

IN THE FRAME



Setting the pace: The SCQF postholders group and core team

FRAMEWORK IS FORGING AHEAD



Welcome to the second edition of *In the Frame*. The social services sector has been at the forefront of developments in implementing the SCQF and there is now widespread awareness and understanding of the framework across the sector. Application of the SCQF is embedded in the objectives of *Changing Lives*, the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, and is central to the SSSC Corporate Plan. The work of the SCQF project and the SCQF Co-ordination group for Social Services has done much to develop and promote opportunities for the sector such as the recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and credit rating workbased learning. We will continue to maximise the imaginative and flexible use of the SCQF to support the development of the social services workforce.

Carole Wilkinson

Carole Wilkinson, Chief Executive,
Scottish Social Services Council

THE WORK OF THE SCQF IN SOCIAL SERVICES PROJECT IS CONTINUING TO GATHER MOMENTUM.

Individual initiatives such as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Workbased Learning projects are applying aspects of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) to practice.

The project is collaborating on the Practice Learning Qualification (Social Services) through RPL and credit transfer and on articulation to the Degree in Social Work.

SCQF language and tools are also being used to promote education and training and to support social service workers in gaining qualifications for registration and lifelong learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - SVQs

The RPL process helps learners to gain confidence and enables them to think reflectively about their practice. This is aimed at recognising learning not previously assessed to enable learners to gain SVQ Level 2 or 3 without duplicating effort.

The first stage of the pilot involves testing materials for

formative recognition. This includes the use of an RPL tool which helps learners draw from prior experience to have their skills and knowledge recognised.

Organisations taking part included CrossReach, Viewpoint Housing Association, the Organisation of Residential Care Homes Angus (ORCHA), the Action Group and Inclusion Glasgow.

Stage two pilots materials to help gather evidence for SVQ 2 and 3. Groups of learners will be tracked until April 2007 as they obtain their SVQs. Learners from Glasgow City Council will be joining the pilot.

Credit-Rating of Workbased Learning

The SCQF in Social Services Project has commissioned the Scottish Centre for Work Based Learning at Glasgow Caledonian University to prepare South Lanarkshire Council's manager induction for credit rating.

A draft report recommended notional levels and credits, and the programme will now be credit-rated.

Perth & Kinross Council and SQA will be working on credit-rating a child protection foundation course.

The project will develop a template and guidelines for preparing workbased learning for credit-rating.

Working with Colleges

Working with colleges is a joint initiative by the SCQF postholders in social services, Scottish Further Education Unit, health and community learning and development.

The first rounds of meetings covered information sharing on RPL and partnership activity, the work of the Learning Networks and SCQF developments.

For more information, contact Alison Harold, SCQF Project Officer for Social Services, email: alison.harold@sssc.uk.com

PRACTICE LEARNING FRAMEWORK TAKES SHAPE

THE NEW FRAMEWORK FOR PRACTICE LEARNING IS TAKING SHAPE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT WORK ON THE CORE ASPECTS OF THE NEW PRACTICE LEARNING QUALIFICATIONS (SOCIAL SERVICES).

The framework has four stages, each set at an SCQF level that reflects the role and responsibilities of the candidate in supporting learning for practice. Stage one is at SCQF Level 7, Stage two at SCQF Level 9, Stage three at SCQF Level 10 and Stage 4 at SCQF Level 11.

The work is being taken forward by a number of working groups representing employer, education and service user and carer interests.

The core aspects are:

- assessment
- teaching and learning materials
- RPL and credit transfer
- service user and carer involvement
- the role of the tutor and mentor.

The RPL and credit transfer working group is looking at the range of current awards that articulate with the different stages of

the PLQ (SS) to help those who have equivalent learning through other qualifications or non-accredited learning.

This will be particularly useful to those working as SVQ assessors. It will also be useful to service users and carers, who contribute to the training and education of social workers but cannot achieve formal recognition through a qualification. RPL and credit transfer will be based on SCQF guidance materials.

The PLQ (SS) will be delivered through the four regional Learning Networks - North, South East, Tayforth and West.

Learning Network West has reached agreement with the SQA to develop the first three stages of the PLQ (SS) as SQA Professional Development Awards. Stage four will be offered as a 60-credit module in some Masters degrees.

Stage three is planned to be ready by spring 2007 so that it can become the new qualification for practice teachers next year. Stages one and two should be ready by late 2007.

Once the SQA awards have been validated they will become available across Scotland, and other Learning Networks are discussing whether to sign up for them.

Learning Network Tayforth has already agreed to deliver the SQA PLQ (SS) Stages one, two and three. The alternative is for universities and colleges to develop their own PLQ (SS) but there has been less interest in this option.

Further information is available from Sheila Lockhart, Project Officer, email: sheila.lockhart@sssc.uk.com or the SPLP website: www.splp.uk.com

WHAT ARE LEARNING NETWORKS?

LEARNING NETWORKS WERE SET UP BY THE SCOTTISH PRACTICE LEARNING PROJECT AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMUNITY IN 2005.

Funded by the Scottish Executive, they are partnerships between employers and education providers to:

- develop systems to embed employee development for all social service workers
- support partner organisations in meeting registration requirements for their staff
- improve quantity, quality and diversity of practice learning opportunities
- help partners achieve workforce planning and development.

Learning Networks aim to support the delivery of a competent, confident and valued workforce by ensuring that workbased learning and continuing professional development are comprehensive, efficient and integrated. The Scottish Social Services Council is responsible for their monitoring.

In helping employers to meet the qualification requirements for registration, Learning Networks can play an important role in promoting and using

the SCQF, and disseminating examples of best practice in the use of RPL.

The SCQF Working with Colleges group has set up groups of colleges to work alongside the Learning Networks to gather and distribute information on current activity between colleges and employers.

To learn more about the Learning Networks, visit: www.learningnetworks.org.uk

SVQ PILOT PROJECT REPORTS

A pilot project to enable some SVQs to be credit-rated and levelled within the SCQF framework was completed in August last year.

Sponsored by the Scottish Executive and managed by SQA

Accreditation, it covers 20 different SVQs including Health and Social Care at Levels 2, 3 and 4.

Copies of the final report can be downloaded at: www.scqf.org.uk/downloads.asp

ALIGNING SOCIAL WORK STANDARDS TO THE SCQF

A PROJECT AIMED AT MATCHING LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE FOR QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORKERS AGAINST SCQF LEVELS IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE SCOTTISH INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION.

The project to align Standards in Social Work Education to the SCQF explores what student social workers learn - both in the classroom and workplace - during different stages in their programme.

It looks not only at what they learn, but at what SCQF level they are learning at different points in their programmes, and whether both classroom and practice learning can provide linked opportunities for learning.

The project aims to:

- better inform thinking about RPL. If what student social workers are learning is closely mapped at different stages and levels, it should be easier for someone who wants to join a programme in the second or third years to know what equivalent learning they have to evidence

- provide a clearer understanding of what is being assessed and at what level to enable practice teachers to more accurately assess students' work
- provide an opportunity to develop clearer and more consistent guidance for higher education institutions and employers to work together.

Work is being carried out with two higher education institutions to map learning in two specific areas - risk assessment and research - and with employing agencies to see what further information and support they need to assess students in practice.

The project's findings are due to be published in June 2007.

Further information from: Andrina Duncan, Project Officer, email: ay.duncan@dundee.ac.uk

NEW HIGHER COURSE

A NEW HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (HIGHER) COURSE AT SCQF LEVEL 6 IS DUE TO BE LAUNCHED BY THE SQA THIS SUMMER.

Part of the SQA's Skills for Work programme, the course is aimed at senior school pupils who want to find out more about care work and can be used as a stepping stone to further and higher education courses. It is also suitable for adult returners.

The course will consist of four mandatory units, each awarding six SCQF credit points. The units can also be taught on a stand-alone basis.

The units are:

- Understanding and Supporting People in a Care Setting
- Care Principles and Practice
- Working in a Care Setting
- Health Safety and Protection in a Care Setting.

A key feature is learning through practical experience. Candidates will have the opportunity to experience aspects of care work through work placements or simulated workplace settings.

There will also be an emphasis on building confidence and preparing candidates to be effective care workers through role play, case studies, visiting speakers and research.

Further information is available from Tom Stannage, Qualifications Manager, SQA, Tel: 0845 213 5502, email: tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk

WORKSHOPS HELP RAISE AWARENESS

A SERIES OF CROSS SECTOR WORKSHOPS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE SCQF WERE HELD IN EDINBURGH, GLASGOW AND INVERNESS IN NOVEMBER.

The workshops, organised by the SCQF postholders group and core team, were aimed at increasing knowledge of the SCQF, the process of credit rating and how to prepare submissions for a credit-rating body.

They also introduced delegates to the principles of recognition of prior learning (RPL) and how to use the SCQF as a route to achieving credit.

Alison Harold, SCQF Project Officer for Social Services, said:

"The workshops proved extremely worthwhile with health, social services and community learning and development all well represented.

"All those who attended said that they had learnt a great deal about credit rating, levelling and RPL, and how to apply those in their work setting."

Further workshops are likely to be held later this year.

NEW AWARD FOR EARLY YEARS LEADERS

A NEW AWARD FOR EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE LEADERS AT SCQF LEVEL 9 IS TO BE DEVELOPED FOLLOWING THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE WORKFORCE.

The award forms part of a number of key pieces of work that Ministers have asked the Scottish Social Services Council to take forward following the publication of *Investing in Children's Futures*.

Other initiatives include the development of an integrated qualifications and professional development framework for the sector and a toolkit to help employers understand progression routes for early years and childcare workers.

The first part of the work requires the development of a benchmark at SCQF Level 9 to support the integrated qualifications framework, which is expected to be in place by September 2007.

The work will be supported by the SCQF Early Education and Childcare Group,

which will provide a forum for discussing and disseminating best practice and dialogue between the higher and further education sectors in Scotland.

Others involved in the process will be key employers, umbrella organisations and membership organisations that support the sector.

A key feature of the new awards that will emerge will be the emphasis on workbased learning and on credit transfer and accessibility by bringing learning to the learner.

Further information is available from Frances Scott, SSSC Learning and Development Adviser, Tel: 01382 207154, email: frances.scott@sssc.uk.com



WORKPLACE LEARNING – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

WORKPLACE LEARNING CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE.

But there is a need to develop a common understanding of concepts such as workplace learning and to familiarise employers with SCQF terms such as levels and credit-rating. To help workers and employers, the SCQF Co-ordination Group

for Social Services has produced this simple guide. Further information is available from Karl Stern, Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Perth & Kinross Council, email: kstern@pkc.gov.uk

Workplace learning is all learning which is supported by the workplace in some way. The range and types of learning can be described as:

<p>PLANNED, TAUGHT LEARNING Taught and accredited courses, including online and distance learning</p> <p>Taught courses, required or optional, non-validated</p> <p>Taught courses validated but not accredited or levelled, e.g. Health and Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of development (knowledge, skills and values) is sought as part of process could be enhanced by quality assurance processes, e.g. levelling or credit rating as above
<p>PLANNED, NOT TAUGHT, LEARNING Induction – could include taught components from above</p> <p>Any learning activities undertaken with prior agreement, e.g. joining a working group, observing a meeting or a piece of work identified in a learning review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as above could contribute to RPL
<p>SELF EMBEDDED LEARNING Learning that a worker gains or finds out for themselves during the course of their working life via colleagues, reading, observing, experience and practice. Often the most powerful learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could contribute to RPL

REFLECTIONS ON LIFELONG LEARNING

MALCOLM MURRAY-SMITH, SENIOR CARE WORKER, VIEWPOINT HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MALCOLM MURRAY-SMITH HAS ACCUMULATED A VAST ARRAY OF SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE FROM A VARIED CAREER THAT HAS INCLUDED BEING A WARRANT OFFICER IN THE ARMY TO WORKING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY.

It's not the kind of background that would appear to be directly relevant to working in a care home in Edinburgh. However, thanks to a pilot project that recognises the informal learning that has taken place throughout an individual's lifetime, Murray (as he prefers to be known) has successfully applied for a promotion. He is now planning to build on this further to take a formal SVQ at Level 3.

Murray is now leading a team of care workers at Viewpoint Housing Association in Edinburgh, supporting older people in residential care. He - and the many older people he cares for - are benefiting today from the recognition of the importance of lifelong learning.

"This process made me realise that I had more skills than I thought. There are all these bits of experience that actually make up to quite a lot. It certainly helped my confidence," said Murray.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pilot aims to develop a Scotland-wide scheme to take account of all prior learning that has not been assessed and credit rated. It can be used to gain entry to programmes of study and to gain credits towards such programmes.

It can also be linked to the development of learning at both personal and professional levels. This pilot has been developed through the SCQF and Social Services Project which is managed by the SSSC.

The RPL process involved Murray reflecting on the skills he had gained throughout his life, with the support and guidance of his mentor, Care Home Manager Julie McNaughton. Although the care sector is very different from the Army, he found there are core skills that



apply to both, including team working, problem solving, prioritising, discipline, diplomacy, adaptability and communication.

Murray put together a portfolio of his previous learning and how it can impact on his present role. It includes painful experiences such as dealing with death in a bush war

against terrorists in South Africa and how that has helped him comfort the bereaved in his new role. It also includes how his chess hobby can help in his work by thinking things through and planning ahead.

The portfolio has helped him gain the confidence to develop his skills and gain the recent promotion from a care worker to a senior care worker. "It shows that you never stop learning and there are all sorts of experiences that can help in everyday situations," said Murray.

He never expected to be working in the care sector and admitted that it was a

"sheer fluke" that he has ended up doing so. He was on a Job Restart programme when he found he was under-qualified for some vacancies and over-qualified for others. He was given a placement in a day centre which, at the time, he thought was just another job. However, he became hooked and the job has now become a career, thanks, in part, to the RPL project.

Pat Sinclair, HR Manager at Viewpoint hopes that Murray's experience will encourage more staff to use their past experience to develop skills for the future. "It is great that we are recognising prior learning and using it to help people build career pathways. That has got to be the way ahead."

This interview has been reproduced from the Scottish Executive report *Life Through Learning: Strategy Update 2006*, published on 4 December, which is available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/publications

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YOUR FAQs

We answer some of the most commonly asked questions about the SCQF framework.

Is it the SCQF's job to award qualifications?

No, the SCQF is not a regulatory framework or an awarding body. Awarding and accrediting qualifications is still the job of organisations like the SQA, universities, colleges and statutory and professional bodies.

Does the SCQF measure the quality of teaching?

No. That is not part of the SCQF's purpose. The framework is a new way of looking at, comparing and understanding Scottish qualifications. Other organisations such as HMIE review the quality of teaching.

What's the difference between general and specific credits?

SCQF credit points are general credit points to show the amount of learning you need to acquire to gain a qualification. The SQA and individual colleges and universities will decide how relevant that piece of learning is for the programme of learning you want to do and award specific credit points.

Can credit be gained for non-certificated learning?

Yes. Credit points can be acquired through a process called Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This involves acknowledgement by a receiving institution of the skills and knowledge a person has acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credit points towards a learning programme or module. The RPL process will vary for each institution.

How do learners acquire SCQF credit points?

The credit points show how much work is involved in achieving that qualification - one credit point equates to a notional 10 hours of learning. So for provision that awards 24 SCQF credit points, it will take on average 240 hours of learning to complete the learning outcomes associated with the qualification.

How can individuals use their SCQF credit points?

Credit points gained from previous learning may be able to count towards other learning programmes. It is always up to the receiving institution how many credit points they are prepared to grant towards a programme of learning. This transfer of credit may help reduce duplication of learning and allow the learner to gain the qualification more quickly. The way credit is used depends on the requirements of the learning programme and the provider.

SCQF FORMALISES PARTNERSHIP



Andrew Cubie: Heading the new partnership board

The organisations involved in developing the SCQF have formed a company limited by guarantee.

The SCQF Partnership formalises an informal partnership between: Quality Assurance Agency Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Universities Scotland, the Association of Scotland's Colleges and the Scottish Executive.

Its main aims are to:

- maintain the quality assurance and integrity of the framework
- promote and develop the SCQF
- maintain and develop relationships with other frameworks in the UK, Europe and internationally.

Dr Andrew Cubie, Chair of the SCQF Joint Advisory Committee, has been appointed Chair of the SCQF Partnership board.

The other board members are David Caldwell, Director of Universities Scotland; Norman Sharp, Head of QAA Scotland; Stephen Kerr, Head of the Skills and Work Division at the Scottish Executive; John Young, Director of Qualifications at SQA, and Dr Ray Harris, Principal of Telford College, Edinburgh, for the Association of Scotland's Colleges.

SIESWE FORMS COMPANY

The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) is to become a company limited by guarantee with a new Strategic Board of representatives from universities, colleges, employers, voluntary sector and service users and carers.

The Strategic Board will drive strategic change, good governance and best practice and enable the Institute to meet its widening role in the implementation of *Changing Lives*, the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review.

It will be supported by a strengthened team, with the appointment of a new Corporate Services Manager and several new members of staff in learning technology, research and development and workplace learning.

Future goals include continuing to promote the SCQF and recognising the value of a framework that identifies learning across all disciplines and at all academic levels.

Further information is available at: www.sieswe.org

In the Frame is published by the Scottish Social Services Council, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY. Lo-call: 0845 60 30 891 Tel: 01382 207101 Fax: 01382 207215 email: enquiries@sssc.uk.com Website: www.sssc.uk.com

Editor: David Mitchell Design & Print: Astron B49963 1/07