Competences for advice roles

These competences are for advice roles and they:

- Combine competences for the gateway and adviser roles except for enquiry areas, which retain two levels.
- Can be adapted for other client facing roles such as reception, information workers and form fillers by picking out the performance criteria and skills relevant to specific roles.
- Are mapped closely to National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) units but remain organisation specific.
- Separate out performance criteria - what the learner needs to be able to do - from the underpinning skills and knowledge which are more relevant to assessors, training supervisors, tutors and learning programme developers.

Digital advice competences will be added soon.

Competences for advice roles

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Core Service competences</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Performance criteria:
1. Work within our key principles to deliver a service that is
• Confidential
• Free
• Impartial
• Independent
• Challenge discrimination, promote equality and value diversity.
2. Contribute towards a safe and positive working atmosphere.
3. Provide a service that meets quality of advice standards.
4. Contribute to the assessment of your practice.
5. Work to continually improve your practice.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Skills
1. Empathy
2. Team work
3. Self-awareness
4. Behaving impartially</td><td>Knowledge
1. Our aims, principles, equality and diversity policies
2. Our health and safety policies
3. What good practice in advice looks like
4. How quality of advice is measured</td></tr>
</table>

Providing information and advice within the scope of your role
Performance criteria: 1. Explore the client's problem and relevant personal circumstances including reviewing relevant paperwork. 2. Identify within the scope of your role: • Emergency situations • Key dates and time limits • Action taken so far • Safeguarding issues • Research and campaigns issues • The client's goals and priorities • Potential conflicts of interest • Discrimination • Related enquiry area issues 3. Use approved information, support, and supervision resources to source relevant information/ advice and check your understanding. 4. Use an approved risk assessment to identify, agree and implement appropriate next steps including: • Providing information or assisted information. • Referring or signposting to another appropriate agency using approved procedures. • Providing further advice in-house. 5. Explain options including legal rights and responsibilities, implications, limitations, barriers and consequences as appropriate to the client and provide calculations where appropriate. 6. Help the client to draw up an action plan including who will take what actions and when and when and how related advice needs will be met. 7. Provide help as agreed in the action plan such as completing forms, writing letters, making phone calls on the client's behalf etc. 8. Write-up the case record and ensure copies of relevant documents are filed including client consent, data protection and copies of significant correspondence in line with approved procedures and legal requirements. 9. Follow up action as agreed such as booking a further appointment, adding to the work queue, research and campaigns action etc.

Skills	Knowledge
1. Questioning 2. Active listening 3. Summarising 4. Checking understanding 5. Researching 6. Analysing 7. Problem solving 8. Carrying out calculations 9. Presenting information 10. Negotiating 11. Writing professional letters 12. Decision making 13. Action planning 14. Time management 15. Recording and storing information 16. Using IT to research, record and store information	1. The centre's delivery model. 2. Approved information resources and how to use them. 3. The legal framework for the advice/information. 4. Approved national and local organisations for signposting and referral. 5. The limits of your knowledge. 6. Your centre's supervision policy and your own supervision needs. 7. The centre's referral and signposting procedure. 8. The centre's case recording and record storage procedure. 9. Legal and organisational requirements relating to: • Data protection and information assurance • Health, safety and security • Equality and discrimination • Confidentiality • Conflict of interest • Safeguarding • Client experience and research follow up.

Work with clients within our values	
Performance criteria 1. Greet client in a welcoming and professional way. 2. Explain the scope and limitations of the interview. 3. Provide advice to the client in a way that is accessible and client focussed, being sensitive to the client's needs and situation. 4. Acknowledge and respect the client's feelings and perception of the problem. 5. Use the client's knowledge, skills and abilities to empower them. 6. Respond appropriately to the client's emotions including anger, frustration and sadness. 7. Check your understanding of the client's situation, needs and abilities to provide a service appropriate to them. 8. Adapt your communication style to meet the client's needs. 9. Check the client's understanding at each stage of the process. 10. Work towards the client's preferred outcome regardless of your view of the client or the problem. 11. End the interview using approved procedures inviting the client to return as necessary.	
Skills 1. Empathy 2. Patience 3. Assessing risk 4. Assertiveness 5. Challenging 6. Customer service 7. Questioning 8. Active listening 9. Summarising 10. Handling aggression	**Knowledge** 1. The services aims, principles and equality, diversity and discrimination policies. 2. Your service delivery model and the range of services your centre provides. 3. The range of emotions clients might display and the possible reasons. 4. Key body language indications. 5. Barriers clients might face in getting help and advice. 6. Issues that can impact on a client's ability to manage a problem. 7. How to empower and enable clients. 8. Your centre's end of interview protocols.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Additional Performance criteria for working with clients on the telephone</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Performance criteria
1. Use the telephone system and equipment in your local office.
2. Prepare the working area so you have access to the right equipment and paperwork before answering a call.
3. Answer the call following your office policies on promptness, initial greeting and introductory information such as explaining confidentiality, data protection, client experience follow up, and taking monitoring information.
4. Explain any limitations on the help that can be given over the telephone such as difficulties from not being able to see paperwork, and identify ways of overcoming these.
5. Work in a focussed way to minimise the cost of the call to the client, listening for signs of concern about the cost and calling the client back within your office policy.
6. Use your office procedures for meeting data protection and getting client authorisation for action over the phone.
7. Use appropriate verbal encouragement and prompts in the absence of visual clues to demonstrate that you are listening to the client.
8. Maintain a call if appropriate when a client may be in danger or at risk.
9. Close the call following end of call procedures such as getting agreement to automated feedback and putting the client through.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Skills
1. Active listening
2. Concentration
3. Empathy
4. Explaining
5. Assessing risk
6. Decision making
7. Staying calm
8. Negotiation</td><td>Knowledge
1. Why callers may choose to contact your office by phone.
2. How to use the office telephone equipment including headsets, call answering, holding, transferring, ending and wrap up facilities.
3. Your local policy on calling clients back and sending out and receiving paperwork and information.
4. How to identify signs of stress or increased emotion in the client without visual clues.
5. Your local policy on ending a call including when it is not appropriate to continue, for example if a client is being abusive.</td></tr>
</table>

Working to influence research and campaigns

Performance criteria

1. Identify new research and campaigns issues.
2. Identify enquiries where there is an issue currently being monitored.
3. Help the client to take action to influence policy.
4. Complete research and campaigns evidence forms.
5. Contribute to the development of research and campaigns work in your local office.

Skills	Knowledge
1. Questioning 2. Listening 3. Summarising (verbal and written) 4. Evaluating 5. Explaining information 6. Researching 7. Influencing 8. Supporting 9. Participating in team discussions.	1. The services aims on research and campaigns (R and C) 2. Confidentiality and consent policies in relation to R and C work. 3. Current local and national R and C issues. 4. How to identify equality issues within R and C work. 5. Local and national procedures for gathering, sharing, monitoring and reporting R and C issues. 6. Good practice in completing evidence forms 7. Ways that R and C can enable a client to manage or resolve their problem. 8. Ways that R and C can respond to the needs of the local community.

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Discrimination: Discrimination, hate crime, and gender abuse (including domestic violence and abuse) **(D)**	**Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice.** 1. Any discrimination issues. 2. Any gender abuse (including domestic violence) or safeguarding issue. 3. Any violence (actual or risk). including hate incidents or crimes. 4. Imminent time limits, or uncertainty about time limits. 5. Court action. 6. Client has lost their job or home (or at risk). 7. Client needs help with a letter, form or claim.	1. Identify and explain unlawful discrimination, including the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 (eg age, sex). 2. Identify and explain the types of discrimination made unlawful by the Equality Act 2010. 3. How and when to challenge discrimination (unlawful or lawful) 4. Explain how and when discrimination rights can be used to resolve a client's problem including in employment, benefits, housing, money advice, and consumer. 5. Support clients to overcome barriers to taking action on discrimination. 6. Support disabled clients to ask for reasonable adjustments. 7. How to report a hate incident or crime. 8. How to challenge unfairness using additional legal responsibilities of public authorities, including human rights. 9. With supervision give advice on situations that may involve • Gender violence and abuse, including making appropriate referral or signposting (in line with local office policy). • Taking action to challenge discrimination eg complaint letter or grievance or other appropriate method. • Using discrimination rights in court action (employment, housing, consumer, debt enforcement).

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Immigration	**You must work within the OISC regulations on this enquiry area.** Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice. 1. Time limit on stay 2. Appeal time limits imminent 3. Destitution 4. Violence	**With supervision give advice within the Level 1 OISC regulations on:** 1. immigration status and implications. 2. Recourse to public funds. 3. Entry clearance and variation of leave procedures. 4. Implications of contacting the authorities. 5. Human rights cases. 6. Provide one-off assistance to asylum seekers in limited circumstances. 7. Straightforward applications for naturalisation or registration of a British Citizen.

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Benefits (B)	**Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice.** 1. Client has no money. 2. Benefits stopped. 3. Deadlines for challenging benefit decisions. 4. Low income clients requiring benefit check or other income maximisation. 5. Health and disability issues requiring benefit check. 6. Help needed to make claims. 7. Impact of change in personal circumstances on benefits.	1. Provide full benefit checks and better off calculations. 2. Identify income maximisation opportunities. 3. Explain eligibility rules for all benefits including the habitual residence test and EU coordination rules. 4. Calculate means tested benefits and tax credits. 5. Explain the decision making process. 6. Interpret and explain official letters and calculations. 7. Identify and advise on potential backdating. 8. Identify and advise on the implications of the fraud act for client and adviser. 9. Complete benefit claims forms. 10. With supervision give advice or consider referral on • Potential suspension or disqualification issues. • Overpayment recovery issues. • Mandatory reconsideration and appeal rights and time limits.

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Housing (H)	Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice. 1. Gender abuse (including domestic violence and abuse). 2. Child and vulnerable adult protection. 3. Relationship breakdown. 4. Repossession. 5. Eviction. 6. Homelessness. 7. Court hearings. 8. Harassment. 9. Time limit for review imminent. 10. Disrepair.	1. Housing status and vulnerability to eviction. 2. Common occupancy rights and obligations. 3. The stage of legal proceedings. 4. Exploratory advice on rent/mortgage arrears. 5. Related debt, benefit/other financial and discrimination issues. 6. Eviction and ending occupancy. 7. Statutory homelessness duty. 8. Finding emergency accommodation. 9. Longer term housing options. 10. Local authority applications, allocations and transfers. 11. Applications for deposit bonds and rent guarantees. 12. Disrepair, rights, responsibilities, main courses of action and security of tenure implications. 13. Environmental health implications. 14. With supervision give advice or consider referral on: • Housing implications of relationship breakdown. • Housing options in cases of gender abuse (including domestic violence and abuse). • Completing court forms for non-defended action.

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Family and personal (F)	**Recognise common emergencies, and situations needing full advice.** 1. Homelessness. 2. Danger of children being removed. 3. Threat of self-harm, possible child abuse or abuse of a adults in vulnerable situations.	1. Rights and responsibilities in different relationship statuses including • marriage • civil partnerships • cohabitation. 2. How to end a relationship and implications including housing, children and money. 3. Child maintenance options including the child maintenance service. 4. Rights of children and young people. 5. Local authority and other agencies obligations and powers affecting children and young people. 6. Implications and options re gender violence and abuse including accessing a place of safety. 7. Bereavement and wills.

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Money problems (M)	**Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice.** 1. Client has no money. 2. Bailiffs involvement. 3. Repossession. 4. Evictions. 5. Court hearings. 6. Loss of utilities. 7. Warrant for arrest. 8. Client has PPI. 9. Any time limits for action, e.g. responding to court summons. 10. Debt management plan.	1. The nature and extent of the debt problem. 2. Any debt situations requiring immediate action. 3. Checking liability for the debts. 4. Identifying priority debts according to creditor sanction and client need. 5. Drawing up a budget with client. 6. Unbudgeted needs and potential savings. 7. Maximising income and reducing expenditure. 8. Drawing up a financial statement using the standard financial statement (SFS). 9. Suitable strategies based on the financial statement and consequences. 10. Calculating and making offers to priority creditors. 11. Undertake preliminary negotiations with creditors to gain acceptance of offers. 12. Explaining options for dealing with the non-priority debts. 13. Identifying key information on common court forms for debt. 14. Use the relevant financial codes of practice relating to debt recovery. 15. Identifying major types of fraudulent action the client discloses.

Enquiry area	Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.	Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.
Employment (E)	**Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice.** 1. Client has been dismissed. 2. Client has been made redundant. 3. Tribunal time limit implications. 4. Cost implications of going to a tribunal. 5. Changes in work, terms and conditions. 6. Grievance and disciplinary proceedings.	1. Employment status. 2. The main statutory rights including • minimum wage • time off and holidays • deductions from wages • transfer of undertakings (protection of employees) TUPE • written statement of terms and conditions of work • sickness • disciplinary and grievance • family and parental • working time • not to be discriminated against. 3. The main contractual issues at work including: • pay • contract variation • hours of work • absence • notice. 4. Holiday pay and entitlements. 5. The different types of dismissal, and termination payments. 6. Tribunal procedures, costs and time limits.

		7. With supervision give advice or consider referral on • Completing employment tribunal forms • Claiming from the National Insurance Fund • Helping with grievances and resolving issues.

Enquiry area	**Level 2 (Gateway): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide information or opportunities for further advice on key areas.**	**Level 3 (Adviser): Using the information system and appropriate supervision provide advice and support on key areas.**
Consumer	**Recognise common emergencies and situations needing full advice.** 1. Non-Uk consumer issues. 2. Trader to trader consumer issues. 3. Time limits e.g. for cooling off periods. 4. Linked problem areas such as debt.	1. Statutory and contractual rights in relation to goods and services including unfair practice. 2. The main elements of a consumer contract including express and implied terms. 3. Aspects of the contract that affect a client's consumer rights including • How and when the contract was formed (e.g. face to face, distance, doorstep selling) • Who the contract is between • How the goods or services were paid for including, cash, credit card, hire purchase etc. 4. The main remedies for resolving consumer issues including, negotiation, arbitration and court action. 5. The different types of credit available and the implications for liability, title, and cancellation rights.