Recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA)

Guidance for learners with additional learning needs

Natspec
The voice of specialist further education

Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Developing and quality assuring RARPA processes for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Welcome to this Wales-facing guidance on using RARPA in further education provision with learners who have additional learning needs.

RARPA is a well-recognised staged process providing a means of measuring learner progress and demonstrating outcomes. It is most commonly used in association with non-accredited learning and for that reason, it is especially valuable for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities who may be following highly personalised programmes that are not linked to qualifications. RARPA stands for Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement. When delivered well and quality assured, RARPA provides a structure through which learners can achieve personalised outcomes and be best prepared for their post-college adult lives. RARPA enables learners with learning difficulties and disabilities to recognise, understand and celebrate their progress ensuring they play meaningful roles in their further education journeys. The quality assurance elements of RARPA provide first hand data and evidence to inform colleges self-evaluation processes. Understanding how RARPA links to what Estyn inspects supports colleges to consider how effectively they meet learners needs and demonstrates a commitment to continual quality improvement.

This guidance focuses on using RARPA for learners with ALN who are enrolled on courses such as independent living skills programmes in mainstream further education (FE) colleges or on study programmes in specialist colleges[1] that are established solely to provide education and training to learners with complex learning needs. RARPA processes can be tailored to work within the existing data systems of organisations ensuring the quality of non-accredited provision is scrutinised to the same level as externally accredited programmes. Learners with complex ALN in FE and specialist colleges in Wales typically follow personalised programmes focused on skills development. Such programmes are often fully non-accredited however, sometimes colleges may choose to use some accredited learning to support the learner in achieving their overarching desired outcomes. E.g. a learner identified as needing to develop their ability to look after themselves may be guided to undertake accredited Agored Cymru units such as 'cooking a simple meal' as part of the holistic goal to increase their independence skills.

In 2020 Natspec, on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), produced RARPA guidance for colleges working with young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in further education in England, including both independent living and vocational learning programmes. This English guidance links RARPA to the UK Government SEND Code of Practice and Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework in England.

To support additional learning needs (ALN) transformation in Wales, Welsh Government commissioned Natspec to produce a Wales-facing version to align RARPA to the ALN Code and Estyn's inspection guidance for FE and specialist colleges in Wales.

Useful links:

- The 2020 RARPA guidance is available on the Education and Training Foundation's SEND Excellence Gateway

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[1] In the ALN Code mainstream further education colleges are called Further Education Institutions (FEIs) and specialist further education colleges are called Independent Special Post-16 Institutions (ISPIs). Estyn refer to them as further education colleges and independent specialist colleges. In this document, we use terms we think are most accessible to learners, their families and professionals so mainstream further education colleges are referred to as 'FE colleges' and specialist further education colleges as 'specialist colleges'.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance will be valuable to colleges in Wales which already have an established RARPA process in place and to those who are new to RARPA. It explains what effective practice looks like at each of the five RARPA stages and suggests some robust quality assurance measures to use at each stage.

It will be useful for practitioners working with or those who have responsibility for learners with additional learning needs including:

• senior leaders and managers with an overall responsibility for quality assurance in FE and specialist colleges

• local authority officials with responsibility for post-16 learners Individual Development Plans (IDPs)

• curriculum leads, teaching staff and learning support assistants

• members of college multi-disciplinary teams such as therapists

• careers advice and guidance teams

• transition officers

• staff who manage the statutory annual review process for learners with ALN.

The guidance includes:

• a description of what each stage of RARPA 'looks like' when managed well, including case studies and links to exemplars from colleges[2]

• an explanation of how each RARPA stage aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance

• key aspects of the ALN Code and what colleges can do as they move through the RARPA stages to adhere to it and support local authorities to fulfil their obligations

• questions colleges should ask themselves at each RARPA stage when using the process with learners with Individual Development Plans

• suggestions for quality assurance activities at each stage

• a self-audit tool for each RARPA stage to support colleges to identify what is going well and to record where action is required.

Self Audit Tools

For a shortcut to the Self Audit Tool for each RARPA Stage please click below:

Stage 1 self audit tool | **Stage 2 self audit tool** | **Stage 3 self audit tool** | **Stage 4 self audit tool** | **Stage 5 self audit tool**

The guidance can be downloaded as a single PDF. You can also download separately self-audit tools for each stage.

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[2] Most examples are from colleges in Wales but exemplars from England are used where appropriate

Further education and training for young people with complex learning needs in Wales

For all young people, regardless of whether they have additional learning needs, further education colleges provide post-school adult-orientated environments to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to meet their aspirations and best prepare them for their post-college adult life. For learners with complex ALN, the primary purpose of further education is usually not the achievement of formal qualifications but instead, the targeted development of life skills. Individualised study programmes provide the learning that is needed to support fulfilling lives with decreased dependence on others. RARPA processes provide a quality-assured framework for the planning of individually tailored programmes and the recording of learners' progress and achievement. RARPA processes ensure that such time-limited, target-driven, destination-led and individualised programmes can be quality-assured to maximise positive outcomes for learners. RARPA also supports colleges to assess progress and achievement across curricula and cohorts.

Most learners in Wales with complex ALN progress to further education and training at their regional FE college when they leave special schools aged 19 where they are enrolled on one of four learning pathways within independent living skills (ILS) programmes. Each of the programmes is based around a core made up of four learning pillars of health and wellbeing, employability, independent living and community inclusion. FE colleges are also expected to embed opportunities for learners to develop their communication, numeracy and digital literacy skills within each of the four pillars. For a small minority of young people, this will not be the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) they need to build their skills. Instead, the complexity of the challenges they face means that their ALP is a specialist college. For example, this could be learners who require constant supervision for their own safety which is not always achievable in a FE college environment. Sensory processing difficulties may mean that mainstream college environments are overwhelming, and learners may require the integration of therapeutic and educational approaches for their intended further education outcomes to be achieved. For example, the expertise of speech and language therapists, occupational therapists or psychological and behavioural expertise may be required to support a learner to access the curriculum they need. Study programmes at specialist colleges are highly personalised and they focus on developing specific skills that it has been identified learners' need to develop. Whatever their programme of learning and wherever it takes place, RARPA ensures colleges can demonstrate that the learning programme has enabled the learner to make the necessary and expected progress to move on to their identified destination.

Further education and training for young people with complex learning needs in Wales continued

The ALN Code for Wales 2021 issued under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 is the guidance for stakeholders with statutory responsibilities. It is also an important reference document for all providers of additional learning provision. Where colleges understand duties in the Code and how they link to RARPA they will be able to provide evidence that learners needs are being met and progress is being made.

Learners with ALN progressing to further education have an individual development plan outlining their ALN and the additional learning provision they need. The Code expects the majority of young people to have their reasonable need for education met in FE colleges and in most cases a learner's FE college takes responsibility for reviewing and maintaining their IDP.

Local authorities are directly responsible for meeting the needs of children and young people with the most complex or severe needs. This includes those whose reasonable needs for education and training cannot be met by an FE college and in those circumstances, responsibilities for reviewing and maintaining IDPs is with local authorities who are responsible for securing placements in specialist colleges.

The Code states that:

In order to achieve their potential, young people with ALN may need ALP to access education or training which is made generally for others of the same age, or they may have need of education or training which is specifically designed for people with ALN. In both cases, the expectation is that mainstream FEIs, and in some cases, maintained schools, will usually be able to meet the education or training needs of the majority of young people who have ALN (17.24).

However, occasionally, there may not be available provision within FEIs or maintained schools to meet a young person's reasonable needs for education or training (including their reasonable needs for ALP to undertake that education or training) or a young person may not be able to access such provision which might otherwise be suitable for meeting their needs. In these cases, a local authority through maintaining an IDP, may need to secure a place at a particular institution for the young person or board and lodging so that the young person's reasonable needs can be met (17.25).

Useful links:
- Welsh Government's Independent Living Skills programme specifications
- ALN Glossary
- ALN Code

Further education and training for young people with complex learning needs in Wales continued

This guidance includes information on how each RARPA stage links to the ALN Code allowing FE colleges and local authorities to see how RARPA processes can support them in meeting their statutory responsibilities. In turn, specialist colleges can use this guidance at each of the RARPA stages to support statutory bodies to meet their obligations for learners with complex ALN.

The guidance also aligns each of the RARPA stages with Estyn's inspection framework. In their publications for further education and specialist colleges, 'What we inspect', Estyn outline their inspection framework and set out what inspectors need to consider when evaluating colleges against their five inspection areas. There is a strong focus on learner progress and how colleges meet the needs of learners with ALN across all five inspection areas (IAs), namely, learning (IA1); wellbeing and attitudes to learning (IA2); teaching and learning experiences (IA3); care, support and guidance (IA4) and leadership and management (IA5).

Keeping learners needs and their voice at the centre of planning are key principles of both RARPA and the ALN reforms and throughout the guidance, person-centred practice and tools are identified at each stage. Person-centred approaches support colleges to find out what is important to a learner, what matters to them most and what support strategies work best for them. This guidance includes links to person-centred thinking tools that colleges can use to support conversations with learners, their parents and carers and other multi-disciplinary professionals throughout the 5 RARPA stages to gather information that keep the learner's aspirations and goals at the centre of planning.

Useful links:
- What we inspect: further education colleges
- What we inspect: independent specialist colleges

The RARPA stages

There are five stages to the RARPA process. They follow a process that is familiar within all types of learning programmes and can be applied to both short and long-term learning goals:

Stage one	Aims of the learning programme
Stage two	Initial assessment
Stage three	Objective setting
Stage four	Formative review of learning
Stage five	Summative assessment of achievement

A 6th 'next steps' stage to the RARPA process was added by the Learning and Work Institute in 2017. This stage was concerned with supporting learners to make informed choices about their next steps towards further learning or work however the revised Natspec guidance in 2020 did not include this stage as it implied that thinking about progression could be left until the end of the course. While transition planning and summative assessments of achievements peak at stage 5, the planning of non-accredited programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities requires having learners' post-college destinations in mind right from pre-enrolment and at every RARPA stage.

Instead of the sixth step, actions are identified within each of the five stages to remind users of the importance of regularly making sure learners are making progress towards their identified destinations. This includes quality assurance actions necessary to assess if post-college destinations are being planned for. From pre-entry advice and guidance to final assessment, colleges should be focused on the purpose of the learning programme for the individual and how it will enable them to move on to the next stage in their lives.

Stage one

Aims of the learning programme

The aims of learning programmes should be easily accessible, be easy to understand and they should be informed by learner needs and aspirations. This ensures learners can be offered the programmes they need and helps colleges manage the expectations of stakeholders.

Stage one: What is involved?

Stage one is about ensuring learners are offered programmes that:

• can meet their individual needs, long-term aspirations and identified outcomes

• support learners to make informed decisions about their choices and next steps in education

• provide clear pathways to identified destinations

• support transition onto a new learning programme

• take account of the local and national context in which the learning is taking place.

When the aims of the learning programme are well managed:

• advice and information processes support learners to make informed realistic choices

• learners' own views and aspirations are taken into account in identifying appropriate provision

• the aims of the programme are relevant to learners' long-term goals and aspirations the intended learning programme is suitably challenging for every learner

• the learning outcomes enable learners to develop the personal, social and employability skills that will lead to them to their desired destination

• there is a planned transition onto the learning programme

• staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and understand the aims of the learning programme

• provision meets local and national demand and is responsive to learners' needs.

Stage one: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance

Making sure learners are offered and enrolled on programmes of learning that meet their education and training needs is an essential foundation for learner achievement and the progress learners make during their education and training is central Estyn's approach to inspection. Estyn requires its HMIs (His Majesty's Inspectors) to assess the quality of impartial guidance and advice provided by colleges and other external agencies to learners before the start of their programme. They also ask inspectors to consider how curriculum offers map to local and national priorities and how this helps learners.

From 'What we inspect' for both further education and 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should evaluate the effectiveness of impartial guidance and advice provided to learners before the start of their programme from the college and other external agencies (IA4.1).

Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers share positive features of provision with staff and collaborate with other education providers and partners within the sector to achieve improvements locally, regionally and nationally (IA5.1).

Stage one: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance continued

From 'What we inspect' for further education colleges

Inspectors should consider the overall coherence and effectiveness of the provision for personal and specialist support, including the availability of services from specialist agencies (IA4.1).

Inspectors should consider whether the range of learning programmes offered provide learners with suitable progression routes into further and higher education as well as employment and training. For learners with complex needs, inspectors should consider the extent to which learning programmes prepare learners for their chosen destinations (IA3.1).

Inspectors should consider the extent to which leaders and managers are purposeful and successful in meeting national and local priorities (IA5.1).

From 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should consider the college's strategic approach to planning the provision and the extent to which it helps learners to become ambitious, confident, aspirational and well-informed individuals (IA3.1).

Inspectors should consider the extent to which learning programmes prepare learners for their chosen destinations (IA3.1).

Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers share positive features of provision with staff and collaborate with other education providers and partners within the sector to achieve improvements locally, regionally and nationally (IA5.1).

Inspectors should be aware that it will not always be possible or appropriate to compare results of learners in independent specialist colleges with other colleges. However, it is important to form a view on the extent to which learners are fulfilling their potential (IA1.1).

Useful links:

- What we inspect: further education colleges
- What we inspect: independent specialist colleges

Stage one: the ALN Code and what colleges can do

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
A key principle underpinning the ALN system is the need for collaboration between all those involved in identifying needs and planning and providing support to children and young people with ALN (21.1). ALNCo responsibilities include liaising with careers specialists to ensure that learners with ALN receive appropriate careers advice (8.21).	Ensure all stakeholders (e.g. learners, parents, local authorities, school Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators [ALNCos], Careers Advisors and Designated Education Clinical Lead Officers [DECLOs] understand your curriculum offers and the kind of meaningful outcomes that can be achieved by learners with complex ALN.
In some cases where a young person has, or a local authority determines that the young person has, reasonable needs to education or training, a local authority might identify more than one proposed suitable programme of study. In this instance, when choosing between them the local authority can take into account the compatibility of alternative options with the need to avoid unreasonable public expenditure (17.80).	Support local authority decision making through the provision of timely and transparent information on the aims of study programmes, any options within them and associated costings.
It is expected planning for a known transition would usually coincide with when an IDP is reviewed. This approach helps ensure that transition planning becomes a regular process in which children and young people become familiar with and feel comfortable discussing how transition may affect them (27.20). Where any information or arrangements to support young person's transition are planned, the body responsible for preparing the IDP set out them out. This could include information about: the transition(s) expected to be made; any individual responsible for co-ordinating the transition arrangements; the agreed actions of all the professionals and/or the agencies involved in supporting the transition(s); the objectives and outcomes the transition is intended to support (23.88).	Support timely transition planning by being prepared to start processes early. Provide transparency on pre-entry assessment processes and ALP offers so stakeholders including learners understand your provision. Ensure timely information is available to stakeholders responsible for IDPs on how positive transitions to college can be supported, including dates and other practical information such as named contacts. Provide accessible information on how objectives and outcomes can be met.

Stage one: the ALN Code and what colleges can do continued

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
Providing additional support for young people with ALN moving into further education may require similar approaches to other transitions. Opportunities to become familiar with a new setting, meeting teaching staff or taking part in taster sessions can help prepare young people with their transition to an FEI (27.45).	Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with schools, LA officials, parents and carers. Support phased transitions and visits for learners and staff and details of how transitions can be supported. E.g. taster days, virtual tours etc.
Keeping ALP and other arrangements under review, is a key part of local strategic planning and decision making. It will enable local authorities to assess current and likely future needs and secure sufficient provision and services to meet those needs.	Provide the local authority with data to demonstrate the number of learners on different learning programmes. This will support strategic planning. Use data supplied by the local authority on anticipated future needs to ensure learning programmes are meeting needs and inform the development of programme aims.

Stage one: questions colleges should ask themselves about Individual Development Plans

At each stage of the RARPA process there are actions which colleges can take to ensure learning programmes align with IDPs.

Questions to ask	If the answer is no or unsure
Does the course aim include opportunities to make progress towards the four pillars (ILS programmes) and/or other personalised identified learner needs?	Review your curriculum offers to make sure course aims accommodate the flexibility required for the achievement of person-centred learning programmes that will allow learners to build the skills they need for their post-college adult lives.
Does the last annual review of the intended outcomes in a learner's IDP inform the admissions process?	Check the outcomes agreed at the last annual review. This will typically have been a transition review with specific actions to support the young person to move to a new setting. Some colleges attend annual reviews in a young person's last year at school to support discussion around post-16 options.
Do the IDP outcomes accurately reflect what is meaningful for the learner at this age and stage of education?	FE colleges can review IDPs in line with their own processes. Specialist FE colleges should contact the relevant local authority for a discussion about changes required before the next annual review.
Will the aims of the learning programme enable the learner to fulfil the outcomes within their IDP? Will these be suitably challenging and avoid repetition?	Arrange for information and advice that will match the learner with a learning programme that meets their needs. IDP outcomes are the expected benefits to the individual as a result of participating in education or training. If the learner cannot make progress towards these within their learning programme or would be repeating learning, this will not be the right programme for them.
Has a planned transition onto the learning programme taken place? Has all the information necessary been gathered to support admission to the learning programme, including asking the young person about the support they need and how they would like to receive this?	Work in partnership with schools and other providers to offer tasters, visits, and careers events to support positive transitions. Identify the relevant and most up to date information about a young person during the admissions process. Finding out from the young person themselves what they want and need is essential to a smooth transition.
Does the learner have a wider package of support that will require adjustment when they start their learning programme?	Develop a multi-disciplinary approach with social care and health to support the transition process for young people, their parents and carers. Many young people will also be moving into adult services at this time which requires working across sectors.

Stage one: person-centered practice

College examples...

Our college ALNCo or transition officers will typically attend the transition review meetings of learners from special schools who it is expected will attend our college. When they are in their final year in school, learners are invited to come along to college for a couple of hours each week. During these school link visits, learners are supported by familiar staff from school while they familiarise themselves with the new learning environment, curriculum and routines. They are alongside learners from other schools who it is expected, will be transitioning to college and so they meet peers and can start to establish new friendships. This process supports us to understand if we are the right provision for the learners. It also supports learner and staff wellbeing and allows us as a college to plan more effectively to meet learners' needs (FE college).

We collate our pre-assessment information gained from information requests sent to schools and parents as well as assessment days and learner visits. We reconcile this information with the learners outcomes outlined in their Learning & Skills Plan (LSP), or Individual Development Plan (IDP) or their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and the learner's long term aspirations and likely post-college destination. A multi-disciplinary team discuss if we are able to meet the learner's needs. We then work backwards from the learner's destination goals and agree purposeful and ambitious personal learning goals (PLGs) for the learner's programme of study (see staff guidance on turning destinations into targets). These are then broken down into annual goals and termly targets. In turn, termly targets are broken down into accessible next steps for the learner (specialist college).

Using a learner destination template serves as a useful document outlining what learner's need from further education and ensures the right learning programme can be identified (specialist college).

Useful links:

Welsh Government published documents

• A guide on person-centred practice in education

• Person-centred reviews toolkit
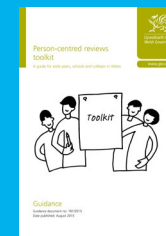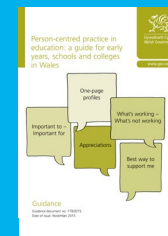
The National Development Team for inclusion (NDTI) published documents

• NDTI example of a Relationship Map

• NDTI tool for Matching Support
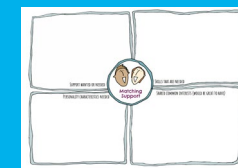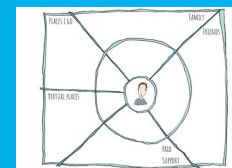
Stage one: quality assurance

Evidence from these activities will inform colleges' self-evaluation reviews and quality improvement programmes. The list here and for the other stages are not exhaustive or prescriptive and colleges may have existing alternative or additional means of checking quality at each RARPA stage.

Examples of quality assurance activity

• Check levels of satisfaction about transition and enrolment. Use feedback forms to inform how enrolment processes can be made more efficient and user friendly.

• Analyse application, enrolment and attendance data to determine if learners have been guided to/placed on correct programmes.

• Observe pre-entry information and advice interactions to check due consideration is being given to learners' chosen destinations.

• Conduct accessibility checks on programme information, including the information on your provision provided through local authority arrangements.

• For a sample of learners on a programme, compare their long-term outcomes with programme aims to verify that learners are being placed on the appropriate programme.

• Provide staff with regular updates, training and written guidance such as a RARPA handbook that tells people who does what, why, when and how.

• Use a staff self-evaluation tool to assess how confident staff are about delivering the 5 RARPA stages.

Stage one: self audit tool

Use the self-audit tool to assess what you are already doing well and where you need to take further action.

■ No evidence requires attention   ■ Requires development   ■ Evidence of this informs planning and delivery

Stage one: aims of the learning programme				what is your evidence? (identify improvement actions in the boxes at the bottom)
Is there evidence that the aim of the learning programme meets need?				
Does the aim of the learning programme include learning opportunities relating to the four pillars of learning; independent living skills, health and well-being, community and employability (ILS programmes in FE colleges)?				
Does the aim of the programme include opportunities to develop personal and communication skills, Welsh language skills, numeracy and digital literacy (FE colleges)?				
Does the aim of the learning programme enable learners to make progress towards personalised outcomes within IDPs that are challenging, aspirational and achievable?				
Will the learning programme enable learners to reach their identified destination?				
Do staff have the training and information they need to understand the programme aims and support prospective learners to make informed choices?				
Is there advice and information available before enrolment that supports learners to make informed choices about which programme is best for them?				
Has the admissions process identified all the learner's support needs and can they be met on the learning programme?				
Can prospective learners find out about the programme from events, visits, taster sessions, transition review meetings and access to information and advice that is accessible and relevant to them?				
Have prospective learners been listened to and their views considered when offering a place on the learning programme?				
Is the quality assurance process informed by feedback from pre-enrolment and admissions processes? Will this support continual improvement?				

Stage one: self audit tool continued

Quality improvement actions

What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?

Stage two

Initial assessment

A shared understanding of learners' baseline skills and knowledge is necessary so that teaching and learning approaches can be appropriately targeted and progress measured. Further education programmes for learners with ALN on ILS courses in FE colleges or at specialist colleges are adult-orientated and tailored to the development of skills needed to lead successful adult lives. Colleges offer different learning environments from those learners have been familiar with in school. They also typically offer different subjects in different ways with different levels of learning support.

Stage two: What is involved?

Stage two is about offering an initial assessment process that:

- takes place typically over a four to six week time period and identifies learner's strengths and areas for development that will inform the delivery of the curriculum

- includes all the relevant information, gathered from different sources, that informs learners' starting points on entry to their learning programme

- enables the learner to demonstrate their current skills and knowledge in areas that are meaningful to them and relate to their long-term aspirations and outcomes

- clarifies additional support needs and strategies to maximise learner potential

- provides an opportunity to build supportive and positive working relationships between staff and learners.

When initial assessment is well managed:

- there is a variety of approaches and learning opportunities to gain feedback from the learner about their aspirations, preferences and preferred learning style

- information gathered during initial assessment leads to the design of a learning programme that is suitably challenging and ambitious, reinforces previous learning and avoids repetition

- the results of initial assessment are shared with the learner, relevant staff, including the wider multi-disciplinary team and parents and carers, where appropriate

- teachers plan opportunities to assess how learners transfer existing skills into their new setting, taking account of how the transition to a new setting may have affected the learner

- there is a focus on what learners can do independently and, where they can build on this for greater independence, additional support needs are identified and strategies are developed with the learner to meet these needs

- there is a clear identification of what the learner knows and can do now and what they need to know and do in the future, to achieve their outcomes.

Stage two: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance

Understanding how RARPA links to what Estyn inspects supports colleges to consider how effectively they meet learners' needs. Using RARPA processes effectively enables colleges to demonstrate they are ensuring learners with ALN are not disadvantaged compared to other learners and can access high quality provision that is ambitious and challenging. Robust RARPA processes lead to transparent measurements of individual learner's progress and provide evidence to demonstrate a commitment to continual quality improvement. HMIs assess the extent to which colleges understand learners' needs and abilities and the rate of progress they make towards learning goals.

From 'What we inspect' for both further education and 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should consider how well the college makes provision for learners with additional learning needs in relation to their individual needs and abilities (IA4.1).

Stage two: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance continued

From 'What we inspect' for further education colleges

For learners with additional learning needs (ALN), evaluations about achievement should take account of information about their individual needs and abilities. Inspectors should consider the rate of progress these learners make in relation to their individual targets, agreed learning goals and starting points. Where relevant, inspectors should evaluate the extent to which learners with additional learning needs develop:

• their fine and gross motor skills, their mobility and their independent living skills

• their social skills, including their ability to relate to other learners, staff and visitors to the college

• the skills they need to prepare them for future life (IA1.1).

From 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should consider whether specific groups of learners are making as much progress as they could in relation to their starting-points and their age and ability (IA1.1).

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent learners develop the skills required to access the whole curriculum and to learn effectively throughout their lives (IA1.1).

Where available, inspectors should consider the results of other relevant assessments, such as those of learners' reading ability, when coming to a view about learners' literacy skills (IA1.1).

Useful links:

• What we inspect: further education colleges

• What we inspect: independent specialist colleges

Stage two: the ALN Code and what colleges can do

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
In cases where an IDP is being prepared (or, in respect of a young person in the area of a local authority in England, if an EHC needs assessment is being considered or conducted or an EHC plan is being prepared), an initial assessment ought to have been made of the young person's needs (16.32).	Work in partnership with schools and local authorities, where appropriate, to gather information to plan a personalised initial assessment that correctly identifies the learner's starting points. Effective use of information from previous settings and during transition will support this.
All education settings are expected to put in place differentiated teaching or other targeted interventions designed to secure better progress where appropriate, for all learners (20.14).	Use an evidence-based approach to identify and provide support, matched to the learner's needs. This may include external specialist support that is commissioned by a college.
All applicants and enrolled students at FEIs should be given the opportunity at application stage, at enrolment and during the course to raise any concerns about their learning needs (20.7).	Provide opportunities for learners to self-declare learning needs during the enrolment and initial assessment process and a culture where learners feel confident in doing this. Provide accessible information to learners about learning support available. Develop support and /or care plans with the learner so they understand how support will enable them to make progress from their starting point.
In identifying desired outcomes, it is essential to consider the young person's views, wishes and feelings about what is important to them and what they want to achieve (17:34).	Ensure all learners are able to communicate their views and wishes and provide tailored learner friendly resources including signs and symbols if required to ensure initial assessments provide up to date information.

Stage two: the ALN Code and what colleges can do continued

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
The FEI should: (a) make arrangements for letting all staff who are involved in teaching or supporting the young person know about those needs; (b) involve the ALNCo in advising teaching staff on appropriate teaching approaches to use in relation to the young person with a view to meeting the apparent needs and on where to get further information and advice if required; (c) make any appropriate adjustments to the environment of the FEI to improve the young person's access to education; (d) provide appropriate additional or different support for the young person from the resources available to it, including access to input from external specialists; (e) monitor the impact of support provided for the young person and alter it if it becomes apparent that this would be appropriate (12.29).	Conduct a staff skills audit to identify any gaps in knowledge and skills relating to assessment of need. Identify continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to build expertise in specific areas and ensure relevant staff have regular briefings and updates about best practice in assessing and meeting needs. Ensure initial assessments identify environmental factors that may adversely affect access to the curriculum. Ensure initial assessments are able to identify any need to access input from external specialists. Share baseline assessment information as a starting point for measuring progress and achievement.

Stage two: questions colleges should ask themselves about Individual Development Plans

Questions to ask	If the answer is no or unsure
Has the initial assessment process correctly identified the learner's current knowledge and skills in relation to their planned aspirations and outcomes within their IDP, including their choice of learning pathway or study programme?	Consider the IDP intended outcomes with the learner and their parent and carers, if appropriate. Check that the outcomes are still relevant. If they are not, implement your own processes for review (FE colleges) and/or contact the local authority to ask for an urgent review as appropriate. Review the learning activities that took place during the initial assessment process. Was there sufficient breadth of activities to measure a learner's starting points across curriculum and programme areas? If not, decide how this could be changed.
Has the initial assessment process confirmed the need for support and ALP as described in the IDP or identified additional or different requirements?	Clarify that you have a full understanding of the learner's current health, care and learning needs. If initial assessment has shown that additional support is required you will need to contact the local authority about this, if it is not already identified in the IDP.
Is the information collated in your initial assessment congruent with the IDP profile (About me)?	Pass on any relevant updates to persons responsible for maintaining IDPs.

Stage two: person-centered practice

College examples...

During the learners first 4 to 5 weeks of college, all staff working with them contribute to a comprehensive Baseline Assessment document that asks questions on the learner's skills and abilities relating to self-care and independence; their sensory and/or physical needs; communication and interaction levels; behaviour, emotional and social development needs and abilities along with their cognition and learning abilities. This comprehensive data is then used as a baseline to measure progress against and to plot out their individualised study programme to meet their destination goals.

A FE college uses an excel spreadsheet for learners' initial assessment that has separate sheets for each of the four pillars of the ILS curriculum along with literacy, communication and digital skills to record learner's baseline abilities from which targets can be set and progress measured.

Another FE college uses a table to baseline assess learners using a 1-10 score to determine short, mid-term and long-term targets for individual development plans. With the input of learners and people who know them well, a specialist college has created a one page profile for staff who may be unfamiliar with learners and new to supporting them.

Useful links:

Welsh Government published documents

• A guide on person-centred practice in education
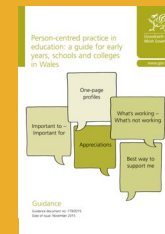
The National Development Team for inclusion (NDTI) have developed:

• NDTI Communication Passport

• NDTI Good Day and Bad Day tool

Stage two: quality assurance

Examples of quality assurance activity

- Sample learners' work during initial assessment and compare this to information about their previous level of skills and knowledge gathered during pre-enrolment.

- Check for consistency in the initial assessment process across subjects or themes in the curriculum. Have a clear process for deciding if accredited learning and qualifications are appropriate.

- Identify where the initial assessment process creates opportunities for learners to develop their personal and communication skills, Welsh language skills, numeracy and digital literacy and if appropriate, their behaviour.

- Observe and gather feedback from learners about their experience of initial assessment and how it meets their expectations of starting college.

- Review learner's long-term outcomes and chosen destinations against the completed initial assessment process to provide evidence that the process is assessing what is relevant for the learner's future.

- Sample additional learning support records to check that there is a correlation between the support learners are being offered and the needs identified during initial assessment.

- Assess the personalised curriculum plans of a sample of learners to identify a match between content and ambitions and preferences expressed by learners during initial assessment.

- Compare initial assessment baseline data with programme learning aims to check that learners are being supported to progress from identified starting points.

Stage two: self audit tool

Use the self-audit tool to assess what you are already doing well and where you need to take further action.

■ No evidence requires attention   ■ Requires development   ■ Evidence of this informs planning and delivery

Stage two: initial assessment				what is your evidence? (identify improvement actions in the boxes at the bottom)
Is there sufficient and relevant information being gathered in transition from previous settings and others who know the learner well, to inform initial assessment?				
Has the initial assessment process encouraged and supported learners to communicate what is important to them about their learning programme and how they prefer to be taught and supported?				
Is initial assessment fun and engaging for learners? Does it focus on identifying strengths and positive qualities as well as challenges? Where appropriate, do learners understand its purpose?				
Do staff accurately identify learners' starting points as relevant to their learning programme?				
Is there a consistent approach to initial assessment across the provision? Do all staff involved share the same understanding of what is being assessed, for whom and for what purpose?				
Does initial assessment lead to the development of challenging and ambitious targets that link directly to learner's long-term outcomes? Does this include opportunities to develop personal, social and independence skills?				
Are support strategies identified and plans shared with relevant staff, the learner and parents and carers, if appropriate?				
Does the initial assessment process enable any unmet needs to be identified that would otherwise disadvantage learners with ALN?				
Do staff have effective processes to share assessment data and do they use this to plan learning activities that take account of learners' different starting points?				
Are there opportunities for learners and their parents (if appropriate) to access advice and information if during the initial assessment process, it becomes evident that a programme cannot meet their needs?				
Is moderation of initial assessment included in the quality cycle and used to make continual improvements to learning programmes?				

Stage two: self audit tool continued

Quality improvement actions

What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?

Stage three
Objective Setting

Most learners with complex ALN are enrolled on non-accredited programmes of learning. Some may pursue some accredited elements of learning within their programme but primarily, their curriculum content and weekly college timetables will be guided by identified learning goals or objectives. These will be informed by the learner's IDP, their learning pathway (if the learner is in a FE college) or study programme (if the learner is a specialist college) along with the initial assessment data collected in stage two and wider information gathered in stage one.

Stage three: What is involved?

Stage three is about having an approach to setting learning objectives that:

- uses information gathered during transition and initial assessment to plan personalised learning programmes

- establishes learning objectives with the learner, that enable them to make progress towards their long-term aspirations and IDP outcomes

- responds quickly to changing or adapting objectives when necessary, to ensure they continue to meet learner's needs

- includes high quality support and interventions for the individual.

When setting learning objectives is well managed:

- there is a clear route from transition to initial assessment and objective setting that supports the achievement of meaningful long-term outcomes

- learners have ownership of their own objectives and can articulate them, in appropriate ways, because they have been involved in developing them

- all staff working with learners are asked to participate and contribute to objective setting and time is allocated for this to happen

- all staff are clear about their responsibilities to support the achievement of objectives and how to recognise and record progress

- there is a management information system where objectives can be recorded and tracked

- objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and within the timeframe of the learning programme

- it is clear how objectives can be achieved across the breadth of the curriculum

- staff continue to access CPD activities that lead to high quality teaching, learning and support.

Stage three: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance

Ensuring learners' objectives are relevant to their individual abilities, needs, and post-college destinations are key aspects of supporting learner achievement and progress. Learners should be supported to play participative roles in agreeing learning objectives and understand how they relate to their post-college aspirations. Objectives should be appropriately challenging and achievable.

Estyn HMIs are guided to evaluate the college's aspirations for its learners and how they plan to meet learners' identified needs.

From 'What we inspect' for both further education and 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which teachers and other practitioners have high expectations of all learners. They should consider the quality of planning and how well their planning meets the needs of the learning programme. They should consider the extent to which teachers have clear objectives for learners' learning and use a range of approaches and resources to engage learners' interest and to challenge them to achieve as well as they can (IA3.2).

Inspectors should consider the extent to which learners develop the skills they need to prepare them for future life (IA1.1 FE college) (IA3.1 in specialist college guidance i.e. in relation to how the curriculum supports skills development).

Stage three: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance continued

In particular, inspectors should evaluate the extent to which learners are ambitious, confident, capable and independent learners (IA2.2).

Inspectors should judge learners' interest in their work, their ability to sustain concentration and to avoid distractions (IA 2.2).

Inspectors should evaluate how well learners persevere and remain purposeful when they face difficulties or seek other solutions when their first approach to a problem is unsuccessful (IA2.2).

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which learning experiences across the college stimulate and challenge learners so that they engage fully in their learning and make the best possible progress (3.1).

Inspectors should consider how well learners show confidence and resilience in their lives, for example in the way they interact with new people and with their peers. Inspectors should consider how well learners are developing as ethical, informed citizens, for example through their awareness of fairness, equality, sustainability and tolerance (IA2.1).

Specialist colleges should also refer to section 4.1 of their Estyn inspection guidance handbook that details specific considerations for inspectors on care support and guidance.

Useful links:

- What we inspect: further education colleges
- What we inspect: independent specialist colleges

Stage three: the ALN Code and what colleges can do

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
IDP intended outcomes should have a strong focus on enabling children and young people to move towards long-term aspirations, be that employment or further or higher education, independent living and/or community participation. To this end, it is essential to consider what is important to the child or young person and what they want to achieve (23.30).	Use an evidence-based approach to involve the learner and those who know them well to set learning objectives relating to fit for purpose IDP outcomes. Have strategies to inspire and encourage learners to identify and work towards challenging outcomes. This includes providing positive role models of disabled people and people with ALN who have succeeded in education and achieved their life goals. Employ staff with the right skills and qualifications to enable learner achievement. Identify where support may need to be commissioned externally.
IDPs can also include outcomes with a wider focus, such as positive social relationships and emotional resilience and stability. For some children and young people, an intended outcome can be about minimising the impact of an impairment on their learning (23.30).	Ensure learning objectives include a wide range of opportunities, including those relating to wellbeing that will support learners in their post-college lives to manage themselves and their time in positive life-enhancing ways (e.g. pursuing hobbies and interests).
All intended outcomes detailed in the IDP should be drafted in such a way that it is possible to measure whether they have been successfully achieved, as well as being realistic and challenging. This should be done by making outcomes "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) (23.31).	Put checks in place to ensure that learner objectives and targets are SMART, realistic and challenging and that all stakeholders including learners can link day to day learning with medium- and longer-term goals.
In order to determine the progress towards achieving the intended outcome(s), it may be helpful to set interim or short-term targets or milestones, and to monitor the impact of the ALP on the child or young person's progress (23.33).	Ensure staff across your college have a shared understanding of how to set and monitor short and medium-term targets that relate to longer term goals and IDP outcomes. Allow time in staff workloads to engage in RARPA processes and reflect on the appropriateness of learners' objectives and targets.

Stage three: questions colleges should ask themselves about Individual Development Plans

Questions to ask	If the answer is no or unsure
Do the learning objectives set for the individual learner clearly link to the achievement of intended outcomes within their IDP?	Check that the IDP outcomes are still relevant and meaningful for the learner. If they are still relevant, review how the learning objectives have been developed and what needs to change to ensure they will support long-term outcomes to be achieved. If the outcomes require amendment, implement your own processes for review (FEIs) and/or contact the local authority to ask for an urgent review as appropriate.
Are the learning objectives specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and within a specific time frame (SMART) as required in the IDP?	Write learning objectives using key phrases that support the SMART approach: e.g. Now I know or can do this... By (when) I will know or be able to do this... This is because I am going to practise doing/learning this...
Are the support interventions, as identified in the IDP, in place?	Audit the learner's care and support plans. Evaluate this against section 2A of the IDP which states the learner's additional learning needs. Contact relevant health and social care providers that also work with the learner to ensure you have accurate and up to date information on successful strategies to meet needs.

Stage three: person-centered practice

College examples…

A specialist college uses an ILP template to record the learner's post-college destination and the curriculum, targets and goals that the college provides to support the learner journey.

A FE college uses a Half-Term Planner template to support Tutors in their planning.

A specialist college uses a My targets this session template to support learner understanding of what they are doing in a specific learning session.

A FE college uses symbols and written text to support learners' understanding of their individual learning targets.
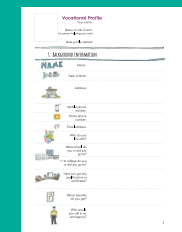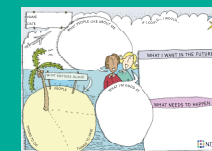
Useful links:

Welsh Government published documents

• Person-Centred Reviews Toolkit

The National Development Team for inclusion (NDTI) have developed:

• NDTI template for planning a Perfect Week

• NDTI template for a What Matters Island

• NDTI template for a Vocational Passport

Stage three: quality assurance

Examples of quality assurance activity

- Identify a team of appropriate staff to moderate learner objectives. This could include a senior manager, curriculum leads, teachers and support leads. Moderation at this stage is about checking that learning objectives are based on a SMART approach, are aspirational, achievable within the curriculum, and link to learner's long-term outcomes.

- Depending on the size of the learning programme, take a sample of learning objectives for each learner across the whole programme and cross reference these to their long-term outcomes. Alternatively, select specific learners and sample all their learning objectives.

- Provide moderators with a checklist that includes asking how, when and who will address any inconsistencies in setting learning objectives and identify good practice that can be shared across the staff team. Moderation can provide evidence that objectives are linked to long-term outcomes and that the curriculum has sufficient breadth to enable the learner to make the progress expected.

- Map learning objectives to subjects or themes within the curriculum to ensure learners have access to the right learning opportunities to make progress.

- Audit learners' care and support plans to ensure there is the right type and level of support in place for each learner relevant to their learning objectives.

- Compare a sample of learner objectives with initial assessment findings to determine whether goals set represent a suitable level of challenge for each learner.

- Use lesson observations or learning walks to check if learning objectives are readily available, visible in the learning environment and understood by staff who provide support. Ask learners what their learning objectives are and how they will make progress towards them.

- Audit the objective setting process to identify instances in which learners have been actively involved (e.g. through use of video, symbols, alternative and augmentative communication and strategies such as intensive interaction).

- Attend learner initial assessment reviews and/or sample meeting records to assess if objectives are being shared with the right people who know the learner well and can give feedback on how appropriately they support the learner's long-term outcomes.

- Review data recorded on management information systems to check that staff are entering objectives and check that all relevant staff have access to this information.

- Survey staff to assess their level of knowledge, understanding and confidence in objective setting. Identify any gaps and provide appropriate CPD, e.g. peer support for less confident staff. Include this in staff supervision and performance management if necessary.

- Undertake a skills audit of staff to assess if staff have the right levels of expertise to enable learners to make progress against their objectives. Identify any gaps in skills or expertise and how to address these through CPD activities or commissioning specialist external support.

- Review the evidence from different quality assurance activities to make a judgement if the objective setting process is identifying correctly what the learner needs to do and know, to move closer to their long-term outcomes. If it is not, identify what changes are needed.

Stage three: self audit tool

Use the self-audit tool to assess what you are already doing well and where you need to take further action.

■ No evidence requires attention   ■ Requires development   ■ Evidence of this informs planning and delivery

Stage three: objective setting				what is your evidence? (identify improvement actions in the boxes at the bottom)
Is there a moderation plan in place within the quality cycle that checks objective/target setting against long-term outcomes? Are changes made as a result of this to improve quality and share best practice?				
Are learners involved in objective/target setting in appropriate ways? E.g., in a way that takes account of their preferred communication and learning styles.				
Is there a management information system where a learner's objectives are stored, can be reported on and altered, that is accessible to all relevant staff?				
Does the management information system enable staff to track progress and achievement from starting points and link back to long-term outcomes?				
Have support and interventions to enable objectives to be achieved been identified for all learners with ALN? Are these evidence-based and delivered to a high standard?				
Do staff have the right levels of expertise and skills to deliver a curriculum where learners can make progress towards their objectives? Is there a CPD plan in place for staff who need to increase their skills and knowledge?				
Is there a logical progression of objectives over time, that shows how each objective sequentially builds on the previous one?				
Are learners' objectives visible in the learning environment? Is this in ways that are meaningful to the learner? E.g. using symbols, photos, pictures, objects				
Do objectives cover all the areas identified for the learner e.g., the four pillars, personal and communication skills, Welsh language skills, numeracy and digital literacy (FE colleges)?				

Stage three: self audit tool continued

Quality improvement actions

What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?

Stage four

Formative review of learning

The focus of stage four of the RARPA process is on recognising and recording the progress that learners make against the objectives set in stage three. This stage provides learners, tutors and wider stakeholders with feedback about the distance learners have travelled towards their destination goals.

Stage four: What is involved?

Stage four is about assessing learner progress through a formative review of learning that:

- reviews and records the progress that is being made during the learning programme

- uses creative approaches to gain regular feedback from learners and other key stakeholders and recognises learner progress across the whole curriculum

- includes person-centred reviews to discuss progress and ensure learning, support and care needs are being met

- provides information, advice and guidance about the learner's next steps using an accurate measure of progress so far.

When the formative review of learning is well managed:

- there is a record of progress and updated learning objectives that demonstrate what the learner can do and knows now, that is different from before

- progress outside of set objectives is captured and used to inform planning

- the learner and key stakeholders are involved in assessing progress and in a way that is meaningful for them

- feedback is personalised to the individual

- learners know what they have achieved and what the next steps are

- learners can make informed decisions about destinations based on assessment of their progress

- there is an effective management information system that collates assessment data

- staff understand their role and responsibilities in conducting assessments and this is done efficiently, without creating unnecessary burdens for staff or learners

- evidence of progress is moderated for consistency and against quality measures

- evidence from progress reports and reviews is used to make improvements for individuals and for the overall learning programme.

Stage four: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance

Understanding the progress learners are making towards their intended outcomes is central to both RARPA and Estyn's approach to inspection, and the appropriateness of assessment tools used to evidence progress is a key quality assurance measure for colleges. Central to person-centred practice in the review of learning, is the building of learners' reflective skills including by involving them in the collation and production of evidence of having made progress towards or achieving their targets and goals.

From 'What we inspect' for both further education and 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should consider a wide range of evidence when evaluating the quality of leadership and management, for example minutes from a range of recent meetings, interviews with staff, improvement action plans and reports on their implementation, recent self-assessment from leaders and managers and the analysis of information on learner performance (IA5.1).

Inspectors should evaluate how well learners develop and apply a wide range of skills and knowledge appropriate to their qualifications or agreed learning goals, including considering the extent to which they develop transferable employability skills (IA3.2).

From 'What we inspect' for further education colleges

For learners with additional learning needs (ALN), evaluations about achievement should take account of information about their individual needs and abilities. Inspectors should consider the rate of progress these learners make in relation to their individual targets, agreed learning goals and starting points. Where relevant, inspectors should evaluate the extent to which learners with additional learning needs develop:

• their fine and gross motor skills, their mobility and their independent living skills

• their social skills, including their ability to relate to other learners, staff and visitors to the college

• the skills they need to prepare them for future life (IA1.1).

Inspectors should evaluate how well learners develop and apply a wide range of skills and knowledge appropriate to their qualifications or agreed learning goals. They should consider how well learners understand how to assess their own performance.

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which the senior management and staff track and keep records on the progress of each learner and report on these clearly to meet the needs of learners and employers. They should consider how well teachers ensure that their assessments are valid, timely, accurate and reliable (IA3.2).

Stage four: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance continued

From 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which teachers analyse the outcomes of their assessment of learners to inform their future planning of lessons and the next steps in learners' learning. They should consider how well teachers ensure that their assessments are valid, accurate and reliable.

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which the senior management and staff track and keep records on the progress of each learner and report on these clearly to meet the needs of learners, parents and carers and placing authorities. They should consider how well teachers ensure that their assessments are valid, timely, accurate and reliable.

Inspectors should evaluate whether learners regularly review their own learning, understand their progress and are involved in setting their own learning targets, including the use of person-centred approaches for learners with additional learning needs (IA 3.2).

Inspectors should evaluate how well learners develop and apply a wide range of skills and knowledge appropriate to their qualifications or agreed learning goals. Inspectors should also evaluate the verbal and written feedback from teachers to help learners to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They should consider how well learners understand how to assess their own performance (IA3.2).

Useful links:

- What we inspect: further education colleges
- What we inspect: independent specialist colleges

Estyn have developed:

- Effective approaches to assessment that improve teaching and learning

Stage four: the ALN Code and what colleges can do

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
In order to determine the progress towards achieving the intended outcome(s), it may be helpful to set interim or short-term targets or milestones, and to monitor the impact of the ALP on the child or young person's progress. This could include a continuing process of tracking or any assessments that might take place in the educational setting on a regular basis. If such targets or milestones are required, these should be recorded in an appendix to the IDP. Any concerns raised as a result of this monitoring might lead to a review of the IDP as a whole (see Chapter 25).	Keep up to date and accurate records of all support and interventions that are in place. Review support and care plans regularly to ensure needs are being met effectively and that this is supporting progress towards outcomes. Make sure learner targets and achievement data can be shared in a format that can be appended to IDPs maintained by FE colleges and local authorities as required. Review how additional learning support is enabling progress to be made. Check that resources are deployed effectively and identify where support needs to be targeted, addressing any issues of inequalities between groups of learners. Provide evidence of the additional support in place, how this meets need and supports learner progress. Case studies may be useful to demonstrate this.

Stage four: the ALN Code and what colleges can do continued

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
The school, FEI or local authority maintaining the IDP should engage regularly with the child, child's parent or young person in order to discuss progress, which in turn should help inform the timing of the review and contribute towards meeting the duty to involve and support children, their parents and young people. Where the IDP is maintained by a local authority, the authority should consider how to involve any institution attended by the child or young person in considering progress and engaging with the child, their parent or the young person. The engagement with the child, their parent or young person should include: (a) the provision of clear and accessible information to them about the child or young person's progress and how ALP may or may not be contributing to this; (b) the provision of opportunities for the child, child's parent or young person to discuss their opinions about the approaches and strategies being used; (c) the provision of opportunities for the child, child's parent or young person to discuss when they think a review of an IDP may be beneficial and why (25.16).	Demonstrate how learners' individual learning programmes have been informed by the learner voice and agreed with the learner. Work with stakeholders to ensure all have a shared understanding of how individual learning programmes are supporting the achievement of person-centred IDP intended outcomes and allowing learners to move towards their long-term aspirations. Use achievement demonstrated through formative assessment to empower learners and build on their identified strengths. Involve learners in progress reviews including assessing that short-, medium- and longer-term learning targets and goals remain appropriate. Where IDP intended outcomes may require reviewing, ensure learner involvement in the process. Use learner feedback to inform quality improvement planning Provide an assessment process that clearly identifies where emerging needs may not be being met and follow due process to update (or request as appropriate) the learner's IDP. Establish where unmet needs can be met through revising ALP and when external referrals may be necessary.
It is important to remember that children and young people learn in different ways, and their needs may change over time. Through a continuous cycle of planning, action and review, different support or expertise can be identified and provided as necessary. The range and style of support ought, therefore, over time be increased, reduced or changed according to the child or young person's individual needs and progress (25.4).	Review how additional learning support is enabling progress to be made. Check that resources are deployed effectively and identify where support needs to be targeted, addressing any issues of inequalities between groups of learners. Provide evidence of the additional support in place, how this meets need and supports learner progress. Case studies may be useful to demonstrate this. Use formative assessment data to plan active support strategies to reduce dependence and increase learner autonomy and skills.

Stage four: questions colleges should ask themselves about Individual Development Plans

Questions to ask	If the answer is no or unsure
Does the progress identified during formative assessment link to the intended outcomes in the IDP?	Identify how the learner's progress is supporting them towards their long-term outcomes and if any changes need to be made to outcomes or short-term objectives. If outcomes are not on track to be achieved within their timescale, decide what else needs to be done by the college or by others to get progress back on track. If outcomes require amendment, contact the relevant people in FE colleges and/or the local authority to discuss this.
Are staff fully aware of learners' views on their progress and what might be preventing or supporting their progress?	Plan annual reviews with the learner. Use person-centred thinking tools to support the learner to decide what they want to say and how they want to say it. The IDP is theirs and their voice is central. For learners who do not use formal communication, develop personalised ways for learners to meaningfully participate and involve staff who know the learner well and can advocate on their behalf.
Does the local authority have accurate and sufficient information and evidence about the progress made towards long-term outcomes?	Prepare progress reports in advance of an IDP annual review. Include a discussion around the learner's progress against shorter term objectives, linked to long- term outcomes. Those with responsibility for maintaining IDPs will need to be satisfied that the learner is making expected progress from the evidence presented at the annual review. When deciding to cease an IDP, FE colleges and local authorities will examine if intended outcomes have been achieved.

Stage four: person-centered practice

College examples...

A specialist college has created a bank of communication resources called an ILP pack that staff can use to support learner understanding of their targets, the progress they are making and seeking an understanding of what they would like to do next.

A FE college uses a targets and tracking document that includes the learners one page profile.

A specialist college has created a learner review self-assessment template staff can use with learners to facilitate in the moment reflections from learners on their progress towards achieving their targets.

A specialist college uses this review template to help prepare for formal review meetings.
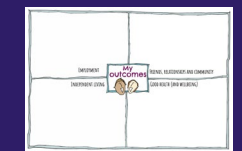
Useful links:

Welsh Government published documents

• Person-Centred Reviews Toolkit

The National Development Team for inclusion (NDTI) have developed:

• NDTI model for looking at What is and isn't working

• NDTI template for a What Matters Island

• NDTI Outcomes template

Stage four: quality assurance

Examples of quality assurance activity

- Assess the quality of a sample of progress reports from different staff working across a programme. Check staff are following the organisation's guidelines for reporting on progress. This could include in-class, face-to-face assessment and written progress reports.

- Collate data on what progress is being made across the curriculum for a sample of individual learners. Identify any specific patterns where progress is not as expected, as well as where progress is consistently high. Use this information to conduct a wider review of areas of the curriculum, to address quality issues and share best practice.

- Hold learner voice meetings or programme representative meetings to ask if learners are getting the feedback they need to understand their progress and what they need to do next. For learners with more complex needs, involve staff who know the learner well and parents and carers, if appropriate.

- Audit a sample of assessment records to determine how much use is being made of learner self-assessment and peer assessment alongside teacher assessment, and how effectively that is being done.

- Send questionnaires to parents and carers, if appropriate, and to key stakeholders to determine whether they have a clear understanding of what progress is being made and whether this matches their expectations.

- Sample learners' work and related feedback/progress records for evidence that consistent judgements on progress are being made and that the language staff use is consistent and accessible to the learner.

- Observe in-lesson assessment methods and ways of recording progress. Check they involve using learner friendly creative approaches such as videos, photographs and displays of learner work that show progress against objectives Identify best practice and share with staff teams.

- Use evidence from a review of formative assessment to identify staff CPD needs, including where performance management measures are required.

Stage four: self audit tool

Use the self-audit tool to assess what you are already doing well and where you need to take further action.

🟥 No evidence requires attention 🟧 Requires development 🟩 Evidence of this informs planning and delivery

Stage four: formative review of learning				what is your evidence? (identify improvement actions in the boxes at the bottom)
Do moderation activities lead to improvements in the quality of formative assessment that support learner progress?				
Do learners understand what they can now do and know, that is different from the start of their learning programme? Do they know what they need to do next?				
Is there evidence that progress towards short and/or medium-term learning objectives is linked to the achievement of long-term outcomes?				
Is the assessment of progress being used to support learners to consider their planned destinations? Is there advice and information available				
For learners in a transition year, does formative assessment support their transition plans?				
Are learner reviews person-centred and do they involve relevant people who know the learner well? Are actions from reviews completed to deadlines?				
Are staff providing regular feedback to learners about their progress towards objectives and long-term outcomes, in accessible and creative ways?				
Is the scrutiny of learner work being used to improve consistency and quality of assessment?				
Do staff have the expertise and specialist knowledge to assess the progress of learners who do not use formal verbal communication? Are staff making accurate judgements on progress for these learners and is appropriate feedback being provided to them?				
Are learner support and care plans being regularly checked and updated in the light of formative assessment?				
Is there a comprehensive CPD plan in place to support staff to conduct high quality assessments?				
Can staff follow the formative assessment process without creating unnecessary burdens for themselves or learners?				

Stage four: self audit tool continued

Quality improvement actions

What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?

Stage five

Summative assessment of achievement

Summative assessments of achievement allow learners and stakeholders to understand the 'distance travelled' in further education and supports informed decision making about next steps. It also allows colleges to assess if programmes of learning have been effective in meeting expectations.

Stage five: What is involved?

Stage five is about completing a summative assessment of achievement that:

• supports learners' progress towards their chosen destination

• provides evidence of achievement that is meaningful to learners and key stakeholders

• demonstrates progress and achievement of outcomes

• celebrates achievement.

When summative assessment is well managed:

• learners know what they have achieved and how they have made progress towards their aspirations and long-term outcomes

• information gathered is useful in supporting a planned transition as it captures the progress made across the whole learning programme from baseline assessment to end point

• employers or other destination settings such as care providers, understand what the learner can do now and how this supports transition

• it includes a record of any external accreditation or qualification(s) gained, along with achievements in broader aspects of the curriculum such as communication and personal development, independence skills, employability and citizenship

• achievement is demonstrated in a variety of creative ways that are meaningful to the learner, achievements are celebrated and shared widely across the organisation and to external partners

• feedback is used to inform planning the curriculum for future learners

• the impact of the learning programme can be evaluated for individuals and groups of learners

• learners have a planned transition to their chosen destination which starts before their final year on a learning programme

• colleges use destination data to inform self-evaluation and quality improvement plans.

Stage five: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance

Assessing how effectively providers understand their strengths and areas for development is central to Estyn's approach to inspection. Understanding if and when learners on non-accredited programmes of learning accomplish their learning objectives and any factors that have helped or hindered achievement should be integral to a college's self-evaluation processes and quality improvement planning. It will also ensure meaningful and appropriate post-college transitions can be supported where learners can continue to build on the skills they have achieved at college.

From 'What we inspect' for both further education and 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should look at the extent to which leaders and managers sustain high quality or improve weak aspects of provision (IA5.1).

Inspectors should evaluate how well governors understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities. They should consider how well they know the college's strengths and areas for development and the degree to which they have participated in setting the college's strategic priorities. They should consider whether there is an appropriate balance between support and challenge in the way the governing body holds senior leadership to account (IA5.1).

Stage five: how it aligns with Estyn's inspection guidance continued

Inspectors should evaluate how accurately leaders and managers know the college's strengths and weaknesses. They should consider how well leaders and managers gather and analyse first-hand evidence of standards of provision, including teaching and assessment (IA5.2).

Inspectors should consider the impact of improvement planning processes and how well identified priorities for improvement link to the outcomes of the college's self-assessment (IA 5.2).

Inspectors should investigate the college's track-record in making improvements and the extent to which they have led to a positive impact on learners' learning and wellbeing, for example through improvements to the quality of teaching and training (IA5.2).

From 'What we inspect' for specialist colleges

Inspectors should consider whether specific groups of learners are making as much progress as they could in relation to their starting-points and their age and ability (IA1.1).

Useful links:

- What we inspect: further education colleges

- What we inspect: independent specialist colleges

Stage five: the ALN Code and what colleges can do

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
A key responsibility of an ALNCo is identified as supporting learners with an IDP with their transition between education settings or into adulthood, further study or work (8.21). It is expected planning for a known transition would usually coincide with when an IDP is reviewed. This approach helps ensure that transition planning becomes a regular process in which children and young people become familiar with and feel comfortable discussing how transition may affect them (27.20).	ALNCo's and relevant staff in colleges should liaise with stakeholders to plan appropriate post-college transitions to settings and/or services that support the maintenance and growth of learners skills. Work in partnership with external agencies to deliver a planned transition to adult services, at an appropriate time. If health and social care needs have changed over the learning programme and this has not fed into an IDP review by the end of the learning programme, summative assessment should reflect any changes to health and social care needs that have impacted upon progress and achievement.
Transition planning is usually most effective when a person centred practice approach is adopted, allowing the child, the child's parent, or young person to voice any concerns relating to their next transition. Discussing the likely changes to the child or young person's education or training can help prepare the learner for transition and highlight what additional support may be required. Some meetings that discuss transition planning will benefit from involving other partners that can help the child or young person understand how transitions will work in practice and what additional support is available to them. Any additional support identified for transitions can be documented in the child or young person's IDP to enable action to be taken at the relevant time (27.6). Planning for transition provides an opportunity for children and young people to raise any concerns they may have about the new setting (27.26).	Use summative assessments to clearly demonstrate learners' increased skills and knowledge and with learners' permission, share information with stakeholders. Have processes in place so the learner is able to communicate their aspirations, and needs for their post-college adult lives as well as any concerns they may have. Organise progress reviews earlier in the year for learners who will be leaving that year. Use the evidence from progress reports to inform planning and next steps towards the chosen destination. Invite representatives from the local authority and other multi-disciplinary professionals who will have a role in the learner's life. Prepare the learner for the review so they can share their progress and make informed decisions about their transition. This may involve arranging for advocacy services through the local authority.

Stage five: the ALN Code and what colleges can do continued

What the ALN Code says	What colleges can do
Transitions into and out of specific phases of education may also benefit from further planning. This may include children and young people preparing to make the transition between key stages, or from education and training to independent living (27.10). When a young person with ALN is leaving education or training and preparing for adulthood, transition planning can help with the emotional and practical challenges ahead. An important discussion as part of their final transition plan is around what happens when their IDP ceases, and what support is available to them in their next stage in life. Advice about the support provided by other agencies can help young people as they leave education and, with the right support, the majority of young people with ALN can reach their potential and live independent, fulfilled lives (27.48).	Work collaboratively with local authorities and careers advisors to ensure learners and their families understand all the post-college options available to the learner including information about benefits and employment rights. Have a culture of high expectations for young people with ALN. Use summative assessment to celebrate and promote the achievements of current and past learners. Include different learner groups to demonstrate the diversity of ALN learners across the whole organisation. Ensure learners leave with a record of their achievements that is meaningful to them and can be shared with others including potential employers.

Stage five: questions colleges should ask themselves about Individual Development Plans

Questions to ask	If the answer is no or unsure
Are you responsible for or involved in decision making about whether or not to cease an IDP Plan at the end of a programme?	Use both formative and summative assessments to provide evidence of progress towards outcomes. IDPs only remain in place where educational provision is required to support a young person to reach IDP outcomes. FE colleges and local authorities will make decisions to cease an IDP based on evidence of progress towards and achievement of outcomes in the plan. The summative assessment will usually be the key evidence on which local authorities base their decisions.
Do you know if the learner's IDP will continue when they move to a new setting?	Review the learner's chosen destination. If they are moving onto another educational setting and still require an IDP, there are specific timescales in the ALN Code which mean IDP annual reviews may need to be scheduled earlier than usual. Ensure information is up to date and reflects what has been achieved at college.
Have the learner's views on their transition to a new setting or returning to a learning programme been considered and are the local authority aware of these views?	Provide evidence to the local authority of how learners have expressed their views about their achievements and what they want to do next. Use person-centred planning tools to demonstrate this. Involve staff who know the learners well and parents and carers, if appropriate.
Does the learner require an informal advocate or third party advocacy services to attend an IDP review or for transition planning?	Ensure staff are suitably skilled to identify learners who may require an advocate and that local authorities are informed of any need for advocacy services in a timely manner. Under the ALN Code (32.59) local authorities must ensure free independent advocacy services are known to stakeholders.

Stage five: person-centered practice

College examples...

Mindful that it can often be the case that people making decisions about the services a young person receives when they leave college may not know learner's very well, one specialist college has developed a Self Advocacy Plan that details all the learners achievements at college and the preferences learner's have for their post college adult lives. The plan details any voluntary work the learner has done, their interests and hobbies and what is important to them such as the skills they want to continue to develop, the type of place they would like to live, the paid or unpaid work they would like to find and other activities they would like to do (e.g. use the gym for one hour three times a week).

A specialist college uses a Learner View Document that is required to be completed ahead of formal review meetings and it evidences their views and preferences. It includes who they would like to attend their review meetings, what is going well, where there is room for improvement and their aspirations for the future.

A FE college uses a RARPA Roadmap to support learner understanding of what they should expect at each stage.

A specialist college uses a summary document to support staff understanding of how RARPA is used in the college.

Useful links:

The National Development Team for inclusion (NDTI) have developed:

• NDTI Good Day and Bad Day tool

• NDTI Presence to Contribution

• NDTI Inclusion Web tool
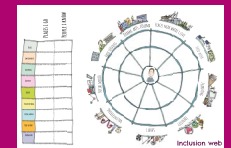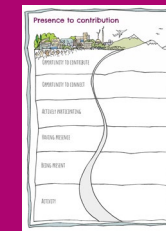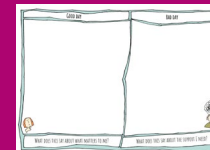
Stage five: quality assurance

Examples of quality assurance activity

- Review achievement data to demonstrate a consistent level of judgement has been applied across all aspects of summative assessment. This could include a scrutiny of evidence to support assessment, final progress reports, learner work and reviewing learners IDP or equivalent. Identify if there are any patterns of inequality between groups of learners e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability or special educational need.

- Check that the summative achievements recorded:

  - represent a satisfactory amount of progress from starting points

  - build on progress made through meeting learning objectives

  - have enabled progress towards long-term aspirations.

- Use a learner survey to find out how well learners believe that the learning programme overall has met their needs. Hold learner voice or learner representative meetings to gain feedback on what they have achieved. Ask learners if it has met their expectations and if they would change anything or do anything differently, including the type of support or interventions they have received.

- Gather feedback from key stakeholders such as parents, carers and multi-disciplinary professionals on how well the learning programme has enabled the learner to achieve.

- Conduct walk throughs of classrooms and communal spaces to observe how learners achievements are shared and celebrated. Review the website and other sources of information for evidence that learners' achievements are highly valued.

- Request feedback from learners' new settings on the usefulness of the summative achievement data shared with them, in planning support, activities and opportunities.

Stage five: self audit tool

Use the self-audit tool to assess what you are already doing well and where you need to take further action.

■ No evidence requires attention   ■ Requires development   ■ Evidence of this informs planning and delivery

Stage five: summative assessment of achievement				what is your evidence? (identify improvement actions in the boxes at the bottom)
Do all learners have a final assessment of their achievements on the learning programme that shows the progress they have made from their starting points?				
Are final progress reports checked for consistency of approach, language, content and assessment of achievement across the whole programme?				
Have learners achieved their learning objectives and longer-term outcomes as expected?				
Can learners articulate, in appropriate ways, what they know and can do now that they could not at the start of their learning programme?				
Are achievements in IDP outcomes and the learner's curriculum areas specifically reported on?				
Is there evidence that the support and interventions in place have enabled learners to achieve?				
Has a moderation of final assessments taken place and is this used to inform planning of the curriculum?				
Is there evidence of creative, meaningful ways to demonstrate achievement, such as videos, displays, learner feedback, celebration events and awards, that involve the learners and express the 'learner voice'?				
Is achievement shared with the wider community, including parents and carers and other key stakeholders?				
Have learners continued with a planned transition to their next setting or destination? Has information from the summative assessment been shared with the learner's consent?				
Is there an analysis of destination data that informs planning?				
Is best practice in summative assessment being shared and actions identified to make improvements where required?				
Can staff deliver their responsibilities for summative assessment effectively and without incurring an overload of work?				
Do staff have targets to improve summative assessment, if required, in their performance reviews and the appraisal process?				

Stage five: self audit tool continued

Quality improvement actions

What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?

Supporting the quality assurance of RARPA

Internal review

Internal reviews can be carried out throughout the year, at key points during the different five stages or on an annual basis.

An internal review supports the identification of best practice and where action is required to improve quality. It should be undertaken within colleges' usual quality assurance cycle.

External review

Colleges may benefit from commissioning an external review of RARPA learning programmes.

External professionals with expertise in delivering and quality assuring RARPA can provide an impartial assessment of how evidence is used to self-assess and improve quality. This can increase stakeholder confidence that there is a level of external scrutiny taking place.

Peer review

In addition to internal reviews, colleges can work in partnership to review each other's processes, identify and share good practice and improve the overall quality of RARPA in Wales. Peer review can work equally well between colleges of the same and different types and where they have similar and different cohorts of learners. It can focus on a particular RARPA stage or look at entire RARPA systems.

Colegau Cymru have developed resources to support FE colleges undertaking peer reviews.

Useful links:

This self-assessment framework developed by ColegauCymru provides examples of the measures that can be taken to improve the quality of RARPA processes.

Colegau Cymru have developed RARPA peer exchange guidance along with a Sampling Form and a RARPA Report Form.

This visual representation demonstrates how RARPA process fit with a college's annual quality cycle.

Natspec's Transform continuing professional development service provides a range of RARPA training and colleges can request an external quality review of RARPA processes.

Natspec

The voice of specialist further education

Natspec exists to improve further education for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. We want this guidance to be as up to date and helpful to stakeholders as possible. If you have any feedback or would like to contribute an example of how you use RARPA please email info@natspec.org.uk

Natspec is a membership organisation and the voice of specialist further education. Our **Transform,** continuing professional development courses and **TechAbility**, our Assistive Technology support service aim to improve outcomes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in mainstream and specialist further education. For more information on membership visit https://natspec.org.uk/membership/join-us/

www.natspec.org.uk

info@natspec.org.uk

@Natspec

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