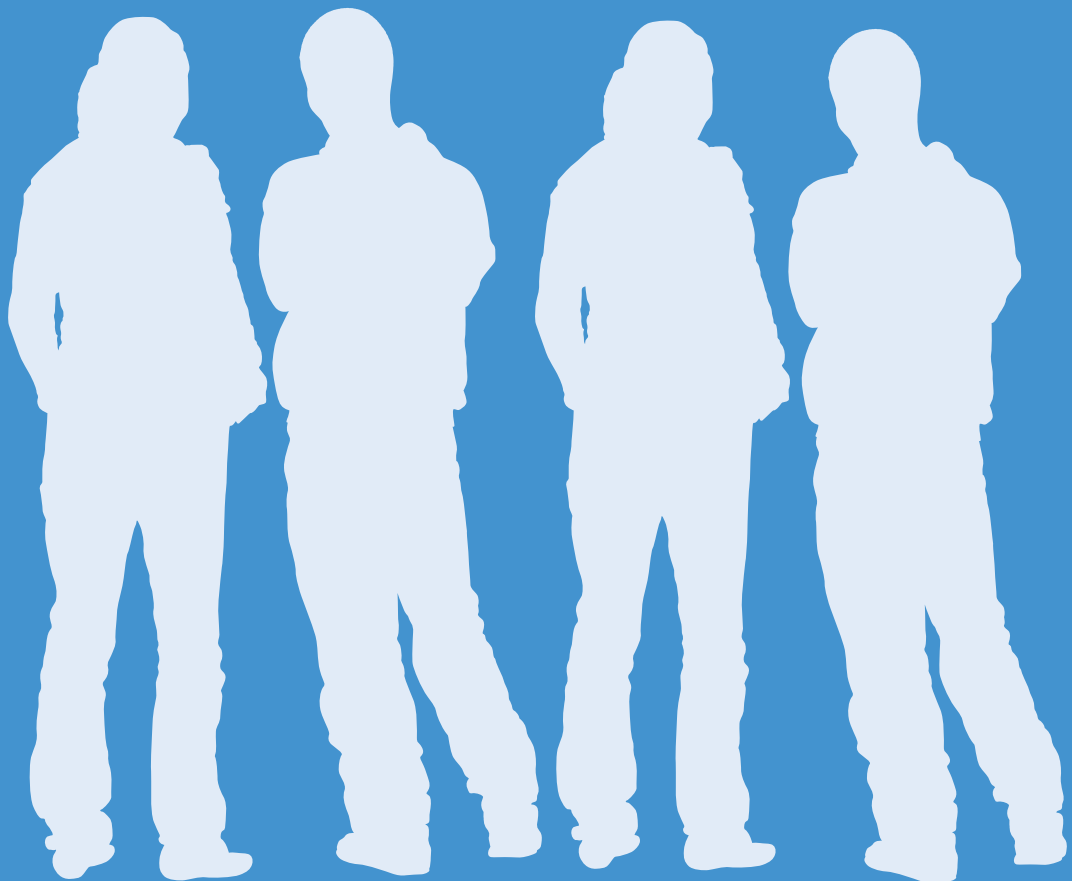


# A GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT

Guidance on NVQ/SVQ  
assessment for staff in  
the Justice sector



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## 1. Introduction

If you are an assessor or internal verifier in the Justice sector, this handbook is for you. Its main aim is to provide you with practical guidance and straightforward suggestions on how to carry out assessment. You may be involved in assessment for NVQs, SVQs, Continuing Development Awards or work based assessment against national occupational standards for other purposes.

Many staff working in the Justice sector are not based in one place, and many work on the move in the community (including people's homes), or travelling between locations. This guidance aims to provide specific help in these circumstances as assessment presents particular challenges.

The material may be useful for candidates, line managers, internal verifiers, assessment centre staff and employers.

It is intended to supplement other guidance from Skills for Justice, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and awarding bodies. Contact details for all these organisations can be found at the end of this handbook.



## 2. Assessment for NVQs/SVQs

### 2.1 Competence brings confidence

Being assessed as competent against national occupational standards gives confidence to the following people

- **the employee**, as they can do the job well in different (and maybe difficult) circumstances and they have their skills, knowledge and experience recognised through gaining a nationally recognised qualification
- **the team**, as colleagues can rely on each other
- **the supervisor**, as the members of their team can perform competently in different situations, and apply rules and procedures appropriately
- **the employer**, as they have a competent and well-qualified workforce
- **the public**, as they can be reassured that individuals delivering services in the Justice sector are qualified and competent in their roles.

Being assessed as competent is particularly important where staff are working on the move, away from their base.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) describe how well people are expected to perform at work.

They can help individuals and organisations deal with the very real challenges they face by ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their day-to-day work.

NVQs/SVQs, based on NOS have been developed specifically for the Justice sector covering

- community justice (community safety, work with offending behaviour, work with victims survivors and witnesses)
- custodial care
- custodial healthcare
- policing and law enforcement
- youth justice
- courts and prosecution services
- witness care
- fire and rescue services.

Other NVQs/SVQs may also be relevant to Justice sector organisations including

- administration
- learning and development
- management and leadership
- customer services
- health and social care.

## 2.2 The aim of assessment

The aim of NVQ/SVQ assessment is to establish whether the candidate can perform to the occupational standards across a range of circumstances and meet changing demands.

### Competence involves

- technical skills - the particular skills required in the job
- planning and problem-solving skills
- the ability to deal with unexpected events
- the ability to work with other people as part of a team and communication skills
- the ability to apply the knowledge and understanding that underpin overall competence.

As the assessor, you want to see evidence of

- how your candidate has carried out the work
- the records and other work documents that they normally use.

You also need to feel confident that they know

- what they are doing
- why they are doing it
- that they can apply the appropriate organisational and legal principles and procedures to their work.

As far as possible assessment should be integrated into everyday work to make the most of opportunities that arise naturally without compromising the quality and reliability of the assessment process.

Naturally arising opportunities for assessment could include

- when you and your candidate are working together
- performance management, e.g. appraisal, professional supervision
- audits
- monitoring exercises.

## 2.3 Assessment requirements

The Assessment Strategy developed by Skills for Justice for NVQs and SVQs aims to strike a balance between the clear demands for quality and what is realistic and acceptable. The Strategy emphasises the importance of assessing performance in the workplace itself, wherever that may be, either

- in the course of day-to-day work, or
- in a few circumstances, by a realistic simulation – e.g. where it is difficult to collect evidence through a real work situation and/or the nature of the work activity presents high risk/danger to the candidate and others.

Assessment of performance in the course of day-to-day work does not mean that you as an assessor need to observe candidates doing everything that is described in the standards – there are many other sources of evidence. Being an assessor does not involve following candidates all day armed with a clipboard.

Flexibility is also possible. For example

- parts of the range can be assessed by questioning, or using 'what if' scenarios
- knowledge and understanding can be assessed away from the workplace
- technology can be used to streamline the assessment process and tools such as digital recorders can be used to record aspects of the assessment process, such as planning, observations, professional discussions and feedback.

You would use 'what if' scenarios or ask additional questions

- when a candidate cannot meet the whole range of particular units in the course of their everyday job
- when it isn't appropriate at the time to question why a candidate is acting in a certain way, for example, in an incident or emergency, or while they are driving.

Detailed assessment guidance will be provided by the NVQ/SVQ awarding body, with evidence requirements specified for each unit in the qualification. Use of simulation must be agreed by the internal verifier and be in line with the evidence requirements and the Skills for Justice Assessment Strategy.

### 3. Planning and preparation for assessment

One of the most obvious challenges for assessors involved in on the move assessment is observing candidates in their daily work. As well as planning for assessment, this may also mean taking advantage of opportunities as they arise or finding other ways of gathering evidence.

#### 3.1 Planning for assessment

Planning is the key to making the assessment process as straightforward and cost-effective as possible. However, this poses a particular challenge for assessors of staff on the move, especially in terms of

- making sure you are in the right place at the right time
- being ready and able to assess the work the candidate is undertaking.

For those on the move this can involve making particular use of

- documentary evidence e.g. documents produced in the workplace by the candidate
- personal testimony
- appropriate witness testimony
- video/audio tapes or CCTV recordings, where these are available and where appropriate
- simulations (when allowed).

So how do you plan in these circumstances?  
You can

- plan what you can by detailing activities, objectives, timescales, review and completion dates – for example, planning what you hope to assess over a period of time e.g. during a shift
- giving clear guidance to the candidates about the activities they should carry out to demonstrate their competence
- make the best use of the opportunities that are available for observation, e.g. before and after journeys
- plan for the use of records that account for normal activities as well as documenting particular incidents i.e. use the documents that your candidate has to complete anyway
- develop approaches to deal with unexpected assessment opportunities
- think creatively about opportunities for evidence gathering.

You need to work closely with your candidate to plan for assessment. If you are not sure about the acceptability of evidence, discuss your ideas with your internal verifier.

In theory, candidates can take as long as they need to complete their NVQ/SVQ. But, if they identify a date for completion, along with interim milestones, it will give both of you a useful set of targets to aim for. Also, in practice many employers do set specific targets by which a qualification must be completed.

Therefore it is important to set clear targets with candidates as they progress with their NVQ/SVQ and to arrange regular review meetings. Be clear from the outset that completion of the NVQ/SVQ will require commitment and time.

The chart on the next page shows the main stages in the assessment planning process. There are three key principles to bear in mind

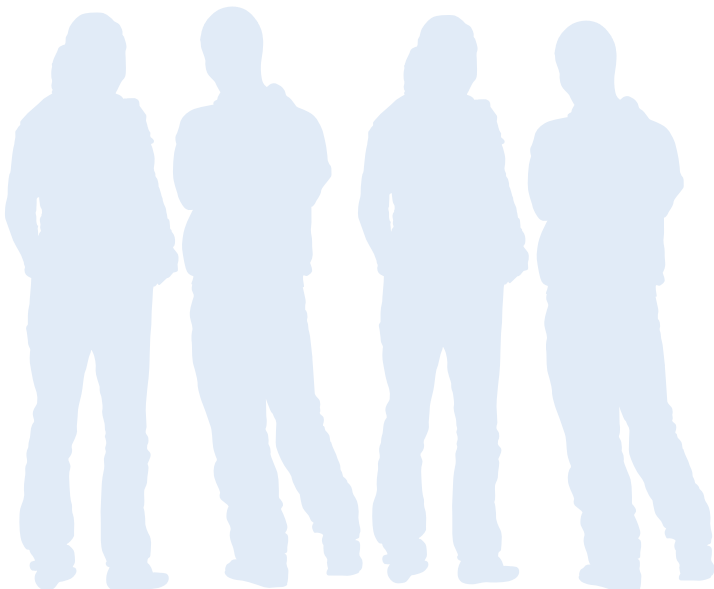
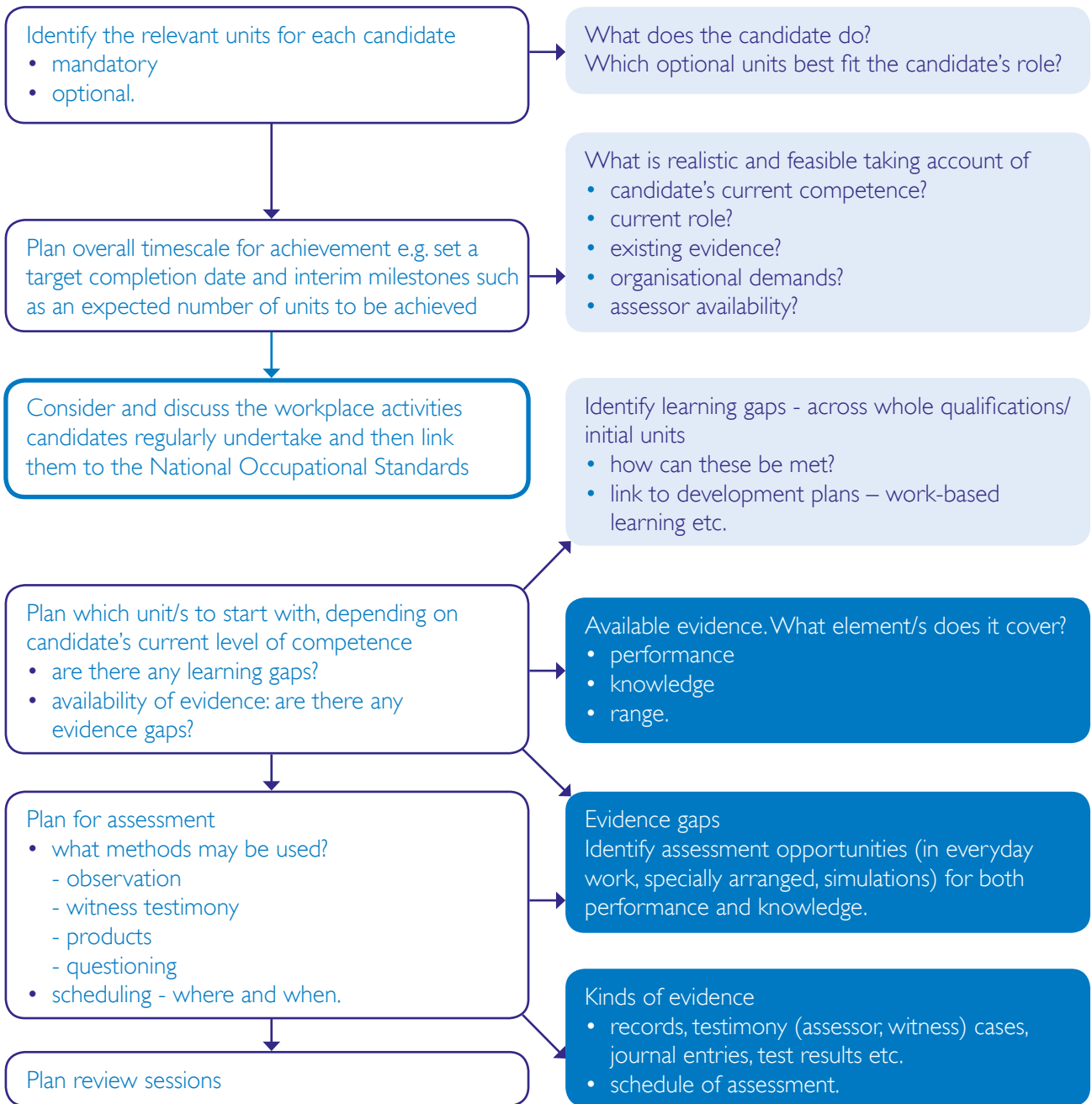
- there are many different sources of evidence – consider and use them all
- look for good evidence then check the detail of the standards to pinpoint where it fits – do not go looking for evidence for each element or unit in turn
- take an holistic approach by focusing on workplace activities rather than individual units / elements and make the maximum use of the evidence that you gather – it will probably count towards more than one unit.

#### 3.2 Planning assessment flowchart

The boxes shaded in light blue indicate activities that relate to advice/support, and the darker blue boxes indicate activities relating directly to assessment.

What needs to be taken into account when setting targets?

- your candidate's current role and the regular activities they carry out in the workplace
- their current level of competence
- any evidence they can already produce
- organisational demands
- your own availability and capacity
- the time needed for review, evaluation and action planning as well as the assessment itself.



### 3.3 Advice and support

Obviously, it is important that candidates take responsibility for their own learning and development. However, sometimes they need more support when undertaking NVQs/SVQs. Should this happen, then giving them the support of a mentor can be particularly useful in keeping the momentum going. In many circumstances, you may be well placed to undertake the role of mentor as well as assessor.

The assessment process is a joint effort between candidate and assessor in which both have responsibilities.

The candidate should be fully involved in the process but their primary focus is on their job and to perform competently the activities described by the NOS.

The assessor – and the organisation – also need to give structure and support to the candidate and the assessor needs to take responsibility for the assessment process.

#### What is mentoring?

It is a relationship of trust and support developed between two people in which the more experienced person helps the less experienced to reach their potential.

The mentoring role can be carried out by different people but if you are your candidate's manager as well as assessor, working with your candidate in this way can help integrate the demands of the qualification with the demands of everyday work.

This kind of support and encouragement can help in a number of ways

- reviewing progress and helping your candidate make sense of the whole qualification and how it all fits together
- helping your candidate to develop his or her own capacity to reflect on their work practice
- using feedback to provide formative assessment, if you are the assessor as well as mentor (formative assessment is assessment of your candidate while they are still undertaking development activities and/or gaining experience, before they are ready for their final 'summative' assessment).

This can reduce time spent assessing (and potential disappointment if your candidate is not yet competent and/or needs to produce more evidence)

- contributing to the assessment planning process, particularly in terms of working jointly with your candidate to consider
  - evidence gathering
  - how evidence can be applied to a number of different elements/units i.e. holistic assessment
  - when your candidate is ready for assessment.

Holistic assessment is vital for the efficient and effective gathering of evidence. It means keeping in mind the requirements of the NVQ/SVQ as a whole, and relating evidence gathered to as many units/elements as practicable. At first, it may be difficult for you to remember all of the units that you are assessing for each candidate, so you may wish to start with a handful of units in mind that are naturally clustered together. As you get more familiar with the standards, this will become much easier.

### 3.4 Knowing the standards

As assessor, it is vital that you have a good working knowledge of the standards you are assessing.

This includes

- the activities they cover
- the standard to which the activities should be performed
- the evidence requirements.

The more you use the standards as part of everyday work the more you will get to know them. You will also identify evidence that can be used for other elements/units - it is frequently the case that each item of evidence can be used towards many elements/units. If you plan holistically, you should identify evidence that naturally links to several units.

### 3.5 Understanding evidence requirements

The evidence requirements for each unit specify that your candidate has to meet all the performance criteria and has to have sufficient knowledge to work across all the range.

For example, in the Unit 4CI 'Develop one's own knowledge and practice', candidates are required to gather evidence over time and from more than one occasion where they have developed their own knowledge and practice. The evidence requirements state that

*"The candidate's package of evidence needs to cover **all** the performance criteria and **all** of the aspects of range.*

**Direct observation of real work activities by the assessor must be used to provide at least some of the evidence of each of the elements in this unit.**

*The nature of the unit means that the assessor will only be able to directly observe any changes in the candidate's practice (i.e. only the result not the process). Other evidence will need to come from written, or oral, reflective accounts and work products. Simulations are not appropriate for this unit."*

Evidence requirements also outline

- how much of the range your candidate must meet by evidence from their performance at work (e.g. witness testimony, documents produced, observation by an assessor, etc)
- how much can be met in other ways – for example by 'what if' questions
- where simulations are allowed.

These points may be particularly helpful for those candidates who find it difficult to provide performance evidence for all the range.

### Planning simulation

The evidence requirements specify when simulation may be used for assessment. Setting up a simulation for assessment (as opposed to learning) means that it has to resemble real work as closely as possible.

For example, where evidence is needed for a unit on minimising and dealing with aggressive and abusive behaviour, volunteers could be asked to role-play the types of behaviour and action that candidates are likely to be faced with in specific situations. Candidates can then be assessed on their

- communication skills – verbal, listening, body language
- control of the situation.

### 3.6 Identifying opportunities to gather evidence

The first step should be to start with the work your candidate does to find out how you can identify opportunities together for gathering evidence holistically (i.e. evidence that can be applied to as many elements/units as possible). For example through

- the candidate's everyday work
- specially planned activities, e.g. projects, assignments.

It is likely that your candidate can already produce existing evidence from their activities to demonstrate their competence.

#### Using Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

- your candidate may be able to provide existing evidence of competence from a variety of sources
- you need to check that the evidence is admissible, for example, that it is valid, reliable, authentic and sufficient.

If you are in doubt or need guidance, ask your internal verifier.

In addition to this you can start the process of identifying where everyday activities could provide a range of evidence that might apply to more than one unit. An example is shown below.



Activity	*Which units might this activity generate evidence for?	Typical evidence of this activity for all these units
Organise group activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC4 Prepare, implement and evaluate group activities</li> <li>• EC1 Help individuals address their offending behaviour</li> <li>• ED4 Deliver accredited programmes</li> </ul>	<p>observation of the candidate by an assessor</p> <p>witness testimony from those with whom the candidate has worked in planning, implementing and evaluating the group activities</p> <p>products of the candidate's work: plans for, and notes from, activities including where modifications have been made</p> <p>reflective practice journal</p> <p>questioning, oral or written</p> <p>case studies, projects, assignments and reflective accounts of their work.</p>

\* Note: These unit numbers are taken from the Community Justice NVQ/SVQ. The same units may appear in other Justice sector NVQs/SVQs.

There are also likely to be aspects of underpinning knowledge that appear in a number of different units. However, you need to check that the evidence fits the context of the performance criteria.

Remember to check the evidence requirements in each unit so that you are clear how much evidence is required from performance at work and how much can be met by questioning or other supporting evidence.

A clear knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of people underpins many of the units. It is important to remember that these must be applied in the context of the unit being assessed. For example this will include aspects of

- national and European legislation e.g. the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003
- applying the principles of equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice
- organisational policies and procedures.

### Dealing with unexpected assessment opportunities

There will be occasions when you are suddenly faced with an unexpected opportunity to assess a candidate. For example, something may happen that you were not expecting, but which is covered by one of the units selected for the candidate. This is particularly likely if you are the candidate's manager.

For example, your candidate may have to deal with an unexpected incident e.g. responding to an individual's abusive behaviour

or

Your candidate may have taken on a more senior role on a temporary basis because of illness, absence, etc.

It is important not to overlook these opportunities and you can use them, in particular, to assess general behaviour areas such as teamwork, communication and health and safety.

You may have discussed this possibility during the planning process but wherever practicable you need to agree with your candidate on each occasion that you are carrying out an assessment.

### 3.7 Identifying evidence gaps

Despite careful planning, you and your candidate may still have to consider whether there are any gaps in evidence. For example, does your assessment plan allow for sufficient evidence to be gathered covering all the performance criteria, range and knowledge? In particular, there may be gaps in finding evidence for contingencies.

If the evidence gaps are significant you may need to think about filling them by

- simulation, if this is allowed
- arranging for your candidate to
  - undertake a project or assignment
  - be seconded for a short period
  - be allocated particular duties for a short period (for example to cover the full range in a unit)
- questioning – including the use of case studies if appropriate.

Parts of the range may be assessed by questioning, or using 'what if' scenarios. You would use 'what if' scenarios or ask additional questions

- when a candidate cannot meet the whole range of particular units in the course of their everyday job
- when it isn't appropriate at the time to question why a candidate is acting in a certain way, for example in an incident or emergency.

#### How do you plan for the unexpected?

Although working in a competent way will reduce the likelihood of things not going according to plan, it is impossible to be prepared for everything.

For example, if your candidate is involved in maintaining security and order, no-one knows in advance how individuals might behave. You may have anticipated being able to cover the range of cooperative and uncooperative individuals but this may turn out not to be the case.

A useful way to capture evidence from everyday activities (and in particular to gather evidence about unusual incidents) is to encourage your candidates to use an aide-memoir such as diaries (including reflective comments) supported by appropriate records. In this way, you can readily see what they have been doing and what evidence they have provided to support their efforts.

Diary entries can be cross-referenced to where the evidence is kept. Candidates can refer to their diary when you want to know how they responded to a situation and why they responded in the way that they did. This activity should support the assessment process and should not be an additional burden for the candidate. Use should be made of existing diary or recording systems such as electronic diaries and police officer pocket notebooks.

Keeping a diary also encourages your candidates to develop their own capacity to reflect on

- their work
- what they did well/less well
- how they might improve their approach.

### 3.8 Scheduling the assessment

When scheduling the assessment, think about the following

- when is the candidate likely to be ready for assessment?
- the specifics of assessment, such as the following
  - how often will you do the assessment?
  - what targets will you set?
  - what are the appropriate assessment methods?

Can the assessment be scheduled into everyday work?

- what are your candidate's shift patterns?
- where will your candidate be?
- when could they be assessed?
- what about confidentiality issues?

- what opportunities will you have to observe the candidate at work?
- other people who might be able to provide witness testimony, i.e. others who saw the candidate working and can say what he or she did?
- how will you help your candidates obtain worthwhile witness testimony?

For example, witness testimony may be obtained from

- colleagues / managers
- staff from other agencies that work with your candidate
- auditors/monitors
- lay observers.

As an assessor, you may be called upon to assess a candidate you don't normally work with, or to arrange for another assessor to assess part of your candidate's performance. For example, this may happen if another assessor has more relevant occupational competence for a particular unit, or will be working with a candidate as they carry out a particular task.

The Skills for Justice Assessment Strategy recognises that some candidates may have more than one assessor. In this case, one of the assessors must be identified as the co-ordinator assessor and the internal verifier will monitor assessment by different assessors for consistency.

## 4. Carrying out assessment

### 4.1 Decide on assessment methods

Decide on the most appropriate methods to gather

- performance evidence
- evidence of knowledge.

You can get evidence of effective performance from

- observation
- witness testimony
- the candidate's report
- video
- records
- professional discussion – a guided discussion based on the activities that candidate has carried out
- documentation (that the candidate completes as part of their work) etc.

You can get evidence of your candidate's knowledge and understanding from

- the way they carry out their work
- questions posed at the time
- professional discussion
- answers to questions away from work.

The table on the next pages shows an example assessment plan for a Custodial Care level 3 candidate. This particular example is for the candidate's work around basic security procedures. However, the principles illustrated would be applied to assessment planning for any Justice sector standards i.e.

- identify relevant candidate activities
- decide the most appropriate assessment methods for those activities
- set target dates when the activities are expected to take place
- be clear about who will be involved
- identify which aspects of the unit (e.g. which elements) each activity is likely to cover
- consider whether the evidence produced might contribute to the achievement of other units
- record when planned activities and evidence collection is completed.



What candidate activity?	Assessment method	Date/s	Who is involved?	Main coverage of unit	Evidence might also be used for	Completion date
Checks locks and bolts; security of surrounding area, alarms etc	Assessor observation and questioning Witness testimony Supporting documentation		Assessor Witness	FD2 Element 1	CK3 FE2	
How the candidate dealt with an incident	Personal testimony		Candidate	FD2 Elements 3 and 4	FB1 GC8 GC9 FF3	
Monitoring the behaviour of individuals	Assessor observation Witness testimony Supporting documentation		Assessor Witness	FD2 Element 2	FB1 FF2	
Dealing with breach incident	Simulation – assessor observation and questioning		Assessor	FD2 Elements 3 and 4	FB1 GC8 GC9 FF3	
Completing documentation e.g. prisoner escort record, security incident report	Records and documentation		Candidate	FD2 Elements 1-4	FB1 GC8 GC9 CK3 FF2 FF3	
Restoring security and order	Assessor observation and questioning to supplement observation of real work or simulation		Assessor	FD2 Elements 3 and 4	FB1 GC9 FF2	

### Using observation

Observation is a key method of gathering evidence for assessment because it enables the assessor to consider how the candidate carries out their role in its entirety. However, assessors - and particularly those who work on the move - may find it difficult to organise observation sessions, because of shift patterns for example. So what can be done?

Some ideas include the following

- where you normally work with your candidate for example, in the same team
  - you can plan to observe normal activities
- liaise with the internal verifier/manager to explore the possibility of using
  - roving or floating assessors or staff who are normally office based
  - different assessors for candidates
- plan to meet with candidates before and after activities where you cannot be present
- make use of witness testimony
- plan how to capture observation evidence from the unexpected – this may include recording observed performance in retrospect because of operational constraints or unplanned incidents
- consider the use of simulations where they are allowed.

Observation will be most effective and efficient if, as far as possible, it is planned carefully.

Before an observation, it is important to think about

- the units involved
- what is being observed
- what is being looked for
- why something is being looked for
- how to record what has been seen
- what notes need to be made
- what other sources of evidence could be used to support observation, eg witnesses
- who else needs to be informed e.g. colleagues / managers / staff from other agencies.

### Using witness testimony

Sometimes it is difficult to arrange an observation. In these circumstances, witness testimony can make a particularly useful contribution to assessment on the move, so long as a few guidelines are adhered to.

Witnesses need to be

- credible and,
- aware of the standards they are offering testimony for.

In circumstances where witness statements relate to technical or specialist activities, the witness will also need to be occupationally competent.

As well as any written testimony, you can question the witness if you want to clarify or expand any points made in the testimony and to check the relevance to the performance criteria and range in the unit/s you are assessing. It can often be more effective for an assessor to contact a witness by telephone as a 2-way discussion may prompt the witness to provide evidence that they didn't think was relevant.

It may be worth thinking with your candidate about the range of people who could potentially provide witness testimony. If they are already working within the team or are otherwise familiar with the work your candidate is undertaking this should be straightforward.

Potential witnesses could be

- team members / colleagues / managers
- staff from other agencies
- volunteer lay people
- qualified assessors who work in other areas of the organisation or another part of the Justice sector.

Making the most of witness testimony may involve briefing potential witnesses on what is required. For example

- the need to understand the demands of the particular unit/s being assessed
- the requirements for observing the candidate's work, including the need to limit their testimony to what they saw the candidate doing.

ENTO's Unit L20:

Support competence achieved in the workplace is relevant to the contribution of witnesses.

### Using records or documentation

Good practice requires that records are kept for many everyday activities in the Justice sector and these records are an excellent source of evidence, especially where it is impossible for you to be physically present to observe your candidate. There should be no problem with using most normal documents so long as the forms are filled in correctly and there is no breach of confidentiality – in line with organisational procedures. You may need to be sure that people's names are removed if copies of records are included as part of your candidate's evidence.

However, you need to be confident that any documentation demonstrates that your candidate carried out their work in accordance with the requirements of the standards. This may mean asking questions about what happened and why.

Wherever possible, all documentation produced by the candidate as part of their regular work activities should remain in the workplace. Your assessment judgement of documents (and a note of where the originals can be found) is added to your candidate's evidence, rather than actual copies of documents. This also has advantages in complying with confidentiality and data protection requirements and saves time and money when reproducing documents.

Examples of documents and records include

- client assessment records
- incident forms/records
- work planning records
- IT based records.

### Using questioning

Questioning can be used to supplement performance evidence and to check your candidate's understanding of

- facts, legislation, policies and procedures, etc.
- principles and theories
- ways of using and applying knowledge.

### Getting the best from questioning

Ask candidates probing questions to

- check whether they know why they are doing something (to cover aspects of knowledge and understanding)
- find out what they might do in different circumstances (to cover aspects of the range)
- see how familiar they are with rules and procedures underpinning their work.

Questioning can be particularly useful to cover the range, where permitted in the evidence requirements, for example "how would you do that differently if...?"

You can question your candidate while you observe them at work or you can use questions to assess them away from their work. In either case, be clear in advance what you expect to achieve through questioning, and check that the answers you receive meet the required standards for the unit/s being assessed.

### Using professional discussion

Professional discussion is a 'case discussion' whereby your candidate prepares to discuss an activity they have undertaken that is linked to a particular unit or units and presents relevant examples from their work. You facilitate a discussion with your candidate to explore how they have demonstrated competence (and in particular, to collect evidence of their knowledge and understanding). Each professional discussion must have clearly defined

objectives and an agreed duration. There should be evidence of the discussion in the form of digital / electronic or written records.

## 4.2 Making assessment decisions

### Acceptability of evidence

All the evidence your candidate gathers has to be acceptable. This means it has to be

- valid
- authentic
- relevant.

**valid** evidence relates to a specific part of the standards (and is not just your idea of competent behaviour)

**authentic** evidence is the work of your candidate as an individual

**relevant** evidence matches the required competence.

### Interpreting evidence

The interpretation of evidence is more important than simply gathering more and more – quality is always better than quantity.

To interpret evidence effectively, as an assessor, you need

- the appropriate occupational knowledge and understanding – a good knowledge of the National Occupational Standards
- familiarity with the organisation's own systems, procedures and practice.

### Interpreting evidence

- is the source credible (e.g. witness testimony)?
- are you balancing positive with any negative evidence?
- are you inclined to err on the side of caution or generosity?
- what cues do you focus on (spoken, non-verbal, etc)?
- how do you assess knowledge that a candidate may not be consciously aware of?
- how confident can you be in predicting how well the candidate can transfer their competence from one situation to another?

## Making judgements

You need to be confident that, taken together, the candidate's 'package' of evidence from different sources

- covers all the performance criteria (including contingencies) and range
- meets the evidence requirements
- demonstrates the candidate's knowledge and understanding
- shows that the candidate's competence is current and consistent over a period of time
- covers a range of contexts and situations.

## 5. Recording and presenting evidence

The awarding bodies provide examples of records you can use - or your organisation may have developed their own documentation in line with the awarding body requirements. Recording information is important so that others can see what has been done. However, it can look as if the assessment process itself has to be met by a series of tick boxes – this is not the case. It is the **evidence** itself that shows someone is competent.

The evidence must be referenced in such a way that it can be easily located and it is clear how it relates to the units. It is the candidate's job to collect their evidence, and typically, records relating to the evidence are stored in a file – the portfolio. There is no prescribed format for a portfolio, as long as the evidence can be found easily and clearly relates to the evidence requirements of the units.

Assessment records and documentation need to be in the portfolio. The majority of product evidence should remain in the workplace and be referenced and signposted in the portfolio (i.e. it must be clear where the evidence can be found).

In the future, it is likely that the use of information technology will increasingly provide innovative methods of recording and referencing evidence e.g.

- digital recording of discussions/questioning with candidates – these can then be saved on computer files
- storing and referencing evidence digitally (i.e. using e-portfolios).

Whatever method you choose for recording and presenting evidence, the internal verifier will be ensuring that your standards are acceptable by sampling candidates' assessed work, so it is in your own interest that you keep up-to-date, accurate records.

Once you have made your decision about whether the candidate's evidence shows that they meet all of the necessary standards or whether more assessment or evidence is needed, you will need to complete the necessary paperwork to record and confirm your decision.



## 6. Providing feedback

Part of the assessment process is providing the candidates with feedback after assessment, whether they are competent or not yet competent. This is known as summative assessment.

A 'not yet competent' decision could indicate a need for

- more development
- or
- more evidence.

Whatever the assessment decision, feedback is an aid to the candidate's progress and learning. It is used to identify any areas that need more, or different, evidence and any areas where the candidate needs further development.

It is essential that assessors use the feedback process in a constructive, supportive way. As far as possible, feedback should be

- honest
- specific
- accurate
- factual
- evidenced.

Feedback should be something the candidate can understand, accept and do something about.

### Giving feedback – golden rules

#### Always

- be clear about what you want to say
- emphasise the positive
- be specific – give examples
- avoid sweeping statements including 'all', 'never', 'always'
- focus on behaviour rather than the person
- be descriptive rather than judgemental
- make clear and specific suggestions about what can be done
- deal with things that can be changed
- consider your own motives for giving feedback
- own the feedback – use 'I' statements.

## 7. And, finally

Dealing with the challenges of assessment can be a rewarding process.

Remember to work with your candidate/s to

- plan for efficient and effective assessment – set targets, regularly review progress and be realistic about the time commitment
- integrate assessment into everyday work as far as possible
- use evidence to cover as many units as possible (i.e. always think holistically about the uses of items of evidence)
- encourage the use of records and documentation as supporting evidence where appropriate (backed up by questions)
- make the most of unexpected assessment opportunities
- make use of appropriate witness testimony.

And, if in any doubt, ask your internal verifier for advice.



## 8.A Guide to Assessment Case Studies

### Policing

#### Initial Assessment and Assessment Planning

Ben is undertaking an NVQ in policing and he is allocated Cathy as his assessor to guide, support and assess him throughout the award. Cathy and Ben meet to carry out an initial assessment of Ben's skills and to discuss the type of work activities he is involved in to identify where they provide evidence for the Policing NVQ.

From their initial discussion, Cathy and Ben identify that Ben carries out a range of activities that will provide evidence for the NVQ and they start to plan for the assessment process. As part of this planning process Cathy identifies a number of activities for Ben to carry out during his shift, links these to the units they will provide evidence for and also suggests a variety of evidence sources that she

will assess. The assessment planning process needs to be recorded / documented in some way but this can often be difficult when the nature and timing of the candidates' work is unpredictable.

For example, Ben does not know in advance exactly what each shift will involve. However, Cathy and Ben agree that over a period of 4 shifts, it is reasonable to expect that Ben will conduct patrol and deal with offences as they occur. As part of the assessment planning process, Cathy and Ben discuss

- **What will be assessed**  
e.g. skills, knowledge, specific work activities
- **When assessment will take place**
- **Who will be involved**  
e.g. individual, manager, other colleagues
- **How the individual will be assessed**  
e.g. assessment methods such as observation, discussion, self-assessment
- **How the assessment will be judged**  
e.g. using NOS criteria, organisational values.

They agree to put this into an assessment plan, shown below

<b>Candidate Name</b> Ben		
<b>Assessor Name</b> Cathy		
<b>Qualification</b> NVQ Level 3 in Policing		<b>Date of Plan</b> 3rd April 2009 <b>Date of Review</b> 17th April 2009
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>
During the next four weeks conduct patrol and when necessary attend a crime incident, providing an initial police response.	2C1 / 1B9 / AA1	Witness Testimony / Observations / Personal Statement / Product Evidence (pocket notebook)
Deal with the incident in an effective manner, providing support and assistance for any victims, conducting an initial investigation and interview a witness and/or victim.	2G2 / 2H1 / 1B9	Witness Testimony / Observations / Product Evidence (victim statement / pocket notebook)
Make an arrest (where possible connected to an incident you have attended) and present the suspect to custody and interview them.	1A1 / 2C3 / 2I1 / 2I2 / 2H2 / 2K1 / 2K2	Observation / Witness testimony / Product Evidence (pocket notebook / interview tape)
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding relating to the above during a de-brief.	As above	Professional Discussion

A range of assessment methods have been identified as being appropriate including an assessor observation carried out by Cathy, review of product evidence produced naturally as part of Ben's work and a professional discussion following the observation. They both agree the assessment plan and arrange to meet again in 2 weeks to review the plan and to plan for the next assessment period.

### Carrying out the assessment

Ben returns to the workplace and over the next few weeks carries out his duties. On the agreed date Cathy arrives at his station and they go out on patrol together where Cathy observes Ben carrying out his duties as agreed previously. Ben has to attend an incident of an assault where he is required to investigate the offence, obtain a statement from the victim and deal with that person in an appropriate manner.

Following the investigation the offender is identified and Ben makes an arrest and presents the suspect to the Custody Sergeant for detention after which he carries out an interview with her. Cathy is present throughout all these procedures and observes him, recording what Ben does and subsequently preparing an observation report outlining what she has seen happening and what performance criteria and range the observation provides evidence for.

Once Ben has completed his work activity he and Cathy have a professional discussion to establish his knowledge around the procedures and processes he has undertaken during this incident. Their discussion is digitally recorded and retained. As part of her approach to the assessment process Cathy later prepares a bullet pointed list of the areas covered during the discussion and the time these areas appear on the recording.

Ben identified a number of pieces of product evidence for Cathy to assess and make a judgement on including a witness statement, pocket notebook entry, interview tapes and prosecution file. Cathy views these documents and makes an assessment judgement using the relevant national occupational standards, recording these on an assessor decision record. All these documents are retained in the workplace and must not be photocopied nor placed in a portfolio.

Ben and Cathy meet, as agreed, to review the assessment plan. Cathy provides feedback in relation to Ben's achievements following the observation, discussion and examination of product evidence, and to show where he has met the performance criteria, and also to show where competence has not yet been shown. They then plan for the next period of assessment.

### Recording assessment

For the assessment process, the following documents were produced

- assessment Plan and review
- an Assessor decision record detailing
  - the product evidence Cathy had assessed, her decisions and feedback to Ben
  - details of the observation including what Ben did, how he did it, feedback from Cathy and links to the performance criteria, range and knowledge criteria
  - a summary of the professional discussion including timings, a brief summary of the content and links to the performance criteria, range and knowledge.

# A Guide to Assessment Case Studies

## Court operations

### Initial Assessment and Assessment Planning

Lucy is undertaking an NVQ in Court Operations and she is allocated Chris as her assessor to guide, support and assess her throughout the award. Lucy and Ben meet to carry out an initial assessment of Lucy's skills and to discuss the type of work activities she is involved in to identify where they provide evidence for the Court Operations NVQ.

From their initial discussion, Chris and Lucy identify that Lucy carries out a range of activities that will provide evidence for the NVQ and they start to plan for the assessment process. As part of this planning process Chris identifies a number of activities for Lucy to carry out during her everyday work in the court. Chris explains how these activities link these to the units in the NVQ and he suggests a variety of evidence sources that he will assess.

The assessment planning process needs to be recorded / documented in some way but this can often be difficult when the nature and timing of the candidates work is unpredictable. For example, Lucy does not know in advance exactly what each day will involve.

However, Chris and Lucy agree that over a period of 4 weeks, it is reasonable to expect that Lucy will work in the court and deal with a variety of people such as members of the public, the press, jury members, other court personnel, members of the legal profession and judiciary.

As part of the assessment planning process, Chris and Lucy discuss

- **What will be assessed**  
e.g. skills, knowledge, specific work activities
- **When assessment will take place**
- **Who will be involved**  
e.g. individual, manager, other colleagues
- **How the individual will be assessed**  
e.g. assessment methods such as observation, discussion, self-assessment
- **How the assessment will be judged**  
e.g. using NOS criteria, organisational values.

They agree to put this into an assessment plan, shown below

<b>Candidate Name</b> Lucy		
<b>Assessor Name</b> Chris		
<b>Qualification</b> NVQ Level 2 in Court Operations		<b>Date of Plan</b> 3rd April 2009 <b>Date of Review</b> 17th April 2009
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>
During the next four weeks provide support and information to people attending the court as part of your everyday duties. Address any special requirements that people may have within the remit of your role.	DC2 / AA1	Witness Testimony / Observations / Personal Statement / Product Evidence (e.g. customer enquiry forms)
Deal with people in a professional manner; respond to customer enquiries and resolve problems for customers. Communicate with people clearly and with respect.	DH1 / AA1 / HF5	Witness Testimony / Observations / Product Evidence
Ensure that the court room is fully prepared for proceedings and that those attending the court adhere to the operating protocols.	DC1 / DC4 / HA1	Observation / Witness testimony / Product Evidence (e.g. courtroom checklist)
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding relating to the above during a de-brief.	As above	Professional Discussion

A range of assessment methods have been identified as being appropriate including an assessor observation carried out by Chris, review of product evidence produced naturally as part of Lucy's work and a professional discussion following the observation. They both agree the assessment plan and arrange to meet again in 2 weeks to review the plan and to plan for the next assessment period.

### Carrying out the assessment

Lucy returns to the workplace and over the next few weeks carries out her duties. On the agreed date Chris arrives at the courts where he observes Lucy carrying out her duties as agreed previously. Lucy has to provide advice to a member of the public who is attending the court and wants more information about where to sit and the timings of proceedings. Chris observes Lucy providing that information and dealing with the member of public in an appropriate manner. Lucy also ensures that the courtroom is well prepared and that all the equipment needed is working and in place. Chris is present throughout all these procedures and observes her, recording what Lucy does and subsequently preparing an observation report outlining what he has seen happening and what performance criteria and range the observation provides evidence for.

Once Lucy has completed her work activity she and Chris have a professional discussion to establish her knowledge around the procedures and processes she has undertaken during this observation. Their discussion is digitally recorded and retained. As part of his approach to the assessment process Chris later prepares a bullet pointed list of the areas covered during the discussion and the time these areas appear on the recording.

Lucy identified a number of pieces of product evidence for Chris to assess and make a judgement on including a courtroom preparation checklist and a completed customer enquiry form. Chris views these documents and makes an assessment judgement using the relevant national occupational standards, recording these on an assessor decision record. All these documents are retained in the workplace and must not be photocopied nor placed in a portfolio.

Lucy and Chris meet, as agreed, to review the assessment plan. Chris provides feedback in relation to Lucy's achievements following the observation, discussion and examination of product evidence, and to show where she has met the performance criteria, and also to show where competence has not yet been shown. They then plan for the next period of assessment.

### Recording assessment

For the assessment process, the following documents were produced

- assessment Plan and review
- an Assessor decision record detailing
  - the product evidence Chris had assessed, his decisions and feedback to Lucy
  - details of the observation including what Lucy did, how she did it, feedback from Chris and links to the performance criteria, range and knowledge criteria
  - a summary of the professional discussion including timings, a brief summary of the content and links to the performance criteria, range and knowledge.

# A Guide to Assessment Case Studies

## Custodial Care

### Initial Assessment and Assessment Planning

Matt is undertaking an NVQ in Custodial Care and he is allocated Claire as his assessor to guide, support and assess him throughout the award. Claire and Matt meet to carry out an initial assessment of Matt’s skills and to discuss the type of work activities he is involved in to identify where they provide evidence for the Custodial Care NVQ.

From their initial discussion, Claire and Matt identify that Matt carries out a range of activities that will provide evidence for the NVQ and they start to plan for the assessment process. As part of this planning process Claire identifies a number of activities for Matt to carry out during his role in transporting individuals between custodial environments. Claire explains how these activities link to the units in the NVQ and she suggests a variety of evidence sources that she will assess.

The assessment planning process needs to be recorded / documented in some way but this can often be difficult when the nature and timing of the candidates work is unpredictable. For example, Matt does not know in advance exactly what each day will involve. However, Claire and Matt agree that over a period of 4 weeks, it is reasonable to expect that Matt will transport a number of individuals between custodial environments. As part of the assessment planning process, Claire and Matt discuss

- **What will be assessed**  
e.g. skills, knowledge, specific work activities
- **When assessment will take place**
- **Who will be involved**  
e.g. individual, manager, other colleagues
- **How the individual will be assessed**  
e.g. assessment methods such as observation, discussion, self-assessment
- **How the assessment will be judged**  
e.g. using NOS criteria, organisational values.

They agree to put this into an assessment plan, shown below

<b>Candidate Name</b> Matt		
<b>Assessor Name</b> Claire		
<b>Qualification</b> NVQ Level 3 in Custodial Care		<b>Date of Plan</b> 3rd April 2009 <b>Date of Review</b> 17th April 2009
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>
During the next four weeks provide transportation services for individuals between custodial environments. Ensure that all vehicles are secure and are searched before and after transportation duties.	FE3 / FE1 / FE2	Witness Testimony / Observations / Personal Statement / Product Evidence (e.g. vehicle log book)
Ensure that security and order is maintained within all custodial environments during transportation and that inappropriate behaviour is prevented / managed.	FD2 / GC9 / AF1	Witness Testimony / Observations
Deal with people in a professional manner; respond to their needs and communicate with people clearly and with respect.	ABI / AA1	Observation / Witness testimony / Product Evidence (e.g. courtroom checklist)
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding relating to the above during a de-brief.	As above	Professional Discussion

A range of assessment methods have been identified as being appropriate including an assessor observation carried out by Claire, review of product evidence produced naturally as part of Matt's work and a professional discussion following the observation. They both agree the assessment plan and arrange to meet again in 2 weeks to review the plan and to plan for the next assessment period.

### Carrying out the assessment

Matt returns to the workplace and over the next few weeks carries out his duties. On the agreed date Claire arrives at HMP Sandway where she observes Matt carrying out his duties as agreed previously. Matt has to prepare the vehicles for transportation, ensure that he searches them thoroughly before and after transportation and completes the relevant vehicle log and security documentation. Claire observes Matt carrying out these activities and also communicating with his colleagues in a professional and appropriate manner. Matt also ensures that he has provided all relevant information to his colleagues at other custodial environments. Claire is present throughout all these procedures and observes him, recording what Matt does and subsequently preparing an observation report outlining what she has seen happening and what performance criteria and range the observation provides evidence for:

Once Matt has completed his work activity he and Claire have a professional discussion to establish his knowledge around the procedures and processes he has undertaken during this observation. Their discussion is digitally recorded and retained. As part of her approach to the assessment process Claire later prepares a bullet pointed list of the areas covered during the discussion and the time these areas appear on the recording.

Matt identified a number of pieces of product evidence for Claire to assess and make a judgement on including a vehicle logbook and completed security records. Claire views these documents and makes an assessment judgement using the relevant national occupational standards, recording these on an assessor decision record. All these documents are retained in the workplace and must not be photocopied nor placed in a portfolio.

Matt and Claire meet, as agreed, to review the assessment plan. Claire provides feedback in relation to Matt's achievements following the observation, discussion and examination of product evidence, and to show where he has met the performance criteria, and also to show where competence has not yet been shown. They then plan for the next period of assessment.

### Recording assessment

For the assessment process, the following documents were produced

- assessment Plan and review
- an Assessor decision record detailing
  - the product evidence Claire had assessed, her decisions and feedback to Matt
  - details of the observation including what Matt did, how he did it, feedback from Claire and links to the performance criteria, range and knowledge criteria
  - a summary of the professional discussion including timings, a brief summary of the content and links to the performance criteria, range and knowledge.

## 9. Useful contacts

Organisation	Contact details	Comments
Skills for Justice	<p>Centre Court Atlas Way Sheffield S4 7QQ</p> <p><b>T</b> 0114 261 1499 <b>F</b> 0114 261 8038 <b>E</b> info@skillsforjustice.com www.skillsforjustice.com</p>	Sets standards and designs NVQs/SVQs and related awards for the Justice sector.
ENTO	<p>Kimberley House 4th Floor 47 Vaughan Way Leicester LE1 4SG</p> <p><b>T</b> 0116 251 7979 <b>F</b> 0116 251 1464 <b>E</b> info@ento.co.uk www.ento.co.uk</p>	ENTO was formerly the Employment NTO and is now an independent Standard Setting Body. Its remit includes assessment, verification and learning and development in the workplace.
Lifelong Learning UK	<p>5th Floor St Andrew's House 18-20 St Andrew's Street London EC4A 3AY</p> <p><b>T</b> 0870 757 7890 <b>F</b> 0870 757 7889 <b>E</b> advice@lluk.org www.lluk.org</p>	Sets standards and develops NVQs/SVQs and related awards for workforce development and the lifelong learning sector.
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)	<p>83 Piccadilly London W1J 8QA</p> <p><b>T</b> 020 7509 5555 <b>F</b> 020 7509 6666 <b>E</b> info@qca.org.uk www.qca.org.uk</p>	The accrediting body for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	<p>The Optima Building 58 Robertson Street Glasgow G2 8DQ</p> <p><b>T</b> 0845 279 1000 <b>F</b> 0845 213 5000 <b>E</b> customer@sqa.org.uk www.sqa.org.uk</p>	The accrediting body for Justice sector Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and also an awarding body for SVQs.

Organisation	Contact details	Comments
City and Guilds	1 Giltspur Street London EC1A 9DD  <b>T</b> 020 7294 2800 <b>F</b> 020 7294 2400 <b>E</b> learnersupport@cityandguilds.com www.cityandguilds.com	Awarding body for Justice sector NVQs.
Edexcel	190 High Holborn London WC1V 7BH  <b>T</b> 0844 5760026 <b>F</b> 020 7190 5700 <b>E</b> enquiries@edexcel.org.uk www.edexcel.com	Awarding body for Justice sector NVQs.
OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations)	OCR Head Office 1 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 1PB  <b>T</b> 01223 553 998 <b>F</b> 01223 552 627 <b>E</b> helpdesk@ocr.org.uk www.ocr.org.uk	Awarding body for Justice sector NVQs.
Chartered Management Institute (CMI)	Management House Cottingham Road, Corby Northamptonshire NN17 1TT  <b>T</b> 01536 204 222 <b>F</b> 01536 201 651 <b>E</b> enquiries@managers.org.uk www.managers.org.uk	Awarding body for Justice sector NVQs.
The Open University	Student Registration & Enquiry Service The Open University PO Box 197 Milton Keynes MK7 6BJ  <b>T</b> 0845 3006090 <b>E</b> general-enquiries@open.ac.uk www.open.ac.uk	Awarding body for Justice sector NVQs.

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