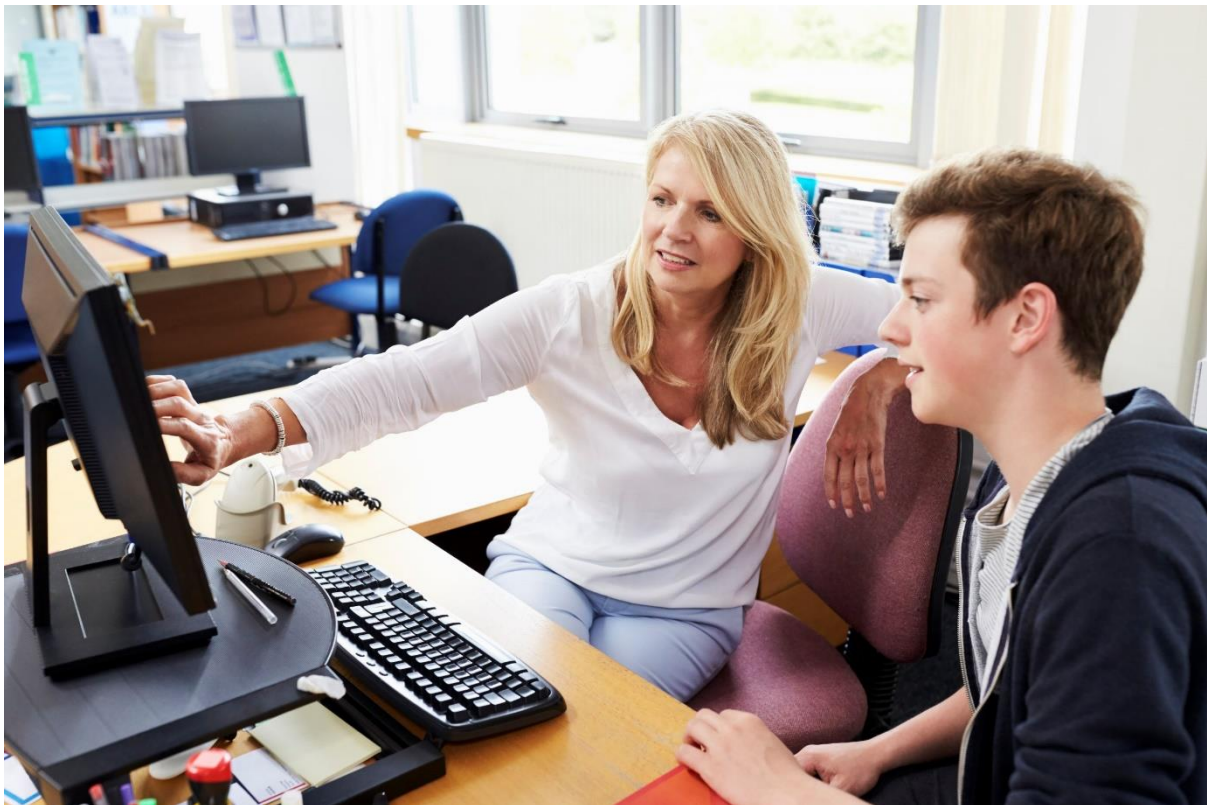**Is that on the SCQF…?**
Mentoring Award

In the first of a new series of blogs, we look at some of the more unusual programmes that are on the SCQF. First up from Sandy Riddell, Qualifications Manager at SQA.

SQA has introduced a new Award in Mentoring, which is aimed at those involved in organised mentoring programmes and was designed in consultation with representatives from various charities and training providers.

The Mentoring Award is made up of two units. The first unit covers the basic theory of mentoring and the second unit covers the practical skills used by mentors carrying out their role. It sits on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at level 4, ensuring accessibility to a wide range of learners. This qualification can be undertaken in many different environments, from rehabilitation or care settings, which may involve things like addiction

recovery or coping strategies, to education, or career settings where specific learning goals or employment opportunities might be the main objectives.

It is important for the mentor and mentee to be carefully matched for their compatibility as some of the mentees may be going through difficult stages in their lives or they may be shy or reluctant participants. Trust, therefore, is a critical part of the relationship between the mentor and mentee and often mentees will appreciate simply having a mentor as someone who they can talk to and who will listen to them in a non-threatening and non-judgemental way. The first requirement of the practical unit is that the mentor and mentee sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure the safety and support of all participants (mentees and mentors) in a mentoring programme. It is also vitally important that the mentoring programme is properly organised and managed by a trained co-ordinator.

In order to achieve the Mentoring Award, learners must complete a short on-screen assessment that features a range of questions on the basic theory and process of mentoring. The on-screen assessments are delivered using SQA's on-screen assessment software, SOLAR. Leaners should be given plenty of opportunities to become accustomed to the software before they undertake their assessment.

In addition, learners must be able to demonstrate other skills whilst undertaking a mentoring role. The assessment of these skills should occur naturally during the mentoring process, such as, introducing themselves to the mentee, holding meetings with their mentee, setting goals, and reviewing progress. There may be scope for some simulation and role-play in the delivery of the Award but in most cases, learners will be assessed in real life mentoring situations.

This new qualification has been available since August 2018 and it is too early to say how many centres may deliver it but it is hoped that the Award will become established and provide the opportunity for learners to gain recognition for the skills and confidence they can develop through mentoring.

The Award is at SCQF level 4 with 12 SCQF credit points. For more information on learning programmes on the SCQF, have a look at the SCQF Database at https://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/.