

**Knowsley FACE (and Flourish)**

**ASSESSMENT POLICY (including RARPA)**

**Purpose**

To ensure that an assessment process in specific curriculum areas and within specific SEN provision such as Flourish FE is effective and fit for purpose and one that informs learners of their progress, attainment and achievement.

Knowsley Family And Community Education recognises the practical difficulties in developing a coherent and consistent assessment system for all courses, however, the main principle is to ensure a structured process is in place for both accredited and non-accredited provision, which is understood by both learner and tutor as well as parents and carers advocating for their young person.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all staff responsible for providing learning.

**Objectives**

For all courses, the following principles of assessment will be implemented:

1. Identification of Learning Outcomes and Methods of Assessment

All tutors are required to have clear overarching learning aims for their course which are shared with learners as part of the Enrolment Process, Initial Advice and Guidance Process and/or Induction.

Flourish is required to have a clear overarching aim of Preparation for Adulthood Curriculum which is linked directly to each learner’s individual EHCP outcomes.

**2. Initial Assessment of Learners**

* 1. All learners will undergo initial assessment of their needs which informs tutors of:
     + Learner’s previous knowledge and experience
     + Any additional learning support needs (please refer to DLSF policy, Learner Handbook 2023/24, E&D Strategy)
  2. Tutors will determine the appropriateness and timing of initial assessment (depending on the individual needs of learners)
     1. Learners at Flourish as part of a full time course will undergo an initial baseline assessment period of 42 days. This will inform tutors of:
* Initial starting points and needs in comparison to existing skills noted at time of leaving full time school education.
* Preferences in activities, likes dislikes and future aspirations
* Differences / changes or development or engagement in learners not previously observed or noted
* Sensory and behavioural support needs.

It is noted learners with high needs often take a longer time to settle and be able to participate so a lengthy and detailed assessment process ensures learners have a long enough opportunity to show their levels skills and capabilities.

#### 3. Negotiation of Objectives with Learners

* 1. Learning objectives, which link to the overall aims of the course, will be determined by the tutor in negotiation with the learner and will be written as a Personal Learning Record.

3.2 At Flourish it is not always possible or appropriate to negotiate learning objectives or targets with learners. Targets are developed in conjunction with observed and assessed needs and the best way forward to successfully achieve EHCP outcomes.

**4. Continuous Formative Assessment**

* 1. Continuous Formative Assessment may not always be formally recorded but needs to be planned for and carried out on a regular basis by tutors, in a non-threatening and sensitive manner. At Flourish targets are monitored each day and either updated and given more challenge or reduced slightly where learners are showing difficulty. This is done formally each half term, but if the response is required immediately, targets can be changed a.s.a.p.
  2. Progress towards learning goals will be monitored on a regular basis by tutors in order to check that the standard of learners’ work is appropriate to the requirements of courses and also to learners’ own learning goals

Tutors at Flourish will meet regularly each half term to discuss any formal changes required to targets.

* 1. Tutors will monitor and record progress using a service or tutor designed approach.

**5. Learner Self Assessment**

* 1. Learning to learn is an important part of the process especially for adults who are returning to learning. Tutors need to make learners aware of what they are doing, how they are doing it, what is going well and what not so well.

Flourish will use methods appropriate to the learners to assist where possible their understanding of their targets and how they are able to work towards achieving them.

* 1. Tutors are encouraged to allow sufficient opportunities for peer and tutor/group assessment.

**6. Summative Assessment and Recording of Achievement**

* 1. All tutors will follow a common service-wide process to record achievement for both accredited and non-accredited learning.
  2. Evidence will record attendance, group and individual objectives, evidence of learner progress through their course, outcomes from both the learner and tutor perspective, the learner’s contribution to the learning process and notes on progression/aspirations.

**7. Progression Advice and Guidance**.

7.1 Tutors will identify progression opportunities within their subject area using Course Outlines and recognise they have a responsibility to encourage learner development and progression.

Where appropriate and possible Flourish will regularly update the learners, their parents and guardians of their progress. This will be done in the format of “open days”, EHCP reviews and reports twice a year.

**8. Celebration of Achievement**.

* 1. Recognising and celebrating learner achievement is an integral part and culmination of the whole learning experience. Celebration is course based, centre based and also service wide. It is highly valued by the learner, tutors and the service as an essential part of the learning experience.

**The role of the assessor in the assessment process**

The role of the Assessor is to support the candidate and to make informed judgements about the range of evidence the candidate has produced, which should demonstrate their competence to meet the assessment criteria as detailed in the Awarding Body Qualification Specification. It is also the duty of the assessor to provide the Internal Moderator with learner work for sampling. Evidence submitted with Learner work for sampling should be fully indexed against the standards.

**The ideal assessor:**

1. First and foremost, assessors should be suitably qualified (D32, D33, A1/A2 or hold another assessor qualification such as a Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocational Achievement (QCF). They should also show a real commitment to developing their skills.
2. Assessors must ensure they have an up to date Qualification Specifications to assist them in the delivery of the qualification before starting delivery.
3. The Assessor should decide on the assessment methods to be used throughout the delivery of the qualification and document this. These should help the candidates demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding to help them provide the necessary evidence. A broad range of assessment methods can also make the qualification more engaging and enjoyable for the candidates.
4. A planned programme outline should also be devised to show how they intend to deliver the qualification and as a benchmark to track progress. A timetable should be created to highlight when teaching will take place.
5. The Assessor and Internal Moderator should work together to create a sampling strategy for internal moderation to take place and plan in dates when sampling can take place.
6. The Assessor may be responsible for inducting the candidates onto the programme. If so this should include discussing relevant policies and procedures, carrying out an initial assessment, discussing reasonable adjustments and special considerations and any additional requirements, discussing whether RPL is appropriate and ensuring that they have signed a statement declaring that their work will be their own.
7. The Assessor should explain to the candidate before the programme commences the content and requirements of the programme so that the candidate is fully aware of their responsibilities. Together they should agree timescales for completion. They can use a candidate action plan and unit feedback document to record the units the candidates will complete and how they will be assessed.
8. It’s essential that that the Assessor reviews the candidate’s progress and provides them with regular feedback, both verbal and written which **must** be documented. The Assessor should set an action plan for the candidate to work through and should give specific deadlines to help the candidate complete the course by the deadline. The Assessor should also review any reasonable adjustments and special considerations during the course of the programme.
9. The Assessor and Internal Moderator should hold regular standardisation meetings and document the minutes.
10. The Assessor should keep up to date with any changes made to Awarding Body processes or procedures, and the content of the Qualification Specification.

**Continuous Formative Assessment**

* Continuous Formative Assessment may not always be formally recorded but needs to be planned for and carried out on a regular basis by tutors, in a non-threatening and sensitive manner.
* Progress towards learning goals will be monitored on a regular basis by tutors in order to check that the standard of learners’ work is appropriate to the requirements of courses and also to learners’ own learning goals
* Tutors will monitor and record progress using a service or tutor designed approach.

On-Programme Assessment is a continuous process by which learners demonstrate their understanding and understanding, usually to a prescribed standard. It may include demonstrating competence in practical activities as well as theoretical knowledge.

Effective On-Programme Assessment includes:

1. Introducing assessment as early as possible in a course helps develop confidence in learners so that they develop a ‘can-do’ attitude and want to be assessed as soon as is practically possible.
2. Explaining the principles of assessment at induction so that learners are familiar with the assessment process, types of evidence and the appeals procedure. A good understanding by learners helps to promote assessment.
3. Assessment becoming learner-led. Learners develop the confidence to know when they are ready for assessment and what they need to do in order to be successful (particularly with Level 3 and above work).
4. Developing the assessment plan over the duration of a programme, incorporating details of the activity being assessed, for example the units, elements, performance criteria and range, along with likely sources of evidence and the method of assessment. It is important however to be aware that opportunities for assessment may arise unexpectedly so some flexibility should be built into the plan.
5. Making use of technology where it helps to facilitate assessment, not for the sake of using it.
6. Setting up enough assessment opportunities to ensure that the learner is practised and more likely to prove competence during an assessment. The best assessors prepare learners to succeed.
7. Grouping assessments to close down units, so that learners can see clear progress as units are completed. Working on too many units at once can make progress unfocused and slow.
8. Ensuring that learners have their own assessment tracker and understand where they are in terms of their assessment plan.
9. Assessors clearly explaining where learners can make improvements.
10. Ensuring assessors give written as well as verbal feedback to learners. Learners know what they have achieved and where they still have more to learn in order to achieve the required standard. No matter how good the verbal feedback given is, some learners will forget what was said.
11. Setting up systems to ensure that the assessment criteria of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are met in every programme area.
12. Ensuring that progress reviews help set clear, broken down targets. This helps facilitate learners moving towards becoming ready for assessment.
13. Assessors stopping assessment where a learner is clearly not going to demonstrate competence. This can turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one by turning assessment into coaching in preparation for the next attempt at proving competence.
14. Providing online assessment where it is available and where it helps learners. This has been particularly successful in key skills where learners receive feedback on where they have gone wrong and quick assessment decisions.
15. Assessment being quality assured and improved through internal and external verification. Where feedback to improve assessment is given this should be easily traced to completion (‘closing the loop’). The best systems promote assessment and track learner progress.
16. Identifying and spreading good practice.

**RARPA (explained)**

**RARPA means Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement.** Accredited courses follow a set syllabus and lead to a certificate or an examination with a recognised Awarding Body or Examination Board. Non-accredited courses don’t but still follow learning objectives and assessment criteria and generally result in a service designed certificate of participation or achievement. The main reason why RARPA was introduced was to assure a level of quality around learners achieving all the learning goals and assessment criteria for a non-accredited course.

Nationally, the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle has been revised and adapted to ensure that it is fit for purpose for the use of non-regulated provision, particularly where that provision is being used to respond to local skills needs. The RARPA Cycle has been modified to ensure it can act as a robust quality monitoring system which can be used by providers to demonstrate quality improvement and assurance of their non-regulated provision in line with the requirements set out in the AEB funding rules.

RARPA has developed since 2002 as a method of ensuring quality improvement, primarily for provision in adult and community learning and in provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Going forward, RARPA has a critical role to play across all locally designed provision in the changing context of funding and commissioning. It is fundamental in capturing and measuring outcomes agreed and commissioned locally.

RARPA enables providers to show how learners are being supported to meet challenging targets in key areas such as skills training, personal, social and employability skills (including English and mathematics) set against their starting points. When making judgements in relation to the quality of learners’ outcomes inspectors need to know how well learners have achieved. They also need to know whether courses enable learners to achieve their personal learning goals, progress into higher level qualifications or into jobs that meet local and national needs.

RARPA can be an effective way of aligning with inspection frameworks in terms of outcomes for learners; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and, personal development behaviour and welfare.

Since 2002 the five *stage* RARPA process has been implemented successfully by many learning providers. The new six *step* process updates RARPA and adds a sixth step that focusses on learner progression towards outcomes such as further learning and employment. Other outcomes are possible too, for example volunteering, which can enable learners to keep progressing and gain evidence of employability.

The new 6 steps are shown and explained in further detail below.



The RARPA process sets out clear the expectations for ensuring effective, reliable and valid assessment, recording of assessment, and capturing progress over each learner’s journey through non-regulated provision. A summary of the 6 stage process is outlined below:

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| **Step** | **Further guidance for providers new to RARPA** | **Potential Types of Evidence (not prescriptive)** |
| **1. Aims appropriate to an individual or group of learners and local needs** | Clearly stated programme aim(s) supporting outcomes in line with local learning and skills priorities for non-regulated provision.  The current nature and scope of non-regulated provision is outlined under the Adult Education Budget funding and performance management rules. | Pre-course starting point assessment records (if appropriate). Curriculum planning records in line with locally driven delivery agreements reflecting both community and skills needs, marketing and prospectus records. Meetings with key stakeholders. The supporting evidence should clearly indicate the basis for the provider’s decision that non-regulated provision is the most suitable intervention for an individual or group of learners. |
| **2. Starting points** | This refers to establishing and recording the learner’s starting point in relation to the course aims, sometimes known as initial assessment.  This is separate to initial assessment  of English and Maths, which may also be included at induction, depending on the type of provision. Processes and details will dependent on type and length of course. | Easily identifiable records of learners’ starting points in relation to course aims. Can include self-assessment (where learners define their own starting points), as well as practical evidence of prior learning. |
| **3. Identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives (initial, re-negotiated, revised) and incorporating generic and individual objectives** | The level of ‘stretch and challenge’ which is appropriate will vary according to learners’ needs, aspirations and starting points. Learning objectives may be amended during the learning programme (as a result of formative feedback and/or assessment).  Objectives should support personal, community, social and economic goals aligned with local learning and skills priorities (in relation to agreed local outcomes). | Records of clearly stated suitably challenging learning objectives for all programmes and wherever feasible identification of individual learners’ objectives, Lesson plans, learners’ portfolios, internally agreed skills/targets matrix. |
| **4. Formative feedback and recognition of progress during programme** | This includes the recording of formative assessment; e.g. Identification of learners’ developing knowledge, skills and behaviour.  Formative feedback to learners supports the development of reflection and the setting of challenging learning objectives. | Learner self-assessment; tutor/key worker records of assessment. Learners’ files, journals, diaries, portfolios, photographs, exhibitions and displays, individual or group testimony. Observation of performance, practical demonstration, tests, project, scenario, interviews, professional discussion, case study, showcase. Evidence may include blended learning and use of technology where appropriate. |
| **5. End-of-programme learner self- assessment, tutor assessment, review of overall progress and achievement.** | This is in relation to learner starting points and on-going learning objectives.  Qualitative and quantitative information and reviews of additional learning gains to be identified here.  Where appropriate, progression into work or further learning and skills development should be evidenced. | Learner self-assessment; tutor/key worker records of assessment. Learners’ files, journals, diaries, portfolios, photographs, exhibitions and displays, individual or group testimony. Observations of performance, practical demonstrations, scenario, tests, projects, interviews, professional discussions, case studies, work readiness interviews etc. Certificates/awards and other relevant records and demonstrations of attainment of new skills/knowledge. |
| **6. Next Steps** | Supporting learners to make informed choices about their next steps into further learning and work  Learning providers will need to provide evidence of providing appropriate individual and/or group information, advice, and/ or guidance  tailored to need and desired outcomes. | Evidence of individual and / or group information, advice and /or guidance  Providers need to show that they have evaluated the overall learning programme with learners. |

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| The RARPA cycle cannot be operated in isolation. It is incomplete without the underpinning support factors and quality improvement and assurance processes. These are the processes that are common to both regulated and non-regulated provision. RARPA sits within a wider organisational, quality improvement and assurance system, that is applied equally to all provision, whether it leads to a regulated qualification or not. The following section provides an overview of the underpinning support factors and Quality Improvement and Assurance requirements.  **The following elements are essential in underpinning the RARPA process:**  ▪ **Information, Advice and Guidance**: as with regulated provision, IAG is critical at all stages of the process to support learners to make an informed choice about their future progression, whether in learning, employment or in the community.  ▪ **Staff development and observation of teaching and learning**: for tutors new to using RARPA, support and additional training may be needed in formative and final assessment. Many tutors will teach on both regulated and non-regulated programmes and observations of teaching and learning can be integrated into existing schedules of internal quality assurance and moderation.  ▪ **Management Information**: the same rigour in analysis and collation of achievements and outcomes is required for non-regulated provision as for regulated qualifications. Where appropriate this should include outcomes gathered from sample post course reviews. Stage one of the RARPA process integrates outcomes required to meet local needs and effective collation of achievements and supports reporting for the local commissioning processes. Local commissioners will expect to see robust evidence of this.  ▪ **Curriculum review and management**: non-regulated provision should be reviewed alongside regulated qualification bearing courses to ensure that both provide the best fit to address local priorities and individual needs.  Fundamental to the quality assurance of the RARPA process is that it is fit for purpose and appropriate for the length, duration and type of course. It should provide a value for money means of ensuring the process is used effectively and the outcomes achieved can be verified. | | | |
| Each provider will have its own quality improvement and assurance processes and the expectation is that these will also be applied to RARPA in a way that is fit for purpose. For example, a 10-hour course will not need the same level of approach as a one-year programme. It is not the intention to place additional bureaucratic burdens on providers.  The expectation is that non-regulated provision will be treated with the same rigour as accredited provision. Providers may wish to review their quality procedures to ensure that the outcomes, achievement and delivery of non-regulation provision is in-line with both national inspection requirements and key local commissioning priorities. | | | |
| **Quality Improvement Element** | **Potential Evidence** |
| **Systems and moderation includes review of the RARPA cycle including the consistency of assessment decisions and achieved learning aims and outcomes; ensuring challenging goals are set and achieved, appropriate capturing of outcomes.** | Records of internal and where appropriate external moderation, learner and tutor records, learner portfolios with evidence in a variety of formats, lesson plans, tutor reports, and sampling of assessment decisions. |
| **Self-Assessment – inclusion of non-regulated provision into existing self- assessment processes. Includes overall analysis of outcomes and achievements and considers alignment to the Common Inspection Framework.** | Report / documents shows clear understanding of the achievements and outcomes of non-regulated provision in the line with the local, individual and group aims. As with regulated qualifications, shows strengths and weaknesses and includes actions to improve weaknesses. |
| **Leadership and Management – evidence from actions above as to how RARPA and non-regulated provision is meeting the wider aims of the organisation, learners and the locality.** | Plans for improvement, CPD records, Observations of Teaching and Learning, reports of meetings, including Governors, stakeholder and learner views.  How is the provision being evaluated and what steps are providers making to improve provision? |

### Monitoring Criteria

### Flourish FE will monitor as part of the quality cycle and review this policy yearly:

* Vicky Bolster

**Date Reviewed/Revised**: 23rd September 2024

**Date for next review**:1st September 2025