



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Social Services (Children and
Young People)**

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 is the first year that approved centres have been delivering the new Social Services (Children and Young People) award (GH5V, GH5W, GH5X) following the launch of the new National Occupational Standards.

Most centres were familiar with, and had worked with, the previous NOS and had delivered the Children's Care Learning and Development VQ or the Children and Young People VQ, so it was possible for them to be desktop approved.

Centres were supported with comprehensive guidance on the Assessment Strategy (written by experienced External Verifiers) and a checklist for recording the Common Knowledge element of the award.

Existing centres with a proven record of competent delivery were able to transfer their knowledge of delivery of the previous SVQs to the new award.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The majority of centres are in a transition phase where they are delivering both the previous and the new award, and this can cause difficulties. They are very familiar with the Unit specifications for CCLD/CYP but are only just becoming familiar with the Unit specifications for SSCYP.

The EV team was appreciative of the many staff teams that had set aside dedicated time to become familiar with the new Units and to devise a strategy for standardisation and delivery of the award.

The majority of centres had reviewed and revised existing materials and, where necessary, had created new assessment materials.

Where new resources were created it was usually done for the Common Knowledge element which unless, it is Unit specific, is now standalone instead of integrated within the award.

It became apparent that centres were keen to avoid banks of questions and were devising projects where candidates could clearly show reflective practice and links to their workplace experience.

Clearly these materials will change and evolve as the award becomes more familiar to assessors and verifiers, and the materials are evaluated with candidates at all SCQF levels.

Evidence Requirements

The new award is, in the main, similar to the existing award and as such centres are comfortable with evidence requirements as they follow the new Assessment Strategy.

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. This has been the practice in centres for many years and continues to be so. Variations to evidence gathering occur only where candidates have additional needs, where alternative methods were then agreed within the staff team.

Centres were clear that any methods used to gather evidence for the Common Knowledge element should be examples of the candidates' own work and clearly show links with candidate practice.

Administration of assessments

The new materials and resources seen by the External Verifiers were, in the majority of centres, well written and produced. The assessments, particularly for the Common Knowledge, were at the appropriate SCQF levels, for candidates, and clearly showed links between knowledge and practice.

Internal verification was robust in the majority of centres and feedback to assessors highlighted any issues with gaps in the evidence or the level of evidence that candidates were producing.

Centres had internal verification schedules in place to ensure 100% verification of the new award and support to assessors in standardisation of approach and in complying with the Assessment Strategy.

General feedback

It is obvious from External Verifiers' reports that the vast majority of candidates interviewed felt well supported by their assessors and that internal verification was thorough and feedback to assessors positive and effective.

Centres had, in the main, developed good induction processes and were ensuring that candidates were on the appropriate SCQF level of the award for their job role and level of responsibility. They also used the candidate induction to ascertain if candidates had additional needs and put measures in place to facilitate access to assessment for all candidates.

Planning for assessment was also a strength in most centres with assessors working with candidates to make sure they were ready for assessment. This approach to planning also ensured that the award was approached in a holistic and integrated manner.

Areas of good practice

Many of the centres that came forward for approval had experience of previous similar awards but in many cases, particularly in colleges, Social Services CYP and Childcare teams had merged to deliver the award.

The External Verifiers noted in their reports that time and consideration had been given to team building and reflecting on their approaches to the new award.

Staff teams, in some instances, had taken time away from their working schedule to familiarise themselves with the structure of the new award and to decide on how they would deliver aspects such as the Common Knowledge element.

Specific areas for improvement

There has been a great deal of confusion around the required qualifications for assessors in terms of the new Assessment Strategy. The strategy states that assessors must hold a qualification that is registerable with a relevant regulatory body (usually the Scottish Social Services Council) gained within a care setting. This caused a measure of uncertainty and a great deal of the External Verifiers' time was taken up answering queries about 'registerable' qualifications in spite of the fact that SQA had produced additional guidance. Some experienced assessors found themselves in the position of having to re-qualify or to do considerable CPD.

There are ongoing issues, which are historical, around centres keeping up to date with current Scottish policy, guidance and legislation and making sure that candidates' practice is current and reflects national and local aspirations.

However, more centre staff are ensuring familiarity with the new award and knowledge of policy guidance and legislation through robust CPD and increased attendance at customer support events.

Extensive CPD undertaken by the merged external verification team (82/84) ensured that EVs were up to date with the substantial changes in the children and young people's sector and highlighted the need for currency in relation to legislation, policy and guidance.

The CPD, which was delivered through SQA Academy, will be reviewed and made available to all assessors and verifiers in approved centres across Scotland. This will enable staff teams to remain current and knowledge to be passed on to candidates to improve their practice and the strength of their reflective evidence.