

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Supporting Individuals in Group Living (SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** J7DC 47  
**SCQF level:** 7 (16 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2024–25

### **Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0) August 2024**

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 helps learners to understand the ethical considerations of supporting individuals in a group setting. Learners take account of the background, needs, wishes and aspirations of individuals, while encouraging participation in the group.

The unit is suitable for learners who support individuals in group living. This may include residential childcare settings, secure care, or residential group homes for adults. The group-living situation can be complex, and support focuses on developing warm, compassionate relationships to support the individual to thrive.

The unit gives learners the opportunity to focus on the complex skills and methods used to support individuals who may have experienced trauma or loss, which has led to the requirement for residential care. These skills include a trauma-informed and relational approach to practice. This unit replaces and broadens the Higher National (HN) unit Caring for Young People in Secure Settings at SCQF level 7.

Entry is at your centre's discretion. However, recommended entry may include qualifications at SCQF level 6 or experience of supporting individuals in residential group-living homes.

Learners who complete the unit as part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Social Services group award can progress to further study, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree-level courses. The HNC Social Services meets the requirements for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 explain the background, needs, wishes and aspirations of an individual
- 2 explain ethical considerations when planning and supporting a group activity
- 3 plan a group activity, based on the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations, in collaboration with the individual and others
- 4 apply evidence-based methods of practice while supporting the group activity
- 5 evaluate the group activity and the methods used to support the individual

## Evidence requirements

Learners must provide knowledge and product evidence for the unit.

The knowledge evidence relates to all outcomes and is the underpinning knowledge for all practical tasks.

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

- 1 a plan for a group activity
- 2 an evaluation of the group activity

For the plan, learners must demonstrate that they have:

- ◆ collaborated with the individual and others throughout the process
- ◆ considered what matters to the individual, their background, strengths, capabilities, and resilience
- ◆ considered the individual's risk of, and resilience to, harm and abuse
- ◆ considered risks and benefits to the individual's physical and mental health and wellbeing

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

- ◆ Explain the circumstances which led to the individual being placed in the residential setting.
- ◆ Describe theories relating to the individual's background, needs or diagnosis.
- ◆ Describe methods of practice to promote the individual's physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- ◆ Evaluate a range of approaches for supporting the individual's feeling of belonging to the group.
- ◆ Explain the importance of play across the lifespan.
- ◆ Explain the importance of trauma-informed practice.

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- ◆ Describe legislative and regulatory frameworks, service and practice standards applicable to supporting individuals in a group-living environment.
- ◆ Explain how they considered, promoted and supported gender equality and identity.
- ◆ Explain how they balanced the needs, wishes and aspirations of the individual with those of the group.
- ◆ Reflect on the methods of practice that they used to support the individual and the group during the activity.
- ◆ In their evaluation of the activity, explain how they involved the individual and communicated with them.

Learners' evidence can be oral or written (or a combination of both) and captured in a range of media. It may 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>◆ theory relating to the individual’s background, needs, or diagnosis</li> <li>◆ methods of effective communication</li> <li>◆ attachment theory</li> <li>◆ the effect of adverse childhood experiences</li> <li>◆ how to work collaboratively with others when gathering information</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ gather information on the individual’s background, needs, or diagnosis</li> <li>◆ work collaboratively with others</li> <li>◆ consider the individual’s views and aspirations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ ethical and safe practices for supporting individuals in group living</li> <li>◆ safeguarding concerns in group-living environments</li> <li>◆ how to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in group living</li> <li>◆ how to balance rights, risk management and risk enablement with individuals</li> <li>◆ the legislative and regulatory framework for supporting individuals in a group-living environment</li> <li>◆ equality legislation, frameworks, and policy</li> <li>◆ the practice and service standards for supporting individuals in group living</li> <li>◆ gender-equal play</li> <li>◆ the importance of play across the lifespan</li> <li>◆ how group activities can support physical and mental wellbeing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ observe risk to the individual</li> <li>◆ use ethical and safe practices</li> <li>◆ consider gender identity</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ methods of effective communication</li> <li>◆ how to work with the individual to gather their views and aspirations</li> <li>◆ factors that mean that the individual may be more at risk of, or resilient to, harm and abuse</li> <li>◆ factors that may cause a risk to the individual’s health and wellbeing</li> <li>◆ the benefits of the group activity to the individual’s physical health and mental wellbeing</li> <li>◆ the challenges the individual faces and how to approach these with them</li> <li>◆ approaches to support the individual’s feeling of belonging to the group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ work collaboratively with others</li> <li>◆ consider the individual’s views and aspirations</li> <li>◆ use effective communication methods to ensure the individual is involved in planning the group activity</li> <li>◆ plan a group activity that:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— takes account of the individual’s background, strengths, capabilities and resilience</li> <li>— promotes the physical and mental wellbeing of the individual</li> <li>— considers the needs, views and aspirations of the group</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ support the individual’s feeling of belonging to the group</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the principles of trauma-informed practice</li> <li>◆ awareness of evidence-based methods of practice</li> <li>◆ gender equality</li> <li>◆ the importance of recognising individual identity in group living, including gender identity</li> <li>◆ gender-equal play</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use relational approaches when supporting the individual</li> <li>◆ adapt to group needs, wishes, and aspirations</li> <li>◆ use current and relevant evidence-based methods of practice</li> </ul>

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>
<p><b>Outcome 5</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ methods of practice used to support individuals</li><li>◆ how to evaluate activities and make improvements</li><li>◆ how to balance the needs, wishes and aspirations of the individual with those of others in the group</li></ul>	<p><b>Outcome 5</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ reflect on the methods of practice they used during the activity</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><li>◆ use effective communication to ensure the individual is involved in evaluating the activity</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: self-directed research; assessing the needs of an individual; reflecting on own knowledge and skills
- ◆ initiative: self-directed research; planning and supporting a group activity for an individual

### Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: receiving and processing information from various sources; sharing information through collaboration; adapting communication to the requirements of the individuals in the group
- ◆ feeling: taking an empathetic approach to supporting individuals in the group
- ◆ collaborating: gathering information with the individual and others on their needs, wishes and aspirations; working with others to plan and develop an activity

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: self-directed research; researching different theories, frameworks and methods to support individuals effectively
- ◆ creativity: designing and implementing an activity to support an individual
- ◆ critical thinking: evaluating and reviewing the approaches taken

## Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

### Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

- ◆ managing time-sensitive tasks
- ◆ allocating time to researching and applying tasks



## **Communication**

Learners develop communication skills by:

- ◆ communicating with others from a range of different backgrounds and experiences
- ◆ using relational approaches when communicating in care practice environments
- ◆ 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
- ◆ conveying ideas and knowledge through written, verbal and digital media

## **Digital**

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by:

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

## Delivery of unit

You can deliver this unit as a stand-alone unit or as an optional unit in the HNC Social Services. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award, you can integrate it with the core units. Most evidence requirements are suitable for integration with Approaches to Assessment in Social Services at SCQF level 7. Some evidence requirements directly relate to Health, Safeguarding, Welfare and Rights at SCQF level 7, which allows for further integration.

You can deliver the unit alongside one of the following Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units in the framework (at SCQF level 7):

- ◆ Contribute to Childcare Practice in Group Living
- ◆ Promote Participation in Therapeutic Group Activities

We recommend that you deliver the unit through:

- ◆ lectures
- ◆ group work
- ◆ practical classroom activities
- ◆ visiting speakers
- ◆ 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 which you can integrate with the mandatory unit Approaches to Assessment in Social Services. You can integrate knowledge and practice with all mandatory units and the core SVQ units.

The notional design length of the unit is 80 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 the background, needs, wishes and aspirations of an individual  
(20 hours)

**Outcome 2** — Explain ethical considerations when planning and supporting a group activity  
(15 hours)

**Outcome 3** — Plan a group activity, based on the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations, in collaboration with the individual and others  
(15 hours)

**Outcome 4** — Apply evidence-based methods of practice while supporting the group activity  
(15 hours)

**Outcome 5** — Evaluate the group activity and the methods used to support the individual  
(15 hours)

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## **Professional recognition**

This unit is an optional unit in the HNC Social Services framework. The HNC in Social Services meets registration requirements for the SSSC.

## Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

This unit helps learners to acquire knowledge of a range of methods used to support individuals in complex residential environments. Learners understand the impact on the individual of moving into, or living in, a group environment, and the circumstances that led to the individual needing this type of care. Learners should demonstrate an understanding of trauma-informed practice, taking account of the specific and sometimes complex needs of individuals. The unit is particularly suitable for those supporting individuals in residential childcare settings, secure-care settings, and group homes for adults with complex needs.

Learners develop an understanding of the impact of their own communications and interactions with individuals. Their study could include works such as *Making Moments Meaningful in Child and Youth Care Practice* (Thom Garfat, 2019) or *Core of Care* (Henry Maier, 1979). Learners understand the importance of connecting in a meaningful way with individuals. Similar methods may include working in the lifespace and social pedagogy. According to *Working in the Lifespace* (Mark Smith, 2005), lifespace involves 'the conscious use of everyday events to promote the growth, development and learning' of individuals. The principles of social pedagogy are centred around a broad education of individuals, promoting life skills and supporting development holistically. Social pedagogy also considers a relational approach to practice and examines communications between workers, individuals and the group as a whole. You can find more information on the [ThemPra Social Pedagogy website](#).

Learners should be aware of, and responsive to, how the individuals in the group feel and how to engage with them. Trauma-informed practice is about having an awareness of the effects of trauma and how these effects can impact on relationships, behaviour, mental health and physical wellbeing. Learners could examine the effects of adverse childhood experiences, developmental trauma, and attachment. You can find more information on these topics in the [National Trauma Training Programme](#). The [Dyadic Developmental Practice Network](#), and the work of Suzanne Zeedyk, Bruce Perry, and Dr Nadine Burke Harris.

When planning the group activity, learners must reflect on group dynamics and on ensuring the activity is a positive experience for all. Everyday group activities can be therapeutic and promote development, physical health, and mental wellbeing. These group activities could involve, but are not limited to, social or community activities, physical leisure activities, and creative activities. When planning the activity, learners should consider the needs, wishes and aspirations of the individual with their group, along with the most appropriate methods of supporting the activity. They should identify health and safety risks and safeguarding concerns, with reference to legislative and regulatory requirements.

Learners should also consider resilience factors, such as the individual having:

- ◆ a supportive family and community
- ◆ at least one supportive relationship based on trust
- ◆ self-esteem and self-efficacy
- ◆ social and communication skills
- ◆ a sense of control over their life
- ◆ a sense of purpose
- ◆ adaptive emotional skills

Learners must plan interventions in collaboration with the individual and the team involved in their care. Next, learners must evaluate how they implemented the activity.

Learners understand the importance of play across the lifespan to the physical health and mental wellbeing needs of individuals and how it enables them to achieve their outcomes. They can reflect on the concept of gender-equal play and how they promoted the identity of the individual throughout the group activity. This may contrast with stereotypical gender norms. Other ethical considerations may include how learners balanced the individuals' rights and responsibilities with any risk to them in carrying out the activity. In some settings, moving into care can involve some loss of liberty, along with barriers caused by balancing group needs with the needs of the individual. This could be due to the risk to the individual from themselves or others. Non-physical restraint, such as locked external doors, can be used to protect individuals. Learners are aware of national policy, guidance and the requirements for any such forms of restraint. Depending on the setting, knowledge of [The Promise Scotland](#), the [Each and Every Child Toolkit](#), the [Talking Hope Report \(Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, 2019\)](#) and [Rights, Risks and Limits to Freedom \(Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, 2021\)](#) may be useful to learners.

Learners should be aware of relevant legislation, practice and service standards regarding supporting individuals in group living in the context of their work setting or placement.

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, we recommend integration with the core units. You can assess the unit alongside one of the following SVQ units (at SCQF level 7):

- ◆ Contribute to Childcare Practice in Group Living
- ◆ Promote Participation in Therapeutic Group Activities

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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 with reference 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. Their portfolio should include a witness testimony and an anonymised product or products from the process of planning, implementing and evaluating the group activity. An oral and/or written assignment of approximately 2,500 words reflecting on their practice and the knowledge they have applied could also form part of the assessment. You can integrate this project with the HNC Social Services core unit: Approaches to Assessment in Social Services. Some evidence requirements relate to Health, Safeguarding, Welfare and Rights at SCQF level 7, which allows for further integration. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award and integrate it with the core 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

### Supporting Individuals in Group Living (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 understand the ethical considerations of supporting individuals in a group setting. You take account of the background, needs, wishes and aspirations of individuals, while encouraging participation with the group. You can focus on the complex skills and methods used to support individuals who may have experienced trauma or loss which has led to the requirement for residential care. These skills include a trauma-informed and a relational approach to practice.

When you complete the unit, you can:

- 1 explain the background, needs, wishes and aspirations of an individual
- 2 explain ethical considerations when planning and supporting a group activity
- 3 plan a group activity, based on the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations, in collaboration with the individual and others
- 4 apply evidence-based methods of practice while supporting the group activity
- 5 evaluate the group activity and the methods used to support the individual

Entry to the unit is at the centre's discretion. However, recommended entry may include qualifications at SCQF level 6 or experience of supporting individuals in residential group-living homes. 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 that involves planning, implementing and evaluating a group activity that takes account of the individual's needs, wishes, and aspirations. You produce product evidence from your activities and an assignment that evidences your knowledge and skills throughout the project.

Throughout the unit, you develop meta-skills covering self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

When you complete the unit as part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Social Services group award, you can 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
2.0	◆ Changes to 'Evidence requirements' section.	August 2024

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