

**Policing 2010 – 2011
 September 2011**

1. The qualifications and standards

<p>Assessment Team:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>The use of digital recording by assessors is now widespread across police centres to record professional discussion and other aspects of the assessment process. This has provided flexibility in the approach to assessment allowing recordings to be made at places other than police offices. There are examples where assessors have used this approach to recording to record their observations of candidates in the workplace and to follow this with a professional discussion, ensuring the evidence is comprehensive and recent.</p> <p>Candidates are provided with a comprehensive induction into the qualification and the assessment process. EVs commented:</p> <p><i>'The candidates were provided with comprehensive information and hints and tips re the evidence required.'</i> (EV report).</p> <p>The induction is viewed as important by candidates and assessors to provide a good understanding for candidates and some centres provided an initial input at the start of the candidates taught phase of their police training programme and a further input toward the end, prior to meeting with their assessor.</p> <p><i>'The first induction session gave me an insight into what I was expected to do and the second session made it really clear for me.'</i> (Candidate).</p> <p>Centres are experiencing changes in their assessment teams due to the economic situations many find themselves in. This has resulted in assessors being returned to front line policing duties and as a result and despite their best efforts, having less time to commit to the assessment process due to increased operational policing demands.</p>
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	<p>The majority of assessors and verifiers are still qualified with the appropriate qualifications however, some centres are taking the opportunity presented by the assessment strategy that allows assessors and verifiers to be trained rather than qualified in their respective roles. There does not appear to be any obvious impact of this approach on the assessment process.</p>
<p>Resources:</p>	<p>Findings: Assessors are being provided with the necessary resources to carry out the assessment function. Digital recorders are being provided by centres to facilitate the recording of various aspects of the assessment process.</p> <p>Assessors and candidates are provided with access to centre documentation with which to record assessment decisions or other forms of evidence.</p> <p>There is a gradual move amongst Centres towards e-portfolios and e-assessment systems. These take different forms from commercially purchased systems, bespoke systems provided by external organisations or a secure in house computer based evidence storage system. This has required sufficient access for candidates, assessors and verifiers although this has not proved to be a major issue for most Centres. The only issue for Centres with this has been to ensure the system is secure and virus free. There are a few centres still producing paper based portfolios and these are now more streamlined although, there are still instance of photocopied evidenced being placed in them when signposting of that evidence would suffice.</p> <p><i>‘Portfolios for the Level 3 and 4 in Policing are still containing large amounts of photocopied product evidence. I recommend assessors make judgements on the original piece of product evidence and that the original is retained in the workplace and signposted in the portfolio.’ (EV Report)</i></p>
<p>Candidate Support:</p>	<p>Findings: Feedback from candidates interviewed by external verifiers tends to indicate satisfaction with the assessment process. Candidates have indicated they receive ongoing and effective support from their assessors whilst recognising that assessors have other demands on their time and skills.</p> <p><i>‘Both candidates indicated they had had a positive assessment experience. They were very happy with the support they had received from their assessors.’ (EV Report)</i></p> <p><i>‘She stated that she was in regular contact with her assessor who had guided her through the qualification. She indicated that she had also had support from her internal verifier who provided guidance and suggestions as to appropriate evidence to use.’ (Candidate)</i></p>

	<p>It is clear that assessors and candidates are meeting on a regular basis in the majority of centres to plan for assessment and also to review evidence and for candidates to receive feedback as to their progress. There is evidence at Centres of internal verifiers meeting or interviewing candidates to establish their assessment experience.</p>
<p>Assessment and Verification:</p>	<p>Findings: External verifiers identified that assessors were using a range of assessment methods throughout the assessment process. Observations were being used on a regular basis in most centres and effective use was being made of witness testimony, examination of product evidence and professional discussion.</p> <p>An increasing number of centres are taking the opportunity presented by the assessment strategy for the Diploma in Policing to evidence the knowledge aspects of the qualification prior to the assessment process taking place. Whilst this is being done at this stage it is evident that assessors are still confirming knowledge during assessment whilst not formally recording that checking process.</p> <p>Internal verification takes place both formatively and summatively with there being a range in the percentage that centres sample.</p> <p><i>Sampling of assessment decisions takes place on a regular basis. It is both formative and summative and is in line with the Centres strategies and plan. The centre ensures that all assessors, candidates, units and assessment methods are sampled over a period of time.(EV Report)</i></p> <p>External verifiers found that the internal verification itself was generally robust and effective.</p> <p><i>'The internal verification that is undertaken is of a high standard and rigorous.'</i>(EV report)</p> <p>A small number of centres were advised to plan verification activities more effectively ensure a more organised approach rather than an ad hoc basis.</p> <p><i>'As stated, the quality of the verification is good it would just benefit from being planned and increased formative sampling.'</i> (EV Report)</p> <p>Feedback from assessors revealed that they were being well supported by internal verifiers who were carrying out observations of them working with candidates and providing feedback as to their performance. Some candidates who were interviewed by external verifiers also explained that they were supported by internal verifiers who were available to assist with questions about the qualifications and evidence when their assessor was not available.</p>

	<p><i>'Feedback to assessors is comprehensive and identifies good assessment practice as well as identifying areas for development. Issues with evidence and assessment methods are identified and fed back to assessors.'</i>(EV Report).</p>
<p>Management Systems and Records:</p>	<p>Findings: There are a greater number of Centres using e-portfolio to store and retain evidence whilst other Centres are using on-line assessment software for the whole of the assessment process. Both these approaches generally receive favourable comments from all involved in the process. The use of photocopied product evidence is declining with assessors being encouraged to assess this in situ and to ensure that the evidence is signposted in portfolios.</p> <p>Standardisation meetings are being held during the year for assessment teams. Minutes indicate that a variety of activities are undertaken in these meetings including professional updating, information around the qualification and standardisation activities using live candidate evidence. The number of regional assessment forums where representatives of assessment and verifier teams meet to share noteworthy practice and standardise practice have declined due, in part, to the familiarity with the qualifications and assessment requirements and restriction on Centre budgets for staff to travel to such meetings</p> <p>All Centres have policies in place to support the assessment process including access to assessment and appeals procedures. There have been very few reported appeals against assessor decisions or practice that have been reported to the Internal Verifier teams and where these have occurred these have been quickly resolved to the satisfaction of all involved. External Verifiers have not been required to become involved in any appeals.</p> <p>Centres have effective recording systems in place to support the assessment process. There are established HR systems for recording candidate details and progress, achievement and certification. Some of the on line systems used by Centres facilitate the tracking of achievement by candidates that enables an 'at glance' view of how far a candidates has progressed through the qualification and where there are gaps in their evidence. This permits assessors to focus assessment planning and activity.</p>

<p>Assessment Summary:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>Centres are generally providing a positive and effective assessment process for candidates. There are many changes taking place within Centres and the Police Forces within which they operate that are having a direct effect upon the composition of assessment and verification teams. These changes have resulted in less full time assessors and many assessors having to fit in their assessment activity with front line policing and the inherent demands upon their time. Centres are striving to manage this process and in the main are doing so effectively.</p> <p>Centres continue to utilise creative approaches to negotiating these difficulties to ensure candidates are supported and achieve the qualification such as digital and video recording and the use of on line assessment and evidence storage systems.</p> <p>Candidate numbers are declining across all centres due to the freeze on police recruits impacting on the Diploma in Policing and a slowing of promotions impacting on the supervisor and management qualifications.</p> <p>Centres are well organised and managed and meet the requirements of external verification. There have been very few sanctions imposed this year with external verifiers increasing their recommendations to improve performance. The majority of Centres delivering the policing qualifications hold DCS status.</p>
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2. Sector Developments

The introduction of the Diploma in Policing has seen the assessment burden on Centre lesson due to the reduction in the number of units in comparison with the old NVQ qualifications. The majority of Centres have expressed satisfaction with the qualification and the requirements to assess it. A small number of Centres have assessed additional units as an adjunct to the 10 units to meet local policing strategies and requirements.

The sector as a whole has seen a marked decrease in the recruitment of new police officers and as such, a registering of candidates. Some centres have not recruited for 2 years or more and are unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. This clearly impacts upon the number of candidates being registered. Once this situation is reversed and forces begin recruiting, registering and assessing there is the potential for assessors and verifiers to have lost their competence as assessors and centres their qualification knowledge and understanding.

The situation is similar with the Police Community Support Officers. There are fewer numbers and little recruitment and as such there is less likely to be any take up for their specific qualification. On a positive note, there are have a limited number of Centres who have recently registered a small number of PCSOs for this qualification and are beginning to undertake assessment.

Within police forces there has been a slowdown in promotion to the ranks of Sergeant and Inspector, the ranks that would be assessed against the Level 3 Supervisory and the Level 4 Operational management qualifications.

It is clear that the sector has been greatly affected by the current requirement by government for cut backs and economic savings and this situation is likely to persist for some time directly affecting the ability of Centres to register new candidates for any of the qualification in the Policing Suite.