

QCF Development UPDATE - October 2009

Who is this information for?

Awarding Organisations to share with Training Providers and any other relevant stakeholders.

The first section is generic information about the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Section 2 focuses on the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce and its links with level 2 and level 4/5.

Please note the messages in this document are relevant for Training Providers and other stakeholders in England only.

Section 1 – Introducing the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

1.1 What's happening with QCF?

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a new framework for recognising and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The framework is at the heart of a major reform of the vocational qualifications system that is simpler to understand and use. The intention is to make both the system and the qualifications offered far more relevant to the needs of employers and more flexible and accessible for learners.

The migration of vocational qualifications from the National Qualification Framework (NQF) to Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) offers the opportunity to design qualifications that better meet both employer and learner needs.

1.2 What will be familiar?

The new qualifications that sit on the QCF will build upon the successes of existing qualifications as they are at the moment. Here are some examples of what will stay the same:

- The new qualifications will be based on the same National Occupational Standards as the current qualifications.
- They will also be useful for shaping learning, continuing professional development (CPD) and career progression.
- They will need assessors, verifiers and centres working with awarding organisations.
- In Scotland, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) will continue as they are, with some updates and revisions.

1.3 What will be new?

The QCF will introduce some new features to bring qualifications up to date and make them more relevant. Here are some examples of what will be new:

- The QCF will introduce unitisation of all qualifications, with each unit allocated a level and credit value.
- Credit value represents the number of credits a learner will be awarded for successfully completing the unit. One credit is awarded for learning outcomes achieved in 10 hours of notional learning time, this is not the same as guided learning hours, it is a combination of taught and personal study.
- Under the QCF, the qualification level indicates its complexity, ranging from Entry to Level 8 (the current NQF system goes up to Level 7). The size (volume of learning of a qualification is expressed using the terms; Award (1-12 credits); Certificate (13-36 credits); or Diploma (37+ credits) with all being available at each level.
- Learners will be able to accumulate and transfer their credit, allowing for more flexible progression.
- The naming of qualifications and units will be much more consistent and transparent across awarding organisations under the QCF.
- The qualifications that sit on the QCF will be made up of units that look different to existing NVQ units – for instance, they will have 'learning outcomes' and 'assessment criteria' rather than 'elements' and 'performance criteria'
- They will include different sized units depending on the subject each unit covers, with simple rules for how these can be put together to make up a qualification
- They will include some units that are about knowledge and understanding on their own, as well as many that are about skill and competence
- They will include different 'pathways' so that learners can learn about – and show their competence in – the particular context or specialism of their work
- They will be designed so that they can be achieved in stages rather than all in one go.
- Credits gained for a unit with one awarding organisation will under certain rules of combination be recognised within a qualification offered by another awarding organisation.
- On successful completion of a unit within the QCF the learner will be awarded the relevant credit and it is planned that this will also be recorded on a centralised **Individual Learner Record (ILR)**. The ILR will be an online record that lists an individual's QCF credit and qualification achievements. It will be a centrally managed database which will contain all achievement no matter which learning provider or awarding organisation it was completed with. A learner will be able to view their record online; they will also be able to manage who else will be allowed access e.g. potential employers.

1.5 What's happening now?

Skills for Care and Development (SfC&D)¹ is the responsible Sector Skills Council for the social care, children, early years and young people's workforces in the UK. Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is member of SfC&D.

CWDC have listened closely to the needs of employers and are working closely with UK partners, other Sector Skills Councils, with sector representatives and with awarding organisations, to develop the new qualifications for the QCF.

The aim of the new qualifications is to:

- build on the strengths of existing vocational qualifications and the QCF;
- to design qualifications that are simple to understand and;
- to design qualifications that are flexible to put together and effective to help people learn what they need to know and do in their work.

CWDC are also working with LLUK, the body responsible for teaching and assessor qualifications, as these qualifications are also being adapted for QCF.

1.6 What will happen next?

The new qualifications are being actively developed now with the intention for them to be on the QCF early in 2010 and available for learners to enrol on by August 2010.

CWDC will work with awarding organisations to help training/learning providers, verifiers, assessors, learners and their employers get ready for the changes the new-style qualifications will bring.

1.7 How to find out more

A series of employer engagement events will commence in November 2009 followed by regular updates over the coming months to keep people informed about what the new qualifications will mean to them. Training Providers will be able to access information from awarding organisations and the CWDC web pages.

¹ Skills for Care and Development is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for social care, children, early years and young people's workforces in the UK. It is an Alliance of 6 organisations: Care Council for Wales, Children's Workforce Development Council, General Social Care Council, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Scottish Social Services Council, and Skills for Care

There is also a significant amount of useful information on the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) website. This body is responsible for QCF readiness.

Useful links:

<http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/qualifications>
<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf>

Future updates will include:

- What do the changes mean for me – the learner?
- What do the changes mean for me – the employer?
- What do the changes mean for me – the assessor?
- What do the changes mean for me – the learning provider/assessment centre?

Section 2 - Introducing the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's workforce

2.1 CWDC's vision for level 3

CWDC has a vision of a single level 3 qualification for the children and young people's workforce that has 3 pathways:

- Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS);
- Early Years and;
- Children's Social Care.

This qualification will take the best parts of the current National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Vocational Related Qualifications (VRQs) and will create a 'hybrid' qualification that is flexible and meets the needs of employers. The target learners will be 16-19 and post 19 for both college and work based routes. For learners in college CWDC recognise that additional qualifications will be required to support learner completion and in some cases progression to higher education. For example:

- Key skills support
- Additional work placements
- A levels
- QCF units at levels 4 and 5

The purpose of the qualification is to be the only level 3 diploma available for the children and young people's workforce in England this product will be a significant contribution to ensuring the sector that CWDC's represents can meet the 2020 Strategy aspirations:

"The Children's Plan set out an aspiration that the children and young people's workforce should be graduate-led and qualified to Level 3, where appropriate." (2020 Children and Young People Workforce Strategy, page 35).

This qualification will also be included on the Integrated Qualification Framework, and CWDC has submitted the proposal through IQF processes, to ensure an integrated approach to its development. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) will be closely collaborating with CWDC. The main advantage of this is that credit can be transferred within the qualifications offered within our separate footprints, if an employee/learner chooses to move. For example from an early years practitioner to a support assistant in schools position.

2.2 What will the level 3 diploma look like?

The Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce will be approximately 60-65 credits. The achievement of 60-65 credits will therefore require 600 – 650 notional learning hours and will equate to a full and relevant level 3 qualification. An exact credit size will be determined when we have completed credit and levelling process with awarding organisations

The new diploma will be made up of units that are a combination of knowledge and skills and will allow for innovative interpretation to fit in with various working practices and enabling study on a full time or part time basis.

All **new** learners in the following sectors will need to enrol on this qualification after August 2010.

The target audience will cover a diverse range of job roles and occupational areas across the children and young people's workforce (see below), all working in statutory, private and voluntary agencies.

Early Years

- All practitioners working in settings required to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- All home-based workers working with children ages 0-5

Social Care

- Foster carers, including private foster carers
- Children's social care workers

LDSS

- Learning mentors

Other

- Support workers in the above settings
- Anyone who works with children and young people in the voluntary sector, including volunteers, who are not covered by another sector skills body

The structure of the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce is built up of a combination of the mandatory and optional units as outlined below. There are mandatory units that will be determined by specific rules of combination

The unit development is in its final stage. We are working closely with awarding organisations to review, credit and level units and therefore the below table is subject to minor changes or additions.

<p>1 SfC&D core mandatory units</p>	<p>These are shared with all SfC&D partners and Skills for Health.</p> <p>They cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Equality • Personal Development
<p>2 Common children and young people's mandatory units</p>	<p>To be the core for all pathways in England</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and young person development • Promote child and young person development • Safeguard children and young people • Support children and young people's health and safety • Develop positive relationships with children, young people and others involved in their care • Working together for the benefit of children and young people • Positive outcomes for children and young people
<p>3 Occupational mandatory pathways (known in the QCF as required pathways)</p>	<p>These will be core for each pathway; early years, social care, Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS):</p> <p>Early Years mandatory Pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context and principles for early years provision • Promote learning and development in the early years • Promote children's welfare in the early years • Professional practice in work with children in their early years • Support children's speech, language and communication <p>Social Care mandatory pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and planning with children and young people • Promote the well being and resilience of children and young people • Professional practice <p>LDSS Mandatory Pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children and young people to achieve their

	<p>educational potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children and young people to make positive changes in their lives • Professional practice in learning, development and support services • Connexions - Support the referral process for children and young people • Educational Welfare - Improving the attendance of children and young people in statutory education • Learning Mentors - Facilitate the learning and development of children and young people through mentoring
<p>4 Optional Units</p>	<p>To support specific occupations and required specialist knowledge and skills. To note the optional unit allocation could be cross sector. These will be defined in the rules of combination. The below list is also not exhaustive and CWDC will continue to review the units that are developed by other Sector Skills Councils.</p> <p>The current bank of option units includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with babies and young children to promote their development and learning. • Care for the physical and nutritional needs of babies and young children • Leading and managing a community pre school • Promote young children's physical development and movement skills. • Set up a home based child care service • Support disabled children and young people and those with specific requirements (additional needs) • Promote creativity and creative learning in young children • Support young people to implement and review a plan of action • Provide information and advice to young people • Develop interviewing skills (with children and young people) • Caseload Management • Support children and young people to move towards independence and manage their lives • Support children and young people to achieve their learning potential • Support children and young people to have positive relationships • Positive practice with children and young people with speech, language and communication needs • Coordinate special educational needs provision in early

	<p>years settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the needs of children who are vulnerable and experiencing poverty and disadvantage • Support young people who are involved in anti social and/ or criminal activities • Support young people who are looked after or leaving care • Speech, language and communication development • Support parents and families to manage children's speech, language and communication needs • Understand the speech language and communication needs of CYP with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties • Supporting the speech, language and communication development of children who are learning more than one language • Supporting children and young peoples speech, language and communication skills • Support young people who are socially excluded or excluded from school • Support young people in relation to sexual health and risk of pregnancy • Enable parents to develop ways of handling relationships and behaviour that contribute to everyday life with children • Work with parents to meet their children's needs • Support young people with mental health problems • Support the creativity of children and young people • Enabling traumatised children and young people to manage their behaviour • Foster Care: Legal Framework in England • Protect children from danger, harm and abuse • Foster care: Working within the legal framework • Work with children and young people in a residential care setting • Work with traumatised children and young people: helping children and young people to manage sexualised behaviour • Support children and young people in their own home • Engage young parents in supporting their children's development • Engage fathers in their children's early learning • Engage parents in their children's early learning • Support children and young people's positive behaviour • Support Care for vulnerable children and young people
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2.3 What about level 2?

We are committed to listening to the voice of our employers and acting on their comments as we develop new qualifications for the children and young people's workforce.

Employers have told us that they need practitioners entering the workforce to be able to develop and demonstrate functional skills and knowledge; in Maths and English - to support working with children and young people - and IT skills - for communication and supporting settings with IT - and knowledge about the children's workforce in its wider context. These skills will be assessed contextually within the qualifications we are developing.

Employers have also told us that this core set of functional skills and knowledge is common across the children and young people's workforce. Therefore we are developing a new level 2 qualification for the children and young people's workforce with this at the heart.

The new level 2 qualification will help employers to encourage the increase in skills and competence of their workforce, leading to higher level qualifications and enabling a 'grow your own' approach to staff development and career progression.

We will map other standards, for example the CWDC induction standards for the children and young people's workforce across to the level 2 qualification and the level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce, so that settings will not have to repeat learning and assessment.

Employers have said that they need practitioners who are committed to continuing to improve their practice and knowledge and who will aim to progress to level 3. With this in mind the new level 2 qualification will include assessment of both competence and knowledge. At this time the qualification is still in development.

The new level 2 qualification is intended to be viewed as a strong step towards the new Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce rather than a stand alone qualification. Although not sector-specific, the new level 2 qualification will provide the ideal platform for progression to higher qualifications and should be seen in the context of our ambition for a level 3 qualified, graduate-led workforce.

The new level 2 qualification will act as a stepping stone to level 3, which in some parts of the children and young people's workforce will be a requirement for registration and regulatory purposes.

The level 2 qualification will be a certificate size called the **Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce**. Its content will reflect the common core skills and knowledge that employers have told us are so important.

2.4 Apprenticeships?

The new National Apprenticeship Service has consulted on a 'blueprint' on Apprenticeships for all sector skills councils and CWDC are still awaiting the findings from the minister. The aim of this piece of work is to create a Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE). <http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/sase.aspx>

It is important that the Apprenticeship offer is available in the QCF and CWDC will provide any updates on the Qualifications web page.

2.5 Level 4/5 QCF qualifications

Employers have said that practitioners who have undertaken a Foundation degree are valued because their confidence has increased, their practice is more reflective and they are committed to Continuing Professional Development, for themselves and others in their setting.

For the wider children and young people's workforce, Foundation degrees provide a work-based route to access higher education and further academic study along side vocational learning in real situations. Foundation degrees are offered widely across England, validated by Higher Education Institutions and delivered locally by institutions, many of whom have excellent links and relationships with employers.

Foundation degrees will be regarded as the primary bridge between Level 3 and higher education study. Employers however say that sometimes the jump to higher education from Level 3 can be a difficult transition.

To help with this transition we will develop units at Level 4 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) which can be taken within the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. Learners will be able to take these as part of their Level 3 study or as stand alone 'bite-size' Continuing Professional Development (CPD). We are working closely with Higher Education Institutions and their further education delivery partners who offer Foundation degrees for our workforce to achieve this.

2.5.1 Leaders and managers

Because of the success of Foundation degrees we will not be developing a Level 4 Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD) on Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) to be delivered in England.

For leaders and managers who wish to develop their business skills and management skills at Level 4 and above there are a range of qualifications available, for example through the Management Standards Centre and Lifelong Learning UK or through the Leadership and Management for Care Services qualification developed for Residential Care Managers. Information on these qualifications is available through their websites.

2.5.2 Senior Practitioners

CWDC are developing a Level 4/5 Diploma in Health and Social Care. This qualification is aimed at senior practitioners with supervisory responsibilities. This qualification will be a progression route from the level 3 children and young people's workforce diploma (social care pathway).

CWDC are also developing a Level 4/5 Diploma for Learning Development and Support Services. This qualification will be a progression route from the level 3 children and young people's workforce diploma (LDSS pathway). This qualification will be offered in **England only**. The target audience will cover the job roles for the Learning Development and Support Service workforce. This comprises workers in Connexions and Education Welfare services, and Learning Mentors, in statutory, private and voluntary agencies.