

# BUILDING LEARNING SOCIETIES



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*Leeds Metropolitan University • Northern College • Swarthmore Adult Education Centre • Kirklees and Doncaster local authorities • GMB and GFTU trade unions • UK NARIC • City and Guilds • the Co-operative College • Endorsement and Quality Standards Board (Community Development)*

“Informal learning is relational; it’s about the process *between* people”





# England + Northern Ireland

- Medium progress!
- Regulatory arrangements allow for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for parts of qualifications
- RPL included in Higher Education Quality Code
- Access courses in further education support recognition of prior learning
- Skills passport – interesting developments in vocational sector eg. Nuclear Passport <http://www.nuclearskillspassport.co.uk/about>
- New Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)
- <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/qualifications-and-credit-framework-qcf.html>
- RARPA supports recognition of learning outcomes in adult and community learning

# Scotland

- Good progress!
- Centralised guidance and methodology in place
- Single credit and qualification framework – SCQF
- <http://scqf.org.uk/>
- RPL covers prior formal, non-formal and informal learning in all sectors
- RPL Toolkit developed and online guide available soon
- <http://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/RPL-Toolkit-Updated-v2-FINAL-December-2010-with-updated-Framework.pdf>
- RPL mostly used in Public Sector (Higher Education)

# Wales

- Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)  
- enables recognition and comparison of achievements from all types of education and training
- **Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL)** - learning outside regulated frameworks can be recognised through CQFW quality assurance mechanism
- QALL Toolikit  
<http://www.niacecymru.org.uk/sites/default/files/NDC%20Quality%20Assured%20English%20LR.pdf>

## *“How do you take a real-life person through the process ?”*

- No national strategy for England/NI
- No specific information provider for the various types of validation in place in the UK
- Low practitioner and public awareness
- Data – very little information on take-up of validation
- Little information about methodologies for validation process
- Loss of funding may inhibit development of validation practices
- No formal requirements in terms of skills or qualifications for validation practitioners

# *“Every human comes with knowledge; we are not blank slates”*

- Drift towards exam-led learning
- Universities increasingly interested in the outcomes of formal education rather than experience
- Funding linked to outcomes (qualifications/employment)
- Prior learning de-valued as access requirements for courses become more demanding
- Decline in opportunities for adults to choose learning pathway with introduction of higher fees and loans





# Who can raise awareness?

*“Validation should be an integral part of learning, not ‘on top of’ what you do”*



- Union Learning Reps and trade unions
- Employers
- Community Learning Trusts
- City Regions <http://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/>
- Community-led local development projects

# 2014 guidelines

*“The conversation itself is empowering; it’s only when you talk to people that you realise that they’ve got a range of skills” – Graham, ULR*

- The process needs to be light and person-centred
- The reasons and motivations for engaging need more consideration
- Assessment should be creative and flexible – eg witness statements, peer assessment, video, learning diaries
- Life skills and experiences need to be included/valued
- The validation process should be built around a reflective model, because informal learning starts with reflection
- Real-life examples are needed in the toolkit
- Competence assessment – transferable skills happen across sectors; we need a framework of ‘core skills’ BUT...
- ‘Competence’ is linked to an employer-driven model , not informal learning

# National Coalitions



- Opportunity to link to existing networks through UK NARIC

<https://www.naric.org.uk/NARIC/Default.aspx>

- EQF advisory group is a well established network with a monitoring role/also sharing practice
- Federation of awarding bodies has well established network
- <http://www.awarding.org.uk/>