



**Arrangements for:
PDAs in Housing Law Advice at
SCQF levels 6 and 7**

**Group Award Codes: G8GM 46
G8GK 47**

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1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the new Group Awards in Housing Law Advice at SCQF levels 6 and 7. This document includes: background information on the development of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

There are two awards:

- ◆ PDA in Housing Law Advice level 6
- ◆ PDA in Housing Law Advice level 7

The titles reflect the nature and content of each awards and highlight the key focus, ie:

- ◆ providing advisers with a knowledge of key aspects of Housing Law in order to be able to provide advice and guidance to clients who are homeless and to assist in the application process.

The titles also reflect the evolving nature of the development as it became clear during the course of Unit writing that awards would be required at different levels to meet the needs of the differing staff groups.

2 Rationale for the development of the Group Award

2.1 Background

In 2005, SQA was approached by Communities Scotland (CS) and through its information and advice support Unit, HomePoint, to produce a Professional Development Award to be based on the competence requirements for housing advisers contained in the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers (the National Standards) and associated training materials developed by HomePoint.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide free and independent housing information and advice on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness to any person in the authority area. The guidance that followed the Act states that all local authorities should ensure provision meets the National Standards. For housing associations, Communities Scotland Regulation and Inspection inspects all regulated bodies against a single set of Performance Standards. The Performance Standards include a set of guiding and activity standards in relation to housing information and advice. The guiding standard states that where a housing association provides housing information and advice that is provided in line with the National Standards.

The Standards define topic specific competences for staff involved in providing advice on housing law. Shelter Scotland was commissioned by CS to develop a training programme to support achievement of these competences.

Given the foregoing, it is anticipated that Statutory regulation of the workforce will be introduced in the not-to-distant future and that this is likely to be accompanied with qualification requirements to support registration.

However, there is no nationally certificated training available at an appropriate level for this area of the sector. After a period of discussion, SQA was commissioned by Communities Scotland to write Higher National Units around which a PDA could be developed.

SQA worked collaboratively with CS and Shelter to produce the PDA and the component Units have undergone extensive scrutiny by both bodies.

2.2 Current position

The original brief to produce a suite of Units from the standards was extended to encompass the needs of staff involved in providing advice at different levels. It was acknowledged that the Units and awards would be applicable to a wide range of staff (paid and unpaid) for whom providing advice on issues relating to housing law formed part of their job role whilst not being a specialist adviser.

The Units are free-standing Units which may be aggregated into Professional Development Awards at levels 6 and 7. The staff groups exist in agencies/organisations spanning the Public, Private and Voluntary sectors.

Definitions

‘Type 1’ staff — frontline staff whose job role involves providing basic advice of a general nature relating to housing issues raised by service users, eg reception staff, staff in generic Advice settings (eg Citizen’s Advice centres), staff in other agencies, eg Benefits Agency, etc.

‘Type 2 and 3’ staff — staff whose job role involves providing specialist advice on a range of housing issues to service users, eg housing officers, housing association key workers, housing advisers, working in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

Award development

To meet the needs of Type 1 staff the following Units have been developed:

- Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Issues
- Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Security of Tenure
- Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Homelessness:
- Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Repair and Disrepair
- Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Arrears, Eviction and Repossession

To meet the needs of Type 2 and 3 staff the following Units have been developed:

- Housing Law Advice: Housing Issues
- Housing Law Advice: Security of Tenure
- Housing Law Advice: Homelessness
- Housing Law Advice: Repair and Disrepair
- Housing Law Advice: Finance
- Housing Law Advice: Representation at Hearings (specifically for Type 3)

It was agreed that there would be no discrete Units on Law as this permeates all Units.

While the areas identified are common to each level, there is much more breadth and depth of knowledge required for the PDA to meet the needs required of 'Type 2/3' candidates, as they require to give specialist advice.

The main difference, however, between the two awards is the means of assessment:

- ◆ the award for 'Type 1' is assessed by short answer questions, which may be multiple choice.
- ◆ the 'Type 2/3' award is assessed by both a series of questions (which may be Multiple Choice) and by an extended response based on a case study. These qualifications have therefore been levelled at level 6 for the Type 1 award and level 7 for the Type 2 and 3 award.

The Units can be taken individually for induction, top-up or purposes of continuing professional development (CPD), or can be aggregated into the Group Award at either level. Guidance materials, including exemplar assessments, will be produced to support implementation.

Target audience

This award has been designed for staff providing advice and support to clients on housing issues either as a dedicated key function or as part of a wider role/remit. The primary target audience is that of Housing Advisers and front-line staff working within the housing sector. However, the Units and awards are not specifically for those in the Housing sector and will be of interest and use to other staff groups working in the wider field of Advice and Guidance.

These include:

- ◆ Welfare Rights workers
- ◆ Youth workers
- ◆ Citizen's Advice Bureaux staff
- ◆ Social Work Department staff
- ◆ Voluntary Sector workers
- ◆ Community Workers
- ◆ Counsellors
- ◆ Housing Support workers
- ◆ Homelessness officers
- ◆ (and at Type 3) solicitors

Relationship with other SQA awards

The PDAs will be part of a larger, established suite of PDAs for the Advice sector. Units from these awards could form part of any future developments of Higher National Qualifications in Housing, Community Development or related areas.

There are also SVQs in Housing at levels 2, 3 and 4 and these new awards could provide some underpinning knowledge and understanding required for the SVQ at levels 2 and 3.

The Outcomes in each of the Units have been aligned to the National Occupational Standards for Housing.

3 Aims of the Group Award

3.1 General aims

The aims of the Group Awards are to:

- ◆ provide an overview of the key aspects of Housing law
- ◆ enable candidates to develop an understanding of the law in relation to Housing in order to support clients/service users
- ◆ provide career progression for candidates

3.2 Specific aims

3.2.1 Level 6 award

- ◆ to enable candidates to develop a basic understanding of issues related to housing law advice in order to offer advice or direct the client/service user to an appropriate source/agency
- ◆ to enable candidates to develop a general, broad-based knowledge and understanding of key areas of Housing issues including rights, benefits, grants, homelessness, arrears (both rent and mortgages), discrimination and the role of the Local Authority in relation to the Application Process

3.2.2 Level 7 award

- ◆ to enable candidates to develop advanced knowledge of key housing issues in order to provide detailed advice to service users
- ◆ to enable candidates to develop specific detailed knowledge of the law relating to the key issues surrounding Security of Tenure, Homelessness, Finance (Arrears and Repossession), Repair and Disrepair
- ◆ to further develop the candidate's understanding of the causes and effects of key housing issues on individuals
- ◆ to examine influences, internal and external on the provision of housing

The Units in the award have been designed to encompass these key competences which aim to meet the needs identified by employers. The aims link directly with the Knowledge and Skills listed in the Unit Specifications.

3.3 Employment opportunities

There are wide and varied opportunities for candidates working in a range of contexts in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

These include:

- ◆ Welfare Rights workers
- ◆ Youth workers
- ◆ Citizen's Advice Bureaux staff
- ◆ Social Work Department staff
- ◆ Voluntary Sector workers
- ◆ Community Workers
- ◆ Counsellors

- ◆ Housing Support workers
- ◆ Homelessness officers
- ◆ (and at Type 3) solicitors

4 Access to Group Award

4.1 General access requirements

Due to the specialist nature of the awards, candidates should be in working, in a paid or voluntary capacity, in an environment which provides advice of a general (eg, generic Advice organisations such as Citizens Advice centres) or specific (eg Housing departments/Associations) nature relating to Housing issues and Housing Law Advice in particular.

The individual Unit specifications do not contain any specific entry requirements and access will be at the discretion of the presenting centre.

The standards are presented as Higher National Units and candidates should have the capacity to meet the demands of the Unit. In most cases the main criterion will be that of experience and evidence and/or evidence of practical work. It could also be evidenced by achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ a group of Units equivalent to a National qualification programme including Communications at SCQF level 6
- ◆ an SVQ 2 or 3 in Housing or a related field, eg, Advice and Guidance
- ◆ at least two Highers, which should be a minimum of a C pass (one preferably English)

4.2 Specific access requirements

The Unit, Housing Law Advice: Representation at Hearings must be delivered in context.

In order to access this Unit, candidates must meet one of the following requirements:

- ◆ have completed the mandatory Units and one of the discrete option Units (HLA: Homelessness; HLA: Finance; HLA: Repair and Disrepair)
- ◆ have current relevant work experience in at least one of the areas covered by the Units

While it is acknowledged that many candidates may have more advanced qualifications, it may also be the case that some candidates do not have formal relevant qualifications. In this situation the centre will assess suitability on an individual basis. In such cases each candidate may be judged on individual abilities and experience and entry to the course would be by APL. Good communication skills, both oral and written, are required.

4.3 Examples of target groups

This award has been designed for staff providing advice and support to clients on housing issues either as a dedicated key function or as part of a wider role/remit. The primary target audience is that of Housing Advisers and front-line staff working within the housing sector. However, the Units and awards are not specifically for those in the Housing sector and will be of interest and use to other staff groups working in the wider field of Advice and Guidance.

Specific

- ◆ Housing Officers
- ◆ Housing Managers
- ◆ Housing Advice staff
- ◆ Tenancy Support Workers
- ◆ Homelessness Officers
- ◆ Legal staff

General

- ◆ Welfare Rights workers
- ◆ Money/Debt Advisors
- ◆ Youth workers
- ◆ Citizen's Advice Bureaux staff
- ◆ Social Work Department staff
- ◆ Voluntary Sector workers
- ◆ Community workers
- ◆ Counsellors

5 Group Award structure

PDA Housing Law Advice at level 6

This award is comprised of three Units. Candidates will require to complete the two mandatory Units (M) and one Unit from the Options (O).

Title	Level	Credit value
HA07 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Issues	6	1 M
HA0A 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Security of Tenure	6	1 M
HA06 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Homelessness:	6	1 O
HA09 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Repair and Disrepair	6	1 O
HA08 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Arrears, Eviction and Repossession	6	1 O

PDA Housing Law Advice level 7

This award is comprised of three Units. Candidates will require to complete the two mandatory units and one from the Options. However, where the Unit, HLA: Representation at Hearings is selected, candidates will require to have completed one of the discrete option Units in order to provide the context for the representation.

Title	Level	Credit value
F1DW 34 Housing Law Advice: Housing Issues	7	1 M
F1E7 34 Housing Law Advice: Security of Tenure	7	1 M
F1DS 34 Housing Law Advice: Homelessness	7	1 O
F1DY 34 Housing Law Advice: Repair and Disrepair	7	1 O
F1DP 34 Housing Law Advice: Finance	7	1 O
F1D 35 Housing Law Advice: Representation at Hearings	8	1 O

The Unit *Housing Law Advice: Representation at Hearings*, is designed to provide an opportunity for Type 3 staff to develop specialist skills in order to represent clients at formal hearings. It provides candidates with the knowledge and skills to allow them to be competent in the processes of representation and mediation for a variety of types of Hearings. Candidates will normally undertake the Unit in the context of one specific sector or one specific organisation which offers housing advice. Candidates will be required to prepare and implement a case plan based on a case study.

6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

6.1 Content and context

The Professional Development Awards in Housing Law Advice are specialist awards designed to develop and enhance skills and knowledge in the field of housing law advice within the broader housing and advice sectors. Being available at two levels, the aim is to cover the spectrum of workers involved in providing advice on housing issues, with a particular emphasis on housing law advice.

Both courses cover the same key topics but at different levels.

Key topics:

- ◆ Homelessness
- ◆ Key housing issues
- ◆ Finance including arrears and repossession
- ◆ Security of Tenure
- ◆ Repair and disrepair

The PDA at Level 6 is an introductory course aimed at workers in a variety of settings which may offer advice of a general nature to service users, (eg, voluntary sector organisations such as Citizen’s Advice) or front line staff (eg reception staff) in housing-related organisations for whom providing advice is not the major function but who require a basic understanding of the key issues and legislation. This award will also afford candidates the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in order to progress within a career in housing.

The PDA at level 7 is an advanced course designed for housing advisors whose key function is to provide specialist advice to a variety of service users on a range of key housing issues with a particular emphasis on housing law advice. In addition, it includes as an option, the Unit — *Representation at Hearings*. This is at SCQF level 8 and is designed to provide specialist knowledge and skills for senior staff involved in representing clients at a range of formal hearings. This Unit provides an opportunity for agencies to differentiate between Type 2 and Type 3 job roles and provides candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate and achieve recognition for their skills in a specialised arena and at a higher level.

6.2 Delivery and assessment

The Unit specifications detail all essential Evidence Requirements to assist centres to develop appropriate assessment materials. The new HN specification places the emphasis on reducing the assessment load for both candidates and centres by creating opportunities to devise assessments that encourage a holistic approach to the assessment of the whole Unit or combine several Outcomes. The degree to which integration of assessment of Outcomes is possible will depend on the content of the Unit.

In line with SQA policy to reduce the assessment load and encourage holistic assessment, the general approach taken within the individual Unit specifications is to assess candidates by way of a series of structured questions, some of which could follow the multiple choice model and encourage where possible a single assessment for the Unit.

Each Unit specification details the exact Evidence Requirements and assessment procedures for each assessment event. Should centres wish to vary the modes of assessment from the recommended models, they should seek prior verification from SQA.

Although the Units in this PDA are designed and intended to be delivered as part of the Group Award, it is possible for the individual Units to be delivered as stand-alone Units as part of a candidate's individual Continuing Professional Development needs.

The PDAs could be delivered through a combination of workshops and self-directed study. Taught sessions could include direct delivery of content, facilitator-led discussion, small group discussion, paired work such as discussion, tasks and role-play. Candidates may be asked to provide feedback to the group or to give oral presentations to their peer group

6.3 Open Learning/Blended Learning

It is possible for the component Units to be delivered on line and by blended learning. The component Units and courses have been designed to facilitate a distance learning model with the use of CD-rom. Where this model is used, it should be noted that candidates may benefit greatly from occasional face-to-face meetings to ensure clear understanding of content. A pilot involving online delivery is currently being tested. This is the preferred mode of delivery at present.

6.4 Relationship to other SQA provision for the Sector

Current SQA provision for the Housing and related sectors is as follows

SVQS:

- ◆ SVQs in Housing at levels 2, 3 and 4
- ◆ SVQs in Advice and Guidance at levels 2, 3 and 4
- ◆ SVQs in Health and Social Care at levels 2, 3 and 4
- ◆ SVQs in Community Development Work at levels 2, 3 and 4

Professional Development Awards (PDAs)

- ◆ Suite of 12 awards for the Advice and Guidance sector — generic and specific

Higher National courses

- ◆ HNC Housing (in lapsing period)
- ◆ HNC Social Care
- ◆ HNC Working with Communities

The development of these PDAs took account of the National Occupational Standards for Housing and the revised suite for Advice and Guidance.

While the proposed awards may provide some of the underpinning knowledge requirements for the SVQs in Housing or Units within the other awards, there is no direct overlap with the above-named qualifications.

6.5 Articulation and credit transfer opportunities

As indicated in 7.4 above, there is no direct credit transfer between these PDAs and other SQA qualifications. However, some of the knowledge and skills developed by the component Units may have clear relevance to Advice and Guidance and Housing related qualifications. There may also be the opportunity of articulation with appropriate Chartered Institute of Housing qualifications. All claims by candidates for APL/APEL/APE must be considered on an individual basis by the Centre and clear evidence provided.

6.6 Core Skills

Whilst a Core Skills profile is not required for PDAs, there are clearly opportunities for candidates to develop or enhance their skills in all five Core Skills of:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Other
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ IT

PDA Housing Law Advice at level 6

Unit title	Core Skill
HA07 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Issues	Communication, Working with Others
HA0A 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Security of Tenure	Communication, Problem Solving, Working with Others
HA06 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Homelessness	Problem Solving
HA09 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Repair and Disrepair	Problem Solving
HA08 33 Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Arrears, Eviction and Repossession	Numeracy, Information Technology, Problem Solving

Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Arrears, Eviction and Repossession

PDA Housing Law Advice level 7

Unit title	Core Skill
F1DW 34 Housing Law Advice: Housing Issues	Communication, Problem Solving, Working with Others
F1E7 34 Housing Law Advice: Security of Tenure	Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving
F1DS 34 Housing Law Advice: Homelessness	Working with Others, Problem Solving, Communication
F1DY 34 Housing Law Advice: Repair and Disrepair	Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving
F1DP 34 Housing Law Advice: Finance	Numeracy, Communication, Working with Others, Information Technology, Problem Solving

7 General information for centres

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).

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these Group Award(s) 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.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education* (www.sqa.org.uk).

8 General information for candidates

The Professional Development Awards in Housing Law Advice at SCQF level 6 and 7

The PDAs in Housing Law Advice have been developed by SQA in conjunction with Communities Scotland and HomePoint with the assistance of Shelter.

The new qualifications are based national performance standards on housing law advice and comprise a suite of Units which have been designed to meet the needs of staff involved in providing advice at different levels.

The PDA at level 6 is an introductory course aimed at staff in a variety of settings which may offer advice of a general nature to service users, (eg, voluntary sector organisations such as Citizen's Advice) or front line staff (eg reception staff) in housing-related organisations for whom providing advice is not the major function but who require a basic understanding of the key issues and legislation. This award will also afford candidates the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in order to progress within a career in housing.

The PDA at level 7 is an advanced course designed for housing advisors whose key function is to provide specialist advice to a variety of service users on a range of key housing issues with a particular emphasis on housing law advice. In addition, it includes as an option, the Unit — *Representation at Hearings*. This is at SCQF level 8 and is designed to provide specialist knowledge and skills for senior staff involved in representing clients at a range of formal hearings.

Structure and Content of the PDAs

Each Award contains two mandatory and 1 optional Units (from a choice of three for level 6 and four for level 7).

Level 6

Mandatory Units	
HA07 33	Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Issues
HA0A 33	Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Security of Tenure
Optional Units (select one)	
HA06 33	Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Homelessness:
HA09 33	Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Repair and Disrepair
HA08 33	Housing Law Advice: Introduction to Housing Arrears, Eviction and Repossession

Level 7

This award is comprised of three Units. You will require to complete two mandatory units and one from the Options. However, where the Unit, HLA: Representation at Hearings is selected, candidates will require to have also completed an additional discrete optional Unit in order to provide the context for the representation.

Mandatory Units	
F1DW 34	Housing Law Advice: Housing Issues
F1E7 34	Housing Law Advice: Security of Tenure
Optional (select 1)	
F1DS 34	Housing Law Advice: Homelessness
F1DY 34	Housing Law Advice: Repair and Disrepair
F1DP 34	Housing Law Advice: Finance
F1D 35	Housing Law Advice: Representation at Hearings*

Access arrangements

The individual Unit specifications do not contain any specific entry requirements and access will be at the discretion of the presenting centre.

Due to the specialist nature of the Awards, candidates should be in working, in a paid or voluntary capacity, in an environment which provides advice of a general (eg, generic Advice organisations such as Citizens Advice centres) or specific nature (eg Housing departments/Associations) relating to Housing issues and Housing Law Advice in particular.

The standards are presented as Higher National Units and candidates should have the capacity to meet the demands of the Unit. In most cases the main criterion will be that of experience and evidence and/or evidence of practical work. It could also be evidenced by achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ a group of units equivalent to a National qualification programme including Communications at SCQF level 6
- ◆ an SVQ 2 or 3 in Housing or a related field, eg, Advice and Guidance
- ◆ at least two Highers, which should be a minimum of a C pass (one preferably English)

9 Glossary of terms

SCQF: This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology 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: One HN credit is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points. This applies to all HN Units, irrespective of their level.

SCQF levels: The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HN Units will normally be at levels 6–9. Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8.

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

Graded Unit: Graded Units assess candidates' ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Their purpose is to add value to the Group Award, making it more than the sum of its parts, and to encourage candidates to retain and adapt their skills and knowledge.

Dedicated Core Skill Unit: This is a Unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills, eg HN Units in Information Technology or Communications.

Embedded Core Skills: This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

Signposted Core Skills: This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

Qualification Design Team: The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the HNC/D from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

Consortium-devised HNCs and HNDs are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.

Specialist single centre and specialist collaborative devised HNCs and HNDs are those developments or revisions led by a single centre or small group of centres who provide knowledge and skills in a specialist area. Like consortium-devised HNCs and HNDs, these developments or revisions will also be supported by SQA.