



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

**Unit code:** FW6G 37

**Superclass:** EC

**Publication date:** October 2011

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to demonstrate and apply knowledge to support the effective administration and management of Children's Hearings and business meetings conducted in the context of the Children's Hearing System.

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

- 1 Analyse and apply the law and practice instruction in relation to arranging and administering the Hearing.
- 2 Apply knowledge of the role of the Reporter in the Hearing processes.
- 3 Apply Duty of Care.
- 4 Explain the different types of Hearings and business meetings.

### 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.

## **General information (cont)**

### **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.*

### **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 Skills 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, performance evidence, 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

**Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

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

Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be assessed holistically. Evidence Requirements and Assessment Guidelines for these Outcomes will appear after Outcome 4.

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

Analyse and apply the law and practice instruction in relation to arranging and administering the Hearing.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Analyse and identify who is a Relevant Person
- ◆ Apply timescales for scheduling and notifying hearings
- ◆ Identify what supporting documentation is to be sent for hearings, who it is to be sent to and when it is to be sent and apply this process
- ◆ Record hearing Outcome including completion of statutory forms
- ◆ Identify who is to be sent notification of hearing Outcomes, what is to be sent and when it is to be sent and apply this process
- ◆ Current legislative requirements in relation to scheduling, notifying and conducting hearings

### Outcome 2

Apply knowledge of the role of the Reporter in the hearing process.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Apply the Role of the Reporter in the hearing
- ◆ The role of other participants in the hearing
- ◆ Apply Practice Instruction in relation to hearings
- ◆ Demonstrate a child centred approach

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

### Outcome 3

Apply Duty of Care.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Apply the Role of the Reporter in the hearing in relation to managing hearing security
- ◆ Duty of Care and its application
- ◆ Apply health and safety guidance
- ◆ Local protocols in relation to hearing security

### Outcome 4

Explain the different types of hearings and business meetings.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The purpose of different types of hearings
- ◆ The procedures for different types of hearings
- ◆ Apply Practice Instruction in relation to hearings
- ◆ Current legislative provisions in relation to different types of hearings and business meetings

#### 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 written report, of approximately 2,500–3,000 words. Candidates should:

- ◆ Explain who is a relevant person and analyse the impact of case law and European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) in this area
- ◆ Explain the role of other participants in the hearing
- ◆ Explain the purpose and procedure of different types of hearings including the practice instruction and legislation which applies to them
- ◆ Describe who has the right and/or obligation to attend a hearing
- ◆ Explain the timescales for scheduling and notifying different types of hearings
- ◆ Explain how to have a child centred approach supported by an example of how the candidate has demonstrated this
- ◆ Explain and apply their duty of care to those attending the Hearing
- ◆ Explain current health and safety guidance
- ◆ Explain any local protocol in relation to hearing security from strategies to minimise risk, impact of drugs/alcohol, how to deal with conflict/aggression and available support mechanisms, such as panic alarms, fire drills, local support systems
- ◆ Explain the purpose and procedure of the most common types of hearings

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

### Unit title: Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

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.

(b) A portfolio of evidence derived from candidate's casework with at least five examples of cases, demonstrating application of practice instruction, legislation and case law to the following circumstances:

- ◆ Scheduling and notifying the hearing
- ◆ Sending supporting documentation for hearing
- ◆ Recording and notifying of the hearing Outcome, including completing statutory forms

The portfolio should incorporate different types of cases, such as non-disclosure, child aged 12 or over, cases requiring different notice periods.

(c) Observed practice sessions of at least five cases in a hearing or simulated hearing, demonstrating:

- ◆ Performance as the reporter within the hearing

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 a written reports/casework, observed practice and/or oral evidence.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

**Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

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 legislation, rules and case law include: Case Practice Enquiries, Children's Hearing Rules, Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and supporting rules and associated case law, Human Rights Act 1998, Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.

At the time of writing, relevant governmental and SCRA documentation, protocols and guidance include: TIWG, Practice Instruction, RAD and case management system.

#### Outcome 2

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

At the time of writing, relevant governmental and SCRA documentation, protocols and guidance include: Practice Instruction, Protocols and Scottish Government Guidance.

#### Outcome 3

All current and relevant Health and Safety legislation, Rules and Guidance.

#### Outcome 4

At the time of writing, relevant legislation, rules and case law include: Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and relevant rules and case law, Human Rights Act 1998, Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

At the time of writing, relevant SCRA documentation, protocols and guidance include: TIWG, Practice Instruction, and Case Practice Enquiries.

### 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.

For this Unit it is anticipated that the main assessment method will be the review of the candidate's casework and the observation of the candidate's performance within Hearings.

Candidates are expected to produce case studies of at least five examples of cases where they have arranged a hearing and five examples of cases where they have recorded and notified hearing Outcomes. These should include a variety of cases such as children over 12, non-disclosure cases and cases with different notice periods. These should demonstrate application of practice instruction, legislation and case law to the following circumstances:

- ◆ Scheduling and notifying the hearing
- ◆ Sending supporting documentation for hearing
- ◆ Recording and notifying of the hearing Outcome, including completing statutory forms

Candidates should produce performance evidence in the form of witness testimony from their line manager, assessor and/or experienced reporter of a minimum of five cases where the candidate was the Reporter in the hearing. The particular areas of the candidate's practice which should be observed and specified in the witness testimony include:

- ◆ Pre hearing contact with panel members
- ◆ Late reports received from other parties or agencies
- ◆ Showing cause for particular warrants
- ◆ Supporting of fair process (eg explaining grounds of referral, hearing failing to consider a relevant and material issue, incompetent decision)
- ◆ Post hearing contact with panel members
- ◆ Providing customer care for children, families and others attending hearing (eg helpful and professional manner, willingness to help, effectively dealing with angry people)
- ◆ Apply local protocol in relation to hearing security

The candidate must anonymise the cases in the portfolio 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.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

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 case where a Children's Hearing is to be scheduled and the candidate could demonstrate how they would schedule, arrange and notify the mock Children's Hearing. In addition, if the candidate does not have cases where they are the Reporter in a Children's Hearing, they could be given a simulated Children's Hearing to attend.

Candidates will also be expected to produce an assignment to support all of the Outcomes. In this assignment, candidates will be expected to provide evidence that research/reading has been undertaken. This should be evidenced by quoting current/best practice or referring to material they have read. Candidates are expected to justify their references, eg because they agree or disagree based on what they believe/have experienced, or explain how it will influence their practice. The assignment should be approximately 2,500 — 3,000 words long and should cover the following areas:

- ◆ Explanation of who is a relevant person with analysis of the impact of the leading case law and European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) in this area
- ◆ Explanation the role of other participants in the hearing
- ◆ Explanation of the purpose and procedure of a variety of different types of hearings including the practice instruction and legislation which applies to them and including who has the right and/or obligation to attend and the timescales for scheduling and notifying the different types of hearings. The different types of hearings covered could include Business meetings; Second and eighth working day hearings; Advice hearing for adoption or permanence order; Review hearings (examples from annual, local authority, child, relevant person or hearing); Transfer (emergency transfer, transfer into secure **or** transfer to another local authority); Warrants (warrants to apprehend and place of safety warrants); Custody; Remit from appeal; Secure criteria
- ◆ Explanation of how to have a child centred approach supported by an example of how the candidate has demonstrated this
- ◆ Explanation of duty of care to those attending hearings, health and safety guidance and local protocols to manage risk at hearings together with examples of how these have been or would be applied in practice

For all Outcomes, work produced by the candidate could be supplemented by oral questions 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.



## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

### 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 of the law and practice in relation to children's hearing and their application to casework.

Oral *Communication* skills may also be enhanced during the interaction with children, young people and their families and partner agencies 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.

### 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.

### 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Children's Reporter Practice: Operating Effectively within Children's Hearings

This Unit is about the knowledge and skills you need to support the effective administration and management of Children's Hearings and business meetings conducted in the context of the Children's Hearing System.

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:**

- ◆ Analyse and identify who is a Relevant Person
- ◆ Apply timescales for scheduling and notifying hearings
- ◆ Identify what supporting documentation is to be sent for hearings, who it is to be sent to and when it is to be sent and apply this process
- ◆ Record hearing Outcome including completion of statutory forms
- ◆ Identify who is to be sent notification of hearing Outcomes, what is to be sent and when it is to be sent and apply this process
- ◆ Current legislative requirements in relation to scheduling, notifying and conducting hearings
- ◆ Apply the Role of the Reporter in the hearing
- ◆ The role of other participants in the hearing
- ◆ Apply Practice Instruction in relation to hearings
- ◆ Demonstrate a child centred approach
- ◆ Apply the Role of the Reporter in the hearing in relation to managing hearing security
- ◆ Duty of Care and its application
- ◆ Apply health and safety guidance
- ◆ Local protocols in relation to hearing security
- ◆ The purpose of different types of hearings
- ◆ The procedures for different types of hearings
- ◆ Apply Practice Instruction in relation to hearings
- ◆ Current legislative provisions in relation to different types of hearings and business meetings