



PART OF **nocn** GROUP

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

NOCN Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism

Qualification No: 610/3164/1

Operational Start Date: 8th September 2023

Version: 1.1 February 2024

To know more about NOCN:

- Visit the NOCN website: www.nocn.org.uk
- Call the Customer Service Team: **0300 999 1177**

Introduction

NOCN is a market-leading awarding organisation that has been providing qualifications for a wide range of Centres, including FE colleges and training providers, for 30 years both in the UK and internationally.

We work with Centres to deliver a high-quality and flexible service for learners to underpin our passionate belief in the power of education and its impact on communities and individuals.

We offer all the advantages of being with a national awarding organisation with a diverse portfolio of qualifications, alongside providing a personalised, bespoke, service to our Centres and learners.

As an accredited Leader in Diversity we are proud of our reputation as a provider of fully accessible, trusted and flexible qualifications.

About NOCN Group

NOCN is part of NOCN Group, a progressive educational charity whose core aims are to help learners reach their potential and organisations thrive. The group includes business units specialising in regulated UK and international qualifications, end point assessment, endorsed programmes and assured short courses, Smart job cards, assessment services, consultancy, and research.

NOCN Group shares a joint purpose to offer learners, training providers, employers, and FE Colleges a fully integrated range of learning and skills development products and services.

Information about all our courses and qualifications is available from our website:

www.nocn.org.uk/

Qualification at a Glance

Title	Size
<p>NOCN Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism</p>	<p>GLH – 172</p> <p>TQT – 200 hours.</p> <p>Credits - 20</p>
Purpose	Target Audience
<p>The purpose of this qualification is to equip learners with the knowledge and understanding to improve their practice, progress to further training or into a job role in the social care sector.</p>	<p>This Level 2 qualification is primarily for learners aged 16 and above and who want to continue their education and develop their knowledge/competencies and understanding of their role working in the social care sector.</p>
Content Overview	Entry Requirements
<p>This Level 2 qualification provides learners with a range of knowledge and skills. Learners will also develop an understanding of the complex and unique nature of autism its place in a neurodiverse world.</p>	<p>There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking this qualification. The qualification can be undertaken without any previous training or qualifications in this subject area.</p>
Assessment	Additional Resources
<p>Assessment for this qualification is set and assessed internally via a portfolio of evidence.</p>	

Summary of changes:

This section summarises the changes to the qualification specification since the last version.

Version	Publication Date	Summary of Amendments.
1.0	08.09.23	Original version
1.1	February 2024	Update to the Health and Care Act 2022 requirements (page 7). Information relating to the qualification mapping to the autism core competency framework (page 8).

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1. Overview of Qualification

This qualification is vocationally based and as such, offers the opportunity for learners to demonstrate an achievement of practical skills, understanding and knowledge in the social care sector, specifically focusing on developing an understanding of autism and the many ways it is experienced by autistic individuals.

The qualification will:

- i) Prepare learners to progress to a qualification in the same subject area but at a higher level or requiring more specific knowledge, skills and understanding. This may mean progressing to a level 3 qualification in a health and social care related field or may lead to more specific and specialised study focusing on autism, neurodivergence, inclusion or the promotion of FREDIE values.
- ii) Preparing learners to progress to a qualification in another subject area. This might be progression to a more general Health & Social Care qualification.
- iii) Preparing learners for employment. An awareness of autism and ways to promote inclusion is relevant to all job roles where you have contact with others.
- iv) Supporting a role in the workplace. This might be an individual already working in social care who is, or may be, working to provide support to autistic people or providing other social care services to autistic individuals.

This qualification is for:

- a) Learners who wish to develop the skills and knowledge required for employment in job roles specifically focused on working with autistic individuals.
- b) Learners who wish to improve their practice in the general social care sector.

This qualification supports and has been developed in response to the 2022 updated “Building the Right Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People: action plan” published by the Department for Health and Social Care, the Health and Care Act 2022 and the Draft Mental Health Bill of 2022.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduces a requirement that providers registered with the CQC must ensure that each person working for the purpose of regulated activities carried on by them receives training on learning disability and autism which is appropriate to the person’s role. As set out in the Health and Care Act 2022, the government is also required to publish a Code of Practice to provide guidance about how to meet this new legal requirement for training on learning disability and autism.

The 2022 “Building the Right Support” action plan details six broad goals and this qualification is specifically related to the “Living an ordinary life in the community” and “Working with changes to the system” goals. Mostly, it provides an opportunity for employers, employees and learners to work towards the goal laid out by Gillian Keegan, Minister of State for Care and Mental Health in the foreword to the Action Plan.

“Our ultimate goal is that, across England, people with a learning disability and autistic people are equal citizens able to fulfil their potential. They are supported to live full lives in their community, in their home, with access to the care that is right for them, when and where they need it. Just like everyone else.”

Gillian Keegan. Foreword to “Building the Right Support Action Plan”

August 2022.

This qualification was written in collaboration with Tigger Pritchard, an award-winning neurodivergent advocate, consultant, mentor and trainer (<https://www.bridgingtheneurodivide.com/>).

This means that the qualification is robust, up to date and is neuro-affirming. There are no mentions of outdated terminology or attitudes, other than to recognise that they were historically barriers to autistic individuals. The underlying ethos of the qualification and the language used throughout is neuro-affirming and actively challenges neuro-stereotyping. This makes this qualification meaningful and fulfils NOCN's commitment as a disability-confident employer to adhering to FREDIE values in all we do.

Skills for Care recognises and aims to promote good practice in terms of autism learning and training. This includes mapping this qualification to the autism core competency framework, as commissioned by Health Education England produced as one of the key objectives for workforce development in delivering the Autism Strategy, overseen by the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC). The framework provides a focus on the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected for the delivery of all services used by autistic people, ensuring this qualification is in-line with those core competencies.

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking this qualification.

Learners must be in a position to demonstrate the requirements of the qualification and have access to required assessment opportunities and relevant resources. Please refer to specific assessment requirements on individual components for more information.

Centres should undertake initial assessment activities with learners to ensure this is an appropriate qualification and they are capable of achieving the level they will be studying before enrolling them onto a programme of learning.

This qualification is available to learners aged **16** years or over.

Progression Routes

Achievement of this qualification confirms the learner has gained the knowledge and skills required to:

- Gain employment in the workplace where the learner may work with or interact with autistic individuals. This qualification is most suited to those roles in the social care sector but could be applied to educational or health related careers also.
- Progress on to Level 3 study.
- Progress on to a Level 3 apprenticeship.

2. Qualification Details

2.1. Qualification Structure

The NOCN Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism is a 20 credit qualification with a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 200 hours, including 172 Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Learners **must** achieve all 20 credits from the 6 mandatory components.

Unit	M/O	Level	Ofqual Unit Ref	Credits	GLH	Assessment
Introduction to Autism.	M	2	F/650/8154	4	34	Portfolio of evidence.
Theoretical Perspectives on Autism	M	2	K/650/8157	4	34	Portfolio of evidence.
Neuro-Affirming Approaches to Supporting Autistic Individuals.	M	2	H/650/8155	3	26	Portfolio of evidence.
Promoting Inclusion, Equity and Equality for Autistic Individuals.	M	2	J/650/8156	3	26	Portfolio of evidence.
Autistic Individuals: Communication, Social Interaction and the Role of the Professional.	M	2	D/650/8153	3	26	Portfolio of evidence.
Applying Theory to Personal Practice.	M	2	A/650/8152	3	26	Portfolio of evidence.

2.2. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Through consultation with users, TQT has been agreed by considering the total number of learning hours required for the average learner to achieve these qualifications.

TQT is split into two areas:

Area	Example of activities
<p>1. Guided Learning Hours (GLH):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning activity under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training • includes the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher • Work-based learning supervised by a teacher • Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teach in real time • E-learning supervised by a teacher in real time • All forms of assessment which take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of an appropriate provider of training • Exam time
<p>2. Other Learning Hours (OLH):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an estimate of the number of hours a learner will spend, as directed by (but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of) a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preparatory work ○ self-study ○ any other form of education or training, including assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent and unsupervised research / learning • Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience • Unsupervised e-learning • Unsupervised e-assessment • Unsupervised coursework • Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar • Unsupervised work-based learning

2.3. Assessment and Evidence

The qualification is assessed via internally set and internally assessed units.

Internal assessment (internally set and internally assessed)

Internal assessment activity must ensure evidence of achievement against **all** the requirements specified within each component.

For assessments that are internally set, the IQA will need to ensure pre-verification of assessment tasks take place prior to its use to ensure that it is an appropriate assessment tool, that it is inclusive to learners of all needs, that it meets the principles of assessment and does not hinder learner attainment of the NOCN assessment evidence requirements.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the Internal Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

Centres must ensure that knowledge-based learning is at the correct level for the qualification. It is important to design the assessment in an appropriate way that does not promote neuro-stereotyping and is neuro-affirming.

Assessment activities must be robust in that the assessment decisions are made based on evidence, which is valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable regarding the assessment taking place:

- Valid** The validity of an assessment decision is ensuring that the right thing has been assessed in the right way to deliver an accurate assessment result.
- Authentic** The assessment process must ensure that all evidence of achievement is authentic in that it has been created solely by the learner (unless otherwise required) and has not been plagiarised. If work was not authentic, it would undermine the entire the assessment process and overall qualification system.
- Current** The assessment process must ensure that the evidence used to claim qualification or unit achievement reflects current industry/qualification practice. This can be done by ensuring that the evidence is relevant at the time of the assessment as well as ensuring that the assessor has used the most-up-date assessment documentation.
- Sufficient** The Assessor must review assessment evidence to judge whether the learner has generated enough evidence at the right level to confidently cover all relevant learning outcome or assessment criteria requirements. The Assessor must also ensure their records of the assessment are complete, legible and accurate.
- Reliable** The Assessor must ensure that they are making reliable and consistent assessment decisions across their learners and with other Assessors within the Centre. Assessment decisions must also be consistent over time and across academic/programme cycles. This can be supported by attending standardisation activities.

2.4. Fair and Equitable Assessment

Assessment must be designed to be accessible and inclusive and the assessment methodology must be appropriate for individual assessment, giving due consideration to any assessment requirements attached to individual components.

2.5. Learners with Particular Requirements

If you are a NOCN Recognised Centre and have learners with particular requirements, please see the **NOCN Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedure** found on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

This policy gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the assessment criteria.

The NOCN Centre Approval process requires the Centre to hold policy statements on Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Disability Discrimination, which will be reviewed by NOCN.

Please refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further details.

2.6. Recognised Prior Learning

Recognising Prior Learning is an assessment process that recognises learning that has its origins in a learner's experience and/or previous formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college, university and outside formal learning situations such as through life, employment, apprenticeships and other work experiences.

NOCN is committed to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and has developed a policy and procedures to inform and support Centres. This is available on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

2.7. Assessment and Evidence for the Components

Assessment materials are only available to Centres approved to deliver the qualification.

All current assessment materials are available from NOCN's vLearn platform. Existing Centres have access to vLearn, new Centres must contact their NOCN Business Development Manager.

Forms and guidance for gathering learner evidence against the individual assessment criteria are available for download in Word format on the NOCN website:

www.nocn.org.uk/support/nocn-support/quality-assurance/

3. Centre Information

3.1. Required Resources for Delivering the Qualification

As part of the requirement to deliver this qualification there is an expectation that staff undertaking roles as part of the delivery and assessment of the qualification have a demonstrable level of expertise.

NOCN expects that Tutors and Assessors are able to demonstrate the following competencies:

3.1.1 Tutor Requirements

- Be subject matter experts with up-to-date knowledge, hold or be registered as working towards, a recognised education and training qualification, have experience of delivering training within this subject area. The minimum expectation is that the level of competence of the Tutor should be at one level above the training that is to be delivered.

3.1.2 Assessor Requirements

- Be technically competent, have experience of carrying out assessment activities and hold, or be registered as working towards, a recognised assessing qualification. The minimum expectation is that the level of competence of the Assessor should be at one level above the qualification being assessed.

3.1.3 Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

Each centre must have internal quality assurance policies and procedures in place to ensure that decisions made by Assessors are appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent, and that they do not discriminate against any learner. The policies and procedures must be sufficient to secure the quality of the award, ensuring validity, reliability and consistency.

NOCN expects that an Internal Quality Assurer is able to demonstrate the following competencies:

They should:

- Have an understanding of the subject area, have experience in carrying out internal quality assurance activities and hold, or be registered as working towards, a recognised Internal Quality Assurance qualification. The minimum expectation is that the level of competence should be at the same level as the qualification being quality assured.

NOCN supports and recognises Centres' internal quality assurance systems which support the above; any system should include standardisation and sharing of good practice.

Centre staff may undertake more than one role, e.g. tutor, assessor or internal quality assurer, but they **cannot** carry out any quality assurance on work that they have previously assessed.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the Internal Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

3.1.4 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Centres are expected to support their staff, ensuring that their subject knowledge remains current and that their members of staff are up to date with regards to best practice in delivery, assessment and quality assurance.

3.1.5 External Quality Assurance

Once recognised as a Centre, NOCN will allocate an External Quality Assurer. The External Quality Assurer will have ongoing responsibility for monitoring the Centre's compliance with the requirements of recognised Centre approval status.

The External Quality Assurer will make regular visits to all Centres. During these visits they will:

Monitor the Centre's compliance with the Centre approval criteria by reviewing course documentation, meeting managers, tutors, internal quality assurers, learners, and administrative staff.

Review the standard of the Centre's assessment and internal quality assurance practices and decisions to determine whether all assessment requirements are met to support safe and valid claims for certification.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the External Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk

3.2. Offering the Qualification

Existing Centres

If you are already recognised to offer NOCN qualifications and would like more information about offering this qualification, please contact: business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk, alternatively use Horizon to add this qualification to your Centre.

New Centres

If you are interested in offering this qualification, but are not yet a NOCN Approved Centre and would like more information about becoming a NOCN Centre and offering this qualification please see **Become a Registered Centre** on our website <https://www.nocn.org.uk/customers/nocn-centres/> and click Become a Centre.

4. Component Information

Within the NOCN Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism qualification, the qualification consists of Mandatory components. The qualification structures (see **section 2**) sets out the rules for achieving the qualification.

To achieve this qualification a learner must provide evidence of learning and achievement against all the assessment requirements within each of their chosen components.

A copy of all Mandatory components can be downloaded via the NOCN website.

<https://www.nocn.org.uk/products/qualifications/610-3164-1-nocn-level-2-certificate-in-understanding-autism/>



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