



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees (SCQF Level 6)

Unit code: H1MM 12

Superclass: PN

Publication date: June 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Summary

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to how committees can be established within a local community and how these committees may operate. Candidates will also have an opportunity to explore the roles and responsibilities of local community members and consider the benefits to be gained from participation with a local committee

Outcomes

- 1 Describe the process of establishing and operating a local committee.
- 2 Identify roles and responsibilities of local committee members.
- 3 Describe the benefits of participating in a local committee.

Recommended entry

Entry is at the discretion of the centre; however a good standard of communication skills would be desirable. It would also be beneficial for candidates to have some experience of working with community groups, or knowledge of community initiatives that involve local committees.

Credit points and level

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

**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 (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees

Core Skills

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

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

National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees
(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

Describe the process of establishing and operating a local committee.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term 'committee' in a local community context.
- (b) Explain what a constitution is and its importance in the establishment and operation of a committee.

Outcome 2

Identify roles and responsibilities of local committee members.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify and describe the roles and responsibilities of office bearers and ordinary committee members.
- (b) Describe roles that a community worker may take on in a local committee.
- (c) Describe how to develop the skills of a local committee.

Outcome 3

Describe the benefits of participating in a local committee.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe benefits people in local communities can gain from committee membership.
- (b) Describe benefits communities can gain from the existence of local committees.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees
(SCQF Level 6)

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

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

Evidence is required of the candidate's understanding of the term 'committee' in a community based context. Candidates will also describe the role and importance of constitutions in the establishment of committees.

Candidates will explain the roles and responsibilities of committee members and explain how to develop the skills of committee members to enable them to carry out their roles more effectively.

Candidates will be expected to describe the benefits of participation in committees to individuals and also explain how communities can benefit from active local committees.

Evidence will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence should be gathered in an individual portfolio of evidence which could include a combination of short answer questions, assignments or case studies.

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees (SCQF Level 6)

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

Outcome 1

What is a local committee?

A committee in a local community context usually consists of a group of people, usually of 3–12 members, who take on the responsibility of managing a local voluntary or community organisation or enterprise. This could include committees set up for the management of:

- ◆ a local building with staff such as a community centre or a church hall
- ◆ a local resource such as an afterschool club
- ◆ a local community support initiative such as a Citizens' Advice Bureau
- ◆ a youth club
- ◆ a local drop-in centre for adult learners

What is a constitution?

Most committees need a constitution. This is a written document which sets out the rules that govern the organisation. A constitution is an important document for local committees because it:

- ◆ states aims and objectives of the organisation
- ◆ outlines the rules for running the meetings
- ◆ highlights the process for making decisions
- ◆ describes the procedures for changing or closing an organisation
- ◆ is usually required when organisations such as youth committees are seeking external funding, eg local grants

A constitution needs to be formally adopted by the committee. This usually involves calling a meeting of everyone who has been involved in the group-to-date, and giving everyone a chance to raise any questions they may have. To adopt the constitution, it needs to be signed and dated by two people currently involved in the group. If an informal committee has already been formed with Office Bearers then the Office Bearers should sign the constitution.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees
(SCQF Level 6)

A Committee/Management Committee (an unincorporated organisation)

Some very informal local committees exist without a legal framework but the majority have a Committee/Management Committee (an unincorporated organisation).

Unincorporated means that the organisation does not have a legal identity separate from the people who run it. The committee members are personally responsible for all the activities, contracts, debts, etc. Most community organisations start off with this legal structure for their committees because they are not required by law to register anywhere or seek approval before starting up and they don't need to inform anyone other than their members about their activities.

A Board of Directors (A Company Limited by Guarantee — incorporated)

Incorporated means that the organisation becomes a Limited Company with a Board of Directors and can take on contracts and buy or lease property and owe money without committee members necessarily being liable.

Most established community groups opt for this legal structure for their committees because member financial liability can be limited to an amount they have guaranteed (usually £1) Profits earned must be reinvested in the organisation.

A Board of Trustees (a registered charity)

Both unincorporated and incorporated organisations can become charities if their aims and objectives relate to one of the following:

- ◆ the relief of poverty
- ◆ the advancement of religion
- ◆ the advancement of education
- ◆ other purposes beneficial to the community

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees (SCQF Level 6)

Outcome 2

What are the roles and responsibilities of local committee members?

As well as having ordinary committee member positions, most committees also have Office Bearer positions which come with specific duties.

Office bearer duties may vary according to the size of the organisation. The main Office Bearer positions are:

Chair (assists with the managerial direction of the committee, plans and conducts meetings and acts as spokesperson for the committee)

In a small committee made up of volunteers or unpaid members such as a Residents' Association, the Chair might be more 'hands on' and manage things on a day-to-day basis.

In a larger committee with a remit to support paid staff such as a Community Hall Committee, the Chair's role might be to support the Manager, and not to get involved in day-to-day work.

Treasurer (ensures correct financial procedures are in place and followed, reports on financial matters and keeps and keeps an overview of the finances of the committee)

Secretary (takes and circulates Minutes, draws up agendas and gathers reports from members)

Ordinary Members

When local people are establishing and participating in a committee either as office bearers or ordinary members their roles and responsibilities can involve consideration of a range of issues such as:

- ◆ Where is the need for the committee coming from?
- ◆ Do similar committees exist?
- ◆ What is the purpose of the committee?
- ◆ Who should be involved?
- ◆ How can these people be included effectively?
- ◆ Are goals clear and realistic?
- ◆ Do timescales need to be set?
- ◆ How regular will the meetings be?
- ◆ What resources will be required (including funding, accommodation, etc)?
- ◆ How will decisions be made?
- ◆ What is the procedure for allocating members' roles and responsibilities?
- ◆ How can the committee bring on new members?
- ◆ How will it establish the ground rules?
- ◆ How will it ensure it adheres to its plans?

The answers to most of the above questions can form the basis of a Constitution.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees (SCQF Level 6)

Research has shown that roles that committee members take on can be divided into 2 main categories and these roles can be interchangeable:

Task Roles

- ◆ The Initiator — someone who comes up with ideas
- ◆ The Clarifier — helps the committee to see the bigger picture
- ◆ The Information Giver — provides information on how to get things done
- ◆ The Questioner — asks why the committee is taking certain actions

Maintenance Roles

- ◆ The Supporter — creates a good positive atmosphere
- ◆ The Joker — provides a light hearted atmosphere
- ◆ The Sharer — shares personal feelings about direction of committee
- ◆ The Observer — comments generally on how the group is progressing

How can a community worker assist a committee?

Community workers are sometimes charged with assisting local groups to establish committees. This can involve working with them to establish exactly what it is the group is trying to achieve and assisting the group to formalise their ideas with a written document called a constitution. Constitutions usually contain the following headings:

- ◆ Name of Organisation/Committee
- ◆ Aims and Objective — why it has been set up
- ◆ Membership Rules — who can join
- ◆ Election of Officers and Committee Members — how and when this happens
- ◆ Finance; how funds will be managed
- ◆ Annual General Meeting — when this will take place and reasons
- ◆ Amendments to the Constitution — how and when to change the rules
- ◆ Dissolution rules for dissolving the committee, eg votes required; timescales

A community worker as a member of a committee may take on additional roles such as:

- ◆ Opinion seeker — finds out/ask for members' opinions
- ◆ Encourager — facilitates communication by making others feel their contribution is worthwhile
- ◆ Commentator — brings committee's attention to ideas and suggestions
- ◆ Benchmarker — analyses progress towards goals
- ◆ Conciliator — relieves tensions and encourage group cohesion
- ◆ Good listener — listens and comment constructively

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees
(SCQF Level 6)

How can a community worker develop the skills of a local committee?

A community worker can offer to run a skills development programme for a local committee. When organising this it is important to establish what skills are there already and how they can be put to good use. Skills gaps can then be filled with a training programme to include skill areas such as:

- ◆ Minute taking
- ◆ Budgeting
- ◆ Financial Management
- ◆ Fundraising
- ◆ People Management
- ◆ Employment Law and Legal Responsibilities
- ◆ Project Management
- ◆ Committee Terminology
- ◆ Public Speaking
- ◆ Networking
- ◆ Teamwork
- ◆ IT skills

Outcome 3

How can community members benefit from taking part in a local committee?

Community members taking part in a local committee can acquire beneficial knowledge and skills in areas such as:

- ◆ Project management
- ◆ Budgeting/financial management
- ◆ Fundraising
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Communication/Marketing
- ◆ Interviewing skills/Staff Supervision
- ◆ Employment law
- ◆ Event management
- ◆ Community engagement
- ◆ Advocacy and networking
- ◆ IT skills

How can communities benefit from the existence of a local committee?

A local committee can offer a community:

- ◆ a platform where local issues can be identified and addressed
- ◆ the prospect of greater access to funding and resources for their area
- ◆ a structure for fundraising for and staging local events
- ◆ channels for consultation on and involvement in new local developments

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees
(SCQF Level 6)

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

A balance between tutor presentation and a candidate centred approach should be adopted throughout this Unit. This could be complemented by:

- ◆ small group discussions
- ◆ input from guest speakers such as members of local committees or people who are employed by and responsible to a local committee
- ◆ visits by candidates to observe local committees and see first hand how they operate
- ◆ self-directed learning as candidates will be required to work independently to obtain information on local committees from a range of external sources
- ◆ case Studies
- ◆ use of internet and professional journals.

The following links may also be helpful:

www.diycommitteeguide.org

www.csv.org.uk/Scotland

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

The evidence will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit with candidates having access to relevant learning and teaching materials.

The evidence should be gathered in an individual folio of evidence which could include the following information:

Outcome 1

An appropriate instrument of assessment would be a series of restricted response questions or a case study totalling no more than 500 words which will ascertain the candidate's understanding of:

- ◆ the term 'committee' in a local community context
- ◆ what a constitution is and why it is important in the establishment of a local committee

Outcome 2

An appropriate instrument of assessment would be an extended response of no more than 500 words in which the candidate will:

- ◆ identify and describe three main roles and their responsibilities within a local committee
- ◆ describe three ways in which a community worker can help a local committee
- ◆ compile a list containing five new skill areas that a local committee may need and how to develop these

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees (SCQF Level 6)

Outcome 3

An appropriate instrument of assessment would be the candidate's compilation of information (totalling no more than 500 words) for an advert for a local newspaper seeking members for a local committee. The advert should describe:

- ◆ five benefits to individuals to be gained from committee membership
- ◆ three ways in which the community may benefit from active local committees

Opportunities for the use of 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 candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills for this Unit. However, there are opportunities to develop aspects of all five Core Skills as follows:

By undertaking this Unit candidates will:

Communicate with other people by:

- ◆ listening and observing effectively
- ◆ speaking so others can understand
- ◆ reading and understanding what they are reading
- ◆ expressing information, ideas and feelings in writing

Solve problems and make decisions by:

- ◆ finding out about local committees
- ◆ thinking about a range of possible issues that local committees need to address
- ◆ deciding on the best solution or actions to take in a particular situation

Work with other people by:

- ◆ negotiating with other people
- ◆ resolving differences
- ◆ cooperating with other people
- ◆ reflecting and learning from experiences

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Communities: Understanding Committees
(SCQF Level 6)

Use ICT to:

- ◆ gather and manage information
- ◆ word process, eg devise questionnaires and reports

Use number skills when:

- ◆ understanding funding mechanisms for local committees
- ◆ presenting information about local committees in number form
- ◆ considering financial implications of running a local committee

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.