City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Climbing Trees and Aerial Rescue (0039-22)

Version 1.6 (March 2025)

Qualification Handbook

Qualification at a glance

Subject area	Chainsaw and Related Operations
City & Guilds number	0039-22
Age group	16+
Entry requirements	Candidate must meet minimum age requirements. Centres must ensure that any pre-requisites stated in the *What is this qualification about?* section are met.
Assessment	To gain this qualification, candidates must successfully achieve the following assessments: • one to one practical assessment with oral questioning by an NPTC City & Guilds approved assessor.
Grading	Met/not met
Approvals	Full centre approval Qualification approval
Support materials	Qualification Handbook (candidates) Assessment materials (approved assessment centres only).
Registration and certification	Consult the Walled Garden/Online Catalogue for last registration and certification dates.

Title and level	City & Guilds qualification number	Regulatory reference number	GLH	TQT
City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Climbing Trees and Aerial Rescue	0039-22	603/7355/6	40	44

Version and date	Change detail	Section
1.0	First version	
1.1/1.2 October 2021	AO name added to qualification title	Throughout
1.3 August 2022	Formatting changes Updated logo Updated 'Sources of general information'	Throughout Front cover Appendix 1
1.4 August 2024	Update of Quality Assurance Statement Formatting changes	Centre Requirements
1.5 October 2024	Formatting changes	Throughout
1.6 March 2025	Updated Quality Assurance Updated Inclusion and Diversity	Throughout

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1 Introduction

This document tells you what you need to do to deliver the **City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Climbing Trees and Aerial Rescue (0039-22)**

Area	Description
Who is the qualification for?	Individuals who climb trees as part of their work in arboriculture, forestry or other industries. It will provide the individual with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to climb trees and perform aerial rescue safely and to industry standards in line with current legislation.
What does the qualification cover?	It covers risk assessment, emergency planning, legislation, industry best practice, environmental considerations, tree condition and working at height assessments, equipment and systems, tree climbing, aerial rescue by climbing suitability, rescue plan and implementation.
What opportunities for progression are there?	This qualification will support progression into employment where tree climbing and rescue is part of the role. Safe operational skills are key to efficient use, good working practice and preventing accidents, leading to business benefits in terms of less machinery damage and down time.
Who did we develop the qualification with?	Developed with City & Guilds NPTC Stakeholders, associates and industry representatives.
Is it part of an apprenticeship framework or initiative?	No

2 Qualification structure

To achieve the **City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Climbing Trees and Aerial Rescue (0039-22)** learners must achieve:

City & Guilds unit number	Unit title	GLH
Mandatory units:		
Learners must achieve or must have achieved this mandatory unit.		
203	Tree climbing and aerial rescue	40

Total Qualification Time

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

TQT consists of the following two elements:

- the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and
- an estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by - but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of - a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other, appropriate provider of education or training.

Title and level	GLH	TQT
City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Climbing Trees and Aerial Rescue	40	44

3 Centre requirements

Approval

Full approval

To offer this qualification, new centres will need to gain both centre and qualification approval. Please refer to the document **Centre Approval process: Quality Standards** for further information. Please email **qasupport@cityandguilds.com** for further information on the approval process.

Centre staffing

Staff delivering these qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they meet the following requirements:

- be technically competent in the areas in which they are delivering
- be able to deliver across the breadth and depth of the content of the qualification being taught
- have recent relevant teaching and assessment experience in the specific area they will be teaching, or be working towards this
- demonstrate continuing CPD.

Centre staff should familiarise themselves with the structure, content and assessment requirements of the qualification before delivering a course programme.

Physical resources

Centres must be able to demonstrate that they have access to the equipment and technical resources required to deliver this qualification and its assessments.

Assessment Guidance for the Assessor

Staff assessing these qualifications must be approved Certificate of Competence City & Guilds NPTC Assessors and must be independent and cannot have been involved with the training of the Candidate. This qualification can only be assessed by an Assessor who is suitably qualified and meets the requirements of the awarding body.

Certificate of Competence City & Guilds NPTC Assessors must meet the following requirements:

- show competence and provide evidence of industry expertise in the qualification/s they wish to assess
- hold the qualification as a candidate and have been technically evaluated as an Assessor
- be up to date with their verification and relevant first aid
- demonstrate continuing technically relevant CPD Compliance with these requirements is a pre-requisite for Assessors remaining on the list of approved Assessors.

Verification is a process of monitoring assessment; it is an essential check to confirm that the assessment procedures are being carried out in the way City & Guilds has laid down. The overall aim of verification is to establish a system of quality assurance that is acceptable in terms of both credibility and cost effectiveness and approved Assessors will be subject to a regular visit by the Verifier at a time when assessments are being undertaken.

A selection of assessment reports completed by the Assessor will be evaluated by a City & Guilds approved Quality Consultant.

Safe Practice

Appropriate PPE must always be worn. All equipment must be operated in such a way that the Candidate, Assessor, other persons, animals or other equipment are not endangered.

If these conditions are not observed this will result in the Candidate not meeting the required standard.

Validation of Equipment

Any item(s) equipment used for the assessment must comply with current legal requirements.

Additional information may be sought from the relevant manufacturer's instruction book, operators' manual, product label/database or any other Government/Government Agency publication.

Appeals and Equal opportunities

Centres must have their own auditable, appeals procedures. If a Candidate is not satisfied with the examination conditions or a Candidate feels the opportunity for examination is being denied, the Centre Manager should, in the first instance, address the problem. If however, the problem cannot be resolved, City & Guilds will arbitrate and a Principal Verifier may be approached to offer independent advice.

All appeals must be clearly documented by the Centre Manager and made available to the Principal Verifier or City & Guilds if advice is required.

Should occasions arise when Centres are not satisfied with any aspect of the verification process, they should contact the Quality Assurance Manager at City & Guilds NPTC, 5-6 Giltspur Street, London, EC1A 9DE, UK Access to the qualification is open to all, irrespective of gender, race, creed or special needs. Subject to Health and Safety restrictions the Centre Manager should ensure that no learner is subjected to unfair discrimination on any grounds in relation to access to assessment and to the fairness of the assessment. QCA requires City & Guilds to monitor centres to check whether equal opportunities policies are being adhered to.

Quality assurance

Approved centres must have effective quality assurance systems to ensure optimum delivery and assessment of qualifications. Quality assurance includes initial centre approval, qualification approval and the centre's own internal procedures for monitoring quality. Centres are responsible for internal quality assurance and City & Guilds is responsible for external quality assurance. All external quality assurance processes reflect the minimum requirements for verified and moderated assessments, as detailed in the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS), section H2 of Ofqual's General Conditions. For more information on both CASS and City & Guilds Quality Assurance processes visit: the **What is CASS?** and **Quality Assurance Standards** documents on the City & Guilds website.

Standards and rigorous quality assurance are maintained by the use of:

- Internal quality assurance
- City & Guilds external quality assurance.

In order to carry out the quality assurance role, Internal Quality Assurers must

- have appropriate teaching and vocational knowledge and expertise
- have experience in quality management/internal quality assurance
- hold or be working towards an appropriate teaching/training/assessing qualification
- be familiar with the occupation and technical content covered within the qualification.

External quality assurance for the qualification will be provided by City & Guilds EQA process. EQAs are appointed by City & Guilds to approve centres, and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres. External quality assurance is carried out to ensure that assessment is valid and reliable, and that there is good assessment practice in centres.

The role of the EQA is to:

- provide advice and support to centre staff
- ensure the quality and consistency of assessments and marking/grading within and between centres by the use of systematic sampling
- provide feedback to centres and to City & Guilds.

Learner entry requirements

Learners must meet the minimum age requirements.

Age restrictions

This qualification is approved for learners aged 16 or above.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Access arrangements are adjustments that allow candidates with disabilities, special educational needs, and temporary injuries to access the assessment and demonstrate their skills and knowledge without changing the demands of the assessment. These arrangements must be made before assessment takes place.

The Equality Act 2010 requires City & Guilds to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure at the start of a programme of learning that candidates will be able to access the requirements of the qualification.

Please refer to the JCQ access arrangements and reasonable adjustments and Access arrangements - when and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds for more information. Both are available on the City & Guilds website: **Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.**

4 Delivering the qualification

Initial assessment and induction

An initial assessment of each learner should be made before the start of their programme to identify:

- if the learner has any specific training needs
- support and guidance they may need when working towards their qualification.
- any units they have already completed or credit they have accumulated which is relevant to the qualification
- the appropriate type and level of qualification.

We recommend that centres provide an induction programme so the learner fully understands the requirements of the qualification, their responsibilities as a learner and the responsibilities of the centre. This information can be recorded on a learning contract.

Inclusion and diversity

City & Guilds is committed to improving inclusion and diversity within the way we work and how we deliver our purpose which is to help people and organisations develop the skills they need for growth.

More information and guidance to support centres in supporting inclusion and diversity through the delivery of City & Guilds qualifications can be found here:

Inclusion and diversity | City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)

Sustainability

City & Guilds are committed to net zero. Our ambition is to reduce our carbon emissions by at least 50% before 2030 and develop environmentally responsible operations to achieve net zero by 2040 or sooner if we can. City & Guilds is committed to supporting qualifications that support our customers to consider sustainability and their environmental footprint.

More information and guidance to support centres in developing sustainable practices through the delivery of City & Guilds qualifications can be found here:

Our Pathway to Net Zero | City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)

Centres should consider their own carbon footprint when delivering this qualification and consider reasonable and practical ways of delivering this qualification with sustainability in mind. This could include:

- reviewing purchasing and procurement processes (such as buying in bulk to reduce the amount of travel time and energy, considering and investing in the use of components that can be reused, instead of the use of disposable or single use consumables)
- reusing components wherever possible
- waste procedures (ensuring that waste is minimised, recycling of components is in place wherever possible)
- minimising water use and considering options for reuse/salvage as part of plumbing activities wherever possible.

Support materials

The following resources are available for this qualification:

Description	How to access
Candidate Handbook	www.nptc.org.uk
Assessment Pack (available only to assessors)	www.nptc.org.uk

5 Assessment

Assessment of the qualification

Assessment types			
Unit	**Title**	**Assessment method**	**Where to obtain assessment materials**
203	Tree climbing and aerial rescue	Oral Examination and Practical observation Centres may use the materials provided by City & Guilds.	www.nptc.org.uk

Assessment strategy

City & Guilds has written the practical observations with oral questioning to use with this qualification, live assessment materials can be downloaded by the assessor via the Assessment Pack from the NPTC website.

Time constraints

The following must be applied to the assessment of this qualification:

- Candidates must finish their assessment within 24 months of date of initial registration
- Assessments should take no longer than 1.5 – 3 hours
- Qualification registration is valid for two years.

6 Units

Structure of the units

These units each have the following:

- City & Guilds reference number
- title
- level
- guided learning hours (GLH)
- unit aim
- assessment type
- learning outcomes, which consist of several assessment criteria

Guidance for delivery of the units

This qualification consists of one **unit**. A unit describes what is expected of a competent person in particular aspects of their job.

Each **unit** is divided into l**earning outcomes** which describe in further detail the skills and knowledge that a candidate should possess.

Each **learning outcome** has a set of **assessment criteria** (performance and knowledge and understanding) which specify the desired criteria that must be satisfied before an individual can be said to have performed to the agreed standard.

Unit 203 Tree climbing and aerial rescue

Level:	2
GLH:	40
Assessment type:	Practical activities with oral assessment.
Aim:	The aim of this unit is to provide the learner with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to climb trees and perform aerial rescue.

Learning outcome

The learner will be able to:

LO1 Climb trees **(Criteria 1.1 – 1.5)**

Assessment criteria

AC1.1 Risk assessment, emergency planning
AC1.2 Legislation, industry guides and environmental factors
AC1.3 Tree condition and working at height assessments
AC1.4 Equipment and systems
AC1.5 Tree climbing

Topic 1.1

The risk assessment process may contain the following five steps:

- identify the hazards
- decide who might be harmed and how
- evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- record the findings and implement them
- review and update the assessment as necessary.

Hazards, risks and controls relevant to the site task.

Emergency planning relevant to a work site:

- site location
- grid reference
- what three words
- designated meeting place
- nearest access point
- street name/district
- type of access (public road/light vehicles, four-wheel drive)
- suitable helicopter landing area
- phone number of nearest doctors
- location of nearest accident and emergency hospital and phone number

- works manager contact details
- your own contact number/mobile number.

Topic 1.2

Key points from the legislation listed below.

Health and Safety at Work Act (HASWA):

- follow training received
- take reasonable care of their own and other people's safety.

Operator's responsibility under Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) regulations

- equipment should be subject to a pre use check by the climber
- a recorded interim inspection should be kept for equipment subject to high levels of wear.

Operator's responsibility under the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) regulations

- carry out equipment maintenance as per manufacturer's guidance
- correct storage of PPE.

Key point from the work at height regulation is:

- understand the methods to be used for working at height.

Industry guides relevant to Tree climbing and aerial rescue:

- Arboricultural Association AA technical guide 1 Tree climbing and aerial rescue.

Personal fall protection performance criteria:

- the system comprises of a primary system and a backup system
- should be attached to independent anchors where possible
- if there is no suitable independent anchor it should be installed over a shared anchor.

Working considerations in relation to tree climbing:

- the climbing ropes must be kept as taut as possible, and any slack must not exceed 500mm
- rope or cord used for friction hitches must be of a suitable type
- no potential fall distance exceeds 500mm
- karabiners must have a spring-loaded, self-locking gate that requires at least three distinct movements to open it.

Legal and environmental considerations:

- landowner's permission
- nesting birds
- bat roosts
- presence of other valuable flora and fauna.

Potential impacts:

- stops work from taking place
- delays work from taking place
- restricts work.

Potential environmental damage:

- damage to retained trees
- wildlife disturbance.

Appropriate responses:

- work sequence chosen to minimise subsequent damage to retained trees
- wildlife assessments completed prior to work.

Topic 1.3

Potential hazards that may be encountered:

- evidence of cavities, decay or decay fungi
- deadwood and broken branches
- dead or flaking bark
- V shaped unions
- cracks
- nesting insects
- the presence of power lines or telephone wires
- targets and obstacles underneath the tree.

Working at height assessment:

- can the work be carried out from ground level
- the use of a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) to prevent a fall
- the use of suitable equipment minimises the distance and consequence of a fall.

Species, condition of tree and time of year may affect tree climbing owing to:

- brittle timber characteristics leading to weaker anchor points
- dead, diseased or dying trees may prevent tree climbing taking place
- trees in leaf may reduce visibility and effective communication
- winter months may present problems such as windy conditions, wet or icy branches, extremities of cold
- summer months may present problems such as pollens, dusts, irritants.

Topic 1.4

To ensure access, tree climbing equipment and systems are safe to use operators must ensure:

- pre-use check of equipment/system undertaken
- on-going equipment/system checks during climbing
- ongoing maintenance.

Inspect all equipment to be used and comment on the condition.

The importance of reading and understanding manufacturer's information is:

- correct equipment application
- how to correctly configure equipment
- compatibility of equipment with other components
- maintenance requirements
- inspection.

Different methods that may be used to access a tree:

- moving rope technique

- stationary rope technique
- ladders
- spikes/climbing irons
- MEWP

The difference between a personal fall protection anchor and a positioning anchor may be:

- personal fall protection anchor:
- an unquestionably reliable anchor point that supports the full potential load of a climber and equipment.

Positioning anchor:

- an anchor that is used to aid the climber with positioning and prevent a pendulum swing.

Topic 1.5

Compliant PPE and safety clothing for tree climbing:

- tree climbing helmet
- personal first aid kit/whistle
- knife with retractable blade or handsaw
- foot protection with good grip and ankle support
- non- snag clothing
- eye protection.

Compliant climbing equipment for tree climbing:

- harness
- ropes/ lanyards of suitable diameter, length and strength for the climbing lines and for the friction hitches
- minimum of triple action auto-locking karabiners for main attachments.

Tie a three-knot system.

All anchor points selected:

- size, strength and structure
- position in relation to the parts of the tree to be accessed
- use of equipment to minimise damage to the tree if appropriate.

Candidate establishes their initial anchor points:

- suitability of the techniques used
- accurate installation of equipment
- organisation of ropes
- safety and position of the anchor points
- testing of the anchor points by thorough loading prior to ascent.

Technique used:

- efficient use of technique chosen
- attached to the tree at all times in accordance with industry good practice
- appropriate selection of anchor points
- appropriate route taken up the tree
- correct use of systems when changing anchor points

- thorough load testing of new anchor points
- risk of a fall is managed at all times
- correct use of equipment.

Access two points within the crown:

- appropriate route
- slack within systems is no more than 500mm
- ropes should be kept in as straight a line as possible to the anchor points
- balance and control maintained
- efficient rope organisation
- controlled movement back into the stem.

Descent from trees:

- rope length
- speed of descent
- not colliding with obstructions
- safe landing
- controlled removal of equipment.

Learning outcome

The learner will:

LO2 Carry out aerial rescue **(Criteria 2.1 – 2.2)**

Assessment criteria

AC2.1 Aerial rescue by climbing suitability
AC2.2 Rescue plan and implementation

Topic 2.1

Aerial rescue by climbing may not be appropriate owing to:

- dangerous tree structure
- additional site hazards such as power-lines present
- when additional risk to casualty/ rescuer would be incurred.

Topic 2.2

Key elements of a rescue plan prior to starting work:

- completing the emergency procedures as part of a site risk assessment
- making sure all equipment required for rescue is available
- identifying a competent and designated rescuer
- installation of a rescue line
- first aid equipment is available.

Preparing a rescue plan:

- emergency procedures as part of the site-specific risk assessment have been comprehensively and accurately completed
- equipment required and competent individuals are available

- competent and designated aerial rescuer and or emergency co-ordinator have been identified and nominated in that role
- first aid equipment is available including tourniquet and haemostatic gauze/cloth
- access route into the tree has been determined
- method of access has been agreed upon
- anchor points have been identified and where practicable pre-installed.

Different rescue methods:

- two-person rescue (pole)
- three-person rescue (belay)
- MEWP
- SRT.

Undertake crown rescue using a suitable technique.

The rescue technique is observed:

- tree accessed and suitable anchor points attained
- rescuer reaches the casualty
- area around casualty is made safe
- rescuer attaches the casualty to the rescuers harness with a direct attachment and attaches a chest strop if required
- rescuer always reassures the casualty
- rescue is conducted with the use of two independent load bearing systems
- controlled descent
- casualty is guided past branches if applicable
- correct use of equipment
- efficiency of the rescue.

Undertake a rescue from a ‘pole’ (standing stem) using climbing irons.

The rescue method is observed:

- pole accessed and suitable false anchor point installed
- rescuer secures the casualty to the rescue system
- rescuer attaches the casualty to the rescuers harness with a direct attachment, if required
- rescuer always reassures the casualty
- rescuer makes use of help from the casualty where appropriate
- rescuer detaches the casualty from the pole, if applicable
- in the event of a belay rescue, casualty descent is controlled by ground.

Person under the direction of the rescuer using an appropriate fail - safe method:

- controlled descent
- correct use of equipment
- efficiency of the rescue.

Reporting of the incident in line with an organisation’s requirements:

- report to supervisor
- record incident details as appropriate
- when applicable report to Health and Safety Executive (HSE) via Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Importance of inspecting equipment :

- to establish if it contributed to the accident
- ensuring it is still safe to operate
- check for contamination
- quarantine equipment.

Communication between climber and ground staff maintained when appropriate.

All tools, equipment and personal protective equipment is used in line with industry good practice.

It is ensured that any possible environmental damage is always minimised.

All activities must be completed in a way which protects the operator and those around them.

Supporting information

Evidence requirements

One to one practical assessment with oral questioning by an NPTC City & Guilds approved assessor.

Unit guidance

Candidates must successfully achieve all assessment activities in their chosen unit(s).

Safe Practice

Assessors must hold a current 'First Aid at Work' Certificate.

It is strongly recommended that Candidates hold at least a recent, recognised 'Emergency First Aid' Training Certificate.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times.

A First Aid kit meeting current regulations, of the appropriate size for the number of persons on site, must be available.

The Assessor must ensure a Risk Assessment is carried out, and sufficient control measures implemented.

All equipment being used for this assessment must comply with relevant requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 and Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998.

Information may be sought from the relevant operator manuals or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Provision must be made to avoid the risk of environmental pollution and adequate control measures must be implemented (a suitable response kit to be available on the machine).

It is the responsibility of the Assessor and the Candidate to ensure that any additional requirements and provisions are met as relevant to this qualification.

Candidates must comply with current regulations when working at heights regulations 2005 amended

A breach of Health and Safety that puts any person at risk during the assessment process will result in the assessment being terminated and the Candidate not meeting the required standard.

Candidates who undertake this assessment and have met the requirements are reminded of their legal obligation to receive/undertake appropriate additional training in the use of any equipment that differs from that used during the assessment, but which they are nevertheless qualified to use.

Suggested learning resources

Manufacturers' handbooks, manuals.
Safety bulletins.

Appendix 1 Sources of general information

The following documents contain essential information for centres delivering City & Guilds qualifications. They should be referred to in conjunction with this handbook. To download the documents and to find other useful documents, go to the **Centre Document Library** on **www.cityandguilds.com** or click on the links below:

Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Handbook
This document is for all approved centres and provides guidance to support their delivery of our qualifications. It includes information on

- Centre quality assurance criteria and monitoring activities
- Administration and assessment systems
- Centre-facing support teams at City & Guilds / ILM
- Centre quality assurance roles and responsibilities.

The Centre Handbook should be used to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Centre Contract.

Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Assessment
This document sets out the minimum common quality assurance requirements for our regulated and non-regulated qualifications that feature centre assessed components. Specific guidance will also be included in relevant qualification handbooks and/or assessment documentation.

It incorporates our expectations for centre internal quality assurance and the external quality assurance methods we use to ensure that assessment standards are met and upheld. It also details the range of sanctions that may be put in place when centres do not comply with our requirements, or actions that will be taken to align centre marking/assessment to required standards. Additionally, it provides detailed guidance on the secure and valid administration of centre-assessments.

Access arrangements - When and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds provides full details of the arrangements that may be made to facilitate access to assessments and qualifications for candidates who are eligible for adjustments in assessment.

The **Centre Document Library** also contains useful information on such things as:

- Conducting examinations
- Registering learners
- Appeals and malpractice

Useful contacts
Please visit the Contact Us section of the City & Guilds website, **Contact us**

About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is the global skills partner, empowering people, organisations and economies to develop the skills they need for growth. With almost 150 years of trusted expertise, we support people into work, help them develop on the job and move into the next job.

We work with Governments, employers, training providers, colleges and industry stakeholders to design and deliver high-quality training, qualifications, assessments and credentials that lead to meaningful career progression. We understand the life changing link between skills development, social mobility and success. Our solutions span critical sectors including construction, engineering, transport, energy and electrical, serving over 1 million learners annually.

Through our comprehensive portfolio of brands and trusted global network, we set industry-wide standards for technical, behavioural and commercial skills to improve performance and productivity. We believe you can achieve your potential - and we're here to help make it happen.

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City & Guilds
Giltspur House
5-6 Giltspur Street
London
EC1A 9DE

cityandguilds.com