Evaluation

City & Guilds Professional Recognition Award Pilot Project

Executive Summary

Introduction to PRA

C&G Professional Recognition Awards (PRA) have a particular application in the recognition and development of leadership and management in a wide range of craft, technical and professional disciplines; and they provide for national recognition of experience and the application of knowledge and skills, benchmarked against defined standards. They are offered at increasing levels of experience and responsibility from Licentiateship (Level 4) to Graduateship (Level 7) and are an excellent vehicle for progression and lifelong career development from entry-level industrial qualifications (including, for example, apprenticeships) to the highest levels of senior management.

The PRA Standard comprises six units:
Standard 1: Commitment to Professional Standards
Standard 2: Communication and Information Management
Standard 3: Leadership
Standard 4: Professional Development
Standard 5: Working with Others
Standard 6: Managing Customer Relationships

The Pilot has:

- Proved a collaborative model for the assessment of PRA Level 4 across the Livery
- Formed a small, dedicated team who have developed a strong working relationship
- Full support and confidence from C&G with Direct Claim Status
- Built a body of knowledge which will be of great use to the Livery and beyond in the future
- Refined mechanisms for uploading a variety of evidence and providing the monitoring of progress and achievement through OneFile
- Shown the commitment of recently qualified apprentices and other candidates to the 'real world' personal and professional skills needed alongside their technical qualifications to progress successfully in their chosen careers
- Developed a valuable database of those Companies who could utilise PRAs in the future
- Identified a number of mentors who are happy to continue their role with future candidates
- Stimulated interest in PRA across the Livery
- Enabled scores of Livery Companies to engage with Livery Companies Skills Council
- Increased interest in Master Certificate Scheme – with some Companies considering using PRA for the first time in 2024 Awards Ceremony – a good 'way in'

Lessons Learnt:

- The timing of the Pilot did not suit all candidates – by offering 2 cohorts per year candidates can choose the most appropriate time to undertake their PRA.
- The length of the Pilot was extended to give extra time for candidates to complete and internal verification.
- Assessor was extremely through and detailed in her feedback. She also gave additional time to support the candidates on how to cross-link evidence to assessments. Feedback can be streamlined for the rollout and the support role should be fully covered by the mentors.
- Mentors are vital in the support of the candidates – full briefing and training up front will increase their understanding and help.   They also need to give more time to 1-2-1s with their candidates.
- Both mentor and candidate inductions spent more time on OneFile training than standard familiarisation – splitting the mentor training into 2 sessions before the start of the programme, and offering the candidates an extra session would assist in the standard familiarisation and cross-linking of evidence.
- More OneFile e-portfolio facilities could be used to show progress, candidate and mentor activity and reflective accounts.
- Use of sound recordings of mentor / employer conversations, and video recordings of candidates at work would provide wider sources of evidence.
- Mentor records of 121s and action plans should be formalised

Pilot Project Costs

Phase 1 Development costs £4,710 were covered in full by LCSC from accumulated reserves.

Phase 2 Delivery costs £16,773 were covered by fundraising (£11,250) with the balance from LCSC reserves.

Total cost £21,483

City & Guilds Professional Recognition Award Pilot Project

Background

Several Livery Companies involved in the Master Certificate Scheme use PRA at Level 4 as one of the criteria by which applicants can demonstrate their professional skills. The Goldsmiths' Company has found them to be invaluable in recognising the project management and personal development skills of their sponsored apprentices training at the Goldsmiths Centre. The successful implementation by the Goldsmiths Company, with its delegated authority to confer Professional Recognition Awards by C&G, led the Livery Companies Skills Council (LCSC) to consider whether a wider adoption of this model could be valuable within the Livery.

In 2019 a feasibility study was undertaken by an external consultant to test the interest and viability of expanding the use of PRA across selected Livery Companies and identify a model for doing so. This primarily targeted Livery Companies that are actively supporting training and development for their crafts and industries that do not currently have access to any other form of professional accreditation. It also explored related applications alongside existing technical qualifications. It tested potential models of delivery, cost structures, and the appetite and market for such a scheme, and concluded that there was sufficient interest expressed from Livery Company representatives to justify progressing a proposal to run a small pilot of Level 4 PRA. This study was jointly funded by The Goldsmiths Company and City & Guilds.

The Pilot

Vision: to provide a cost-effective service to enable the Livery, through their networks of contacts with employers in virtually every sector of the economy, to engage with young people at the start of their careers, and other candidates, and to provide recognition of their growing experience and skill as they progress through increasing levels of responsibility. From the candidates' point of view PRA enables them to show their added value to present and future employers. It encompasses the theme of commitment to lifelong learning.

Outline: The delivery model recommended by the feasibility study drew heavily on the previous experience of the Livery Companies Apprenticeship Scheme (LCAS). Overall management, quality control, progress monitoring and general administration were undertaken by a central Hub (LCAS) which would provide support for individual Livery Companies who would identify candidates and provide mentors.

Following the Goldsmiths' example, the generic standard would be contextualised to suit respective Livery Companies. Formal assessment would be undertaken by a qualified assessor, and all evidence submitted online through OneFile. For quality control purposes, and to enable the formal registration and certification of candidates, the Hub needed to 'plug into' an existing accredited PRA assessment centre.

A significant factor that emerged from the feasibility study is that relatively few Company representatives had had direct experience of vocational assessment and quality assurance procedures. A key outcome of the practical pilot was therefore to demonstrate that all the necessary procedures could be readily understood and implemented by all those involved.

Funding and Development

An outline proposal was prepared and approved by the LCSC in November 2019 detailing development of the delivery model. The LCSC Management Committee drafted a prospectus setting out the vision for the pilot and long-term aim, and asking for confirmation of participation and/or interest in funding to be circulated to targeted Livery Companies: LCSC Members, LCAS Pilot Members, Construction Liveries Group, Wood Group and obvious Companies for larger sums. The LCSC would also be committing some reserved funds and commissioning LCAS to manage the Pilot.

The initial plan was to charge participating Companies on a per candidate basis to fund the pilot. However once the estimated cost of development, set up and delivery of the pilot was agreed, the cost per candidate was considered to be quite high. Given the amount of voluntary effort required by Companies participating in the Pilot it was felt unreasonable also to ask them to contribute financially.

October 2019-June 2022 – LCSC funds PRA development work @ £5,000.

A grant application proposal was drawn up in May 2020, however contact with Livery Companies was delayed due to the onset of the pandemic. The Pilot start was postponed until at least Spring 2021.

There were two possible centres through which the pilot could operate - the Goldsmiths Centre or direct with C&G through their internal centre. Once a few key personnel returned from furlough in Autumn 2020, we were able to continue discussions with both organisations. The Goldsmiths Centre reluctantly decided that they were unable to act as the assessment centre as they could not commit any time or resources to any outside project while they were still grappling with the aftermath of the pandemic. Discussions with C&G proceeded to a satisfactory conclusion but progress was slow due to the continuing restrictions and key personnel still on furlough.

In Autumn 2021 budgets for the Pilot were finalised and a fundraising strategy was agreed for the delivery phase with approaches to large Companies, outside charities and organisations to start in early January 2022, beginning with Livery Companies then progressing to outside organisations if necessary.

In February 2022 the LCSC decided to hold back from a broad appeal across the whole Livery and resolved to launch a more limited appeal to Livery Companies with the aim of raising up to £12k. An amended list was agreed and one page overview and proposals were circulated in early Autumn 2022. Early meetings were positive and follow-up documentation was sent out.

Donations were received from four Livery Companies (2 participating in Pilot) and one outside organisation. One Company donation stipulated LCSC matched funding.

By Jan 2023, £7,600 had been raised - enough to cover the delivery phase enabling the Pilot to start in February. Fundraising continued and a further £5,000 was received at the end of February which covered the balance of funds required for the cross-Livery engagement and evaluation.

Pilot Details

Phase 1 - Development of a detailed delivery model – open ended timescale

The original 2019 feasibility study had indicated costs of £28,000 for the Pilot development and delivery. The consultant had recommended three roles – project co-ordinator, internal quality assurer (IQA) and assessor – and her report was completed on the basis of every task necessary for each role without taking into account the systems we already had in place, any prior working relationships or ePortfolio experience. It was agreed the costs could be reduced by consolidating the three roles into two and allocating those tasks between the assessor (Amanda Sails) and project co-ordinator / IQA (Jo Mabbutt). By eliminating a substantial amount of the crossover between the roles, streamlining the tasks, and allocating hours against tasks, the cost was reduced by almost a third and a complete plan for both development and delivery was drafted. This preliminary work significantly shaped thinking on the delivery model and gave confidence for further progress in fleshing out the details. This involved consultancy support and costs incurred by our potential assessment partners, both in set up and in the delivery of the practical assessments.

The feasibility report had recommended working with 5/6 candidates and 2/3 Companies but it was hoped that it would be possible to open this out to some of the other 4/5 Companies who were keen to participate and include up to 10 candidates, thus providing a broader range of test cases.

Development proceeded with:
- C&G meetings and preparation for the qualification approval
- pilot roles and responsibilities

- processes and procedures
- liaising with OneFile - standards and resources
- schedules
- costings
- scheme of work and handbook
- documents to aid Companies in the selection of candidates and mentors.
- fundraising proposal
- engaging with target companies and lining up candidates.

The first requirement was for LCAS to set up a satellite centre which necessitated additional time and costs for the centre and qualification approval processes that had not been included in the original feasibility study. Caroline Salter (Manager City & Guilds Internal Qualification Centre and Pilot Lead Internal Quality Assurer) advised us on the necessary information for due diligence, approval for the qualification, registration and certification. She submitted a Qualification Approval Form via the C&G Walled Garden (an online administration service for approved centres). Formal approval was received in January 2023. The qualification was then uploaded to OneFile, together with the Handbook, Scheme of Work and all other resources.

Conversations took place with a couple of Companies regarding the selection of candidates and also with one potential candidate regarding her expectations in terms of timescale, the understanding of criteria and collation of evidence.

The Goldsmiths' contextualised standard was used as an exemplar by five mentors to produce their own specialist standards, translating the generic 'C&G terminology into the context of their particular area. This was extremely helpful in enabling the candidates to understand the evidence requirements. One Company also completed a mapping exercise showing which sources pieces of evidence could be used across individual criteria. This proved very useful to two other mentors who amended their own standards accordingly.

Two mentors did not produce contextualised standards. Their candidates were working at higher levels than Level 4 and they did not need assistance in understanding the requirements.

Phase 2 - Delivery

Following one month of final set up of processes and procedures, delivery started in March.2023.

The Team:
- Pilot Coordinator, Internal Quality Assurer and OneFile Centre Manager (progress and activity checks) – Jo Mabbutt
- Assessor and OneFile Centre Manager (account setups, internal quality assurance training) – Amanda Sails
- C&G Lead Internal Quality Assurer (+ C&G registrations) – Caroline Salter

Consultancy agreements for JM and AS were finalised. The first half their budgeted fees was paid up front. The following were also finalised:
  mentor and candidate induction plans
  mentor and candidate induction tasks devised an uploaded into OneFile
  candidate data collection for C&G registration

Good strong communication links were forged during the Pilot between the Co-ordinator, Assessor and C&G Lead Internal Quality Assurer. This was managed via phone calls, emails and the internet using Zoom and other screen-sharing software for meetings and action planning.

It was very important that the Amanda Sails kept her two roles separate – only logging in as Assessor during the Pilot except for IQA training as OneFile Centre Manager. This ensured accurate records of activity for each role.

Candidates

It was necessary to work with a few Companies who already had experience of OneFile (through the LCAS Pilot) as well as a few who are coming to OneFile with no working knowledge. We also needed to ensure a mix of candidates to test the mechanisms and log time spent on management and support. Some were ex-LCAS Pilot apprentices who have worked with OneFile and the rest did not have this experience - similar case with mentors. We would then have a good comparator between those already familiar with the OneFile System and those who started from scratch.

A selection criteria document was prepared for C&G approval. However, this was not needed as all 10 candidates were already known to Company representatives and/or mentors. Going forward this might initially be the case but cannot be a given so the selection criteria would be used.

Participation involved 7 Livery Companies and 10 candidates:
- Carpenters x 1
- Constructors x 1
- Masons x 2
- Plumbers x 2
- Wax Chandlers x 2
- Wheelwrights x 1
- World Traders x 1

Three candidates were previous LCAS apprentices with OneFile experience. One candidate wanted to undertake a higher level PRA but this was not possible as we only had approval for Level 4. She requested a Learning & Development PRA rather than Leadership & Management and this was agreed. Understandably this candidate's portfolio was outstanding as she was obviously working at a higher level.

Candidate-mentor circumstances varied: two Plumber candidates were working on site with one mentor, which speeded up unit completion. The rest of the candidates did not have any face-to-face contact with their mentors.

Whilst assembling candidate details required for C&G registration, it was necessary to establish whether any candidates had any learning difficulties, disabilities (e.g. visual or hearing impairment, mental health difficulty), concern about working on this award (i.e. written descriptions, reflective accounts), or any health issues (e.g. temporary illness, post-viral, accident). One candidate who had dyslexia and was already known to us as a former LCAS apprentice, having had prior experience of OneFile and the various options for evidence presentation.

C&G registration was delayed till 31st March due to:
- extracting final candidate information for registration.
- avoiding any drop outs by giving the candidates three weeks to ensure they were going to continue on the programme - once registered it is not possible to swap a candidate out and replace with another.

Mentors

A selection criteria document was produced for C&G.
Four mentors were initially Livery Company contacts who took on the mentor role.
Two mentors were already known to LCAS through a previous pilot so they were familiar with OneFile.
Five mentors produced excellent contextualised standards which really helped candidates understand the unit requirements.

The mentors were absolutely essential assisting with criteria understanding and linking evidence to criteria etc. [I agree but did they all fulfil this role? Amanda did a lot of the heavy lifting] One mentor would have liked to have a face to face meeting with her candidate. This would not be the norm in the future.

Action plans were available in the OneFile resources area - 3 mentors used their own documents.
Evidence of 1-2-1's was down to mentors' choice – formalise this going forward and include as evidence.

<u>Induction Sessions</u>

Delivered by AS in Centre Manager role.

Mentors' induction was on the day before the candidates'. In future it would be a great advantage to have more time between the inductions to allow fellow mentor contact and support.

Induction tasks were designed to boost the start and get the candidates going while the assessor was on holiday. Not completed fully by all candidates, however this generally worked well. Some candidates took longer than anticipated to get going, as did a few of the mentor. Candidates were pointed towards using their CVs for the skills scan – not all completed this and a couple were very scant. One company drafted their own skills scan (Plumbers).

Candidates found the induction tasks really helpful – a mentor has suggested that it would be useful to see the mapping of these tasks across the units.

Mentors had access to all contextualised standards in OneFile resources area

Recordings of candidate and mentor inductions were uploaded to OneFile resources area.
Six candidates watched the recording afterwards – two were unable to attend induction session
Three candidates had already worked with OneFile so didn't need to watch the recording.
Three mentors watched the recording afterwards.

Induction is critical. Best done in cohorts rather than piecemeal and must be completed if a candidate is to proceed.

<u>OneFile Management Experience</u>

All evidence, tracking and assessment was evidenced through the OneFile ePortfolio system covering:
- data management
- resources area – User Guides, How To Guides, induction videos, resources folders
- individual ePortfolios containing:
  - activity log
  - personalised progression
  - tracking of standard achievement
  - reflective journal
  - folder for evidence upload
  - action plan
  - assessment and internal quality assurance feedback
  - email hub for contact with Co-ordinator, Mentor and Assessor

Issues:
- One of the Journal feature buttons wasn't working. The Project Co-ordinator raised this with OneFile and it was fixed, however very few candidates used this feature.
- Resources area – the assessor could not upload the 1-2-1's report evidence into the folders in the resource area. The assessor emailed the documentation to Pilot Co-ordinator to upload onto the resources area on OneFile, ready for the EQA to sample.
- Sample evidence – exemplar evidence was not shared with candidates at the start as it was felt that this might be intimidating. However this proved very useful for a few candidates towards the end of the pilot.   This is something that mentors should pick up on.
- Lead IQA not having access to Resources Area – this was a OneFile issue on the permissions.

The OneFile system enabled the team to identify the lack of activity, logging in times and progression through detailed reporting. The assessor was able to target candidates with specific tasks, offers of a

1-2-1, signposting evidence against criteria etc. Again going forward mentors will be encouraged to be pro-active.

One candidate failed to engage fully with the ePortfolio despite positive encouragement. A couple of candidates did not get going soon after induction and then felt a bit of pressure coming up to the deadlines.

Evidence

All evidence was uploaded into ePortfolios. There was a little confusion with some evidence titles not relating to the content. This should be made clearer in future inductions.

A variety of evidence could be submitted:
- Case Study
- Professional Discussion
- Project Description
- Reflective Account
- Witness Testimony
- Work Product

Formal professional discussion and witness testimony were not used - something to be highlighted in the induction? An informal assessor report on one candidate regarding specific evidence for one unit was used.

One Mentor included statements at the end of candidate's evidence. This could be formalised in a witness statement to add to the evidence.

The Assessor was very active giving extra 1-2-1s to get evidence uploaded and linked to criteria. This was time consuming and a task that, in future, mentors should be expected to take on.

Progress

The Pilot was planned to run over three months. However, two extensions were granted to enable three final candidates to complete - two did, but one is still to finish.

With six units to achieve and a start date in March 2023:
- by middle of April - three candidates were completing units
- early May - four further candidates were completing units
- April 22 – first full completion
- May 8 – four more full completions
- by mid-June – nine candidates had fully completed.

The 10th candidate still sits at 40% but would be 85% if the uploaded evidence was linked to assessment criteria. He was given two extensions to enable completion, but he was extremely busy and was not confident that he was good enough. Offers of help from both assessor and mentor were not taken up and he ran out of time. An interim verification sample was taken and a report was submitted by the Pilot Co-ordinator to the External Quality Assurer who has confirmed that he can complete in the Autumn.

Assessment

The Assessor kept detailed records and all mapping was through the OneFile Gap Analysis, a key feature in the portfolio that shows what is needed to complete any gaps.

There was a delay in the initial assessments; some candidates had assessment evidence in their eportfolios, but the assessor could not assess, give feedback or sign off the candidates' work until they were registered with City & Guilds on The Walled Garden (online secure administration system). The

assessor explained this to the candidates during the initial 1-2-1's. As soon as the candidates were registered with C&G, the assessor had a huge workload of assessments to mark (including creating bespoke detailed feedback for each individual assessment) for each candidate. The detailed feedback was given in this way because it was a pilot and we were aiming to be given the ultimate confidence for direct claim status. In future the feedback could be reduced timewise.

The Assessor was very thorough in checking through all evidence and she provided comprehensive, detailed feedback. All candidates commented on how helpful she was, and she received a glowing report from the External Quality Assurer for 'exceptional feedback …… so constructive, detailed and comprehensive ….. she hadn't seen better'.

Quality Assurance / Standardisation

Internal quality assurance was slow in starting due to IQA's illness, also in combination with other factors including Assessor's holiday delaying assessment.

The interim sampling and standardisation with the Lead IQA was very helpful for refining feedback:
- confirming evidence was sufficient
- refining feedback from assessor to candidates and IQA to assessor
- suggesting additional types of evidence – images and videos authenticate with faces
- recommending authentication by copies of meetings, screen shots of emails
- discussing mentor statements
- currency of evidence – more recent examples were needed from two candidates, the rule being two years
- confirming the good quality of evidence coming through over all
- ensuring that assessor and IQA should be referring to VARCS constantly - VARCS principles: Valid, Authentic, Sufficient, Current and Reliable.

The IQA ensured that sampled evidence confirms that the Assessor is consistent with assessments.

The IQA oversampled to ensure evidence met VARCS principals, going over already sampled assessments. There will be less sampling required in the future cohorts.

The C&G Lead Internal Quality Assurer has been a very supportive critical friend giving extremely useful guidance and encouragement to both assessor and IQA throughout the development process and the delivery of the pilot. She also gave advice in the standardisation process directing Assessor and IQA to look deeper to ensure that VARCS principles are met, and directing the IQA to produce more meaningful feedback to the assessor.

External Verification

The C&G External Quality Assurer (EQA) was originally booked to carry out external verification sampling in June. However the standardisation meeting in mid-May had identified some actions for both assessor and IQA to complete ahead of the remote sampling, and there were still a few learners who had not completed their eportfolios. Therefore the date was amended to the beginning of July so that we could show that the identified actions had been completed and all candidates would be finished prior to the sampling.

The IQA produced a detailed sampling action plan with comments about assessor feedback, any actions required or taken, and the standard and sufficiency of evidence. She also produced a report on 10th candidate's partial achievement.

The EQA sampled five candidates' portfolios, interviewed one of these candidates over the phone, and reviewed records of staff CPD and records of standardisation.

The feedback session via Teams with the Project Co-ordinator/IQA and Lead IQA was very positive.

The EQA commented on the management systems which gave two levels of assurance via the LCAS Pilot Co-ordinator and OneFile, and highlighted the exceptional assessor feedback to candidates being constructive, detailed and comprehensive.

The EQA outlined her interview with one candidate who had been confused at the start of the programme about the level and volume of evidence but had found helpful advice on the C&G website. The candidate appreciated the Assessor's excellent and very helpful feedback and felt privileged to have been chosen to participate in the Pilot. The EQA commended the outstanding portfolio of one candidate.

The EQA had some comments about the OneFile Manage Tab links to witness testimony which have been added to the Pilot recommendations.

Some minor actions for future improvement were highlighted:
- candidates selecting correct titles for assessments from types of evidence
- use of witness statements in the future
- candidates' journal / notes section - use more
- more variety of evidence – recordings of 1-2-1s, witness statements, videos
- data for external verification sampling in place in a timely manner – 15 working days before sampling date

The EAQ recommended agreeing an action plan for the 10th candidate's completion in Autumn 2023 which should implement some of the above actions.

The EQA produced a report recommending that the LCAS centre is classed as low risk Centre and given Direct Claim Status. Going forward, we will be able to arrange direct certification in the future and an EQA does not have to sample each candidate as they complete. A very positive outcome.

Feedback

Questionnaires were completed by nine candidates and eight Livery volunteers including seven mentors

Their feedback has been most helpful and constructive. A summary is included in Appendix 1.

Costs

The original 2019 feasibility study laid out activities required to run a 'Hub & Spoke' pilot ePortfolio PRA programme for candidate support and assessment, covering recommended Pilot Co-ordinator / Administrator, IQA and Assessor tasks and hours, and giving an outline costing of £28,000.

Costings assumed that the participating Livery Companies will provide pro bono support of the pilot, promoting and publicising the pilot throughout their Company, identifying and engaging employers, candidates and mentors to take part in the pilot. The costs of the small pilot programme for 6-10 learners were primarily related to the time needed by the people involved to carry out their roles and for use of the ePortfolio itself.

These costings were based on the assumption that none of the individuals taking these roles had any experience of OneFile so would need training and support. In the event the Assessor had expert knowledge of OneFile and the Co-ordinator / IQA had working knowledge, and with the consolidation of the three roles into two it was possible to reduce some of the costs.

Phase 1 Development costs £4,710 were covered in full by LCSC from accumulated reserves.
Phase 2 Delivery costs £16,773 were covered by fundraising (£11,250) and the balance from LCSC reserves.
Cross-Livery engagement and evaluation costs were not included in original feasibility study costings.
ACTUAL OVERALL COSTS – £21,483

An overspend of ca. £3,000 was due to:
- longer set up required – some tasks could not be undertaken before C&G qualification approval

- C&G qualification approval incurred costs not foreseen in the feasibility study
- inevitable delays on induction tasks and some candidate inaction
- additional 1-2-1 candidate support provided by AS
- Assessor's highly detailed feedback
- two extensions given for candidates to complete
- underestimated hours for Lead IQA completing admin tasks

Recommendations

Programme length: the two factors for completion were time and motivation. Whilst some of the candidates were working at a higher level than Level 4 and could potentially have completed the programme within three months, it became clear that most were working very long hours so did not have much spare time to devote to the collation of evidence. The motivation factor was clear, those candidates who immediately got to grips with OneFile and the standard (some watching the recording of their induction for clarification) were the ones who completed well within the 3 months. The candidate selection process should take account of candidate circumstances. In future candidates will be able to select which cohort to join to suit their circumstances. It should be the aim normally to complete in a maximum of 4 months.

The C&G candidate registration is valid for three years, however, whilst this would enable the odd candidate who needed extra time to complete (LCAS being pro-active and supportive), it would be very challenging to have an open-ended programme, and very poor use of the limited availability of Assessor and Co-ordinator.

Running two cohorts of up to fifteen candidates per year would enable OneFile annual licences to be used twice in one year. This would also be within the current capacity of the Assessor and Co-ordinator/IQA.

Programme timing: LCAS continues to manage approximately three bee farmer apprentices per year over their 3 year apprenticeships therefore it is likely that there will be further bee farmer PRA candidates. Bee farmers are extremely busy during Spring / Summer working all the daylight hours. The delay in the pilot start meant that it clashed with this frenetic period. If the Pilot had commenced in Autumn 2022 as originally planned, it may be that the 10th candidate could have completed the programme. The recommended two cohorts per year would give scope for scheduling to fit the bee farmers into their less busy winter months.

Inductions:
- Schedule mentor and candidate inductions further apart (two weeks) to allow fellow mentor contact and support, and to give them time to get to know OneFile
- Wording to both candidates and mentors to be tightened up, and include encouragement to take up their 1-2-1s with their mentor
- Go through the standards and induction tasks in more detail
- Evidence – flag up informal methods of collection: recorded conversations, witness statements, assessor / IQA feedback reports. These will be added to the assessment task list on OneFile.

Candidates' induction tasks:
- Send a definite task for a skills scan and emphasise the importance of using CV for this, with examples straight away
- Highlight importance of personal statement on life journey so far
- Draw attention to exemplar evidence sample
- Map induction tasks across criteria - for mentors too
- Create short induction videos specifically signposting to areas on the portfolio. These could be used as part of tasks for the candidates to ensure full use of the portfolio.

Mentors:
- Keep formal records of 1-2-1 conversations and action plans
- Use witness statement area

- Mentors to include their statements at the end of candidate's evidence as a witness statement to add to the evidence

Candidate support:
- Set up forum in OneFile for contact with each other and support from mentors

Documentation:
- Formal witness statement and action plan
- Handbooks – extend the different evidence descriptions
- Formal mentor record of candidate contact through action plans plus a form that mentors can keep on their computers, adding information throughout and then uploading at the end of the programme.
- Contextualised standards – more detailed mapping of evidence requirements to standards criteria

Evidence:
- Capture excellent pieces of evidence from current candidates to use in the future in addition to exemplar evidence samples provided by C&G. Ensure permission is sought from candidates.
- Candidates to ensure that images of demos, attendance at events include their faces for authenticity
- Increase use of video / sound recordings
- Authenticity of evidence can also be assured by signatures, dates etc on documentation of meetings, discussions, appraisals etc.
- Some candidates might not have formal procedures, forms etc. for appraisals, customer / client feedback etc. This can be evidenced by recorded conversations with employer, colleague, line manager and mentor. Actively get email customer feedback – could be challenging for small businesses. The Assessor and/or IQA could speak with employer / mentor and formalise in a feedback report – conversations can provide evidence. Unit 6 – informal methods of collection / analysis etc. Flag up at beginning so that witness statements / recorded conversations can be set up.

OneFile:
- Use Journal facility
- Use Manage Tab links to witness testimony and information about expert witness.
- The EQA used the learning journey facility which shows target progress, actual progress and activities. This feature can be seen by the mentors.
- Progress reports for both candidates and mentors are available through the Learning Journey facility showing actual progress, target progress and activities.

Pilot Costs v Sustainable Costs

For the pilot, the time required for assessment was based on a scenario where the Livery Companies / mentors had no prior knowledge of the procedures nor the opportunity to contextualise the evidence requirements based on the normal working practices of their respective sectors. The pilot therefore allowed for pre-training before formal assessment can begin. In reality five mentors produced contextualised standards so they already had knowledge of the requirements and did not need the pre induction training.

A key objective of the pilot is to demonstrate how much time will be required once the procedures have settled down and Livery mentors are up to speed. It was reasonable to expect that the cost per candidate could be amended to a more competitive price at Level 4 whilst providing an enhanced service. It should also be noted that the cost of the time spent by the Assessor and IQA was significantly below market rates. Overall this whole scheme provides a much-enhanced service including pro bono mentoring by trade / profession specific mentors who also produce contextualised standards.

Post-apprenticeship / training candidates (working at Level 4) will generally need more guidance than more experienced candidates working at higher levels at the start of the programme for the understanding of criteria and evidence requirements.

The Future - Sustainability

We are now a fully approved satellite centre for the PRA. The whole system of processes, procedures and resources is now set up and with a few amendments to embellish the programme with the EQA's recommendations we will be ready to move forward.

In future, the full per candidate cost will be covered by the individual (= commitment and recognition of benefits) or their sponsor. Some Companies and / or employers may wish to fund / sponsor candidates and one Livery Company has already ring fenced an annual budget for this.

LCAS Board to establish a financially stable model - consider recommendations and draw up a proposal setting out the ongoing costs and fee structure to cover management, assessment and quality control.

It was originally hoped that another cohort would be run in Autumn 2023, however with the delayed start of the Pilot and the extended timescale, the evaluation circulation was delayed. The cross-Livery engagement will continue through the Autumn with follow ups hopefully establishing potential candidates for Spring 2024.

Promotion by Livery Companies, Company members / employers, Trade associations, LCAS website and Livery Committee website.

There is potential for a good number of Level 4 PRAs from several Companies which would keep the Centre running for at least a couple of years, increasing as more Companies become interested.
To offer higher level PRAs would necessitate a C&G approval process for each level at commensurate costs which would also include additional training for mentors. There would also be capacity issues for administration, mentoring and assessor.

PRA assessment does not require technical knowledge or expertise in any trade or profession; they are about generic leadership, project management and personal development. It was originally thought that the vast majority of all Liverymen would have the necessary professional and business experience to be able to undertake PRA assessments. However, C&G requires assessors to be formally trained and qualified (both Assessor and IQA were required to submit their Assessment and IQA qualification certificates), and going forward any additional assessors would need to be listed as assessors with C&G, therefore there would be a cost to this, both monetarily and time wise. It would be worth considering sourcing another C&G approved assessor as capacity increases. The hourly rates for assessor and internal quality assessor for the pilot were lower than outside Assessor and IQA rates. These do vary but a rate between £50-£70 per hour would seem to be more realistic.

It may be that additional assessors will be required in the future and Livery Company mentors could undertake a formal assessment qualification if they wished, but this would come at a cost. However, it is possible that mentors might wish to undertake a PRA for themselves in the future having gained a depth of understanding of the requirements supporting their candidates.

The Pilot has been so successful with extremely positive feedback from the EQA - we would not want to jeopardise our recently granted Direct Claim Status

Cross Livery Engagement

Livery engagement formed an important part of the Pilot as there was a lack of understanding of the PRAs which are not qualifications but sit alongside them as awards to recognise professional leadership and management standards.

Research commenced on each Livery Company's website to get an idea of areas of support, education, awards. This initial scan ruled out those Companies whose objectives did not meet the Pilot vision and outcomes, and those modern Companies whose members already have access to leadership and management training or run courses themselves.

Occasionally it took time to get to speak to the right person in the Company, but generally there has been a keen interest to learn more. Companies need time to discuss and fully understand possible PRA applications, to then take this further to relevant committees.

The Pilot Co-ordinator made a good start with Company research in late March then contacting them with phone conversations, Zooms and some follow up meetings. Health issues in April / May slowed down this process but contacts continued to be followed up with the assistance of a member of the LCAS Board. Some 88 Companies have been contacted and a number of these will be discussing PRAs in September committee meetings. Companies are waiting for the evaluation before further internal discussions and almost all Companies will need contacting again.

Responses so far:
- positive responses have been received from most Companies
- very few Companies have dismissed PRA outright
- many are taking information back to appropriate committees for further discussions
- some have directed us to trade organisations for initial discussions
- most have come back for clarification / more information
- 12 Companies would definitely like to proceed with PRA on Autumn committee agendas

Initial findings:
- several Companies are considering joining the Master Certificate Scheme as a route into PRA through the Journeyman level. Some are already identifying possible Journeyman candidates.
- one Company will make an annual financial commitment to support candidates
- one Company is keen to develop their contextual standard in the Autumn with a view to running a couple of candidates through PRA in the next cohort
- a few Companies are considering joining the Livery Companies Skills Council, including a couple who may re-join after a lapsed few years.
- one Company could potentially fill an entire cohort in due course

Possible applications of PRA discussed with Companies include:
- Embed PRA within training programmes sponsored or supported by the Livery.
- Promote PRA at Level 4 (Licentiateship) to newly-qualified apprentices and other technical students in trades related to the Livery, as a means of supporting career development and enhancing Livery engagement with young people.
- Promote PRA to those in mid-career seeking higher-level recognition of their experience in applying knowledge and skills, including those who might not have acquired formal technical qualifications (career changers, self-employed and self-taught might be candidates).
- PRA could provide benchmarks linked to entry-level membership of Livery Companies (examples might be at Apprentice, Yeoman or equivalent levels, depending on the respective traditions of Livery Companies).
- Integrate into the Master Certificate Scheme (MCS) at Journeyman level.
- Over time, increasing numbers of PRA recipients could provide a network of expertise to help mentor and support younger generations on their career paths.
- Livery Companies might be well placed to encourage related trade and professional bodies to promote PRA.

The Pilot Co-ordinator has also had initial conversations with six outside organisations who are all keen to learn more. A further eight are scheduled for contact.

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire Summary

9 candidates completed questionnaires – results:
- 8/9 had a clear understanding of the award programme
- 8/9 received adequate advice from your Livery Company
- 9/9 understand the role of their mentor in helping them complete your Award
- 9/9 agreed that they received adequate information and communication from the Pilot Co-ordinator regarding the start of the programme, induction, additional evidence, programme completion
- Support from mentors: All received emails and telephone support. 3 had additional Teams and Zoom sessions, 5 had regular reviews, 2 had weekly face to face meetings (working onsite with mentor)

- Issues that impacted on their programme:
  - 7 had no issues
  - uncertainty at the start of the course with what evidence was required
  - 2 had personal issues – one sorted with assessor, the other continued to have both personal and time issues and is still to complete

- Comments about the induction session:
  - helpful and informative
  - helped to understand the requirements and who to contact
  - useful in understanding how the pilot was going to work
  - more information at the beginning regarding the course as a whole would have been useful

- Comments about navigating OneFile ePortfolio and uploading evidence:
  - not too difficult x 1
  - quite easy x 2
  - very easy x 4
  - unit submission process was a little confusing

- Assessor contact:
  - all had 1-2-1 phone calls and emails
  - texts and messages via OneFile
  - correct communication method was used, a call/video call with screen sharing for more in depth catch ups. Emails when it was just a quick relay of information

- Assessor guidance, support and feedback:
  - good at identifying and linking evidence on OneFile
  - very useful
  - assistance with feedback on what had been submitted, what was being considered to submit and what criteria it would hit was invaluable. She was very good at not over complicating linking evidence and just assisted the whole time.
  - very helpful, feedback was useful for subsequent assessments
  - she really helped
  - gave advice on quick and easy ways to link through evidence
  - feedback always allowed progress going forward easier

- How will gaining C&G Professional Recognition Award enhance your career?
  - building up my career to the next level
  - helpful to reflect on some workplace achievements
  - give recognition in stone masonry

- o demonstrates my commitment to my career in bee farming
- o evidence of competency in leadership
- o allow me to be able to manage more projects effectively
- o push me to a higher level of professional recognition in trade association
- o confidence, ability to go for new roles, further learning having completed this award

- 8 candidates would be interested in completing a higher level PRA in the future – 1 stated '100% without a doubt'

- Additional comments:
    - o a positive experience that I am glad to have had the opportunity to complete
    - o appreciation for having the opportunity to improve my knowledge and receive this award
    - o a fairly straight forward process
    - o a perfect timescale and the mentoring side worked very well with understanding what was required
    - o assessor was invaluable in helping with 1-2-1's
    - o really appreciate all the support and communication assessor and co-ordinator provided throughout the course
    - o thank you for your help and support through the course - it was invaluable! Zoom meetings really helped me focus up and have a clear goal to work towards
    - o 1 candidate finished in good time and would have liked an update midway through
    - o 1 candidate felt that the programme was more focused on reflective accounts of past events/achievements rather than how to improve professional qualities from industry standards

Mentors:
- all understood their role and responsibilities as Mentor
- all received 'good contact, advice, and support' from the Pilot Co-ordinator

- comments on induction:
    - o helpful
    - o contact with fellow mentors would have been beneficial
    - o a lot to take in - slow down the session a little
    - o very clear
    - o essential, especially for those with no knowledge of OneFile
- 3 watched the recording afterwards

- Mentor contact and support:
    - o regular live catch-ups on progress
    - o virtual meetings, emails and text messages, telephone calls
    - o messaging through OneFile
    - o reminders to upload evidence and prompts for 1-2-1 sessions

- Navigating the OneFile ePortfolio system:
    - o relatively easy, especially in candidates' profiles
    - o system appeared complex but once in use the flow of info and requirements were logical
    - o complex to begin with – evidence uploaded did not show…..also slow in acknowledging that evidence was received and being dealt with
    - o very clear what counts as evidence
    - o a bit clunky - hard to tell which bits were missing. Used Dropbox instead checking unit by unit with mentor giving feedback to candidate to add before uploading to OneFile
    - o 1 mentor did not access OneFile at all – only through screen sharing with her candidate

- Contact with the Assessor: [is this mentor contact with assessor?]
    - o 4 x not required following induction

- o 1 x yes - help to get a candidate motivated. Praised assessor on the amount of availability she offered
- o 2 x yes - very helpful

- External issues that impacted mentoring role:
  - o Yes – the course clashed with a busy time for both candidates
  - o 1 x poor eyesight impacted use of OneFile
  - o 1 x online did sometimes hamper the flow of conversations and candidate's change in role at the time of the assessment period cut time available to engage and complete. However, limited impact on the overall outcome.
  - o 1 x full time work and other committee commitments limited the time to dedicate to being a mentor
  - o 3 x none – one mentor worked in the same department as 2 candidates so was able to assign them time to complete the required standards

- Support, advise and mentor candidates in the future:
  - o   6 x yes, 1 x unsure

- Additional comments:
  - o I mentored two candidates and ended up with one very self-motivated one and one who needed a lot of help. So, I felt I saw the best and the worst of the scheme. On reflection timing of the qualification in regard to the candidates' workloads (i.e. thinking particularly of rural industries) is important.
  - o Having completed the level 5 PRA previously I found this to be similar. The online assessment portfolio was a different one however it was very similar - OneFile has far greater functionality. The Pilot has been a success and could help others achieve success as well as highlighting the great work that the City of London and its' Livery Companies' support.
  - o Those who aren't digitally able might be excluded by OneFile difficulties. Units are couched in a generalised management speak. This too might exclude some candidates, who may well have the exact practical skills which we are trying to encourage, but struggle to describe their evidence.
  - o Great scheme for mentees to further their career. I found OneFile very easy to navigate. Jo and Amanda have been very supportive throughout the process.
  - o I understand why specific timescales were set for each stage to fit in with the overall pilot programme timescales. However, a bit more time would be helpful to allow for initial discussions which would assist the candidate to formulate the evidence and then the mentor to review. Maybe a process by which candidates can meet up (online) in a forum where they can discuss their evidence and provide support and advice to each other would be good.
  - o It would be handy if the system could churn out auto reports weekly to show progress of candidates.
  - o Suggest 6 months rather than 3
  - o A lot of value – very positive
  - o Regular discussions / reflective conversations very useful
  - o Will use PRA as USP for getting young people into the Company – formalise – give credit / incentive for Livery membership. Company has a Journeyman Scheme – include PRA in the future
  - o Candidates – quantitative analysis and selling to Livery Companies – main benefits

APPENDIX 2

Documentation List

PRA Handbook
Candidate Selection Criteria
Mentor Selection Criteria
PRA Standard
Contextualised Standards – Carpenters, Plumbers, Bee Farmers, Wheelwrights, Masons
Candidate Action Plan
Candidate Induction Tasks
Pilot Schedule