

**21<sup>st</sup> August 2013**

**REPORT FOR PUBLICATION**

**1. The qualifications and standards**

- **Structure and content**

<p><b>Assessment Team:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>A number of centres have demonstrated good practice in relation to the presentation of CPD records. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear explanation of the activities undertaken</li> <li>• The relationship of the activities to the occupational standards</li> </ul> <p>There are still some centres that have had sanctions levied due to CPD records not being updated. Centres are reminded that it is a requirement of the approval process that updated records are available, confirming the currency of the occupational competence and knowledge of the assessment personnel involved in the assessment of Customer Service.</p> <p>All centres have had sufficient occupationally competent assessment personnel available for the number of learners on programme. Where there are trainee assessors and/or IQAs, the centres have identified counter-signatories. Centres are reminded that the counter-signatories should be reviewing the assessment or IQA judgements of the people that they are counter-signing. It has been noted in a minor number of centres that some counter-signatories were signing without reviewing the judgements.</p>
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<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>More centres are opting to use e-portfolio systems. This is enabling the learners to have more regular contact with their assessors. There have been some issues with e-portfolio systems not having the mandatory evidence requirements identified for cross-referencing. It is the responsibility of the centres to check that their elected e-portfolio system is fit for purpose and contains all of the unit specifications as required. Failure to carry this out could lead to inaccuracies with assessment which could lead to a high level sanction and removal of direct claim status.</p> <p>More and more centres are using digital recorders to record guided and professional discussions, Q&amp;A sessions and witness testimonies. These have been very effective and welcomed by the EQAs. Centres are again reminded to consider the length of the recordings and not to allow them to go on for too long.</p>
<p><b>Candidate Support:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>There have been no issues with candidate support. EQAs have conducted a number of candidate interviews where candidates have confirmed that they are happy with the level of support that they are receiving from their assessor and the centre as a whole. The majority of centres carry out a form of skills scan to establish the appropriate level for the candidate to work towards</p> <p>Assessors have agreed individual assessment plans with the candidates being provided with ample opportunity to review progress.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and Verification:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>The main issues identified by the EQAs are with respect to the IQA processes. A number of sanctions ranging from Level 1 to Level 3 have been levied by the EQAs this year. The issues identified are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of advanced planning for the IQA of all units</li> <li>• No specific standardisation activities eg discussion of specific units, reviewing candidate evidence against the standards</li> <li>• IQA records and sampling plans not available for the EQA to review</li> <li>• Lack of audit trail for the IQA process</li> <li>• Original certificates for new assessment</li> </ul>

	<p>personnel not available for inspection by the EQA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD records not updated</li> <li>• Requested candidates and assessment personnel not available for interview by the EQA</li> <li>• Lack of observation of assessors and candidate interviews by IQAs</li> <li>• Classification of general team meetings as standardisation meetings</li> </ul> <p>Weaknesses in assessment practice have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate and assessor signing the evidence reference sheet prior to completion</li> <li>• Over-claiming of evidence</li> </ul> <p>It should be noted that these are isolated cases and overall the assessment and IQA practices are well planned and supportive to the candidates. There are many centres that have spent time and effort in ensuring that all assessment personnel are fully conversant with the QCF qualifications, their rules of combination and most importantly the use of command verbs.</p>
<p><b>Management Systems and Records:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>EQAs have commented on the fact that the majority of centres continually review their policies and procedures on an annual basis. Overall centre communication with OCR and the EQA is very good, with EQAs having full access to records, assessment personnel, portfolios and candidates. Where there have been issues with access, this has only been in isolated cases.</p> <p>Where centres have had action points and/or recommendations, in the majority of cases it can be seen that these have been addressed, as appropriate, by the centres by the subsequent visit.</p>

<p><b>Assessment Summary:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Centres have continued to embrace the QCF qualifications and enhance their understanding of the assessment criteria. Overall, centres are providing their learners with high quality delivery and assessment of the Customer Service qualifications. There are still some weaknesses primarily in the IQA practice within centres which need to be addressed in order for standards to be maintained.</p>
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## 2. Sector Developments

Unfortunately the trend in the reduction of funding and reduced income for businesses is still having an effect on the number of learners accessing the customer service qualifications.

There has been a change of funding within England for traineeships/apprenticeships which could have an effect on the number of registrations for Customer Service as a qualification. The Traineeships Framework for Delivery document, states that “for 19-24 year olds, the programme will be available only for those who have not yet achieved their first full level two qualification”. “For 16-19 year olds, providers will have flexibility to work with young people who have a level two qualification but not a level three”. Many centres put their apprentices through two different level 2 qualifications eg Business and Administration and Customer Service. It appears that this will not be an option under the new funding regime.

The National Occupational Standards are due to be revised this year and it is important that centres and awarding organisations take the opportunity to participate in the on-line surveys and reviews that the CfA are making available on their website.