



# **Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2014**

## **Childcare**

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

# SVQ awards

## General comments

This year has seen the approval of a new award *Social Services Children and Young People* (SSCYP), which will replace the *Children's Care Learning and Development award* (CCLD). As a result, no new centres have come forward for approval for CCLD.

External verification reports indicate that all centres visited had a clear understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Children's Care Learning and Development as the majority of centres are now established and have been working with the standards for many years.

Most of the centres visited were delivering Levels 3 and 4 of the award as demand for the Level 2 award has reduced.

Of these centres, most were complying with the Assessment Strategy for the award, in that they were taking a holistic approach to the delivery of the standards and encouraging reflective practice through robust assessment planning based on candidates' own workplace practice. Most centres also deliver the underpinning knowledge in a robust and considered way to ensure that all candidates, especially very young candidates, have the theory to support their practice.

Following the publication of the National Occupational Standards and the launch of SSCYP in 2014, many centres came forward for approval to offer the SSCYP award.

The transition to the new award has caused difficulties for many centres as it integrates two previous awards, Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) and the Children's Care Learning and Development award. Issues with approval arose mainly due to the new Assessment Strategy's requirements for assessor qualifications. The Assessment Strategy for SSCYP stated that the staff should '*hold a registerable qualification acceptable to the SSSC for the area and level of practice being assessed*'. In spite of guidance for delivery of the new award, written by SQA, and a well-attended customer support event, confusion around appropriate assessor qualifications remains within the sector.

A working group at SQA designed basic formats for the paperwork, which was disseminated within the sector together with guidance for the delivery of the award.

In order to simplify the approval process it was agreed within SQA that if centres were applying to offer 'like for like' Units, within the levels of qualifications offered, and were not intending to expand the scope of their centre delivery, then desktop approval would be appropriate. This limited the number of visits carried out by the external verification team although it was still a very busy time.

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

With a very few exceptions, all assessors are familiar with the Units for the levels of the CCLD award which they deliver. Instruments of assessments are appropriate and assist in the production of evidence at the correct SCQF level. An appropriate range of instruments of assessment is being used.

The External Verifiers have been advising that in reviewing their materials for the SSCYP award centres remain committed to retaining the best of their appropriate CCLD materials whilst creating new materials to support the new award.

## **Evidence Requirements**

The majority of assessors and internal verifiers are experienced in delivering the area and level of the new award, which deals with children from pre-birth to five years. Many centres that were visited, or that were represented at the customer support day, have plans for, or had already undertaken, staff development days to ensure an understanding of the new Evidence Requirements.

Many assessors and verifiers have sought advice from EVs via e-mail and by phone contact and it is expected that assessment practices will evolve over time. Many centres are anticipating the first QA visit in order to have an opportunity to discuss their progress with their verifier.

## **Administration of assessments**

In the vast majority of centres visited by verifiers this year, the procedures to ensure good practice have been exemplary. Standardisation meetings are ensuring a consistency of approach to the delivery of the CCLD award. Internal verification is robust and internal verifiers are highlighting areas of strengths and areas for improvement. More centres are now recording when issues, highlighted by internal verifiers, are addressed by assessors. This more standardised approach is ensuring that all evidence, created by candidates, meets the requirements at all SCQF levels and covers both the knowledge and practice elements of the award.

In spite of the changes within the new award it will be possible for centres to transfer this robust approach to practice and procedure for the SSCYP award

## **General feedback**

Almost all of the candidates interviewed felt that they were offered appropriate support from their assessors and in some cases the assessor had gone beyond their remit to ensure candidates could stay on the programme. Candidates felt that they had developed professionally and personally throughout the award and that their practice and the quality of their work, with young children, had improved.

This positive view is supported by the feedback from assessors contained in the candidate portfolios. There is obvious care taken, in centres, to give candidates a

quality developmental experience which will support their practice in years to come. This candidate-centred approach is resulting in almost universal compliance with the Assessment Strategy.

Most candidates with additional support needs appeared to be very well supported, with some centres making a great effort to ensure fair and equitable access to assessment for all candidates.

Again, it is not anticipated that this approach will change with the implementation of the new award.

Feedback, from many centres, indicates that they like the new quality assurance format, that they are clearer about the requirements of the quality assurance process, and that it has given them an opportunity to prepare well for SQA visits.

## **Areas of good practice**

As this is the final year for candidates to be inducted on to the CCLD award, and as the centres visited have considerable experience of delivering the award, external verification reports indicate that all centres visited had a clear understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Children's Care Learning and Development. There are many instances where successful innovative practice has become embedded in assessment practice.

The external verification team has also reported that they have found many positive examples of support to candidates to enable them to reach the required SCQF level and to promote the appropriate skills for gathering evidence of their good practice with young children. This support has resulted in many examples of good portfolios of reflective evidence.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

As always there is a need for assessors and verifiers to keep up to date with all current initiatives, guidance, policy and Scottish legislation in a rapidly developing sector.

It is also crucial that assessors ensure that this up to date knowledge is passed on to candidates, and is reflected in, their planning, evidence gathering and practice.

Assessors and verifiers who are to be involved in the assessment of the new award will be required to produce evidence of their 'registerable' qualification and undertake and record appropriate CPD to ensure currency in their area of expertise. If a centre wishes to develop into another area of the SSCYP award they will be required to ensure that assessors meet the specific requirements of the Assessment Strategy.

*Centres are once again requested to fill in the visit feedback pro forma following a quality assurance visit. All feedback to SQA is shared with the EV team and appropriate action taken.*