

Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement

November 2007

10 Guided Learning Hours

QCA Accreditation: 500/1987/9

Description:

The government white paper, entitled *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier* published in 2004, identified the need for a new role of NHS Health Trainer to be established, to advise, motivate and support individuals to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

This short RSPH Level 2 award has been developed in support of the wider Health Trainer role identified in the white paper, for which Level 3 qualifications are being developed by other awarding bodies.

The RSPH Level 2 Award provides an introduction to the fundamentals of health and wellbeing, of barriers to making a change of lifestyle and of how to help people to make changes to improve their health. It is relevant to target groups across a range of community and organisation settings. Organisations with an interest in the health and wellbeing of their workforce and customer/client groups will find the RSPH Level 2 Award valuable. It provides an ideal way of equipping key staff with basic health advice and methods of support which they can then use to inform and assist colleagues and/or customers. Employers may wish to use this award as core modular training, to which they could add further training specific to their workplace needs.

The Award is mapped to relevant elements of the National Occupational Standards for Health Trainers and is therefore also appropriate as a stand alone stepping stone for those aspiring to become Health Trainers, as it provides consolidation of learning prior to attaining full Health Trainer competence.

The aim of this award is to equip candidates with a knowledge and understanding of the principles of promoting health and wellbeing and of how to direct individuals towards further practical support in their efforts to attain a healthier lifestyle.

The Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement is a single unit qualification. All outcomes are assessed.

Supported by the Department of Health



Range of Settings

Health sector (hospitals, surgeries)
Care sector (care homes, residential homes)
Local authorities
Prisons
Leisure and fitness industry
Education sector (schools, colleges, universities, youth workers)
Retail sector (pharmaceutical, supermarkets, health food shops)
Other public services (police, fire, armed forces)
Large corporate employers (workforce support and welfare)

Overview

This award provides individuals with the underpinning knowledge and understanding necessary to work effectively in helping people who need support and encouragement to make positive changes in their lives, including how to help them access further assistance (in, for example, identifying barriers to change, and setting goals) towards the objective of adopting and maintaining a healthier lifestyle.

This Award counts as one credit in the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Summary of Outcomes

To achieve this qualification a candidate must know and understand:

- The importance and benefits to public health of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace and community settings.
- The factors that facilitate and create barriers to health improvement.
- The principles of behaviour change and maintenance and of how to apply them in helping people to make changes.
- The responsibilities associated with handling confidential and sensitive information.
- Methods that may be used to evaluate a programme to promote healthier lifestyles.

Content

The HT K references indicate how elements of this award map to the 'knowledge and understanding' elements of the Health Trainer National Occupational Standards.

1. **The importance and benefits to public health of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace and community settings**

Basic concepts of health: The meaning of the term 'Health' in relation to physical, mental and social health and wellbeing (**HT2 K1, 2, 3**); the common models of 'Health'. **HT2 K1, 2, 3**.

Promoting health and wellbeing: The benefits to making changes to improve health and wellbeing using diet and activity as examples (**HT2 K4, HT2 K9**); how Government policy is linked to health promotion and the role of the person providing health information and support (Broad outline only. Include the social and financial costs of poor health, and the need to highlight the benefits of improving health) (**HT2 K4, 5, 8, 9; HT3 K3, 6**); the principal (both individual and wider) factors that affect health and wellbeing (**HT2 K3, 15; HT3 K3, 5, 22**); how individuals' attitude to health and lifestyle can trigger or reinforce aspects of behaviour (**HT2 K2, 7; HT3 K2, 3**); how individuals can promote their own health with the help of local services (using examples relevant to candidates' own workplaces) (**HT2 K5, 6; HT3 K18**)

2. **Factors that support health improvement and factors that create barriers**

Inequalities: interventions that support health improvement (**HT2 K3, 4**); the factors related to inequality in health (**HT2 K3; HT3 K1, 4, 5**); the layers of influence and how they may affect health in candidates' areas of practice (**HT2 K3; HT3, K5**).

Communication: The four basic communication skills: Non-verbal, para-verbal, verbal, active listening (**HT1, K1, 2, 3; HT2 K13; HT3 K20**); the barriers to effective communication: speech, mis-communication, ethnicity, beliefs (**HT1 K14; HT2 K13, 15; HT3 K20, 22**); ways of overcoming communication barriers (**HT2 K13; HT3 K20**)

3. **Principles used in health behaviour change and maintenance and how to apply them**

Health behaviour change theory (brief outline only) (**HT3 K6, 7, 8**); how a person's attitude to changing behaviour (reasoned action) can create barriers (**HT2 K7; HT3 K8**); the basic principles of goal setting as part of a plan to improve health (**HT3 K8, 9, 10, 11**); how to help people with goal setting as part of their plans for improved health, and coping with setbacks (Including the use of the SMART principles) (**HT2 K8, HT3 K9, 10, 11, 12, 18**).

4. **The responsibilities associated with handling confidential and sensitive information**

The policies and procedures (broad terms only) relating to confidentiality, as set out in relevant Department of Health codes of practice, or in candidates' own organisations (**HT1 K10; HT2 K11; HT3 K17**)

5. **Methods that may be used to evaluate a programme to promote healthier lifestyles**

The kinds of information that can be collected for evaluation purposes (**HT1 K5, HT3 K15, 19**); ways of checking an individual's health and lifestyle changes as an outcome of participation in a programme (**HT3 K15**); how the outcomes of evaluation of the programme can be used to improve it (**HT2 K16; HT3 K23**)

Relevance to National Occupational Standards and Public Health Practice

This award provides an essential grounding in key areas of health training, on which further knowledge, understanding and competencies can be built. The award is mapped to the relevant knowledge and understanding elements of the Skills for Health Competences for Health Trainers:

HT1: Make relationships with communities.

HT2: Communicate with individuals about promoting their health and wellbeing

HT3: Enable individuals to change their behaviour to improve their own health and wellbeing

Assessment

The assessment will consist of one examination paper of 30 multiple choice questions to be answered in 45 minutes.

To attain a pass, candidates must achieve 20 correct answers out of 30 (66%).

To attain a credit, they must achieve 26 correct answers out of 30 (87%).

Pre-course Entry Requirements

There are no pre-course entry requirements. It is recommended that candidates for this Award have good oral communication skills, basic standards of literacy and numeracy and an ability to relate to people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Examination Entry Requirements

Candidates must have attained the knowledge outcomes detailed below, prior to taking the examination. This may be achieved by undertaking a course of instruction approved by the RSPH, or by having attained other suitable qualifications and/or experience.

Application for entry to the examination must be made through an RSPH registered training centre. A list of centres is available on the RSPH website: www.rsph.org.uk

Examination Results and Certificates

RSPH Registered Centres will be supplied with a results list stating whether candidates have passed or failed the examination and indicating the grade.

Certificates for successful candidates are normally sent to RSPH Registered Centres for distribution to candidates.

Progression

Holders of this award may wish to progress to a Level 3 qualification in any of the broad fields of health and social care, education, health improvement, community development or the public services. Those who aspire to become Health Trainers will be able to progress to Level 3 Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) for Health Trainers. City & Guilds currently offer the VRQ Certificate for Health Trainers at Level 3, accredited by QCA and mapped to National Occupational Standards. For more information please see the following website: www.cityandguilds.com/healthtrainers
Holders of the Level 2 Award may also progress to Health Trainer programmes validated by universities in the UK. See the RSPH website for further details www.rsph.org.uk

Key Skills

Delivery of the RSPH Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement provides opportunities for developing and assessing certain Key Skills.

The examination does not directly assess Key Skills, but the knowledge required, if put into practice during a course, would require the application of Key Skills which might be independently assessed at the same time in line with published guidance. See Appendix for further guidance.

Guidance for Training / Examination Centres

Centres wishing to provide courses leading to the RSPH Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement should first apply to RSPH for registration.

Prospective trainers will normally:

- be a registered Health Professional in a related field of practice OR have at least a recognised Level 3 (or equivalent) qualification in a related field
- have practical experience of working/managing in a relevant working environment
- have a training qualification and/or experience of training.

Full details of registration procedures and application forms are available from the RSPH website (www.rsph.org.uk).

Examinations for this qualification can be held on demand and exam bookings can be made online via the RSPH website (www.rsph.org.uk) or directly with

The Qualifications Department,
Royal Society for Public Health
3rd Floor
Market Towers
1 Nine Elms Lane
SW8 5NQ

Exam bookings should be made at least two weeks before the date of the examination. Bookings made less than two weeks before the date of the examination will be subject to a late booking fee.

Examination Centres may wish to make special arrangements for candidates for whom the standard examination format might present difficulties. Full details and the special arrangements form can be found on the RSPH website (www.rsph.org.uk).

Other Issues

Delivery of this award provides opportunities for developing understanding of wider issues that affect us all. Some areas for consideration are given below.

Spiritual, social and cultural issues	These issues are integral to this award. Candidates may discuss the spiritual, social and cultural influences on individuals and how these may affect how they think and feel about themselves, their lifestyle and changing it.
Moral, ethical and legislative issues, including health and safety	Candidates may discuss moral issues relating to the adverse effects of inequalities on health, by considering aspects such as ethnicity, employment and social class. Ethical issues on maintenance of confidentiality in relation to personal information known or held about individuals may be considered. These issues are integral to this award. Regarding health and safety, candidates may consider whether there are any risk factors relating to their work role and how they might address them.
Economic issues	Candidates may discuss the financial cost to individuals, and the wider economic cost, of poor health. This issue is integral to this award.
Environment and sustainability issues	Candidates may consider ways in which people's lifestyles may impact on the environment and on sustainable living, for example the quantity of waste that is produced (eg food, food wrapping and plastic bottles, cigarette packets).
European and global issues	In considering social and cultural influences on health, candidates may wish to compare such influences on lifestyles in the UK and in other countries. The World Health Organization's definition of health, and its five key principles of health promotion, underpins all the outcomes of this award.

Appendix

Key Skills

Although the RSPH Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement does not directly assess Key Skills, the delivery of it provides opportunities for developing, or for generating evidence for, Key Skills which might be independently assessed in line with published guidance. Some examples of such opportunities are given below, but it is recommended that tutors first read the relevant Key Skills standards and guidance which can be accessed at <http://www.qca.org.uk/6507.html> Guidance on assessment can be accessed at <http://www.qca.org.uk/6445.html>

Application of Number

Skill	Specification Content	Suggested Activity
N2.1	Interpret information from a suitable source	Candidates could be asked to interpret statistics on the incidence of ill health caused by smoking, over-eating, lack of exercise and similar lifestyle behaviours.
N2.2	Use your information to carry out calculations	Candidates could be asked to show how statistics compare over time, for the various diseases amongst different age groups, social classes and geographical areas.

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Communication

Skill	Specification Content	Suggested Activity
C2.2	Read and summarise information from at least two documents on the same subject. Each must be a minimum of 500 words long.	Candidates could be asked to undertake this exercise using documents/handouts provided or recommended by the tutor for any aspect of the syllabus.
C3.1a	Take part in a group discussion	Group discussions could be held on barriers to effective communication and how these might be overcome; or on the matters described in "Other Issues" below. Candidates should make clear contributions to the discussion, respond sensitively to

others and develop points and ideas. They should also encourage others to contribute.

Working with Others

Skills	Specification Content	Suggested Activity
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WO2.1	Plan work with others	Candidates could undertake a joint exercise to identify, from a given scenario, lifestyle behaviours that could be changed to improve an individual's health, and how they would help support the individual to plan in making lifestyle changes for health improvement.
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Information and Communication Technology

Skills	Specification Content	Suggested Activity
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ICT2.1	Search for and select information to meet your needs, using different sources of information for each task and multiple search criteria in at least one case.	Candidates could search websites (eg those of Department of Health, British Nutrition Foundation, Diabetes UK, Action on Smoking and Health, Skills for Health Sector Skills Council), journals, magazines and other information sources for literature that would help clients in support sessions.
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