

## **Assessment Support – sharing best practice**

We held the first Pilot Centre Themed Conversation of 2023-24 at the end of October, focusing on assessment support.

The session covered the assessment 'big picture' as well as combined and integrated assessment, sampling and inference.

Practitioners then hosted break-out discussions, where they shared examples of new, innovative approaches to assessment they have developed for NextGen: HN qualifications in Childhood Practice, Social Services and Accounting.

Below, we look at some of the key tips which came through during the sessions.

### ***'Time spent on planning is definitely an investment'***

For Social Services and Childhood Practice, the planning of assessment was highlighted as key, particularly when aiming for an integrated approach.

Taking the time to consider the qualification as a whole – including the assessment strategy – helped to identify bigger themes or topics which could be organised into a selection of manageable assessments.

It was also important that these were activities which align with tasks that would happen naturally in the workplace:

*"We worked with service providers to design product evidence which would be useful for the workplace. This ensured that what we had was not only relevant for the student but also for the employer."*

These assessments could be mapped to the evidence requirements to make sure these are met.

### ***'Finding an assessment that relates to the learner and they enjoy is such a winner'***

In the Accounting breakout session, the key was seen as encouraging learners to find true connection with learning content:

*"Rather than reducing the number of assessments, the decision was to focus on positive learner experience and variety instead, aiming again to give learners real-life experiences of working practices and make them more aware of their learning environment."*

A similar approach was highlighted in the Social Services and Childhood Practice session:

*"Having split our evidence requirements into themes, we ensured that they contained the range of evidence types that would be produced in a typical work situation. This ensures that several evidence criteria can be covered in one task, reducing repetition across the whole award."*

*"These assessment tasks also make better sense to the students and prove beneficial and more meaningful to their practise."*

Ensuring learners were clear on what was expected of them was also key:

*"We made sure that our assessment briefs were written in a way that the students could understand and made sense to them."*

*“We grouped evidence requirements together to make meaningful tasks and included the full list of the evidence requirements covered in that assessment, so that the students knew exactly what they need to do and why.”*

### ***Meeting the meta-skills requirement***

The groups also discussed how careful assessment planning helps identify assessments which contribute to developing meta-skills and where meta skills can be embedded and evaluated.

Having learners carry out a self-assessment plan for meta-skills as early as possible in the academic year was highlighted as worthwhile. This allows skills development to continue throughout the year and gives learners a basis for performing their evaluation towards the end.

In the Accounting session, it was suggested that integrating and relating meta-skills questions to other parts of the course was beneficial. Blogging was also highlighted as a way of demonstrating reflection and meta-skills development.

### ***‘This is an opportunity for change’***

Overall, the session provided a very useful opportunity to highlight innovative ways of working and share good practice in assessment, recognising the opportunities that can be explored in NextGen: HN:

*“This is a new type of award and it’s an opportunity for change, to be creative in delivering and assessing these awards. We also need to be ready to adapt as we go forward.*

*“The advantage of all of this is reduced assessment...but in our experience the biggest advantage from less assessment is that it leaves more time for teaching and learning and engaging with the students.”*