



Internal Assessment Report: Community Justice

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

SVQ Awards

Titles/levels of SVQ Awards verified

G461 23	Working with Offending Behaviour
G75P 23	Youth Justice
G89G 22	Community Wardens

General comments

The uptake of the awards continues to be relatively low given the number of staff working in the sector, with single-figure numbers of registered candidates in all but two accredited centres. This does make it difficult to generalise, as only seven visits were made in this session to the centres. A few that were offering awards (Community Wardens) were doing so for the first time.

This year the sector's largest employer applied for and achieved approved centre status in its own right, and has started to roll out the awards to its employees across Scotland. However, it is difficult to make any general comments on such a small number of candidates.

Each award on offer has been developed at different stages. The assessment strategies are variable, with assessment guidance for the awards more product-based. Some do not mention reflective accounts and instead use personal statements and assessor checklists.

Feedback from the external verification reports indicates that all the candidates place a great deal of effort on producing substantial amounts of evidence, but the approaches taken by the different centres offering the awards is variable. The standard of evidence required by candidates for achieving their SVQ award is there, but the absence of an overarching assessment strategy creates difficulties for centres as well as verifiers. This will change when the revised National Occupational Standards are validated, as a large number of employers of community justice staff are currently registering for the Health and Social Care awards until the revised Community Justice awards are recognised by SSSC.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

As mentioned before, the sector is awaiting some development work and during this academic session two consultation meetings took place, the aims of which were to ensure that the revised structures are fit for purpose in Scotland and are accepted on the SSSC register. An application has been made for a 12-month extension for the existing CJ: Working with Offending Behaviour award (G461 23) which, if approved, will give Skills for Justice an opportunity to bring the NOS into line with other awards approved by SSSC for registration purposes.

The proposals emerging from the consultation meetings are for a Community Justice award at Level 3 with a broadly similar core to the Health and Social Care awards, and optional Units drawn from Health and Social Care as well as a selection from the Skills for Justice NOS. It will require SSSC agreement, but when this process is completed and validation is

approved Community Justice award holders will be able to register with the Social Services Council. This, in turn, will make the workforce more mobile and attract more candidates to the Community Justice awards.

The feedback from the verification visits suggests that a small number of candidates in most centres are working really hard and generating a great deal of evidence. At the largest centre, the Scottish Prison Service College, all 30 of the candidates receive no financial benefit from achieving the award, but do so for CPD. No new candidates have been registered this year at the college, although SACRO — the most recently approved centre — has started with 10 staff with a plan to rapidly expand as it gains more experience.

All of the centres visited said that they are awaiting approval by the SSSC of the new Occupational Standards. This is an area of frustration that is outwith SQA control. Once the awards have been rewritten to incorporate values within the individual Units, SSSC are in agreement, and validation is achieved, there is no doubt that development and marketing work in the next session will be required as the sector awaits these revised awards.