

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Approaches to Assessment in Social Services (SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** J6EH 47  
**SCQF level:** 7 (24 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2022–23

### **Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 1.0) July 2022**

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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## **Unit purpose**

This unit enables learners to develop and apply their knowledge and skills to support the assessment of an individual and to plan positive outcomes. Learners develop the skills they need to reflect on relevant sociological and psychological theory, as well as the individual's background. The unit emphasises collaboration with individuals and those involved in their care. This enables positive meaningful outcomes for individuals and develops learners' skills through research, application of knowledge and collaboration.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. However, recommended entry may include qualifications at SCQF level 6 and/or experience of working in the social services sector.

Learners who complete the unit as part of the HNC Social Services group awards may have the opportunity to progress to further study, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree-level courses.

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 explain factors that have shaped the development of family structures and roles
- 2 identify research related to the individual's condition or situation
- 3 assess an individual's risk of, and resilience to, harm and abuse
- 4 produce an outcome-focused assessment of an individual they support
- 5 evaluate the assessment process of an individual they support
- 6 review how equality, diversity and inclusion are supported in current practice environments

## Evidence requirements

Learners must provide knowledge and product evidence for the unit.

For all outcomes, the product evidence takes the form of:

- 1 an outcome-focused assessment of the individual
- 2 an evaluation of the assessment

For the outcome-focused assessment, learners must demonstrate that they have:

- ◆ gathered information with the individual about what matters to them, and about their background, strengths, capabilities, and resilience
- ◆ sourced information on the individual's specific requirements
- ◆ assessed the individual's risk of, and resilience to, harm and abuse

In their evaluation of their assessment of an individual, learners should reflect on their work with the individual, and how they applied their knowledge in practice. To successfully achieve the outcomes, learners must provide evidence that they can complete the following tasks:

- ◆ Describe how factors such as poverty, substance use, mental health or attachment can adversely affect individuals.
- ◆ Describe factors that mean that an individual may be more at risk of, or more resilient to, harm and abuse.
- ◆ Describe sociological perspectives and concepts related to families.
- ◆ Describe psychological theories related to the individual's needs or diagnosis.
- ◆ Describe stages and developmental strands of human development.
- ◆ Explain how to have an outcome-focused conversation with people about what matters to them.
- ◆ Evaluate the benefits of using an outcome-focused approach.
- ◆ Evaluate the difference the assessment has made to the individual and their family.
- ◆ Describe models and methods of delivering or accessing care.

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- ◆ Explain how they maintained the individual's rights in making decisions, while managing and enabling risk, with reference to current legislative and regulatory frameworks.
- ◆ Evaluate how collaboration can work in the interests of the individual.
- ◆ Reflect on how they promoted what matters to the individual throughout the assessment process, with reference to current service and practice standards.
- ◆ Reflect on how they have promoted equality, diversity and inclusion in line with relevant legislation and practice standards.

Learners' evidence can be written or oral, or a combination of both, and captured in a range of media. The evidence can be produced over a period of time in lightly controlled conditions and requires authentication.

## Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ different family structures and the corresponding roles within the family</li> <li>◆ the relationship between these different structures and the impact on the individual</li> <li>◆ the relationship between factors such as mental health, poverty and substance abuse, and their impact on the individual</li> <li>◆ family and how family structure has evolved</li> <li>◆ sociological perspectives, concepts, and the sociological imagination</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use sociological perspectives and concepts to analyse the family structure</li> <li>◆ apply their knowledge of sociological theory and concepts to explain the impact on family structure and the consequences for the individual</li> <li>◆ reflect on different types of families in society</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ psychological theories and concepts</li> <li>◆ the various developmental life stages, including infancy; childhood; adolescence; adulthood; older adulthood; and the corresponding ages of each stage.</li> <li>◆ the strands of development, including social, physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ apply knowledge of psychological theory and stages of development to individuals and their condition(s)</li> <li>◆ recognise the impact of the individual's background on their outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ factors that mean that individuals may be more at risk of, or more resilient to, harm and abuse</li> <li>◆ the types of harm or abuse most relevant to their work setting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ assess an individual's risk of, and resilience to, harm and abuse</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ outcome-focused approaches to assessment and their benefits</li> <li>◆ the role of assessment in the care planning process</li> <li>◆ models and methods of delivering care</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ have an outcome-focused conversation</li> <li>◆ gather relevant information with the individual about what matters to them, their background, and their strengths, capacities and resilience</li> <li>◆ collaborate with the individual and others to carry out an assessment of an individual</li> <li>◆ use an outcome-focused approach to assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 5</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the rights of individuals to make informed decisions about their care</li> <li>◆ how to balance rights, risk management and risk enablement with individuals</li> <li>◆ the current legislative and regulatory standards regarding rights and risks</li> <li>◆ the variety of roles contributing to meeting individual's outcomes</li> <li>◆ how to collaborate with others to help devise the planning of care</li> <li>◆ the current service and practice standards relating to promoting the individual's choices, wishes and aspirations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 5</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ observe risk to the individual</li> <li>◆ promote the rights of individuals to plan their own care, including where there may be risk</li> <li>◆ reflect on their own role and that of others in the assessment process</li> <li>◆ reflect on how they have collaborated with others</li> <li>◆ reflect on how they promoted the individual's choices, wishes and aspirations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 6</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how to promote equality, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>◆ equality legislation, frameworks and policy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 6</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ demonstrate consistent practice</li> <li>◆ demonstrate effective communication</li> <li>◆ promote equality, diversity and inclusion</li> </ul>

## Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the social services sector.

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: researching, evaluating understanding on an ongoing basis through formative assessment
- ◆ integrity: discussing own values, ethics and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence including reflective practice
- ◆ adapting: critical reflection, accommodating new ideas through research and practical experience
- ◆ initiative: independent research, collaborating with other professionals to share enthusiasm and knowledge

### Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ feeling: discussing own values and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence, empathy, personal reflection, building relationships
- ◆ communicating: collaborative working, sharing ideas and perspectives
- ◆ collaborating: teamwork and shared goals within practice

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity and creativity: researching and observing to understand the link between theory and practice
- ◆ sense-making: holistic thinking, researching, evaluating understanding
- ◆ critical thinking: analysing research, making informed decisions

## Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

### Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

- ◆ managing time-sensitive tasks
- ◆ allocating time to research and apply tasks
- ◆ analysis of resources

- ◆ managing word count of assessment instruments

## **Communication**

Learners develop communication skills by:

- ◆ participating in spoken question and answer sessions, and small and large group discussions
- ◆ receiving and responding appropriately to verbal and non-verbal communication in the learning and care practice environments
- ◆ creating and responding to written and digital communications in the learning and care practice environments.
- ◆ completing written assignments and accurately referencing sources of information
- ◆ producing at least one appropriately referenced essay

## **Digital**

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by:

- ◆ using digital platforms to access information to support learning and understanding
- ◆ using a computer or digital devices to develop coherent portfolio and project work
- ◆ using digital platforms to engage and collaborate with professionals and carers in the sector



## Delivery of unit

You can deliver this unit as a stand-alone unit or as a mandatory unit within the HNC Social Services. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award, you can integrate delivery with the optional and remaining core units.

The unit provides some of the underpinning knowledge for the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units Promote Health, Safety and Security in the Work Setting at SCQF level 7; Promote Effective Communication at SCQF level 7; and Develop your Practice through Reflection and Learning at SCQF level 7.

We recommend that you deliver the unit through lectures, group work, practical classroom activities, visiting speakers and visits to appropriate practice settings. There are a variety of media resources that you can use to support the delivery of the unit. We encourage some self-directed learning and research to ensure learners recognise its importance to their own self-development.

The unit involves significant project work and therefore you should allocate sufficient time to the unit early in your delivery of the group award. The notional design length is 120 hours, however, the amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

**Outcome 1** — Explain factors that have shaped the development of family structures and roles.  
(21 hours)

**Outcome 2** — Identify research related to the individual's condition or situation.  
(24 hours)

**Outcome 3** — Assess an individual's risk of, and resilience to, harm and abuse.  
(15 hours)

**Outcome 4** — Produce an outcome-focused assessment of an individual they support.  
(30 hours)

**Outcome 5** — Evaluate the assessment process of an individual they support.  
(15 hours)

**Outcome 6** — Review how equality, diversity and inclusion are supported in current practice environments.  
(15 hours)

## Professional recognition

This unit is a mandatory unit in the HNC Social Services framework. The HNC in Social Services meets registration requirements for the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

## Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

This unit provides learners with the skills necessary to research and understand an individual's condition or situation, what matters to them, and their background, strengths, capabilities and resilience. To achieve their aims, learners must understand the importance of the holistic, outcome-focused nature of assessing the individual and how to apply a person-centred approach to the care of those they are supporting. In carrying out an outcome-focused assessment, learners explore the importance of adopting a sociological imagination and apply sociological perspectives and concepts to the family structure. Learners also apply psychological theory and show that they understand the developmental strands of different life stages.

Learners must carry out a project that involves assessing an individual using an outcome-focused approach. They must gather information with the individual about what matters to them, their background, strengths, capabilities and resilience. This requires some research into the individual's condition, or the situation in which they receive care. The outcome-focused approach involves working alongside the individual (and those involved in their care) to assess what outcomes they would like to achieve to improve aspects of their life. In practice, this can involve using tools such as a risk-benefit analysis, wellness recovery action plans, behavioural analysis, the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) national practice model, or other tools specific to their care, service or placement.

Learners examine different family structures, the roles within these families, and the impact of these different family structures on the individual in terms of, for example, poverty, mental health, substance use, or attachment. Learners apply this knowledge of the family to assess the needs of the individual in the care context and complete their outcome-focused assessment.

The unit also requires learners to understand and apply sociological theory to analysing society and assessing the needs of the individual. Learners should apply sociological theories such as functionalism, feminism, Marxism or the symbolic interactionist approach, alongside psychological theories such as the psychodynamic approach, humanistic approach (Maslow's hierarchy of needs), behaviourist approach (social learning theory) or theories relevant to the individual's situation, condition or diagnosis. Learners apply this knowledge to the individual they are assessing.

Learners develop an understanding of strands of development including social, physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual. In conjunction with these strands of development, they gain knowledge of the different stages of lifespan development, including infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and older adulthood. Learners can identify an individual's needs at different life stages.

Learners should understand the role of assessment in the care planning cycle and the four stages involved in this. You should teach the underpinning values of person-centred care, such as respect, safety, equality, privacy, confidentiality, dignity, anti-discrimination, and independence. You should also consider approaches such as exchange, task-centred, strengths-based and person-centred. Learners should demonstrate their ability to draw links

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to relevant rights-based legislation such as the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Learners should consider the individual's risks of, and resilience to, harm and abuse. They should identify what, in the individual's circumstances or environment, makes them more, or less, at risk.

Learners also reflect on their role in outcome-focused assessment with the individual and how it connects to the roles of others involved in the process. They should acknowledge the contribution they have made in the process, and how this has been received by others. Work completed on these outcomes should include practical tasks that form part of a portfolio of evidence, with witness testimonies from placement or workplace supervisors.

Learners should reflect on how they have promoted equality, diversity, and inclusion, using an example from practice and in-line with relevant legislation and practice standards. They should consider frameworks relevant to their role in the context of equality and inclusion.

We recommend that if you deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit, you should assess the outcomes holistically. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award, you can integrate this with outcomes from the remaining core and/or optional units.

The unit provides some of the underpinning knowledge and evidence of practice for the Scottish Vocational Units (SVQs) Promote Health, Safety and Security in the Work Setting at SCQF level 7; Promote Effective Communication at SCQF level 7; and Develop your Practice through Reflection and Learning at SCQF level 7.

Learners must achieve all evidence requirements in the context of social services settings. All teaching, learning and assessment should be completed in the context of, and refer to, current:

- ◆ terminology
- ◆ regulatory bodies
- ◆ national standards
- ◆ legislation
- ◆ policy frameworks
- ◆ recommended practices
- ◆ relevant theory and concepts
- ◆ reflective practice

We recommend that learners carry out a project for which they compile their product evidence in a portfolio that includes a witness testimony and anonymised product(s) from the assessment process. An oral and/or written assignment of approximately 3,000 words reflecting on their practice and the knowledge they have applied could also form part of the assessment. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award and integrate it with other Higher National units, you can adjust the word count accordingly.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

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

## Information for learners

### Approaches to Assessment in Social Services (SCQF level 7)

This section explains:

- ◆ what the unit is about
- ◆ what you should know or be able to do before you start
- ◆ what you need to do during the unit
- ◆ opportunities for further learning and employment

### Unit information

This unit helps you to develop and apply your knowledge and skills to support the assessment of an individual to plan positive outcomes. You develop skills to reflect on relevant sociological and psychological theory, as well as the individual's background. The unit has a strong emphasis on collaboration with individuals and those involved in their care to enable positive meaningful outcomes for the individual. This project unit develops your skills through research, use of knowledge and collaboration with an individual and others. You must carry out some self-directed research to complete the unit.

When you complete the unit, you can:

- 1 explain factors that have shaped the development of family structures and roles
- 2 identify research related to the individual's condition or situation
- 3 assess an individual's risk of, and resilience to, harm and abuse
- 4 produce an outcome-focused assessment of an individual you support
- 5 evaluate the assessment process of an individual you support
- 6 review how equality, diversity and inclusion are supported within current practice environments

Entry to the unit is at the centre's discretion. However, recommended entry may include qualifications at SCQF level 6 and/or experience of working in the social services sector. You must reflect on your work with an individual in a work placement or work practice environment.

To achieve the unit, you must carry out a project, assessing an individual's needs with an outcome-focused approach. You produce product evidence from your activities and an assignment that evidences your knowledge and skills throughout the project.

## **Meta-skills**

Throughout the unit, you develop meta-skills to enhance your employability in the social services sector.

### **Self-management**

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: researching, evaluating understanding on an ongoing basis through formative assessment
- ◆ integrity: discussing own values, ethics and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence including reflective practice
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### **Social intelligence**

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### **Innovation**

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity and creativity: researching and observing to understand the link between theory and practice
- ◆ sense-making: holistic thinking, researching, evaluating understanding
- ◆ critical thinking: analysing research, making informed decisions

When you complete this unit as part of the HNC Social Services Group Award, you may have the opportunity to progress to further study, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree-level courses. The HNC Social Services meets registration requirements for the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

# Administrative information

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**Superclass** PR

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.