



# Qualification Specification:

## **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice**

- **Qualification No: 603/6817/2**

## **OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security**

- **Qualification No: 603/6816/0**



# 1. Specification Updates

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Key changes have been listed below:

Section	Detail of change	Version and date of Issue
Specification	Both qualifications extended to 31 October 2030	2.0

## 2. Contents

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### 3. Introduction to Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI)

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The Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI) is a UK recognised awarding organisation based in Northern Ireland. We are regulated by CCEA Regulation to develop and award regulated professional and technical (vocational) qualifications from Entry Level up to and including Level 5 across all sector areas. In addition, OCN NI is also regulated by Ofqual to award qualifications in England.

OCN NI is also an educational charity that advances education by developing nationally recognised qualifications and recognising the achievements of learners. We work with centres such as Further Education Colleges, Private Training Organisations, Voluntary & Community Organisations, Schools, SME's and Public Sector bodies to provide learners with opportunities to progress into further learning and/or employment. OCN NI's Strategic Plan can be found on the OCN NI website [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk).

For further information on OCN NI qualifications or to contact us, you can visit our website at [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk). The website should provide you with details about our qualifications, courses, contact information, and any other relevant information you may need.

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## 4. About this Specification

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This specification details OCN NI's specific requirements for the delivery and assessment of the **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice**.

This specification will provide guidelines for centres to ensure the effective and correct delivery of these qualifications. OCN NI qualification specifications are based on research and engagement with the practitioner community to ensure they provide appropriate skills and knowledge for learners.

The qualification specification will detail the following aspects of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice.

- **Qualification Features:** this includes the key characteristics and features of these qualifications, such as their intended audience, purpose, and credit value.
- **Centre Requirements:** this details the prerequisites and obligations that centres must fulfil to be eligible to deliver and assess these qualifications. These include guidelines on staff qualifications, resources, and required procedures.
- **Structure and Content:** this details the structure and content of the qualifications including units, and any specific content that learners will be required to study.
- **Assessment Requirements:** this details assessment criteria and assessment methods for these qualifications, ensuring that summative assessment approaches are clear.
- **Quality Assurance:** the quality and consistency of delivery and assessment of these qualifications are of paramount importance to OCN NI. The mandatory quality assurance arrangements including processes for internal and external verification that all centres offering these qualifications must adhere to are detailed.
- **Administration:** guidance on the administrative aspects of delivering these qualifications, including registration, certification, and record-keeping.
- Reference to other handbooks and policies as appropriate to the qualifications.

It is important to note that OCN NI will communicate any significant updates or changes to this specification in writing to our centres. Additionally, we will make these changes available on our official website at [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk).

To stay current, please refer to the online version of this specification as it is the most authoritative and up-to-date publication. Be aware that downloaded and printed copies may not reflect the latest revisions.

#### 4.1 Additional Support

OCN NI offers a comprehensive range of support services designed to assist centres in meeting the delivery and quality assurance requirements of OCN NI qualifications. These services include:

- **Learner Assessment Booklets**: These booklets are created to assist learners in demonstrating the fulfilment of assessment criteria and organising the quality assurance prerequisites for each individual unit.
- **Qualification Support Pack**: A support pack has been developed to support centres in the delivery of these qualifications. The pack includes planning and assessment templates, guides to best practice, etc.
- **Professional Development for Educators**: OCN NI provides opportunities for professional development tailored to meet the various needs of practitioners and quality assurance staff. Centres can join our training sessions, available in both face-to-face and online formats, or explore a wealth of training materials by visiting [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk)
- **OCN NI Subject Advisors**: Our team of subject advisors offers vital information and support to centres. They provide guidance on specification details, non-exam assessment advice, updates on resource developments, and various training opportunities. They actively engage with subject communities through an array of networks to facilitate the exchange of ideas and expertise, to support practitioners to provide quality education programs to learners.

All centres can access information, support and guidance to support the delivery and quality assurance of these qualifications by contacting their designated Business Development Advisor or by contacting us on [Contact Us | OCN NI](#)

## 5. About these Qualifications

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### 5.1 Qualification Regulation Information

#### **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice**

Qualification number: 603/6817/2

#### **OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice**

Qualification number: 603/6816/0

Operational start date: 15 November 2020

Operational end date: 31 October 2030

Certification end date: 31 October 2034

The qualifications' operational start and end dates define the regulated qualifications' lifecycle. The operational end date is the final date for learner registration, while learners have until the certificate end date to complete the qualifications and receive their certificates.

It is important to note that all OCN NI regulated qualifications are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RQF), which can be found at [Ofqual Register](#). This register is maintained by Ofqual in England and CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland. It contains information about qualifications that are regulated and accredited. It is a key resource for learners, employers, and educational institutions to verify the status and recognition of qualifications.

Centres must adhere to administrative guidelines diligently, with special attention to the fact that fees, registration, and certification end dates for the qualification may be subject to changes. It is a centre's responsibility to make itself aware of updates on any modifications to ensure compliance with the latest requirements. OCN NI provides centres with timely updates through various channels including website, newsletters and through this specification. Information on qualification fees can be found on the Centre Login section of the OCN NI website [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk).

### 5.2 Sector Subject Area

A subject sector area is a specific category used to classify academic and vocational qualifications. Subject sector areas are part of the educational and qualifications framework to organise and categorise qualifications. The sector subject for these qualifications is:

#### **15.5 Law and Legal Services**

These qualifications are mapped to National Occupational Standards in Legal Advice where appropriate.

[National Occupations Standards - Skills for Justice](#)  
[NOS - Advice and Guidance](#)

### 5.3 Grading

Grading for these qualifications is pass/fail.

### 5.4 Qualifications' Aims and Objectives

#### Qualifications' Aim

The aim of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice and the OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice is to provide learners with an understanding of social security benefits and how to advise clients regarding social security benefits issues. These qualifications will provide learners with the fundamental skills for advice provision along with an understanding of policies, procedures, and compliance requirements for providing generalist and specialist advice. The learner will also understand the importance and application of continuing professional development.

#### Qualifications' Objectives

The objectives of these qualifications are to enable learners to understand:

- the policies, principles, and standards for advice services
- the importance of creating accurate case records, how to manage an active case load, and the impact of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) when case recording
- budgeting, different types of borrowing and banking options, as well as future planning for financial wellbeing
- the application and assessment process when claiming disability benefits, Personal Independence Payments (PIP), social security benefits outside of Universal Credit and Universal Credit including Universal Credit deductions
- how to calculate Universal Credit awards
- the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for advisers, CPD evaluation principles and how to apply it to own practice

### 5.5 Target Learners

These qualifications are targeted at individuals who may require an understanding of social security benefits as part of their job or volunteering role. Learners will require a minimum 12-week placement opportunity to demonstrate key advice skills such as case recording and form completion.



## **5.6 Entry Requirements**

There are no formal entry requirements though it is expected that learners would have at least a level 2 or equivalent qualification e.g. GCSE English or Essential Skills. Learners must be at least 18 years old. Learners will require a minimum 12-week placement opportunity.

## **5.7 Progression**

These qualifications will help learners to progress to other qualifications in similar or related areas such as specialist advice, legal advice or tribunal representation or into employment in occupationally related areas.

## **5.8 Delivery Language**

These qualifications are exclusively available in English. If there is a desire to offer these qualifications in Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), we encourage you to get in touch with OCN NI. They will assess the demand for such provisions and, if feasible, provide the qualification in the requested language as appropriate.

## 6. Centre Requirements for Delivering these Qualifications

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### 6.1 Centre Recognition

New and existing OCN NI recognised centres must apply for and be granted approval to deliver these qualifications prior to the commencement of delivery.

### 6.2 Qualification Approval

Once a centre has successfully undergone the Centre Recognition process, it becomes eligible to apply for qualification approval. The centre's capability to meet and sustain the qualification criteria will be assessed. Throughout the qualification approval process, OCN NI will aim to ensure that:

- centres possess suitable physical resources (e.g., equipment, IT, learning materials, teaching rooms) to support qualification delivery and assessment
- centre staff involved in the assessment process have relevant expertise and/or occupational experience
- robust systems are in place for ensuring ongoing professional development for staff delivering the qualifications
- centres have appropriate health and safety policies concerning learner equipment use
- qualification delivery by centres complies with current equality and diversity legislation and regulations
- as a part of the assessment process for these qualifications it may be useful for learners to have access to a practical work setting

### 6.3 Centre Staffing

To offer these qualifications centres are mandated to establish the following roles as a minimum, although a single staff member may serve in more than one capacity\*:

- Centre contact
- Programme Co-ordinator
- Assessor
- Internal Verifier

\*Note: An individual cannot serve as an Internal Verifier for their own assessments.

## 6.4 Tutor Requirements

Tutors responsible for delivering these qualifications are expected to possess a high degree of occupational competency. They should meet the following criteria:

- **Occupational Competency:** Tutors should demonstrate a clear understanding of the subject matter, including up-to-date knowledge. This competence should enable them to effectively impart knowledge and practical skills to learners.
- **Qualifications:** Tutors delivering these qualifications must have at least two years' experience in providing social security advice or hold a relevant qualification to at least level 5. This ensures that they have the necessary academic foundation to provide in-depth guidance and support to learners.
- **Relevant Industry Experience:** In addition to academic qualifications, tutors must have a minimum of three years of relevant, hands-on experience.

These requirements collectively ensure that learners receive instruction from highly qualified and experienced instructors, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of their educational experience.

## 6.5 Assessor Requirements

The assessment of these qualifications takes place within the centre and is subjected to OCN NI's rigorous quality assurance procedures. The achievement of individual units is based on the criteria defined in each unit.

Assessors play a pivotal role in ensuring the validity and fairness of assessments. They are required to meet the following criteria:

- **Occupational Competency:** Assessors should possess a high degree of occupational competency in the relevant subject matter. This expertise enables them to accurately evaluate and measure a learner's knowledge and skills. They must also have at least two years' experience in providing social security advice or hold a relevant qualification to at least level 5 ensuring their in-depth understanding of the subject matter.
- **Relevant Industry Experience:** A minimum of three years of relevant practical experience in providing social security advice is a prerequisite. This practical background is essential for assessors to effectively evaluate a learner's capabilities in real-world contexts.
- **Assessment Expertise:** Assessors should have direct or related experience in the field of assessment. This includes knowledge of best practices in designing, conducting, and grading assessments. Their expertise ensures that assessments are both fair and valid.
- **Assessors Qualification:** Assessors should hold or be currently undertaking a recognised assessor's qualification; or must have attended the OCN NI Assessment Training.

- **Comprehensive Assessment Oversight:** Assessors are responsible for evaluating all assessment tasks and activities comprehensively. They must thoroughly review and assess each element to ensure a fair and accurate representation of a learner's skills and knowledge.

These rigorous requirements uphold the quality and integrity of the qualification's assessment process, ensuring that learners receive a fair and reliable evaluation of their competencies.

## 6.6 Internal Verifier Requirements

The Internal Verifier plays a crucial role in the centre's internal quality assurance processes. The centre must designate a skilled and trained Internal Verifier who assumes the role of an internal quality monitor responsible for verifying the delivery and assessment of the qualifications.

The Internal Verifier for these qualifications must meet the following criteria:

- **Relevant Industry Experience:** A minimum of three years of practical experience in providing social security advice is a prerequisite. This practical background is essential for assessors to effectively evaluate a learner's capabilities in real-world contexts.
- **Internal Verification Expertise:** Internal Verifiers must have at least two years' experience in providing social security advice or hold a relevant qualification to at least level 5. They should have direct or related experience in the field of verification. This includes knowledge of best practices in designing, conducting, and grading assessments. Their expertise ensures that assessments are both fair and valid.
- **Internal Verifiers Qualification:** Internal Verifiers should hold or be currently undertaking a recognised Internal Verifier's qualification; or must have attended the OCN NI Internal Verification Training.
- **Thorough Evaluation of Assessment Tasks and Activities:** Internal verifiers are tasked with conducting in-depth reviews and assessments of all assessment tasks and activities. Their responsibility is to ensure a comprehensive and meticulous oversight of each element to guarantee a just and precise reflection of a learner's abilities and knowledge and to ensure that all assessment and quality assurance requirements are fulfilled.

## 7. Qualification Structure

### 7.1 Qualification Purpose

The OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice are unitised qualifications on a scale of pass or fail. Learners are expected to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, ensuring a level of proficiency.

### 7.2 Qualification Level

In the context of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice it is essential to understand the significance of qualification levels, as they play a pivotal role in assessing the depth and complexity of knowledge and skills required for successful attainment. These qualifications align with Level 4, which signify a complex level of difficulty and intricacy. It's important to note that qualification levels in the educational framework range from Level 1 to Level 8, complemented by three 'entry' levels, namely Entry 1 to Entry 3.

### 7.3 Qualification Size

#### Total Qualification Time (TQT)

This represents the total amount of time a learner is expected to spend to complete the qualification successfully. It includes both guided learning hours (GLH) and independent study or additional learning time.

#### Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

These are the hours of guided instruction and teaching provided to learners. This may include classroom instruction, tutorials, or other forms of structured learning.

<b>OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice</b>	
Total Qualification Time (TQT):	260 hours
Total Credits Required:	26 credits
Guided Learning Hours (GLH):	156 hours
<b>OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice</b>	
Total Qualification Time (TQT):	320 hours
Total Credits Required:	32 credits
Guided Learning Hours (GLH):	192 hours

### 7.4 How to Achieve the Qualifications

To achieve the **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice** learners must complete 8 units - 26 credits.

To achieve the **OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice** learners must complete all 9 units - 32 credits.

## 8. Assessment Structure

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These qualifications are assessed through internal assessment and each unit is accompanied by specific assessment criteria that define the requirements for achievement.

### 8.1 Assessment Guidance: Portfolio

The portfolio for these qualifications is designed to provide a comprehensive view of a learner's skills and knowledge. It is a holistic collection of evidence that may include a single piece of evidence that satisfies multiple assessment criteria. There is no requirement for learners to maintain separate evidence for each assessment criterion.

When learners are creating their portfolio, they should refer to the assessment criteria to understand the evidence required.

It is essential that the evidence in the portfolio reflects the application of skills in real-world situations. Learners should ensure that they provide multiple examples or references whenever the assessment criteria require it.

### 8.2 Understanding the Units

The units outlined in this specification establish clear assessment expectations. They serve as a valuable guide for conducting assessments and ensuring quality assurance efficiently. Each unit within this specification follows a consistent structure. This section explains the operational framework of these units. It is imperative that all educators, assessors, internal verifiers, and other personnel overseeing the qualification review and familiarise themselves with this section to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how these units function.

- **Title:** The title will reflect the content of the unit and should be clear and concise.
- **Level:** A unit can have one of six RQF levels: Entry, One, Two, Three, Four or Five. All units within these qualifications are Level 4.
- **Credit Value:** This describes the number of credits ascribed to a unit. It identifies the number of credits a learner is awarded upon successful achievement of the unit. One credit is awarded for the learning outcomes which a learner, on average, might reasonably be expected to achieve in a notional 10 hours of learning.
- **Learning Outcome:** A coherent set of measurable achievements.
- **Assessment Criteria:** These enable a judgement to be made about whether or not, and how well, the students have achieved the learning outcomes.
- **Assessment Guidance and Methods:** These detail the different assessment methods within the unit that may be used.
- **Possible Content:** This provides indicative content to assist in teaching and learning.

## 9. Qualification Summary by Unit

### OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice

Total Qualification Time (TQT) for this qualification: 260 hours

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification: 156 hours

In order to achieve this qualification, the learner must successfully complete all 8 units below – 26 credits.

Unit Reference Number	OCN NI Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Value	GLH	Level
<i>Certificate units</i>					
<a href="#">Y/618/5413</a>	CBF095	Advice Policies, Principles, and Standards	3	18	Four
<a href="#">D/618/5414</a>	CBF098	Case Recording and Case Management for Advice Services	4	24	Four
<a href="#">H/618/5415</a>	CBF099	Disability Benefits	3	18	Four
<a href="#">K/618/5416</a>	CBF100	Building Financial Capability for Future Financial Wellbeing	2	12	Four
<a href="#">M/618/5417</a>	CBF101	Managing Advice Interviews	3	18	Four
<a href="#">T/618/5418</a>	CBF102	Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	2	12	Four
<a href="#">A/618/5419</a>	CBF103	Understanding Social Security Benefits	5	30	Four
<a href="#">M/618/5420</a>	CBF104	Universal Credit	4	24	Four

### OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice

Total Qualification Time (TQT) for this qualification: 320 hours

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification: 192 hours

In order to achieve this qualification, the learner must successfully complete all 9 units below – 32 credits.

Unit Reference Number	OCN NI Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Value	GLH	Level
<i>Extended Certificate units</i>					
<a href="#">Y/618/5413</a>	CBF095	Advice Policies, Principles, and Standards	3	18	Four
<a href="#">D/618/5414</a>	CBF098	Case Recording and Case Management for Advice Services	4	24	Four
<a href="#">H/618/5415</a>	CBF099	Disability Benefits	3	18	Four
<a href="#">K/618/5416</a>	CBF100	Building Financial Capability for Future Financial Wellbeing	2	12	Four
<a href="#">M/618/5417</a>	CBF101	Managing Advice Interviews	3	18	Four
<a href="#">T/618/5418</a>	CBF102	Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	2	12	Four
<a href="#">A/618/5419</a>	CBF103	Understanding Social Security Benefits	5	30	Four
<a href="#">M/618/5420</a>	CBF104	Universal Credit	4	24	Four
<a href="#">T/618/5421</a>	CBF105	Continuing Professional Development for Advisers	6	36	Four



## 10. Unit Content

Title	Advice Policies, Principles, and Standards	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	3	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	18	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF095	
Unit Reference No	Y/618/5413	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the policies, principles, and standards for advice services.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand the importance of policies and procedures for advice services.	1.1. Research and explain the key policies and procedures for advice services.	
2. Understand the importance and implementation of social policy in relation to advice services.	2.1. Explain the importance of social policy and how the work of advice services supports its implementation.	
3. Understand the importance of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for advice services.	3.1. Research and explain the importance of GDPR for advice services.	
4. Understand the principles of advice to ensure quality of provision including advice standards.	4.1. Research and summarise the principles of advice, including their functions and how they are applied. 4.2. Research and explain how advice standards impact on the outcomes of advice services.	
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Case Recording and Case Management for Advice Services	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	4	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	24	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF098	
Unit Reference No	D/618/5414	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the importance of creating accurate case records, how to manage an active case load, and the impact of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) when case recording.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand the importance of recording accurate case records and compliance with a quality standard.	1.1. Research and explain the importance of recording accurate case records, including how to comply with a quality standard. 1.2. Summarise the essential content to be included in a case record and explain why each element is required. 1.3. Demonstrate with at least three examples how to accurately case record to an appropriate standard.	
2. Understand how to source and reference information appropriately within a case record.	2.1. Explain how to source and reference information accurately for case records.	
3. Understand how to accurately manage multiple advice cases and comply with a quality standard.	3.1. Research and explain how to accurately manage multiple advice cases. 3.2. Explain and evaluate how to manage at least three cases simultaneously ensuring compliance with a quality standard.	
4. Understand General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and its impact on case recording.	4.1. Explain with at least three examples the impact of GDPR on case recording.	
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log

Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Disability Benefits	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	3	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	18	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF099	
Unit Reference No	H/618/5415	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the application and assessment process when claiming disability benefits.		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria</b>
1. Understand the qualifying conditions and eligibility criteria for disability benefits.	1.1. Research and explain the following in relation to disability benefits: a) qualifying conditions b) eligibility criteria including special conditions	
2. Understand how to complete the application, assessment and administrative processes when claiming disability benefits.	2.1. Research and explain the following when claiming disability benefits: a) application process b) assessment procedure c) administrative processes for payment 2.2. Demonstrate how to accurately complete an application for disability benefits.	
3. Be able to calculate payment rates and components in relation to individual circumstances.	3.1. Calculate payment rates and components in relation to at least four different individuals with different circumstances.	
4. Understand the process for challenging application decisions.	4.1. Explain the process of accurately challenging application decisions.	
<b>Assessment Guidance</b>		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Possible Content</b>
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Building Financial Capability for Future Financial Wellbeing	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	2	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	12	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF100	
Unit Reference No	K/618/5416	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand budgeting, different types of borrowing and banking options, as well as future planning for financial wellbeing.		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria</b>
1. Understand budgeting and how to create a household budget.	1.1. Explain the difference between income and expenditure. 1.2. Critically compare the difference between priority and non-priority payments. 1.3. Critically compare the following types of budgets, including available options for households associated with each type: a) surplus b) balanced c) deficit 1.4. Explain the importance of budgeting in households and develop a household budget.	
2. Understand different types of borrowing, banking options and how to improve an individual's credit score.	2.1. Critically compare at least three types of available borrowing options for individuals. 2.2. Explain at least three methods to improve a credit score for an individual. 2.3. Compare and contrast at least three different banking options for individuals.	
3. Understand future planning for financial wellbeing and how to access debt and money advice services.	3.1. Explain future planning for financial wellbeing, including the following: a) a savings buffer b) protection from unexpected change c) viable pension options d) future retirement income e) other financial planning options 3.2. Explain when it is appropriate to signpost individuals to debt and money advice services or to self-help resources. 3.3. Summarise how to prepare an individual for debt advice.	
<b>Assessment Guidance</b>		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Possible Content</b>
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion

Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Managing Advice Interviews	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	3	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	18	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF101	
Unit Reference No	M/618/5417	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to carry out advice interviews using multiple channels, appropriate communication skills and techniques, to manage the interview process in line with advice principles and standards.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand how to use multiple channels to carry out advice interviews.	1.1. Critically compare the following channels used to carry out advice interviews to include: a) face to face b) via telephone c) online	
2. Understand how to create a suitable environment and effectively manage advice interviews.	2.1. Explain how to create a suitable physical environment for clients in an advice setting. 2.2. Explain how to use communication skills and techniques to effectively manage advice interviews.	
3. Understand the key elements of advice interviews and the purpose and importance of the principles of advice.	3.1. Summarise the key elements of advice interviews. 3.2. Explain the purpose and importance of the principles of advice when adhering to a quality standard.	
4. Understand and apply triage in an advice setting.	4.1. Explain what is meant by triage in an advice setting. 4.2. Analyse and apply a triage model for at least three different advice scenarios.	
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practice and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	2	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	12	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF102	
Unit Reference No	T/618/5418	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand how to calculate personal independence payments (PIP) awards, the application and assessment processes for claiming PIP and how to challenge application decisions.		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>		<b>Assessment Criteria</b>
1. Understand the qualifying conditions and eligibility criteria for Personal Independence Payments (PIP).	1.1. Research and explain the following in relation to PIP: a) qualifying conditions b) eligibility criteria including special conditions	
2. Understand how to complete the application, assessment and administrative processes when claiming PIP.	2.1. Research and explain the following when claiming PIP: a) application process b) assessment procedure c) administrative process for payment 2.2. Demonstrate how to accurately complete a PIP application.	
3. Be able to calculate payment rates and components in relation to individual circumstances.	3.1. Calculate payment rates and components in relation to at least four different individuals in different circumstances including: a) eligibility criteria b) points allocation	
4. Understand the process for challenging application decisions.	4.1. Explain the process of accurately challenging application decisions.	
<b>Assessment Guidance</b>		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Possible Content</b>
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log



Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Understanding Social Security Benefits	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	5	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	30	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF103	
Unit Reference No	A/618/5419	
<p><i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the application and assessment processes when claiming social security benefits outside of Universal Credit. The learner will also understand how to access the Financial Support Service and how to challenge benefits and support decisions.</p>		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	
1. Understand the eligibility criteria and qualifying conditions for social security benefits outside of Universal Credit.	1.1. Research and explain the eligibility criteria and qualifying conditions for each of the following types of social security benefits outside of Universal Credit: a) means tested b) non-means tested c) contributory d) non-contributory	
2. Understand the application and assessment process when claiming social security benefits outside of Universal Credit.	2.1. Research and explain how to claim social security benefits outside of Universal Credit including: a) application process b) assessment procedure	
3. Understand and be able to calculate social security benefits outside of Universal Credit including tariff income and sanctionable benefits.	3.1. Explain and demonstrate how to calculate awards for the following social security benefits outside of Universal Credit: a) means tested b) non-means tested c) contributory d) non-contributory 3.2. Explain tariff income and demonstrate how it is calculated. 3.3. Summarise sanctionable benefits and the impact of sanctions on an award.	
4. Understand the eligibility criteria and application process for loans and grants under the Financial Support Service.	4.1. Research and explain the eligibility criteria and application process for loans and grants under the Financial Support Service.	
5. Understand how to challenge benefits and support decisions.	5.1. Explain how to accurately challenge decisions on the following: a) social security benefits outside of Universal Credit b) the Financial Support Service	
<b>Assessment Guidance</b>		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Possible Content</b>
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion

	the learner's progression through the course	
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Universal Credit	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	4	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	24	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF104	
Unit Reference No	M/618/5420	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the application and assessment process when claiming Universal Credit including Universal Credit deductions. The learner will also understand how to calculate Universal Credit awards.		
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	
1. Understand the eligibility criteria and qualifying conditions for Universal Credit.	1.1. Research and explain the following in relation to Universal Credit: a) eligibility criteria b) qualifying conditions c) exemption criteria d) transitional protection e) conditionality groups and requirements	
2. Be able to calculate Universal Credit and Transitional Protection Awards.	2.1. Use at least four different scenarios in order to calculate entitlement to Universal Credit. 2.2. Calculate awards of Transitional Protection.	
3. Understand the application process, assessment procedure and support available when claiming Universal Credit.	3.1. Summarise the following when claiming Universal Credit: a) application process b) assessment procedure c) financial support available d) support for vulnerable claimants	
4. Understand Universal Credit deductions.	4.1. Explain, with examples, the impact of sanctions and the benefit cap on an award of Universal Credit.	
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

Title	Continuing Professional Development for Advisers	
Level	Four	
Credit Value	6	
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	36	
OCN NI Unit Code	CBF105	
Unit Reference No	T/618/5421	
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to understand the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for advisers. The learner will also understand CPD evaluation principles and how to apply it to own practice.		
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	
1. Understand the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for advisers including appropriate professional development routes.	1.1. Research and explain CPD standards for advisers. 1.2. Research and explain the importance of CPD. 1.3. Summarise the possible impact for clients and advisers if regular CPD activities are not undertaken. 1.4. Critically compare at least two professional development routes for advisers.	
2. Understand how to develop and evaluate a CPD plan.	2.1. Develop and implement a 12-month CPD plan which aims to improve own practice. 2.2. Explain and demonstrate evaluation principles within own CPD practice to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) key performance indicators</li> <li>b) supervision feedback</li> <li>c) client feedback</li> </ul>	
<b>Assessment Guidance</b>		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Possible Content</b>
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Coursework	Research or projects that count towards a learner's final outcome and demonstrate the skills and/or knowledge gained throughout the course	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Tutor notes/record Learner log/diary
E-assessment	The use of information technology to assess learners' work	Electronic portfolio E-tests

## 11. Quality Assurance of Centre Performance

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### 11.1 Internal Assessment

When delivering and assessing these qualifications, centres must align with stakeholders' expectations and address learners' needs by implementing a practical and applied programme. Centres have the flexibility to customise programmes to meet local requirements and establish connections with local employers and the broader vocational sector.

The Assessor should work with the Internal Verifier to ensure that the assessment is planned in line with OCN NI requirements. Assessment Plans must be developed and approved by the Internal Verifier prior to the delivery of the qualification.

All units within these qualifications must undergo internal assessment. Learners must provide evidence that they have appropriately met all assessment criteria required for that grade.

The assessment format for all units involves a task conducted after the delivery of the unit's content, or part of it, if multiple tasks are used. Tasks may exhibit in various forms, encompassing practical and written types. Please refer to 'OCN NI's Assessment Definitions Guide' for additional details.

A task constitutes a distinct activity completed independently by learners, separated from teaching, practice, exploration, and other activities guided by tutors. Tasks are assigned to learners with a specified start date, completion date, and explicit requirements for the evidence to be produced. Some tasks may include observed practical components and require diverse forms of evidence.

A valid assignment will enable a clear and formal assessment outcome, which meets the requirements of the assessment criteria. Assessment decisions are based on the specific assessment criteria given in each unit and set at each grade level. The way in which individual units are written provides a balance of assessment of understanding, practical skills and vocational attributes appropriate to the purpose of qualifications.

It is the Assessor's role to ensure that learners are appropriately prepared for assessment, this begins from induction onwards. Assessors should ensure that learners understand how assessment tasks are used to determine the award of credit, the importance of meeting assessment timelines, and that all learners work must be independently created, where source documents are used this should be appropriately referenced, learners should be aware of what would constitute plagiarism and the possible consequences.

When conducting the assessment, Assessors must ensure they do not provide direct input, instructions or specific feedback which may compromise the authenticity of the work submitted.

Once the Assessor has authenticated the learners work, they must transparently demonstrate the rationale behind their assessment decisions. Once a learner completes all assigned tasks for a unit, the Assessor will allocate a grade for the unit. Refer to the 'Unit Grading Matrix' for additional information on the grading process.

Once the Assessor has completed the assessment process for the task, the assessment decision is recorded formally, and feedback is provided to the learner. The feedback should show the learner the outcome of the assessment decision, how it was determined or where the criteria has been met, it may indicate to the learner why achievement of the assessment criteria has not been met. It must be clear to the learner that this Assessment outcome is subject to verification.

For further information on assessment practice, please see the 'OCN NI Centre Handbook'. Assessment Training is also available and can be booked through the OCN NI Website.

## **11.2 Internal Verification**

The role of the Internal Verifier is to ensure appropriate internal quality assurance processes are carried out. The Internal Verifier must oversee that assessments are conducted in accordance with relevant OCN NI policies, regulations, and this specification.

The Internal Verifier must ensure assessments are fair, reliable, and uniform, thereby providing a consistent standard for all learners.

Internal Verifiers are required to provide constructive feedback to Assessors, identifying areas of strength and those that may require improvement. This feedback contributes to the ongoing professional development of Assessors.

Contributing to the standardisation of assessment practices within the centre is an important function of this role. This entails aligning assessment methods, grading criteria, and decision-making processes to maintain fairness and equity.

Internal Verifiers will actively engage in the sampling and monitoring of assessments to ensure the consistency and accuracy of assessment decisions. This process helps identify trends, areas for improvement, and ensures the robustness of the overall assessment system.

For further information on internal verification practice, please see the 'OCN NI Centre Handbook'. Internal Verification Training is also available and can be booked through the OCN NI Website.

### 11.3 Documentation

For internal quality assurance processes to be effective, the internal assessment and internal verification team needs to keep effective records.

- The programme must have an assessment and internal verification plan. When producing a plan, they should consider:
  - the time required for training and standardisation activities
  - the time available to undertake teaching and carry out assessment,
  - consider when learners may complete assessments and when quality assurance will take place
  - the completion dates for different assessment tasks
  - the date by which the assignment needs to be internally verified
  - sampling strategies
  - how to manage the assessment and verification of learners' work so that they can be given formal decisions promptly
  - how resubmission opportunities can be scheduled.

The following documents are available from OCN NI and document templates can be found in the Centre Login section of the OCN NI website [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk):

- A1 – Learner Assessment Record per Learner
- A2 – Assessment Decision Form per Learner
- learner authentication declarations
- Records of any reasonable adjustments applied for and the outcome – please see 'OCN NI's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy' for further information
- M1 Internal Verification Sample Record
- M2 Feedback to Assessor
- Records of any complaints or appeals

### 11.4 External Quality Assurance

All OCN NI recognised centres are subject to External Quality Assurance. External quality assurance activities will be conducted to confirm continued compliance with the CCEA Regulation General Conditions of Recognition, OCN NI terms and conditions and the requirements outlined within this qualification specification.

The External Quality Assurance is assigned by OCN NI. The External Quality Assurer will review the delivery and assessment of these qualifications. This will include, but is not limited to, the review of a sample of assessment evidence and evidence of the internal verification of assessment and assessment decisions. This will form the basis of the External Quality Assurance report and will help OCN NI determine the centre's risk.

The role of the External Quality Assurer serves as an external overseer of assessment quality, working to uphold consistency, compliance, and continuous improvement within the assessment process. Their role is crucial in ensuring that assessments are valid, reliable, fair, and aligned with the required standards and regulations.



For further information on OCN NI Centre Assessments Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy, please see the OCN NI Centre Handbook.

## 11.5 Standardisation

As a process, standardisation is designed to ensure consistency and promote good practice in understanding and the application of standards. Standardisation events:

- make qualified statements about the level of consistency in assessment across centres delivering a qualification
- make statements on the standard of evidence that is required to meet the assessment criteria for units in a qualification
- make recommendations on assessment practice
- produce advice and guidance for the assessment of units
- identify good practice in assessment and internal verification

Centres offering these qualifications must carry out internal standardisation activities prior to the claim for certification.

Centres offering units of an OCN NI qualification must attend and contribute assessment materials and learner evidence for standardisation events if requested.

OCN NI will notify centres of the nature of sample evidence required for standardisation events (this will include assessment materials, learner evidence and relevant Assessor and Internal Verifier documentation). OCN NI will make standardisation summary reports available and correspond directly with centres regarding event outcomes.

## 12. Administration

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### 12.1 Registration

A centre must register learners for these qualifications within 20 days of commencement of the delivery of the programme.

For further information on learner registration please see the OCN NI Centre Handbook and the QuartzWeb Manual, available through the Centre Login section of the OCN NI website. Administration training is also available and can be booked through [www.ocnni.org.uk](http://www.ocnni.org.uk).

### 12.2 Certification

Once all internal quality assurance activities have been successfully completed, the centre can claim certification for the learner(s).

Certificates will be issued to centres within 20 working days from completion of a satisfactory external quality assurance activity, if appropriate, alternatively from the submission of an accurate and complete marksheet.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that certificates received from OCN NI are held securely and distributed to learners promptly and securely.

For further information on the uploading of results please see the QuartzWeb Manual for guidance, administration training is also available and can be booked through [OCN NI](#)

### 12.3 Charges

OCN NI publishes all up-to-date qualification fees in its Fees and Invoicing Policy document. Further information can be found on the centre login area of the OCN NI website.

### 12.4 Equality, Fairness and Inclusion

OCN NI's are committed to ensuring all learners have an equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessment, and that our qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every learner.

OCN NI is committed to making sure that:

- learners with a protected characteristic are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to learners who do not share that characteristic
- all learners achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers

For information on reasonable adjustments and special considerations please see the OCN NI Centre Handbook and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy held in the back office of the OCN NI website.

## **12.5 Retention of Evidence**

OCN NI has published guidance for centres on the retention of evidence. Details are provided in the OCN NI Centre Handbook and can be accessed via the OCN NI website.

**OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice**

**Qualification number: 603/6817/2**

**OCN NI Level 4 Extended Certificate in Providing Social Security Advice**

**Qualification number: 603/6816/0**

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Operational start date: 15 November 2020  
Operational end date: 31 October 2030  
Certification end date: 31 October 2034

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