



PART OF **nocn** GROUP

# QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

## NOCN Level 4 Certificate in Professional Development (Youth Work)

**Qualification No: 610/1714/0**

**Operational Start Date: January 2023**

**Version: 1.2 April 2025**

### **To know more about NOCN:**

- Visit the NOCN website: [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)
- Call the Customer Service Team: **0300 999 1177**

## **Introduction**

NOCN is a market-leading awarding organisation that has been providing qualifications for a wide range of Centres, including FE colleges and training providers, for 30 years both in the UK and internationally.

We work with Centres to deliver a high quality and flexible service for learners to underpin our passionate belief in the power of education and its impact on communities and individuals.

We offer all the advantages of being with a national awarding organisation with a diverse portfolio of qualifications, alongside providing a personalised, bespoke, service to our Centres and learners.

As an accredited Leader in Diversity, we are proud of our reputation as a provider of fully accessible, trusted, and flexible qualifications.

## **About NOCN Group**

NOCN is part of NOCN Group, a progressive educational charity whose core aims are to help learners reach their potential and organisations thrive. The group includes business units specialising in regulated UK and international qualifications, end point assessment, endorsed programmes and assured short courses, Smart job cards, assessment services, consultancy, and research.

NOCN Group shares a joint purpose to offer learners, training providers, employers, and FE Colleges a fully integrated range of learning and skills development products and services.

Information about all our courses and qualifications is available from our website:

[www.nocn.org.uk/](http://www.nocn.org.uk/)

## Qualification at a Glance

Title	Size
<p>NOCN Level 4 Certificate in Professional Development (Youth Work)</p>	<p>GLH – 90 hours</p> <p>TQT – 150 hours</p> <p>Credit - 15</p>
Purpose	Target Audience
<p>The purpose of this qualification is to equip learners with the knowledge and understanding to progress to further specialist areas related to Youth Work.</p>	<p>This Level 4 qualification is primarily for learners aged 19 and above, who are already engaged in Youth Work, or working alongside young-people through multi-agency partnership, such as Social Work, Police, Emergency Services, Teachers or those within Youth Justice, and who want to continue their education and develop their knowledge/competencies and understanding of their role. This certificate is not a JNC recognised qualification and therefore would not, in isolation, qualify the holder to work as a Professional Youth Worker.</p>
Content Overview	Entry Requirements
<p>This Level 4 qualification provides learners with a range of knowledge and skills. Learners will also develop an understanding of specialist areas for progressing in the Youth Work, or associated industry.</p>	<p>Learners must be aged 19 years or over. Additionally, Learners must hold either the Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Youth Work or a Level 3 qualification in their associated specialist area.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Learners hold a grade 4 or above in GCSE English Language, or equivalent qualification.</p>

Assessment	Additional Resources
<p>There are a variety of assessment methods used in this qualification. Please see each unit for information on how it must be assessed.</p>	<p>Supporting resources are available for this qualification in the form of scope of training for each unit.</p>

## Summary of changes:

This section summarises the changes to the qualification specification since the last version (version 1.0 November 2022).

Version	Publication Date	Summary of Amendments
1.0	November 2022	Original version of document.
1.1	August 2024	<p><b>Addition of optional units.</b></p> <p><b>Optional Units include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Environmental Youth Work: Climate Change (page 8)</b></li> <li>• <b>Leading Safeguarding in the Youth, Community and Further Education and Training Sectors: Part 1 (page 8)</b></li> <li>• <b>Leading Safeguarding in the Youth, Community and Further Education and Training Sectors: Part 2 (page 8)</b></li> <li>• <b>Working with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller young people (page 9)</b></li> <li>• <b>Youth Work Supervision (page 11)</b></li> </ul>
1.2	April 2025	<p><b>Addition of optional units.</b></p> <p><b>Optional units include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Building Curiosity For All: Informal STEM in Youth Work (page 10)</b></li> <li>• <b>Youth Work and Social Action (page 10)</b></li> </ul>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
About NOCN Group.....	2
Qualification at a Glance .....	3
Summary of changes:.....	4
1. Overview of Qualification .....	6
Entry Requirements .....	6
Progression Routes.....	7
2. Qualification Details .....	7
2.1. Qualification Structure .....	7
2.2. Total Qualification Time (TQT).....	10
2.3. Assessment and Evidence .....	12
2.4. Fair and Equitable Assessment .....	13
2.5. Learners with Particular Requirements .....	13
2.6. Recognised Prior Learning .....	13
2.7. Assessment and Evidence for the Components .....	14
3. Centre Information.....	15
3.1. Required Resources for Delivering the Qualification.....	15
3.2. Offering the Qualification .....	17
4. Component Information .....	18

## 1. Overview of Qualification

This qualification is vocationally based and as such, offers the opportunity for learners to demonstrate an achievement of practical skills, understanding and knowledge in different specialist areas related to Youth Work. It is suitable for those engaged in Youth Work directly, or those engaged with young people through multi-agency collaboration. This can include Social Workers, Police Officers, Emergency Services, Teachers, or those working within Youth Justice.

The qualification will:

- a) Support a role in the workplace. This qualification was written in collaboration with the National Youth Agency (NYA) and Education Training Standards (ETS) and is therefore aimed at those who are working in Youth Work directly, or an associated professional area, who wish to gain specialist knowledge related to the field.
- b) Prepare learners to progress to a qualification in the same subject area but at a higher level or requiring more specific knowledge, skills and understanding.
- c) Prepare learners to progress to a qualification in another subject area. This is likely to be a related subject area.

This qualification is for:

Learners who wish to develop the specialist skills and knowledge required for employment as a Youth Worker.

This qualification has been developed in collaboration with the National Youth Agency (NYA) and Education Training Standards (ETS) for individuals working in a Youth Work environment. The NYA and ETS are responsible for the development and endorsement of Youth Work qualifications in England and Wales based on the National Occupational Standards in partnership with Awarding Organisations.

This Certificate is not a JNC recognised Youth Work qualification and therefore would not on its own, qualify the holder to work as a professional Youth Worker.

### Entry Requirements

Learners must hold either the Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Youth Work or a Level 3 qualification in their specialist discipline area.

It is also recommended that the learner holds at least a grade 4 or above in GCSE English Language or Level 2 equivalent.

Learners must be able to demonstrate the requirements of the qualification and have access to required assessment opportunities and relevant resources. Therefore, Learners must be engaged in Youth Work activity. Please refer to specific assessment requirements on individual components for more information.

Centres should undertake initial assessment activities with learners to ensure this is an appropriate qualification and that they can achieve the level they will be studying before enrolling them onto a programme of learning.

This qualification is available to learners aged **19** years or over at the time of commencing the qualification.

## Progression Routes

Achievement of this qualification confirms the learner has gained the knowledge and skills required to:

- Progress into specialist/further youth engagement within their own role.
- Enhance current youth work skills within the Youth Work sector.
- Progress into further study, at a higher level within Youth Work or associated specialist area.

## 2. Qualification Details

### 2.1. Qualification Structure

The NOCN Level 4 Certificate in Professional Development (Youth Work) is a 15-credit qualification with a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 150 hours, including 90 Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Learners **must** achieve 5 credits from the mandatory components and 10 credits from the optional components. A minimum of 10 credits across both mandatory and optional components must be at Level 4.

Unit	M/O	Level	Ofqual Unit Ref	Credits	GLH	Assessment
<b>Mandatory Unit</b>						
Introduction to Professional Development (Youth Work)	M	4	A/650/4660	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
<b>Optional Units</b>						
Conflict Transformation and Trauma Informed Practice in Youth Work	O	4	D/650/4661	5	45	Portfolio of Evidence

Detached Youth Work	O	4	F/650/4662	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Digital Youth Work	O	4	H/650/4663	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Environmental Youth Work: Climate Change	O	4	L/651/2775	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Leadership and Management in Youth Work	O	4	J/650/4664	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Leading Safeguarding in the Youth, Community and Further Education and Training Sectors: Part 1	O	4	J/651/2773	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Leading Safeguarding in the Youth, Community and Further Education and Training Sectors: Part 2	O	4	K/651/2774	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Mental Health and Wellbeing in Youth Work	O	4	K/650/4665	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Race and Racism and its Relationship to Youth Work	O	4	L/650/4666	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Strength-Based Approaches to Youth Work Practice	O	4	M/650/4667	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Working with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller young people.	O	4	H/651/2772	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and Disability	O	4	R/650/4668	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence

Youth Work and Faith	O	4	T/650/4669	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and LGBTQ+	O	4	D/650/4670	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and Local Strategy, Local Youth Partnerships and Related Structures	O	4	F/650/4671	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and Social Pedagogy in Children's Social Care	O	4	H/650/4672	5	50	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and Social Work	O	4	J/650/4673	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and Youth Justice	O	4	K/650/4674	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work Approaches to Violence, Gangs and Exploitation	O	4	L/650/4675	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work in Formal Education	O	4	M/650/4676	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work Approaches to Working in the Secure Estate	O	4	R/650/4677	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work, Participation and Democracy	O	4	T/650/4678	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work Supervision	O	4	F/651/2771	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence

Therapeutic Youth Work - Terminology, Methods, and Theory	O	5	Y/650/4679	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Therapeutic Youth Work in Practice	O	5	F/650/4680	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Exploring Gendered Worlds	O	5	H/650/4681	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Opening Up Gendered Worlds	O	5	J/650/4682	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Building Curiosity For All: Informal STEM in Youth Work	O	4	R/651/5846	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence
Youth Work and Social Action	O	4	M/651/5845	5	30	Portfolio of Evidence

## 2.2. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Through consultation with users, TQT has been agreed by considering the total number of learning hours required for the average learner to achieve these qualifications.

TQT is split into two areas:

Area	Example of activities
<p><b>1. Guided Learning Hours (GLH):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learning activity under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training</li> <li>includes the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher.</li> <li>Work-based learning supervised by a teacher.</li> <li>Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teach in real time.</li> <li>E-learning supervised by a teacher in real time.</li> <li>All forms of assessment which take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of an appropriate provider of training.</li> <li>Exam time</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Other Learning Hours (OLH):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an estimate of the number of hours a learner will spend, as directed by (but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of) a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ preparatory work</li> <li>○ self-study</li> <li>○ any other form of education or training, including assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent and unsupervised research / learning</li> <li>• Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience</li> <li>• Unsupervised e-learning</li> <li>• Unsupervised e-assessment</li> <li>• Unsupervised coursework</li> <li>• Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar</li> <li>• Unsupervised work-based learning</li> </ul>
---	---

### 2.3. Assessment and Evidence

The qualification consists of internally set and internally assessed units.

#### Internal assessment (internally set and internally assessed)

Internal assessment activity must ensure evidence of achievement against **all** the requirements specified within each component.

For assessments that are internally set, the IQA will need to ensure pre-verification of assessment tasks take place prior to its use to ensure that it is an appropriate assessment tool, that it is inclusive to learners of all needs, that it meets the principles of assessment and does not hinder learner attainment of the NOCN assessment evidence requirements.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the Internal Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)

Centres must ensure that knowledge-based learning is at the correct level for the qualification.

Assessment activities must be robust in that the assessment decisions are made based on evidence, which is valid, authentic, current, sufficient, and reliable regarding the assessment taking place:

- Valid** The validity of an assessment decision is ensuring that the right thing has been assessed in the right way to deliver an accurate assessment result.
- Authentic** The assessment process must ensure that all evidence of achievement is authentic in that it has been created solely by the learner (unless otherwise required) and has not been plagiarised. If work were not authentic, it would undermine the entire the assessment process and overall qualification system.
- Current** The assessment process must ensure that the evidence used to claim qualification or unit achievement reflects current industry/qualification practice. This can be done by ensuring that the evidence is relevant at the time of the assessment as well as ensuring that the assessor has used the most-up-date assessment documentation.
- Sufficient** The Assessor must review assessment evidence to judge whether the learner has generated enough evidence at the right level to confidently cover all relevant learning outcome or assessment criteria requirements. The Assessor must also ensure their records of the assessment are complete, legible, and accurate.
- Reliable** The Assessor must ensure that they are making reliable and consistent assessment decisions across their learners and with other Assessors within the Centre. Assessment decisions must also be consistent over time and across academic/programme cycles. This can be supported by attending standardisation activities.

## 2.4. Fair and Equitable Assessment

Assessment must be designed to be accessible and inclusive, and the assessment methodology must be appropriate for individual assessment, giving due consideration to any assessment requirements attached to individual components.

## 2.5. Learners with Particular Requirements

If you are a NOCN Recognised Centre and have learners with particular requirements, please see the **NOCN Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedure** found on the NOCN website at [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)

This policy gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the assessment criteria.

The NOCN Centre Approval process requires the Centre to hold policy statements on Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Disability Discrimination, which will be reviewed by NOCN.

Please refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further details.

## 2.6. Recognised Prior Learning

Recognising Prior Learning is an assessment process that recognises learning that has its origins in a learner's experience and/or previous formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college, university, and outside formal learning situations such as through life, employment, apprenticeships, and other work experiences.

NOCN is committed to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and has developed a policy and procedures to inform and support Centres. This is available on the NOCN website at [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)

## **2.7. Assessment and Evidence for the Components**

Assessment materials are only available to Centres approved to deliver this qualification.

All current assessment materials are available from NOCN's website. Existing Centres have access to this, new Centres must contact their NOCN Business Development Manager. Centres must use current live assessment material, always download the most up-to-date version before a learner starts their assessment.'

Forms and guidance for gathering learner evidence against the individual assessment criteria are available for download in Word format on the NOCN website:

[www.nocn.org.uk/support/nocn-support/quality-assurance/](http://www.nocn.org.uk/support/nocn-support/quality-assurance/)

## 3. Centre Information

### 3.1. Required Resources for Delivering the Qualification

As part of the requirement to deliver this qualification there is an expectation that staff undertaking roles as part of the delivery and assessment of the qualification have a demonstrable level of expertise.

NOCN expects that Tutors and Assessors can demonstrate the following competencies:

#### 3.1.1 Tutor Requirements

NOCN expects that Tutors/Assessors hold or are registered as working towards, a recognised education and training qualification such as the Level 3 Award in Education and Training.

- The NYA stipulates tutors must:
- For the delivery of the mandatory unit, be a JNC Professionally Qualified Youth Work practitioner, having undertaken a recognised professional qualification in youth work as identified by the NYA.
- Have a minimum of three years' practice experience.
- for the delivery of the optional units, be an experienced practitioner/subject specialist (with a minimum of three years' practice experience within the last five years) with expertise in the subject area provided/hold a qualification at the same level or above the unit being delivered or assessed.
- Have a sound understanding of National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.
- Have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual.
- Be able to evidence continued professional development, including fieldwork activities within the last 3 years.

#### 3.1.2 Assessor Requirements

NOCN expects that Assessors have experience of carrying out assessment activities and hold, or be registered as working towards, a recognised assessing qualification. Please note, if the Assessor holds the Level 3 Award in Education and Training and has achieved the unit 'Understanding the principles and practices of assessment' then they have achieved the equivalent of the Level 3 Award in Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment.

The NYA Stipulates assessors must:

- For the assessment of the mandatory unit, hold a recognised Youth Work (JNC) professional qualification with a minimum of three years' practice experience, with field work experience in the context of Youth Work, community work, community education or the voluntary community sector, and have relevant experience across the youth and community sector in a capacity recognised by the JNC/ETS within the last 3 years.

- For the assessment of the optional units be an experienced practitioner/subject specialist (minimum of three years' practice experience within the last five years) with expertise in the subject area and hold a qualification at the same level or above the unit being assessed.
- Have a sound understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.
- Have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual.
- Hold or be working towards a recognised assessor qualification.
- Be committed to, and able to evidence, further training and development.

### 3.1.3 Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

Each centre must have internal quality assurance policies and procedures in place to ensure that decisions made by Assessors are appropriate, consistent, fair, and transparent, and that they do not discriminate against any learner. The policies and procedures must be sufficient to secure the quality of the award, ensuring validity, reliability, and consistency.

The NYA stipulates that those carrying out internal assuring quality of these qualifications must:

- Hold a JNC Professional Youth Work qualification and three years' practice experience, with field work experience in the context of Youth Work, community work, community education or the voluntary community sector, and/or have broader relevant experience across the youth and community sector in a capacity recognised by the JNC/ETS within the last 3 years.
- Have recent experience (within the last three years) of internal quality assurance preferably within an occupational area with relevance to Youth Work.
- Have a sound understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.
- Have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual.
- Hold or be working towards an Internal Quality Assurance qualification.
- be committed to, and able to evidence, further training and development.

NOCN supports and recognises Centres' internal quality assurance systems which support the above; any system should include standardisation and sharing of good practice.

Centre staff may undertake more than one role, e.g. tutor, assessor, or internal quality assurer, but they **cannot** carry out any quality assurance on work that they have previously assessed.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the Internal Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)

### 3.1.4 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Centres are expected to support their staff, ensuring that their subject knowledge remains current and that their members of staff are up to date with regards to best practice in delivery, assessment, and quality assurance.

### 3.1.5 External Quality Assurance

Once recognised as a Centre, NOCN will allocate an External Quality Assurer. The External Quality Assurer will have ongoing responsibility for monitoring the Centre's compliance with the requirements of recognised Centre approval status.

Those externally assuring quality must:

- Hold a JNC Professional Youth Work qualification or an aligned professional qualification (one that is related to children, young people, and families, teaching or social work).
- Have a sound understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.
- Have recent experience of external quality assurance.
- Hold or be working towards an External Quality Assurance qualification.
- Have a sound understanding of the requirements for assessment within Ofqual.

The External Quality Assurer will make regular visits to all Centres. During these visits they will:

Monitor the Centre's compliance with the Centre approval criteria by reviewing course documentation, meeting managers, tutors, internal quality assurers, learners, and administrative staff.

Review the standard of the Centre's assessment and internal quality assurance practices and decisions to determine whether all assessment requirements are met to support safe and valid claims for certification.

Refer to the **NOCN Quality Assurance Manual** for further information on the External Quality Assurance process. This can be found on the NOCN website at [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)

## 3.2. Offering the Qualification

### Existing Centres

If you are already recognised to offer NOCN qualifications and would like more information about offering this qualification, please contact: [business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk](mailto:business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk), alternatively use Horizon to add this qualification to your Centre.

### New Centres

If you are interested in offering this qualification, but are not yet a NOCN Approved Centre and would like more information about becoming a NOCN Centre and offering this qualification please see **Become a Registered Centre** on our website <https://www.nocn.org.uk/customers/nocn-centres/> and click Become a Centre.

## 4. Component Information

Within the Level 4 qualification, the qualification consists of Mandatory and Optional components. The qualification structures (**see section 2**) sets out the rules for achieving the qualification.

To achieve this qualification a learner must provide evidence of learning and achievement against all the assessment requirements within each of their chosen components.

A copy of all Mandatory and Optional components can be downloaded via the NOCN website.

- [Level 4 Certificate in Professional Development \(Youth Work\)](#)

© NOCN April 25



PART OF **nocn** GROUP

Acero Building  
1 Concourse Way  
Sheaf Street  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
England  
S1 2BJ

**Tel:** 0300 999 1177

**Email:** [nocn@nocn.org.uk](mailto:nocn@nocn.org.uk)

**[www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)**