



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

**Unit code:** HG33 36

**Superclass:** PN

**Publication date:** August 2016

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to enable learners to understand and support education and the process of moving on in residential child care. Education is a key contributor to ensuring that young people have the best chances in their future life. Yet research shows that this area is one in which children and young people in residential care have some of the poorest Outcomes. Another key contributor to success in later life is a helpful transition process, incorporating throughcare and aftercare. The Standard for Residential Child Care says that practitioners need to 'support and manage children and young people's transitions including throughcare and aftercare transitions' (Standard 4.10). In addition, the standard highlights the importance of education and the need to support children and young people in this area when it says that 'Practitioners have knowledge and a critical understanding of children and young people's development and learning and the factors that affect it' (Standard 3.2).

The Unit will provide underpinning knowledge about the research around education and transitions. It will also examine some aspects of best practice and encourage learners to critically reflect on how they and their organisations support education and transition. Successful completion of the Unit will enable the learner to understand and critically reflect upon how they can best support the education and transitions of the children and young people in their care.

## Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Critically evaluate legislation, policy and research about supporting education and transitions.
- 2 Critically examine factors and approaches to best practice in the areas of education and transitions.
- 3 Critically examine individual and organisational barriers to best practice in relation to supporting education and transitions.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 9: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9)

### Recommended entry to the Unit

In order to access the PDA level 9 Residential Child Care award learners must be able to demonstrate appropriate experience of working in a residential child care setting and have gained 120 credits at SCQF levels 7 and 8 which are recognised as meeting the requirements for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council in residential child care.

### Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

### 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.

### Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## **Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards**

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

### **Outcome 1**

Critically evaluate legislation, policy and research about supporting education and transitions.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Research on education for looked after children and young people
- ◆ Research on throughcare and aftercare practice
- ◆ Current legislation, policy and guidance on supporting education
- ◆ Current legislation, policy and guidance on supporting throughcare and aftercare

### **Outcome 2**

Critically examine factors and approaches to best practice in the areas of education and transitions.

- ◆ Factors affecting Outcomes in education
- ◆ Factors affecting throughcare and aftercare practice
- ◆ Best practice in education
- ◆ Best practice in throughcare and aftercare

### **Outcome 3**

Critically examine individual and organisational barriers to best practice in relation to supporting education and transitions.

- ◆ Individual barriers which impact on supporting educational outcomes
- ◆ Individual barriers which impact on supporting throughcare and aftercare
- ◆ Organisational barriers

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

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### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ critically evaluate two main pieces of research on educational Outcomes for children and young people in residential child care.
- ◆ critically evaluate two main pieces of research on throughcare and aftercare of children and young people in residential child care.
- ◆ critically evaluate the impact of two pieces of legislation and two national policy or guidance documents relating to supporting education.
- ◆ critically evaluate the impact of two pieces of legislation and two national policy or guidance documents relating to through care and aftercare.
- ◆ critically analyse three key factors contributing to the support of educational Outcomes and transitions in residential child care.
- ◆ critically examine two barriers for practitioners which may hinder the support of educational Outcomes for children and young people.
- ◆ critically examine two barriers for practitioners which may hinder best practice in transitions.
- ◆ critically analyse two barriers to best practice in supporting education and transitions which exists in the learner's own workplace, Unit or organisation.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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 concerned with supporting educational Outcomes and healthy transitions in residential child care and how this benefits the children and young people with whom the learner works. When the learner has completed the Unit, they should have had the opportunity to examine research, legislation and policy on education and transitions, some of the factors affecting good practice in education and transition support, and critically reflect on how well they, as a practitioner, and their organisations does in supporting education and transitions for children and young people in residential care. For ease of understanding, this set of support notes has been divided into the three Outcomes.

#### Outcome 1

This Outcome gives learners the opportunity to expand their knowledge about legislation, policy and research around the areas of education and transitions. Research has demonstrated that children and young people have had poorer Outcomes than those in the general population, when looking at education and the transition to adulthood.

In terms of education, the report *Learning with Care* (Scottish Executive, 2001) outlined the poor educational Outcomes for looked after children. It identified four key areas in which looked after young people can have difficulties in education. These are getting to school, coping there, being helped to learn and progressing to education beyond school. Cameron et al (2015) gives an up to date evidence-informed practical guide to supporting the education of children and young people in care, and those leaving care as young adults. Their main argument is that for children to thrive and flourish, and realise their potential, and particularly where they have had very difficult early childhoods, they need to be cared for in school and educated at home. This is an important premise in which education is seen as a responsibility of the residential care Unit and its practitioners. Connelly and Kinloch (2013) did some interesting research into support in higher education for care leavers which showed that strategy is piecemeal.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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In terms of transitions, definitions are helpful. In this Unit, transitions refer to throughcare and aftercare (TCAC). Throughcare is the ongoing preparation and support of young people who have been looked after and may soon be making the transition to live more independently. Aftercare is the continuing support, planning and guidance for a young person who has left care or a supported living environment. The research by Dixon and Stein (2005) demonstrated that TCAC was problematic for young people leaving care in Scotland. The latest research in this area by McGhee et al (2014) demonstrates that there are still challenges in this area. There is a range of policy documentation in this area. Some examples are *Staying Put Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2013a) and the *Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers* (Scottish Government 2013b).

In terms of legislation, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) extended the age to which care leavers are able to receive support up to and including age 25 years. This has clear implications for residential child care Units. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009) automatically deems that all looked after children and young people have additional support needs unless the education authority determine that they do not require additional support in order to benefit from school education. It also states that education authorities must consider whether each looked after child or young person for whose school education they are responsible requires a co-ordinated support plan (CSP). Residential practitioners are in a key position to make sure that the powers of this act are invoked for the young people in their care. Learners should also look specifically at the challenges facing children and young people affected by disability in terms of education support and transition to adulthood. Research demonstrates that this group are more disadvantaged than any other when it comes to education support and healthy transitions to adulthood.

Learners should also have a brief look at the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The CfE is the Scottish framework for delivering education from the ages of 3–18 years. Information on the curriculum can be gained from <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/understandingthecurriculumasawhole/index.asp>.

It is important for residential practitioners to have a basic understanding of the aims and approach of the CfE so that they can contribute to the support of the children and young people in their care.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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### Outcome 2

It is important for learners to consider the key factors which have an impact on educational Outcomes. When learners have examined the research, they will also have been able to note some of the factors which assist in this area. For example, *Learning with Care* (2001) found that children and young people who lived in residential homes experienced similar problems about communication and role clarity in schools. In addition, children lacked encouragement to complete homework or take part in out of school activities. Responses from young people who took part included accounts of disruptive environments in residential homes and how they affected the aspirations and expectations of the young people who lived there. Outcomes improved if looked after children had clear plans which explicitly identified goals, tasks, and targets and allocated areas of responsibility for implementing them. The most successful plans were found when social workers and residential practitioners worked with young people to help achieve the goals that they had identified together.

The document *How good is your throughcare and aftercare service* (Scottish TCAC Forum, 2006) was an excellent and practical document which outlined quality indicators which should be expected from any local authority. The factors needed to promote healthy transitions can be examined through this document and also from the research evidence. The website of the forum itself is <http://www.staf.scot/> and it is an excellent resource for up to date information on legislation, policies, guidance and practice in this field. Learners should also examine how to work with the effects of disability to ensure that disabled children and young people have equal access to education and fair and just transitions from residential child care into adulthood.

Some examples of case studies in moving on are contained in Dixon and Stein's report *Still a Bairn* (2002), particularly from Section 4.4 onwards which looks at What Works. There are also multiple examples of case studies which can be sourced from websites such as STAF, Goodenoughcaring and WhoCares?Scotland among others.

### Outcome 3

This Outcome concerns a self-examination and an organisational examination of the barriers to good practice in education and transition support. Learners are asked to be critically reflective of themselves and the factors in their own lives and which help and hinder them from supporting education and transitions. They are also asked to examine their organisations in the light of research and guidance, and to examine what may hinder best practice. Case studies and personal reflections are a good way to examine this.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

### References and websites to support the Outcomes

Cameron, C, Connelly, G & Jackson, S (2015). *Educating Children and Young People in Care: Learning Placements and Caring Schools*. London.

Connelly, G. and Kinloch, J. (2013). Research Briefing: From care to uni  
Looked after Children and Care Leavers in Higher Education in Scotland. Glasgow: CELCIS.  
Accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016 at  
[http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/45384/1/From\\_Care\\_to\\_Uni\\_Research\\_briefing.pdf](http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/45384/1/From_Care_to_Uni_Research_briefing.pdf)

Dixon, J. and Stein, M. (2002) *Still a Bairn*. York: University of York. Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2016 at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/46729/0013996.pdf>

Dixon, J., & Stein, M. (2005). *Leaving Care, Throughcare and Aftercare in Scotland*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

McGhee, K., Lerpiniere, J., Welch, V., Graham, P. and Harkin, B. (2014)  
*Throughcare and Aftercare Services in Scotland's Local Authorities: A National Study*  
Glasgow: CELCIS. Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb., 2016 at  
<http://www.celcis.org/files/1814/4050/5854/Throughcare-and-aftercare-in-scotlands-local-authorities.pdf>

Scottish Executive (2001) Learning with Care: The Education of Children  
Looked After Away from Home by Local Authorities. Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb., 2016 at  
[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/lwc\\_tcm4-712786.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/lwc_tcm4-712786.pdf)

Scottish Government. (2013a). Staying Put Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.  
Accessed on 2 Feb 2016 at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00435935.pdf>

Scottish Government. (2013b). Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers. Edinburgh:  
Scottish Government. Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb., 2016 at  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00435939>

Scottish TCAC Forum (2006) How good is your throughcare and aftercare service?  
Accessed on 1 Feb 2016 at <http://www.westlothianhchp.org.uk/media/3037/Throughcare-and-Aftercare-Standards/pdf/tcacstandards.pdf>

*Some other very good RCC websites which may contain useful information are*  
The Scottish Residential Child Care Workers Association <http://www.srccwa.com/>  
The Centre of Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (incorporating SIRCC)  
<http://www.celcis.org/>  
Good Enough Caring <http://www.goodenoughcaring.com/>  
The A-Z of residential child care: The archived work of NCERCC  
<http://www.ncb.org.uk/ncercc/a-z-of-residential-child-care>  
The Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum  
<http://www.staf.scot/>  
WhoCares?Scotland. The national voluntary organisation supporting children and young  
people in care and leaving care  
[www.whocaresscotland.org.uk](http://www.whocaresscotland.org.uk)



## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

The first Outcome gives learners the opportunity to learn about legislation, policy and research around the areas of education and transitions. Learners should examine some of the key research in this area. *Learning with Care* (Scottish Executive, 2001) and its support materials are a fantastic resource for teaching. Tutors should encourage learners to look at individual pieces of research and to carry out group presentations of findings. In terms of transitions, definitions should be clarified in the group and meanings and responsibilities of individual staff and settings should be examined. The research by Dixon and Stein (2005) was one of the seminal pieces of work and led to changes in legislation and policy in Scotland. More up-to-date research should also be examined, once again encouraging learners to seek out new work and present this to their peers. In terms of legislation, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009) need to be highlighted. It will also be helpful to have a brief look at the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

The second Outcome focusses on the key factors which have an impact on educational Outcomes and transitions. Some of these will have emerged in their examination of the research and these should be discussed in more depth. *Learning with Care* (2001) found that Outcomes improved if looked after children had clear plans which explicitly identified goals, tasks, and targets and allocated areas of responsibility for implementing them. Reflection on the role of Unit culture and key working in supporting education plans should be encouraged. In terms of throughcare and aftercare, the website of the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum ([www.staf.scot/](http://www.staf.scot/)) is an excellent resource for up to date information on legislation, policies, guidance and practice. It may also be helpful to ask a speaker from a throughcare/aftercare service to come and talk to the group. In addition, the WhoCares?Scotland website has some excellent video clips which can provoke discussion. Learners should also examine what factors have particular relevance to disability, and what the differences are when a young person with a disability is transitioning to adult services.

The third Outcome will be looking at barriers to supporting education and transitions both at the individual level and at the organisational level. At an individual practitioner level, the reason for this is quite deliberate because some of the research shows that one of the barriers to educational support is the lack of confidence and education among residential child care practitioners themselves. It is important that this is brought to the surface, and a discussion based in self-reflections is an excellent way to raise this awareness. They are also asked to examine their organisations in the light of the research and guidance which they have examined in the first two Outcomes, and to examine what hinders best practice. Case studies and personal reflections are a good way to examine this. Some examples of case studies in moving on are contained in Dixon and Stein's report *Still a Bairn* (2002), as previously stated. There are also multiple examples of case studies which can be sourced from websites such as STAF, Goodenoughcaring and WhoCares?Scotland among others. YouTube clips and TED talks are also a very good source of material for provoking discussion and debate.

Delivery of the unit must explain the relational aspects of education and transitions but that each presents unique challenges in the life of children and young people in residential childcare. Therefore it is imperative that each aspect being given equal weighting'.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following is a suggestion only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

It is suggested that the assessment for this Unit is in the form of a written assignment, incorporating a self-reflection and organisational critique, which could cover all of the Outcomes for the Unit. The written assignment should be around 2000 words.

The written assignment could have the following content:

The Outcomes for young people leaving care are much poorer than in the general population. Discuss this with reference to research and policy. The following aspects could be included:

- ◆ Critical evaluation of two key research pieces in educational Outcomes and two of the key research pieces on transitions and aftercare
- ◆ Critical evaluation of two pieces of legislation and two policy or guidance documents relating to supporting education
- ◆ Critical evaluation of two pieces of legislation and two policy or guidance documents relating to transitions
- ◆ Identification and critical analysis of at least three key factors which can encourage support for education and transitions in residential child care
- ◆ Critical reflection on two main aspects of personal individual challenges for you as a practitioner working to support education and transitions and two main barriers which may hinder education and transition in your current workplace

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Assessment of this Unit will assume the development of Core Skills necessary in the performance of work tasks at this level. For example, the assessment is likely to include the use of appropriate information technology. Taking part in the activities of the class will lead to the demonstration of skills required to undertake presentations written and oral which will include the use of complex information.

Learners will have the opportunity to develop the following Core Skills:

**Communication:** Written communications will be developed through learners producing written work in a variety of formats; oral communication will be developed through discussion, debate and evidence of engagement with other professionals and key people.

**Working with Others:** Will be developed as learners will be required to work collaboratively with colleagues from their own Unit in the preparation and research for their assessment.

**Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** Learners will develop their *ICT* skills through research and the presentation of the written assignment and organisational study.

**Problem Solving:** Learners will have the opportunity to develop problem solving skills through the presentation of their written assignment and relating their findings to their own workplace.

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for learners

### **Unit title:** Supporting Education and Transition in Residential Child Care (SCQF level 9)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The purpose of the Unit is to help you to understand and support education and the process of moving on in residential child care. Education is a key contributor to ensuring that young people have the best chances in their future life. Yet research shows that this area is one in which children and young people in residential care have some of the poorest Outcomes. Another key contributor to success in later life is a helpful transition process, incorporating throughcare and aftercare. The Standard for Residential Child Care says that practitioners need to 'support and manage children and young people's transitions including throughcare and aftercare transitions' (Standard 4.10). In addition, the standard highlights the importance of education and the need to support children and young people in this area when it says that 'Practitioners have knowledge and a critical understanding of children and young people's development and learning and the factors that affect it' (Standard 3.2).

The Unit will provide underpinning knowledge about the research around education and transitions. It will also examine some aspects of best practice and encourage you to critically reflect on how you and your organisations support education and transition. Successful completion of the Unit will enable you to understand and critically reflect upon how you can best support the education and transitions of children and young people, and what the main barriers and drivers to best practice are.

You will be assessed by means of a written assignment. In this assessment you will be given the opportunity to explain what you have learned about research and best practice in the areas of supporting education and transitions. You will also be given the opportunity to reflect on yourself and your own organisation and discuss barriers to these two crucial areas.

Successful completion of the Unit will enable you to understand the importance of education support and healthy transitions into adulthood. You will also further enhance some of your Core Skills in *Communication, ICT and Working with Others* and *Problem Solving*.