



Group Award Specification for:

**Professional Development Award (PDA) for
Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members**

Group Award Code: GH80 47

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to:

- Assist centres to implement, deliver and manage the qualification.
- Provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification.
- Inform course managers teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers and higher education institutes (HEIs) of the aims and purpose of the qualification.
- Provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities.

1.1 General

This validation proposal is for the new group award:

The Professional Development Award for Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members at SCQF level 7.

This new award has been designed to provide a certificated qualification to improve practice and continuous development for individuals appointed as members of the National Children's Panel in Scotland.

The award will equip learners with the knowledge and skills required to effectively deliver their duties and responsibilities in this role to ensure that the best interests of the child are served.

The proposed title meets the requirements of the award, it describes who it is for and sets the level of achievement identified by the SCQF.

Following approval by SQA of the product development business case for this PDA, a Qualification Design Team (QDT) was assembled to design an award that will meet the needs of the National Children's Panel in the delivery of its duties and responsibilities.

The QDT contained a serving panel member with additional leadership responsibilities, educationalists, one of whom is a former member of a Children's Panel Advisory Committee (CPAC) and now an Area Support Team (AST) member, a representative from the Scottish Social Services Council, the Director of Panel and Area Support, and the Practice and Policy Officer for Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS).

The QDT also included membership that could advise on relevant national occupational standards, and project management to ensure completion of the award design to agreed timescales.

QDT team members were available throughout the design process to provide advice on the structure and content of the PDA and ensure consistency and alignment to the good practice set out in the Guidance Document.

1.2 History of development

Background to the development began with the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 which came into force on 24 June 2013. The Act introduced significant changes to the Children's Hearings System. The Act revised the legal framework at every stage and introduced some completely new provisions.

The 2011 Act aims to:

- strengthen the place of children
- deliver better support to children
- deliver better support to panel members
- ensure national consistency
- modernise processes

The Children's Hearings System is Scotland's unique, integrated approach to child care and justice for children and young people in need or at risk. The ethos and principles of the system were set out in the Kilbrandon Committee's report which was published in 1964: children and young people who offend and those who require care and protection are equally deserving to be considered as children in need and the welfare of the child is paramount.

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is the national public body that administers children's hearings and manages the network of children's hearings centres throughout Scotland. Children are referred to the Children's Reporter from a number of sources, most commonly the police and social work, but other agencies such as health or education can make a referral, as well as any member of the public or a child or young person themselves.

The Children's Reporter investigates each referral before deciding what action, if any, is necessary in the child's best interests. If the Children's Reporter considers that there is enough evidence to support the reasons for referral and that a compulsory supervision order is needed, they must arrange a children's hearing.

A children's hearing is a lay tribunal of three members, who are members of the largest tribunal in Scotland — the National Children's Panel.

The hearing considers and makes decisions on the welfare of the child or young person before them, taking into account all the circumstances, including any offending behaviour. There are a range of measures a children's hearing can include within any Compulsory Supervision Order the hearing makes.

The 2011 Act resulted in significant structural change for the 2,700 lay people who serve as children's panel members in Scotland, through the creation of the National Children's Panel which replaced the previous 32 Scottish Local Authority Panels and the ways in which panel members are recruited, trained and supported in their role.

The Act created the role of National Convener and established CHS, giving panel members a figurehead and their own national body for the first time to support the carrying out of the National Convener functions.

The previous CPACs were replaced by 22 Area Support Teams, consisting of trained volunteers appointed by the National Convener to undertake delegated functions on her behalf. Local Authority clerking staff support the ASTs at local level.

Further information on the work of Children's Hearings Scotland can be found at: **Children's Hearings Scotland** (www.chscotland.gov.uk).

1.3 Development of award

In June 2012 CHS published The National Standards for the Children's Panel. This document consists of eight national standards which provide a clear framework for panel members and AST members in their practice.

The standards apply to panel members, Area Support Teams, the National Convener and everyone at CHS. The standards set out a series of commitments to panel members and AST members from the National Convener and CHS, and a range of expectations of panel members and AST members in fulfilling their duties.

Whilst panel members give their time to serve as lay tribunal members, (the role is not remunerated) panel membership is a public duty and panel members have considerable responsibilities in that their decision making powers are far reaching and include the power to issue orders that remove children from the care of their families or result in loss of liberty in secure care placements.

All panel members are therefore put through an intense training programme incorporating leadership, teamwork, effective communication, analytical thinking, decision making, influencing and negotiating skills. Prior to sitting on a children's hearing, panel members must develop and demonstrate these skills and their understanding and knowledge of the procedure and legal duties of the children's hearing.

The organisation and delivery of core panel member training is the responsibility of the National Convener and CHS as the power to determine and provide training rests with the National Convener.

CHS consulted with the panel community (panel members, AST members and others) during early 2012 in relation to the draft national standards and a significant number of requests for accredited training were raised during this process.

In January 2012 CHS held discussions with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and commissioned an audit of pre-service and panel member training to take place between March and May to review the previous arrangements for panel member training and recommend options for the National Convener to consider.

The options report completed by SSSC recommended that a national training curriculum be developed and that core elements (the pre-service and management of hearings training) would lead to a nationally recognised qualification. This will instill confidence in panel members, children and young people, parents and employers. CHS is committed to engaging with employers, ensuring that the value of the significant skills that panel members develop in training and in practice and can bring into the workplace, are recognised.

The principles that underpin the Children's Hearings System do not stand alone. They require a sound framework of law, social policies and professional skills. These processes need to be supported and enhanced by comprehensive training.

The content of the PDA aims to support these underpinning principles through a sound framework as detailed within the units.

The award developed comprises of three units:

- Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System. In completing this unit learners will gain an understanding of the responsibilities they have towards children and young people involved in children's hearings. Learners will learn about the main areas that impact on and influence the lives of children and young people.
- Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members aims to prepare learners for their role and function as members of the Children's Panel sitting on children's hearings in Scotland. Learners will gain an understanding of the development of the Children's Hearings System in Scotland and the roles within it. They will learn about the legal framework which underpins the system and their role within it.

They will demonstrate through simulation their capacity to fulfill the responsibilities of a panel member.

- Management of Children's Hearings is the final unit in the group award and aims to prepare members for their role in chairing children's hearings. Learners will develop skills in how to manage children's hearings effectively. In studying this unit they will be able to explain the role and responsibilities of a chairing member. They will be able to demonstrate through practice their ability to manage the process and to adhere to the procedural requirements. Through observation of their simulated practice they will demonstrate their skills in communicating with all participants and in upholding the rights of the child or young person and others.

1.4 Access to award

Because of the specialised nature of this unit and others linked to the Professional Development Award for Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members access is limited and all learners must be recommended to the National Convener for appointment to panel membership.

Prior to undertaking the Management of Children's Hearings unit learners must be serving members of the National Children's Panel and have served as a panel member for at least six months. They will have demonstrated competence in this role and have been recommended by the Area Support Team as competent to undertake unit 3 Management of Children's Hearings.

2. Qualification structure

The qualification is achieved on the successful attainment of all of the units within the group award, that is, a total of three mandatory units.

2.1 Structure

This group award is made up of 3 SQA HN Unit credits. It comprises 24 SCQF credit points which are at SCQF level 7. A mapping of Core Skills development opportunities is available in section 5.3.

All units are mandatory and are to be achieved for the group award.

The group award includes the units set out below.

4 code	2 code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
H5BR	34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	1	8	7
H5BS	34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	1	8	7
H5BT	34	Management of Children's Hearings	1	8	7

3. Aims of the qualification

The group award aims to prepare and consolidate learners for their role and function as members of the National Children's Panel sitting on children's hearings in Scotland.

The principal goals of this PDA are to:

- offer a nationally recognised qualification for children's panel members in Scotland and through doing so achieve greater consistency in quality assurance and responsiveness of learning and development opportunities for children's panel members.
- provide learners with SCQF credit points which may allow progression to other levels of study.
- impact on the standards of practice and consistency in the delivery of positive outcomes for children and young people in Scotland.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

The general aims of this award are best described by the National Standards for the Children's Panel:

Standard 1: Children and young people are at the centre of everything that we do.

Standard 2: Panel members are well equipped and supported to undertake their role.

Standard 3: Panel member practice is consistent across Scotland.

Standard 4: Every children's hearing is managed fairly and effectively.

Standard 5: Every children's hearing makes decisions based on sound reasons in the best interests of the child or young person.

Standard 7: Communication and information sharing across the Children's Panel, ASTs and CHS is clear, appropriate and purposeful.

Standard 8: Functions, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood within the system.

Generally, the award aims to:

- provide academic stimulus and challenge.
- allow theory to be applied to practice.
- develop study skills.
- develop research, analytical and organisational and planning skills.
- develop communication skills.
- develop time management skills.
- develop relationship management skills.
- develop an understanding of policy and strategy.
- develop cultural awareness.
- give an understanding of children's needs.

Develop an understanding of the legal framework in relation to:

- the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the Children's Hearings System in Scotland.
- upholding the rights of children, young people and others.
- safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

Specifically, the award aims to provide an understanding of the undernoted key aspects of the role of a children's panel member.

Covered by unit Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System:

1. Understand and describe panel members' responsibilities towards children and young people within the Children's Hearings System.
2. Understand and evaluate issues which can influence and impact on children's lives.
3. Evaluate the needs of looked after children and young people.

Covered by unit Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members:

4. Understand and describe the development of the Children's Hearings System and the roles within it.
5. Describe and apply the procedures governing children's hearings.
6. Understand and demonstrate effective and purposeful communication in relation to the panel member role.

Covered by unit Management of Children's Hearings:

7. Explain and evaluate the role and responsibilities of the chairing member.
8. Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of the relevant rules and procedures in the role of chairing member.
9. Demonstrate good practice in acting as chairing member to maintain the rights of the child and others present at the hearing.

4. Recommended entry to the qualification

Because of the specialised nature of this unit and others linked to the Professional Development Award for Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members all learners must be recommended to the National Convener for appointment to panel membership.

4.1 Previous qualifications

There are no specific qualifications identified as a pre-requisite to entry. However learners should have good communication skills both written and oral, problem solving and working with others.

The following information on prior knowledge, skills, experience or qualifications that provide suitable preparation for this qualification has been provided by the Qualification Design Team as guidance only.

4.2 Relevant experience

Prospective learners will have been through a selection process and recommended for appointment as a children's panel member to the National Convener. This selection process explores values and attitudes, relevant skills and experience, for example as a parent or in a formal work role, required to fulfill the panel member competencies.

Some prospective learners may be currently active in the role of children's panel member. To meet the legal requirements of panel membership learners must be over the age of 18.

4.3 Core Skills entry profile

The Core Skill entry profile provides a summary of the associated assessment activities that exemplify why a particular level has been recommended for this qualification. The information would be used to identify if additional learning support needs to be put in place for learners whose Core Skills profile is below the recommended entry level or whether learners should be encouraged to do an alternative level or learning programme.

Communication at SCQF level 6

Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at SCQF level 6

Working with Others at SCQF level 6

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	5	All
Numeracy	5	All
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	All
Problem Solving	5	All
Working with Others	5	All

5. Additional benefits of the qualification in meeting employer needs

This qualification was designed to meet a specific purpose and what follows are details on how that purpose has been met through mapping of the units to the aims of the qualification. Through meeting the aims, additional value has been achieved by linking the unit standards with those defined in national occupational standards and / or trade / professional body requirements. In addition, significant opportunities exist for learners to develop the more generic skill, known as Core Skills through doing this qualification.

Appendix 1 shows mapping of the PDA to the National Occupational Standards: Social Services Children and Young People at SCQF level 2 and 3.

Children's hearings are legal tribunals and panel members are trained lay tribunal members.

In order for panel members to be able to take up appointment they must be assessed as having satisfactorily completed comprehensive training. During this training, potential panel members must demonstrate the ability to meet a range of competencies linked to their important role as decision makers within Scotland's unique care and justice system for children and young people.

The National Convener published the National Standards for the Children's Panel in July 2012 and these set out the core values, principles and behaviours expected to be demonstrated by panel members in fulfilling their duties.

The national standards also set out what panel members can expect in return in terms of support and training from the National Convener, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and training providers acting on the National Convener's behalf.

The skills and competencies required for, and developed by, panel membership can be transferrable to employers. For example:

- leadership
- team working
- effective communication
- analytical thinking
- decision making
- negotiating

5.1 Mapping of qualification aims to units

Note: For details of the aims, see section [3.1 General aims of the qualification](#) and section [3.2 Specific aims of the qualification](#).

Unit code	Unit title	General aims	Specific aims
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8	1, 2, 3
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	2, 3, 4, 7, 8	4, 5, 6
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8	7, 8, 9

5.2 Mapping of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Children's Panel

Unit code	Unit title	National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Children
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	1, 2, 3, 5
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

5.3 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

Core Skill Communication components: Written (Reading), Written (Writing), Oral

Learners will develop Communication skills verbal and non-verbal in relation to working with children and young people as part of their role and function and through working with other members of a team.

Unit code	Unit title	Communication components
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral

Core Skill Numeracy components: Using Number, Using Graphical Information

Unit code	Unit title	Numeracy components
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	Not applicable
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	Not applicable
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	Not applicable

Core Skill Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components:

Accessing Information, Providing / Creating Information

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) may be used as a research tool. Accessing and evaluating electronic sources which provide complex information, current facts and ideas on professional concerns and issues should be encouraged in order that learners are able to read in depth and in detail reference materials from a range of sources. Learners will be accessing systems and resources through CHS portal.

Unit code	Unit title	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	Accessing Information Providing / Creating Information
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	Accessing Information Providing / Creating Information
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	Accessing Information Providing / Creating Information

Core Skill Problem Solving components: Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising, Reviewing and Evaluating

Problem Solving skills will be gained through considering scenarios and seeking appropriate responses to challenging situations, the focus of group discussions will be on identifying progressive solutions.

Unit code	Unit title	Problem Solving components
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	Critical Thinking Planning and Organising Reviewing and Evaluating
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	Critical Thinking Planning and Organising Reviewing and Evaluating
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	Critical Thinking Planning and Organising Reviewing and Evaluating

Core Skill Working with Others components: Working Co-operatively with Others, Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

Working with Others as part of groups of learners will help to prepare learners to work with colleague panel members and others involved in the Children's Hearings System, small group exercises and simulated hearings will help learners further develop their advice guidance and listening skills.

Unit code	Unit title	Working with Others components
H5BR 34	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
H5BS 34	Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
H5BT 34	Management of Children's Hearings	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

5.4 Assessment strategy for the qualifications

Unit title	Assessment: Outcome 1	Assessment: Outcome 2	Assessment: Outcome 3
Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System	Identify and describe the key responsibilities a panel member has to children and young people who are involved in the Children's Hearings System.	Identify and evaluate two positive and two negative issues that can impact on the lives of children and young people.	Explain and evaluate two examples of the needs of children and young people who are looked after.
Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members	Describe and explain the development of the Children's Hearings System and the roles within it. Using a case study of a children's hearing analyse the materials required for a children's hearing.	Undertake the role of a panel member in at least one simulated children's hearing. Evaluate and reflect on their panel member role in the simulation of a children's hearing.	Demonstrate through simulated practice how to communicate effectively and purposefully.
Management of Children's Hearings	Provide a detailed evaluation of the role of the chairing member. Demonstrate in practice the completion of relevant procedural requirements.	Demonstrate effective practice in the role of chairing member in at least one simulated children's hearing upholding the rights of the child and others present at the hearing.	Demonstrate through simulated practice ability to enable all participants in the Children's hearing to fully engage equitably in the hearing process keeping the child at the centre.

6. Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

Delivery of the award will be through a combination of taught learning, groupwork, practical experience, reading and research. Learners will complete assignments as part of ongoing learning and assessment and will demonstrate good practice through simulated exercises and their participation in children's hearings.

Learners may learn through:

- class based tuition
- online learning
- reading and research
- evaluation of case studies
- presentation of work based assignments
- simulated exercises and scenarios

The PDA has been designed such that learners will receive support from the SQA centre approved to deliver the qualification where suitably qualified staff members will be able to provide advice, guidance, coaching and mentoring as well as assessment.

6.1 Sequencing / integration of units

Sequence for delivery:

It is anticipated that the Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System will be delivered alongside Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members during the first part of the national training programme. Learners will then have a period of time when they will be serving as panel members and will gain experience of this aspect of their role prior to undertaking the final unit Management of Children's Hearings. On successful completion of the final unit learners will achieve the full Professional Development Award.

Integration of learning:

- It is recommended that the unit Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System is taught alongside the unit Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members.
- Learning should follow the order of the outcomes and learners made aware that the unit Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members will cover more of the legal framework.
- It is recommended that much of the delivery for this unit is classroom based supported by activities, video presentations and research.
- Group working is encouraged in the research tasks and learners should also explore their local area in order to research services and facilities that are new to them.

6.2 Recognition of prior learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a full group award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full group award.

The recognition of prior learning may **not** be used as a method of assessing in the following types of units and assessments:

- HN Graded Units.
- Course and / or external assessments.
- Other integrative assessment units (which may or not be graded).
- Certain types of assessment instruments where the standard may be compromised by not using the same assessment method outlined in the unit.
- Where there is an existing requirement for a licence to practice.
- Where there are specific health and safety requirements.
- Where there are regulatory, professional or other statutory requirements.
- Where otherwise specified in an assessment strategy.

More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website: [SQA Home Page](http://www.sqa.org.uk) (www.sqa.org.uk).

The following sub-sections outline how existing SQA units may contribute to this group award. Additionally, they also outline how this group award may be recognised for professional and articulation purposes.

6.2.1 Articulation and / or progression

Not applicable.

6.2.2 Professional recognition

This qualification is nationally recognised as meeting a national training curriculum to qualify Children's Panel Members in their role.

6.2.3 Transitional arrangements

Not applicable.

6.2.4 Credit transfer

Not applicable.

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

It is anticipated that this PDA will be offered on a part time basis allowing for tuition, study and assessment utilising classroom type, practice based and electronic methods of delivery.

The requirement to ensure that the award is made available to remote regions is a critical requirement and in this regard approved centres should be capable of offering a blend of e-Learning capability that could include: e-testing, the use of e-portfolios, or social software, for example Teams, Google Classroom.

6.4 Support materials

A list of existing Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) is available to view on SQA's website: [Internal Assessment Support Materials](http://www.sqa.org.uk/internal-assessment-support-materials) (www.sqa.org.uk/internal-assessment-support-materials).

6.5 Resource requirements

Learner should have access to a copy of the Practice and Procedure Manual, the National Standards for the Children's Panel, the competence framework for panel members, the Core Policies for the Children Panel and training materials. These resources will be available online.

Any observations of learners in children's hearings should be undertaken by a member of the centre's training team or an approved member of an Area Support Team as an expert witness. In the case where this is not possible, an observation of simulated practice can occur, which must also be observed by the centre's training team.

7. General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The unit specifications making up this group award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website:

[SQA Assessment Arrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements) (www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

There are no anticipated barriers for any learner enrolling for the PDA, although to meet the requirements of some of the unit Management of Children's Hearings contained within the award exposure to practical work associated with elements of competence will have to be arranged.

Given the nature of work associated with the award (for example demonstration of good practice in acting a chairing member) it is considered that learners have to be proficient in the English language. Where English is not a first language, it is recommended that learners possess English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or IELTS at an appropriate level determined by the SQA Approved centre.

Internal and external verification

All assessments used within these qualifications should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

SQA allocates each approved centre an external verifier and he / she will undertake visits to ensure that effective benchmarking, quality control and standard setting across course providers, is adhered to.

Both internal and external verifiers will have to evidence knowledge of the Children's Hearings System to ensure that appropriate benchmarking, quality control and standard setting is in place.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in SQA's Guide to Assessment [Guide to Assessment](#)

(www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Guide_To_Assessment.pdf)

8. Glossary of terms

Embedded Core Skills is where the assessment evidence for the unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. A learner and / or candidate successfully completing the unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

Finish date: The end of a group award's lapsing period is known as the finish date. After the finish date, the group award will no longer be live and the following applies:

- Learners and / or candidates may not be entered for the group award.
- the group award will continue to exist only as an archive record on the Awards Processing System (APS).

Lapsing date: When a group award is entered into its lapsing period, the following will apply:

- the group award will be deleted from the relevant catalogue.
- the group award specification will remain until the qualification reaches its finish date at which point it will be removed from SQA's website and archived.
- no new centres may be approved to offer the group award.
- centres should only enter learners and / or candidates whom they expect to complete the group award during the defined lapsing period.

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a unit gives an indication of the contribution the unit makes to an SQA group award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk.

SCQF credit points: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the Framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one Higher National Unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification is assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HNCs and HNDs are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8, respectively. Higher National Units will normally be at levels 6 to 9 and graded units will be at levels 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2 to 6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2 to 7.

Subject unit: Subject units contain vocational / subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

Signposted Core Skills: Refers to opportunities to develop Core Skills arise in learning and teaching but are not automatically certificated.

History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up-to-date qualification structure.

Please note: Where a unit is revised by another unit:

- No new centres may be approved to offer the unit which has been revised.
- Centres should only enter learners and /or candidates for the unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the unit before its finish date.

Version number	Description	Date
02	Transferred to current template (February 2025). Updates throughout to remove the requirement for direct observation for unit H5BT 34.	June 2025

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of this qualification.

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that the undernoted organisations have made to the development of Professional Development Award:

Children's Hearings Scotland and Scottish Social Services Council

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9. General information for learners

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

9.1 General

The Professional Development Award for Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members is a new award at SCQF level 7 designed to provide nationally consistent and quality assured training for children's panel members.

The skills, knowledge and practical learning you will gain from the award will allow you to effectively plan and undertake your role as a member of the children's hearing.

The PDA will describe the legislative framework within which the children's hearings are set, the rights and needs of children and young people, and the management of hearings.

9.2 Achieving the award

To attain this award you need to complete all three units within the group award as described in section 2.

Achieving the award will equip you with the skills and knowledge set out in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

You will have been through your formal selection process and have been recommended to the National Convener for appointment to panel membership.

You will learn about the legal system surrounding children's hearings and what your role and the roles of others in this process.

You will learn about the principles of the Children's Hearings System and what the different stages of the hearing are. This will include examining your role and that of others before hearings, during hearings, and after hearings. You will also learn about the needs of children and young people who are involved in the Children's Hearings System.

You will have the opportunity to practise your communication skills, verbal and non-verbal, through taking part in discussions, undertaking written exercises in your class group and through taking part in simulated exercises.

You will work in small groups with other panel members. In addition to your class based work you may also be required to undertake some additional reading, research and observation as you work through the unit content.

At the end of the teaching and learning sessions you will complete your formally assessed workbook by writing your responses to set questions on the:

- origin and development of children's hearings in Scotland and the roles of people within the hearing.
- the legal framework.
- the needs of children and young people.

The teaching and learning for the final unit will consider the responsibilities of the chairing member and will pay particular attention to the legislation, policies and procedures governing the role. You will be provided with further opportunities to expand and practise your communication skills, team working and leadership.

The assessment you will complete will focus on you acting in the role of chairing member and will consider your pre-hearing preparation, your ability to work with a team, your focus on the rights and welfare of the child or young person, how you ensure a fair and transparent process, how you complete the proceedings and record the decisions and reasons.

The skills you demonstrate will be informed by all of the knowledge and understanding you have gained throughout your training programme and will link with the following areas of the National Standards for the Children's Panel.

Standard 1: Children and young people are at the centre of everything that we do.

Standard 2: Panel members are well equipped and supported to undertake their role.

Standard 3: Panel member practice is consistent across Scotland.

Standard 4: Every children's hearing is managed fairly and effectively.

Standard 5: Every children's hearing makes decisions based on sound reasons in the best interests of the child or young person.

Standard 7: Communication and information sharing across the Children's Panel, ASTs and CHS is clear, appropriate and purposeful.

Standard 8: Functions, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood within the system.

Appendix 1: Mapping to National Occupational Standards

Mandatory units

National Occupational Standards for SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at Level 2	Links to Generic Knowledge in relation to: Rights How you Carry out your work Theory for Practice Communication Safeguarding Handling information
SCDCCLD0201 Support effective communication	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0022 Support the health and safety of yourself and individuals	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDCCLD0202 Support the safeguard of children	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0023 Develop your own knowledge and practice	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings

Optional units

National Occupational Standards for SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at Level 2	Links to Generic Knowledge in relation to: Rights How you Carry out your work Theory for Practice Communication Safeguarding Handling information
SCDCCLD0203 Support the development of children and young people	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDCCLD0205 Maintain environments to meet children's needs	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0241 Contribute to the effectiveness of teams	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings

Mandatory units

National Occupational Standards for SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at Level 3	Links to Generic Knowledge in relation to: Rights How you Carry out your work Theory for Practice Communication Safeguarding Handling information
SCDCCLD0301 Develop and promote positive relationships	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0032 Promote health safety and security in the work setting	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0033 Develop your practice through reflection and learning	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0034 Promote the safeguard of children and young people	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings

Optional units

National Occupational Standards for SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at Level 2	Links to Generic Knowledge in relation to: Rights How you Carry out your work Theory for Practice Communication Safeguarding Handling information
SCDCCLD0303 Promote children's development	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDCCLD0327 Support children who have experienced trauma	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDCCLD0307 Promote the health and physical development of children	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDHSC0325 Contribute to the support of children and young people who have experienced harm or abuse	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings
SCDCCLD0338 Develop productive working relationships with others	Needs of Children and Young People within the Children's Hearings System Principles and Practice for Children's Panel Members Management of Children's Hearings