



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Unit code: F5BN 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to provide candidates with a range of knowledge and skills relating to legislation and policy issues which are essential in ensuring the highest standards of professional practice in a childhood practice or social services setting. The Unit is designed for candidates who are developing skills beyond that of practitioner level in their particular field of practice. To enable candidates to complete this Unit they should be employed in an appropriate job role, in a placement setting or have relevant and recent experience of an appropriate sector.

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

- ◆ evaluate and contribute to formulation of policy in relation to professional role
- ◆ demonstrate understanding of application of legislation relevant to professional context
- ◆ demonstrate professional competence with regard to protection issues

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have good communication skills, both written and oral, preferably through achievement of Higher English or a Communication Unit at SCQF level 6. Ideally the candidate should have achieved a relevant qualification equivalent to SCQF level 7 to ensure they have the underpinning knowledge to work at SCQF level 8. Exemplary candidates may still be considered through the completion of a pre-course interview part of which could take the form of a written assignment. The skills to undertake this Unit could also be demonstrated through an employer's reference or the process of application and interview in the absence of certificated learning.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop Core Skills and Core Skill components of *Communication* — Oral Communication and Written Communication (writing and reading) at SCQF level 6 and *Working with Others* as SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

General information for centres (cont)

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.

If being taught as part of the HND Childhood Practice or HND Social Services Group Awards, it is recommended that this Unit be delivered after *Applied Psychology* and *Applied Sociology*, by which time candidates should have a good appreciation of psychological and sociological theory and approaches as applied to professional practice.

Assessment: It is expected that this Unit will be undertaken as part of an integrated award and that delivery and assessment will be carried out in a manner which is integrated with other relevant Units. Guidance on the integrated delivery and assessment for the Group Awards that this Unit forms can be found in the respective Arrangement Documents.

If delivered on a standalone basis the Outcomes within this Unit could be assessed holistically by a single instrument of assessment that requires candidates to produce a report and answer questions based on a case study or on their work place experience (depending on the current situation of the candidates and their prior experience). If need be, it would also be possible to break this assessment down into four separate assessment events that assess each Outcome separately.

Should it be necessary to assess learning from this Unit alone, it would be necessary to do so in a manner which evidences the candidate's application of learning within a real work context in order to make an assessment of actual practice. This might be achieved by a number of different assessment methods, which should contain elements demonstrating how the candidate uses theoretical constructs to inform practice. It should also be verified by a senior practitioner or manager from the candidate's workplace to ensure authenticity.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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

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

Evaluate and contribute to formulation of policy in relation to professional role

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Construction of social policy and legislation, the political processes involved and the different levels where this takes place, eg local, Scottish and UK Government levels and also within European and International contexts
- ◆ Pressure Groups and their influence
- ◆ Current policy, legislation and consultation issues in relation to specific professional role
- ◆ Involvement of self and others in forums which are concerned with consultation and formulation of policy
- ◆ Issues relating to diversity, inequality and discrimination and their impact on practice

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate an understanding of the political processes which determine and influence social policy initiatives by providing an analysis and timeline of one recent policy initiative related to specific area of your professional practice
- ◆ analyse effects of three selected current policy initiatives and related legislation on delivery of services within your professional context and occurring at different levels such as local, Scottish and UK Government and European and International contexts
- ◆ demonstrate involvement of self and others by contributing to consultation, formulation and application of policy and evaluate the impact of such contributions
- ◆ analyse the effects of inequality and discrimination in relation to outcomes of current policies and legislation

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Assessment Guidelines

It is recommended that this Outcome be assessed in an integrated fashion along with related Outcomes from this and other Units from the Group Award in which it belongs, eg HND Childhood Practice or HND Social Services. Please see guidance on integrated and holistic approaches to assessment contained within the Arrangements Documents for each respective Group Award.

If undertaking this Unit on a standalone basis, this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 2 and 3 and assessed holistically. Candidates could produce a report and answer questions based on a case study or on their work place experience (depending on the current situation of the candidates and their prior experience). It would also be possible to break this assessment down into four separate assessment events that assess each Outcome separately.

Outcome 2

Demonstrate understanding of application of legislation relevant to professional context

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ General legislation relevant to professional role in childhood practice or social services provision
- ◆ Current specific legislation underpinning and relevant to particular professional role in childhood practice or social services provision
- ◆ Statutory elements of professional role in childhood practice or social services provision
- ◆ Application of professional codes of practice in childhood practice or social services provision

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate a broad knowledge of the scope and application of current legislation which underpins professional role by analysing effects on work practice
- ◆ analyse application of three pieces of current legislation which is specific to professional context
- ◆ evaluate effectiveness of statutory elements of professional role in relation to practice
- ◆ evaluate application of professional codes of practice

Assessment Guidelines

It is recommended that this Outcome be assessed in an integrated fashion along with related Outcomes from this and other Units from the Group Award in which it belongs, eg HND Childhood Practice or HND Social Services. Please see guidance on integrated and holistic approaches to assessment contained within the Arrangements Documents for each respective Group Award.

If undertaking this Unit on a standalone basis, this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 1 and 3 and assessed holistically. Candidates could produce a report and answer questions based on a case study or on their work place experience (depending on the current situation of the candidates and their prior experience). It would also be possible to break this assessment down into four separate assessment events that assess each Outcome separately.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Outcome 3

Demonstrate professional competence with regard to protection issues

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Key Capabilities in Child Care and Protection
- ◆ Protection and risk issues specific to professional role
- ◆ Relevant core theories and current research in relation to protection issues
- ◆ Organisational policies and procedures concerned with protection issues and risk management
- ◆ Professional boundaries and joint approaches
- ◆ Approaches to supporting individuals in regard to protection and diversity issues

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate key capabilities in child care and protection in professional role by analysis of case study from practice or use of a hypothetical study if this is out with area of specific professional practice
- ◆ demonstrate understanding of protection issues specific to professional role by evaluating two relevant core theories and two pieces of current research
- ◆ critically evaluate the application of a minimum of two organisational policies and procedures relating to protection and risk management, paying particular attention to working across professional boundaries and joint approaches
- ◆ evaluate the effectiveness of a minimum of two procedures or protocols in promoting the rights, responsibilities, equality and respect for diversity of individuals/children and/or young people with regard to care and protection issues

Assessment Guidelines

It is recommended that this Outcome be assessed in an integrated fashion along with related Outcomes from this and other Units from the Group Award in which it belongs, eg HND Childhood Practice or HND Social Services. Please see guidance on integrated and holistic approaches to assessment contained within the Arrangements Documents for each respective Group Award.

If undertaking this Unit on a standalone basis, this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 1 and 2 and assessed holistically. Candidates could produce a report and answer questions based on a case study or on their work place experience (depending on the current situation of the candidates and their prior experience). It would also be possible to break this assessment down into four separate assessment events that assess each Outcome separately.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F5BN 35

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services:
Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Superclass category: PM

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

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 to enable candidates to develop their knowledge about legislative, policy and protection issues in their professional role and develop skills in analysing and applying professional practice. It focuses on the three main areas, policy, legislation and protection issues.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to make critical evaluations of social policy relating to their professional role. They should have participated directly in a relevant policy making forum and evaluated their contribution. They will acquire a sophisticated knowledge of legislation relating to their professional role and will gain a critical understanding of protection issues. In addition they will gain a sophisticated understanding of Key Capabilities in Child Care and Protection. They will also be able to analyse the effectiveness of their organisation's risk and protection strategies and procedures. The knowledge and skills taught in this Unit will assist candidates to develop their professional practice and understand their own role in relation to other related professions and local, national and international legislation and policies.

It is envisaged that this Unit will be delivered as part of the HND Childhood Practice or HND Social Services. However it may be delivered on a standalone basis for purposes of CPD. Indeed, there may be significant advantages in delivering this Unit to mixed groups of candidates from both awards, as the recognition of commonalities of practice and opportunities to work across professional boundaries in a learning situation could have significant impact on reducing obstacles to effective working between agencies and professions in practice. The Unit is written in a way which allows the content to be delivered in both contexts and there is an expectation that candidates doing either of the awards will be guided to specific relevant material as outlined in these support notes.

It is also recognised that the Unit will be undertaken by candidates from a very wide spectrum of professional roles within both fields of childhood practice and social services, therefore the Evidence Requirements have had to be framed in general terms. It is expected that class tutors will be able to use their knowledge of the various professional roles to help candidates contextualise the specific requirements to their particular field of work.

Outcome 1

This Outcome is intended to enable candidates to understand, evaluate and participate in the process of formulating policy in relation to their professional role. Candidates should be encouraged at an early stage to identify forums where they will be able to either directly contribute to, or support others to contribute to the consultation or review process of social policy or legislation. There are a substantial number of such forums which are run by user groups, pressure groups, media sources, professional bodies or Scottish Government. It is expected that the candidate would consult with class tutor as to suitability of selected forum. There are enough such sites to ensure that there would be no need for any form of simulation.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Candidates may have existing awareness of social policy basics from previous learning, but this can't always be assumed and it may be necessary for them to cover some basic introductory material before moving on to examine the complexities of current policies.

Candidates are required to develop a fairly sophisticated understanding of how policy and legislation in their professional area is formulated and influenced. They will learn much about this area by direct participation as outlined above, but will also be required to learn about the wide mechanisms which exist at various local, national and indeed, international levels. They should be encouraged to build their knowledge base of current political processes and viewpoints from a basis of understanding that the work they do is in many ways influenced by such processes but also that they have the ability to influence these in turn.

An excellent method of building such knowledge is by direct contact with politicians and policy makers and an opportunity to listen to such individuals representing different perspectives would be invaluable. This could be achieved by listening to and questioning invited speakers or indeed, an organised visit to meet such individuals in local or national government in their own location, which is generally easy to organise (especially at Scottish Government level).

It is expected that candidates will be assisted to develop a sophisticated level of understanding of current policy as it affects the delivery of services within their professional area which will include the ability to examine effects of projected changes. They should also be able to analyse the effects of inequality and discrimination in delivery and uptake of services. They should also be assisted in developing an understanding of factors which determine the direction of policy, such as demographic or political factors.

Candidates should be directed towards all major general policy initiatives which may have a direct or indirect effect in their area of professional practice. They will also be required to develop a detailed understanding of current and major previous policy initiatives in their specialised area of practice.

Examples of such general policy initiatives in the area of social services might include *Changing Lives (Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review)* or *National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland*. More specific initiatives might include: *The Same as You* or *National Occupational Standards* specific to professional area of practice such as in older people's services, mental health and housing support.

Examples of such general policy initiatives in the area of childhood practice might include: *Early Years and Early Intervention Framework* or *the Standard for Childhood Practice*. Examples of more specialised initiatives might include study of specific standards and documents related to area of practice.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Outcome 2

This Outcome is intended to enable candidates to develop a sophisticated knowledge of general and specific legislation relating to their role. In addition they will become familiar with the process and procedures involved in the application of legislation and also be able to make critical judgements about the effectiveness or otherwise of such. They will also be required to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of professional codes of practice and to evaluate effects of these on practice, particularly their usefulness in helping to resolve practice dilemmas. They will also be required to become fully conversant with any statutory elements of their professional role.

Candidates should be directed towards the many resources which are now available on-line which allow them to download free and current copies of all legislation. They should also be directed towards relevant guides to the interpretation and application of such legislation.

Most candidates should have a reasonable overview of legislation relating to their field of practice and may also have some practical experience of legal processes or requirements. It is expected that this knowledge be built on in this Outcome to enable them to demonstrate a thorough and sophisticated understanding of the application and consequences of legislation. The need for accuracy and attention to detail when dealing with matters relating to legislative processes cannot be overstated. Candidates should be informed of the high possibility of being required to appear in a court situation and justify actions and statements.

Use should be made of case studies which demonstrate how law is applied in real life situations. It may also be useful to present candidates with scenarios for interpretation.

Outcome 3

All candidates are required to demonstrate competence in the Key Capabilities in Child Care and Protection across the four headings below at SCQF level 8 as determined in documentation.

- 1 Effective Communication.
- 2 Knowledge and Understanding.
- 3 Professional Confidence and Competence.
- 4 Values and Ethical Practice.

This is in line with Scottish Government recommendations and should be undertaken by all candidates irrespective of area of professional practice. In addition to this, candidates should also demonstrate an equivalent understanding of protection issues specific to their professional role.

There is a substantial amount of teaching and learning material already in existence for Key Capabilities in Child Care and Protection which class tutors should make use of. For those candidates whose professional role means they work exclusively with children it is expected that they should have a sound working knowledge of issues across other fields.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

In addition to above, candidates are then expected to examine and evaluate protection issues specific to their professional role and area of practice. It is envisaged that study of Key Capabilities will serve as delivery vehicle covering protection issues with regard to children and young people and candidates will build on this by study of material relating to their specific role. This will involve them in examination and analysis of two pieces of valid and current, relevant research and research and two relevant theories drawn from psychological or sociological approaches.

Candidates will then be asked to evaluate two different organisational policies relating to protection and risk management with special regard to work which occurs across professional and organisational boundaries. Use should be made of the substantial body of material which has been produced by inquiry reports. Candidates will then carry out an evaluation of the effectiveness of two procedures or protocols in promoting individual rights, responsibilities and respect for diversity in connection with protection issues. It is acceptable to use the policies identified in the first part of this paragraph to cover this.

Useful Sources

<http://www.socialworkscotland.org.uk/> — this site provides access to a range of resources which allow the candidate to keep up to date with the very latest professional developments

The Standards for Childhood Practice The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2007

Social Work and the Law in Scotland, Baillie, D, (editor), Open University

Social Work: Themes, Issues and Critical Debates (2nd Edition), Adams, Dominelli, Payne (editors)

Social Work: Preparing for Practice, Thomson, N MacMillan Press

Ethics and Values in Social Work, Banks, S, Palgrave MacMillan

<http://www.socialworkscotland.org.uk/> — this site provides access to a range of resources which allow the candidate to keep up to date with the very latest professional developments

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/about> — this link provides access to the Office of Public Sector Administration and from there access to the full text of all Scottish legislation. It also serves as a portal for access to all UK legislation.

<http://www.iriss.ac.uk/learnx> — this link takes you to the excellent Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services and Learning Exchange site. This allows you to access and download first class learning materials from a huge library of resources in a variety of different formats including podcast and video material.

<http://www.iriss.ac.uk/conference/girfec> — provides direct access to material in a range of formats from the Conference: ‘Getting it Right for Every Child: Childhood, Citizenship and Children’s Services’, Glasgow, 24-26 September 2008

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

Adams, Dominelli, Payne (editors), (2002) *Social Work: Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*, Palgrave MacMillan

Baillie, D, (editor) (2003), *Social Work and the Law in Scotland*, Palgrave MacMillan

Banks, S, (2006) *Ethics and Values in Social Work*, Palgrave MacMillan

Clark. M (2007) *Early Childhood Education and Care: Policy and Practice* Sage Publications

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Every Child Matters: Changes for Children* DfES Publications, Nottingham

Ilse-Buck & Newstead (2003) *Essential Skills for Managers of Child-Centred Settings*, London David Fulton

Scottish Executive (2006) *Investing in Children's Futures: National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh

Scottish Executive (2005) *Getting it Right for Every Child*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh

Scottish Government (2008) *Early Years and Early Intervention: A joint Scottish Government and COSLA policy statement*, Scottish Government, Edinburgh

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2007) *The Standards for Childhood Practice*

Thomson, N (2005) *Social Work: Preparing for Practice*, MacMillan Press

Zwozdiak- Myers P. (2007) *Childhood and Youth Studies* Learning Matters Ltd

Possible Links to Other Units in Group Awards

This Unit is linked to all other mandatory Units in the Group Awards HND Childhood Practice and HND Social Services.

Links to other Group Awards

This Unit may supply considerable underpinning knowledge for SVQ level 4 Leadership and Management Award for Care Services (G8W8 24).

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit forms part of the Group Awards, HND Childhood Practice and HND Social Services. However, it can also be delivered as a stand alone Unit.

To lessen assessment burden for candidates it is recommended that a holistic approach to assessment and delivery should be undertaken.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice and Social Services: Legislative, Policy and Protection Contexts

In order to achieve this Unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the knowledge and skills requirements for each Outcome.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop Core Skills and Core Skill components of *Communication* — Oral Communication and Written Communication (writing and reading) at SCQF level 6 and *Working with Others* as SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Communication — This could be developed by individual or group presentations. Written communication will be developed as a substantial amount of written work will be undertaken for this Unit.

Working with Others — This could be developed by working in group settings and undertaking formative and summative work when candidates may participate in preparing for and undertaking individual and/or group presentations.

Open learning

This Unit is suitable for Open Learning, provided there is authentication of the candidate's evidence. However it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that assessment of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 is assessed by an appropriate supervisor.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

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On completion of the Unit you will be able to make critical evaluations of social policy relating to your professional role. You will have participated directly in a relevant policy making forum and evaluated your contribution. You will gain a sophisticated knowledge of legislation relating to your professional role and will develop a critical understanding of protection issues. In addition you will gain a sophisticated understanding of Key Capabilities in Child Care and Protection. On completion of this Unit you will also be able to analyse the effectiveness of your organisation's risk and protection strategies and procedures.

The knowledge and skills you gain in this Unit will assist and develop your professional practice and understanding of your own role in relation to other related professions and local, national and international legislation and policies.

To enable you to complete this Unit you should be employed in an appropriate job role, in a placement setting or have relevant and recent experience of an appropriate sector, which will allow you to reflect upon your practice.

You may be given the opportunity to develop the Core Skills and the Core Skills components of *Communication* and *Working with Others* to SCQF level 6, although these will not be certificated

You may find that the assessment of this Unit may be integrated with other related Units from the HND Childhood Practice or HND Social Services Group Awards. Alternatively, the Unit may be assessed on a stand alone basis. Assessment methods will be decided by your lecturer following SQA guidance.

Below is a list of useful resources/publications you may find of use while undertaking this Unit. Please note the most recent publication should be referred to at all times.

Useful Sources

<http://www.socialworkscotland.org.uk/> — this site provides access to a range of resources which allow the candidate to keep up to date with the very latest professional developments.

The Standards for Childhood Practice The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2007

Social Work and the Law in Scotland, Baillie, D, (editor), Open University

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General information for candidates (cont)

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