



Rt Hon Daisy Cooper MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA  
United Kingdom

30 June 2020

Dear Ms Cooper,

Thank you for your recent parliamentary question regarding National Pool Lifeguard Qualifications (NPLQs) and the potential merits for extending the expiry date of these qualifications.

NPLQs are qualifications offered by IQL UK, a trading subsidiary of the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) and endorsed by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA).

CIMSPA also endorses the Level 2 Award in Pool Lifeguarding offered by Safety Training Awards (STA), the awarding organisation of the Swimming Teachers Association. In addition, Highfield Qualifications offer a Level 2 Award in Pool Lifeguarding which has been developed in accordance with the regulations and guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive and SkillsActive - the Sector Skills Council for the Active, Leisure and Well-being sector.

We know there are typically around 30,000 certifications each year across the five available qualifications in this area, including the three NPLQs. Over 23,000 of these certifications are for IQL UK's NPLQs.

For qualifications due to be completed this summer with learners registered before the end of July we know that:

- IQL UK has extended the NPLQ assessment window to 30 September 2020. In addition, they are providing adapted assessments where appropriate, that is where they are not at the expense of the required assessment criteria. The assessment of Lifeguard competency in practical/rescue skills will continue to be required to take place in the pool and learners will continue to be required to achieve the assessment criteria before the qualification can be awarded.
- Highfield Qualifications are also providing adapted assessments where appropriate.

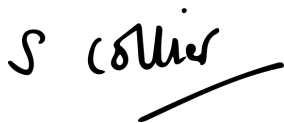
- The STA Level 2 Award in Pool Lifeguarding is out of scope of our Extraordinary Regulatory Framework, the special arrangements we introduced because of COVID-19. This means STA can still run assessments for this qualification and are still required to comply with our existing rules.

The above arrangements enable learners who are currently undertaking these qualifications to progress through parts of the qualifications, and to be assessed on their occupational competence as soon as pools reopen.

The expiry date of qualifications already achieved and held, does not fall under our remit; this is set by RLSS UK as the lifesaving governing body. However, we know that that all RLSS UK and IQL UK regulated and non-regulated qualifications due to expire between 16 March 2020 - 30 September 2020 will be extended until 30 September 2020. RLSS UK announced this extension<sup>1</sup> on 3 June 2020. This reflects the HSE statement for First Aid qualifications<sup>2</sup>. RLSS UK have committed to notifying all qualification holders of this new expiration date.

You may find it helpful to review our guidance for students and centres, which we have updated following the recent consultation and our subsequent decisions<sup>3</sup>. In addition, we have developed an interactive tool which sets out the approach awarding organisations are taking for each qualification - <https://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk/> - and also released the underpinning data so that centres can review the arrangements for all qualifications.

Yours sincerely,



**Sally Collier**  
Chief Regulator

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rlss.org.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-update-for-tas>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm#non-healthcare>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>