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## **WP3**

### **Definition of a Framework of Competences for the professional care service provider**

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\* The term "care service provider" used in the in the project proposal was replaced by "home care worker" (HCW) during the implementation of the project.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Upcaring project aims to define an integrated and comprehensive model for improving and promoting access to LLL on the part of low skilled and migrant people working in the social care sector throughout Europe.

This includes defining a framework of competence for the specific job profile of the social care provider, specifically addressing the elderly, which is linked to the EQF and ECVET, identifying an e-learning scheme model, a validation/certification system of prior learning and a system to improve the Demand and Supply matching.

The model should hence include assessment and diagnostic tools on the one side, propose and test appropriate use of ICTs for the specific purposes of the project on the other, outline useful toolkits for the main categories of actors involved and, finally, suggest policy recommendations.

The WP3 has the main objective of defining the framework of competences of the **Home Care Worker** (as per the operational definition adopted in the Edinburgh meeting instead of the initial one of “professional care service provider”), which can be recognised and utilised at the European level and that is linked to the EQF and the ECVET.

Based on the “Review of European Models of Validation/Certification of Competences, E-learning and Demand/Supply Matching Systems for Professional Care Service Providers” carried out as part of the WP2, and the relevant amount of information collected related to 9 regional/national cases<sup>1</sup>, a Framework of competences for the HCW was outlined in a way that should allow to encompass most of the quite different cultural and legal scenarios existing in Europe for this professional profile.

This document is a sort of guidelines that accompanies the Framework and provides support for a more fruitful use of it in that it aims 1) to identify the conditions for accessing the learning units (in terms of technical and methodological pre-requisites that candidate learners should have) and 2) presents tools for validating the units (such as illustrative assessment grids and templates). It is especially directed to those people who are called to welcome the candidate HCW and orientate her/him to the learning path and/or to a validation of prior learning, that is to say to what we refer to as the intermediary professionals: they can be trainers, assessors, recruitment services managers and so on.

Firstly, it is useful to remind that the Upcaring framework aims to outline the general architecture of the European HCW through which national profiles can be confronted and detected and that five are its main uses

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<sup>1</sup> Greece, France, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Scotland, Apulia, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany.

- 1) Positioning each HCW against the framework
- 2) Diagnosis of existing and missing competences
- 3) Professional development, planning for improvement
- 4) Competence recognition (recognising learning outcomes of experience)
- 5) Training / learning opportunity design / developing training opportunities

The proposed framework identifies four macro areas of competence and a fifth transversal one, which are:

- 1°: Establishing a positive relationship with the care recipient based on the knowledge of the person and of its context** (family-wise, in cultural and institutional terms, etc. This area provides a ground against which the other competences have to be deployed)
- 2°: Hygiene, cleaning and safety of the care recipient** (taking care of all those tasks closely linked to the care of the individual in his/her more immediate needs)
- 3°: Operational care giving** (performing operational tasks such as accompanying the person, using mechanic equipment for elders, giving meals and medicines, etc.)
- 4°: Organization, planning, care giving project** (acting consistently to a given care project, performing in coordination and in liaison with family, institutions, doctors and other actors, etc.)

The **5° transversal competence is the ICT component** which implies the capacity of the HCW to handle basic electronic devices which mainly allow the access to the internet, browsing for information, using online training platforms, opening/reading a CD, DVD or other electronic/computing resources (including smart telephones and the like).

If all 4 types of competences are present at the same time, the professional figure can be defined as HCW. Actually, at this level of the project deployment, and according to what certification requirements each national context may impose, the macro competences can be 3 or 4 (swinging between EQF level 3 and 4).

However, most national profiles include other competences which have here been included as "side competences" for the simple reason that they also concur to the definition of other job profile and do not necessarily and per se define the HCW. Each national context will identify those essential for their certification.



This document has been drafted also on the basis of discussions held during project meetings and rough preliminary proposals for the eLearning scheme and the VPL procedure.

## 1. Pre-requisites for accessing learning within the Upcaring Competence Framework

As a first step, a profile of the candidate learner for the Upcaring model should be outlined by the intermediary professionals. To approach the user with this modality, rather than telling her/him that pre-requisites have to be first checked, will result much more conducive for the subsequent exercise.

The user's profile should highlight the following aspects:

- Capacity to use technologies:
  - to what extent is the person able to handle devices like personal computer, laptops, netbooks, tablets or other mobile devices, cd/dvd players, mp3 players etc.;
  - to what extent is the person acquainted with software and programs such as for writing, for creating spreadsheets, browsing the internet, using the email etc.
- Access to technologies or not: if the person has capacity (which also means that the 5<sup>th</sup> transversal macro competence is covered), it needs to be considered whether s/he also has access to the technology. If not, the intermediary professionals should consider ways to make it available for the candidate (either at public or private premises, such as associations working with cultural communities, or municipal libraries, etc.) otherwise a crucial assumption for the learning to take place is undermined.

These two aspects, however, are only meaningful to be considered where the training offer is based on an eLearning approach. Where training is offered in a traditional teaching modality (paper support and face to face classroom), it is quite irrelevant.

- Linguistic skills: has the candidate sufficient knowledge of the language/s in which the learning is offered? It must be not overlooked that in many countries, especially in the Mediterranean area, care-givers are mostly foreigners and have a better oral comprehension and production than reading and writing. Moreover, learning materials can be provided in different languages according to the contents and the relevance for the learning unit as some resources can be made available in the local language (the language of the care recipient – for instance legal or institutional information) or in the original language (that of the care-giver – for instance instructions for proper food preparation).
- Experiential area: this is less structured area of the user's profile where the intermediary professional can take notes concerning competences/attitudes of the candidate connected to the communication and relational field, such as soft skills, attitudes etc. This is not a pre-requisite but can help the professional to orientate the candidate and



Do I have an internet connection of my own? Yes , no

Do I know where to access an internet connection?

- I would not know
- At a relative/friend/acquaintance's house
- private service (paying one)
- public place (for free or very low cost)

Can I afford accessing an internet connection? Yes , no

### Linguistic skills:

Mother tongue: .....  
(it is assumed that a literate person can sufficiently read, write and listen in it)

Local/national language, if different from mother tongue: .....  
How easily can you read, write and listen in it? Easily , medium , low

Other languages: .....  
How easily can you read, write and listen in it? Easily , medium , low

(NB: determining the level of knowledge in reading, listening and writing could be useful: each national context should establish how to scale it; the Europass could be a reference but in some cases to sophisticated to assess).

## **Part run by the interviewer (intermediary professional)**

### Personal experiential area

- Have you ever worked in the sector of assisting people, especially ageing, sick, or hospitalized people, or people with disability and/or mental difficulties, or looking after young children or other people with temporary mobility issues and the like?
- What do you think the main needs of an elder may be?
- What would you like to do as a job in the future?

### Prior learning area

- What educational background do you have?

- What work experiences do you have? Describe them roughly and point out those you consider most relevant for your own professional growth.
- What do you do in your spare time? Do you have any special hobby?
- Describe the composition of your family of origin.

## **2. Validation of learning outcomes within the Upcaring Competence Framework**

As a premise, it must be underlined that a validation process can reach increasingly detailed levels of competences. This affects the process and the tools. In the case of the Upcaring piloting experience, people in charge of running it will have to reflect and decide how deep they want to go into the assessment, i.e. to what level learners' competences will have to be proven.

Another important premise is about the real underlying objective of the use of the framework, whether it is the learning (professional development/growth) or the creation of a portfolio. The two functions of assessment of the learning and of creating the portfolio should be separate in order to avoid the assessor (who often can coincide with the teacher/trainer) be involved in biased judgment. In the first case, this would probably be not a problem as, on the opposite, the commitment and motivation of the trainer/assessor could contribute to make the validation moment an educational one too.

Moreover, it must be considered attentively that assessment normally slows down education/learning and sometimes some people do not care about obtaining a certificate but may be rather interested in accessing the learning experience. This consideration should help the pilot-runners make a well grounded decision.

As a pre-assumption, this Upcaring validation approach also undertakes that the 4 macro competences identified by the framework will be certificated individually (i.e. 4 certificates will be obtained related to the four macro competences, which all contribute to the European qualification of the HCW).

The intermediary professionals must also decide, based on their national context and customs, which evidences will be accepted (for instance, decide how old they should be to be considered acceptable).

The intermediary professionals (and pilot runners in the frame of this project) are hence advised to elaborate assessment grids customized to their learning objectives, that is to say including assessment for those side competences that need to be assessed for obtaining the qualification at their local/national level. This effort will be facilitated at the very moment of starting translating the framework into the local language: transferring the contents into a specific language will necessarily start a process of adaptation, progressively leading to the identification, where desired, of the potential national qualification.

As an example, here below are presented some principles/scheme for the elaboration of competence assessment grids for the HCW. Beyond what stated at the beginning of this very chapter, here it is advised to limit assessment to the second level of the Upcaring framework, that is to say to the level of the Competence Units. This does not impede partners to go further into details and

build tools for assessing also the activities required to perform as a home care worker.

Example:

*Macro competence area 1: Establishing a positive relationship...*

*Competence Unit 1.1: Understand and contextualise the assisted person in his/her different stages of personal development*

Can the candidate...	Yes	Not	Notes (testimonials available, prior experience, personal conditions...)
Understand implications of ageing?			
Understand implications of hampered mobility?			
Understand the implications of loss of autonomy?			
... (to be filled according to specific objectives)			
Tot.			Percentage covered: ...%

*Competence Unit 1.2: Understand and contextualise the assisted person in his/her social and cultural context*

Can the candidate...	Yes	Not	Notes (testimonials available, prior experience, personal conditions...)
Recognise differences in social and cultural status from her/his own?			
Respect social and cultural differences?			
Encourage the assisted person in maintaining own social and cultural habits?			
Avoid conflicting behaviours in cultural terms?			
Act with empathy?			
... (to be filled according to specific objectives)			
Tot.			Percentage covered: ...%

Each competence unit table will be adapted according to the objectives set at the beginning and the percentage obtained of Y (yes) against the N (not) will provide an indication of how much the candidate is prepared in that unit and guide the intermediary professional (pilot runner) in orienting the potential learner in the learning path to undertake, also based on the user's profile outlined earlier.

Each intermediary professional/pilot site will have to prepare assessment grids for the four macro areas (plus the ICT transversal one) which will provide the

basis for the assessment of the HCW profile. More grids can be elaborated for the side competences.

The column dedicated to the notes already hints to the existence (or possible creation) of a portfolio, where testimonials collected can be archived as an evidence for skills acquired. Similarly it can be done for elements related to prior work experiences and personal conditions (which can include limitations but also positive aspects of the person, such as natural attitudes etc.).