

APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD

EMERGENCY CONTACT HANDLER

FULL SPECIFICATION

evel

Duration

Maximum Funding

Code

ON

3

12 Months (Not including EPA)

£9,000

ST0483

603/7069/5





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About Future Quals

FutureQuals works together with employers and industry experts to develop End-point Assessments, materials and tools. We provide a first class service for your End-point Assessment needs and we ensure that we support your employees in every step towards their End-point Assessment.

Our processes ensure that the apprentice has sufficient knowledge, skills and behaviours in their area of work, as determined by the Level 3 Emergency Contact Handler Occupational Standard and Assessment Plan.

FutureQuals is a recognised and approved End-point Assessment Organisation and appears on the Register of End-point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO). FutureQuals are the EPAO within Future (Awards & Qualifications) Ltd.

More information on our processes and End-point Assessment can be found on our website or by contacting us at EPAO@futurequals.com.

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The Emergency Contact Handler Role

Overview of the Role

The Emergency Contact Handler (ECH) responds to requests for specialist professional assistance from members of the public, colleagues and employees from other organisations.

These Service user request can be received through a variety of different communications, such as telephone (999/ 111 urgent care calls), text messages, online applications or social media platforms.

It will involve dealing with service users who are in difficult or even traumatic situations, such as being in danger or unwell. These service users could potentially display a variety of characteristics, such as vulnerability, anxiety or being confrontational. Therefore, the ECH will need to be able to act calmly and efficiently under pressure and in all situations.

The main purpose of the ECH is to communicate with the service users to ascertain their needs, provide reassurance and advice, and decide an appropriate course of action to take. They will need to follow processes and procedures and ensure that computer records are updated accurately.

They will typically work for a "blue light organisation", and will normally be working shifts, in order to be able to provide a 24 hour service, 365 days a year. They will generally have no line management responsibility.

Emergency Contact Handler Apprenticeship

The aim of the ECH apprenticeship is to ensure that the ECH will be fully competent and job ready to perform the role of the ECH as required by the end of the programme and End-point Assessment.

The Apprentice Standard provides a highly descriptive record of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that each ECH apprentice must meet whilst on the apprenticeship.

Due to the nature of the role, apprentices must be at least 18 years old. They must be able to demonstrate an ability to converse clearly with service users. Therefore some employers may require apprentices to hold qualifications in English and other entry requirements may also be required. Prior to taking the End-point Assessment, all apprentices will need to have achieved English and Maths at Level 2.

Due to the nature of this occupation, during a structured period of on and off the job training, apprentices will receive a significant amount of off the job training at the start of the apprenticeship, in order to ensure that they have the right knowledge, skills and behaviours to move onto on the job training.

Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

In order for the apprentices to be fully occupationally competent, the standard requires that ECHs meet and demonstrate particular values and behaviours. They must also demonstrate particular skills and hold certain knowledge.

A full description of these criteria can be found detailed in the first column in Appendices A & B.

The standard has been designed by organisations from the Fire Service, Ambulance Service, Police Services and NHS Integrated Urgent Care. The apprentice will be assessed against the standard as it is, but also against their sector specific knowledge, as an addition to the knowledge statement in the standard. For sector specific knowledge requirement see *Appendix C*.

End-point Assessment (EPA) Process

Overview of End-point Assessment

The apprentice registers for the apprenticeship programme with their employer

OnProgramme

On and Off the job structred learning

Achieve Level 2 English and Maths if not already held or valid alternatives

Level 2 English and Maths (or equivalent)
Employer and provider agrees apprentice is ready for EPA and notifies the EPAO

The amounts from Gateway to prepare evidence for the EPA

Observation of live and pre-recorded contacts
Professional Discussion

Independent Assessor gives the overall grade

End-point Assessment Structure

Overview of the EPA

Prior to End-point Assessment (EPA) the apprentice will undergo a structured period of on and off the job training. Once the Line Manager, Training Provider and apprentice themselves, have all agreed the apprentice is competent, the apprentice can move on to Gateway for the EPA. The role of each party will be as follows:

Party	Role
Apprentice	To evidence competency against the apprenticeship standard by completing the structured portfolio of work, and confirm readiness for end-point assessment
Line Manager	To confirm the Apprentice's consistent competence in the workplace in line with the skills, knowledge and behaviour of the standard
Training Provider	To confirm all elements of the on-programme training and assessment have been achieved

The EPA will comprise of two assessment components, as demonstrated below, which will both be assessed by the End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

Assessment Method	Areas Assessed	Grading	Duration
Observation of live contacts and pre-recorded contacts	Skills, Knowledge & Behaviours	Fail/ Pass/ Distinction	135-165 minutes
Professional Discussion based on evidence provided of specific	Behaviours	Fail/ Pass/ Distinction	80-100 Minutes
behaviours and structured questioning for knowledge requirements.	Knowledge	Fail/ Pass/ Distinction	

It is expected that the EPA will be completed in one assessment day, and one visit to the apprentice's place of work. The observation of live and pre-recorded contacts should be done before the discussion, as the findings from the observations form part of the discussion.

When all assessments have been completed, apprentices will then be informed of their results. On successful achievement, the EPAO will claim for certificates on behalf of the successful apprentices.

Gateway Readiness

In order for the apprentice to reach Assessment gateway, the Line Manager, the Training Provider and the apprentice must all jointly agree the apprentice has met all the required criteria for them to be competent in their role.

The apprentice will have evidenced competency against the Apprenticeship standard. The Line Manager will confirm the apprentice's consistent competence in the workplace in line with the standard. The training provider will confirm that all elements of the on programme training and assessment have been met.

Apprentices will also need to have achieved:

• Level 2 in English and Maths. For those with an education and health care plan or a legacy statement, the English and Maths minimum entry requirement is Level 3. British sign language qualifications are an alternative to English qualifications, for those whom this is their primary language.

Once apprentices have passed the Gateway, they have a maximum of 3 months to gather the required contact evidence to be submitted to the EPAO.

EPA Components

The EPA components to be assessed are detailed on page 7.

The live observation will provide the apprentices with an opportunity to demonstrate a broad range of skills and behaviours related to their effective use of IT systems and communication with service users and colleagues. It is expected that whilst the live observation will demonstrate specific skills and behaviours, it will infer knowledge as required.

The observation is expected to last between 135 - 165 minutes, but will consider breaks in line with the organisational procedures and individual requirements.

In order to ensure that a variety of evidence can be captured, the EPAO should liaise with the Employer to identify when a large number of calls is expected. They will also discuss the best method that will ensure the IEPA (Independent End-point Assessor) does not cause a disruption to the service for that period.

As there is no guarantee that the live observation will provide an opportunity for the IEPA to witness a variety challenges for the apprentice, the apprentice will submit 5 recent contacts as evidence which the IEPA will assess on the day.

Appendix A details what the apprentice is required to submit for the pre-recorded observations and what knowledge, skills and behaviours need to be evidenced. They are also expected to provide a short justification as to why their submitted contacts demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and behaviour criteria. This will also show what the IEPA will be assessing against for the live observations.

In order to comply with Data Protection, Confidentiality legislation (e.g. Official Secrets Act) and sector/employer policies the Assessor will not be able to record details of callers. Employers may check to ensure, prior to the Assessor leaving the site, that assessment paperwork does not contain any personal / confidential information relating to members of the public.

The Professional Discussion will be based on evidence of specific behaviours and structured questioning to test knowledge, as these certain behaviours may not be able to be evidenced through observations.

The apprentice will be expected to collate evidence for the behaviours. The discussion will consist of discussing supplementary evidence provided for behaviours and questioning to demonstrate knowledge.

The IEPA will ask and record questions and answers, ensuring that they are non-leading questions. In order to ensure this, the EPAO will develop a question template, and will also monitor this via Internal Quality Assurance checks.

The discussion is expected to last 80-100 minutes, but the EPAO will take into account breaks, the requirements of organisational procedures and individual requirements.

Behaviours will be assessed as demonstrated in *Appendix* B. Although knowledge may be inferred in the observations, any further knowledge and sector specific knowledge will be assessed through questioning (*Appendix B*). However, some answers will need to be confirmed by an occupationally competent individual as the apprentice needs to demonstrate knowledge in their own specific organisation.

Grading & Weighting

To attain a Pass the apprentice is expected to demonstrate competence in each knowledge, skill and behaviour criteria in line with assessment methodology as shown in *Appendix A & B*.

Any one area that is not marked as competent will be marked as a Fail, and the apprentice will need to retake the failed assessment method, when it has been agreed again that they are ready to retake it. The apprentice is allowed 2 retakes, and they should take place within a 6 month period.

There are 13 knowledge, skills and behaviours Distinction criteria available. In order to achieve an overall Distinction, the apprentice will need to attain 8 out of the 13 Distinction criteria in accordance with the minimum requirements for each assessment methodology as shown below:

Assessment Methodology:		To attain a Distinction:
Live observation and pre-recorded calls		2 out of a possible 3 at Distinction Level
Professional	Evidence for specific behaviours	2 out of a possible 3 at Distinction Level
Discussion	Questioning for knowledge	4 out of a possible 7 at Distinction Level

[A more detailed look at grading can be found in the Assessment Plan, or by contacting us]

EPAO Role

In line with the assessment plan, as an EPAO, we will:

- Take no part in the training of apprentices who complete the EPA's
- Devise assessment materials and administer the EPA
- Recruit and train Independent End-point Assessors, Lead IEPAs and IQAs
- Ensure IEPAs, Lead IEPAs and IQAs are occupationally competent, are able to assess the
 performance of the apprentice using the EPA method and are able to determine grade
 achieved
- Undertake annual standardisations and moderation activities
- Actively participate in quality assurance procedures described in the assessment plan
- Follow Internal Quality Assurance Procedures and adhere to External Quality Assurance procedures and requests
- Comply with the Conditions for EPAOs
- Comply with the EQA Framework

Contact Us

For more information about the EPAO, FutureQuals or the EPA please contact us on:

Phone: 01530 836668

Email: EPAO@futurequals.com

Web: www.futurequals.com

Appendix A: Assessment Method for Live Observations and Pre-recorded and Requirements of Evidence

Criteria (as shown in the Assessment Plan)	Evidence Requirements for a Pass	Distinction Descriptor (where applicable)	Evidence Requirements for a Distinction
	Knowledge		
Health and Safety: How to comply with the Health and Safety legislation and any regulations/organisational policies relevant to the specific emergency service sector, including to the management of own welfare. This will include knowing and understanding how to provide critical health and safety advice to service users, specific to each sector.	Demonstrates, through either the live observation and/or pre- recorded contacts, an understanding of how to comply with health and safety regulations / policies. This could be, for example, through providing advice to service users.	N/A	N/A
Equality & Inclusion: Equality legislation/regulations/policies and how these impact on the way a Contact Handler responds to service users and colleagues.	Demonstrates, through either the live observation and/or pre- recorded contacts, behaviours which are non-discriminatory and responds appropriately to all service users, promoting equality of opportunity if appropriate	N/A	N/A
Communication Techniques: Advanced and effective communication techniques, including: Ways to build rapport and empathise, reassuring service users whilst they are in an emergency situation Methods of questioning and listening Methods to influence and negotiate How to manage challenging calls and situations.	Demonstrates, through either the live observation and/or pre-recorded contacts, effective communication techniques.	N/A	N/A
Technical knowledge of incidents: Incidents relevant to the specific sector, including a full comprehension of:	Demonstrates, through either the live observation and/or pre-recorded contacts, an understanding of types of incidents and advice/instructions which should be provided to service users.	N/A	N/A

Technology: The IT and communication solutions relevant to the specific sector/ organisation, including contact management equipment (e.g. telephony systems), and bespoke software programmes (e.g. recording and resource systems)	Demonstrates, through the live observation, an understanding of how to use IT and communication systems.	N/A	N/A
Procedures: Processes and procedures of the role of contact handler in own sector / organisation.	Demonstrates, through either the live observation and/or pre- recorded contacts, an understanding of how to follow processes and procedures	N/A	N/A
	Skills		
Operate communication systems and bespoke software in an efficient and effective way.	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	N/A	N/A
Communicate with service users in a clear, calm and reassuring manner.	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	Apply enhanced communication techniques with service users who demonstrate behaviours of a challenging nature e.g. distressed, angry Examples of techniques (which should be used appropriately): Name exchange / use of service users name, empathy, voice matching, checking for understanding.	Evident in a minimum of 2 of the recorded contacts
Gather relevant information from the service user, using questioning techniques appropriate to the situation	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	Use a flow of questions that creates a natural rapport with the caller whilst at the same time ensuring all information is obtained. Interpret complex or ambiguous answers and, as required, enhances and clarifies the information.	Evident in a minimum of 2 of the recorded contacts.
Accurately utilise and record information on computer systems and bespoke software packages, which may be whilst communicating with the service user.	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	N/A	N/A
Manage service users' expectations depending on a variety of factors including severity of the situation and any regulatory	(If occurs, to be evidenced through the live observation) Evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	Apply enhanced communication techniques with service users	Evident in a minimum of 1 out of

requirements. This will be done through persuasive negotiation and may require being assertive in some cases (for the safety of service users).		whose original expectations cannot be met e.g. expectations are unrealistic Examples of techniques (which should be used appropriately): - Positive/persuasive language to gain agreement from callers Signposting caller appropriately	the recorded contacts.
Provide immediate and appropriate advice and information to the service user, adapting this, as necessary, as the contact progresses.	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	N/A	N/A
Assess information and decide appropriate course of action, following relevant organisational procedures, regulations and legislation.	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts.	N/A	N/A
Treat allowing and coming years with assumption and	Behaviours	N1/A	N1/A
Treat colleagues and service users with compassion and empathy, without bias or prejudice. Respect diversity, beliefs, culture and values	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts	N/A	N/A
Demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism and trustworthiness, making sure that organisational values, moral codes and ethical standards are always upheld. Act in the best interests of the service user, seeking guidance when necessary.	Live observation and evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts	N/A	N/A
Act in the best interests of the service user, seeking guidance when necessary.	Evident in a minimum of 3 of the recorded contacts		
Manage multiple demands, whilst prioritising safety. Manage own emotions in challenging situations with service users, remaining calm and professional. Recognise when to seek support for own welfare.	Evident in a minimum of 1 recorded contact submitted as evidence. (This contact should demonstrate the contact handler managing a challenging situation)	N/A	N/A

Appendix B: Assessment Method for Professional Discussion

[For the knowledge, the criteria highlighted in blue are the criteria that have sector specific knowledge requirements.]

Criteria (as shown in the Assessment Plan)	Evidence Requirements for a Pass	Distinction Descriptor (where applicable)	Evidence Requirements for a Distinction			
	Behaviour					
Treat colleagues and service users with compassion and empathy, without bias or prejudice. Respect diversity, beliefs, culture and values.	Evidence from the line manager and/ or feedback from others e.g. performance reviews, witness statements	Challenging inequality and/or promoting inclusions	Testimony from appropriate source or evidence of products e.g. emails			
Demonstrate the highest standard of professionalism and trustworthiness, making sure that organisational values, moral codes and ethical standards are always upheld. Act in the best interests of the service user, seeking guidance where necessary	Evidence from line manager and/ or feedback from others e.g. performance reviews, witness statements	N/A	N/A			
Manage multiple demands, whilst prioritising safety. Manage own emotions in challenging situations with service users, remaining calm and professional. Recognise when to seek support for own welfare.	Evidence from line manager and/ or feedback from others e.g. performance reviews, witness statements	N/A	N/A			
Be reliable and adaptable. Follow instructions when given. Take ownership for own professional performance and continuous development.	Evidence from line manager and/or feedback from others e.g. performance reviews, witness statements & Evidence of own development e.g. CPD logs	Actively seeks feedback. Shows evidence of self-learning and reflective practice on own initiative.	Evidence of seeking feedback e.g. emails. Evidence of using own initiative to learn e.g. reflective logs			
Demonstrate a proactive approach to collaboration with colleagues from own and other organisations by offering help, support and guidance.	Evidence of collaborating with colleagues from own and other organisations e.g. witness statements from others, record of contacting other organisations.	Promoting team ethics by supporting colleagues, promoting positivity, and leading by example.	Evidence of positively promoting team work/team activity e.g. emails, testimonies			
Knowledge						
Data Protection: How to comply with the Data Protection legislation, regulations and policies relevant to the specific emergency service sector and/or organisations.	Apprentice generally explains how they comply with Data Protection legislation, regulations and policies relevant to their sector	Apprentice explains the principles of Data Protection legislation, regulations and policies relevant to their sector. Apprentice provides details of the pertinent principles	N/A			

		and examples of they comply with these in their own role.	
Health, Safety & Security: How to comply with the Health and safety legislation and any regulations/ organisational policies relevant to the specific emergency service sector, including to the management of own welfare	Apprentice generally explains how they comply with Health & Safety legislation and any regulations and policies relevant to their sector.	Apprentice explains the principles of Health & Safety legislation and any regulations/ policies, providing details of the pertinent and examples of how they comply with these in their role.	N/A
Equality and Inclusion: Equality legislation/regulations/policies and how these impact on the way a Contact Handler responds to service users and colleagues.	Apprentice generally explains how they comply with Equality legislation, regulations and policies.	Apprentice explains the principles of Equality legislation, regulations / policies, providing details of pertinent principles and examples of how they comply with these in their role.	N/A
 Communication techniques: Advanced and effective communication techniques, including: Ways to build rapport and empathise, reassuring service users whilst they are in an emergency situation Methods of questioning and listening Methods to influence and negotiate How to manage challenging calls and situations 	Apprentice explains a range of communication techniques and explains how they apply these in their role For example: - explains how they build rapport and empathise with service users - explains 2 types of questions and how they apply to their role - explains a model for listening and how they apply this - explains how they influence and negotiate - explains how they manage a challenge call and situation.	Apprentice provides in-depth knowledge of a variety of communication techniques and analyses how they would apply each appropriately in their role For example: -explains techniques for building rapport and empathising with service users, with an example of applying this - explains 4 types of questioning, describing these and how they would apply each appropriately in their role explains 2 or 3 models of listening and how they would apply each appropriately in their role.	N/A

		 explains techniques for influencing and negotiating explains techniques for managing a challenging call and situation. 	
Technical knowledge of Incidents: Incidents relevant to the specific sector, including a full comprehension of:	Apprentice explains: -the meaning of complex terminology relevant to their sector - potential consequences of different types of incidents - how they would advise service users in response to specific incidents	Apprentice provides an in-depth understanding of: - complex terminology relevant to their sector - the potential consequences of different types of incidents - How to advise service users in response to specific incidents and the reasons why they would provide this advice.	N/A
Decision Making: Decision making techniques, including principles of risk assessment and how to make decisions in critical situations, in line with specific emergency service sector and/or organisational requirements.	Apprentice explains: - A decision making technique. As part of the technique they should explain how they assess and manage risk. - How they apply the technique in a critical situation in line with sector and/or organisational requirements.	Apprentice provides: - An in-depth understanding of each part of the decision making technique and why each stage is important. As part of the technique, they should explain how they assess and manage risk. - A pertinent example of how they have applied each stage of the technique in a critical situation in line with sector and/or organisational requirements.	N/A
Grading of Incidents: How to grade incidents and escalate in order for resources to be deployed, as appropriate, in line with policies and procedures of the specific sector/organisation. (an occupationally competent individual who works for the Employer will need to confirm accuracy of the Apprentice's answer)	Apprentice explains how to correctly grade incidents and escalate in order for resources to be deployed, as appropriate, in line with policies and procedures of the specific sector/organisation.	N/A	N/A

Technology: The IT and communication solutions relevant to the specific sector/organisation, including contact management equipment (e.g. telephony systems), and bespoke software programmes (e.g. recording and resource systems). (an occupationally competent individual who works for the Employer will need to confirm accuracy of the Apprentice's answer)	Apprentice correctly explains the systems that they use and why they use them	N/A	N/A
Multi-agency Working: The roles and responsibilities of partner and commissioned agencies, including an understanding of: • JESIP • How and when to sign-post service users to other partners/agencies	Apprentice explains: - the roles and responsibilities of partner and commissioned agencies, including the purpose of JESIP - How and when they would sign-post a service user to other partners/agencies.	Apprentice displays an in depth knowledge of - roles and responsibilities of Partner and commissioned agencies, including the JESIP Principles and the application of methodology, for example, METHANE How, when and why they would sign-post a service user to other partners/agencies	N/A
Procedures: Processes and procedures of the role of contact handler in own sector / organisation. (an occupationally competent individual who works for the Employer will need to confirm accuracy of the Apprentice's answer)	Apprentice correctly explains a process/procedure that they follow.	N/A	N/A

Appendix C: Sector Specific Knowledge Requirements

Knowledge Statement from the standard:	Ambulance (emergency)	NHS Integrated and Urgent Care	Fire Service	Police Service
Data Protection & Confidentiality	 Caldicott Principles of Confidentiality NHS Information Governance Awareness Training 	Caldicott Principles of Confidentiality NHS Information Governance Awareness Training	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Management of Police Information
Health, Safety & Security	Safeguarding and PREVENT	Safeguarding and PREVENT	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Safeguarding and PREVENT
Equality & Inclusion	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Code of Ethics
Communication Techniques	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies
Knowledge of Incidents	 Medical terminology and awareness Basic life support Threat, vulnerability, risk and harm in relation to incidents 	 Medical terminology Basic life support Response to a range of calls NHS Incident reporting, whistle blowing and serious incidents 	 Knowledge of survival guidance procedures; survival guidance for a range of incidents including fire and flooding Crewing, staff roles and level authority Developing action plans 	 Threat, vulnerability, risk and harm in relation to incidents Role of deployable resources, and how this impacts on information gathered/advice provided to service users
Decision Making	 Joint decision model Clinical governance Appointed triage systems 	 Clinical governance Capacity to consent National decision model 	 Demand management plans National decision model 	 National decision model NSIR and NCRS Warning markers
Grading and Escalations on Incidents	Computer aided dispatch systemsSURGE plans	 Datix reporting system Incident reporting and management NHSE escalation process 	 Knowledge of procedures for classifying, managing and closing incidents 	 Grading protocols in line with Force Procedures

Technology	 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system Triage tool system Telephony system Microsoft Office 	 Pathways CAD system Triage tool system Telephony system Microsoft Office Triage: Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch system or NHS Pathways 	 Radio procedure: knowledge of radio protocols. This includes: - Status codes - Talk groups - Working practise Service mobilising system Service ICC's Control system recording software Service software for monitoring/ updating appliance crewing Chemdata 	 Force Contact/ Telephony System Force information management system Force incident/ intel recording system
Multi-agency working	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies
Process/ Procedures	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Knowledge statement as written in the standard applies	Business continuity: knowledge of fall back procedures National Occupational Standards for Fire Rescue Service Control Room Operator The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	 National standard of Incident Recording National Crime Recording Standards



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