. They should justify their references on the basis of what they believe or have experienced and explain how it will influence their practice.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Decision-Making and the Referral Process

- (b) A portfolio of evidence derived from candidate's casework including a review and analysis of cases with at least five examples of cases where the candidate has made an initial decision, five cases where the candidate has made a final decision and five cases where the candidate has drafted grounds of referral, demonstrating:
- What constitutes a referral, the different conditions of referral and analysis of which condition(s) applies.
 - Analysis of the factors in the framework for decision making.
 - Application of the framework for decision making to referrals received at the initial decision stage and final decision stage.
 - Communication with relevant parties.
 - Application of case management system to referral received.
 - Application of practice instruction and legal requirements in relation to referrals received.
 - Evaluation of information received.
 - Application of the principle of fairness, practice instruction, current legislation and case law to drafting grounds of referral.

The cases where the candidate has made an initial decision, final decision and drafted grounds of referral can be the same case or multiple cases.

Where a candidate has insufficient case examples from their casework to meet the Evidence Requirements, a case scenario can be used as the basis for preparing the required documentation.

Assessment Guidelines for the Unit

Assessment for these Outcomes can be undertaken during a suitable course of study or in the candidate's work context. Assessment may be completed in time set aside from work or in the candidate's own time.

All evidence should be relevant to the role of the Children's Reporter in delivering services to children, young people and their families.

The assessment for these Outcomes could take the form of written reports/casework, and/or oral evidence.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Decision-Making and the Referral Process

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed for those members of SCRA who are carrying out the role of Children's Reporter. This Unit is part of the Professional Development Award (PDA) for Children's Reporter Practice. Candidates undertaking the full Award should be encouraged to relate their work for this Unit to the others in the Award.

The candidate should be encouraged to reflect on their experience and skills development during this and all other Units which comprise the PDA. It is anticipated that candidates will maintain a work-based reflective journal. This journal could be used as a private reference mechanism by the candidate and can assist in progressing the candidate's personal development. This journal is not assessed and its purpose is to enhance the personal development of the candidates.

Outcome 1

At the time of writing, relevant SCRA documentation, protocols and guidance include: Framework for Decision Making by Reporters and Practice Instruction. Candidates should also be aware of risk assessment tools and assessment frameworks used by or being developed by relevant agencies, for example, the My World Triangle, Asset, YLS.

Outcome 2

At the time of writing, relevant legislation, rules and case law include: Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and supporting rules and case law, Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, Criminal Law Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1995, Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

At the time of writing, relevant SCRA documentation, protocols and guidance include: RAD processes, TIWG, Support Staff Practice, Practice Instruction, Framework for Decision Making by Reporters, Scheme of Delegation.

Outcome 3

At the time of writing, relevant legislation, rules and case law include: Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and supporting rules and case law, Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995, Human Rights legislation and case law, Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Decision-Making and the Referral Process

At the time of writing, relevant SCRA documentation, protocols and guidance include: Reference materials/styles, Practice Instruction.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit can be delivered as part of the Professional Development Award (PDA) for Children's Reporter Practice or on a stand-alone basis.

Candidates will meet with assessors to agree an assessment plan which will include detail of what evidence will be produced by the candidate and the date it will be produced.

Candidates will be expected to produce an assignment to support all Outcomes. The assignment should demonstrate analysis and understanding by the candidate.

In relation to the critical analysis of risk assessment tools for children, particular areas which could be considered by the candidate include:

- ◆ What risk factors might be relevant to the assessment of a child referred for committing an offence
- ◆ Describe and critically analyse the assessment model(s) that exist in relation to youth offending
- ◆ Describe and critically analyse an assessment model in relation to sexual abuse
- ◆ Compare two different risk assessment models relevant to children
- ◆ Evaluate assessment frameworks of other agencies by considering one particular framework or by a comparison of different frameworks

In relation to the analysis of five different types of risk factors for children, particular areas which could be considered by the candidate include child protection, abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug misuse (by child or carer), domestic abuse, offending, health and poverty.

Candidates are also expected to produce a review and analysis of cases to support all Outcomes with at least five examples each of cases where the candidate has made an initial decision, a final decision and drafted grounds of referral. These can relate to the same case or different cases at the different stages. The review and analysis of cases should demonstrate the candidate's application of knowledge to casework. The candidate must anonymise the cases by removing all references to names, addresses and date of birth. Candidates can use the unique identifying number from the case management system. In selecting cases for use to meet the Evidence Requirements for this Unit, candidates are encouraged to reflect on the Evidence Requirements for the other Units in this professional development award to try to select cases that will meet Evidence Requirements for other Units. Where a candidate has insufficient case examples from their own casework to meet the Evidence Requirements, case scenarios can be used. For example, the centre could provide a case scenario to the candidate of a mock referral which has been received in respect of a child and the candidate could make an initial decision on this mock referral.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Decision-Making and the Referral Process

The assignment and review and analysis of cases could be reviewed with the candidate in the form of a professional discussion to allow professional reflection and to ensure all Evidence Requirements are met.

For all Outcomes, work produced by the candidate could be supplemented by the use of case scenarios and oral questions as required to ensure all Evidence Requirements are met.

Candidates may complete the Evidence Requirements in time set aside from work or in their own time. They may be supported in this through a course of study including workshops provided by the centre or external training courses.

To support them completing this Unit, candidates can access resources on the intranet including current case law, practice instruction and research articles.

Open learning

All Outcomes are appropriate to open learning with assessor support at all stages. It is the responsibility of the delivering centre to ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work. Assessment evidence must be generated as described in the Evidence Requirements section. At the time of writing, candidates complete a paper portfolio but it is anticipated that e-portfolios will be developed in the future.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Elements of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* — Critical Thinking and Reviewing and Evaluating may be developed and enhanced in this Unit, which requires the analysis and evaluation of risk assessment tools, assessment frameworks and their application to casework.

Oral *Communication* skills may also be enhanced during the interaction with children, young people and their families in the workplace. This is likely to involve using a range of verbal and non-verbal communication techniques, such as questioning, giving information and responding to others in order to advise on and/or prepare a case. Written *Communication* skills may also be enhanced where candidates will be encouraged to produce clear, structured written work in the preparation of their casework.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

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This Unit is intended to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for you to make decisions about children referred, to identify children who require compulsory measures of supervision and where necessary produce grounds of referral to Children's Hearings.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of your centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

This Unit is assessed by written papers, casework and/or oral evidence and can be undertaken during a suitable course of study or in your work context. Assessment may be completed in time set aside from work or in your own time.

You will learn about/how to:

- ◆ Critically analyse current risk assessment tools for children
- ◆ Evaluate current assessment frameworks used by other agencies
- ◆ Analyse types of risk factors for children
- ◆ Explain what constitutes a referral
- ◆ Analyse and apply current framework for decision-making by reporters at both initial and final decision stage
- ◆ Apply current law and protocols governing provision of reports by other agencies
- ◆ Apply case management system in relation to referrals received
- ◆ Apply practice instruction, current legislation and case law to decision-making in relation to referrals received
- ◆ Explain timescales for notifying decisions
- ◆ Explain who is to be notified of decisions and when it is appropriate to withhold information
- ◆ Analyse which conditions of referral to apply to case
- ◆ Evaluate information received from other parties
- ◆ Apply principle of fairness to drafting grounds of referral
- ◆ Statements of fact not evidence
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