

This work is taken from an analysis of leadership development in social work and social services qualifications and awards. It was undertaken by Jean Gordon and Mary Coles for the Scottish Social Services Council in 2011. In this extract, the authors demonstrate where the Mental Health Officer Award (MHOA) supports the development of leadership knowledge, skills and values.

The Mapping

Skills, knowledge and competence relating to the leadership capabilities in the Continuous Learning Framework are mainly to be found in the following standards of the MHOA:

Learning Focus 1: Mental Well-being and Mental Disorder

Standards:

- 1.1 Engagement with individuals affected by mental disorder, and where appropriate their families, carers and relevant others in ways appropriate to the MHO role.
- 1.5 Application of knowledge of the range of care, support and treatments for mental disorders to the potential outcomes for vulnerable people at risk of being subject to the powers of relevant legislation.

Learning Focus 2: Powers and Duties

Standard:

- 2.6 Addressing the rights of the individual and others involved in statutory processes, including those relating to appeals, termination and maintenance orders.

Learning Focus 3: Collaborative Working in relation to roles and organisations

Standards:

- 3.4 Leadership in contributing to planning and implementation of interventions, in the assessment and management of care, support and treatment.
- 3.5 Managing professional tensions, dilemmas and conflict.

Learning Focus 4: Assessment and Management of need, care and risk

Standard:

- 4.4 Assessing and managing risk, planned and unplanned, within the existing risk management frameworks, in conjunction with other disciplines.

Knowledge, skills and values in the MHOA have been mapped below. Those elements which 'must be applied to demonstrate leadership in practice' are in bold, and those elements which are 'foundations for leadership' are not.

MHOA Knowledge	Learning Focus
The significance of mental health and well-being for human growth and development	1
The possibilities of improving the mental well-being of vulnerable people affected by mental disorders, including applicable research evidence	1
The rights, of individuals, families and carers involved in statutory processes, including those of appeals, termination and maintenance orders	2
Current national and local policy surrounding MHO practice and its influence on the MHO role and relevant mental health service provision, including relevant research	2
Relevant research and reports which focus on collaborative practice issues and development in the specialist context	3
Key agencies and services who will be involved in collaborative processes of assessment and management of risk	3
The range of factors, perspectives and frameworks that impinge on assessment and increase or reduce levels of risk	4
Local and national policy in relation to integrated assessment and management of care and risk	4
Multi-disciplinary approaches to risk assessment and management	4

MHOA Skills	Learning Focus
Apply knowledge and understanding of mental disorder to construct, comment upon and challenge reports and applications	1
Apply knowledge of care support and treatment and alternative perspectives in discussing and challenging views within a multi-disciplinary team	1
Consider, give or withhold consent and make applications to legal systems and hearings based on professional and legally justifiable assessments	2
Present a coherent set of arguments as before a legal hearing, reflecting the needs of the service user, demonstrating an understanding of real and meaningful alternatives to hospital care where appropriate	2
Lead evidence from witnesses and cross examine witnesses in a tribunal	2
Communicate to anyone, potentially subject to the powers of the relevant legislation, their rights and the availability of legal support and advocacy	2
Network and practice collaboratively in relation to roles and organisations including those skills relating to: (ii) negotiation... (v)coordination in relation to interprofessional leadership	3
Work effectively with differing leadership and management cultures and systems	3
Weigh information gathered in relation to individual factors including risk, to present assessments verbally and in written format as required for legal and agency procedures	4
Develop plans to manage care and risk; and implement monitor and review these plans in accordance with national and local guidelines	4

MHOA Values	Learning Focus
Integrate a substantial degree of professional confidence, competence and authority in activities related to the MHO role	1
Show sensitivity and understanding through anti-discriminatory practice in all consultation with individuals, families and carers	1
Show sensitivity to alternative ways of understanding the experience of mental disorders	1
Work within SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers in relation to MHO duties to explore and work with the degree of autonomy given to MHOs in terms of their assessment and decision making, while working with appropriate accountability to their employing authority	2
Work with and manage professional tensions, challenges and conflicts in relation to MHO duties	2
Recognise and work sensitively in relation to role boundaries/ambivalence/ambiguity	3
Manage professional tensions, dilemmas and conflicts	3
Challenge and report actions that are impacting on the management of risk as per SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers	4
Balance rights of the individual to make decisions which may involve risk to self and others within the context of the responsibility of the MHO in relation to public protection	4
Take account of negative stereotyping and approaches to assessment and risk which reduce the scope for positive risk taking	4