

As you are aware, work on the Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF) is developing at speed. Skills for Care are developing units in the area of Activities Coordinator in response to the identified need from the sector and The National Minimum Care Standards for Care Homes for Older People (Department of Health, 2003) which states that service users, particularly those with dementia, should have opportunities for stimulation through leisure and recreational activities which suits their needs, preferences and capacities.

Skills for Care have been clear in our direction of travel that the QCF allows us the flexibility to undertake some generic 'performance' units that indicate the worker can do tasks and also 'knowledge' units that indicate the worker has the required knowledge to meet the needs of the people who use the service. We would therefore like to separate units that are differentiated on the basis of knowledge or skill. This would avoid duplication of learning for those learners who may undertake the unit in a setting where they are not yet able to demonstrate competence i.e. at college.

The content and structure of the proposed Activities units and qualifications will allow the opportunity to undertake specialist awards or certificates. Rules of combination will also allow the completion of replacement NVQ level 2&3 Health and Social Care (HSC) QCF qualifications as a specialist career pathway. The units will offer the opportunity to accredit specialist dementia knowledge and competence. In addition they may be used to develop internal career pathways through offering bite-size steps towards the full qualification at each level. To confirm occupational competence for qualifications required for registration and regulation learners will be required to complete both knowledge and skill units. There may be some separate assessment of knowledge and skill in individual units. Rules of Combination will be used to help ensure that assessment of knowledge and competence are not separated inappropriately.

Skills for Care feel that it is of paramount importance to involve the sector in the development work and as part of the quality assurance process.

The terms of reference are attached for your information, though the role of the reference group will be:

- To act as an advisor
- That draft materials be sampled, with a focus on mandatory units/core material, and any optional units with a partner-specific priority
- That draft materials be reviewed against tight criteria.
- That the internal reference group operate primarily as a 'virtual' group, circulating material by email and responding by email and through teleconferences, working to agreed timescales that will be notified as early as possible.