



Advice NI Centre Handbook



About the Centre Handbook

Welcome and thank you for choosing Advice NI for your selected training or qualification. We hope you enjoy your time with us.

The Advice NI Centre Handbook has been created to act as a reference tool and support for learners who are training with us. We recommend that you read it before you commence your training, in conjunction with the qualification specifications and / or course handbook.

This handbook sets out what is required from you as a learner, what you can expect from Advice NI as a training and qualifications Centre, and, how we will deliver our qualifications. It also contains information on our policies and procedures in relation to training.

If you have further questions, your tutor will be your first point of contact.

We value your input and would happily receive any compliments, concerns or queries that you may have. You can get in touch with us via your course tutor, or by emailing training@adviceni.net

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1. Who are Advice NI?

Advice NI is a membership organisation that exists to provide leadership, representation and support for independent advice organisations in Northern Ireland. We have 70 member organisations operating throughout Northern Ireland who provided advice, information and advocacy services for over 400,000 enquiries a year, on an extensive range of matters including benefits, housing, debt, consumer and employment issues.

Advice NI also delivers a range of advice services to the public including Debt and Money, Tax and Benefits, EU Settlement Scheme, Business Debt and more recently COVID-19 support. We offer a wide range of award winning training, and campaign on issues raised by the independent advice network to improve the lives of people in Northern Ireland. For further information visit www.adviceni.net

As society moves increasingly online in a digital world, Advice NI is working to ensure that no one is left behind in terms of digital capability. Through partnership working we are committed to providing free digital training.



All of our advice services are now available on one single number and email.

0800 915 4604

advice@adviceni.net

2. Advice NI Training

Advice NI is the leading provider of nationally accredited Advice and Guidance, Legal Advice and Independent Advocacy Qualifications in Northern Ireland.

We provide a wide range of non-formal courses, endorsed courses and qualifications for supporting the continuous professional development of people working in the advice sector, and throughout the wider voluntary, public and private sectors.

Advice NI provide accredited and non-accredited training from beginner to diploma-level for the independent advice sector and associated organisations. Through our award-winning training and development package's we provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to provide confident, up-to-date and good quality advice. Our training also supports and meets the required sector standards.

Our main areas of training include:

- Welfare Reform
- Social Security Benefits and Tax Credits
- Tribunal Representation
- Advice Skills
- Money and Debt Advice
- Independent Advocacy
- Financial Capability and Money Management
- Lone Working
- Age Awareness
- Training and Presentation Skills

We offer scheduled, in-house and bespoke training options and can develop training to meet your organisational needs. If you have any questions or want to speak to us about bespoke training, please email training@adviceni.net

For further information, visit the Advice NI website <https://www.adviceni.net/training> or view and book onto our current courses via our website at [Upcoming Training](#).

3. How Our Training Works

Until March 2020, the majority of our courses were delivered face to face at our new training facility in Purdy's Lane, Belfast.

In response to current guidance around stopping the spread of COVID-19, Advice NI has moved its training online for the remainder of 2020. We have a wide variety of content and formats to choose from, in order to suit all requirements and types of training.

Currently to engage in our training learners require an internet connection and suitable internet enabled device.

As society moves increasingly online in a digital world, Advice NI is working to ensure that no one is left behind in terms of digital capability and is committed to providing free digital training and, where funding permits, devices and data plans to allow people to get online.

If getting online, or digital skills are barriers for you to taking part in our training please contact us to see if we can help.

Live Online

Courses delivered live at scheduled times on [Zoom](#).

Blended Online

Courses with material and content accessible online via our Learning Management System (LMS) [Advice NI E-Learning Online](#) with live Zoom sessions scheduled to support you as you progress.

Anytime Online

Courses with materials and content you can access on our LMS (Advice NI Learning Online or [Wiseradviser NI Online Learning](#)) online at a time that suits you.

Accreditation

We offer both accredited and non-accredited courses. This means that for accredited courses, you will receive formal recognition and certification for your achievement. The certificate will be provided by one of our nationally recognised Awarding Organisations (formerly known as Awarding Bodies).

We currently work alongside [Open College Network Northern Ireland \(OCN NI\)](#) and [City & Guilds](#). You can check out their websites for information on certification, and what they offer learners.

For non-accredited courses, you will receive CPD points and recognition. A CPD certificate of attendance will be awarded by Advice NI once you have completed your course.

4. Meet the team

As well as our skilled and experienced in house core tutor team, Advice NI also work with a range of subject matter experts and external tutors for various specialist areas of our training.

Advice NI Tutors



Conor McDonald
conor@adviceni.net



Ryan Fitzsimmons
ryanf@adviceni.net



Seonagh Gervin
seonagh@adviceni.net

In addition to our tutor group, we have a number of training team staff who work hard behind the scenes to ensure that we provide a high standard of training and development.

The rest of the team



Corrie Chappell
corrie@adviceni.net



Debi Madden
debi@adviceni.net



Emma Murphy
emma@adviceni.net



Joanne McCoy
joanne@adviceni.net



Michelle McGreevy
michelle@adviceni.net

5. Quality Training

Moderation, Assessment and Internal Verification

In order to ensure our materials, delivery and assessment are always at the highest quality standard that learners, Awarding Organisations and Advice NI expect, we carry out sampling activities and quality assurance checks. The Advice NI training team meet regularly and discuss best practice and standardisation of work.

Advice NI have internal moderators/ verifiers (IV's) who will monitor and sample the work of tutors across all aspects of assessment. This ensures consistency in interpretation and application of the assessment criteria. We will sample and review the quality of tutor judgements at summative stages, and support tutors to ensure assessment decisions are reliable, consistent and fair. Assessments are sampled, and tutors are provided with written and /or oral constructive feedback.

Advice NI will also have external verification (EV) visits from our awarding organisations. These activities check that the training meets the expected standard and that learners are receiving the best possible service and opportunity to succeed. The EV will provide us with support and feedback.

As a further quality measure, we will review completed learner evaluation forms. Evaluation forms are confidential and anonymous. If however, you would like a response to your feedback, you can send it directly to training@adviceni.net and we will ensure that you are contacted.

All of these quality activities promote the credibility of our qualifications and training, and provide a positive learner journey.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is an assessment process. It uses an individual's prior learning or achievement to evidence and determine if they already meet the learning outcomes of a unit. RPL helps to avoid unnecessary learning in these circumstances, or the possibility of over assessment.

Please contact training@adviceni.net or speak to your tutor if you would like to discuss RPL in relation to your chosen course.

Equal Opportunities

Advice NI is committed to promoting equal opportunities as an employer and service provider, in order to combat discrimination and prejudice.

Advice NI will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation or identity, ethnic or national origin, disability, partnership status or home responsibility, HIV or AIDS status, mental health, age, religious belief, trade union activity or socio-economic background and reserves the right to add to these groups at any time.

Advice NI however recognises that discrimination can and does occur and this can be direct, indirect or institutional.

Please refer to our policy for further information and feel free to contact training@adviceni.net if you have any questions or queries.

A copy of the equal opportunities policy is included in this pack.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Advice NI is committed to ensuring that the learner's right to access qualifications and assessment, in a way most appropriate to their individual needs, is upheld. We comply with relevant legislation in order to do this.

As such, Advice NI will carry out reasonable adjustments and special considerations in line with the awarding organisation requirements and relevant legislation. Please speak to your tutor if you have any questions.

A copy of the reasonable adjustment and special considerations policy is included in this pack.

Submissions and re-submissions

Work submissions are usually a requirement of accredited courses. These enable your tutor/ assessor to assess your work and make a decision on your understanding and competency in the chosen area.

In most circumstances, submissions of work will be made on our Learning Management System (LMS), [Advice NI E-Learning Online](#) and feedback will be returned to you in the same way. You will be given an induction and shown how to do this if you register on a course that requires it.

However, for some of our blended and live online courses, submissions via email may be necessary. Email submissions should be sent to submissions@adviceni.net on or before the submission deadline given by your tutor. If you feel you will have difficulty with a submission, you should speak to your tutor as soon as possible.

Late submissions will require an extension request. If this is necessary, you should contact your tutor for an extension request form. A copy of this form is also available in the appendices of this handbook or in your course area on the LMS.

If additional evidence is required, you may be asked to re-submit your work with additions or updates. The number of re-submissions allowed will be limited, so please speak with your tutor if you are unsure of what is expected from you or if you require any assistance.

Your tutor will explain to you at each individual course how, and when, you should submit.

Malpractice and Maladministration

Malpractice is deemed to be a deliberate action or practice which compromises, or attempts to compromise, the integrity of assessment and the validity of results or certificates.

Maladministration is where the management or administration of records, or indeed the conduct of delivery, results in persistent or widespread errors. Maladministration undermines the integrity of the internal assessment process and the integrity or validity of a regulated qualification.

Advice NI take both malpractice and maladministration very seriously, and would like to hear from you if you have any concerns.

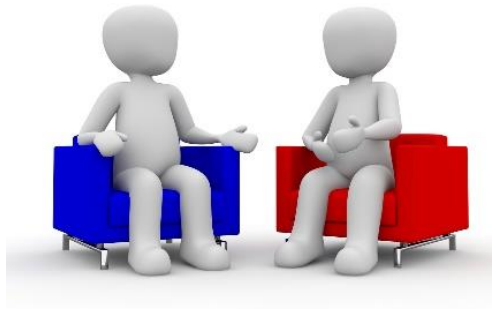
[A copy of the Malpractice policy can be found in this pack.](#)

Complaints

Advice NI want your learning experience to be a positive one, however it is recognised that there are times when difficulties can occur and that you may have a concern or issue regarding our training. If this is the case, we would like to hear from you and have the opportunity to resolve any problems.

We hope that most issues can be resolved informally, so concerns should be raised with your tutor initially. If your issue is unresolved, if you feel the matter warrants a formal complaint, or you would like to speak to someone else, please feel free to contact training@adviceni.net or refer to our formal complaints procedure.

A copy of the complaints procedure is included in this pack.



Appeals Procedure

If you disagree with an assessment decision, you have the right to appeal this. Initially you should contact your tutor/ assessor if you would like to discuss the decision. If necessary, you can lodge an appeal in accordance with our appeals procedure.

A copy of the appeals procedure is included in this pack.

6. Protecting you and your information

Health, Safety and Risk Assessment

Advice NI recognises the importance of Health and Safety standards and operates a health and safety policy in the workplace, and our training facility.

Your course tutor will be responsible for ensuring that any external venues have the appropriate health and safety policies in place before you attend a course.

Advice NI will do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent personal injury and damage to property, and to protect everyone from foreseeable hazards, including the public, in so far as they come into contact with the organisation.

A copy of our Health and Safety policy is included in this pack.

As the majority of our courses are currently online, Advice NI also take online and internet safety, and risk very seriously. All of our staff have received training in online risk and safety, and we work hard to protect our remote learners.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your online safety in relation to learning with us, please contact training@adviceni.net

GDPR Privacy Notice and Data Retention

Advice NI is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, which came into force on 1 March 2000.

We will therefore follow procedures which aim to ensure that anyone who has access to any personal data held by, or on behalf of, Advice NI are fully aware of and abide by the legislative requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Advice NI is committed to a policy of protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to the processing of their personal data.

Advice NI take our responsibilities to the protection of data very seriously. The personal information of learners is as important to us, as that of our staff and advice clients.

Information retained in respect of learning will be documents such as registration forms, learner work and certification results. We will only retain what is completely necessary, and only for the period that is required by our Awarding Organisations.

Learner data is usually retained for five years from certification. During this time our learners have the right to know, or access all the personal data held about them.

When the retention period ends, we will dispose of your personal data in a safe, compliant and confidential manner.

For more information on how we use your data please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

A copy of the data retention policy is included in this pack.

7. Appendices: Policy and Procedure documents



Advice NI

Assessment Centre Equal Opportunities Policy

1. POLICY

Advice NI is committed to providing equal opportunities as an employer and in the provision of services. This commitment is carried over into activities within Advice NI and particularly in relation to candidates for accredited training. This document relates to the commitment of Advice NI to EO in its role as an approved Assessment Centre and should be read in conjunction with the IV sampling strategy, the assessor practice agreement and the appeals procedure.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that all individuals, with whom Advice NI has a relationship, receive equal treatment regardless of gender, sexual orientation, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status, family circumstances, socio-economic background, disability or religious or political beliefs.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Communication of Policy

Advice NI will ensure that its equal opportunities policy is communicated to all those involved in the assessment process, including the Awarding Body, External Verifiers (EVs), Internal Verifiers, Assessors and all candidates. The roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and verification team across all assessment sites will be clearly defined, allocated and understood. The implementation of the policy will be monitored through the requirements outlined in the Practice Agreement. (1.1.1, 1.1.3 - Approved Centre Requirements)

Advice NI will pay due regard to the policy in any promotional material for accredited qualifications and all other courses provided by Advice NI.

2.2 OWNERSHIP AND LOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Advice NI will ensure, through external verification, internal verification, and assessor meetings that the equal opportunities policy is adhered to. All assessors and internal verifiers will have to the equal opportunities policy as part of their Practice Agreement at their induction and annually thereafter. (1.1.2, 1.1.3 – Approved Centre Requirements)

Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and taking corrective action from its outcomes to maintain and improve it rests with Advice NI.

Advice NI will monitor application of the policy and ensure there is parity of treatment of candidates with regard to entry selection, participation, access to assessment and success.

Advice NI will strive to ensure that no unfair discrimination is applied in considering candidates for registration, and that no irrelevant information is brought to bear by assessors whilst assessing candidates. Assessors will match candidate development needs against the requirements of the Qualification and will establish an agreed assessment plan. (2.1.2 – Approved Assessment Centre Requirements) Particular

assessment requirements of candidates will be identified and met where possible. (2.1.4 – Approved Centre Requirements)

Any person who believes that they are being discriminated against should raise the matter through the appropriate channels. The Complaints/Appeals procedure will be communicated to candidates at their initial meeting with their assessor and they will be provided with a written copy. A candidate complaint regarding assessors/IVs should go through the internal appeals/complaints procedure. If the candidate is still not satisfied then the complaint should go through to the Awarding Body appeals/complaints procedure. (2.1.5 – Approved Centre Requirements)

2.3 STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Advice NI will provide training for IV's and assessors on the implementation of its equal opportunities policy. Equal Opportunities good practice will be covered annually in a workshop and IV's and assessors will receive a copy of the document. Information on qualification uptake and progress will be distributed/shared at each IV and assessor meeting (held 4 times per year in Derry and 4 times in Belfast) and participants will have an opportunity to discuss effective implementation. Any recommendations will be addressed accordingly. (3.2.3 – Approved Centre Requirements, Practice Agreement & IV strategy)

2.4 Centre training and development

Advice NI will circulate information received from the awarding body on any particular assessment requirements identified. Examples of candidates who may have particular assessment requirements are candidates with:

- dyslexia,
- English as a foreign language,
- learning difficulties,
- physical disabilities (sight, hearing, mobility, manual skills, speech),
- mental health difficulties,
- personal care difficulties,
- fatigue,
- pain,
- any other particular assessment requirements.

Advice NI will seek guidance and support from the awarding body and the EV to ensure access to the Qualification and at the same time ensuring fair assessment.

3. Procedures for equal opportunities monitoring.(3.1.4 – Approved Centre Requirements)

Advice NI through its registration procedure, databases and centre profiling information will monitor the following data on an annual basis.

- Gender: Male and Female;
- Ethnic Origin: White – UK/Irish/Welsh/ or White – European or White – Other or Black Caribbean or Black African or Black other or Indian or Bangladeshi or Pakistani or Chinese or any other ethnic group;
- Disability, does the candidate consider themselves disabled: Yes or No
- Geographical location

There are general sections for the candidate to provide brief details of disability and any special requirements for assessment that they believe they have. This is included in the Advice NI booking form and monitoring forms.

Advice NI has updated its registration form and assessment planning process in line with the Awarding Body (Also note, similar EO monitoring requirements are provided to the funder of this project). The data currently monitored incorporates the data requirements from OCNNI, including the following equal opportunities data:

- Gender: Male and Female;
- Ethnic Origin:

White –British/Irish/European/Other

Black – British/Caribbean/African/Other

Asian – British/Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi

Chinese – British/Other

Arabic – British/Other

Mixed – White - Black/Asian, Black-Asian, Any other mixed background

- Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Y/N - If yes please provide details
- Do you have a need for particular assessment requirements? Y/N - If yes please provide details

Advice NI keeps this data on hard copy and on the database. We are able to monitor the equal opportunities data (gender, ethnicity and particular assessment requirements) against the following criteria:

- Candidate
- Location
- Qualification type (Full/Units)
- Candidate registration date
- Candidate certification date
- Age
- Status of candidate (certificated/active/lapsed¹/withdrawn²)

The data is kept with due regard to the General Data Protection Regulations

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation>

A lapsed candidate is a candidate who is still registered but the award they are registered on is past its certificate end date. Hence the candidate cannot complete on this award

Advice NI

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy

This document sets out the Advice NI policy for reasonable adjustments and special considerations on accredited training programmes. Reasonable adjustments and special considerations practice will be open and consistent with the code of practice and regulations laid down by the relevant awarding body (City & Guilds, ProQual, and OCNNI).

Definitions:

a. Definition of reasonable adjustments:

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification, courses and units. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- changing usual assessment arrangements: for example, allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a British Sign Language interpreter or a reader
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner
- changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work. Advice NI are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration. Adjustments which involve excessive/unreasonable cost or timeframes or that could affect security/integrity may not be considered reasonable. (Source: Adapted from OCNNI)

b. Definition of special considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason why the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who had temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control

and which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, nor should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his/her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his/her potential ability. Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner. (Source: Adapted from OCNNI)

Commitment

Advice NI is committed to ensuring that the rights of individual learners to access qualifications and assessment in a way most appropriate to their individual needs are upheld and comply with relevant legislation to do so.

Advice NI has an 'Access to Fair Assessment' policy and 'Equal Opportunities' policy in operation.

Advice NI will carry out reasonable adjustments and special considerations in line with the awarding body requirements and relevant legislation. These will be determined on a case-by-case basis to determine if the adjustments are necessary, if they will be effective and if they are reasonable. Advice NI will work with the individual and relevant awarding body to determine this and meet needs.

For accredited training Advice NI will follow the relevant awarding bodies policy for reasonable adjustments and special considerations:

OCNNI policy available in the Centre Handbook, downloadable at: <https://www.ocnni.org.uk/blog/ocn-ni-centre-handbook/>

Putting this policy into practice

To put this policy into practice successfully Advice NI will:

- issue a copy of this policy to all staff, trainers and verifiers and ensure they are familiar with it
- make it readily available to learners upon request
- monitor and review the effectiveness of the policy and make improvements where appropriate.

Identifying learner needs and appropriate adjustments:

As part of the booking and induction process all learners will be asked if they have any learning support needs that may require additional mechanisms to be put in place. This will enable Advice NI to ensure learners select courses or course formats suitable to their needs. It will enable any reasonable adjustments to be put in place for the learner as soon as is practicable.

All learners will be made aware of Advice NI's reasonable adjustment and special consideration policy in the induction process and can request at any time for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration to be made.

Tutors/Assessors and/or Internal Verifiers can identify learners who may benefit from a reasonable adjustment and offer this to learners.

Advice NI will liaise with learners to determine how their needs could be best met and identify appropriate adjustments in line with awarding body guidelines.

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments:

Awarding Body Permission:

Advice NI will complete the required reasonable adjustment awarding body documentation in conjunction with learner and the Head of Training and send to the awarding body for approval. Advice NI will identify and obtain supporting evidence to the awarding body where necessary.

IV Notification:

In cases where permission is not required from the awarding body, Advice NI will implement the adjustment and notify the IV of adjustments implemented.

Meeting responsibilities:

Reasonable adjustments will be based on learner needs and on what is 'reasonable' for Advice NI. They may include:

- Changes to assessment conditions e.g. extra time, supervised rest breaks, change in the organisation of the assessment room.
- Use of mechanical, electrical and technological aids for assessments e.g. assistive technologies such as screen reading, use of bilingual or translation dictionaries.
- Modifications to the presentation of assessment materials e.g. enlarged print, braille, colour contrasts, BSL, audio format
- Alternative ways of presenting learner responses to assessments e.g. ICT, recording responses, BSL, Braille.
- Use of access facilitators for assessments e.g. reader, scribe, BSL/English interpreter, prompter, practical assistant, transcriber.

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Records:

A record of all reasonable adjustment or special consideration requests and implementations will be kept on file at Advice NI. A copy of documentation and supporting evidence will be retained. Advice NI will follow the awarding body policy and procedures with regard to recording reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Appeals:

All learners must be informed of the Advice NI appeals procedure at the beginning of the programme. Learners can appeal decisions regarding reasonable adjustments and special considerations taken by the centre and/or awarding body.

Advice NI Complaints Procedure

Advice NI is committed to providing a high standard of service and to continuously improving this service. However, we recognise that there may be times when we will not live up to your expectations or our promises. When this happens we ask you to tell us so that we can deal speedily with the problem.

Your comments are important. Not only do they allow us to improve our individual service to you, they also help us to enhance our services in general.

Advice NI aims to provide high quality services to the public, our members and other agencies and individuals in the voluntary and community sector.

If you are unhappy about any of our services, we undertake to deal quickly and effectively with the matter. Firstly, we suggest that you contact the member of staff concerned/member of staff responsible for area of concern to see if the problem can be resolved to your satisfaction. Advice NI will do everything they can to put things right including reviewing procedures to stop problems happening again.

If you are not happy with the response, or if you are not sure which member of staff to contact, please follow the steps outlined below:

- All complaints should be made to the Chief Executive (or designated person in their absence) in writing by letter or email. (See below for Advice NI contact details). This will be acknowledged within three working days.
- The Chief Executive (or designated person in their absence) will investigate the issues raised and let you have Advice NI's response within ten working days. Should the investigation require further time, an acknowledgement letter will be sent to you in the first instance, followed by a full response.
- If you do not feel that the Chief Executive or designated person's response is acceptable, you have the right to ask for your complaint to be referred to Advice NI's Staffing & Resources Committee. You will be advised of the date the committee meets and you may attend the meeting to make representation. You may also bring someone with you if you wish for personal support.
- You will be advised of the committee's decision within five working days of its meeting.
- Committee's decision is final.

Forestview
Purdy's Lane
Newtownbreda
Belfast, BT8 4AR
N. Ireland
Email: info@adviceni.net

Advice NI

Qualification Appeals Procedure

Learners are made aware of their right to appeal before they are assessed.

Learners are advised of the assessment decision, wherever possible, at the time of assessment.

Learners wishing to lodge an appeal against the assessment decision must in the first instance raise any grievance with their assessor who should establish if formal grievance procedures are being invoked. The assessor should try to resolve the problem and should reply to the learner within 5 working days.

Learners wishing to appeal must lodge their appeal with the Internal Verifier, or the person responsible to the Awarding Bodies for the work of the centre, within 20 days of the learner being notified of the assessment decision.

If the learner is not satisfied with the reply or who has not received a reply within 5 working days may ask the assessor to raise the matter with the internal verifier or person responsible to the Awarding Body for the work of the centre within 20 days of the learner being notified of the assessment decision.

It is then the responsibility of the Internal Verifier to set a date for the appeal to be considered by an appeals panel. At this stage the Internal Verifier attempts to find a solution with the learner and assessor, this may take the form of another assessment or reconsideration of the evidence provided by the learner and assessor.

If the learner is not satisfied at this stage the Internal Verifier must notify the external verifier that an appeal has been lodged and give details of how it will be heard.

The appeals panel meets to consider the appeal within 20 working days of the Internal Verifier receiving the appeal.

The panel must ensure that it has full accounts from all parties involved in the assessment.

No-one involved in the original assessment is involved on this panel.

This appeals panel is independent - this may mean inviting another assessor or verifier to sit on this panel.

Advice NI Malpractice Procedure

Advice NI takes seriously the issue of malpractice on the part of learners, trainers, and any other individuals involved in the provision of learning and training programmes.

Examples of learner malpractice may include:

- Misuse of assessment/examination material
- Bringing unauthorised material into an assessment/examination environment
- Obtaining or passing on assessment/exam related information through talking or passing notes
- Copying from another learner
- Disruptive behaviour during the assessment/examination
- Impersonation - pretending to be someone else, or arranging for someone else to undertake the assessment/examination in your place
- Breaching security of assessment/examination materials
- Failing to follow instructions provided by an assessor/invigilator
- Changing result statements or certificates
- Undermining the integrity of the assessment/examination

Examples of trainer malpractice may include:

- Failure to keep assessment/examination materials secure
- Moving the time or date of the assessment/examination without prior agreement of those concerned
- Failure to supervise the assessment/examination properly
- Helping learners to answer questions during the examination

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Malpractice

Allegations of malpractice should be reported to Advice NI at the earliest possible opportunity.

If Advice NI discovers or is made aware of alleged malpractice, it will conduct a full investigation. Where appropriate any relevant commissioning organisation will also be notified.

If an anonymous report of malpractice is made, it will only be investigated if sufficient evidence is provided, or if it is serious enough to warrant investigation on the claim alone.

Individual/s being investigated for alleged malpractice will be informed of this in writing at the earliest possible opportunity. This notification should detail the nature of the malpractice for which they are being investigated and the possible consequences they may face should they be found guilty.

Any individual accused of malpractice must be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them.

It is the responsibility of Advice NI to provide a written report. The report must contain, where appropriate:

- Details of all the facts, details of any circumstances, and details of the investigation carried out.
- Written statement(s) from the person under investigation.
- Written statement(s) from all other persons involved.
- Details of any mitigating circumstances.
- Details of the conclusions as to whether and what malpractice is deemed to have taken place.

Advice NI will appoint an independent advisor to;

- review the report
- decide whether the correct procedures have been adhered to in conducting the investigation
- ensure that the individual accused of malpractice has had a fair chance to explain themselves
- review the conclusions of the report and agree/disagree with the findings
- discuss and agree appropriate penalties/actions

Each case will be considered on an individual basis dependant on all the information given.

Advice NI will take action/impose penalties in order to:

- Prevent the individual/s from gaining an unfair advantage.
- Maintain the integrity of the assessment/examination and the confidence in the public of the awarding procedures.
- Deter any others from attempting to do the same in the future.

Advice NI will decide the appropriate actions to take in relation to individuals found guilty of malpractice. The sanction/penalty imposed will reflect the severity of the malpractice. The following sanctions may be imposed on:

- An official warning
- Withdrawal of contract (in the case of associates/trainers/verifiers etc.)
- Loss of part of the marks gained for the assessment/examination
- Loss of all the marks gained for the assessment/examination
- Disqualification from the whole qualification
- Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series

If necessary, Advice NI may also report the case to other Awarding Bodies and the police.

Advice NI

Health and Safety General Policy Statement

Health and Safety at work (NI) order 1978

1. The Management of ADVICE NI regards the promotion of health and safety measures as a mutual objective for Management and employees at all levels.
2. It is therefore ADVICE NI's policy to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent personal injury and damage to property, and to protect everyone from foreseeable work hazards, including the public in so far as they come into contact with the organisation.
3. ADVICE NI has a responsibility to:
 - (a) provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions taking account of any statutory requirements;
 - (b) provide training and instruction to enable employees to perform their work safely and efficiently;
 - (c) make available all necessary safety devices and protective equipment and to supervise their use.
 - (d) maintain a constant and continuing interest in health and safety matters applicable to ADVICE NI's activities, in particular, by consulting and involving employees (or their representatives) wherever possible.
4. Employees have a duty to co-operate in the operation of this policy by:
 - (a) working safely and efficiently;
 - (b) using the protective equipment provided, and by meeting statutory obligations;
 - (c) reporting incidents that have led, or may lead, to injury or damages;
 - (d) adhering to ADVICENI's procedures (jointly agreed on their behalf) for securing a safe workplace;
 - (e) assisting in the investigation of accidents with the objective of introducing measures to prevent a recurrence.
 - (f) ensuring electrical equipment is turned off/placed on night mode each working day and fire regulations adhered to.

Advice NI

Data Protection Policy

Definitions

- GDPR means the General Data Protection Regulation.
- Responsible Person means Advice NI's Data Protection Officer, who at present is James McCann
- Information Assets register means a register of all systems or contexts in which personal data is processed by Advice NI

1. Data protection principles

Advice NI is committed to processing data in accordance with its responsibilities under the GDPR.

Article 5 of the GDPR requires that personal data shall be:

- a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals;
- b) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes;
- c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;
- d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay;
- e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals; and
- f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures."

2. General Provisions

- a) This policy applies to all personal data processed by Advice NI.
- b) The Responsible Person shall take responsibility for Advice NI's ongoing compliance with this policy.
- c) This policy shall be reviewed at least annually.
- d) Advice NI shall register with the Information Commissioner's Office as an organisation that processes personal data.

3. Lawful, fair and transparent processing

- a) To ensure its processing of data is lawful, fair and transparent, Advice NI shall maintain an Information Assets Register.
- b) The Information Assets Register shall be reviewed at least annually.
- c) Individuals have the right to access their personal data and any such requests made to Advice NI shall be dealt with in a timely manner.

4. Lawful purposes

- a) All data processed by the charity must be done on one of the following lawful bases:
 - i) Consent
 - ii) Contract
 - iii) Legal obligation,
 - iv) Vital interests,
 - v) Public task, or;
 - vi) Legitimate interests
- b) Advice NI shall note the appropriate lawful basis within its Information Assets Register.
- c) Where consent is relied upon as a lawful basis for processing data, evidence of opt-in consent shall be kept with the personal data.
- d) Where communications are sent to individuals based on their consent, the option for the individual to revoke their consent should be clearly available and systems should be in place to ensure such revocation is reflected accurately in Advice NI's systems.

5. **Data minimisation**

Advice NI shall ensure that personal data are adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed.

6. **Accuracy**

- a) Advice NI shall take reasonable steps to ensure personal data is accurate.
- b) Where necessary for the lawful basis on which data is processed, steps shall be put in place to ensure that personal data is kept up to date.

7. **Archiving / removal**

- a) To ensure that personal data is kept for no longer than necessary, Advice NI shall put in place an archiving policy for each area in which personal data is processed and review this process annually.
- b) The archiving policy shall consider what data should/must be retained, for how long, and why.

8. **Security**

- a) Advice NI shall ensure that personal data is stored securely using modern software that is kept-up-to-date.
- b) Access to personal data shall be limited to personnel who need access and appropriate security should be in place to avoid unauthorised sharing of information.
- c) When personal data is deleted this should be done safely such that the data is irrecoverable.
- d) Appropriate back-up and disaster recovery solutions shall be in place.

9. **Breach**

In the event of a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data, the Charity shall promptly assess the risk to people's rights and freedoms and if appropriate report this breach to the ICO (more information on the ICO website).

Advice NI

Document Retention Policy

“Personal data shall be kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed.” – Article 5(1) (e) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Advice NI is obliged as an organisation to protect the integrity and confidentiality of personal data held by us with regard to our clients and staff, and obligation which also extends to individual staff. You must avoid unlawful processing and/or disclosure of data whether it is oral, printed, hand-written, computer based or microfiche.

This policy has been written to provide the necessary information to Advice NI staff, detailing their duties pursuant to the Storage Limitation principle under article 5 GDPR, and Record Retention procedures. This policy has also been written to set out the standards expected by Advice NI staff in relation to the processing of Personal Data and safeguarding individuals “rights and freedoms” under article 24 GDPR.

Destruction and Disposal

To remain compliant with GDPR and DPA (2018), all information, irrespective of its format, destroyed from any Advice NI location must not expose the identity of our employees, clients and customers. Hard copies of Advice NI documents must be destroyed by shredding after the retention date specified in the Data Retention Schedule.

The procedure for the destruction of Confidential or Sensitive Waste on electronic media such as tape, disk, cassette/cartridge, hard drives, CD-ROM, DVD, USB pens and ZIP drive is as follows:

- Media that are being destroyed because they are showing signs of damage or are obsolete should be physically destroyed by being cut into pieces or other ways prior to disposal
- Where disks, tapes, DVD, USB, or CD ROM are being used to supply data to third parties they should, at the very least, be reformatted before the files are saved on to it. The process of saving files to the disk may overwrite areas of the disk previously used, but this is no guarantee of preventing retrieval of previously stored files. The most effective way to ensure that media are cleaned of all previous data is to use a utility package to perform a "secure wipe"
- Destruction of back-up copies of such data also needs to be dealt with
- Online copies must be deleted or destroyed in a manner that they are no longer retained in a retrievable format.

Suspension of Record Disposal in Event of Litigation or Claims

In the event Advice NI is served with any notice or request for documents or any employee becomes aware of a governmental investigation or audit concerning Advice NI or the commencement of any litigation against or concerning Advice NI, such employee shall inform the Chief Executive of Advice NI and any further disposal of documents shall be suspended until such time as the Chief Executive, with the advice of counsel, determines otherwise. The Chief Executive shall take such steps as is necessary to promptly inform all staff of any suspension in the further disposal of documents.

Data Retention / Security

Advice NI operates a 'Clear-Desk' policy which means at the end of each day all personal data on desks is to be cleared and put away in lockable cabinets/cupboards. The Data Retention / Security procedures table below details for how long data should be retained and the associated security procedures for storing data.

LEARNER EXTENSION REQUEST FORM

Learner Registration Number/ ULN		AWARDING ORGANISATION	
<p><i>Please fully complete the form below if you wish to request an extension for your chosen course/ assignment. EXTENSION REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE THE EXPECTED HAND IN DATE OF YOUR COURSE/ ASSIGNMENT. This form should be returned to your course tutor with any attached documents that you feel will support your request. Your tutor will get back to you as soon as possible.</i></p> <p style="color: green; text-align: center;">Green sections for tutor use only</p>			
SURNAME		FIRST NAME(S)	
CURRENT EXPECTED HAND IN DATE			POST CODE
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	MOBILE:	EMAIL:
QUALIFICATION TITLE /LEVEL			
REQUESTED HAND IN DATE/ EXTENSION PERIOD DETAILS OF ASSIGNMENT REQUIRING AN EXTENSION			
PLEASE STATE BELOW THE REASONS FOR AN EXTENSION REQUEST			
LEARNER SIGNATURE			
DATE			
EXTENSION GRANTED/ DECLINED? DECISION MAKER NAME (PRINT)			
DECISION DATE/ ADDITIONAL NOTES			

Advice NI

Forestview,
Purdy's Lane
Newtownbreda
Belfast, BT8 4AR
N. Ireland
Tel: +44(0)28 9064 5919