



## National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

**Unit code:** HD6T 46

**Superclass:** PM

**Publication date:** April 2016

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit has been developed for learners who wish to pursue a career in social services, and is a mandatory Unit of the National Progression Award Social Services and Healthcare. It may also be undertaken as a stand-alone Unit.

The Unit is suitable for learners who have not previously studied aspects of social service or had practical experience in this sector, as well as those who have already gained some experience.

The purpose of the Unit is to introduce learners to communication in care relationships. It highlights the central importance of communication in social services settings, in particular the communication needs, wishes and preferences of individuals. It will enable learners to consider factors that might create barriers to communication, and ways in which barriers can be reduced. Learners will be introduced to the principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings.

### Outcomes

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

- 1 Investigate different methods of communication in care relationships.
- 2 Explain methods to reduce barriers to communication in care relationships.
- 3 Explain ways to support the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of individuals in social services settings.
- 4 Explain ways to apply principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings.

### Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 6: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

## National Unit specification: General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

### Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. This Unit is suitable for learners who have not previously studied aspects of social services or had practical experience in this sector, as well as those who have already gained some experience. Learners may benefit from previous relevant learning such as National 5 or an equivalent level.

It is recognised that a range of formal and informal prior learning may be relevant, such as:

- ◆ opportunities to carry out research and develop a useful background knowledge base.
- ◆ opportunities to think about the needs of self and others.
- ◆ skills in review, analysis and evaluation.

This Unit is suitable for learners who wish to enter employment in social services settings. It is also suitable for learners undertaking a placement or volunteering in a social services setting.

### 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. This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the NPA Social Services and Healthcare.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

### 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).

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

### **Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

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**

Investigate different methods of communication in care relationships.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Explain the importance of clear communication with individuals in a social services setting.
- (b) Investigate different communication methods.
- (c) Identify when and how to seek advice from others.

#### **Outcome 2**

Explain methods to reduce barriers to communication in care relationships

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify barriers to communication within a social services setting.
- (b) Describe ways to use active listening and body language when communicating with people in a social services setting.
- (c) Identify factors that can have a positive or negative effect on the way people communicate.
- (d) Explain how to adapt the way you communicate to reduce barriers to communication.
- (e) Explain ways to give constructive feedback and encouragement to individuals within a social services setting.

#### **Outcome 3**

Explain ways to support the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of individuals in social services settings.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify ways that promote active participation when supporting the individual to communicate.
- (b) Explain the meaning of person-centred working and the importance of individuals' cultural and language context.
- (c) Explain ways to support the needs of the individual to be able to communicate their views, wishes and preferences.
- (d) Explain why it is important to give individuals enough time to communicate and to check that you and the individual have understood each other.

## National Unit specification: Statement of standards

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

### Outcome 4

Explain ways to apply principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings.

#### Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain ways to maintain confidentiality in social services settings.
- (b) Explain ways to deal with messages and pass on information.
- (c) Identify the legal requirements, policies and procedures for security and confidentiality of information.

#### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Written and/or oral evidence is required for all Outcomes and will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence can be generated using a range of techniques. An assessor observation checklist must be used to support performance evidence.

#### Outcome 1

Appropriate methods of assessment for Outcome 1 may include presentations with notes, PowerPoint, posters or the use of blogs.

To achieve Outcome 1 learners must provide evidence which shows that they can:

- ◆ explain the importance of clear communication with individuals in a social services setting.
- ◆ investigate **four** different communication methods.
- ◆ identify when and how to seek advice from others.

#### Outcome 2

An appropriate method of assessment for Outcome 2 may be a practical activity based on at least two case studies, contextualised to social services settings.

To achieve Outcome 2 learners must provide evidence to show that they can:

- ◆ identify **three** barriers to communication including physiological, cultural and environmental barriers.
- ◆ describe **one way** to use active listening and **one way to use** body language when communicating with people in a social services setting.
- ◆ identify **two** factors that can have a positive or negative effect on the way people communicate.
- ◆ explain **two ways** how to adapt the way you communicate to reduce barriers to communication.

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

### Unit title: Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

- ◆ explain **two** ways to give constructive feedback and encouragement to individuals within a social services setting.

#### Outcome 3

Appropriate methods of assessment for Outcome 3 may include presentations with notes, PowerPoint, posters or the use of blogs.

To achieve Outcome 3 learners must provide evidence which shows that they can:

- ◆ identify **two** ways that promote active participation when supporting the individual to communicate.
- ◆ explain the meaning of person-centred working and the importance of individuals' cultural and language context.
- ◆ explain **one way** to support the needs of the individual to be able to communicate their views, wishes and preferences.
- ◆ explain why it is important to give individuals enough time to communicate and to check that you and the individual have understood each other.

#### Outcome 4

An appropriate method of assessment for Outcome 4 may be the use of structured questions, based around case studies which are contextualised to a social service setting.

Evidence for Outcome 4 will be gathered under supervision at appropriate points in the Unit.

To achieve Outcome 4 learners must provide evidence which shows that they can:

- ◆ explain **three** reasons why employees should maintain confidentiality in a social services setting.
- ◆ explain **four** ways in which to deal with messages and information in a social services setting.
- ◆ explain **three** reasons why employers should maintain confidentiality in a social services setting.



## National Unit Support Notes

### Unit title: Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

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 a mandatory Unit of the NPA Social Services and Healthcare, but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The Unit is suitable for learners who have not previously studied aspects of social service or had experience in this sector.

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce learners to communication in care relationships. It includes the central importance of communication in social services settings, in particular the communication needs, wishes and preferences of individuals. It will enable learners to consider factors that might create barriers to communication, and ways in which barriers can be reduced. Learners will be introduced to the principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings.

### Outcome 1

This Outcome is intended to provide an introduction to the communication methods required to support users of social services settings. Learners should be made aware of the particular communication problems that some people can experience and the importance of seeking advice from others when needed.

### Communication methods

- ◆ verbal — and vocabulary used
- ◆ linguistic tone
- ◆ listening
- ◆ touch, eg holding or stroking someone's hand
- ◆ pitch
- ◆ non-verbal communication including eye contact
- ◆ touch
- ◆ physical gestures
- ◆ body language
- ◆ British sign language
- ◆ Makaton
- ◆ braille

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

- ◆ finger spelling
- ◆ pictures and symbols
- ◆ technological aids, eg minicom, telephone relay systems, TypeTalk
- ◆ human aids, eg interpreters, translators

Learners will investigate different methods of communication. It may be beneficial for learners to work in groups and share information although there must be evidence of the learners own work. Teachers/lecturers should ensure that learners understand that communication is the key to establishing and maintaining relationships.

### Outcome 2

This Outcome will enable learners to recognise and identify barriers to communication in care relationships and ways that those barriers can be reduced. Learners will learn that communication is an active process that involves listening, questioning, understanding and responding. Learners should be encouraged to consider that communication is not just about the words that are used, but also about the way we speak, listen, use of silence and about our body language.

### Barriers to Communication

- ◆ sensory impairment
- ◆ dialect
- ◆ use of jargon or language not appropriate to age/stage of development
- ◆ environmental factors eg noise, poor lighting
- ◆ attitudes
- ◆ effects of alcohol or drugs
- ◆ range of behaviours
- ◆ mental health problems
- ◆ learning disabilities
- ◆ health conditions such as dementia or anxiety
- ◆ lack of confidence

Learners should be made aware that some people may have difficulties with their sensory signals such as sound, touch and sight and can experience a sensory overload. Teachers/lecturer should encourage learners to consider the environment and different situations that individuals may struggle to cope with.

### Ways to reduce barriers to communication

- ◆ use of technological aids, human aids, eg interpreters, signers, translators
- ◆ using clear speech and appropriate vocabulary
- ◆ staff training
- ◆ improving the environment
- ◆ reducing distractions
- ◆ checking understanding
- ◆ sources of information and support

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

- ◆ speech and language services
- ◆ advocacy services
- ◆ third sector organisations, eg Action on Hearing Loss

Learners may be provided with case study scenarios contextualised to a social services setting. Evidence can be generated using a range of techniques including: presentation notes, posters, PowerPoint, use of blogs. As part of the learning and teaching, a range of scenarios could be devised demonstrating barriers to communication. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on ways those barriers could be reduced.

#### Outcome 3

This Outcome is intended to provide learners with the understanding of the communication and language needs and wishes of individuals. Learners will learn that without effective communication with people we cannot access their perspectives, understand their concerns, provide adequately for their needs or convey our respect for them.

#### Communication and language needs of individuals

- ◆ home language
- ◆ preferred method of communication
- ◆ sensory difficulties
- ◆ preferences based on beliefs, values, cultural variations, age, gender, additional learning needs, physical disabilities
- ◆ knowing when and how to seek advice
- ◆ awareness of barriers
- ◆ understanding own strengths and weaknesses relating to communication skills
- ◆ support from colleagues
- ◆ specialists, eg speech and language therapists, sign language specialists, occupational therapists
- ◆ role of carers in supporting a knowledge of preferred modes of communication

Learners will investigate **four** different methods of communication. It may be beneficial for learners to work in groups and share information although there must be evidence of the learners own work. Teachers/lecturers should ensure that learners understand that communication is the key to establishing and maintaining relationships.

#### Outcome 4

This Outcome is intended to introduce Learners to the principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings. The SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers and Employers set out standards that workers and employers must meet in order to provide high quality and safe care in the workplace.



## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

### Principles and practices of confidentiality in Social Service settings:

- ◆ current legislation, eg The Data Protection act 1998
- ◆ confidentiality in day-to-day communication
- ◆ confidentiality in different inter-personal situations
- ◆ dealing with personal or sensitive information about another adult or colleague
- ◆ policies and procedures in Social Services workplace settings
- ◆ types of information, eg paper-based, electronic, verbal, hearsay
- ◆ confidentiality relating to the collection, recording and storage of different types of information
- ◆ how and when to seek advice regarding confidentiality
- ◆ whistle- blowing
- ◆ importance of following procedures
- ◆ limitations of confidentiality, for example, when an individual may be at risk

Learners should be made aware of the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers and Employers. In particular, Teachers/Lecturers should encourage learners to reflect on what is meant by respecting confidential information. Teachers/Lecturers should ensure that learners understand the role of professionals and the sharing of confidential information. Teachers/Lecturers should ensure that learners understand the difference between what is fact, opinion and judgement.

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

A variety of approaches to delivery could be used, including:

**Case studies** (electronic, verbal, written or audio visual) including review of media information to illustrate and enable discussion relating to communication in care relationships.

**Group or individual project work** to explore different aspects of communication. For example learners could be encouraged to research third sector organisations using online and other resources, to support the development of primary and secondary research skills.

**Electronic, visual, PowerPoint, or other types of presentation** to provide information, encourage discussion and guide learning.

**Electronic practice simulation and/or practical activities** such as role play with scenarios contextualised to Social Services settings

**Discussions and blogs** to enable learners to share their experiences of different life events and transitions.

**Guest speakers** to share knowledge, provide information and encourage and facilitate discussion on communication in care relationships.

Please note it is not expected or anticipated that all of the above methods be used, and this is not an exhaustive list. Other approaches to delivery may also be used.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

**On-line learning** - such as available SSSC learning materials.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

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

Centres are reminded that prior SQA verification of centre devised assessments will help ensure that the national standard is met. Also where learners experience a range of assessment methods, it can help them to develop learning and presentation skills that could be transferrable to employment, further or higher education.

Assessments must be carried out under supervision. Assessment methods should reflect delivery methods and could include:

- ◆ **Case studies** (electronic, verbal, written or audio visual, or online) with associated questioning of different types to draw out evidence of knowledge and understanding relevant to communication in care relationships.
- ◆ **Group or individual projects** which may be presented on paper or electronically and are based on exploratory or investigative work, such as research into communication methods and how these methods may help break down barriers to communication in care relationships. Where group projects are undertaken, individual learner's evidence will be tracked and recorded by assessors.
- ◆ **Use of online resources/case studies, blogs** which illustrate communication in care relationships, barriers to communication and ways in which barriers can be reduced in Social Services settings.
- ◆ **Posters or leaflets** which may be presented on paper or electronically and have been designed by individuals or groups which illustrate aspects of relevant learning.
- ◆ **Presentations** prepared and delivered by individuals or groups of learners relevant to communication in care relationships. Evidence may be generated using a range of techniques such as: e-portfolio, presentation notes, posters, PowerPoint, blogs. Performance evidence will be based on observation of each individual's contribution, and in the case of group work, their ability to work co-operatively. An assessor observation record must be used to support the performance evidence.
- ◆ **Practical activities, electronic practice simulation** with scenarios contextualised to social service settings.

Please note that it is not expected or anticipated that all the above methods be used, and this is not an exhaustive list. Other approaches to assessment may also be used.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

### Outcomes 1 and 3

Evidence for Outcomes 1 and 3 will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence can be generated using a range of techniques including: e-portfolio presentation notes, posters, PowerPoint, electronic practice simulation and the use of blogs. Progress will be discussed with the teacher/lecturer at an appropriate point during the process to ensure that the notes are the learners own work. A record of the discussion must be retained. Learner's evidence (including verbal evidence) must always be recorded to enable learners to reflect on how they have achieved the standards and to support internal and external verification processes. Learners will investigate **four** different methods of communication and will show how these methods can support individuals to be able to communicate their views, wishes and preferences.

Where a presentation approach is used, it is recommended that learners might be expected to provide handouts for their peers and be prepared to respond to relevant questions. Non-verbal techniques will include use of eye contact, posture and gesture. A presentation given by an individual should last a minimum of five minutes and be followed by questions and answers. Small group presentations should last a minimum of ten minutes and be followed by questions and answers. The emphasis should be on gathering information in groups and the teacher/lecturer should support the group process and facilitate negotiation of the allocation of tasks within groups, ensuring that all members of the group contribute to the process.

An assessor observation record must be used to support performance evidence.

### Outcome 2

Evidence for Outcome 2 will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence can be generated using a range of techniques including practical activity such as a role play exercise, presentation notes, posters, PowerPoint, use of blogs. Progress will be discussed with the teacher/lecturer at an appropriate point during the process to ensure that the electronic, written and/or oral notes are the learners own work. A record of the discussion must be retained.

Learners will be provided with at least **two** electronic case study scenarios, contextualised to a Social Services setting, in which they can:

- ◆ reduce barriers to communication.
- ◆ use active listening and body language skills when communicating.
- ◆ adapt the communication to meet the needs of others.
- ◆ give constructive feedback and encouragement.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

### Outcome 4

Evidence for Outcome 4 may be generated using a variety of techniques. An appropriate method of assessment may be the use of structured questions, based on case studies which have been contextualised to a social services setting.

The assessment methods discussed for all Outcomes are for guidance purposes, as other methods may prove better suited to learners and the circumstances of assessment. Integration of assessment across the Outcomes and Performance Criteria may be used where this is considered appropriate and to enable holistic assessment.

The issues associated with plagiarism should be discussed with learners. Some written work might be undertaken outside the centre but clear conditions will always be in place to ensure authenticity of evidence. Retention of preparatory or draft work, and any tracking records or e-mail exchanges between learners and teachers/lecturers can help support quality assurance and the internal and external verification processes.

There should be no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Delivery and assessment will be open to the use of alternative methods to facilitate the inclusion of all learners, and support them towards achievement of this Unit. The nature of learners' needs should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative assessment instruments. Examples could include extensions to the time line for assessments, and use of supportive technology.

Any oral evidence should be recorded order to provide examples of standards for learners as well as to support internal and external verification procedures. If an observation record is used as evidence of competence, assessor notes should be detailed and comprehensive.

### Resources

Several relevant web based resources have been identified that may be useful for learners. These can be found on the SQA NPA Social Services and Healthcare web page.

Further resources and information for teachers, lecturers and learners can be accessed via SQA's Ushare site which provides links to open learning resources, including NQ Care.  
<http://ushare.education/Ushare/Home>

### 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).

## **National Unit Support Notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

### **Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills**

The skills that learners will be expected to develop through this Unit are consistent with the four capacities outlined in the Curriculum for Excellence, which are to enable each learner to be: a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor. Specific skills associated with this Unit are listed below and should be built into the learning opportunities where possible.

- 1 Verbal, and written communication
- 2 Information and Communication Technology
- 3 Citizenship
- 4 Employability
- 5 Analysis and evaluation
- 6 Application of learning to practical situations

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for learners

### Unit title: Communication in Care Relationships (SCQF level 6)

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.

This Unit is a mandatory part of the National Progression Award Social Services and Healthcare. The Unit is suitable for you even if you have not previously studied aspects of social service or had practical experience in this sector and it could lead you towards employment in social services, or further study.

The purpose of this Unit is to give you an introduction to communication in care relationships. It will introduce you to the central importance of communication in a range of social services settings. It will enable you to consider factors that might create barriers to communication, and ways in which barriers can be reduced. You will be introduced to the principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings.

You will have the opportunity to practice positive and meaningful communication in your class group. You will consider verbal and non-verbal communication with an emphasis on active listening, asking questions and the use of silence. You will be encouraged to demonstrate good interpersonal skills, kindness and sensitivity when working with others.

There are four learning Outcomes for this Unit:

- 1 Investigate different methods of communication in care relationships.
- 2 Explain methods to reduce barriers to communication in care relationships.
- 3 Explain ways to support the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of individuals in social services settings.
- 4 Explain ways to apply principles and practices of confidentiality in social services settings.

The assessments for this Unit may involve presentations, practical activities and written and/or oral questions. The submission of these assessment materials will help improve your learning, inter-personal and communication skills.

The skills that you will develop through this Unit are consistent with the four capacities outlined in the Curriculum for Excellence, which are to enable each learner to be: a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.