



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Community Justice**

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

SVQ awards

General Comments

All centres that currently offer the Community Justice Awards (G9WM, G9YL, G9YK) have had years of experience in relation to the use of national standards. Prior to the introduction of the awards, existing centres offered candidates access to the Health and Social Care awards, which have a similar core and share many optional Units, and so familiarisation and understanding of the requirements of the Units is much easier for existing centres.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres have all received exemplars which are based on anonymised real work examples in order to support approved centres. Community Justice (GD65) candidates do work within challenging environments and routinely access or gather evidence using highly sensitive information. Guidance to assessors regarding evidence-gathering opportunities has required detailed information and guidance.

Centres are also given a list of useful Community Justice underpinning knowledge material as well as useful websites. Similar arrangements were also in place for the Victims, Survivors and Witnesses (G9YK) award.

Evidence Requirements

The Evidence Requirements are laid down in an identical way to the Health and Social Care awards, which share many core and optional Units. Centre staff can therefore, draw upon their experience of other awards when delivering underpinning knowledge training as well as induction. Current Government policy initiatives in the Community Justice sector are continually developing and there are plenty of CPD opportunities for candidates and assessors to meet the underpinning knowledge requirements as well as improve their practice.

Administration of assessments

New centres coming forward for approval are offered an 18 month period for new assessors to undertake CPD/assessment activities which will help familiarise them with the sector. The nature of offending and anti-social behaviour as well as working with victims of domestic violence and abuse is that for candidates and assessors, it can be difficult, unpredictable and stressful working with service users.

Candidates can be subject to physically challenging behaviour and often work on their own with minimal supervision, but the evidence from the reports was that there was plenty of evidence of well-planned and sensitive accounts of practice from candidates working under difficult circumstances. Assessors mentioned that candidates may plan an activity but on the day the person may be absent, be

recalled to custody, or a domestic crisis may have occurred, but such developments can give fresh and creative opportunities for evidence gathering. Assessors also demonstrated creative approaches to direct observations. In one example, the assessor observed the candidates working with a women's support group and included feedback from the services users which supported and confirmed the candidates' performance. All candidates, in all centres, adopted an integrated and holistic approach to all the work in line with the Assessment Strategy. All external verification reports mentioned the quality of assessment evidence along with strong evidence of planned support for candidates.

General feedback

The new pathway for the Victims, Survivors and Witnesses award candidates has now been approved and made available to centres. The Victims, Survivors and Witnesses award has the highest number of registered candidates. Overall, the number of centres offering the award is also slowly increasing but candidate numbers are still low. Community Justice Awards are currently under review and changes may be forthcoming in 2015. Most centres also offer their awards alongside Health and Social Care, with candidates and assessors working alongside their colleagues sharing opportunities for training and standardisation. On most external verification visits, External Verifiers met with candidates who were very complimentary of the support from assessors and all commented on the support with regard to CPD and training opportunities.

Areas of good practice

Feedback and information from the external verification reports demonstrate significant strengths across all measures.

On occasions, it can be difficult for assessors to directly observe candidates' practice. Discussions with centre staff, and the nature of the situations that candidates have to work within, made clear the needs to be creative and to take best advantage of opportunities. However, the candidates' evidence submitted for scrutiny to the External Verifiers demonstrated well planned assessments where candidates as well as assessors made best use of opportunities for evidence gathering.

Internal verification reports all confirmed the good quality and standard of evidence. There were also reports of assessment staff being supported both through attendance at meetings but also by video conferencing when one assessor was based 150 miles away from the main centre base. In another centre, special arrangements were put in place to allow assessor access to court-controlled case records that had been completed by candidate and which contained valuable evidence of performance.