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| Written/reviewed by:                   | Gill Viner (Director of Operations)                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |
| Board approval:                        | Date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | N/A |
|                                        | Signed:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |     |
|                                        | Position:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |
| Review due by:                         | 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2027                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |
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| Substantive changes since last review: | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |

## Learner Recruitment Process

Learners are referred to an Acorn Centre by their school or a local authority, following identification of additional needs that are not being met in their mainstream setting. A placement at an Acorn Centre is an intervention intended to provide additional support for the learner in overcoming their barriers to learning, particularly in their social, emotional, and mental health development, and enabling them to re-engage with learning on reintegration at school or onto further education or training.

To make a referral, the referring agency (usually either the learner's current mainstream school or the local authority) completes an Acorn Referral Form, which provides information such as learner basic details, prior attendance, prior attainment, identified barriers, and reasons for referral.

Following this, the learner, together with their parents/carers and representatives from their referring agency will attend a Referral Interview at Acorn. During this interview, all parties will discuss and agree whether a placement at Acorn is appropriate and for how long. A Commissioning Agreement is drawn up which identifies the intended outcomes of the placement and the planned onward destination at the end of the placement. At this point, all parties will decide whether Functional Skills Qualifications will form part of the learning pathway for the learner. This decision, along with planned outcomes, length of placement and planned onward destination is reviewed at half-termly intervals.

## Initial Assessments

In the first few weeks of a placement at Acorn, learners will undertake several initial assessments, including in English and Maths. These, along with the work learners do in class will help Acorn staff identify

what levels learners are working at, and if their pathway includes Functional Skills Qualifications, what level they should be entered for and when they should sit assessments.

## **Assessment Readiness**

Over the course of a placement, learner progress and assessment readiness will be monitored continuously and discussed by Acorn staff during regular team meetings. When it is agreed that learners are nearing completion of their learning pathway towards readiness for Functional Skills assessment, staff will plan assessment dates and begin to make preparations for the assessments to take place.

### **Learner Induction**

The plan will be discussed with learners, their parents and referring agencies and Acorn staff will use the Induction for Learners PowerPoint and Functional Skills Page on the Acorn AP SharePoint to ensure that learners are introduced to the information they need and understand how things will proceed. This will include helping them know what to expect, where to go for help and making sure they are aware of relevant policies and procedures, including:

- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Access Arrangements
- Appeals Process
- Complaint Procedure.

## **Registration of learners for Functional Skills Qualifications**

Under the direction of the Acorn Head of Centre, English and Maths Tutors/Assessors will be responsible for informing Acorn AP's Director of Operations which learners will be sitting assessments, including the dates/times, subjects and levels. At this point, they will also inform the Director of Operations if the learner will require any Reasonable Adjustments.

The Acorn Director of Operations will make registrations/bookings on the NCFE Portal and co-ordinate any applications for Reasonable Adjustment, RPL or Credit Transfer, following NCFE's processes, and feeding back to the Centre-based Tutors/Assessors throughout the process as appropriate. All records relating to qualification registrations will be maintained centrally by the Director of Operations. Acorn Centre staff will communicate in a timely manner with the Director of Operations wherever any changes need to be made to registrations, including any withdrawals or changes in date/time.

Once registrations/bookings have been made, the director of Operations will inform Acorn Heads of Centre, who should then refer to the Secure Handling of Exam Materials Policy for details of how to manage the process for downloading, printing and securely storing internally assessed (all Entry Level and SLC assessments) components. Staff should also then follow the Acorn Controlled Assessments Policy and the relevant NCFE procedures for conducting controlled internal assessments and external assessments.

## **Certification of learner achievements**

For all qualifications and components that are internally assessed, the Director of Operations will coordinate the process of internal and external quality assurance and prepare and make certificate claims once signed-off by the NCFE Quality Reviewer.

Learner certificates will be posted by NCFE directly to the Acorn delivery Centres, who are responsible for ensuring they are securely transferred to the learners in a timely manner. This will be either by hand

delivery, or by tracked and signed for post. Delivery Centres will keep a log of Certificates received from NCFE and the method and date of transfer to the learner. Certificate handling logs should be available on request to the Director of Operations and the NCFE quality reviewer.

Centres should inform the Director of Operations of any missing Certificates, who will contact NCFE to find out the reason for delay.