



# **Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2016 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

Due to the merger of Child Care Learning Development and Health and Social Care Children and Young People, SQA agreed that group 82 (Care) and group 84 (Childcare) should work closely together as a larger team, but with distinct identities. This has worked extremely well. There are members of these teams who are able to work across both groups and carry out qualification verification visits and this has its advantages in relation to standardising practice. All standardisation meetings are joint events as are the SQA customer support events for centres, which contributes to standardisation across the country as centres may deliver both of these group's awards.

This year over 120 qualification verification visits were completed successfully. This demonstrated the high quality of assessments being carried out within centres across the country. It also reflects the value that organisations place on these qualifications and their importance, allowing successful candidates to meet registration requirements with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Within Group 84 there are no instruments of assessment as such, however the assessment strategy clearly informs assessors and verifiers of the assessment methods available to them to use in order to make consistent judgements and decisions regarding the competence of candidates. External verification visits evidenced effective internal verification and the use of appropriate assessment methods, demonstrating there is a consistent approach to applying the assessment strategy and assessment guidance.

The unit specifications clearly focus the requirements of each unit and assessors use their judgements as to the appropriate assessment method when planning assessments with candidates. Assessment plans are used within centres and external verifiers have given centres recommendations with regards to assessment planning and in particular to focus on holistic planning.

Level 4 has caused difficulty for assessment within Residential Childcare and Secure Accommodation, due to the limited optional units available to this group of candidates. Advice and guidance has been sought from SSSC to try and include more optional units and to date discussion is ongoing.

Centres have been encouraged via the most recent SQA support event to look at verification in a more holistic manner, working in line with the L&D 11 award rather than a percentage approach where policy drives practice.

This session, SQA Care hosted customer support events. These events were well attended by centre representatives and feedback was extremely positive

with centres stating the benefit of these events for centres delivering these qualifications.

Workshops were focused on areas that had been identified from centre feedback. Materials from the workshops are available from SQA Care.

### **Evidence requirements**

The assessment strategy requires evidence to be drawn from work activities in settings for children and young people and the principle method of evidence-gathering to be observed practice and reflection.

There should be reflective writing by candidates at all levels of awards.

As there are no evidence requirements detailed within units, centres must identify and agree how they are going to assess individual candidates. This has resulted in a more focused approach to standardisation within centres in relation to how they agree the delivery and assessment of performance and common knowledge.

However, there remains uncertainty within centres and advice has been sought from SQA in clarifying '*what is sufficient evidence to meet a performance criteria or knowledge point*'.

An example of this is the following extract from one of the EV standardisation meetings:

*'A centre had wanted clarification as to whether performance criteria could be covered with an observation alone or whether it required to have a reflective account in addition to an observation claimed against it. All present agreed that an observation or reflective writing can provide sufficient evidence on its own to meet any performance criteria.'*

*'The assessor needs to make a professional judgement as to whether it is necessary for the candidate to provide additional evidence to make the claim for the performance criteria robust or whether the observation provides sufficient evidence of competence.'*

### **Administration of assessments**

The awards that are delivered in centres are the following:

SVQ 2 Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 6  
SVQ 3 Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7  
SVQ 4 Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 9  
Children's Care, Learning and Development Level 2  
Children's Care, Learning and Development Level 3  
Children's Care, Learning and Development Level 4

It is therefore necessary that assessors and verifiers ensure that the SCQF level associated with each award being assessed is met and EV visits would support that this is the case.

The assessment evidence sampled by EVs were at the appropriate SCQF levels for candidates, and clearly showed integration of knowledge and performance criteria.

Internal verification is evidenced as robust within centres and feedback to assessors is supportive and developmental where required.

Where centres are using e-portfolios for presenting candidate evidence, it is imperative that candidate evidence is appropriately referenced and clearly tracked against the National Occupational Standards.

In particular, voice-recorded evidence must be clearly tracked against performance criteria and knowledge points. Detail of where in the recording specific points have been claimed must be recorded to ensure clarity of assessment, thus making it clear for sampling purposes. This ensures that centres are compliant with the following guidance:

*'Evidence that has been recorded electronically (computer files/e-mail etc) and includes candidate evidence such as answers to questions, digital audio/video recording files, personal accounts and professional discussion, must be subject to the same levels of security and access as hardcopy evidence.'*

### **General feedback**

As relationships between EVs and centres continue to develop a number of centres have sought guidance from their EV outwith visits.

This has not replaced development visits which still take place and are extremely useful for centres, particularly new centres. Development visits carried out during this session include internal verification sampling and the common knowledge — key areas that centre staff have requested support with.

This, along with information on SQA Care website enables centres to be included in up to date and relevant information. This assists in engaging candidates and keeps motivation high, whilst ensuring the qualification delivery is not compromised.

Continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken by all external verifiers (82/84) continues to ensure that EVs are up to date with changes to legislation, policy and guidance/frameworks. This CPD, is delivered through SQA Academy, and is reviewed annually. This is now available to all assessors and verifiers and candidates in approved centres.

## **Areas of good practice**

Feedback from candidates continues to be positive across the board, highlighting strong support and guidance from assessors.

Centres continue to prepare and support candidates for assessment in line with L&D9Di standards and this has been highlighted as good practice by EVs through their reports. There is some really good evidence of support for candidates with additional learning requirements.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

The team will continue to support centres with a standardised approach to visits which reflects attitude and behaviours.

Customer support event further guidance documents will continue to be produced for centres to use.

SQA Care is also hosting two more customer support events on 28 November 2016 in Stirling and 29 November 2016 in Glasgow. From assessor and internal verifier feedback this session the following areas have been identified as the most relevant subjects for workshops at these events:

- ◆ Supporting candidates with additional support needs
- ◆ Tracking the SVQ Social Services and Health Care Level 4 (SCQF level 9) to the SVQ Care Services Leadership and Management (SCQF level 10) and *vice versa*

The customer support events will be run as joint events for centres offering SVQs in Social Services and Healthcare, and centres offering SVQs in Social Services Children and Young People. This year there will be a specific workshop focusing on issues that are pertinent for those working within the early years' sector.