

CQFW Case Study: NHS Wales – Recognition of Prior Learning Framework and Toolkit

“The NHS Wales RPL Framework can help employees to develop their career pathway in the health service”

Introduction

In 2017 NHS Wales developed a new All Wales Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Framework and Toolkit via the Workforce, Education and Development Services (WEDS), to address recommendations made in a Report to Welsh Government on the implementation of the NHS Wales Skills & Career Development Framework for Clinical Healthcare Support Workers supporting Nursing and other Allied Health Professionals.

This framework enables evidence of previous learning and experience that is relevant to the employee’s post to be verified and minimises the need to duplicate learning. It is designed to support progression and staff development through lifelong learning, non-accredited in-house learning or work-based learning qualifications which are no longer current. It also makes provision for the acknowledgement of relevant learning through experiences. It helps ensure consistency of approach in the execution of the RPL process across the NHS in Wales.

What is RPL?

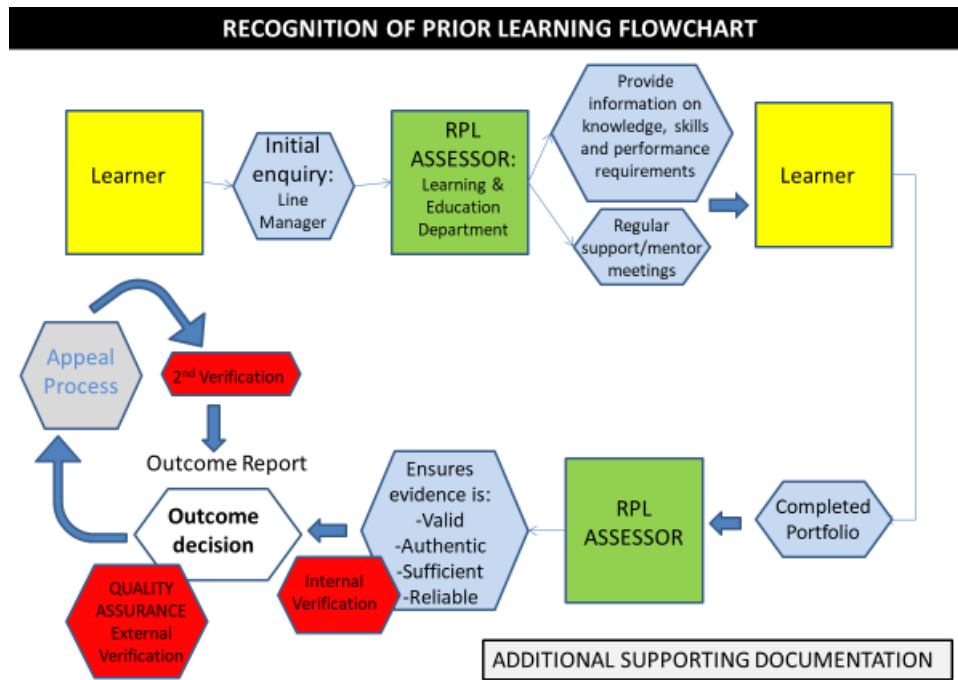
RPL is a process which enables recognition of formal and informal learning and award/transfer of credit towards existing courses or units of learning. It is defined as a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for learning through knowledge, understanding or skills they possess and that they do not need to go through a course of study. It is one method of enabling individuals to claim credit irrespective of where the relevant learning has taken place in the past.

In the context of CQFW, the definition of RPL is specific and relates to assessment leading to the award of credit. Assessment for RPL is conducted against learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a unit and is subject to the same internal and external requirements as any other kind of assessment within the CQFW.

All Wales RPL Framework

The Framework documentation provides support and guidance for supervisors, managers, learning and development staff, assessors and learners on the

implementation of an All Wales RPL Framework for NHS staff in Wales to acknowledge prior learning, experience and qualifications required to undertake current roles in Wales. It fits with the One Wales ethic and embraces the NHS core principles, developed to help, support and value NHS Wales staff. The principles are rooted in the prudent healthcare concept.



Learners/employees will need to present evidence in a way that demonstrates that learning has taken place. The *RPL Portfolio* provides guidance and tools to support the collation and presentation of this evidence. Assessors must determine that evidence used for RPL is valid and authentic and in accordance with the relevant awarding bodies' criteria. When the learner wishes to claim RPL they will require the support of current or previous managers or RPL Advisor. The whole process must be carried out by staff with relevant expertise and knowledge to meet the requirements of delivery and assessment for the qualification they are working with. Internal and external verification must be in place to confirm the process of RPL and any proposed award of credit/recognition. In some circumstances, there may be a limit on the proportion of a qualification that can be achieved by credit transfer or RPL.

Benefits

An All Wales RPL Framework can bring significant benefits to individuals and their organisations:

- It can promote more staff engagement
- It can help staff check that their knowledge and skills are up to date
- It can ensure that more learners are supported to have their prior learning and experience recognised

- It will serve to reassure staff who have not undertaken any formal learning for some time that their knowledge and skills are valued in their organisation and encourage them to undertake further education and training where necessary
- There will be less time taken away from the job to achieve the same learning outcomes
- There will be efficiencies and cost benefits over time

The RPL Toolkit

The Framework is supported with a Toolkit which is intended to assist learners, managers and assessors to execute the RPL process. It is web-based and offers a set of tools and resources which include

- Policy document
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Application for Recognition of Prior Learning
- Approver Feedback and Outcome Report
- Portfolio outline of proposed content - includes guidance and tools to support the collation and presentation of evidence
- QuickGuide to RPL
- Flowchart
- Roles and Responsibilities – Learner, Manager, RPL Assessor, Internal Verifier, External Verifier, Second verification
- Meetings Log
- Reflection Template
- Supporting documents, including Internal QA Strategy and Assessment Strategy



HSCW (learner) with RPL manager actively working through the RPL process.

The All Wales RPL Framework and Toolkit is seen as an important development towards recognising prior learning and experience of NHS Wales employees.

Stephen Griffiths, Director – Workforce Education and Development Services (WEDS), NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) said:

NHS Wales values its staff and wants to recognise competence relevant to an individual's role no matter how it is achieved, including on the job learning and learning gained outside of a formal setting. But knowing how to go about recognising and acknowledging such learning and experience is a challenge. This RPL Framework and Toolkit offers step by step guidance and support to all those involved, from start to finish in a standardised way.

Rachel Rushforth, LED Manager – HCSW Development, University Hospital Llandough said:

“The RPL toolkit really maps out the processes involved in a visual way - easy for learners and assessors to use, it's made RPL easy to follow”.

Two new recruits to Public Health Wales Screening Services have just embarked on the RPL process:

Joanne: We have just been recruited to screening posts with Public Health Wales. We both have a Level 3 qualification - QCF in Health and Social Care Level 3 – but for our new posts need to have the Diploma in Health Screening. The RPL process will work for us. It will significantly reduce the amount of work we have to undertake to complete and successfully achieve the Diploma in Health Screening.

Simone: *This also means that we shall be competent to screen a lot more quickly and that there is a reduced assessment burden on the clinical skills trainers and Internal Verification staff.*

For further information about the Framework and toolkit visit
www.WEDS.wales.nhs.uk

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