**Remote teaching and assessment practices in response to the Coronavirus**

We are required to follow personal, government and employer preferences or instruction around face-to-face teaching learning and assessment.

Where you or employers are in isolation or lockdown, continued learning and assessment is essential. It is a requirement of funding, OFSTED and often the sector or role they work in. Most importantly, learners and employers need to be motivated and inspired to continue learning. This is, however, a strategy of blended learning – we have not moved to online learning.

As and when remote learning and assessment is required, we have awarding body agreement for the following assessment practices. In all instances learner’s assessment must be authentic and validated.

Throughout all delivery its essential we demonstrate support to the learner but in particular we need to demonstrate how we have responded to this blended learning. It will not be sufficient to just say we do it.

**Knowledge learning outcomes**

We are permitted to use verbal or video recordings to demonstrate learner’s knowledge. If verbal or video evidence is used to capture knowledge from Q&A, then it is important to ensure that the learner is not being prompted e.g. by written cues, notes which are "off camera". Each recording must start with the learner’s name, date of birth and permission to record. Please keep recordings no longer than 8 minutes and ensure assessment criteria is mapped to relevant timings of the recording making it simple and efficient for internal and external quality assurance.

**Competence learning outcomes**

Direct observation Competence based assessment requirements must include direct observation of performance of the learner as the main source of evidence. Where it is deemed safe and appropriate following a robust COVID-19 risk assessment process, direct observation of performance remains the preferred method of assessment. Where it is not safe to gain direct observation of performance, the following approaches should be considered. A combination can be used to create a robust triangulation of performance-based evidence for the learner.

Where 1-2 good holistic observations have not yet taken place, we are approved to rely upon the following:

* Expert Witness Testimonies
* Work products
* Audio/video recordings with the learner to complete the detail.

If a learner is sending you audio/video recordings this is great evidence but think about data protection and safeguarding (in some instances it is not appropriate); however, video evidence will be sufficient if a learner it talking through a Care plan for example as long as no names are showing. Please use the OneDrive folder where your tracker is stored to store recordings so you have sufficient storage and it is protected.

**Expert Witness Testimony**

The use of an expert witness testimony (EWT) is permitted to undertake and provide observations of performance of the learner if an observation by a qualified assessor cannot be completed. An expert witness must:

· have a working knowledge of the units for which they are providing expert testimony

· be occupationally competent in their area for which they are providing expert testimony

· have EITHER any qualification in assessment of workplace performance OR a work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff within their area of expertise.

The use of an EWT should be determined and agreed by the assessor and final assessment decisions must be made by the qualified assessor. The EWT should be provided with induction, training and on-going support from the assessor/IQA in order to encourage the provision of a robust statement of the learner’s performance against agreed standards or criteria.

A range of suitable EWT’s should be explored with the learner and workplace. Centres should enable EWT’s to provide and present their evidence in an efficient way which does not compromise validity and reliability. This could include the use of voice and audio recordings, or through remote discussions where the main assessor could scribe the EW contributions.

This information is taken directly from “Skills for Care and Development Assessment principles: Flexible arrangements to support existing principles and approaches to unit/qualification assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic. August 2020”.

**Remote Technology**

It remains that video or audio streaming or recording should not be used where this compromises the privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual, child or young person or family using services as a method of gaining performance evidence.

The use of remote technologies could be considered to observe aspects of the learner’s performance where privacy, dignity or confidentiality of any individual, child or young person, or family using services is not compromised. For example, this may include on-line meetings and remote activities in which the learner is contributing, and where the assessor could also attend remotely or observe through use of technology.

If the centre is using remote technologies, then there is responsibility to ensure standardised approaches are adopted and reviewed which consider units and criteria of the qualification where this approach might be suitable. Application of assessment principles should remain central in the way evidence is agreed, planned, gained and presented. If this method is being used, then a careful selection of appropriate assessment opportunities will need to be considered.

**Remote Observations**

Remote observations can and should be utilised where viable. However, it is important that client confidentiality is maintained as stated above. Observations can be recorded and submitted to portfolios where there is no compromise of privacy, dignity or confidentiality, and all people included in the recording must provide written consent.

However, if there is an individual in the recording (say in the background) who has not given there consent to recording must not be uploaded as evidence. In this case the observation can be written up and the recording deleted.

**Remote Teaching and Learning**

Although the current COVID pandemic has meant that the majority of face to face visits have been suspended, it is still vital that quality Teaching and Learning continues with all learners wherever possible.

Online platforms such as Zoom, Google classrooms and Teams should be used to conduct online Teaching and Learning where possible. This allows both one to one and group sessions to be conducted remotely.

When using these platforms sessions should be recorded and uploaded to the learner’s online portfolio (OneDrive). Ensure agreement for recording is received by all prior to starting recording of the session. Every learner should have at least one recorded teaching and learning session each month.

**Use of Professional Discussion and Reflective Accounts**

Reflective Accounts of practice and Professional Discussions could be used to support other forms of evidence but are **not direct evidence sources** which can replace the observation requirement.

The safety of all involved should be considered. If access to the workplace to carry out observation of practice is permitted; a COVID-19 risk assessment process should be applied and current government regulations and guidance strictly adhered to.

**Assessment Planning and/or Learning Reviews**

These can continue to be written but must be validated with an email from the learner and employer; to confirm the activity took place, they agree with progress and targets/actions. Alternatively we have DocuSign account that can be utilised.

For the current duration assessment planning or learning reviews can be verbally or video recorded. Again, please ensure progress, impact and target or action planning is clear and agreed. Please follow the format of the assessment plans or reviews.

**Learner assessment feedback**

Please ensure this is comprehensive and there is an audit trail of receipt from learners closing the assessment cycle.

**ePortfolio Systems**

Learners must be encouraged to utilise ePortfolios where they are available. Learners should upload their work directly onto the platform. This ensures authenticity of learner work.

Learner must have their own individual log in for the ePortfolio, and all work uploaded must be plagiarism checked.

**Off the job training**

There is likely to be flexibility around off the job training but until further detail is announced please continue to ensure learners are taking and recording time off the job for teaching and learning. Please maintain logs, assessment plans and reviews to reflect on what off the job training too place, what they learnt and what impact it had.

**Validate all evidence**

As you teach, learn and assess learners, and obtain the evidence please ensure it is always validated with an email from the learner confirming the activity took place, was valid and authentic.

**Please remember in relation to video evidence**

* It must comply with GDPR, safeguarding etc
* It must be dated and time tagged
* It will show surroundings, particularly if these are crucial to performance e.g. are they safe, appropriate, meeting industry standards.
* The other issue which the video needs to pick up is the impact of the learner’s performance e.g. how they interact with clients, customers, colleagues and what their response is to the learner, where possible.
* If video is used to collect knowledge from Q & A, then it is really important to ensure that the learner is not being prompted e.g. by written cues, notes which are "of camera".

The types of **remote methods** include: Skype, phone, zoom, what’s up call / video call etc.

To reiterate all recordings must include the learner’s consent to be recorded.

**The EQA team have confirmed that this approach is acceptable so that we can continue to support our learners, and teaching and learning continues.**

**e-Safety**

Please ensure when using remote teaching and assessment methods that learners are aware of the need to ensure they are maintaining their digital security. When using such online platforms as Zoom, or Google Classrooms, learners should be encouraged to have their camera’s switched on to allow Assessors to view the learners. This can help Assessors identify if there are any Safeguarding issues. We recommend that learners are seen virtually at least once a month.

However, it is a learner right to state they do not want to use their camera, and if stated they should not be told that having a camera on is mandatory. Learners should also be informed that they should ensure they have a suitable background. This means ensuring there are not personal items/photographs/information in the background. If the platform supports the use of ‘virtual’ background, these should be used to maintain privacy.

Assessors should also ensure that all online meetings are conducted in a suitable setting with a suitable background, with no personal/items/photographs/information in the background, or as above if available use a virtual background. They should ensure they are no disturbed through the session.

**Mental Health and Wellbeing (Safeguarding)**

During remote teaching and assessment learners should be reminded and encouraged to think about their mental health and wellbeing. During the COVID pandemic mental health and wellbeing is especially important, and the risks to individuals through stress, poverty and loneliness are increased.

Suggestions include:

* Regular exercise
* Keeping in contact with friends and family
* Taking regular breaks from work
* Contacting the appropriate support lines if required

Learners should consistently be reminded and supported with Safeguarding, for themselves and for those they work with or for.

**Equality and Diversity**

Blended learning and assessment should be individualised to learners needs and capabilities. All learners should receive equal and fair access to teaching, learning and assessment.