

National Activity Providers Association (NAPA)

Supporting activity provision in social care

The National Association for Providers of Activities, a national charity and membership organisation, developed a training programme to deliver the Level 2 qualification for activity co-ordinators. They ran this training for staff who work in activity provision in care homes.

Background

NAPA is a national charity and membership organisation who support care teams to enable older people to live their lives in the way they would like, with meaning and purpose. Their vision is that activity is at the heart of care for older people.

NAPA reports that there is a lack of formal qualifications for those caring for older people. The Level 2 qualification for activity workers aims to address this. It focuses on a specific sub-group who would not otherwise receive specialised training. Often there is only one activity co-ordinator in each home which means sharing best practice can be a challenge. Training provides an

important opportunity for activity workers to learn and support one another in this challenging role.

What we wanted to achieve

This project had three aims:

- To effect cultural change in care settings by promoting person-centred care and valuing the importance of activity in relation to well-being.
- To increase awareness and uptake of a new vocational qualification for Activity Providers working in care settings, and move towards a registered workforce.
- To develop a cost effective electronic format to promote greater uptake of the new qualification.

Over the last few years there has been increased focus on social connections, wellbeing and lifestyle for residents in care. This course aimed to address the training need for activity workers.

This training course was developed when the activity provision qualifications were new. Prior to this similar courses had been run but they did not lead to a qualification. This was important because having a qualification increases the profile of activity co-ordinators within the care profession.



What we did

The Level 2 Award in Activity Provision offered through this project was developed to contain four units: understanding activity provision in social care; delivery of activities; benefits of engaging in activities; and dementia awareness. The course provides the basic foundation of knowledge necessary for any activity worker and is seen by many as a minimum requirement for the role. The Level 2 course can be done over a two year period but on average people complete it in about six or seven months.

It was developed by established trainers and can be completed either as a blended learning or purely distance learning course. NAPA felt it is important to offer an online version of the course to allow larger numbers of activity workers to access the training. However, in practice it can be difficult for activity workers to access a computer in the care setting.

The course has proved to be popular and as a result they have developed a training course to deliver the Level 3 Certificate in Activity Provision in Social Care.

What we achieved

The course has proved extremely popular with activity workers. The most important reason for this was that they felt that the course increased their confidence and credibility.

Some activity workers noted they felt that they had more credibility with their managers as a result of attending the course. Having a qualification in activity provision was important both in terms of how they viewed their own role but also how others within their organisation view them. The course increased the profile of activity workers.

“The impact we have on students is on two levels. Confidence and credibility”

Sylvie Silver- NAPA

“I wanted a course and an exam in my field of work because I couldn't find anything else out there...I think it's a good thing for us, it recognises us as activity co-ordinators”

Beneficiary

Activity workers also reported making changes in their work practice in line with their learning. Notably, they reported taking a more person-centred approach to provision and having better planning mechanisms. For example using individual's life stories to inform activity planning.

What we learnt

There is a large demand for this type of training. NAPA were surprised at the numbers of people now undertaking the course without them having any kind of marketing budget to promote it. In Ireland for example they have had six care homes involved. This is particularly pleasing because the course accreditation is not recognised there. They also have a short list of people waiting for the Level 3 course to start.

This success was at least in part due to the distance learning medium. It meant that more people could do the course and that learners can enrol on the course on a rolling basis.

The challenge for other employers wishing to run a similar course will be that finding suitable markers and tutors is difficult in this specialist area. This can only be addressed by training more activity workers to a high level.

For more information please contact

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Skills for Care Recommends

From activity provision and dementia qualifications to associated guidance, Skills for Care produces various resources to strengthen care worker skills and enable better care provision.

Common core principles for supporting people with dementia

We have produced a guide which supports the social care and health workforce to care for people with dementia. Employers should use the principles as part of their development plans to improve the experience of those with dementia and their carers.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/
dementia](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/dementia)

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