

Timetable

The new National Occupational Standards, qualification structures and the assessment strategy will be in place early in 2005.

Information will be posted at www.niscc.info and distributed through networks as the materials are developed.

For further information about National Occupational Standards for social care workers contact

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Review of the National Occupational Standards and Awards in Social Care

October 2004

National Occupational Standards (NOS) in social care explain what social care workers are expected to do and how they should carry out these tasks. These are national standards, which means that people using social care services, anywhere in the United Kingdom, should receive services from staff working to the same social care standards. National Occupational Standards will help develop a skilled workforce and a better quality of service. This will benefit the people who use services and those who provide them. NISCC is registering the social care workforce. Staff registered with the Council must meet standards for their work, as agreed in the NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers.

NISCC has been part of the UK project to revise the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Social Care. These new standards, the corresponding National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) structures and the assessment strategy for NVQs were endorsed at the July meeting of the United Kingdom Coordinating Group (UKCG). This group had been set up by the education regulatory bodies to approve standards and qualifications.

National Occupational Standards (NOS)

The underpinning principles used to develop the new National Occupational Standards included:

- The need to use plain language in order to make them more understandable.
- The use of the active voice.
- Standards that are more evenly sized.
- The embedding of values, range and the Codes of Practice in all relevant National Occupational Standards.
- The creation of an increased number of standards to support modernised and innovative practice.

National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Structures

The underpinning principles used to develop the new qualification structures included:

- The need to develop a more flexible qualification to enable staff to more effectively meet the needs of users and as an aid to career progression.
- Clear boundaries between NVQ levels with no sharing of units between levels.
- The need to demonstrate initial competence to practice safely.

The new NVQ titles and structures for social care are as follows:

- NVQ level 2 Health and Social Care (4 mandatory units + 2 optional units).
- NVQ level 3 Health and Social Care (4 mandatory units + 4 optional units) with either an adult or children and young people pathway.
- NVQ level 4 Health and Social Care (4 mandatory units + 4 optional units) with either an adult or children and young person pathway.

Assessment Strategy

The underpinning principle behind this revised strategy is:

“the need to balance flexibility of assessment for staff working in a range of settings with the need to create a robust quality system to deliver a qualification that reflects work-based competence.”

The new assessment strategy proposes the use (where applicable) of an ‘expert witness’ who can contribute to the assessment of evidence of a candidate’s competence. The expert witness must have a working knowledge of the National Occupational Standards and have current expertise and occupational competence.

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