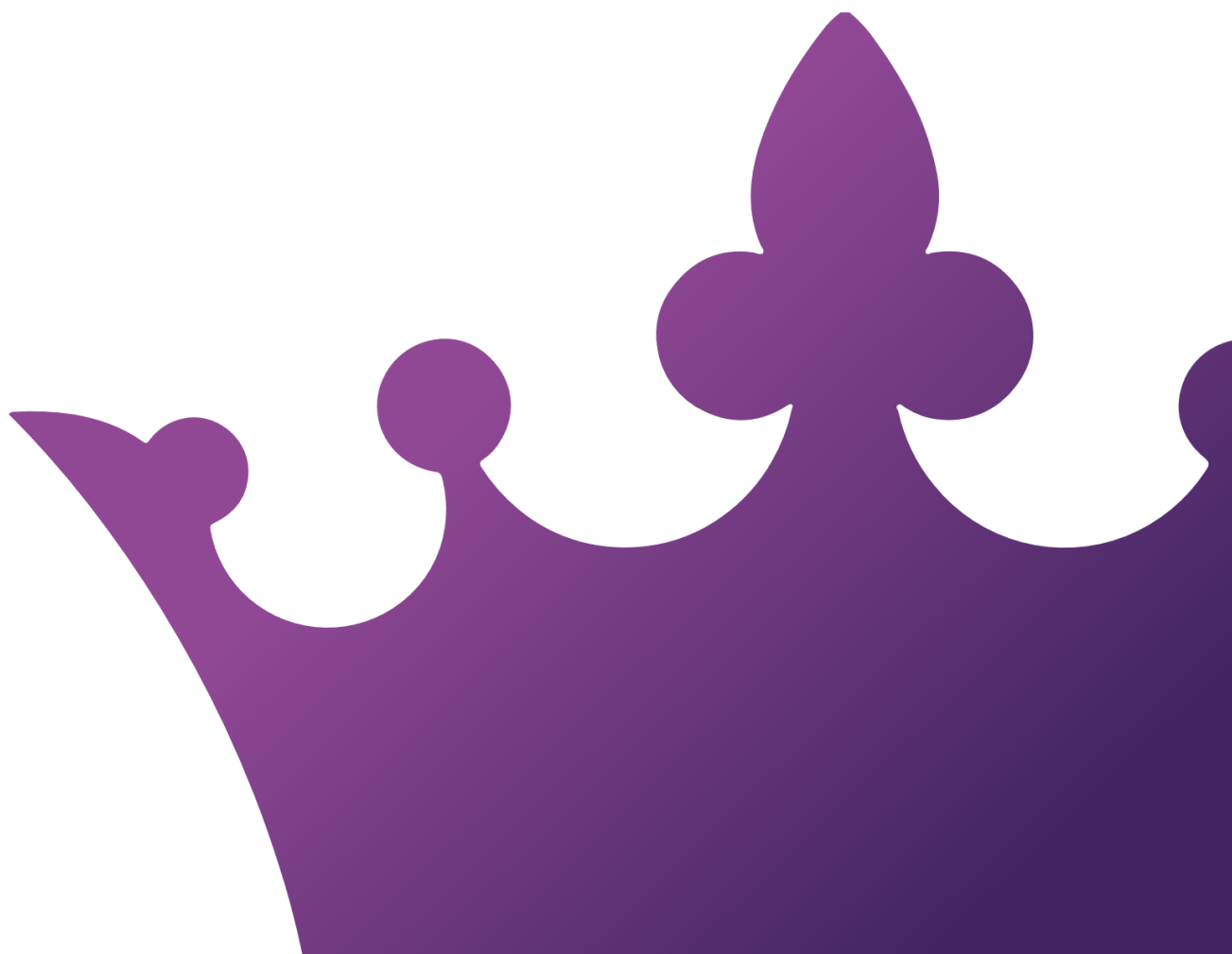

Level 4 Certificate for Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies



Qualification Handbook

SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate for Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies

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1 Introduction

1.1 About Us

SFJ Awards is part of the Workforce Development Trust group, together with Skills for Justice, Skills for Health and People 1st International. The Workforce Development Trust is a not-for-profit organisation helping employers to continually improve their workforce through increasing productivity, improving learning solutions and helping to boost the skills for staff across a wide range of industries throughout the UK and internationally.

SFJ Awards is an independent Awarding Organisation, regulated by the UK qualifications regulators, including Ofqual, CCEA and Qualifications Wales, to assess, quality assure and certificate learners and employees, helping training providers and employers to continue developing a highly skilled workforce for the future. Our values are 'For Skills, For Flexibility and For Jobs' and our work embodies the core charitable aims of the wider Workforce Development Trust group that ultimately supports better jobs. We add value to employers and training providers by delivering a wide range of sector-specific regulated qualifications, bespoke learner certification and quality assurance; SFJ Awards is also an End-Point Assessment Organisation for Apprenticeships in England.

Whilst predominantly delivering qualifications and assessments to meet the needs of Policing, Fire and Rescue, Community Justice, Custodial Care, Armed Forces, Security and Emergency Services, we continue to grow into markets that require a robust, and quality assured certification solution.

1.2 Customer Service Statement

Our Customer Service Statement is published on the SFJ Awards [website](#) giving the minimum level of service that centres can expect. The Statement will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to customer feedback, changes in legislation, and guidance from the qualifications regulators.

1.3 Centre Support

SFJ Awards works in partnership with its customers. For help or advice contact:

SFJ Awards
Consult House
Meadowcourt Business Park
4 Hayland Street
Sheffield
S9 1BY

Tel: 0114 284 1970

E-mail: info@sfjawards.com

Website: www.sfjawards.com

2 The Qualification

2.1 Qualification Objective

This handbook relates to the following qualification:

SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate for Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies

The objective of this qualification is to equip Employment Advisers (EAs) with the required knowledge and skills to:

- provide employment information, advice and guidance to NHS Talking Therapies clients
- support NHS Talking Therapies clients to develop their employment goals
- work collaboratively with NHS Talking Therapies clients, their clinicians and relevant organisations to achieve these employment goals

The principal role of the EA is to provide information, advice and guidance to all NHS Talking Therapies clients who choose to receive employment support. This information, advice and guidance will include, but is not limited to, reasonable adjustments, graduated return to work, access to work and other mechanisms which will support the client and their employer. The EA should work to empower the client to make better decisions about their working lives and improve communication with their colleagues and managers at work.

The EA is responsible for engaging with the client to establish the client's employment goals. The EA will work with the client and their clinician to produce a personalised action plan to ensure that both psychological treatment and employment support are provided. This will support the client to improve their mental health and meet their stated employment goals, which could include to:

- find a suitable job
- return to work from sick leave
- improve the working environment in which the client is working
- leave work and find more suitable alternative employment
- retire from work

The EA will work directly with Jobcentre Plus, Work & Health Programme providers, employers, trade unions and employment agencies to support people to stay in employment and secure employment opportunities.

As the EA role is to provide initial information, advice and guidance, clients with complex legal or employment issues are signposted to other organisations who can help with these

specific issues, for example Citizens Advice, Law Centres, ACAS or local welfare rights services etc. Negotiating with the employer on behalf of the client is not part of the EA role.

2.2 Pre-entry Requirements

To undertake this qualification learners will need to be working as an Employment Adviser delivering employment interventions in NHS Talking Therapies to clients with mental health needs. Centres must also ensure that learners are able to complete this qualification, for example, through completing a skills scan to ensure they can work at the appropriate level.

2.3 Qualification Structure

To be awarded this qualification the learner must achieve **three** mandatory units as shown in the table below.

| Mandatory Units | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---|-------|-----|
| Unit Number | Odyssey Reference | Unit Title | Level | GLH |
| 1 | 6339 | Understand the Role of the Employment Adviser in NHS Talking Therapies | 4 | 40 |
| 2 | 6340 | Engagement and Initial Assessment in the Employment Adviser Role in NHS Talking Therapies | 4 | 25 |
| 3 | 6341 | Delivering Employment Interventions to People with Mental Health Needs | 4 | 45 |

2.4 Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Values for Total Qualification Time¹, including Guided Learning, are calculated by considering the different activities that Learners would typically complete to achieve and

¹ Total Qualification Time, Ofqual

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications>



demonstrate the learning outcomes of a qualification. They do not include activities which are required by a Learner's Teacher based on the requirements of an individual Learner and/or cohort. Individual Learners' requirements and individual teaching styles mean there will be variation in the actual time taken to complete a qualification. Values for Total Qualification Time, including Guided Learning, are estimates.

Some examples of activities which can contribute to Total Qualification Time include:

- Independent and unsupervised research/learning
- Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience
- Unsupervised e-learning
- Unsupervised e-assessment
- Unsupervised coursework
- Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar
- Unsupervised work-based learning
- All Guided Learning

Some examples of activities which can contribute to Guided Learning include:

- Classroom-based learning supervised by a Teacher
- Work-based learning supervised by a Teacher
- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a Teacher in real time
- E-learning supervised by a Teacher in real time
- All forms of assessment which take place under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including where the assessment is competence-based and may be turned into a learning opportunity.

The Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning Hours for this qualification are as follows:

| Qualification Title | TQT | GLH |
|---|-----|-----|
| SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate for Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies | 200 | 110 |

2.5 Grading

This qualification is graded pass / fail.



2.6 Age Range and Geographical Coverage

This qualification is recommended to learners aged **18** years and over and is regulated in England.

2.7 Opportunities for Progression

This qualification creates a number of opportunities for progression, for example, to the role of Senior Employment Adviser, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner or High Intensity Therapist. Learners may also progress to the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development.

2.8 Use of Languages

SFJ Awards business language is English and we provide assessment materials and qualification specifications that are expressed in English. Assessment specifications and assessment materials may be requested in Welsh or Irish and, where possible, SFJ Awards will try to fulfil such requests. SFJ Awards will provide assessment materials and qualification specifications that are expressed in Welsh or Irish and support the assessment of those learners, where the number of learners makes it economically viable for SFJ Awards to do so. More information is provided in the SFJ Awards' Use of Language Policy.

For learners seeking to take a qualification and be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language, please refer to SFJ Awards' Reasonable Adjustments Policy. A learner may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by SFJ Awards for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment.

Policies are available on our website www.sfjawards.com or on request from SFJ Awards.

3 Qualification Units

3.1 Mandatory Units

| Title | Understand the Role of the Employment Adviser in NHS Talking Therapies | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Level | 4 | | |
| Unit Number | 1 | | |
| Total Hours | 65 | | |
| GLH | 40 | | |
| Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i> | Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i> | | Guidance and/or Indicative Content |
| 1. Understand mental health conditions in the context of NHS Talking Therapies | 1.1 | Describe mental health conditions in the context of primary and secondary NHS Talking Therapies | <p>It is important for EAs to be aware of the mental health disorders that are supported within primary care Talking Therapies and those which would be supported within secondary care</p> <p>Such information will relate to tailoring of support needs/disclosures, signposting and joint working e.g. if a patient were to mention they were accessing psychiatric</p> |



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|---|-----|--|--|
| | | | support, any supporting therapist would need to be aware to gauge suitability of information, advice and guidance the EA provides |
| | 1.2 | Analyse the impact of mental health conditions on individual day to day functioning and motivation in relation to employment | |
| | 1.3 | Analyse the impact of work on individual mental health and wellbeing | |
| 2. Understand working as an Employment Adviser in NHS Talking Therapies | 2.1 | Explain the role of the Employment Adviser in NHS Talking Therapies | <p>The EA role is to provide information, advice and guidance</p> <p>Clients with complex legal or employment issues should be signposted to other organisations for example Citizens Advice, Law Centres, ACAS, Local welfare rights services etc</p> |
| | 2.2 | Clarify the roles of therapists in NHS Talking Therapies | Therapists may include but are not limited to Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP), High Intensity Therapists (HIT) and counsellors |
| | 2.3 | Identify different models of joint working between Employment Advisers and mental health professionals, in particular staff in NHS Talking Therapies | This will ensure that Employment Advisers participate in collaborative working, action planning, conferencing, and escalation processes |



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|--|-----|---|---|
| | 2.4 | Describe how to work in line with NHS confidentiality and consent guidance with clients | |
| | 2.5 | Clarify the relevance and application of relevant legislation to the role of the Employment Adviser in NHS Talking Therapies | Employment legislation, Equality Act (2010) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) |
| | 2.6 | Explain local risk and safeguarding protocols when working as an Employment Adviser | This will be included in mandatory training and relates to systems and processes – how the learner would flag risk/ safeguarding issues |
| 3. Understand engagement and assessment when working as an Employment Adviser in NHS Talking Therapies | 3.1 | Explain why it is important to have a collaborative approach between the Employment Adviser, therapist and client | |
| | 3.2 | Explain the importance of structured meetings with clients that are planned in advance | |
| | 3.3 | Explain techniques which can be used in client meetings to ensure adherence to an agreed agenda and to pace the meeting | |
| | 3.4 | Identify the assessment processes and tools required to establish clients' employment needs in the service and relevant external services | |
| | 3.5 | Explain the importance of working collaboratively with service therapists to identify clients' barriers to work | |



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| 4. Understand NHS Talking Therapies outcome measures | 4.1 | Explain what minimum dataset (MDS) outcome measures are | |
| | 4.2 | Describe how outcome measures are used by therapists | These measures are background information for Employment Advisers' who are not expected to use them |
| | 4.3 | Explain outcome measures relevant to the Employment Adviser role | Measures relevant to the EA role are presenteeism questionnaire (Productivity Cost Questionnaire - PCQ) and Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) |
| 5. Understand work and health-related state benefits | 5.1 | Summarise work and health-related state benefits | |
| | 5.2 | Explain the conditions of entitlement for state benefits | |
| | 5.3 | Summarise reconsideration and appeals processes that will assist clients | |
| | 5.4 | Identify sources of help and information on benefits | May include use of online benefits entitlement calculators or organisations that clients can be referred to |



| Additional information about the unit | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Assessment guidance | <p>This unit can be assessed through methods appropriate for knowledge based assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written tests in a controlled environment • Evidenced question and answer sessions/professional discussions with assessors • Coursework • Projects • Written assignments (including scenario-based written assignments) • E-assessment • Portfolio of evidence |
| Links/resources | <p>EA Hub</p> <p>Citizens' Advice https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/</p> <p>ACAS https://www.acas.org.uk/</p> <p>ACAS Employers' Advice https://employeradvice.org/</p> |



| Title | Engagement and Initial Assessment in the Employment Adviser Role in NHS Talking Therapies | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Level | 4 | | |
| Unit Number | 2 | | |
| Total Hours | 45 | | |
| GLH | 25 | | |
| Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i> | Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i> | | Guidance and/or Indicative Content |
| 1. Be able to engage with clients in NHS Talking Therapies to deliver employment interventions | 1.1 | Use interpersonal skills to develop working relationships with clients | Engagement could be face to face, by telephone or through virtual means This will include rapport, warmth and trust between the adviser and client |
| | 1.2 | Structure the conversation at a pace suitable for the client | |
| | 1.3 | Use active listening skills in an empathetic, non-judgemental and supportive manner | |
| | 1.4 | Use questioning skills to establish the client's aspirations and needs | |
| | 1.5 | Empower the client to take responsibility for and agree actions identified during the intervention | Overarching goals for clients are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to work • Find work |



| | | | |
|---|-----|--|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain in work <p>There may be a need to support people to leave work with dignity if the job is or has become unsuitable for them</p> <p>Interventions are defined as the steps and individual actions that are agreed between the Employment Adviser and client to achieve their agreed goal</p> |
| | 1.6 | Address any concerns or scepticism the client may have about the intervention | |
| 2. Be able to conduct assessments of clients' employment needs in NHS Talking Therapies | 2.1 | Conduct assessments of clients' employment needs to establish their overarching goal | <p>Overarching goals for clients are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to work • Find work • Remain in work <p>There may be a need to support people to leave work with dignity if the job is or has become unsuitable for them</p> |
| | 2.2 | Determine clients' employment needs in the context of their mental health | May include for example reasonable adjustments, phased return to work |
| 3. Be able to engage with professionals and external organisations when | 3.1 | Identify professionals and external support organisations who may be involved to address clients' employment needs | Any other issues identified by the adviser should be signposted to other services/organisations |



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|--|-----|---|--|
| delivering employment interventions in NHS Talking Therapies | 3.2 | Use external organisations that can provide specialist support, advice and guidance to clients | May include but is not limited to breaches of employability or disability rights legislation; financial needs/legal advice |
| | 3.3 | Work in collaboration with NHS Primary Care Talking therapists to develop work-based programme/plans to address workplace based psychological problems | Programme/plan will support job retention for those newly employed or who are at risk of becoming unemployed due to a mental health condition |
| | 3.4 | Engage with clients, professionals and organisations to test, interpret and review action plans | May include the employer and any relevant support organisations |
| 4. Be able to use information systems relevant to the Employment Adviser role | 4.1 | Use systems to record information and inform case management in line with own organisation's requirements | May include patient administration systems such as IAPTUS, PCMIS, System One Paris and Carenotes Organisation's requirements may include confidentiality, ethics, data security |
| 5. Be able to present information about the NHS Primary Care Talking Therapy service offer to a variety of audiences | 5.1 | Identify potential audiences relevant to the Employment Adviser role who may require information about the NHS Primary Care Talking Therapy service offer | Audience could include but is not limited to individuals, employers, HR groups, other services, stakeholders, community groups, job centres |
| | 5.2 | Use communication skills to present information about the NHS Primary Care Talking Therapy service offer in different ways to a variety of audiences | Information could be presented in different ways (including digital), depending on the audience and context |



| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | Employment Adviser would be expected to present information as appropriate to their role A therapist may or may not be involved in delivery of any information/presentation |
| Additional information about the unit | | | |
| Assessment guidance | <p>Assessors are expected to use a combination of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's occupational competence. Methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation in the workplace • Practical demonstration / assignment • Testimony of witnesses and expert witnesses • Work outputs (product evidence) • Evidenced professional discussion with assessors • Evidenced questioning of the learner (oral or written) with assessors • Simulation in a scenario environment • Portfolio of evidence | | |
| Links/resources | <p>EA Hub Citizens' Advice https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/ ACAS https://www.acas.org.uk/ ACAS Employers' Advice https://employeradvice.org/</p> | | |



| Title | Delivering Employment Interventions to People with Mental Health Needs | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Level | 4 | | |
| Unit Number | 3 | | |
| Total Hours | 90 | | |
| GLH | 45 | | |
| Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i> | Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i> | | Guidance and/or Indicative Content |
| 1. Be able to deliver employment interventions to people with mental health needs | 1.1 | Work collaboratively with NHS Primary Care Talking Therapy service clinicians and clients | <p>Collaborative working can occur at any stage before or during the intervention</p> <p>The Employment Adviser, client and clinician/therapist need to work collaboratively throughout the process</p> <p>Collaboration could be, but is not limited to, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussions with clinicians/therapists • accessing information held on relevant systems • action plans • feeding back any changing presentation of the client to their therapist |



| | | | |
|--|-----|---|--|
| | 1.2 | Support the client to understand the role of the Employment Adviser in individual sessions | <p>Includes remit, purpose and boundaries of the role</p> <p>The client's needs may change between sessions, so what the Employment Adviser can offer or the interventions may also change according to the client's situation</p> |
| | 1.3 | Communicate to the client about the delivery, implementation and monitoring of the employment intervention including nature and timings of meetings | <p>Communications should be face-to-face, by telephone and online</p> <p>Client should be made aware of different modes of accessing support</p> <p>This should involve the therapist, Employment Adviser and client working collaboratively</p> |
| | 1.4 | Support the client to understand the rationale of the employment focussed intervention | <p>The employment intervention will depend on whether the client is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking available work • Trying to remain in work • Returning to work • Leaving work if the job is or has become unsuitable for them |



| | | | |
|--|------|---|---|
| | 1.5 | Support the client to understand the focus of the intervention | This will include face-to-face, telephone and virtual/online interventions The focus is the development of the client's employment related knowledge and skills in relation to any mental health needs they may have |
| | 1.6 | Construct a structured agenda that focusses on issues and areas for development, which is agreed with the client | |
| | 1.7 | Employ strategies to pace the session to ensure all agenda items are fully addressed | |
| | 1.8 | Employ strategies to maintain the client's focus on key issues | |
| | 1.9 | Identify areas of conversation which could divert attention from the primary aim of the session | |
| | 1.10 | Change the focus of the session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in response to the needs of the client identified during the conversation to concentrate on the key issues where the client has digressed | |
| | 1.11 | Agree actions to address both psychological and employment needs of the client | Agreement should be with client, Employment Adviser and clinician/therapist |



| | | | |
|--|------|--|---|
| | 1.12 | Support the client to use self-help materials | Use to monitor/identify progress and motivate clients |
| | 1.13 | Review and revise agreed actions with the client at follow up meetings | |
| | 1.14 | Support the client to problem solve any difficulties | |
| 2. Be able to agree goals with clients with mental health needs to address employment related issues | 2.1 | Provide the client with employment advice appropriate to their circumstances | <p>The employment advice will depend on whether the client is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking available work • Trying to remain in work • Returning to work <p>The advice will be based on local labour market knowledge (how it functions, factors that influence it, where there is growth and demand) and include for example types of work, rates of pay</p> <p>There may be a need to support people to leave work with dignity if the job is or has become unsuitable for them</p> |
| | 2.2 | Support the client to build confidence and resilience, enhancing their ability to make decisions about their future work | |



| | | | |
|--|-----|--|---|
| | 2.3 | Support the client with generating own objectives and actions that meet their identified goal | Objectives must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound) and help the client to progress to their overarching goal |
| | 2.4 | Challenge the client constructively where objectives may be unrealistic or unachievable | |
| | 2.5 | Gain consensus and ownership of the objectives from the client | |
| 3. Be able to provide a summary of an employment intervention to clients | 3.1 | Clarify with the client that they understand the nature of the intervention and steps going forward | |
| | 3.2 | Convey to the client the importance of shared decision making and taking action between meetings | |
| 4. Be able to empower clients to carry out tasks and actions | 4.1 | Support the client to understand the rationale for completing homework and related tasks | |
| | 4.2 | Use interpersonal skills to motivate and empower the client to carry out tasks and actions | Learners will be expected to adapt their approach to meet the needs of different clients |
| | 4.3 | Use problem solving techniques to support the client to find solutions to anticipated difficulties in carrying out tasks and actions | |



| | | | |
|---|-----|--|--|
| 5. Be able to use employment related measures when delivering and reviewing employment interventions | 5.1 | Use employment related measures to establish the client's current situation from which to track progress | Measures used should be presenteeism questionnaire (Productivity Cost Questionnaire iPCQ) and Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) |
| | 5.2 | Use employment related measures to track the client's progress and realign support as appropriate | |
| 6. Be able to meet statutory requirements regarding risk, safeguarding and confidentiality when delivering employment interventions in mental health settings | 6.1 | Recognise when a client appears to be at risk | This could be implicit or explicit, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> something mentioned in conversation by the client how the client presents |
| | 6.2 | Respond appropriately to clients in line with the Employment Adviser's remit | Employment Adviser should work according to role boundaries; they would be expected to inform client about colleagues/other professionals or agencies to who they might have to escalate any issues raised. They will be expected to demonstrate empathy when responding to the client |
| | 6.3 | Follow local safeguarding and risk escalation procedures to ensure the safety of all involved | Employment Adviser is not expected to manage the risk themselves but know where to find help using existing protocols |
| | 6.4 | Work with clients in line with NHS confidentiality and consent guidance | |



| Additional information about the unit | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Assessment guidance | <p>Assessors are expected to use a combination of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's occupational competence. Methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation in the workplace • Practical demonstration / assignment • Testimony of witnesses and expert witnesses • Work outputs (product evidence) • Evidenced professional discussion with assessors • Evidenced questioning of the learner (oral or written) with assessors • Simulation in a scenario environment • Portfolio of evidence |
| Links/resources | <p>EA Hub</p> <p>Citizens' Advice https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/</p> <p>ACAS https://www.acas.org.uk/</p> <p>ACAS Employers' Advice https://employeradvice.org/</p> |



4 Centre Requirements

4.1 Centre Responsibilities

Centres must be approved by SFJ Awards and also have approval to deliver the qualifications they wish to offer. This is to ensure centres have the processes and resources in place to deliver the qualifications. Approved centres must adhere to the requirements detailed in the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook, which includes information for centres on assessment and internal quality assurance processes and procedures.

When a centre applies to offer a qualification, they will need to provide evidence that they have sufficient resources and infrastructure in place for delivery of that qualification:

- evidence of assessor and IQA competence
- sample assessment materials and mark schemes
- scheme of work
- details of available resources

Centres are responsible for ensuring that their assessor and internal quality assurance staff:

- are occupationally competent and/or knowledgeable as appropriate to the assessor or IQA role they are carrying out
- have current experience of assessing/internal quality assuring as appropriate to the assessor or IQA role they are carrying out
- have access to appropriate training and support
- are independent and any conflicts of interests are managed and monitored appropriately by SFJ Awards

Information on the induction and continuing professional development of those carrying out assessment and internal quality assurance must be made available by centres to SFJ Awards through the external quality assurance process.

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the following SFJ Awards documents:

- Assessment Guidance
- Centre Handbook
- Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policies



- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Examinations and Invigilation Policy
- Risk and Centre Monitoring Policy
- Fair Access and Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy
- Standardisation Policy
- Direct Claims Policy
- Centre Approval Process

All documents referenced in the strategy are available to centres on Odyssey, SFJ Awards learner management system, or on request from SFJ Awards.

4.2 Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy

Awarding Organisations are required by Ofqual to have a CASS Strategy in place to improve the controls where an assessment is devised and marked by a centre.² In line with our CASS Strategy, SFJ Awards will determine the most appropriate CASS approach for each qualification / qualification suite using a risk based approach.

Any Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) used by centres to develop and/or mark assessments must declare any conflict of interest and centres must ensure that any such conflicts are mitigated. All details of such conflicts of interest must be recorded by the centre.

SFJ Awards will require sample assessments from centres to maintain confidence with our centres' approach to maintaining the integrity of our quality assurance strategy defined within the CASS strategy. Centre marking will be subject to external quality assurance.

Centres are permitted to develop and mark assessments for the SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate for Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies, in line with our CASS Strategy.

4.3 Facilities

Training and assessment for approved qualifications must take place in a suitable environment that has been approved by SFJ Awards. The environment must be adequately

² [Condition H2 - Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny where an assessment is marked by a Centre](#)



equipped for training, conducive to effective learning, and must comply with current Health and Safety requirements. Equipment for practical activities must be readily available and fit for purpose. All examination venues must comply with the policy, standards, and regulations specified by SFJ Awards to gain approval for knowledge-based assessment.

Training and assessment facilities must comply with the ongoing approval arrangements of SFJ Awards.

4.4 Trainers

Some sectors specify trainer requirements for qualification delivery, for example first aid and security. Details of any specific trainer requirements are included in this qualification handbook. Centres should therefore check this handbook, or with SFJ Awards, for any trainer requirements that apply to the qualification(s) they wish to deliver. Centres applying for approval with SFJ Awards will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each trainer meets the requirements, for example certificates of achievement, CV or CPD records.



5 Assessment

5.1 Qualification Assessment Methods

Assessment methods³ that can be used for the **SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate for Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies** are as follows:

- Coursework
- E-assessment
- Portfolio of Evidence (including for example records of question and answer sessions, work products)
- Practical Demonstration / Assignment
- Written Examination
- Observation
- Professional Discussion
- Presentation and Questioning
- Project

5.2 Assessing Competence

The purpose of assessing competence is to make sure that an individual is competent to carry out the activities required in their work.

Assessors gather and judge evidence during normal work activities to determine whether the learner demonstrates their competence against the standards in the qualification unit(s). Competence should be demonstrated at a level appropriate to the qualification. The skills required at the different qualification levels are defined in Ofqual's level descriptors.⁴ Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

Evidence must be:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Current
- Reliable

³ Selected from assessment methods listed on Ofqual's regulatory system (Portal)

⁴ Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition, Section E - Design and development of qualifications www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications



Assessment should be integrated into everyday work to make the most of opportunities that arise naturally within the workplace.

5.3 Methods for Assessing Competence

Qualifications may be assessed using any method, or combination of methods, as stipulated either by SFJ Awards or within specific qualifications, and which clearly demonstrate that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. Some sectors may have specific assessment requirements that apply to their qualifications and where these apply, details will be included in the qualification-specific handbook.

Assessors need to be able to select the right assessment methods for the competences that are being assessed, without overburdening the learner or the assessment process, or interfering with everyday work activities. SFJ Awards expect assessors to use a combination of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's occupational competence. Assessment methods which are most likely to be used are outlined below. However, these are included for guidance only and there may be other methods which are suitable. Further information on assessment methods is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

5.3.1 Observation

SFJ Awards believe that direct observation in the workplace by an assessor or testimony from an expert witness is preferable as it allows for authenticated, valid and reliable evidence. Where learners demonstrate their competence in a real work situation, this must be done without the intervention from a tutor, supervisor or colleague.

However, SFJ Awards recognise that alternative sources of evidence and assessment methods may have to be used where direct observation is not possible or practical.

5.3.2 Testimony of Witnesses and Expert Witnesses

Witness testimonies are an accepted form of evidence by learners when compiling portfolios. Witness testimonies can be generated by peers, line managers and other individuals working closely with the learner. Witnesses are defined as being those people who are occupationally expert in their role.

Testimony can also be provided by expert witnesses who are occupationally competent **and** familiar with the qualification unit(s). Assessors will not need to spend as long assessing expert witness testimony as they would a witness testimony from a non-expert. Therefore, if expert witnesses are involved in the assessment strategy for a qualification a greater number of learners can be managed by a smaller number of assessors.



The assessor is however responsible for making the final judgement in terms of the learner meeting the evidence requirements for the qualification unit(s).

5.3.2 Work Outputs (Product Evidence)

Examples of work outputs include plans, reports, budgets, photographs, videos or notes of an event. Assessors can use work outputs in conjunction with other assessment methods, such as observation and discussion, to confirm competence and assure authenticity of the evidence presented.

5.3.4 Professional Discussion

Discussions allow the learner to describe and reflect on their performance and knowledge in relation to the standards. Assessors can use discussions to test the authenticity, validity and reliability of a learner's evidence. Written/audio records of discussions must be maintained.

5.3.5 Questioning the Learner

Questioning can be carried out orally or in written form and used to cover any gaps in assessment or corroborate other forms of evidence. Written/audio records of all questioning must be maintained.

5.3.6 Simulations

Simulations may take place either in a non-operational environment which is not the learner's workplace, for example a training centre. The qualification handbook will specify whether simulations are allowed for the qualification and/or units within it. Proposed simulations must be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose as part of the IQA's pre-delivery activity.

Simulations can be used when:

- the employer or assessor consider that evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within a reasonable timeframe
- there are limited opportunities to demonstrate competence in the workplace against all the assessment criteria
- there are health and safety implications due to the high-risk nature of the work activity
- the work activity is non-routine and assessment cannot easily be planned for
- assessment is required in more difficult circumstances than is likely to happen day to day

Simulations must follow the principles below:



1. The nature of the contingency and the physical environment for the simulation must be realistic
2. Learners should be given no indication as to exactly what contingencies they may come across in the simulation
3. The demands on the learner during the simulation should be no more or less than they would be in a real work situation
4. Simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation correctly reflects what the specific qualification unit seeks to assess and all simulations should follow these documented plans
5. There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of a unit and they should be rotated regularly

5.4 Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge-based assessment involves establishing what the learner knows or understands at a level appropriate to the qualification. The depth and breadth of knowledge required at the different qualification levels are defined in Ofqual's level descriptors.⁵ Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Guidance.

Assessments must be:

- Fair
- Robust
- Rigorous
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Transparent
- Appropriate

Good practice when assessing knowledge includes use of a combination of assessment methods to ensure that as well as being able to recall information, the learner has a broader understanding of its application in the workplace. This ensures that qualifications are a valid measure of a learner's knowledge and understanding.

A proportion of any summative assessment may be conducted in controlled environments to ensure conditions are the same for all learners. This could include use of:

- Closed book conditions, where learners are not allowed access to reference materials
- Time bound conditions
- Invigilation

⁵ Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition, Section E - Design and development of qualifications www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications



Where assessment in controlled environments is considered appropriate for qualifications, or the use of specific assessment materials (for example, exemplars or scenarios) is required, information will be included in the qualification handbook.

5.5 Methods for Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

SFJ Awards expect assessors to use a variety of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's knowledge and understanding, which may include a combination of the following:

- a) Written tests in a controlled environment
- b) Multiple choice questions (MCQs)
- c) Evidenced question and answer sessions with assessors
- d) Evidenced professional discussions
- e) Written assignments (including scenario-based written assignments)

Where written assessments are centre-devised and centre-assessed, centres must:

- maintain a sufficient bank of assignments which are changed regularly
- record how risks in tests/exams conducted in controlled environments are mitigated
- conduct assessments in line with SFJ Awards Examination and Invigilation Policy

Centres must take into account the qualification when selecting knowledge assessment methods to ensure they are appropriate and allow the learner to evidence the assessment criteria. For example, MCQs are unlikely to be appropriate for higher levels qualifications or assessment criteria which require learners to 'explain', 'describe', 'evaluate' or 'analyse'.

5.6 Assessment Planning

Planning assessment allows a holistic approach to be taken, which focuses on assessment of the learner's work activity as a whole. This means that the assessment:

- reflects the skills requirements of the workplace
- saves time
- streamlines processes
- makes the most of naturally occurring evidence opportunities

Planning assessment enables assessors to track learners' progress and incorporate feedback into the learning process; assessors can therefore be sure that learners have had sufficient opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge to perform competently and consistently to the standards before being assessed. The assessment is therefore a



more efficient, cost effective process which minimises the burden on learners, assessors and employers.



6 Assessor Requirements

6.1 Occupational Knowledge and Competence

Due to the risk-critical nature of the work, particularly when assessing in the public and security sectors, and the legal implications of the assessment process, assessors must understand the nature and context of the learners' work. This means that assessors must be occupationally competent. Each assessor must therefore be, according to current sector practice, competent in the functions covered by the unit(s) they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence by working within the sector relating to the unit(s) or qualification(s) they are assessing.

Assessors must be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the qualification unit(s) they are assessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager.

Where assessors are assessing knowledge-based qualifications, they must be occupationally knowledgeable in the sector they are assessing in.

6.2 Qualification Knowledge

Assessors must be familiar with the qualification unit(s) they are assessing. They must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

6.3 Assessor Competence

Assessors must be able to make valid, reliable and fair assessment decisions. To demonstrate their competence, we expect assessors to be:

- qualified with a recognised assessor qualification, or
- working towards a recognised assessor qualification

However, there may be circumstances when assessors have the equivalent competence through training to appropriate national standards, and SFJ Awards will agree this on a case-by-case basis.



Assessors' experience, knowledge and understanding could be verified by a combination of:

- curriculum vitae and employer endorsement or references
- possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ, or vocationally related qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- interview (the verification process must be recorded and available for audit)

Recognised assessor qualifications include, but are not limited to:

- RQF/QCF Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
- RQF/QCF Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- RQF/QCF Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement
- An appropriate Assessor qualification in the SCQF as identified by SQA Accreditation
- A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods
- D32/33 Assess candidate performance, using differing sources of evidence

Where assessors hold an older qualification e.g. D32/33 or A1, they must provide evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to demonstrate current competence.

Assessors must hold an assessor qualification, or equivalent competence if agreed by SFJ Awards, relevant to the type of qualification(s) they are assessing e.g.

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment:
For assessors who assess **competence in a work environment**, which requires the use of the following assessment methods: observation, examining work products or outputs, oral questioning, discussion, use of witness testimony, learner statements and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement:
For assessors who assess **knowledge and/or skills in vocationally related areas** using the following assessment methods: tests of skills, oral questioning, written questions, case studies, assignments, projects and RPL.

To be able to assess both knowledge and competence-based qualifications, new assessors should be working towards the **Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement**. Centres must have in place a procedure to ensure that their trainee assessors have a representative sample of their assessment decisions counter signed by a qualified and competent assessor. SFJ Awards will provide centres with guidance on the ratio of qualified/trainee assessors.

Trainee assessors working towards a qualification must be registered for the qualification with a regulated AO and achieve it within 18 months. Assessor competence will be checked through annual External Quality Assurance checks.

Centres must check the qualification handbook for assessor requirements for the qualification(s) they are approved to deliver as some sectors have different requirements



e.g. security, education and training, assessor and quality assurance, and learning and development.

Centres applying for approval with SFJ Awards will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each assessor meets these requirements, for example certificates of achievement. Centres who apply for approval to offer additional qualifications will be required to provide evidence of assessor competence for the qualifications they wish to offer.

6.4 Continuing Professional Development

Assessors must actively engage in continuous professional development activities to maintain:

- occupational competence and knowledge by keeping up-to-date with the changes taking place in the sector(s) for which they carry out assessments
- professional competence and knowledge as an assessor.

It is the centre's responsibility to retain the CPD information of assessors. Assessor competence and CPD will be checked by External Quality Assurers at the centre's annual compliance visit.



7 Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

7.1 Occupational Knowledge

Internal quality assurers (IQAs) must be occupationally knowledgeable across the range of units for which they are responsible prior to commencing the role. Due to the risk-critical nature of the work, particularly in the justice, community safety and security sectors, and the legal implications of the assessment process, they must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their learners. This means that they must have worked closely with staff who carry out the functions covered by the qualifications, possibly by training or supervising them, and have sufficient knowledge of these functions to be able to offer credible advice on the interpretation of the units.

7.2 Qualification Knowledge

IQAs must understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the qualification(s) they are internal quality assuring.

Centres should provide IQAs with an induction to the qualifications that they are responsible for quality assuring. IQAs should also have access to ongoing training and updates on current issues relevant to these qualifications.

7.3 Internal Quality Assurer Competence

IQAs must occupy a position in the organisation that gives them the authority and resources to:

- coordinate the work of assessors
- provide authoritative advice
- call meetings as appropriate
- conduct pre-delivery internal quality assurance on centre assessment plans, for example, to ensure that any proposed simulations are fit for purpose
- visit and observe assessment practice
- review the assessment process by sampling assessment decisions
- ensure that assessment has been carried out by assessors who are occupationally competent, or for knowledge-based qualifications occupationally knowledgeable, in the area they are assessing



- lead internal standardisation activity
- resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions

To demonstrate their competence, IQAs must be:

- qualified with a recognised internal quality assurance qualification, or
- working towards a recognised internal quality assurance qualification

However, there may be circumstances when IQAs have the equivalent competence through training to appropriate national standards, and SFJ Awards will agree this on a case-by-case basis. Recognised IQA qualifications include, but are not limited to:

- RQF/QCF Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- RQF/QCF Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- An appropriate IQA qualification in the SCQF as identified by SQA Accreditation
- V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
- D34 Internally verify the assessment process

Where IQAs hold an older qualification e.g. D34 or V1, they must provide evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to demonstrate current competence. Approved centres will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each IQA meets these requirements, for example certificates of achievement.

Centres must have in place a procedure to ensure that their trainee IQAs have a representative sample of their IQA decisions counter signed by a qualified IQA who holds a minimum of the Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice. SFJ Awards will provide centres with guidance on the ratio of qualified/trainee assessors.

Trainee IQAs working towards one of the above qualifications must be registered for the qualification with a regulated AO and achieve it within 18 months. IQA competence will be checked through annual External Quality Assurance checks.

7.4 Continuing Professional Development

IQAs must actively engage in continuous professional development activities to maintain:

- occupational knowledge by keeping up-to-date with the changes taking place in the sector(s) for which they carry out assessments
- professional competence and knowledge as an IQA



Centres must check the qualification handbook for IQA requirements for the qualification(s) they are approved to deliver as some sectors have different requirements e.g. security, education and training, assessor and quality assurance, and learning and development.



8 Expert Witnesses

Expert witnesses, for example line managers and supervisors, can provide evidence that a learner has demonstrated competence in an activity. Their evidence contributes to performance evidence and has parity with assessor observation. Expert witnesses do not however perform the role of assessor.

8.1 Occupational Competence

Expert witnesses must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the unit(s) for which they are providing evidence.

They must be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the qualification unit that they are witnessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager.

8.2 Qualification Knowledge

Expert witnesses must be familiar with the qualification unit(s) and must be able to interpret current working practices and technologies within the area of work.



9 External Quality Assurers

External quality assurance is carried out by SFJ Awards to ensure that there is compliance, validity, reliability and good practice in centres. External quality assurers (EQAs) are appointed by SFJ Awards to approve centres and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres.

SFJ Awards are responsible for ensuring that their external quality assurance team have:

- sufficient and appropriate occupational knowledge
- current experience of external quality assurance
- access to appropriate training and support

9.1 External Quality Assurer Competence

To demonstrate their competence, EQAs must be:

- qualified with a recognised external quality assurance qualification, or
- working towards a recognised external quality assurance qualification

Relevant qualifications include:

- Level 4 Award in the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
- Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice

Trainee EQAs working towards one of the above qualifications must be registered for the qualification with a regulated AO and aim to achieve it within 18 months. Whilst working towards a qualification, trainee EQAs will be supported by qualified EQA and receive training, for example by shadowing the EQA on compliance visits. EQA competence will be checked and monitored by SFJ Awards.

9.2 Continuing Professional Development

EQAs must maintain their occupational and external quality assurance knowledge. They will attend training and development designed to keep them up-to-date, facilitate standardisation between staff and share good practice.



10 Standardisation

Internal and external standardisation is required to ensure the consistency of evidence, assessment decisions and qualifications awarded over time.

10.1 Internal Standardisation

IQAs should facilitate internal standardisation events for assessors to attend and participate, in order to review evidence used, make judgments, compare quality and come to a common understanding of what is sufficient.

10.2 External Standardisation

SFJ Awards will enable access to external standardisation opportunities for centres and EQAs over time.

Further information on standardisation is available in the SFJ Awards Quality Assurance (Internal and External) Guidance and the SFJ Awards [Standardisation Policy](#).



11 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process of recognising previous formal, informal or experiential learning so that the learner avoids having to repeat learning/assessment within a new qualification. RPL is a broad concept and covers a range of possible approaches and outcomes to the recognition of prior learning (including credit transfer where an Awarding Organisation has decided to attribute credit to a qualification).

The use of RPL encourages transferability of qualifications and/or units, which benefits both learners and employers. SFJ Awards support the use of RPL and centres must work to the principles included in Section 6 Assessment and Quality Assurance of the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook and outlined in SFJ Awards [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).



12 Equality and Diversity

Centres must comply with legislation and the requirements of the RQF relating to equality and diversity. There should be no barriers to achieving a qualification based on:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that learners who are disabled or who have additional learning needs are not disadvantaged in any way. Learners must declare their needs prior to the assessment and all necessary reasonable adjustment arrangements must have been approved by SFJ Awards and implemented before the time of their assessment.

All cases where reasonable adjustment has been used must be fully documented, made available for external quality assurance and retained for a minimum of 3 years.

Further information is available in the SFJ Awards [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#) and the SFJ Awards [Equality of Opportunity Policy](#).

SFJ Awards will conduct Equality Impact Assessments in the design and development of qualifications to minimise as far as possible any impact on learners with a protected characteristic, disability or additional learning needs.



13 Health and Safety

SFJ Awards are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, employees and volunteers and expect everyone to share this commitment.

SFJ Awards foster an open and supportive culture to encourage the safety and well-being of employees, learners and partner organisations to enable:

- learners to thrive and achieve
- employees, volunteers and visitors to feel secure
- everyone to feel assured that their welfare is a high priority.

Assessment of competence-based qualifications in some sectors can carry a high risk level due to the nature of some roles. Centres must therefore ensure that due regard is taken to assess and manage risk and have procedures in place to ensure that:

- qualifications can be delivered safely with risks to learners and those involved in the assessment process minimised as far as possible
 - working environments meet relevant health and safety requirements.
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