

# Support for Living NVQ Assessment Centre

## Frequently Asked Questions about NVQ's

### 1. What is an NVQ?

An NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) is a competence based qualification. To achieve your award you are supported by an assessor who advises you on the collection of evidence to prove you are competent. Your competence is assessed against a set of nationally agreed standards.

### 2. What is the difference between levels 2, 3 and 4?

#### *Level 2 - Supervised*

Competence in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. Some of the activities are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility or autonomy. Collaboration with others perhaps through membership of a work group or team may often be a requirement

#### *Level 3 - Supervisory*

Competence in a broad range or varied work activities performed in a wide range of contexts and most which are complex and non-routine. There is a considerable responsibility and autonomy and control or guidance of others is often required.

#### *Level 4 - Managerial*

Competence in the performance of complex, technical and professional work activities, including senior supervisory or management.

### 3. What level is the right level to choose?

The level chosen is generally based on the candidate's job description. As a rule Support Workers will *usually* be suitable for Level 2, Deputy Managers for Level 3 and Managers for Level 4. The NVQ centre will have a short 'interview' with anyone applying for a Level 3 award to ensure they are able to collect the evidence needed to achieve the award.

### 4. How long should an NVQ take?

The centre recommends the following timeframes for completion of awards:

Health and Social Care Level 2: 6 months  
Health and Social Care Level 3: 8 months  
Health and Social Care Level 4: 9-12 months  
Registered Managers Award: 9-12 months  
A1: 6 months  
V1: 8 months

Each candidate is allocated 24 hours assessment time within that period.

### 5. Why should I do an NVQ?

Most recent guidelines from CSCI (2006) state:

50% of the workforce should hold a NVQ Level 2 qualification or above.

Managers should have two qualifications. One of these has to be relevant to the care they are responsible for such as:

- The Diploma in Social Work (and its predecessors such as Certificate of Qualification in Social Work)
- Certificate of Social Services
- Nursing with live registration
- Diploma in Occupational Therapy
- Diploma in Physiotherapy; or
- National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Care Level 4/NVQ 4 in Health and Social Care

The second qualification should be in managing care services. There is a specific NVQ 4 for this purpose - Registered Managers (Adults) NVQ 4 or managers may hold the general management NVQ at level 4 (or 5) all of which are acceptable.

CSCI has agreed that the following management qualifications are acceptable in providing evidence of transferable knowledge and skills that a Registered Manager has been using in their current role:

- Certificate in Management Studies
- Diploma in Management Studies
- City and Guilds 325/3 – Advanced Management in Care
- Diploma in the Management of Care Services
- Masters in Business Administration
- Post Qualifying Award in Social Work
- Advanced Award in Social Work

See [http://www.csci.org.uk/professional/Docs/qual\\_manag\\_care\\_homes.doc](http://www.csci.org.uk/professional/Docs/qual_manag_care_homes.doc) for further information.

Overall, an NVQ makes you more attractive to any employer in Health and Social Care.

## **6. Will there be anyone to help me?**

You will be supported by an assessor who will help you put a portfolio of evidence together. An internal verifier will monitor the assessor. The QAC (Quality Assurance Co-ordinator) will monitor the work of both internal verifiers and assessors and our centre is monitored by City and Guilds.

## **7. What does the assessor do? What does the internal verifier do?**

The assessor supports the candidate to collect evidence which will demonstrate that they are competent. All assessors have to hold either AI, D23/D33 awards. Assessors have a job description and job role definition in our Assessor Handbook which was issued to every assessor in March 2008. We have 5 freelance assessors and 27 internal assessors currently working with candidates. 9 of these are trainee assessors. We have 6 trained internal assessors who are currently inactive.

The internal verifier monitors the quality of assessment practice in the centre. We allocate assessors to internal verifiers so they can develop a line management role with them to support and develop them. All internal verifiers have a job description and job role definition in our Internal Verifier Handbook which was issued to every internal verifier in March 2008.

Candidates have one (in some cases two) assessors and one internal verifier. The centre has 12 internal verifiers. 9 qualified internal verifiers are currently active in the centre. We have one trainee internal verifier. We have 2 freelance internal verifiers.

## **8. What does the QAC do?**

QAC (Quality Assurance Co-ordinator) is responsible for monitoring the quality of assessment and verification work in the centre. The QAC also liaises with the awarding Body (City and Guilds) and the External Verifier who audits the centre twice a year. The QAC is there to deal with complaints/appeals, candidate queries. In this centre, QAC also puts on training and development sessions for assessors and internal verifiers.

## **9. What is required of me?**

You will be required to demonstrate that you are competent at your job. This is done by having an assessor watch you work and showing your assessor documentation which will show how good you are at your job. Others, even Service Users, if they want to, can also contribute to your qualification.

You will be required to produce a 'portfolio of evidence', which you will be supported to do.

## **10. What do I do if I am worried about anything?**

If you are worried about anything to do with NVQ's you should talk to the QAC. As a centre we have a complaints and appeals policy and procedure. If you disagree with the decisions being made by your assessor you will be able to talk to them directly about this. If, however, you feel unable to do so, you can speak to the internal verifier or the QAC. We encourage all our candidates to make comments on the service that they receive from the centre as much as possible so that we can put improvements in place when they are needed.

## **11. What are the benefits of doing an NVQ?**

### ***Benefits for the organisation***

- More trust in the candidates ability
- Improved standards within the organisation
- Increased staff development
- Increased team morale and motivation
- Increased credibility for the organisation
- Requirement of the minimum standards in health and social care meets CSCI requirements.
- Updated team knowledge and performance
- Feeds into supervision and appraisal for managers.

### ***Benefits for the candidate***

- Increased self-esteem, confidence, job satisfaction, morale and motivation
- Increased knowledge and study skills
- More awareness of policies, procedures and standards
- More responsibility
- More understanding of own role and the need for teamwork
- Increased awareness of the demand for higher levels of caring skills in relation to client rights and needs
- Potential for promotion through the organisation.