KARE

QQI Quality Assurance Document

Policies & Procedures

Version 7.0

February 2022

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Introduction & Context

Background & Context

KARE is an innovative and progressive voluntary organisation that provides services and supports for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. KARE was founded in 1967 by a group of parents and friends of children with an intellectual disability who set out to ensure that children with disabilities could live at home with their family and be educated locally. This led to the formation of a network of branches throughout the catchment area and these branches are still in operation supporting KARE's activities in a variety of ways. Over the years the organisation has expanded the range of services and supports on offer to meet increased demand and changing needs. KARE now has a wide range of community-based supports available to children and adults with an intellectual disability, including day, residential and short-break services. In addition to this KARE is patron to St. Anne's and St. Mark's, both special schools in the Newbridge area. KARE's catchment area is Mid-South Kildare, East Offaly, West Wicklow and North East Carlow.

KARE Services

KARE's Adult Supports are organised through our network of Local Services, Outreach Service and Community Houses. Services are designed to support each person to lead the life of their choice. We use individualised planning to identify and agree the specific supports we will provide to each person, these supports typically fall into the areas of Daily Living, Emotional and Physical Wellbeing, Employment, Formal Education, Sport and Leisure, Living Arrangements and Short Breaks for Families. We provide a range of clinical supports to adults in the areas of physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, social work, psychology, behaviour support and occupational therapy.

KARE provides preschool supports to children aged 3-6 years with global developmental delay and/or complex needs. Children attend the specialist preschool, Curragh Grange, or are supported to attend their local mainstream preschool. KARE continues to be one of the 5 organisations involved in the provision of children's disability services in Kildare West Wicklow, implementing the national policy 'Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People' employing a range of clinicians across the 3 Children's Disability Network Teams in the area. In May 2019 KARE was appointed lead agency for the South Kildare Disability Network Team.

KARE works with a number of groups in supporting adult and community training and education and we sponsor two Community Employment Programmes, one in adult supports and one in childcare. These programmes are funded through the Department of Social Protection (DSP). We also sponsor a full-time local Traineeship Programme funded by Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). Learners on these programmes are supported to gain QQI accreditation, while at the same time transfer their learning into the workplace through relevant work placements.

Diagram 1:   Map of KARE Services

KARE's Vision, Mission & Guiding Values

KARE has a new strategic plan, which has been signed off the Board of Directors. The plan is currently being prepared for publication and it is the organisation's intention to launch it early in 2021. The strategic plan will guide the organisation's work through to 2025. As part of the consultation process around developing this plan, the Mission, Vision and Values of the organisation were discussed in various forums and were refreshed to reflect the collective current beliefs of all stakeholders.

Our Vision

People of all abilities are supported in their right to have real opportunities and choice to live their best life

Our Mission

We work in partnership to support people with disabilities and their families to create a present and future that fulfils their personal potential

Our Values

- How we work with the people we support and their families
    - We support people who use our service in an individualised and creative way
    - We provide people with supports underpinned by the principles of access and consistency
    - We listen to the wishes and dreams of the people we support and find ways to support them to own and achieve these
    - We encourage the people we support to develop strong, diverse and positive relationships
    - We empower and encourage the people we support to speak for themselves and decide what is best for them
- How we work with our staff and others
    - We foster empathy, kindness and appreciation for each other
    - We are accountable to ourselves and the people we support for what we do
    - We respect and value our people
    - We work collaboratively in flexible, open and innovative ways to achieve the best outcomes for the people we support
    - We ensure staff are well supported and informed
    - We trust staff to carry out their roles in a consistent and professional manner

Our Strategic Priorities

- Further develop Individualised Supports to meet the needs of the people we support as effectively as possible
- Strengthen children's and young people's services to optimise inclusion and opportunity
- Strengthen KARE as an organisation to ensure we are best placed to provide the highest quality services

Overview of Training for Programmes leading to QQI awards

KARE provide training leading to QQI awards to 2 main learner groups within the organisation:

1. Adult Service Users, that is people who access services from the organisation and have a recognised intellectual disability
2. Staff, that is people paid to support KARE service users either in a front-line position or in a supporting role for example administration

KARE employs approximately 600 staff, which are made up of staff on permanent contracts, fixed term contracts, community employment programmes, relief staff and volunteers. While employees from all areas in KARE participate in programmes leading to QQI awards, the majority of participants, and the primary target group for these programmes, are front-line staff in three main areas - Adult Services, Residential and Respite Services, and Children's Services.

KARE currently provides services to approximately 400 adults and children with intellectual disability. Level 1-3 training programmes leading to QQI awards offered by KARE are targeted at the adult service user population. Service User training is managed by a teacher group, consisting of four teachers, who are directly involved in the development, planning, delivery, assessment and evaluation of programmes leading to QQI awards for service users.

KARE agreed their Quality Assured Policies and Procedures with FETAC in 2006. The QQI training function operates under the HR Department and is administered by the Training Department. The overall responsibility for QQI Training and Education lies with the Training and Education Committee. We have developed and validated seven Major Awards through QQI, which are designed to include a strong emphasis on the application of learning. These programmes are delivered in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications and are outlined in the following table:

Programme Code	Programme Title	Level & Type	Award Code	Certificate Title
PG10724	Daily Living	1 - Major	P1GL0	General Learning
PG10143	Towards Independent Living	2 - Major	P2GL0	General Learning
PG10897	Creative Expressions	2 - Major	P2GL0	General Learning
PG10264	Independent Skills	3 - Major	3M0874	General Learning
PG10846	Intellectual Disability Practice	5 - Major	5M1761	Intellectual Disability Practice
PG20477	Early Childhood Care & Education	5 - Major	5M2009	Early Childhood Care and Education
PG23763	Certificate in Community Health Care Practice	5 - Major	5M4468	Community Health Services

Overview of KARE Programmes Leading to QQI Awards

Daily Living – QQI Level 1 Major Award

The Daily Living Programme is aimed at adult learners with moderate and severe learning disabilities, who traditionally wouldn't have had the opportunity to achieve an accreditation. Some learners may have limited or no verbal communication skills and some may be on work experience, on job training, supported employment and or community based learning. The overall purpose of this programme is to provide learners with opportunities to develop daily living skills in key areas in order to promote their independence and to achieve accreditation at level 1. Learners can progress onto awards at level 2 depending on ability.

Towards Independent Living – QQI Level 2 Major Award

The Towards Independent Living programme is aimed at learners with a moderate general learning disability who use KARE services. This programme facilitates learners who haven't engaged in learning/education for a while and are now returning. One of the main aims is to support learners to build confidence as they reengage with adult education. The programme has been designed to offer learners the opportunity to develop a wide range of relevant skills and focuses on providing learners with the appropriate skills to promote independence in the areas of decision making, health and safety, budgeting and planning for the future. Learners can progress onto awards at level 3 depending on ability.

Creative Expressions – QQI Level 2 Major Award

This Creative Expressions Programme is aimed at learners with a moderate general learning disability who use KARE services. This programme provides learners with the option to focus on creative skills and have their skills acknowledged and accredited. The focus of the programme is on the development of creative expression through craft, drama, art and music. It facilitates learners to develop confidence and communicate their identity and choice through the creative process and is intended to lead to a major award in level 2 general learning. Learners can progress onto awards at level 3 depending on ability

Independent Skills – QQI Level 3 Major Award

The Independent Skills Programme is aimed at adult learners with a mild general learning disability who use KARE Services. This programme provides learners with the opportunity to explore vocational modules and gain concrete competencies in specific vocational sectors. This programme focuses on providing independence skills in the areas of advocacy, health and wellbeing, computer skills and work preparation and experience. It is intended to lead to a Major Award in Level 3 General Learning and learners will participate in centre based and/or community based learning for the purposes of this programme. Learners can progress onto awards at Level 4 or 5, depending on ability or enter the labour market.

Intellectual Disability Practice – QQI Level 5 Major Award

The Intellectual Disability Practice Programme is aimed primarily at front-line staff and volunteers who are currently supporting adults or children with intellectual disability. The main purpose of this programme is to provide learners with competencies necessary to support people with intellectual disability to live empowered lives and to be valued members of their local communities. There is a particular focus on the transfer of learning into the workplace and assessments are designed to have practical application to the learner. It is intended to lead to a Major Award at Level 5 in Intellectual Disability Practice and this is the baseline qualification to work as an Instructor/Facilitator within the organisation.

Early Childhood Care & Education – QQI Level 5 Major Award

The Early Childhood Care and Education Programme is aimed primarily at front-line staff who are currently supporting children either with or without intellectual disability in childcare settings. KARE sponsor a Community Employment (CE) Childcare Programme and

participants are offered the opportunity to complete this major award as part of their time on CE. The main purpose of this programme is to provide learners with competencies necessary to work with children in a variety of different childcare settings, to include preschool, afterschool and full day care. There is a particular focus on the transfer of learning into the workplace and assessments are designed to have practical application to the learner. It is intended to lead to a Major Award at Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education, and this is the baseline qualification to work in the sector.

Certificate in Community Health Care Practice – QQI Level 5 Major Award

The Certificate in Community Health Care Practice is aimed at frontline staff who are currently supporting adults with intellectual disability in KARE services. The main purpose of this programme is to provide learners with the competencies required to support people with disabilities to meet all their existing or developing needs, for example, nutritional needs, personal care needs and needs around specific conditions i.e. dementia etc. This programme proposes to enhance staff competencies and qualifications in order to best support the people who access KARE's services. There is a particular focus on the transfer of learning into the workplace and assessments are designed to have practical application to the learner. It is intended to lead to a Major Award at Level 5 in Community Health Services and will provide learners with a broad qualification in healthcare and provides them with additional options for working in healthcare as well as disability services.

Future Scope of Provision

KARE's current scope of provision is linked very much to its core activities - Intellectual Disability Practice, Community Healthcare and Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5. Programmes in General Learning support KARE to meet the needs of our learners at Levels 1 to 3. However in in order to meet the changing needs of our learner population, we do intend to develop and submit new programmes for validation, which we hope to achieve before the end of 2023. The programmes we are planning for are as follows:

- Level 4 General Learning, which will provide learners who have completed Level 3 Major Awards with the opportunity for progression and to further develop their competencies
- Level 4 Sports & Recreation, which will provide us with the prospect to develop a programme that will facilitate learners with the opportunity to gain accreditation for

sports and recreation activities they are already involved with as well as increasing their opportunities for further learning in this area

- Level 6 Inclusive Education and Training, which will offer opportunities for staff to develop skills in facilitating learning for our service user population. At present the criteria for staff supporting service users with their learning is to hold a Level 5 Facilitating Learning Certificate, however this major award will provide opportunities to progress from providing learner support to direct engagement in teaching and assessment

- Level 6 Health Services Supervisory Management, which will offer opportunities for staff to develop competencies that will support their progression both within the organisation and externally to a team leader role. Currently the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) recognise the Level 6 Leadership component as a 'Person in Charge' qualification, however we would like to offer staff the opportunity to gain a Major Award in Supervisory Management and to develop a range of skills that would support them in a leadership role

Each of the programmes identified above will be developed using the process outlined in Section 3: Programmes of Education and Training and specifically 3.2 Programme Development.

Section 1: Governance and Management of Quality

1.1   Policy on Governance and Management of Quality

Background of this Policy

KARE is committed to striving for excellence and assuring quality in all its activities and this policy has been developed to provide guidance and clarity on the governance and management of quality in relation to QQI training and education activities within the organisation

Aim of this Policy

This policy aims to describe the quality assurance system and strategies in place in KARE in order to achieve high quality training and education and to monitor the effectiveness of same.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all KARE staff, Service Users, Community Employment (CE) and Traineeship participants, volunteers, and all others engaging with QQI training and education within the organisation. The policy applies to all QQI training and education activities undertaken as part of KARE's business.

Governance

Organisation Structure

KARE is a registered company, limited by guarantee. The Memorandum & Articles of Association originally adopted in 1974 was updated and approved at an Extraordinary General Meeting in 2010 having been approved by the Revenue Commissioners.

The main Object for which the Association is established is:

To promote and/or provide the highest possible standards of support, treatment, training, education, general welfare and inclusion in their community of people with intellectual disabilities: to give advice, guidance and support to parents and relatives of people with intellectual disabilities, to arrange or assist in arranging and providing for the holding of lectures, conferences, meetings and discussions on subjects of general or specific interest in the field of intellectual disabilities and encourage provision of inclusive activities and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities in their own communities.

The Articles of Association lay down the details of Membership, Meetings and how the Board of Directors operate. KARE have developed a Code of Governance and this code provides clarity and detail on:

- Company details and services

- Principal external advisors, relationships and funding

- Board of Directors in terms of composition, appointment, co-options, induction and disqualification

- Role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors and of the Secretary

- Reserved powers and delegated powers and the role of the CEO in relation to this

- Board procedures including:
  - Frequency of Meetings
  - Sub Committees of the Board i.e. Finance Audit, Risk Quality and Safety and Remuneration and Nominations
  - Relationships with the Board & Management
  - External Relationships, Conflict of Interest and Fundraising

Diagram 2: KARE Organisation Chart
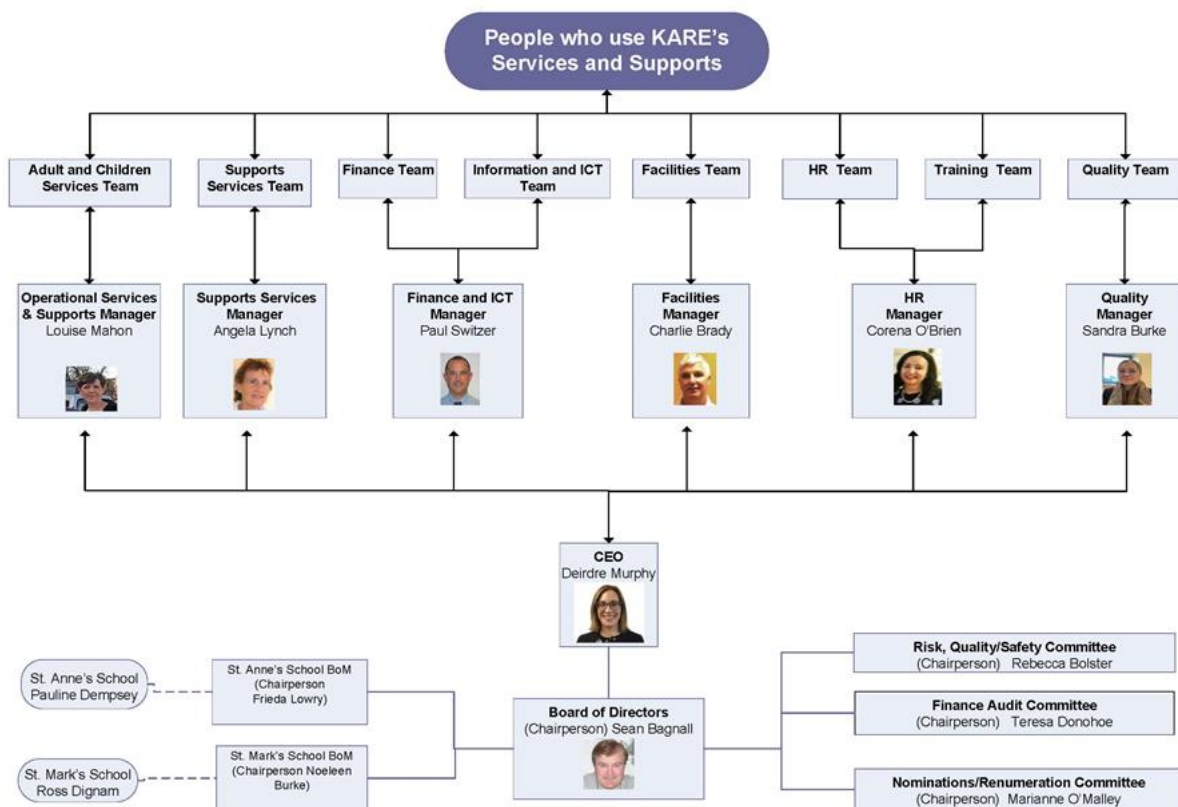
Company Information	
Name:	KARE, PROMOTING INCLUSION FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered Office	Newbridge Industrial Estate, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
Company Registration Number	48017
Revenue Charity Number	CHY No. 5907
Registered Charity Number	CRA No. 20009700
Chief Executive Officer	Ms. Deirdre Murphy
Board of Directors	Mr. Sean Bagnall, Chair Ms. Emily Blennerhassett, Vice Chair Mr. John Weldon, Honorary Secretary Ms. Teresa Donohoe, Honorary Treasurer Ms. Mary Conliffe Ms. Marianne O'Malley Ms. Rebecca Bolster Ms. Margaret Quinn Mr. Roger O'Shea
Independent Auditor	JPS Brenson Lawlor Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm, Morehampton Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
Solicitors	Coughlan White & Partners Moorefield Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
Bankers	Bank of Ireland Main Street, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
Company Secretary	Ms Deirdre Murphy

Board Composition

The Board of Directors, which meets a minimum of nine times per year is made up of the following:

- 4 Directors from the Branches of KARE
- 6 Directors from Family Members
- The Outgoing Officers who will be from the 4 Branch Directors or the 6 Family Directors
- 2 Co-Opted Members.

The Directors are appointed for a three-year period and are eligible for re-appointment up to a maximum of three periods i.e., nine years.

The CEO attends the Board of Director's Meetings in an ex officio capacity and is not a member of the Board of Directors.

There are currently three sub-committees of the Board of Directors as follows:

1) **Finance Audit Committee**, which oversees the financial management of the organisation and provides a level of assurance to the Board that there are appropriate and effective systems in place to cover all aspects of financial management in its promotion of good corporate governance.

2) **Risk, Quality and Safety Committee**, which oversees the management of risk, quality and safety in the organisation and provides a level of assurance to the Board that there are appropriate and effective systems in place that cover all aspects, risk management and quality improvement.

3) **Remuneration & Nominations Committee**, which ensures that remuneration policies, procedures and practices of KARE comply with public service pay policy and any specific directions or instructions of the HSE. It will also ensure that appropriate plans are in place for the orderly succession of appointments to the Board to maintain an appropriate balance of skills and expertise.

Principal External Relationships & Funding

The principal external group that KARE is linked with is the Health Service Executive (HSE). The relationship is defined under the terms of a negotiated Service Level Agreement (SLA). The HSE is the principal funder of the company contributing 93% of the total operating cost. The company is a Schedule 38 Organisation under the 2004 Health Act.

Pension

All permanent staff in the organisation join the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Defined Contribution Pension Scheme. The Trustees of the pension scheme are drawn from member organisations of the Federation. Staff have the option of joining a permanent health insurance scheme at their own expense.

Insurance

KARE carries a comprehensive suite of Insurance Coverage which includes Directors and Officers Liability Cover. KARE is indemnified through the State Claims Agency for the core areas of insurance.

1.2   Governance of Organisation Training & Education

While training and education is not the core business of KARE it is seen as a fundamental part of the organisation and a vehicle for ensuring staff and service users are provided with opportunities to develop both personally and professionally.

KARE recognises that their staff is the most valuable resource that it possesses; therefore, it is committed to the training and development of all staff within their organisation. KARE strive to ensure that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to carry out the work of the organisation. This commitment recognises that staff needs to develop both personally and professionally. Therefore, they are provided with both formal, in particular programmes that lead to QQI Awards and informal training, which encompasses areas of induction, health and safety, mandatory training and continuing professional and personal development.

KARE have a long history of providing training and education to its service users and this is underpinned by the Lifelong Learning Policy. Both New Directions and Residential Standards call for training and education to be provided to those who access our services and KARE have a dedicated Lifelong Learning team who manage service user training development, delivery, assessment and evaluation within the organisation.

Training Budget

A training plan for the organisation is developed annually and this forms the basis for the required training budget. The organisation agrees and allocates a training budget on an annual basis and it is reviewed monthly by the HR Manager and Staff Training and Development Officer. All non-pay training and education related activities with a financial cost are provided for in this budget, this includes QQI related activities, where required.

Staffing

KARE have a dedicated Training Department, which oversees the planning, development, delivery, assessment and evaluation of all staff related training and education activities within the organisation. This department consists of a Staff Training and Development Officer, who is registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland, a Training Administration Officer, who holds an Associate CIPD and a Training Clerical Officer.

We also have a dedicated Lifelong Learning Department, which consists of four teachers, who are all registered with The Teaching Council of Ireland, and oversees the planning, development, delivery, assessment and evaluation of all service user related training and education activities.

KARE do not have full time trainers and assessors. Trainers and assessors are recruited from the existing KARE staff pool to deliver and assess training and education programmes. This is in addition to their core role within the organisation and time spent training and/or assessing has been agreed with the Operations Management Team. Recruitment is carried out in line with the recruitment and selection policy and all staff involved in training and assessment must have a relevant qualification in the field of training and a minimum QQI Level 6 Training Delivery and Evaluation qualification.

Health & Safety

KARE is committed to ensuring, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of its staff, people who use the service and all other persons who may be affected by its activities. It does this by creating a culture where safety, health and welfare are an integral part of all KARE's policies, procedures and practices.

The following policies and procedures have been developed to support effective health and safety practices:

• KARE Safety Statement	• Managing Properties Policy
• Risk Management Policy	• Child Protection & Welfare Policy
• Fire Safety Policy	• Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
• Infection Control Policy	• Trust in Care Policy
• Moving & Handling Policy	• Dignity at Work Policy
• Smoke Free Workplace Policy	
Please see Section 1 Supporting Documentation for copies of these policies	

Information & Technology Support

KARE have a dedicated IT Department which provides ongoing support in relation to internal IT Systems. This includes:

- Provision and maintenance of required IT equipment
- Support in relation to the development and maintenance of a learning management system

- Specific support in developing and maintaining key recording systems
- A helpdesk, which learners can contact about specific issues, for example password resets.
- Development of specific training for IT related areas
- Support for remote training delivery

1.3   The Training & Education Committee

The main role of KARE's Board of Directors is to govern the work of the organisation and ensure that a quality service provision, based on current best practice is provided to people who use our services. However, in order to ensure that all academic decision making is done in an independent manner, The Board have delegated sole responsibility for all academic issues to the KARE Training and Education Committee (TEC). This committee oversees the management and governance of programmes of learning leading to QQI awards. The Chairperson and Vice-Chair of the committee are external to KARE and both have expertise in quality assurance and programme development. The remaining committee members come from within the organisation and have expertise in both the operational and training and education functions of the organisation.

A number of different teams report into the TEC in relation to programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation, including KARE's Training and Lifelong Departments. These departments manage all staff and service user training and education within the organisation, including programmes leading to QQI accreditation. This includes developing Annual Training Plans, learner admissions, scheduling, organising internal verification and external authentication and submission to QQI for certification. The Teaching and Learning, Learning Assessment and Supports and Programme Development and Validation Teams as well as the Learner Representative Committee report on the implementation and operational elements of training and education. This includes programme development, delivery, assessment and evaluation as well as the provision of learner supports. These teams link closely with the Training and Lifelong Learning Departments in ensuring all training and education activities are carried out effectively in line with the annual plan. This is where the main work of the TEC is generated from and they have overall responsibility for making decisions on existing and potential programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation, these responsibilities are outlined in the TEC Terms of Reference.

While the TEC have overall responsibility for programmes leading to QQI accreditation, they do link in with the Risk, Quality and Safety Committee, which is a sub-committee of the KARE Board of Directors. This committee is tasked to oversee the management of risk, quality and safety in the organisation and to provide a level of assurance to the board that there are appropriate and effective systems in place that cover all aspects of risk management oversight, quality oversight and safety oversight. Therefore they are best placed to link with from a consultation and quality assurance perspective and also to provide information to the KARE Board of Directors on the work of the TEC.

The following outlines the structure and communication flow of the TEC and the Terms of Reference which guides the work of the committee.

Diagram 3: Training & Education Committee Structure & Communication Flow

Training & Education Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose	The Training and Education Committee is responsible for the governance and management of the training and education activities of the organisation.
Aim	To set in place the academic governance framework and oversee the establishment, maintenance and development of quality assurance policies and procedures for all QQI training and educational programmes within the organisation.
Responsibilities	The key responsibilities for the Training & Education Committee are: • Ensure all QQI training and education activities within the organisation are conducted in line with the agreed QA standards • Oversee the monitoring, review and ongoing development of QQI Quality Assurance policies and procedures. • Review and agree new QQI programme proposals submitted by the training department and/or the lifelong learning department • Review and approval of new programme applications and associated documentation before submission to QQI for validation • Oversee QQI assessment and examination procedures and ratify the appointment of external authenticators • Review QQI internal verification and external authentication reports • Agree and sign off results that have gone through the results approval process and approve submission to QQI • Review and decide on learner appeals relating to QQI assessment outcomes • Review and decide on learner complaints relating to the delivery and/or assessment of QQI training and education programmes • Manage the self-evaluation of programmes leading to QQI awards • Approve QA Reports prior to submission to QQI and publication on the KARE Website • Promote and recognise excellence in training and education

Membership & Recruitment of Committee Members	• The Training & Education Committee will comprise of the following:
	    ○ External Representative (Chair)
	    ○ External Representative (Vice Chair)
	    ○ Human Resources Manager
	    ○ Operations Manager Representative
	    ○ Staff Training & Development Officer
	    ○ Staff Trainer/Assessor Representative (Secretary)
	    ○ Lifelong Learning Department Representative
	• Members serve for a term of three years, with the possibility of further terms. Depending on the agenda, others, for example subject matter experts, may be invited to be present for part, or all, of a meeting.

	- Recruitment for external representatives is carried out as follows: - Develop a role specification outlining required competencies - Advertise through an appropriate e.g. Boardmatch Ireland and Active Link - Shortlist applicants and conduct interviews - Select external representatives against the key competencies outlined in the role specification - Recruitment for internal committee members is carried out as follows: - Develop a role specification outlining required competencies - Advertise internally in KARE - Shortlist applicants and conduct interviews - Select internal committee members against the key competencies outlined in the role specification
Frequency of Meetings	- The Training & Education Committee meets every quarter, with additional meetings if required. The breadth of responsibility is in relation to QQI education and training activities in the organisation - Committee members are expected to attend at least two meetings in a year - All members have equal voting rights with the Chairperson having the casting vote - Meeting agenda and minutes will be produced, circulated and stored electronically in a secure location
Quorum	The quorum for a meeting is four people
Reporting to the Board	The Training & Education Committee reports to the Risk, Quality & Safety Board Subcommittee and will provide a quarterly report to this committee on the work of the Training & Education Committee
Administrative Support	KARE will provide administrative support to the committee through membership of the Training & Education Committee and through the Training Department, where necessary. This will include circulation of the agenda and associated documents prior to each meeting.
Review	- These terms of reference were agreed and adopted on 1st June 2021 by the Training & Education Committee - They will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure meeting the needs of the Board for effective governance.

Roles & Responsibilities Associated with the Training & Education Committee

Chairperson	The appointed Chairperson will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of training and education, with a particular focus on QQI and further education and training (FET). Experience of being part of a committee and a background in further training and education is desirable. The Chairperson of the Training & Education Committee will ensure that: • They understand the responsibilities associated with the TEC • They lead meetings and ensure they are conducted effectively • Matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner • The committee fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively • They engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to
Vice-Chairperson	The appointed Vice-Chairperson will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of training and education, with a particular focus on QQI and further education and training (FET). Experience of being part of a committee and a background in further training and education is desirable. The Vice-Chairperson of the Training & Education Committee will: • Read and understand the responsibilities associated with the TEC • Support the Chairperson in ensuring the work of the committee is carried out effectively • Deputise as the Chairperson if required • Engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to
Secretary	The appointed secretary will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of training and education, with a particular focus on QQI and further education and training (FET). Experience of being part of a committee and of developing agendas and taking minutes is essential. The Secretary of the Training & Education Committee will: • Develop an agenda with the Chairperson for each quarterly meeting and circulate prior to the meeting • Take minutes effectively, ensuring to capture all action items • Store minutes securely and circulate in a timely manner • Read and understand the responsibilities associated with the TEC • Engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to
Committee Members	Training & Education Committee members will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of training and education, with a particular focus on QQI and further education and training (FET). A Training and Education Committee Member will: • Read and understand the responsibilities associated with the TEC • Engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to

1.4   The Learner Representative Committee

KARE have a strong history of communicating with and listening to its stakeholders. Staff surveys and involvement in a range of projects and policy development are some of the key ways that the staff voice is heard. A good example of this is the implementation of the new strategic plan, where the organisation recruited project teams from both the staff and service user population to plan for and implement the identified goals.

Voice for KARE

KARE also have a Voice for KARE Committee, which is the key advocacy group for the service and is the main way for people who use the service to hear about events and changes in the organisation, that affects them. Voice for KARE has been an integral part of KARE since 2008 and its main aim is to work with Service Users, Staff and Managers on decisions affecting people who use KARE's services as well as providing support and advice on KARE's policy development and review. Voice for KARE plays an important role in the organisation and in relation to programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation will provide advice, information and feedback.

We recognise the importance of learner involvement in relation to teaching, learning, monitoring and review of QQI training and education activities. The Learner Representative Committees provide a forum for consultation between learners within the organisation and also for consultation with Voice for KARE and the Training and Education Committee. They meet at least twice per year and they play an important role in the monitoring and review of training and education activities in the organisation. While they do work closely with the Training and Lifelong Learning Departments they report directly to the Training and Education Committee. The Learner Representative Committee produces a report, which is submitted to and reviewed by the Training and Education Committee. A Learner Representative will also attend meetings of the Training and Education Committee if and when required.

The following outlines the Terms of Reference that will guide the work of the committee.

Learner Representative Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose	The Learner Representative Committee is responsible for bringing the learner voice to the forefront in relation to QQI education and training activities in the organisation.
Aim	The aim of KARE's Learner Representative Committees is to review and monitor learner experiences on QQI programmes of learning, to discuss and identify issues and concerns arising from those experiences and to feedback on same to the Training and Education Committee.
Responsibilities	The key responsibilities for the Learner Representative Committee are: • To represent the voice of learners with Voice for KARE and other fora, through making such representation to the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department and the Training and Education Committee • To gather and discuss learner feedback and identify specific issues and/or concerns and to collate this information and feedback to the appropriate department • To feedback to the peers they represent on the progress or outcomes of relevant actions and/or developments arising from the Training and Education Committee • To feedback to their peers on the progress or outcomes of relevant actions and/or developments arising from Learner Representative Committee meetings. • Act as a consultative body for the purposes of programme development, monitoring and evaluation • Act as an information point for prospective learners from within the organisation • Support the organisation in running learner information days through direct involvement or organising digital 'learner experience' informational resources • Take part in a review of learner information days and provide suggestions on how these can be improved for learners

	• Support the organisation to achieve effective learner engagement and consultation
Membership	• The Learner Representative Committee is made up from existing and/or past learners within the organisation. • The Learner Representative Committee will be made up of 8 learners and will be representative of the range of learning levels and programmes within the organisation. • The Learner Representative Committee will nominate one of its members to act as chair and a member who will act as secretary
Frequency of Meetings	• The Learner Representative Committee meets biannually and the breadth of responsibility is in relation to QQI education and training activities in the organisation • Committee members are expected to attend at least one meeting in a year • Meeting agenda and minutes will be produced, circulated and stored electronically in a secure location
Quorum	• The quorum for a meeting is five people
Reporting to the Training & Education Committee	• The Chair of the Learner Representative Committee will nominate one of its members that will report directly to the Training and Education Committee. • The Committee will produce a report that will be reviewed at the Training & Education Committee meetings
Administrative Support	• KARE will provide administrative support to the committee through membership of the Learner Representative Committee and through the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department, where necessary. This will include circulation of the agenda and associated documents prior to each meeting.
Review	• These terms of reference were agreed and adopted in 2021 by the Learner Representative Committee • They will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure meeting the needs of the Board for effective governance.

Roles & Responsibilities Associated with the Learner Representative Committee

Chairperson	The appointed Chairperson will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of QQI training and education within KARE, with a particular focus on programme delivery, assessment and evaluation as well as supports for learners. The Chairperson of the Learner Representative Committee will ensure that: • They understand the responsibilities associated with the committee • Meetings are conducted effectively • Matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner • The committee fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively • Engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to
Secretary	The appointed secretary will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of training and education in KARE, with a particular focus on programme delivery, assessment and evaluation as well as supports for learners. Experience of developing agendas and taking minutes is desirable. The Secretary of the Learner Representative Committee will: • Develop an agenda for each quarterly meeting and circulate prior to the meeting • Take minutes effectively, ensuring to capture all action items • Read and understand the responsibilities associated with the committee • Engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to
Committee Members	Learner Representative Committee members will have excellent communication, interpersonal and organization skills. They will have a good understanding of training and education, with a particular focus on programme delivery, assessment and evaluation as well as supports for learners. A Learner Representative Committee Member will: • Read and understand the responsibilities associated with the committee • Engage actively in carrying out the work of the committee and completing action items they have committed to

1.5   Embedding a Quality Culture

Quality is fundamental to service provision within KARE and the organisation strives to ensure that all organisational activities are underpinned by a culture that respects and promotes a culture of quality across all departments. We have invested time, research, and resources into developing a quality culture that fits the organisation and one that is in line with the overall ethos of the organisation, which values and promotes inclusion, particularly for those who access our service. This quality culture is reflected in the vision, mission and strategic plan and also in resourcing a dedicated Quality Department. This department monitors quality systems within the organisation, supports the development of policies and procedures and carries out audits to ensure compliance. We have a range of policies, procedures and guidelines, which underpin the work of the organisation and ensures that staff, people who access the service and other stakeholders understand how KARE does its work.

Since 2003 quality within KARE has been underpinned by the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model (EFQM). This is a framework to assess how an organisation manages itself, recognises that there are many approaches and highlights what needs to be done. It is a "globally recognised framework that supports organisations in managing change and improving performance, has experienced a number of improvement cycles over the years to make sure that it not only remains relevant but continues to set the management agenda for any organisation wanting a long term, sustainable future" (EFQM, 2019).

The table and chart below outlines KARE's progress through this framework from 2003 to the present (please note that an EFQM assessment was planned for 2020, however due to Covid-19 this was not achieved):

Diagram 4: KARE's EFQM Journey

Year	Engagement	Outcome
2003	Self-Assessment	N/A
2005	EFQM Assessment	2 Star
2007	EFQM Assessment	4 Star
2010	EFQM Assessment	4 Star
2013	EFQM Assessment	5 Star
2016	EFQM Assessment	5 Star

KARE's EFQM Journey
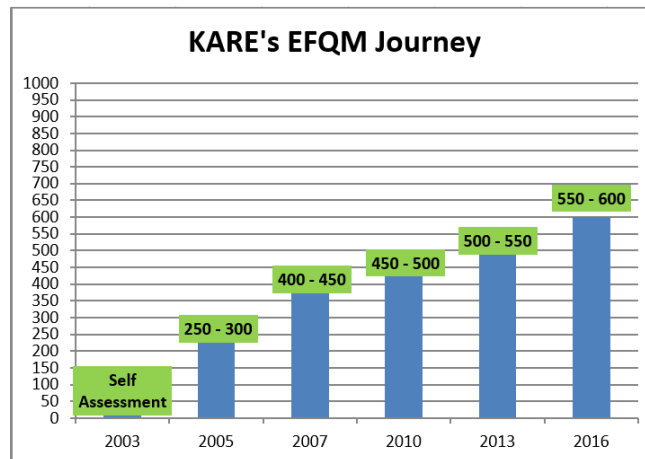
EFQM helps the organisation achieve success by measuring where KARE are in the path to creating sustainable value. It helps KARE understand the gaps and possible solutions available, empowering the organisation to progress and significantly improve the organisations performance. One of the criterion with the EFQM model focuses on purpose, vision and strategy.

'An outstanding organisation is defined by a purpose that inspires, a vision that is aspirational and a strategy that delivers.' Under this is many indicators - one of which is 'develops business models that fit with the purpose, vision and strategy'.

KARE launched their new strategic plan for 2021-2025 in January 2021. Within the plan are two areas, linked to the vision and mission of the organisation, that are related to Learning and development.

1. Area 1 - Fully roll-out the KARE individualised planning approach across the organisation in order to improve quality of life for the people we support.
2. Area 2 - Support staff to develop and progress in their roles.

As stated previously KARE originally agreed its quality assurance with FETAC in 2006 and it is this QA coupled with the overall organisational EFQM quality culture that underpins the QQI training and education activities within the organisation. The overall approach of the EFQM model fits very well with QQI Quality Assurance and this leads to the achievement of a quality culture that respects and engages with all aspects of quality assurance, including:

- Quality Control, through the development of policies and procedures which promote best practice in service provision
- Quality Assurance, through both internal and external monitoring and audits
- Continuous Quality Improvement, through reviewing and implementing identified actions

1.6   Supporting Documentation

- Inclusion, Innovation, Inspiration: KARE's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025

- Memorandum & Articles of Association

- KARE Code of Governance

- KARE Organisational Chart

- Lifelong Learning Policy

- KARE Safety Statement

- Risk Management Policy

- Fire Safety Policy

- Managing Properties Policy

- Child Protection and Welfare Policy

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk Policy

- Trust in Care Policy

- Dignity at Work Policy

- Infection Control Policy

- Moving and Handling Policy

- Smoke Free Workplace Policy

- Training & Education Committee Terms of Reference

- Learner Representative Committee Terms of Reference

- Risk, Quality & Safety Terms of Reference

- The EFQM Model

Section 2: Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

2.1 Policy on a Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

Background of this Policy

KARE recognise the need to take a consistent approach to policy development and review and have developed a process to support this. This ensures that all KARE policies are developed and reviewed in line with the organisation's vision and are compliant with applicable legislation. By following this process KARE strive to reduce risk and promote best practice within the organisation.

Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all policies and procedures underpinning QQI Quality Assurance are developed and reviewed in line with the organisation's process and those agreed through the QQI Quality Assurance process.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all policies and procedures underpinning QQI training and education activities in the organisation and all those involved in developing and reviewing KARE's Quality Assurance Document.

Development and Review of QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

The main purpose of KARE's QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is to ensure that activities within QQI training and education are fit for purpose and are informed by the relevant QQI guidelines and national legislation, where relevant. KARE will ensure to provide a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in order to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to quality provision in relation to the development, delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of all QQI training and education in the organisation. These policies and procedures will be made available internally in the organisation and also external to the organisation in order to maximise clarity and transparency.

KARE will ensure:

- That QA Policies and Procedures are developed to be fit for purpose, facilitate diversity and inclusion and promote a culture of quality in relation to QQI programmes of learning
- That QA Policies and Procedures are underpinned by best practice, relevant legislation and QQI policy and guidelines

- To review all QA Policies and Procedures at least every 3 years, or as needed, in order to maximise opportunities for continuous improvement
- That development and review of QA Policies and Procedures will include representation from all stakeholders involved in QQI programmes of learning

Roles and Responsibilities

- The policy owner for the QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is the Training and Education Committee
- Policies and procedures are developed and reviewed by the Training Department and/or The Lifelong Learning Department in consultation with relevant stakeholders
- The function of approving newly developed or reviewed policies sits with the Training and Education Committee

Policy Development

Policy development in KARE is ongoing in order to ensure best practice, meet legislative requirements and reduce risk in specific areas. In relation to the development and review of QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures the following stages are adhered to:

Development & Approval

1. Identification and approval of new QQI QA policy area
2. Convene policy development team and identify a policy owner
3. Register new policy development with the Quality Department
4. Conduct research and prepare draft policy
5. Consultation with relevant groups
6. Review of feedback and revise policy as relevant
7. Submit to Training & Education Committee and the Quality Department for approval of final draft
8. Approval by the Training & Education Committee
9. Launch of Policy to all Stakeholders
10. Publication of Policy on KARE Connect and on KARE's Website

Diagram 5:   QA Policy Development Process

QQI Quality Assurance Policy Development

| Training & Education Committee | Approval of new QA Policy Area for Development → Register the new QA policy development with the Quality Department | Review the new QA Policy → Approve the new QA Policy |

Log the new policy development and confirm with The Training & Lifelong Learning Departments

Review the new QA Policy

Identify new QA Policy Area for Development → Conduct Research and prepare draft policy → Consult with relevant groups → Submit to the Training & Education Committee and Quality Department for final review → Update QQI Quality Assurance Documents → Publish on KARE Connect & the KARE Website

(Swimlanes: Training & Education Committee; Quality Department; Training & Lifelong Learning Departments)

Policy Review

Review of QQI Quality Assurance Policies in KARE follows a consistent process which includes the following stages:

1.   Prepare a Plan for the Policy Review

- Confirm who will lead the policy review
- Identify staff member from Quality Department to support the review
- Identify the policy review team
- Identify documents that need to be consulted with to inform review e.g. regulations, standards, guidance documents, existing policies, audit reports, or survey findings
- Identify stakeholder groups for consultation and how consultation with happen
- Identify any benchmarking that needs to be carried out to inform review e.g. practices in other organisations
- Agree Communication Plan for policy once review is completed i.e. publication process
- Establish time frames for completion of the policy review including dates for completion of research and consultation phase, writing phase, approval phase and communication phase

- Agree how information in relation to the review will be managed

2. **Carry out Research and Consultation**
   - Review relevant documentation including regulations, standards, guidance documents, existing policies, audit reports or survey findings
   - Carry out any benchmarking that has been identified as needed
   - Prepare and carry out consultation with relevant groups and gather feedback including what is working well, what is not working well, what is not covered and what could be improved
   - Analyse findings/feedback and identify issues to be addressed in the update

3. **Prepare Revision to Policy Document**
   - Prepare policy document for updating
   - Work through the policy document updating it as relevant
   - Carry out any further consultation required (if significant changes have been made further consultation may be required)
   - Finalise the Communication Plan and the draft document including layout format

4. **Approval and Communication of Policy**
   - Submit draft revision of policy and proposed Communication Plan to the Training & Education Committee for their review
   - Make final adjustments to the policy if necessary
   - Submit policy to the Training & Education Committee for approval
   - Implement the Communication Plan including publishing the policy, getting staff sign off and making an accessible version if relevant

Diagram 6:   QA Policy Review Process

QQI Quality Assurance Policy Review

Training & Education Committee

- Identify Policy Review area and link with Training & Lifelong Learning Departments to develop policy review plan
- Identify who will lead the policy review and link with Quality Department
- Review the draft policy review
- Provide feedback identifying changes if required
- Approve the new QA Policy

Quality Department

- Identify Quality Department staff link for policy review

Training & Lifelong Learning Departments

- Prepare plan for policy review including stakeholder consultation, benchmarking and the communication plan
- Undertake review of policy in line with relevant documentation and benchmarking
- Consult with relevant stakeholders
- Prepare draft policy review following consultation process
- Implement recommended changes if required
- Send to Training & Education Committee for final approval
- Update QQI Quality Assurance Documents
- Publish on KARE Connect & the KARE Website

Section 3: Programmes of Education & Training

3.1 Policy on Programmes of Education & Training

Background of this Policy

KARE, as an organisation, are aware that training and development are ongoing processes and are committed to continuous programme development, delivery and review in order to promote and fulfil learners' individual needs and personal growth.

KARE believe that, to be effective, programme development must take into account the needs of the learners, and as such should be designed and delivered in a way to optimise the success of the learners involved. Therefore, KARE commit to carry out continuous assessment of needs in order to improve and enhance programme design, taking into account the delivery of the programme to ensure that sufficient materials, methods and flexibility have been put in place to meet the learners' needs. KARE are also committed to carrying out regular reviews and evaluations of all the available programmes and are willing to make any changes necessary in order to maintain a high standard of programme delivery to ensure the success of our learners.

Aim of this Policy

This policy aims to outline how KARE plans, coordinates and facilitates the development, delivery and review of QQI programmes in line with identified training needs, ensuring successful access, transfer and progression to learners and providing them with the opportunity to practice and transfer learned skills to their work environment and/or daily lives.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to access, transfer and progression as well as the development, delivery and review of all programmes of learning leading to QQI Awards.

3.2 Access, Transfer and Progression Policy

Background of this Policy

KARE recognise the need to have clarity in relation to the access, transfer and progression therefore have developed this policy in order to provide learners with clear and accurate information in relation to the QQI training and education programmes within the organisation.

Aim of this Policy

This policy aims to provide clear and accurate information on KARE's position in relation to access, transfer and progression and to ensure that all individuals are facilitated to enter and successfully participate on programmes leading to awards both offered within KARE and other providers.

Scope of this Policy

Whilst the principles for Access, Transfer and Progression are applied to all education and training within KARE, this policy is specific to the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012). Such requirements specifically relate to admissions policies, including transfer from other programmes and progression to higher award levels on the NFQ.

Policy Statements

It is our policy to ensure:

- Information on access, transfer and progression is provided to learners and other stakeholders in an accessible and appropriate format
- All learners are provided with the opportunity to discuss and identify entry pathways incorporating previous academic achievements in order to ensure recognition of prior certified learning
- Arrangements for accessing and engaging with a programme are clear, accessible and appropriate
- All applicants are treated in a fair and consistent manner and in accordance with relevant equality legislation
- All decisions on admission to a programme of learning are transparent
- Learners are provided with a Learner Handbook, in an accessible format, outlining the key information required to successfully participate in their chosen programme
- An risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of learners with regard to access, transfer and progression is identified and addressed
- A complaints and appeals process is available to learners who are not happy with access, transfer or progression outcomes

Access

According to QQI Access is "the process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence required" (QQI, 2021).

KARE operates an open access policy to learners who wish to commence a programme of learning within the organisation. All learners have the opportunity to apply for admission into their chosen learning programme. Learner applications are reviewed and admissions are made on the basis of applicants meeting the minimum requirements for the relevant programme.

Entry requirements are specific to each programme of learning and are summarised as follows:

Level 1 Daily Living: There are no minimum entry criteria for this programme it is expected that learners wanting to achieve this award will have the capacity to do so. The delivery of this programme will be completed using a person-centred approach and in such a way that the learner's goals are achievable.

Level 2 Towards Independent Living: There are no minimum entry criteria for this programme, however the programme is open to learners who want to:

- Demonstrate achievement of accreditation through portfolio/ collection of work and role plays
- Communicate their independence and choice through the skills learned and have the opportunity to achieve accreditation at level 2
- Achieve certification which will increase their sense of confidence and achievement through this process

Level 3 Independent Skills: In order to access this programme Learners should have:

- Completed a Level 2 programme or equivalent standard
- Completed Level 3 minor components and want to achieve a Level 3 Major Award
- The ability to communicate with others and take part in and understand an assessment process appropriate to their communicative ability

Level 5 Programmes: The minimum entry requirements for Level 5 Programmes in KARE are:

- Knowledge, skill and competence associated with level 4 of the National Framework of Qualifications (This may have been achieved through a formal qualification or through relevant life and work experience)
- Basic computer skills
- Competency in English

Training & Education Reasonable Accommodation

Given the nature of KARE's business we are committed to implementing a policy of equal opportunities for all learners and we strive to ensure that learners regardless of disability are provided with opportunities to achieve accreditation relevant to their level of learning.

KARE will ensure, through the availability of learner support services, that no learner is disadvantaged by reason of having a disability and/or specific learning difficulty.

We will ensure, within reason and budgetary limitations, to take every reasonable action to meet the specific requirements of learners in order that they are able to participate as fully as is practicable in their chosen programme of learning.

We have identified a range of reasonable accommodations in relation to training and education that learners may apply for including:

- Learning materials provided in accessible, modifiable electronic formats
- Scribe and/or Reader
- The use of Assistive Technology where appropriate
- Additional time for assessments
- Alternative assessment formats e.g. audio/visual evidence
- Tutor verification

Learners accessing KARE's services will have a diagnosed intellectual disability and the need for reasonable accommodations in relation to training and education will be assessed through their keyworker.

We encourage staff as learners to disclose any specific learning difficulties they have during the application process as non-disclosure may limit access to appropriate procedures, accommodations and supports. Each learner application for reasonable accommodation in

relation to training and education is dealt with on an individual basis in terms of their requirements.

KARE will ensure that all facilities are accessible to all learners insofar as is possible. This includes physical accessibility to and within the buildings, as well as access to information.

Training & Education Reasonable Accommodation Application Process

- Learners with a diagnosed disability and/or specific learning difficulty will complete the reasonable accommodation application form, and submit it and supporting evidence, if appropriate, to the Training Department for staff learners and the Lifelong Learning Department for service user learners.
- The relevant department will review the application and supporting documentation, if available, and will where necessary discuss the application with the learner through a phone conversation or a face to face meeting.
- A provisional decision will be made by the relevant department and this will be forwarded it to the Training & Education Committee for a final decision.
- If approved the decision the learner and tutor/assessor will be informed and will commence planning for the reasonable accommodation. Support from the Training and/or Lifelong Learning Department will be provided where required.
- If denied the learner will be informed and provided with the opportunity to appeal.

Diagram 7:   Training & Education Reasonable Accommodation Application Process
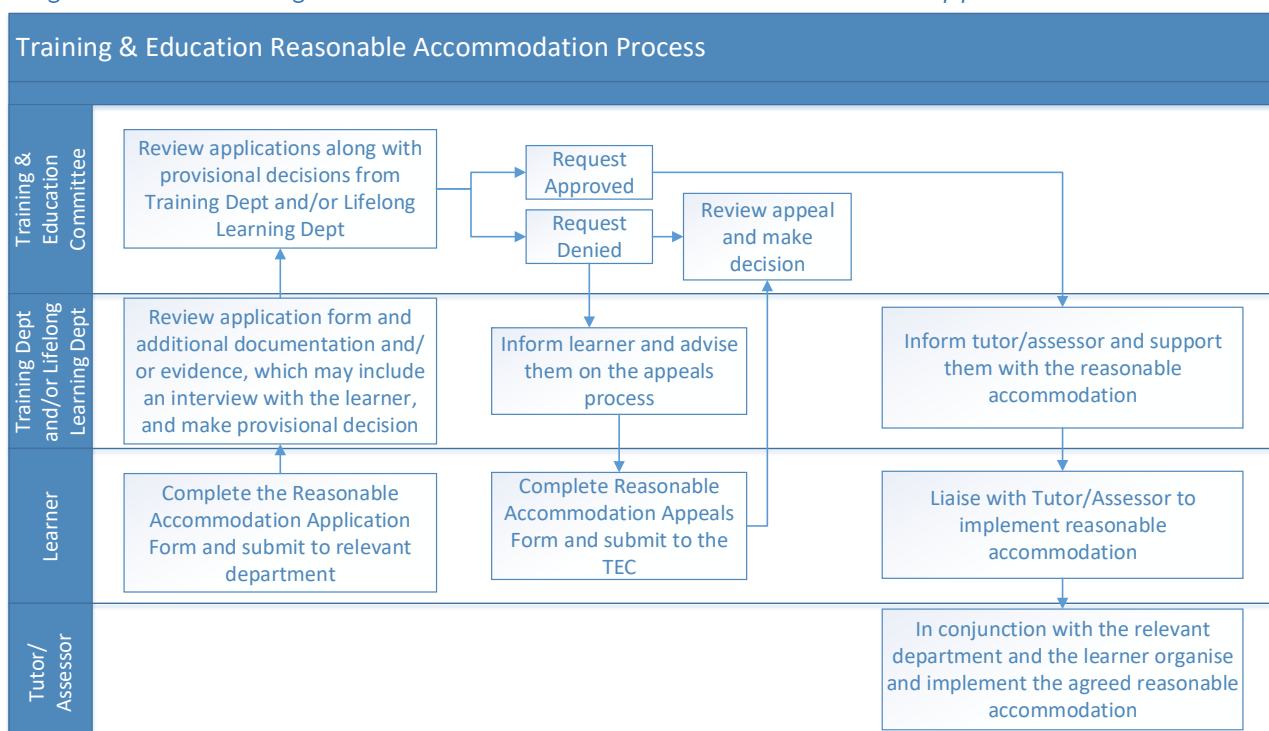
Transfer & Progression

According to QQI Transfer is "the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme having received recognition for knowledge, skill and competence acquired" (QQI, 2021). Progression is defined as "the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme" (QQI, 2021).

KARE offers a range of awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. These awards have been developed to ensure that learners benefit from connections that will support them to transfer and progress to relevant awards and levels on the framework. The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) defines the relationship between awards: this in itself contributes to improved transfer and progression. The NFQ is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) which allows for transfer and progression:

- Between levels
- Between award-types at the same level
- Between named awards

KARE strives to ensure that all of its programmes of learning are designed in such a way as to meet the needs of learners. This includes those learners entering onto a programme for the first time, as well as those transferring or progressing from programmes to further learning opportunities, whether immediately or at some later stage. KARE support learners to transfer to available programmes at the same level in the organisation and to progress onto programmes leading to the next level on the framework through the provision of accessible information and the appropriate support access point.

KARE provides programmes which lead to awards on the NFQ and provides the learner and prospective learners' information on transfer into a programme and possible progression routes. This information is available online and in the Learner Handbook for each individual programme. The information includes details on the Common Awards System, which learners benefit from as the awards they have achieved can be carried to a higher level award and are easily recognised and used with another provider, should a learner chose to go that route.

3.3 Policy on the Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)

Background to this Policy

KARE is committed to recognising prior certified learning as part of its commitment to promoting equality of access, lifelong learning and progression onto programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation. We appreciate that learners will have experiences and in some cases qualifications that will be of benefit to and may link to their chosen programme of learning. As a result of this KARE wants to ensure that learners are fully aware of what to expect in relation to the recognition of prior learning.

Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide clear and accurate information to learners on KARE's position in relation to the recognition of prior certified learning and to outline the measures that will be taken to recognise certification already achieved

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all programmes of learning provided by KARE that lead to QQI awards where a learner may wish to seek an exemption and or submit credits from previous certification in order to achieve a major award.

Recognition of Prior Learning

KARE are fully committed to ensuring that all learners are provided with the opportunity to discuss and identify entry pathways incorporating previous academic achievements in order to ensure recognition of prior certified learning. Prior certified learning in KARE is defined as a previous certificate, recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications, awarded to a learner within the last 5 years

Provisions

KARE will ensure to use an individualised approach in order to:
- Meet with individual learners to discuss and review previously achieved certificates in order to ensure they have been achieved within 5 years
- Map previously achieved certificates to support learners to achieve a major award on entry to a programme.

- Grant exemptions from specific course modules on the basis that they have already been certified for the learner

Roles & Responsibilities

In order to identify if a learner has achieved previous certification and decide on the appropriateness of that certification to be used towards a major award and/or exemption the following has been put in place:

- The Lifelong Learning Team will support learners accessing programmes from levels 1-3 on the National Framework of Qualifications
- The Training Department will support learners accessing programmes at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications

It is the responsibility of the learner to furnish the required evidence of prior certified learning to the relevant department. Such evidence will be current i.e. within the last 5 years and will be subject to the same internal and external verification procedures that apply for the purposes of assessing the learner's suitability for an award.

3.4   Programme Development

Identification of Potential Programmes

KARE identifies potential new programmes using both informal and formal approaches. We are in a unique position of being both an intellectual disability service provider as well as a provider of education and training to staff and services users within the organisation. As members of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers we liaise regularly with other organisations in the sector and therefore have access to a rich source of consultation. In identifying potential programmes we use the following approaches:

Learner Input

The organisation operates the following processes in order to identify learner needs:

1. **Performance Management**, which supports staff to carry out their job to the best of their ability. It supports staff to develop their skills in line with the needs of the organisation and to ensure staff plans are in line with team and organisational plans.

Performance Management is an ongoing process between a staff member and their line manager and includes regular reviews, both formal and informal. During this process staff training and development needs are identified and recorded both manually and electronically. These are then developed into training and development goals and are sent to the training department. It is through this process that staff highlight a need for potential new programmes.

Diagram 8:   The Performance Management Process
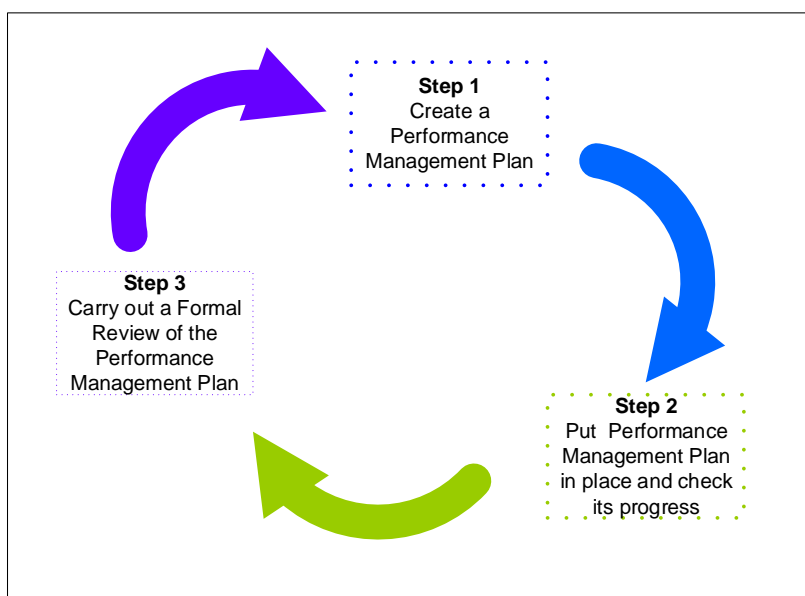
2. **Individualised Planning**, which is a tool used to support people who use our adult services to live a good life and to ensure it identifies and seeks to achieve what is important for them i.e. their support needs and what is important to them i.e. their wishes and dreams. This process is underpinned by John O'Brien's 5 Valued Experiences in which individuals are supported to develop and use their abilities, grow in relationships, share ordinary places, have valued social roles and make informed choices.

The Individualised Planning process produces an Individual Support Plan (ISP), which looks at the key areas of a person's life i.e. daily living, emotional and physical wellbeing, relationships, work and career, finance and possessions, fun and leisure and formal education.

Training and education needs are identified through this process, goals are developed and recorded in the person's Individual Support Plan. These goals are fed back to the lifelong learning team and it is this process that highlights the need for potential new programmes from a service user perspective.

Diagram 9:   The Individual Planning Process

Planning with People

Identify what is
important for the person
i.e. their support needs

Explore with the person what is
important to them
i.e. their wishes and dreams

Identify more support
needs for the person
through a 'specialist'
referral if necessary

Check how the plan is
going

Talking about what the
person wants and who
can support them

Support the person to
achieve their plan

MY PLAN

The Individual Support
Plan

3. **Learner Self-Referral**, through formal and informal meetings learners have the opportunity to contact the training department and/or the lifelong learning department themselves and express their interest in participating in programmes leading to QQI Awards.   These expression of interests are collated and reviewed by the relevant department and from this the need for new programmes may be identified.

4. **Team Improvement Plans**, through the annual review, teams within the organisation identify improvements for the coming year and this is captured on their team plan. Specific learning/training needs are communicated to the training department and management team and new programmes may evolve from this process.

Organisation Input

Stakeholders within the organisation also provide key inputs into identifying potential new programmes:

- Management teams within the organisation are in the position to identify and communicate specific organisational needs, in relation to service user provision. This

can lead to the need for a new programme of learning to meet specific gaps in learner skills and knowledge.

- The potential for new programmes may also arise out of changing policy and legislation and KARE stays up to date with all relevant changes and development.
- Staff involved in training and development are well informed about current trends and issues and therefore can provide specific input in relation to the needs of the sector, therefore are well placed to put ideas forward.

External Input

KARE have direct links with a number of external agencies who can provide not only insights into training and education development but can also act as sounding boards for new ideas. These include:

- National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- The Wheel
- Health Information & Quality Authority (HIQA)
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board
- Department of Social Protection

3.3 Approval of New Programme Proposal

Once the need for a new programme is identified it needs to go through the New Programme Approval Process which is outlined in Diagram 10. This process identifies the need to develop an outline proposal which is submitted to the Training and Education Committee for review. This committee has overall responsibility for the programmes which are approved for development.

Diagram 10: New Programme Approval Process

New Programme Approval Process
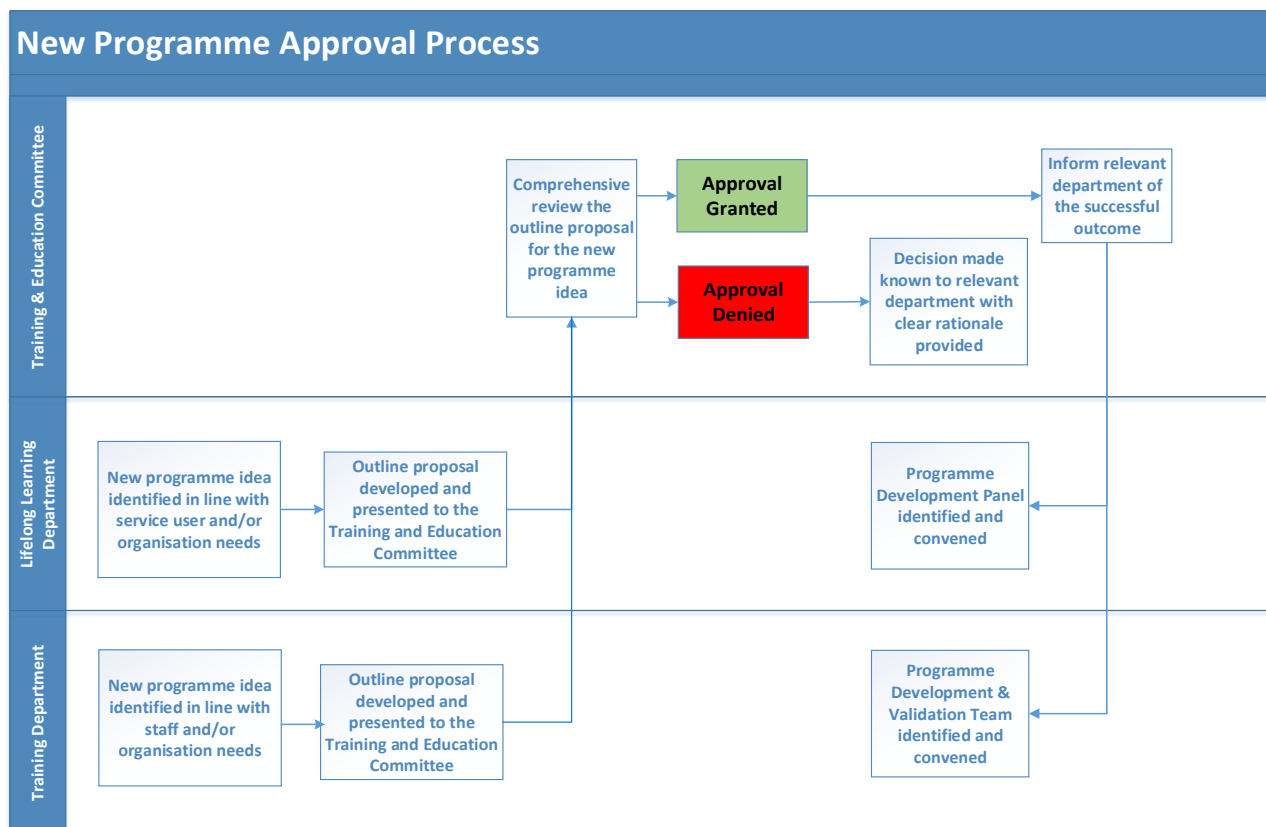
The outline proposal for the potential programme should include the following:

- Identification of programme level and associated major award
- Clear rationale for the proposed programme
- Identification of how the proposed programme fits with the scope of training provision in the organisation
- Proposed target group
- Overview of potential course modules
- Required resources and associated costs
- Action plan outlining required subject matter expertise and deadlines for completion

Development of New Programmes

When approval for a new programme has been granted, it is necessary to identify and convene a Programme Development and Validation Team, which will be determined by the nature of the proposed programme but should include:

- Representation from the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department
- Subject Matter Expert

- Trainer/Assessor
- Learner Representative

The Programme Development and Validation Team will develop a clear action plan outlining the development process. This plan should be aligned with the QQI Programme Validation Process and should include:

- Key development activities and responsibility for same
- Dates and locations for development work
- Deadlines for completion of each development stage
- Consultation and review activities
- Self-evaluation against the QQI Validation Criteria

Once the programme has been developed in line with the QQI Programme Validation Process it will be submitted to the Training & Education Committee. A comprehensive review will be conducted to ensure that:

- The programme meets the expected outcomes of the original proposal
- The programme content and assessment is in line with the associated level on the National Framework of Qualifications
- All learning outcomes are being met and assessed through the programme content and associated assessments
- The information provided is accurate and reflects the organisations values, policies, procedures and practices
- The required resources can be met fully by the organisation
- All required validation criteria has been met

Following a satisfactory review of the developed programme the Training & Education Committee will sanction its submission to QQI for Programme Validation through QBS.

Once programme validation has been successfully achieved preparation for programme delivery and assessment can begin.

Diagram 11: Programme Validation Process

Programme Validation Process

Training & Education Committee	Identify and convene a Programme Development & Validation Team → Review & agree Action Plan → Review against identified Programme Validation Criteria and approve for submission to QQI → Submit to QQI for validation using the appropriate medium → Programme Validated by QQI → Yes / No → Inform Programme Development & Validation Team → Submit to Programme Development & Validation Team in order to resolve issues and make ready for resubmission → Resubmit to QQI with relevant changes and information as requested
Programme Development & Validation Team	Develop a clear action plan and submit to Training & Education Committee → Implement Action Plan in order to develop the programme and produce clear and relevant documentation → Submit to Training & Education Committee for review → Implement changes as required and resubmit to TEC for review and submission to QQI

3.4   Programme Delivery

Planning

On an annual basis KARE plans, coordinates and facilitates the delivery of QQI programmes within the organisation, ensuring that all involved are provided with the appropriate information, materials & resources to successfully partake in the programme. As stated previously learners in KARE are organisational staff and people who use our services. Planning for delivery is two-fold as follows:

Staff Training

The training needs of staff is identified through Performance Management and Operational Planning in line with best practice and legislative guidelines. A staff training plan is developed by the training department each year based on the identified training needs. This plan outlines all planned training i.e. mandatory, health & safety, specific purpose and QQI programmes. Once developed the training plan is submitted to the Operation Management Team for review and final approval is through the Training & Education Committee. The training plan is published on KARE Connect, the organisation intranet, and is reviewed and updated as required throughout the year.

Diagram 12: Developing the Staff Training Plan Process

Developing the Staff Training Plan

Role	Process
Training & Education Committee	Review and approve Staff Training Plan for publication
Training Department	Collate training needs and develop draft training plan with consideration of the training budget → Publish Training Plan on KARE Connect
OMT	Submit organisational training needs as decided from Operational Plan to Training Department → Review draft training plan and amend if necessary → Agree training plan and send to Training & Education Committee for final approval
Line Manager	Submit training goals from staff Performance Management to Training Department

Service User Training

A service user training plan is developed by the lifelong learning department each year. This plan is based on training and education goals identified through the individualised planning and self-referral processes. This plan outlines, in an accessible format, all planned QQI training and once developed the training plan is submitted to the Training & Education Committee for approval. The training plan is published on KARE Connect on the Lifelong Learning page. It is also circulated to all local services, community houses and the outreach department. The plan is reviewed and updated as required throughout the year.

Developing the Lifelong Learning Training Plan

Overall Process

Training & Education Committee			Review and approve Lifelong Learning Training Plan for publication		
Lifelong Learning Department		Lifelong Department review Expression of Interest Database	Collate training needs and develop draft Lifelong Learning Training Plan	Publish Lifelong Learning Training Plan on KARE Connect	Send Lifelong Learning Training Plan to all Local Services, Community Houses & Outreach
Service Users & Staff	Service Users are supported to complete an Expression of Interest Form	Form is sent to administration to be logged to the Expression of Interest Database			
Service Users	Service Users identify learning goals through the individualised planning process				

Learner Admission, Progression & Recognition

It is the policy of KARE to provide effective access, transfer and progression for learners and to ensure that they are informed fully on all aspects of the programmes being offered by KARE. This includes information on the transfer and progression options, if applicable, available to them on successful receipt of an award.

Therefore KARE commit to provide relevant, up to date information about the programmes and services offered in order to ensure that learners have the opportunity to make informed choices. KARE will also provide a dedicated support system to ensure the learners' successful participation on programmes and will also take into account when designing programmes any transfer and progression routes available to learners.

Information to Learners

KARE strive to ensure that learners have accurate and reliable information available so that they can make informed choices in relation to their training and education options. Information on programmes leading to QQI Awards is provided to learners, both staff and services users, using a range of mechanisms as follows:

- Publication on KARE Connect of the Annual Training Plans i.e. staff and service user versions

- Publication on KARE Connect of QQI Training Prospectuses, which give an overview of QQI and the National Framework of Qualifications. They also outline the various stakeholders involved in KARE QQI training, giving a description of their roles & responsibilities. The prospectuses also include information on programme modules, credits towards other awards and give a breakdown of all current QQI programmes

- Development, reviewing and distribution of learner handbooks, providing a comprehensive range of information regarding individual QQI validated programmes including (but not limited to) programme aims, objectives, structure, programme module specifications, entry & specific course requirements, location, assessment regulations, penalties for breach of regulations, repeats process, assignment and various forms, glossary of assessment terms as well as a learner contract.

- Information sessions where learners are invited to come and hear about training & education programmes leading to QQI Awards. These sessions have question and answer forums and learners have access to a range of published information in an accessible format i.e. a format that is easily understood by all learners in KARE

- Informational PowerPoint presentations and video clips providing clear information on access, transfer and progression options

Enrolment of Learners

KARE ensure equality of opportunity for all learners to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities through a variety of learning opportunities. Learners wishing to enrol on specific courses must go through the following process:

1. Identify the training/education need through performance management, individualised planning or self-referral

2. Complete a QQI Course Application Form or Expression of Interest Form, which provides the option to identify the need for additional supports

3. Have the form signed off by a line manager for staff or a key worker for service users

4. Submit the form to the training department for staff and the lifelong learning department for service users

5. The application is reviewed by the appropriate department and depending on meeting the pre-requisites of the course and availability of places a decision is made. This decision may include an interview with the applicant or in some cases the line manager or key worker

6. The applicant receives confirmation of acceptance along with a learner handbook outlining key course information

Additional Supports and Reasonable Accommodations

KARE in its capacity as both a service provider and a provider of education and training acknowledges that learners, regardless of learning level, may require specific supports to achieve their learning goals. We ensure, as much as is practically possible, the adaptation and implementation of specific supports to facilitate individual learners or groups with particular needs to successfully participate, transfer and progress on any QQI programmes offered by KARE. In relation to assessment any reasonable accommodations made will be implemented in a fair and impartial manner and will in no way advantage or disadvantage learners.

Specific Supports Provided:
- Development of Individual Learning Plans identifying learner expectations, special requirements and also how the expected learning outcomes will transfer to work practice
- Provision of accessible information to ensure ease of understanding for all learners
- Learner mentoring sessions
- Study and exam leave options

Diagram 14: KARE QQI Training & Development Process

KARE QQI Training & Development Process

Swimlane	Process Steps
Training & Education Committee	Review the Annual Training Plan and ensure that it is fit for purpose → Approve Annual Training Plan
Training & Lifelong Learning	Gather information and collate required mandatory, recommended and CPD training requirements → Develop the Annual Training Plan and identify Trainers & Locations (ensuring to consider associated budget) → Communicate Annual Training Plan & Upload to KARE Connect → Schedule learners onto relevant course to ensure maximum numbers are not exceeded → Confirm training booking to Line Manager/Key Worker and notify learners on how to access required resources → Manage attendance and import training records to learner training profiles on TMS or CID → Conduct review meetings with Trainer groups to include discussion on learner evaluations → Analyse effectiveness of Training Plan to inform the following year
OMT	Discuss and prioritise organisation training requirements
Line Manager/Key Worker	Collate Individual and Local Training requirements → Approve training requests using the online approval system → Release learners for training in line with confirmed bookings → Notify Training Department if learner cannot attend training event as soon as possible → Plan and implement transfer of learning with learner post training → Support learner to transfer learning into work practice
Learners	Identify Training Goals through Performance Management or the individual planning process → Complete the application or expression of interest form on LEAP and submit for approval → Attend training event or give notice re: non-attendance → Complete course evaluation form following completion of training through LEAP → Plan and implement transfer of learning with Line Manager or Key Worker post training
Teaching, Learning & Assessment Teams	Take part in a course planning meeting with the Training Department → Prepare required course materials and resources and upload to the course page on LEAP → Take attendance at training and update staff attendance on LEAP → Deliver training effectively and in line with agreed learning outcomes and associated assessments → Ensure course evaluation forms are completed by learners through the course page on LEAP → Take part in a course review meeting to analyse learner, trainer and assessor feedback in order to identify and implement improvements

3.5 Programme Monitoring & Review

Programme monitoring and review is central to informing the organisation on how effectively programmes are performing in terms of meeting both learner and organisational needs. Therefore KARE plans, coordinates and facilitates the review of QQI programmes at regular intervals to ensure their continued relevance to learners and also to update programme content in line with new legislation and current best practice. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out using a number of approaches in order to gather relevant and appropriate information from all stakeholders.

Learner Review and Evaluation

In order to gather evidence on learner experiences of the delivery of QQI programmes of learning it is important to include them in the review and evaluation process. KARE do this in a number of ways:

- Learner Reaction Evaluation, which provides learners with the opportunity to give immediate feedback on programme module completion. This provides information on the training location, how the tutors managed the delivery of the training, the key learning points achieved by the learner, suggestions as to how the new knowledge can support their work practice, suggestions for improvements to the course and an overall score on how valuable they thought the training was.

- Learner Post Learning Review and Evaluation, which provides learners with the opportunity to provide feedback on training having had time to reflect further on their experience of training and also on what they are doing differently as a result of the training i.e. what have they learned and how are they using it in practice. The post learning review and evaluation is conducted as follows:
    - Learner focus groups, where staff from the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department meet with some learners in person for an open discussion in order to generate relevant information.
    - Learners are provided with the opportunity to complete a post learning review and evaluation form and submit it to the Training Department

Programme Teaching and Learning Team Review and Evaluation

As part of the development of the Annual Training Plan dates are identified for individual Programme Teaching and Learning Team review and evaluation meetings. Meeting attendees include the Staff Training and Development Officer, Tutors and/or Assessors and a Programme Development Representative if required. The process for the programme module team review and evaluation is as follows:

1. Training Delivery and Assessment Evaluation Forms are circulated to the tutors/assessors, who complete the forms and provide specific feedback on delivery and assessment and also on their own practice.

2. Completed forms are submitted to the Training Department for review and collation

3. The programme Teaching and Learning Team attends the review and evaluation meeting and the results of tutor/assessor feedback, learner feedback, internal verification and external authentication feedback is reviewed and discussed

4. Suggestions for programme improvement are identified, checked to ensure they meet with the outcomes associated with the programme and agreed on

5. An action plan is developed, clearly outlining the steps that need to be taken, who is responsible for each step and the deadlines for full implementation

6. On completion of the action plan the reviewed programme is circulated for review by the programme team and on full agreement with the team it is finalised

7. The Training and Education Committee review and approve the action plan for implementation

8. Actions are implemented, this is monitored by the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department

9. The reviewed programme is saved and made available to the programme module team for the next training delivery

Internal Verification & External Authentication

Feedback from internal verification and external authentication is used to inform programme module review and evaluation as it can provide clear suggestions for improving programme delivery and assessment. The reports produced by the internal verifier and the external authenticator provide different perspectives in terms of review and evaluation and they are well placed to look at programme delivery and assessment through a wider lens, therefore can spot issues that might not be apparent to tutors and assessors. The Training & Education Committee review all information generated from this process and they agree and monitor the implementation of action plans.

Diagram 15: Programme Monitoring & Review Process

Programme Monitoring & Review Process

Overall Process

Swimlane	Process Steps
Training & Education Committee	Review and approve Programme Review Action Plan
Training/Lifelong Departments	Collate Written Evaluation Information and generate evaluation report · Organise and conduct Learner Focus Groups to generate specific information in relation to programme evaluation · Organise and conduct Programme Module Team evaluation to review feedback and generate an action plan · Implement Action Plan · Update Programme and make available to Programme Module Team
External Authentication	Conduct External Authentication and generate the External Authentication Report, identifying issues for review
Internal Verification	Conduct Internal Verification and generate the Internal Verification Report, identifying issues for review
Programme Module Team	Complete Training Delivery & Assessment Evaluation Forms and submit to Training Department · When invited take part in the programme module team review & evaluation to review feedback & generate an action plan · Develop Action Plan & Assign Responsibilities
Learners	Complete course evaluation form immediately on completion of course and submit to Training Department · Complete Post Course evaluation form within 12 weeks of completion of course and submit to Training Department · When invited to take part in a learner review & evaluation focus group discussion to generate specific feedback on programme review and evaluation

3.6   Supporting Documentation

- Performance Management Policy
- Individualised Planning Policy
- KARE Level 5 Programme Prospectus
- KARE Lifelong Learning & Rehabilitative Training Programme Specification
- Annual Staff Training Plan Template
- Annual Service User Training Plan Template
- Staff QQI Course Application Form
- Lifelong Learning Expression of Interest Form
- KARE Level 1 Daily Living Programme Information
- KARE Level 2 Creative Expressions Programme Information
- KARE Level 2 Towards Independent Living Learner Handbook
- KARE Level 3 Independent Living Learner Handbook
- KARE Level 5 Intellectual Disability Practice Learner Handbook
- KARE Level 5 Early Childhood Care & Education Learner Handbook
- KARE Level 5 Community Healthcare Services Learner Handbook
- Learner Level 5 Course Evaluation Form
- Sample Service User Evaluation Form
- Trainer Training Delivery Evaluation Form
- Assessor Assessment Evaluation Form

Section 4: Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

4.1 Background and Context

As stated previously the core business of KARE is providing services to individuals with intellectual disability. The provision of QQI training and education is part of this service provision. Staff are primarily recruited to fill specific vacancies that arise in the organisation and training delivery and assessment may or may not form part of their role. Therefore all staff recruited into the organisation fall under the remit of the Recruitment and Selection Policy, which is outlined in 4.2. From a training perspective staff within the organisation are recruited as trainers using the follow on process as outlined in the Training Staff Recruitment and Development Policy as outlined in 4.3.

4.2 Policy on Organisation Staff Recruitment and Selection

Background to the Policy

This policy has been developed to ensure an effective and fair recruitment and selection process where there is transparency in decision making regarding the appointment of candidates to positions in KARE. This policy is underpinned by KARE's Policy on Equal Opportunities/Diversity in the Workplace, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2015, Freedom of Information Act 2007 and the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to outline KARE's recruitment and selection policy, process and procedures and to ensure that all those who are involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Scope of the Policy

This policy relates to the recruitment of all employees to KARE services. It covers from when a vacancy is notified to the Human Resources Department to when the new person commences working with KARE including:

- Notification of a Vacancy
- Application Process
- Interviewing process
- Post interview screening
- Post interview administration
- Garda Vetting

Recruitment

- Staff will be recruited based on the requirements of the job, without bias on the grounds of the candidate's Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Race or Membership of the Travelling Community.

- KARE will recruit people to vacant positions as soon as possible following the identification of an impending vacancy and the approval to fill same.

- The job description will be reviewed/developed for the position and this will define the functions of the role and the specific conditions pertaining to it.

- All vacancies will be advertised internally within KARE and vacancies may also be advertised externally in the local/national press, on-line, professional journals and magazines.

- The closing date for receipt of applications will normally be two weeks after the date the position was advertised. However, this may be extended to three weeks, in exceptional circumstances for positions that are more difficult to fill.

- All applications for a position will be assessed against the agreed criteria for the position using the information provided in the application documentation. Based on this assessment candidates will be shortlisted for interview. Applicants must ensure the application form is fully completed and the requested documentation is provided as failure to do this may result in not being shortlisted for interview.

- Applicants not shortlisted for interview will be notified in writing.
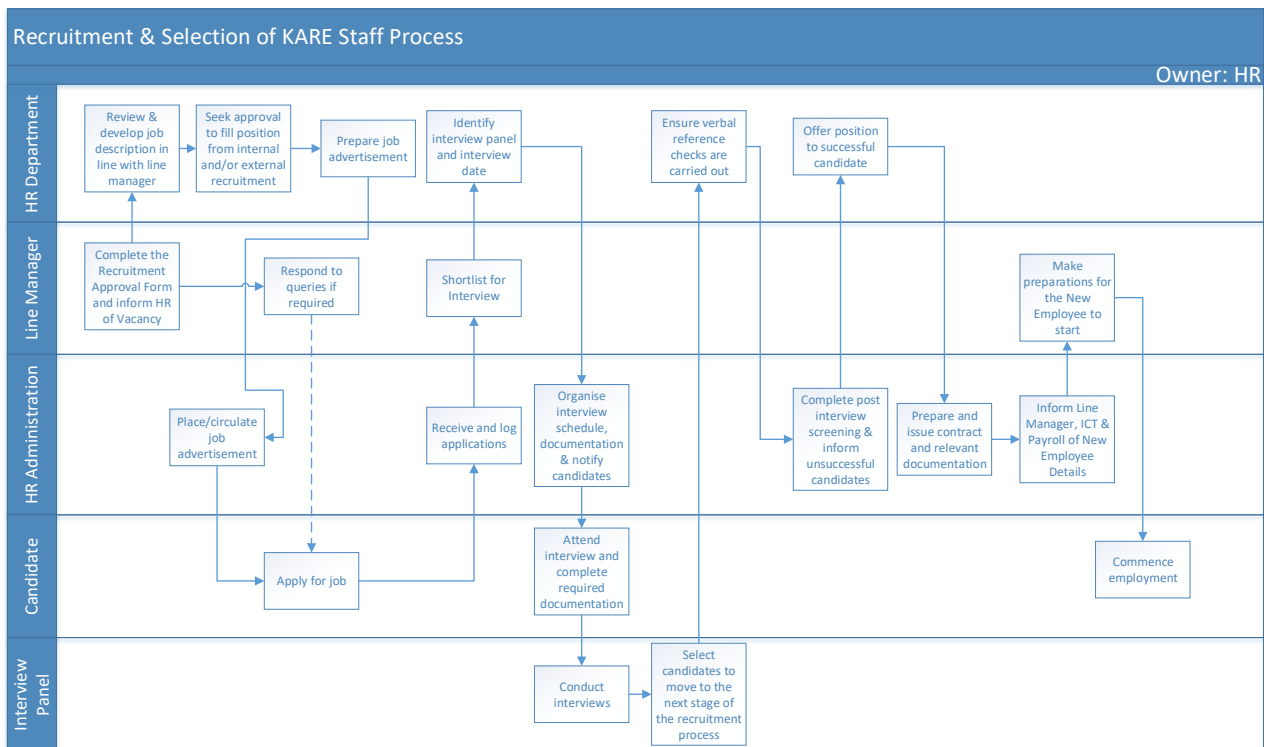
Selection

- The selection process will involve the relevant Line Manager/s from the area where the vacancy exists and a representative from the HR Department. Where appropriate, a member of the KARE Board of Directors, a representative from the individuals who use the service and/or a suitably qualified internal/external person will also participate in the process.

- No staff member, board member, individual who uses the service or external person shall be involved in any aspect of the selection process where an immediate family/household member or anybody with whom they have a close relationship/friendship is an applicant.

- The selection process will always involve an interview but may also include meetings with individuals who use the service, group exercises, psychometric testing, specific skills tests, reference checks and/or other suitable methods of selection.

- Interviews will be held within one month of the closing date for applications. Where necessary, interview dates will be arranged prior to advertising and the dates included in the advertisement.

- Prior to offering a candidate a position in KARE, the following should be in place:
  - Two acceptable written references on KARE's Reference Form, both of which meet regulatory requirements.
  - Satisfactory Garda Vetting/Police Clearance
  - Two forms of identification, one of which must be a photographic identification
  - Satisfactory pre-employment medical examination
  - Completed Applicant Declaration Form
  - Proof of required qualifications
  - Proof of their right to work in Ireland
  - Full, clean, manual, Irish driving licence, where required

- Only in very exceptional circumstances will a job offer be made subject to the above but employment cannot commence with KARE until the above are in place.

- All decisions made as to the suitability of a candidate as a result of any disclosures received will be done with a commitment to fairness. The decision-making process will consider if the disclosure has a potential bearing on the suitability of the candidate for the position for which they have applied. It will not be a forum to pass judgement on the candidate's behaviour as a member of society.

- The successful candidate will be issued with a contract of employment which complies with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2014, and the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015. The contract will be signed by all parties.

- Unsuccessful candidates will normally be notified within 3 weeks of interview either verbally or in writing except in exceptional circumstances where there is an unavoidable delay in the recruitment process.

- An unsuccessful candidate may request feedback from their interview/tests. Requests for feedback will be co-ordinated by the HR Department and appropriate members of the interview panel may be involved in giving the feedback. The interview assessment form and where appropriate, results from psychometric/skills tests will be used as a basis for the feedback discussion.

- The HR Department will ensure that all documentation relating to the recruitment process is filed in a manner that complies with the Data Protection legislation.

Garda Vetting

As part of the recruitment process all applicants, including volunteers will be informed as part of the interviewing process that it is KARE's policy to carry out Garda Vetting/Police Clearance as per the KARE Garda/Police Vetting Policy

Diagram 16: Recruitment & Selection of KARE Staff Process

Probation & Induction

The probationary period in KARE is viewed as an extension of the selection process and must be completed satisfactorily before employment is confirmed on a permanent basis. The duration of probation is detailed in the Contract of Employment, however the usual length of probation is 6 months. KARE makes every effort to assist staff to meet the requirements of their job and provides the information, resources and support necessary to perform the job to the required standard.

While on probation, staff receive induction training and are given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the standards of conduct, job performance, attendance, time keeping and KARE's policies and procedures. Progress is reviewed on an ongoing basis, and

the probationary period may be extended, following discussion with the staff member, the Line Manager and the HR Department.

Probationary reviews will be carried out by the Line Manager. During the probationary period a minimum of four review meetings will take place and the Line Manager also has the option of holding additional interim reviews. Where performance does not meet the requirements of the job, the staff member will be informed by the Line Manager of the improvements necessary and if appropriate, training, development and or coaching will be provided to support the staff member. The onus is on the staff member to show that their work performance/conduct is to the standard required. Once the staff member has successfully completed probation the HR Department confirm employment in writing.

In the event of continued failure to meet the required performance/conduct the staff member is advised in writing of the areas of performance/conduct that are unsatisfactory and of the action proposed. These actions include the following:
- The probationary period may be extended
- If the staff does not successfully complete the extended probationary period this will result in termination of employment
- Termination of employment will be informed by the Line Manager and the HR Department before the end of the probationary period

Induction training is provided for all staff. The purpose of induction is to ensure that staff are given the relevant information to assist in carrying out their role. Departmental induction, which is the responsibility of the Line Manager, is carried out on commencement of employment and they are responsible for ensuring that staff are informed of all matters relating to their position, work location and their required performance/conduct. The Line Manager is also responsible for ensuring that staff are scheduled for all Mandatory Training associated with their role and staff are required to attend such training. The Induction Checklist, which covers each area of induction must be completed and initialled by staff and Line Managers and forwarded to the Human Resources Department. Organisation induction is provided to staff within the first three months of employment and this provides key information on the organisation in terms of organisational culture, vision, mission and guiding values. It also provides specific information into the services provided by the organisation and what is expected by staff working within the organisation.

4.3   Policy on Training Staff Recruitment and Selection

Trainers in KARE are selected from the existing pool of staff, who will have undergone the recruitment and selection process as outlined in 4.2. Therefore they will have the necessary qualifications and experience to fulfil their principle role within the organisation. The minimum requirements for those involved in staff training is as follows:
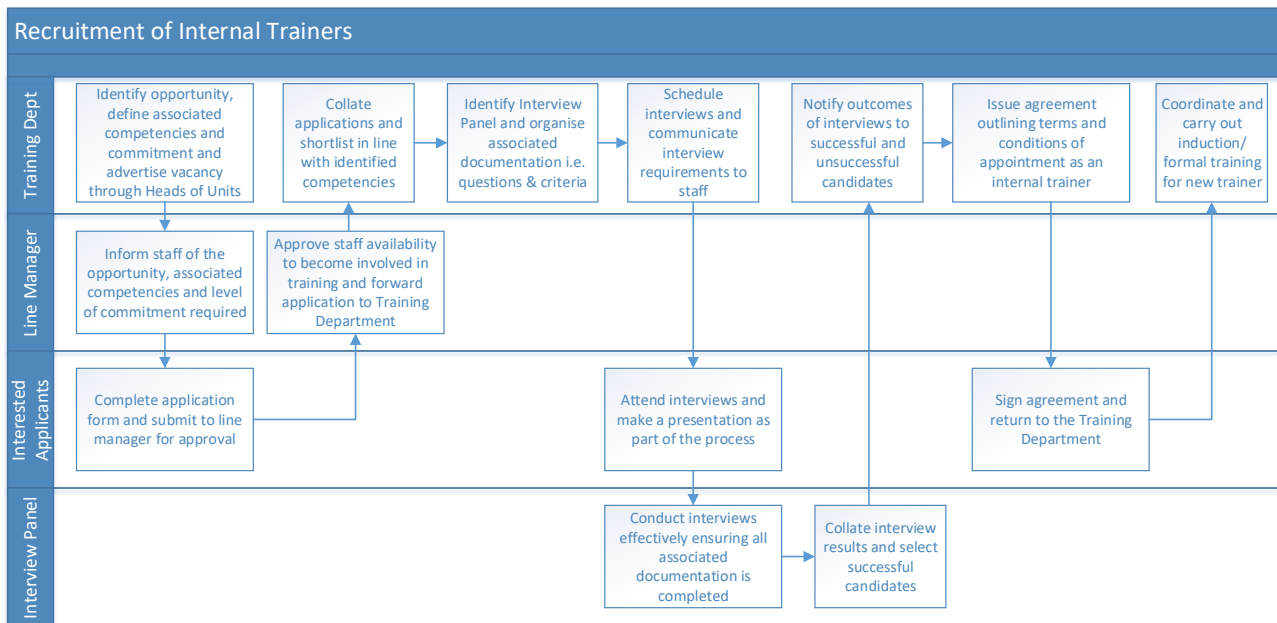
- Relevant qualification or significant experience in the subject area
- QQI Level 6 Training Delivery and Evaluation

Recruiting trainers in KARE for staff training is achieved through the following process:

1. The Training Department identify a 'trainer gap' and define the required competencies in line with the subject matter of the training programme/component
2. The vacancy is advertised internally using the KARE email system
3. Interested staff complete an application form in conjunction with their line manager, who must approve the staff's availability to become involved in training
4. The Training Department collate applications and short-list in line with defined competencies
5. The Training Department convene an interview panel and organise interviews
6. Staff attend interview
7. The interview panel select the successful applicant(s)
8. The Training Department notifies all applicants, providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates
9. The Training Department issues the Training Delivery & Assessment of Learning Handbook to the successful applicant(s)
10. The Training Department organises and records induction training for the new trainers

Induction for new trainers includes training on KARE's QA Policies and Procedures, with a particular focus on teaching and learning and assessment of learning. On the job training is also provided and new tutors and/or assessors are assigned to an experienced tutor to observe and assist in order to understand the processes and procedures underpinning best practice.

Diagram 17: Recruitment & Selection of Trainers (Level 5+) Process

Recruitment of Internal Trainers

| **Training Dept** | Identify opportunity, define associated competencies and commitment and advertise vacancy through Heads of Units | Collate applications and shortlist in line with identified competencies | Identify Interview Panel and organise associated documentation i.e. questions & criteria | Schedule interviews and communicate interview requirements to staff | Notify outcomes of interviews to successful and unsuccessful candidates | Issue agreement outlining terms and conditions of appointment as an internal trainer | Coordinate and carry out induction/ formal training for new trainer |

| **Line Manager** | Inform staff of the opportunity, associated competencies and level of commitment required | Approve staff availability to become involved in training and forward application to Training Department |

| **Interested Applicants** | Complete application form and submit to line manager for approval | Attend interviews and make a presentation as part of the process | Sign agreement and return to the Training Department |

| **Interview Panel** | Conduct interviews effectively ensuring all associated documentation is completed | Collate interview results and select successful candidates |

Service User Training is managed by the Lifelong Learning Department, which is staffed by 4 teachers, who have been recruited into the organisation following the process identified in 4.2. The teachers have a recognised teaching qualification and are registered with The Teaching Council of Ireland. The teacher group develop the Service User training plan and once the learners have been accepted onto the learning programmes they identify the additional learning supports required. To become a learning support staff in KARE the minimum qualification required is QQI Level 5 Facilitating Learning. These staff work in conjunction with the teacher group in supporting individuals with intellectual disability to achieve success in their programme of learning.

4.4 Policy on Managing Staff Performance

Context

Staff working in KARE are required to engage with performance management, which is underpinned by the Performance Management Policy. This policy sets out the requirements and procedures for carrying out performance management. This is conducted between the staff member and their direct line manager, with one formal meeting per year and 3 interim meetings.

Background to this Policy

KARE initially developed a Performance Management System for staff in 1996; we have improved this system over the years. In 2006 we did a comprehensive review of this system to make sure that the system supported staff in their role in the organisation. We had another review in 2013 in response to feedback from staff. We had a further review in 2019 to streamline the process and include mandatory training.

Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to manage staff performance so that it benefits the staff and the organisation. Performance Management supports staff to carry out their job to the best of their ability. Performance Management will support staff to develop their skills in line with the needs of the organisation and to make sure staff plans are in line with team and organisational plans.

Scope of this Policy

This Performance Management Policy applies to all staff employed by KARE who have successfully completed their probationary period.

Non Scope of this Policy

- Managing on-going poor performance
- Managing Probation
- Professional Supervision
- Mentoring

Policy Statements

- Performance Management is ongoing and includes regular reviews, both formal and informal.
- Everyone will have a formal review every year to create their Performance Management Plan.
- Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the review period has been amended to read Performance Management Reviews due in the period March to September 2020 may have the review date extended to November 30th, 2020.
- Performance Management is a two way process between a Staff Member and their Line Manager.
- The Performance Management System will help staff be part of a team by making sure staff goals are in line with team goals.

Diagram 18: Performance Management Process
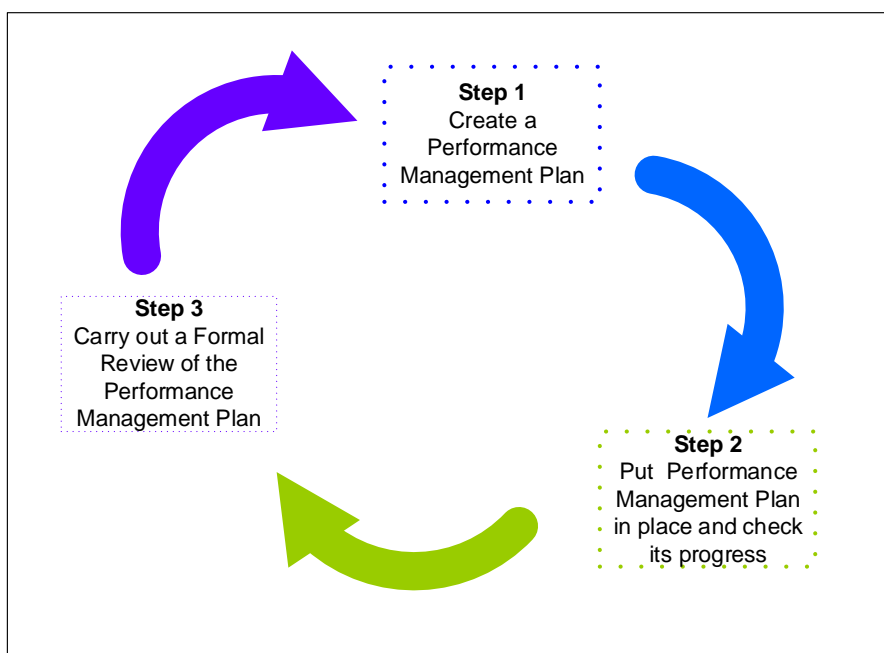
Performance Management Procedures

There are 3 steps to performance management:

1. **Create a performance management plan**
   - The Line Manager and Staff Member will both agree a date for a Performance Management meeting.
   - The Staff Member and Line Manager will separately look at the staff member's performance. This will be guided by:

- o The staff members job description
- o The staff members previous Performance Management Plan
- o The organisation's key activities and processes
- o Team Plan/s and Organisation Plans
- They will use the Performance Review Discussion Form to look at:
- o What was successful and why
- o What proved difficult and why
- o Suggestions for Performance Goals for the next year.
- o Suggestions for Training and Development Goals for the next year
- Using the Performance Review Discussion Forms the Line Manager and the Staff Member will discuss what was successful and why and what proved difficult and why
- Staff member and line manager will discuss and agree the Performance/ Training and Development Goals for the next year
- The Staff Member will then:
- o Make the goals into a SMART format
- o Write down each goal on the Performance Management Plan Goals Summary Record.
- o Agree which goals require an Action Plan
- o Write an Action Plan for achieving the goals as agreed
- The Staff Member and Line Manager will agree/finalise smart goals the Performance Management Plan and the Action Plan. This can be done either by meeting or via email. The Line Manager will record the date the plan was finalised on the relevant electronic system.
- The Staff Member and Line Manager will also agree when to check on progress. This should happen at least once a year and be recorded as Interim Review on the Performance Management Plan.
- The Staff Member will keep their final plan and give a copy to their Line Manager.
- The Line Manager will liaise with the Training Department to progress training and development goals as appropriate.

2. **Put the Performance Management Plan in place and check progress**
- The Staff Member will use the Plan to help them do their job every day.

- The Staff Member will keep track of how their plan is going.
- The Staff Member will talk to their line manager about any problems achieving their goals and where necessary agree actions to overcome difficulties.
- The Line Manager will support the staff member to achieve their goals through regular formal and informal communication.
- The Staff Member and Line Manager will meet on the Interim Review date agreed to check the progress of the Plan.

3. **Carry out a Formal Review of the Performance Management Plan**

- The Staff Member and the Line Manager will review the achievement of the goals and using the Performance Review Discussion Forms they will discuss:
  o What was successful and why
  o What proved difficult and why
- They will make sure the outcome of each goal is recorded on the Performance Management Plan and the Final Review Date is entered and signed by both people.
- The Line Manager will forward a copy of the Reviewed Performance Plan to HR for filing in the Staff Member's Personnel File and record the date of the review meeting on the relevant electronic system

4.5   Policy on Managing Staff Development

Context

KARE have a Staff Training and Development Policy, which outlines the organisation's position on training and development both within and external to KARE. As stated previously KARE have an annual training budget, which covers the training and development needs of staff. The annual training plan identifies the training that will be delivered within a calendar year and this includes mandatory training, health and safety, QQI Validated Programmes and required organisation training, for example, Autism Awareness or Supporting Individuals with Complex Needs.

Specific funding for Education Assistance is provided for in the training budget and all staff have the opportunity to apply for this funding. This is an opportunity for staff to undertake professional development courses and/or degrees that will support their work within the organisation. KARE also buy in two QQI Accredited Level 6 courses i.e. Leadership, which is

recognised by HIQA as a Person in Charge (PIC) qualification and Training Delivery and Evaluation, which is a minimum requirement to become a trainer within the organisation. Staff are supported through performance management to identify performance, training and career goals and it is through this system that they may qualify to apply for either education assistance or the Level 6 courses on offer.

Background to this Policy

KARE recognises the importance of having a skilled workforce in order to achieve strategic and operational plans and is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to effective performance and promotes training opportunities for all staff.

Aim of this Policy

To provide a framework for training that ensures staff have necessary competencies to deliver on KARE's strategic and operational plans and to meet statutory requirements.

Scope of this Policy

This policy relates to the training of all KARE staff.

Policy Statements

- There will be equality of opportunity for all KARE staff to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities through a blend of learning methods including, on the job learning/coaching, attending training courses, conferences and seminars and course mentoring.
- The training needs of staff will be identified through Performance Management and Operational Planning in line with best practice and legislative guidelines.
- The Annual Training Plan, outlining planned in house training courses will be approved by the Operational Management Team (OMT) and the Training & Education Committee and communicated to all staff.
- KARE will facilitate externally accredited training and development opportunities for staff subject to the availability of funding.
- KARE will be an approved Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Centre in order to provide nationally recognised progression opportunities.
- All training, i.e. courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences should be co-ordinated through the Training Department to ensure all training is captured and recorded appropriately.

- Training courses will be evaluated to inform changes and improvements in training provision.
- The line manager will agree with the staff member, how the knowledge/skills learned will be shared to inform team/organisational learning.
- The line manager will facilitate the staff member to transfer the knowledge/skills learned to the workplace.
- Staff participating in training courses/seminars will satisfy all attendance, assessment and evaluation requirements within the required timeframes.
- KARE will develop internal trainer capacity to facilitate delivery of training programmes in line with organisational needs and to provide training opportunities for staff.

- Staff can apply to KARE for funding to undertake further education outside of normal working hours through the Education Assistance Programme. The funding for this programme will be subject to budget availability. Where funding is available the % approved for each person applying will be based on individual applications.
- Where staff are undertaking further education outside of normal working hours they can apply for study/exam leave.
- Staff will consult with their line manager in planning any pieces of work, course assignments or dissertations to ensure that the outcomes from these support continuous improvement for KARE. Findings from research carried out by staff as part of KARE funded programmes should be made available to the organisation.
- Staff will be required to repay Education Assistance funding if they:
    o Discontinue employment with KARE during the year of funding
    o Discontinue their studies in that particular course
    o Fail to pass required exams or assessments
    o Cannot produce an official statement of results for exams completed and passed
- Applications for study or exam leave will be considered from all staff undertaking courses, not just those being funded by KARE. It will be based on the relevance of the course to their role in KARE and must have prior written approval of the Line Manager.
- Study and exam leave must be taken within the academic year (not the calendar year) of the course. No leave will be backdated.

Study Leave Entitlements for Staff:

Course Type	Course Level	Study Leave Entitlement
Certificate	NFQ Level 5 & 6	1 day per academic year
Ordinary Degree	NFQ Level 7	3 days per academic year
Honours Degree, Master's Degree or PHD	NFQ Levels 8, 9 & 10	5 days per academic year

Exam Leave Entitlements for Staff:

Exam leave application forms must be submitted to line managers with an official exam schedule at least 3 months prior to leave being required. Leave entitlements will cover the duration of the exam.

4.6   Supporting Documentation

- KARE's Recruitment and Selection Policy
- KARE's Performance Management Policy
- KARE's Staff Training and Development Policy
- Garda/Police Vetting Policy
- KARE Induction Checklist
- KARE Probation Forms
- KARE's Training Delivery & Assessment Handbook

Section 5: Teaching and Learning

5.1   Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Statement

In KARE we believe that opportunities for learning should be open to learners of all abilities and in response to this KARE is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning activities, ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to develop both professionally in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities and personally in terms of confidence, esteem and overall attitude.   In order to achieve this we strive to foster teaching and learning relationships based on mutual respect and trust and build learning environments that are safe, open and accepting so that all learners can actively participate in learning activities in order to achieve their learning potential.

We recognise that learners have a vast array of experiences and that they learn differently therefore we incorporate a range of different teaching, learning and assessment strategies that take in account the concept of multiple intelligences and learning styles so that we ensure all learners have the opportunity to learn and be assessed in a way that suits them best. We strive to make learners aware of how their learning can influence their lives as a whole, to give them the room to think and reflect and make conscious decisions about their own lives and most importantly to support them to identify and achieve realistic goals.

KARE will use a range of assessment techniques to ensure that all learners are provided with the opportunity to achieve success, however we will ensure that assessment is fair, transparent and is reflective of the national standards associated with specific levels of learning. In our experience learners learn best and achieve results when they have the opportunity to transfer their learning into the key areas of their lives and therefore we ensure that our teaching, learning and assessment strategies are practical in nature, where possible, and will have meaning for the learner. This will lead to deep learning and an effective and engaging teaching and learning experience for all involved.

Key Priority Areas

- Programme Development & Design
  - KARE are committed to identifying and developing programmes of learning that are practical, relevant, meet the needs of their learner population and their vocational sector. This will be achieved through collaboration with stakeholders, effective review and evaluation of existing programmes and through using the QQI programme validation process.

- Excellence in Teaching, Learning & Assessment
  - KARE are committed to using a range of inclusive and robust teaching, learning and assessment methods that meet the needs of a diverse learner population. These are informed, stimulating and responsive and foster links between theory and practice.

- Integrity, Fairness & Consistency
  - KARE are committed to ensuring integrity, fairness and consistency in all teaching, learning and assessment methods. This is achieved by clear processes and procedures and is underpinned by ongoing training for all staff involved in delivering, assessing and evaluating programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation.

- Collaboration
  - Through collaboration with all stakeholders KARE strive to develop new ideas and approaches that support the emerging needs of our learner population. We also strive to create a community of practice where staff are valued and supported to communicate in an open and honest manner.

- Learner Experience
  - KARE are committed to providing learning environments that are inclusive, accessible and learner centred. This is supported by fostering teaching and learning relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Our learning environments are stimulating and responsive to the needs of all learners. They are safe, open and accepting so that all learners can actively participate in teaching and learning activities in order to achieve their learning potential.

- Continuous Improvement
  - KARE strive for continuous improvement, which leads to enhanced experiences both for our learner population and staff. We continuously seek innovative and

effective ways for teaching, learning and assessment by planning, doing and reviewing. We work in partnership with our stakeholders, through open communication, research and development and appropriate training to ensure quality provision in teaching, learning and assessment.

Learner Outcomes

The following learner outcomes were identified through consultation with the learner population and teaching, learning and assessment staff in KARE. Learners who successfully complete programmes of learning in KARE strive to be:

- Confident, self-directed, responsible, caring professionals who work to empower individuals and facilitate them to live the lives of their choice
- Competent and capable with an appreciation for exploiting new knowledge through lifelong learning
- Effective communicators with the ability to use appropriate communication strategies by understanding the needs of others
- Creative and resilient with the ability for positive thinking, problem solving and an appreciation of innovation in both work and life experiences
- Digitally competent and be capable of identifying and using appropriate digital resources, tools and strategies in order to effectively navigate their professional and personal environments
- Effective team members with the ability to use interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, to be respectful and inclusive in dealing with others and be open to and act on constructive feedback
- Committed to inclusion and diversity in their work and/or life context and value the importance of individual uniqueness

The following is an overview of KARE's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and is designed to provide staff and learners and other stakeholders with information on how KARE achieve best practice and quality in training and education.

Diagram 19: Overview of KARE's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy

Teaching, Learning & Assessment in KARE

- KARE aim to provide high quality teaching, learning and assessment to learners of all abilities in order to support them to reach their potential.
- We will do this by creating teaching and learning environments underpinned by excellence in teaching and assessment and respectful and open relationships

Key Priority Areas

- Programme Development and Design
- Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Integrity, Fairness and Consistency
- Collaboration
- Leaner Experience
- Continuous Improvement

Key Priority Area Outcomes

- Programme development and design leading to content that is relevant, responsive to the needs of learners and the vocational sector and underpinned by a robust validation process
- Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment underpinned by robust training and continuous professional development. Staff belong to a community of practice that is inclusive, proactive, and responsive and supports engagement with learners and constructive feedback.
- Integrity, Fairness and Consistency, which is achieved by ensuring and disseminating clear processes and procedures and is underpinned by ongoing training for all staff involved in delivering, assessing and evaluating programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation.
- Collaboration with all stakeholders in QQI accredited training and education to ensure quality programmes of learning that are progressive, purposeful, innovative and maintained
- Leaner Experience is considered and underpinned by inclusivity, accessibility and learner centeredness. Learners are supported to engage with teaching and learning experiences that are enriching, holistic, relevant and attainable. Learning relationships are mutually respectful and supports learners to foster links between theory and practice.
- Continuous Improvement is a vital component in maintaining quality and enhanced experiences both for our learner population and staff. We continuously seek innovative and effective ways for teaching, learning and assessment by planning, doing and reviewing. We work in partnership with our stakeholders, through open communication, research and development and appropriate training to ensure quality provision in teaching, learning and assessment.

Learner Outcomes

- Learners will be confident, self-directed, responsible, capable and caring individuals who are effective communicators, creative, resilient and digitally competent. They will be effective team members and committed to inclusion and achieving their individual potential

5.2 Teaching and Learning Policy

Background to the Policy

Teaching and learning is fundamental to the delivery of programmes in KARE and we are committed to providing high quality learning opportunities to learners, who wish to improve their knowledge and skills. We recognise that learners within our organisation are self-motivated to engage with learning, therefore maintaining this engagement depends on the provision of a quality teaching and learning process. In order to achieve this we focus on the development of positive tutor/learner relationships, using mentoring to support learning and ensuring that curriculum development provides clear opportunities for learners to link theory with practice. There is a focus on the development of knowledge and skills to support the work practice of staff within the organisation and for the development of specific skills to support and promote service user independence in their daily lives.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that learners in KARE are provided with a supportive and respectful learning environment and high quality teaching and learning opportunities, which are based on best teaching practice, critical reflection on practice, learner experience and continuous improvements through self-monitoring and evaluation.

Scope of the Policy

This policy covers all those involved in the teaching and learning process of QQI Validated Programmes in the organisation i.e. learners, training staff and associated support workers

Teaching on QQI Programmes

Staff who are engaged with training on QQI Validated Programmes are recruited through KARE's Staff Recruitment and Development Policy and are assigned to specific programme modules based on their educational qualifications and experience. In order to teach on the programme the following is required:

- Relevant qualifications and/or experience in the subject area for example a social care qualification or significant experience of working within the sector
- Minimum QQI Level 6 Training Delivery and Evaluation or equivalent qualification (for teaching at Level 5)
- Minimum QQI Level 5 Facilitating Learning (for teaching and supporting learners at Levels 1-3)

- Minimum 2 years in training delivery, assessment and evaluation, time spent both within and outside a classroom setting can be taken into account
- Capacity to teach at least one day per working week or as required

Supporting the Transfer of Learning into Practice

Staff as learners in KARE will have a direct line manager who will support learners to effectively transfer their learning to their work practice. Line mangers will also link in with the tutor and learner through the mentoring process to ensure that the learner has access to the resources required to successfully engage with the learning programme both within the classroom and in their work location. In order to support staff as learners the following is required:

- Minimum QQI Level 6 Leadership
- Minimum 2 years' experience in managing people/teams
- A clear understanding of the teaching, learning and mentoring process
- Capacity to support learners for the duration of the learning programme

Services users as learners in KARE will have a key worker who takes on the role of support person for the duration of the learning programme. They will also have additional support workers identified to support them in engaging with their learning. These support workers should be identified in conjunction with the Lifelong Learning Department and the line manager in the Service User's service.

Designing Learning Materials

KARE is committed to ensuring the design of high quality learning materials and resources which will support learners to actively engage with and learn from. Learning materials are designed against the following criteria and must:

1. Be reflective of the key learning outcomes associated with the programme
2. Meet the level of the associated programme in terms of delivery, assessment and the learner workload i.e. the workload must be proportional to the programme level
3. Be designed with the learner profile in mind and cater to flexible learning pathways
4. Be designed to promote equality and diversity
5. Cater for the application of learning into work practice and/or daily living
6. Be based on research and reflect best practice in the relevant area

7. Plan for critical evaluation and review of the programme content in order to facilitate continuous improvement

Designing learning materials is carried out by the Teaching & Learning team, which consists of a representative from the Training Department and/or the Lifelong Learning Department, the programme module tutor(s) and assessors(s) and may require input from the IT department if necessary to support the design of digital content. In terms of consultation on learning materials we look to wider training and/or lifelong teams, learners and external sources. Once the content has been fully developed and consulted on it is sent to the Training and Education Committee for final approval.

The design of learning materials in KARE follows a 5 stage process:

1. **Planning**

   Before writing programme module content it is necessary to consider the following key questions:
   - What are the learning outcomes associated with the programme module?
   - Who will be engaging with the materials i.e. the learner profile?
   - Why are we designing the materials i.e. what is the relevance?
   - Where will the content be delivered?
   - How will the course material be delivered?

   These questions will provide an overall picture leading to a clear starting point for content development and design

2. **Research and Design**

   Programme module content should be underpinned by appropriate research and based on current best practice. KARE are unique in that they are service providers for people with intellectual disability as well as providers of training and education. We are members of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers and therefore are well placed to collaborate, research and understand best practice within the disability sector. We are members of the Disability Federation of Ireland and also of The Wheel and this provides opportunities for collaboration and research. As well as external research contributors, we have professional clinicians and staff within the organisation, who are well placed to

conduct research and identify best practice models within the sector. Therefore, learning materials are designed and reviewed in line with current theory and best practice.

When designing learning materials the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Learning materials should be designed in such a way as to appeal to a variety of different learning styles and be appropriate to the level of learning
- Materials should demonstrate variety in modes of delivery and take into account the use of audio/visual technology and where appropriate assistive technology
- Materials should be culturally appropriate and inclusive and at all times promote equality and diversity and avoid bias and discrimination
- Materials should support and reinforce the teaching and learning process and should where relevant make appropriate links to existing learner knowledge
- Materials should be designed in a way that is clear and maximises learner engagement

3. Approval

When the design phase is complete i.e. considered a final draft, the programme module team submit the learning materials to the Training and Education Committee for final approval. This can result in:

- Full approval with no changes
- Approval with some changes to be made

4. Implementation

Implementation consists of using the learning materials as part of the course delivery. We consider this to be the most effective method of testing not only content but also the learner activities. In the pilot phase of implementation, the tutor will continuously evaluate the learning materials against the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to the level of learning
- Learner engagement with the content
- Learner engagement with learner activities
- The effectiveness of the blend of theory and activity

5. Review

In order to measure the effectiveness of programme content and delivery it is necessary to review the teaching and learning process regularly. In KARE we review in line with our annual review and evaluation plan, which sets out specific timeframes for each QQI module review. This plan is published on KARE Connect as part of the annual training plan. Reviews take place using a consistent approach and involve the following steps:

1. Learners will complete a learner evaluation form on course completion, which is automatically submitted to the Training Department and/or the Lifelong Learning Department

2. Tutors/Assessors will complete a delivery and assessment evaluation form, which is automatically submitted to the Training Department and/or the Lifelong Learning Department

3. The Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department will review and collate information in relation to learner engagement, learner complaints, learner completion rates and learner certification, the result of which will be part of the programme module evaluation report

4. The Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department will collate both learner evaluation and tutor/assessor evaluation and develop an evaluation report

5. A module team meeting will be convened where the evaluation results will be discussed and a plan of action for improvement will be drafted and submitted to the Training and Education Committee for approval

6. The action plan will be implemented and the programme module will be updated in line with approved actions

7. The revised programme module will be published to the relevant location on KARE Connect and the Learner Management System once developed, and older materials will be archived

Diagram 20: Designing Learning Materials
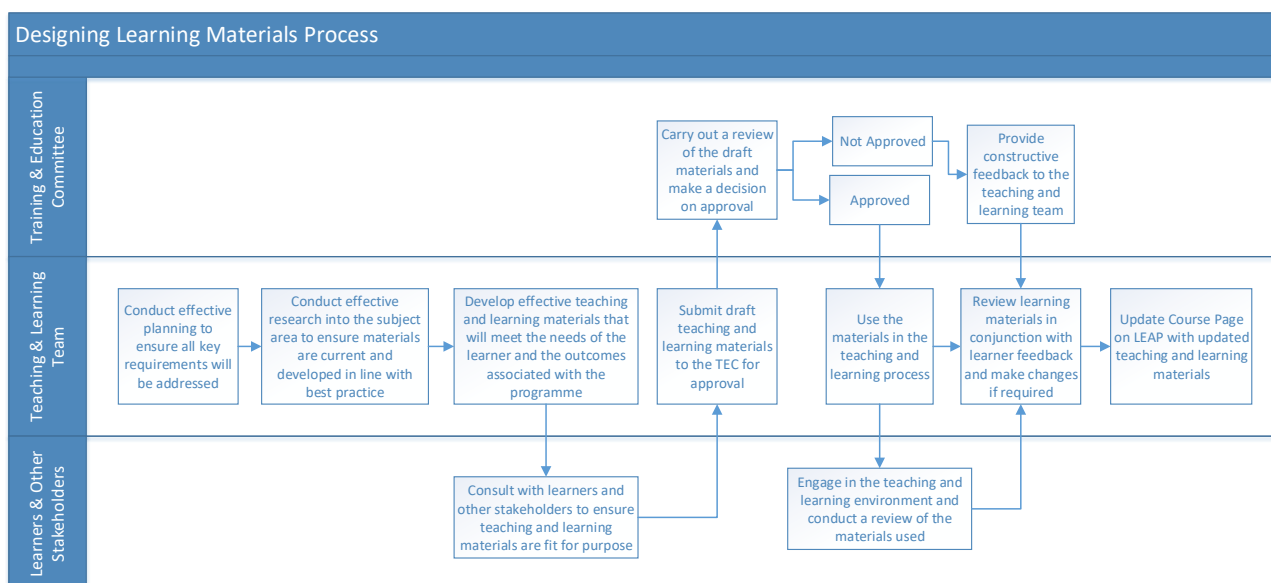
5.3   The Teaching and Learning Environment

KARE is committed to delivering programmes of learning with a comprehensive support system in order to facilitate effective learning. As state previously learners in KARE are staff, who actively provide services and service users, who are people with a diagnosed intellectual disability. Given the diverse profile of learners within the organisation it is necessary to provide diverse teaching and learning environments that are underpinned by the principles of adult education. Therefore, KARE strive to:

- Provide training and education programmes that meet both the educational and personal needs of learners
- Ensure learners are at the centre of the learning process, where learning is seen as construction rather than instruction. The need is to recognise that adult learners bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that can complement the teaching and learning environment
- See learners as self-directed and self-motivated, while at the same time recognising that some learners will need specific supports to engage with teaching and learning
- Recognise the importance of lifelong and lifewide learning and in doing so understand that learning happens across the lifespan as well as in many different contexts. The key aim of staff training is that they have the opportunity to transfer theory into

practice, thereby enhancing their learning. Service User training focuses on the development of key skills that can support them in all areas of their daily lives.

Physical Environments

In KARE the main teaching and learning environment is a physical classroom, where learners and tutors engage in learning using a collaborative approach. The physical premises available for training consists of the following:

- 1 conference room in KARE's McMahon Centre, Kilcullen with full conference facilities and also kitchen and bathroom facilities
- 1 fully equipped computer room with 20 PCs all with internet access and which are maintained by the ICT Department on a regular basis. This facility is also in KARE's McMahon Centre, Kilcullen and has full kitchen and bathroom facilities
- 1 large training room in KARE's Link Building, Newbridge, Co. Kildare with full conference, kitchen, and bathroom facilities
- 1 training room in Charlotte Mall, Newbridge, Co. Kildare with full conference, kitchen and bathroom facilities

All physical learning environments are maintained by KARE's Facility Department and given the diverse learner profile in KARE we ensure that our training environments are:
- Accessible to all learners
- Comfortable, clean and well maintained
- Bright and well-ventilated
- Organised with tables and chairs that can be easily moved in order to facilitate learner activities and effective learning

When learning outside of the classroom for staff as learners we look to the workplace as a learning environment. KARE's Level 5 Programmes focus on transferring theory into work practice and with this in mind learners are facilitated to apply their learning in a supervised context. Line managers and peers act as a support network and provide mentoring to learners in relation to hands on learning. We also encourage staff who may need specific experiences to temporarily move location within the organisation in order to enhance the transfer of learning opportunities.

There is a clear understanding in KARE of the many different ways of supporting Service User learning outside of the structured classroom environment. We focus on unstructured, incidental and natural learning opportunities to facilitate the move from surface learning to deep learning. This is of vital importance when supporting a person with intellectual disability in their learning. Support staff collaborate with tutors to ensure a clear connection between structured learning and learning in other contexts. Families are also invited into supporting learning for their family members and this is very valuable particularly in relation to the generalisation of learning across different environments.

Online Learning Environment

In recent times, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has become necessary to introduce a more blended learning environment in KARE. This was a challenge to us as our previous focus was on face-to-face classroom teaching and learning. However it was a welcomed challenge as it forced us to think of alternative ways of creating effective learning environments. With this in mind we developed an emergency contingency plan which was submitted to QQI. This plan was developed with the understanding that face-to-face teaching and learning will resume as soon as the health and safety of all within the physical learning environment is assured. We have further developed our contingency plan, which is detailed in the next section and this will underpin our teaching and learning during the period of the pandemic only. The concept of using an online learning environment for QQI programmes had not previously been considered in KARE, however the pandemic has provided us with the opportunity to develop KARE LEAP, which is a learner management system developed using Moodle. Our aim is to have this platform launched in March 2021 and it will be used as a supplemental resource that will support the face to face delivery of programmes of learning leading to QQI accreditation. The platform will be used to host course information, course content, learner forums and extracurricular course activities. It will also provide a platform to access and submit programme assessment, which will further enhance the security and storage of learner work submitted for assessment. This platform will also be used to support learners to access and complete mandatory and organisation training as well as lifelong learning programmes that do not lead to QQI accreditation.

5.4   Blended Learning Contingency Plan

Background to the Contingency Plan

This plan arose out of the need to support learners to continue their learning on QQI Validated Programmes in KARE during the Covid-19 pandemic. This policy outlines KARE's process for QQI Validated Programmes which are delivered, supported or assessed using an online or blended approach where public health restrictions prevent classroom delivery and assessment. This plan supports the development of flexible learning opportunities using non-traditional delivery methods in order to maximise learners' opportunities for success.

Aim of the Plan

The aim of this plan is to safeguard the quality assurance of all QQI Validated Programmes delivered and assessed either wholly or partially through blended learning and to reduce the risks posed by challenges faced by staff and learners engaged in blended teaching and learning environments during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Scope of the Plan

This plan covers the teaching, learning and assessment of all QQI Validated Programmes offered by KARE with a blended delivery component during the Covid-19 pandemic. It applies to all staff and learners engaged in the delivery and/or learning of QQI Validated Programmes. For the purpose of this plan a blended teaching and learning environment is one where the learner is physically remote from other learners and the tutor and is using technology to access the remote training environment. Remote training has been adopted in KARE as the terminology when discussing blended learning and will be used henceforth in this plan.

Objectives

KARE will ensure:
- To provide a framework for learners to engage with remote programme delivery and assessment underpinned by an effective technical infrastructure during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Compliance with QQI quality assurance policies in relation to programme delivery and assessment

- That the remote learning environment has the appropriate operational, staff and learner supports
- To provide guidance to staff on the provision of remote programme delivery and assessment

Information Communication Technology

- KARE will use Microsoft Teams as its primary platform for engaging with learners in the remote delivery of QQI validated programme modules during the Covid-19 pandemic
- A Learner Management System (LMS) will be developed in order to enhance training and delivery within KARE and will provide for different levels of access for administration, staff and learners through multi-factor authentication.
- The LMS will have the capacity to:
  - Act as an information communication system for staff and learners
  - Use Accessibility features i.e. immersive reader
  - Host an interactive booking/enrolment system
  - Host learning materials
  - Host links to live remote training sessions
  - Submit attendance logs
  - Complete and submit course evaluation
  - Conduct learner forums
  - Provide for assessment submissions
  - Provide learner results and constructive feedback
  - Provide a clear reporting system to measure associated KPIs
- The Training Department will manage an IT lending scheme i.e. laptops, cameras, projectors and other equipment as required
- The Training Department will communicate with learners to carry out a technology audit in order to identify the technology available to them to access remote training
- The Training Department will accommodate learners with limited or no access to a device to use for remote training
- All use of Information Communication Technology within KARE is underpinned by the Policy on the Use of Information Technology, which all staff must read and sign off on

Training of Trainers

- All trainers within KARE are qualified in their subject area and have a recognised training qualification, however KARE recognises that teaching on a remote training programme requires pedagogical and technical expertise. KARE will ensure that tutors are supported to function effectively in their delivery of remote training
- Staff engaged in remote training will have training in:
  - How to effectively use Microsoft Teams and manage training delivery and learner engagement using the functions provided through the platform
  - Using the LMS to manage teaching and learning materials, manage learner information i.e. attendance, evaluation, assessment and feedback
  - Data management and GDPR as it relates to remote training
- Trainers are provided with opportunities to attend webinars specifically dealing with online and blended learning development and delivery
- Trainers are provided with a remote training checklist in order to ensure compliance with all key areas

Remote Programme Delivery

KARE will deliver live training remotely through Microsoft Teams during the Covid-19 pandemic using the following guidelines:

- Reducing class capacity to a maximum of 15 in order to engage as effectively as possible with the learners
- Shorter class sessions with structured breaks in order to maximise engagement
- The use of 'break-out rooms' to facilitate small group discussion
- The use of a variety of resources during delivery in order to maximise learners opportunities for input, for example quizzes, polls, whiteboard, chat function etc

Learner Support

- KARE will ensure its remote teaching, learning and assessment practices are accessible to learners i.e. both staff and service users
- Teaching and learning will be underpinned by the principles of universal design i.e. engagement, representation, action and expression

- KARE will promote a learner-centred focus to the remote teaching and learning environment, with a focus on engaging learners in the learning process through a range of learner activities
- Once enrolled on a remote training programme learners are provided with an induction that includes:
  - Issue of individual login information to access the LMS
  - Remote setup will be carried out individually with learners in order to ensure they have the necessary technical requirements to access remote training
  - Follow up support contact will be made prior to course commencement in order to ensure learners can easily access steps to login to the remote training
  - Clear identification of specific requirements for access to the remote learning environment and code of conduct while accessing IT and information systems
- During remote training dedicated IT support will be provided to the learners, this support will ensure that learners who for one reason or another leave the training are supported to get back on
- Learners will have access to additional support through a dedicated IT Helpdesk for issues such as login/password issues
- Learners will have access to a variety of learning resources, catered to their individual needs, for example textbooks, audio/visual resources, course handouts and immersive readers
- Mentoring is a key component to teaching and learning in KARE and this will be provided remotely on a one-to-one or small group basis during programme delivery. This is the learner's opportunity to clarify issues on course content and assessment

Diagram 21: Remote Training Process

Remote Training Process

Overall Process

Line Manager / Staff
- Line Manager and/or staff email training@kare.ie to book onto a specific remote training course

Training Clerical
- Staff are enrolled onto the course using the Training Scheduler
- Full Staff details are logged onto the Remote Training List
- Attendance is logged on the Training Scheduler

Training Administration
- Staff are contacted to ensure they are set up for remote training
- Training Session is set up through Outlook and link is emailed to course participants and tutors
- Learner List is emailed to course tutors
- Support is arranged and provided for the live remote training session
- Support person confirms that training has been completed successfully

Trainer
- Trainer delivers the live training session
- Trainer logs attendance on the remote training attendance form

Assessment of Learning

KARE recognise that assessment of learning is paramount to the teaching and learning process and in recognition of this we will ensure that:

- All associated assessment for remote learning programmes will be conducted in a fair, transparent and consistent manner and in line with quality assurance.
- All assessment is conducted in line with the learning outcomes of the programme and meets the national standards associated with the programme level as defined by the National Framework of Qualifications
- Information on the methods and criteria of assessment will be provided to learners in the Learner Handbooks and will be reiterated throughout the programme of learning.
- Assessment regulations and penalties for the violation of assessment regulations are communicated to learners through the Learner Handbook and form part of programme induction
- Security issues relating to the authentication of a learner's work will be considered when designing assessment processes and in the case of suspected plagiarism the penalties for violation of assessment regulations will be implemented

- Where online assessment is necessary, the learners will receive support sessions in advance to ensure that they feel confident in engaging in this type of assessment
- Assessment will continue as agreed in our programme validation in as much as is possible, however the following adjustments are being provided for:
  - Assessment briefs will be uploaded into the learners classroom space on the LMS
  - Trainers will ensure all learners are aware of what they are expected to do for assessment through remote class discussion and mentoring
  - Where appropriate learners will use the assessment brief agreed through programme validation
  - For assessments that normally require learners to work directly with Service Users we have developed a series of case studies from which learners will take the information required to complete their assessment
  - Where practical, skills demonstrations will be conducted remotely through Microsoft Teams e.g. Oral Presentations, Interviews and Group Discussion
  - Trainers will record the skills demonstration and save them securely for assessment and external authentication purposes
  - Where skills demonstrations are not practical e.g. teaching a service user a task in Facilitating Learning, these will be deferred until it is safe to proceed in line with National Public Health Guidance
  - Examinations will be conducted under supervision and in line with National Public Health Guidance

5.5   Supporting Documentation

- Managing Properties Policy
- LEAP (Learner Management System) Project Plan
- Policy on the Use of Information Technology
- Remote Training Checklist
- Training Delivery & Assessment of Learning Handbook

Section 6: Assessment of Learners

6.1 Background and Context

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and it needs to be robust and fit for purpose. Therefore KARE have designed assessments, which are in line with the requirements outlined in the programme specifications. There is a focus on applied assessment i.e. learners are supported to use, where practical, real situations in the assessment of learning, thereby facilitating clear connections between theory and practice. KARE's assessment framework includes formal assessment, which leads to certification and is managed through the processes outlined in the Policy on Assessment of Learners. Informal assessment, which does not lead to certification is also a key component in the assessment framework. It facilitates learners to apply their learning in a supervised and supported context and to receive constructive feedback on their performance.

6.2 Policy on Assessment of Learners

Background to the Policy

KARE is committed to ensuring that adequate and appropriate systems are in place for the assessment and verification of learner achievement. To this end, KARE will ensure that:

- The policy is understood by all those involved in the assessment process
- Learners are kept informed of what is expected of them and of their progress in this regard
- Assessments of learning are fair, consistent and timely, both in terms of access and process, and across assessors
- Assessments incorporate an emphasis on application of learning appropriate to learners' context
- Reasonable accommodation/assistance is provided to learners in undertaking assessments, where possible and appropriate
- A repeat and appeals mechanism is in place for all assessments

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to coordinate the assessment related processes and materials to ensure integrity, fairness, transparency, consistency, and security so as to maximise the value of those assessments across QQI validated programmes of learning.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the assessment of all QQI validated programmes of learning in the organisation and covers all stakeholders in the assessment process i.e. staff, learners, administrators, internal verifiers and external authenticators.

Assessment of Learning Achieved

Assessment of QQI validated programmes in KARE is criterion referenced and successful achievement of specific awards i.e. major and/or component are based on learners having successfully achieved the required standards of knowledge, skill and competence associated with the identified learning outcomes.

Assessments have been mapped and developed in accordance with specific programme component assessment techniques. These have been approved through the QQI Programme Validation Process and assessments are reliable and valid and are implemented in line with the validated programme.

KARE recognise the importance of transparency in assessment and strive to ensure that assessment policies and procedures are accessible to learners, staff and all stakeholders involved in the assessment process. In addition to this fairness and consistency underpins the assessment process and to this end we ensure that:

- All learners have equal opportunities to engage in and understand the assessments associated with their programme of learning
- Assessments are accessible to learners both in terms of access and comprehension
- Learners are provided with the necessary information and resources to successfully engage in assessment
- Assessors are provided with training on assessment of learning and have the necessary information and resources to conduct assessment fairly, consistently and without bias
- Assessors must complete a conflict of interest form, where they have a direct relationship with a learner

In order for assessment to be fair, transparent and consistent the following criteria must be adhered to:

- An assessment brief must be written up for each associated programme assessment.
- Assessment briefs must contain the following information

- Programme Module Name
- Component Code
- Programme Module Level
- Assessment Type
- Assessment Weighting
- Agreed Deadline
- Assessment Tasks & Guidelines
- Assessment Presentation & Submission
- Assessment Criteria

- Assessment briefs must be accessible to learners i.e. they must be able to understand the requirements for assessment
- Learners must have access to assessment briefs in a timely manner
- An assessment marking criteria must be developed for each assessment brief
- Assessment marking criteria must contain the following information:
  - Programme Module Name
  - Component Code
  - Programme Module Level
  - Assessment Type
  - Assessment Weighting
  - Assessment Criteria
  - Criteria for Allocation of Marks
  - Sub-totals and Overall Result
  - Feedback for Learners

Assessment Techniques

When developing assessment, care is taken to ensure a balance for learners in terms of summative and formative assessment methods. All associated learning outcomes are assessed and learners are provided with every opportunity to achieve learning outcomes in real life contexts as follows:

- **Assessment Techniques used to Assess Staff as Learners**
  - Assignments, projects and collections of work are developed in line with work practice and will facilitate learners to work with those they support in a work context to reflect on their skills, abilities and support needs, identify goals, draw up action plans, and

identify barriers and strategies to overcome barriers. The output of these assessments will be 'real live documents', which will not only be used for assessment purposes but also to meet specific needs for Service Users.

- o Skills demonstrations are developed to support learners to put theory into practice and some will involve supporting a Service User in real time activities, for example, learning a new skill and reviewing goals and/or plans.

- o Learner journals will provide learners with opportunities to critically reflect on theory learned in the classroom and how this can impact and/or improve their work practice. Learner journals can also provide opportunities for self-evaluation and critical reflection on attitudes, attributes, experiences and actions, which may lead to positive changes for personal and professional development.

- o Examinations are developed to assess a learner's ability to recall and apply knowledge, skills and understanding of specific theory and knowledge. They are also a means to facilitate learners to demonstrate the practical application of knowledge, for example in word processing.

- **Assessment Techniques used to Assess Service Users as Learners**
  - o Learners studying at Levels 1, 2 and 3 in KARE are assessed by two main assessment techniques:
    1. Collection of Work, which may include assessment workbooks, project work and photographic evidence
    2. Skills Demonstration, which may include presentations and group discussions and are captured using digital and photographic evidence
  - o Tutor verification may be a necessary element, depending on the level of learning. It is necessary for tutors to complete the Tutor Verification Form to confirm that the learner(s) have completed the associated assessment independently and successfully and that it is their own work.

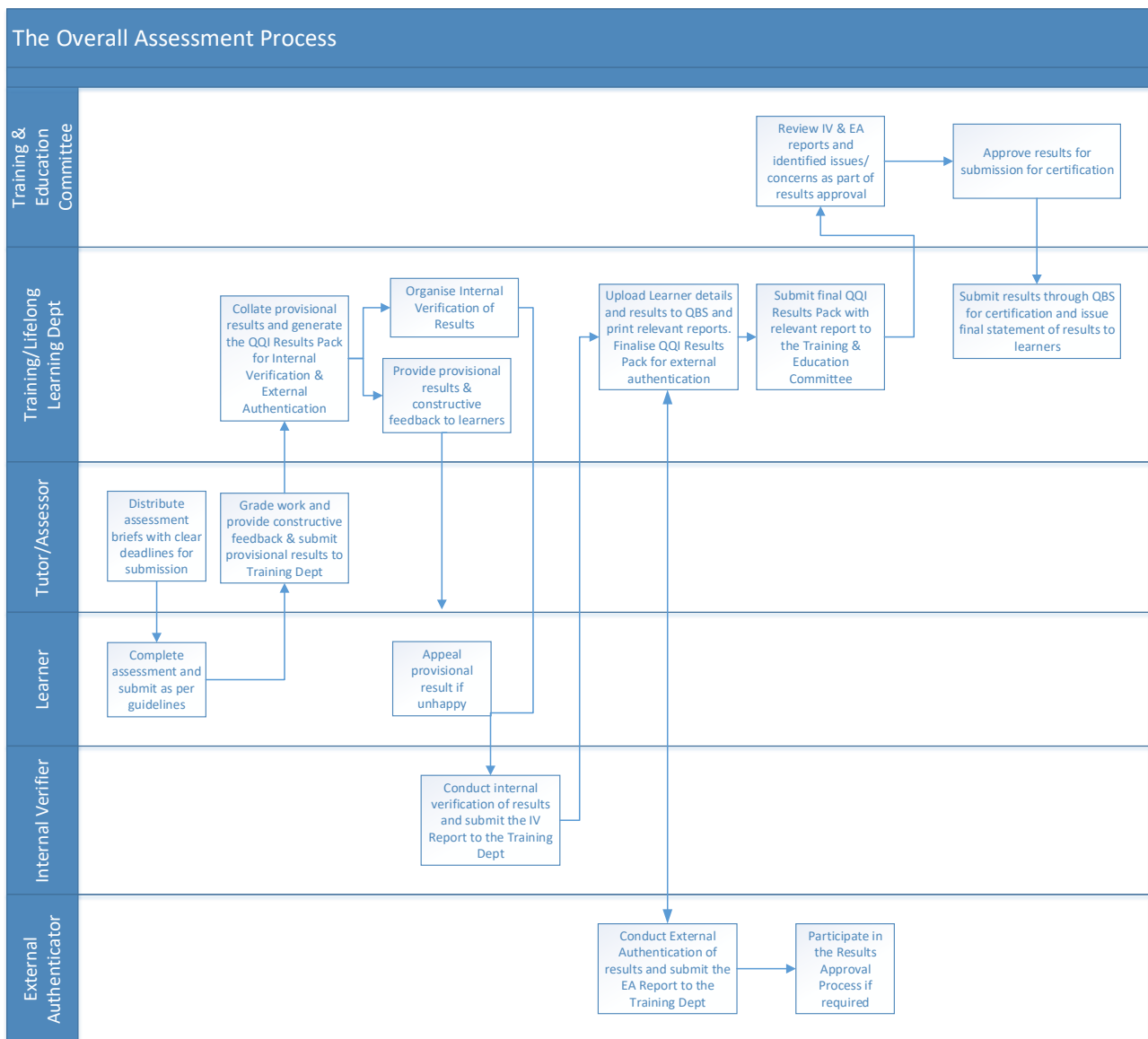## Information and Communication to Learners

Information on the policies and procedures relating to assessment is provided to learners through the relevant learner handbook and also through programme module induction. Handbooks are provided to learners on course enrolment and these are reviewed and updated regularly. Mentoring on learning programmes provides additional opportunities for

learners to get information on assessment and open communication between learners, tutors and the relevant department i.e. The Training Department and/or The Lifelong Learning Department is encouraged.

The Assessment Process

The overarching assessment process in KARE is consistent across all assessment methods and is outlined as follows:

Diagram 22: The Overall Assessment Process

The Overall Assessment Process

Role	Process
Training & Education Committee	Review IV & EA reports and identified issues/concerns as part of results approval → Approve results for submission for certification
Training/Lifelong Learning Dept	Collate provisional results and generate the QQI Results Pack for Internal Verification & External Authentication → Organise Internal Verification of Results / Provide provisional results & constructive feedback to learners → Upload Learner details and results to QBS and print relevant reports. Finalise QQI Results Pack for external authentication → Submit final QQI Results Pack with relevant report to the Training & Education Committee → Submit results through QBS for certification and issue final statement of results to learners
Tutor/Assessor	Distribute assessment briefs with clear deadlines for submission → Grade work and provide constructive feedback & submit provisional results to Training Dept
Learner	Complete assessment and submit as per guidelines → Appeal provisional result if unhappy
Internal Verifier	Conduct internal verification of results and submit the IV Report to the Training Dept
External Authenticator	Conduct External Authentication of results and submit the EA Report to the Training Dept → Participate in the Results Approval Process if required

Specific Assessment Processes

There are some assessments which require additional processes as follows:

Theory and Practical Examinations

- Learners are made aware of the modules where an examination is part of the assessment requirement on enrolment to a programme of learning. This information is provided in their learner handbook and examination dates are scheduled on the programme calendar.

- Examinations are developed and are stored securely in a password protected folder and there are a minimum of two examinations per module to ensure sufficient rotation of exam papers.

- Examinations are always conducted under supervision and learners must follow the specific regulations in relation to engaging in examinations

Examination Regulations

Learners attending for theory or practical examinations:

- Are required to be in attendance at the examination centre prior to the commencement of the examination and will not be admitted to the examination centre after thirty minutes has expired from the time at which the examination began

- Must occupy the place first assigned by the examination supervisor during the entire examination

- Must enter any details required e.g. examination number/name on the examination script

- May not be allowed to leave the examination centre and return during the examination period unless the examination supervisor is satisfied that the learner's need is genuine. Time lost by the learner will not be compensated for at the close of the examination

- Must raise a hand to attract the attention of the examination supervisor during the examination

- Must not write in the answer book anything that is not directly connected with the subject matter of the questions to be answered

- Must not remove from the answer books any page or part of a page

- Must not take out, or attempt to take out of the examination centre any answer books, whether used or unused

- Must not use or attempt to use, any book, notes or paper that have not been supplied by the examination supervisor

- Must not aid, or attempt to obtain, aid from another learner
- Must not communicate, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another learner
- Must not access files on a computer or computer network which are not part of the examination, nor shall they access any other learner's files
- Must stop all input at the conclusion of the examination and remain in their seats until the examination supervisor has collected the scripts
- May be expelled from the examination centre if their behaviour, in the opinion of the examination supervisor is such as to jeopardise the successful conduct of the examination

Supervised Skills Demonstrations

In an assessment situation which calls for a supervised skills demonstration e.g. oral presentations, interviews or group discussions, the following regulations must be adhered to.

Learners:
- Must consent to the digital recording of all skills demonstrations
- Must arrive to the assessment centre at least 10 minutes prior to the skills demonstration commencing to ensure for adequate setup and preparation
- Must arrive prepared and ready to take part in the skills demonstration
- Must follow instructions from the assessment supervisor
- Must participate actively in the skills demonstration
- Must not interfere with another learner's skills demonstration
- Must submit supporting documentation on completion of the skills demonstration

Penalties for Violation of Regulations

Regardless of the assessment technique used there are penalties for the violation of regulations. Where the assessor is of the opinion that any learner has:
- Violated any of the assessment regulations
- Attempted to obtain a result to which the learner is not entitled
- Claimed or attempted to claim such a result
- Furnished incorrect information in relation to their candidature
- Aided or attempted to aid another learner, except where group work is required

- Obtained or attempted to obtain aid from another learner, except where group work is required

The Learner will be notified in **<u>writing</u>** when a suspected violation of regulations is being investigated and such a learner will be liable to be:

- Deprived of certification, module credit or marks or to have such deductions made as the Training and Education Committee deems appropriate
- Debarred from entering for any of the assessments for such period as the Training and Education Committee may determine

Deadlines

Learners will be given a date by the course tutor as to when all work should be submitted. It is the Learners own responsibility to ensure that course work is submitted either before or on the date in question. Deadlines are issued in order to manage both the learning and assessment process and it is in learners own interests that they are met. We have made provisions for the following circumstances:

- Late Assignments
  - If for some reason the learner cannot present the work either on or before the submission date, an extension may be granted. However, only exceptional circumstances will be accepted and will be dealt with on an individual basis.
- Incomplete Assessments
  - It is a requirement of the course that the learner attempts all assignments presented to them during the course. Learners cannot pass the course having only completed part of the assessment criteria. Those learners needing extra support are encouraged to speak to the course tutors and/or the Training Department, who will try to accommodate learners where possible.
- Deferrals
  - If the work has not been completed for the course by the agreed date, the learner will be deferred until the next Assessment Period as set out by QQI.

6.3 Security of Assessment and Learner Records

KARE have taken measures to ensure the security of assessment and learner records in relation to programmes of learning leading to QQI awards. We will ensure, through our Data Protection and Records Management Policy, that assessment documentation and learner records are gathered and stored in a fair, consistent, reliable and secure manner.

We will ensure that:

- Assessment materials and resources are developed in line with the associated component specifications and in line with national standards and that they are kept securely using password protected systems

- Assessment materials and resources will only be accessed by staff who have assigned rights to do so

- Learners who are enrolled on programmes have access to LEAP, KARE's Learning and Engagement Platform. All relevant information relating to specific programmes are accessed through this platform and this includes assessment briefs and associated assessment information

- Learners submit work for assessment through LEAP and their work is accessed by assessors through this forum. Learner work is printed, graded, filed securely and made available to internal verifiers and external authenticators when required

- Learner work submitted for assessment is held securely and in a manner that prevents tampering i.e. in a locked filing cabinet

- Learner results are managed and held securely on password protected systems that allow access only to staff who have assigned responsibility. Learners have access to their grades through LEAP and they do not have access to any grade or information that is not theirs

- Once a learner has been submitted for and received certification, their work is shredded within 6 months

- Result Packs are kept securely in line with KARE's retention of information guidelines and only staff who have assigned rights to do so will have access

Diagram 23: Security of Assessment & Learner Records Process
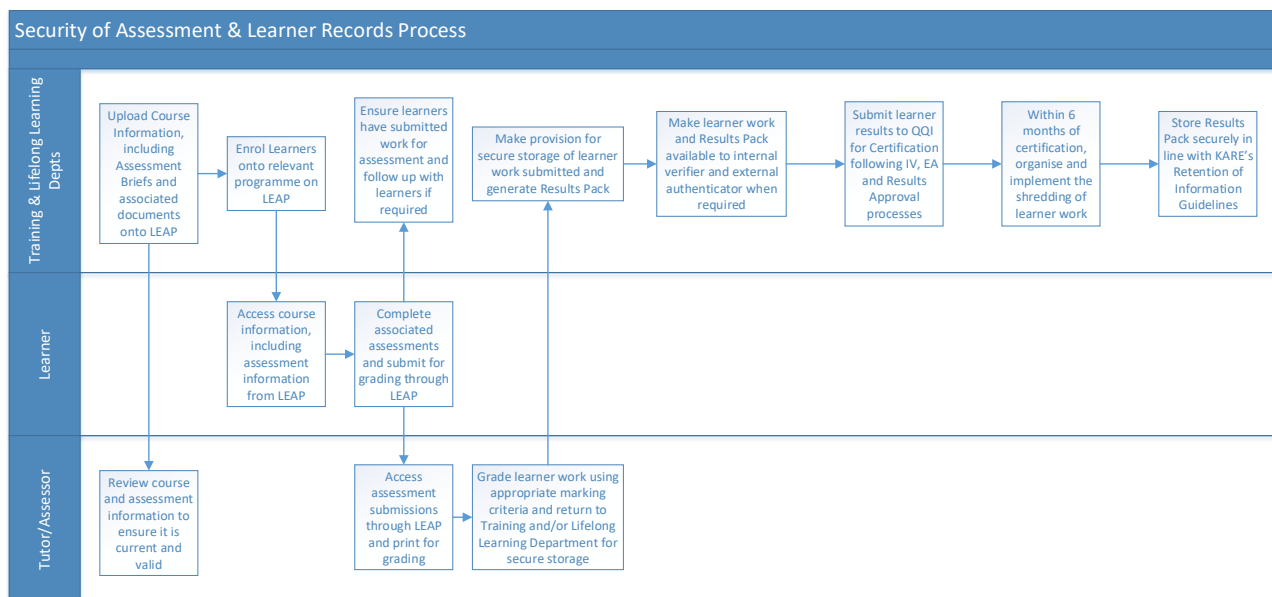
6.4 Overview of the Management of Assessment

There are a number of staff and/or external persons involved in the management of assessment within KARE and the roles are outlined as follows:

The Training and Education Committee

The Training and Education Committee is responsible for the governance and management of QQI training and education activities in the organisation and they monitor the assessment process to ensure that it is conducted in line with quality assurance standards.

The Training and Education Committee have access to all required assessment information including the Results Pack, Internal Verification Reports, External Authentication Reports and to the learner's work if required.

The role of the Training and Education Committee in relation to the effective management of assessment of QQI programmes of learning is to:

- Ensure all assessment activities in relation to QQI validated programmes within the organisation are conducted in line with the agreed QA standards to include conduct of assessment, requests for reasonable accommodation, internal verification, external authentication, results approval and submission of results for certification
- Approve all assessment techniques and revisions as required
- Oversee QQI assessment and examination procedures and ratify the appointment of external authenticators

- Review QQI internal verification and external authentication reports
- Agree and sign off results that have gone through the results approval process and approve submission to QQI
- Promote and recognise excellence in assessment of QQI programmes of learning

The Staff Training & Development Officer

The role of the Staff Training and Development Officer in relation to the effective management of assessment of QQI validated programmes of learning is to:

- Liaise directly with the Training and Education Committee in relation to all assessment related activities to include conduct of assessment, requests for reasonable accommodation, internal verification, external authentication, results approval and submission of results for certification
- Ensure that assessment techniques are in place for all QQI validated programmes of learning and that they are managed securely
- Organise training for tutors/assessors in relation to assessment policies and procedures and the code of conduct for assessment of QQI validated programmes
- Support the development of assessment briefs, marking criteria, examination papers and answer guides in line with defined assessment techniques and marking criteria
- Provide ongoing support to tutors/assessors in relation to the assessment process
- Monitor the implementation of assessment to ensure fairness and consistency across all assessors
- Participate in investigations of possible violation of assessment regulations
- Communication of constructive feedback and provisional and final assessment results to staff learners
- Ensure effective internal verification and external authentication processes are implemented effectively
- Manage the QBS process in KARE and ensure learner information and results are valid and correct
- Manage all assessment records and ensure that they are accurate and securely kept
- Ensure assessment processes are reviewed at least annually

Tutor/Assessor

The role of the Tutor/Assessor in relation to the effective management of assessment of QQI programmes of learning is to:

- Undertake required training as identified by the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department

- Liaise with the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department in order to fully understand assessment requirements

- Effectively communicate all assessment requirements to learners and ensure that they fully understand what is expected of them i.e. what the assessment is, the medium of response, submission guidelines and deadlines

- Mentor and support learners through the assessment process and in conjunction with the relevant department deal with issues that may arise

- Mark all work submitted for assessment and return grades and constructive feedback to learners to the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department

- Identify violation of assessment concerns to the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department and take part in subsequent investigations

- Demonstrate best practice in all assessment associated activities

Internal Verifier

The role of the Internal Verifier in relation to the effective management of assessment of QQI programmes of learning is to:

- Ensure that KARE's assessment procedures have been adhered to during assessment by being involved in planning meetings and communicating effectively with all course coordinators, tutors and assessors

- Ensure that learning has been assessed using the techniques outlined in the programme module descriptors and that results are documented using appropriate documentation

- Keep abreast of changes to policies and procedures relating to assessment and make this information available to Assessors/Markers

- Monitor and check assessment results on an identified sample basis

- Ensure that all work for assessment is marked and totalled correctly and is made available for external authentication, ensuring that evidence exists for each learner presented for an award

- Consult with the Training Department regarding any issues that arise from internal verification
- Complete and present an Internal Verification Report to the Training and Education Committee on completion of the internal verification process

External Authenticator

The Training and Education Committee will appoint an external authenticator using the following criteria:

- The External Authenticator will:
  - Have technical/subject matter expertise within the field of learning
  - Have experience of programme assessment and external authentication
  - Have excellent communication skills, administrative and IT skills
  - Operate within QQI guidelines and adhere to QQI codes of practice
  - Be available to KARE at appropriate times
  - Be independent to the centre to which they have agreed to carry out external authentication

The External Authenticator will be provided with a comprehensive results pack, which contains all the required information to conduct a full external authentication including:

- Internal Verification and previous External Authentication Reports
- Programme and Component Specifications
- KARE's Validated Programmes and Module Specifications
- QQI Certification Authentication Reports
- Assessment Briefs
- Assessment Marking Criteria
- Examination Papers
- Examination Answer Guides

The External Authenticator will visit KARE as required to conduct external authentication and will have access to all learner work submitted for certification. The Staff Training & Development Officer, Lifelong Learning Representative, Tutors, Assessors and Learners will be available for the duration of the visit and will answer any questions that the External Authenticator may have.

The role of the External Authenticator in relation to the effective management of assessment of QQI programmes of learning is to:

- Review the appropriateness of KARE's assessment strategies and techniques and provide constructive feedback and support to the Training Department
- Confirm that fair and consistent assessment of learners has been conducted in line with national standards and KARE's assessment procedures
- Review the Internal Verification Report and authenticate findings/outcomes
- Apply KARE's sampling strategy and moderate assessment results in accordance with national standards
- Participate in the authentication process by visiting the centre and communicating effectively with staff and learners, where appropriate
- Review borderline grading and make judgements on the validity of the result
- Identify issues/irregularities in relation to the assessment process and complete and present an External Authentication Report to the Training and Education Committee
- Participate in the Results Approval Process where required

Sampling Strategy

KARE are committed to ensuring that internal verification and external authentication are conducted effectively. We have developed a sampling strategy that will ensure verification and authentication is fair and consistent and clearly demonstrates if assessment procedures are being implemented appropriately.

The sampling strategy for KARE is as follows:

Activity	Sample Size
Internal Verification	The internal verifier will select a sample not less than 50% of the learner work submitted for certification
External Authentication	The External Authenticator will select a sample not less than 25% of the learner work submitted for certification

KARE will ensure that the sample:

- Is representative of all minor awards, all learner levels and all assessment techniques submitted for certification

- Is sufficient in size to enable the Internal Verifier and External Authenticator to make sound judgments in relation to the fairness and consistency of assessment
- Covers the full range of attainment in terms of grades achieved and a random selection of evidence for each grade/band
- Includes learner evidence which is borderline between grades in order for more closer examination of the evidence submitted
- Ensures new assessors work is sampled to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners has taken place

Issue of Results

Provisional results will be made available to learners through the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department once they have been assessed and reviewed i.e. the overall score is reflective of the marks given by the assessor. At this point if a learner is not happy with their result they are invited to talk to the relevant department and if necessary the appeals process will be implemented.

Final results will be made available to learners through the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department once they have been submitted through QBS for certification and the Final Statement of Results become available.

Learner Training & Education Appeals

It is the policy of KARE to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners and we operate an appeals process to enable learners to appeal:
- The Assessment Process
- The Assessment Result

Only results approved through the Training and Education Committee can be formally appealed by the learner.

Appealing the Assessment Process

Learners in KARE are entitled to make an appeal if they are not satisfied with any aspect of the assessment process. If a learner perceives that there has been an irregularity in conducting the assessment process the following steps should be taken:

- Raise the issue/concern in writing with the assessor who carried out the assessment no later than 10 working days from the date the assessment took place
- The assessor should discuss the assessment process and the issue/concern with the learner ensuring that they are made aware of their right to appeal.
- They assessor should also support them to locate the appeals form, which can be found on LEAP.
- If the learner wishes to appeal they must complete the appeals application form fully, clearly explaining why they are appealing the assessment process.
- The appeals application form must be submitted to the Training Department for staff learners and the Lifelong Learning Department for service user learners.
- A review of the assessment process for the specific learner concerned will be conducted by the relevant department and a provisional decision will be made.
- The final decision will be made by the Training & Education Committee and the learner will be informed within the agreed timescale.

Diagram 24: Appealing the Assessment Process
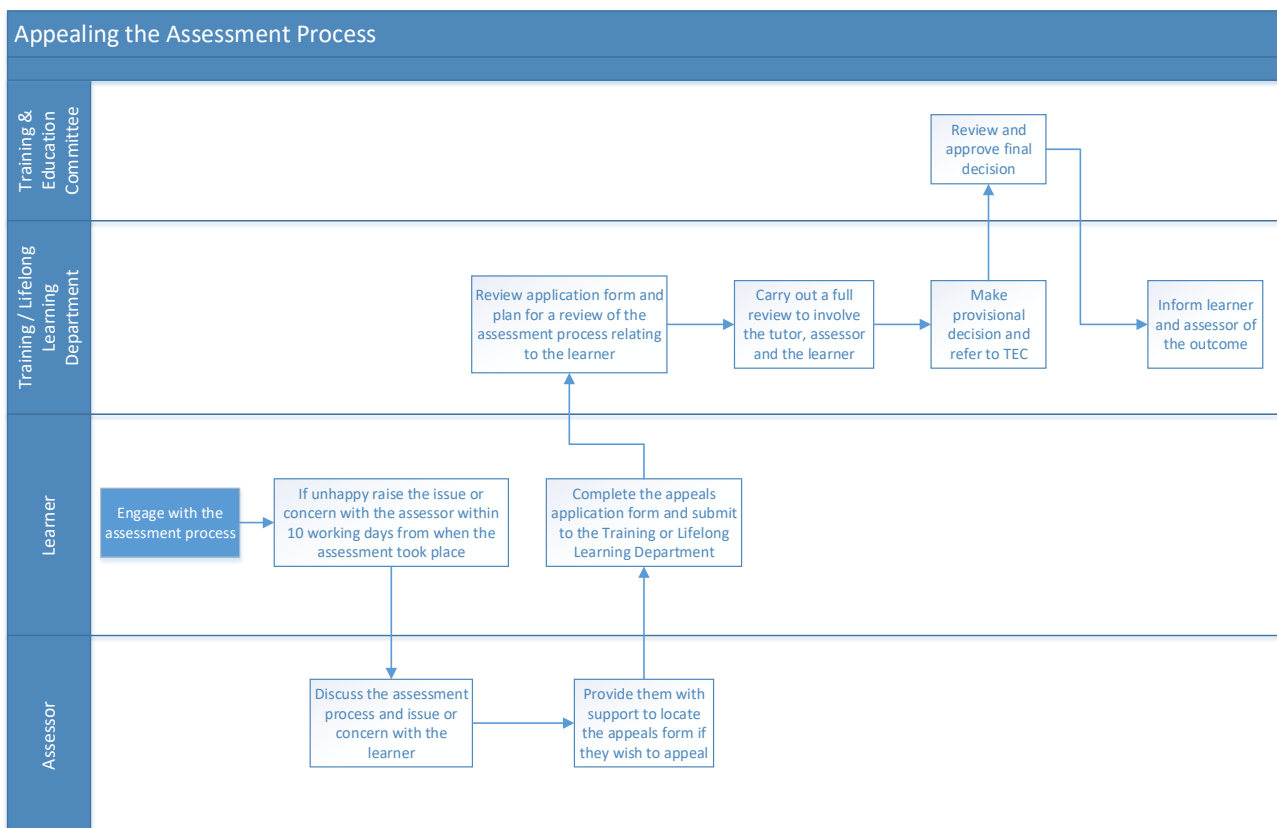
Appealing the Assessment Result

Learners in KARE are entitled to make an appeal if they are not satisfied with their assessment results. Only results approved through the Training and Education Committee can be formally appealed by the learner. If a learner wishes to appeal their assessment results the following steps should be taken:

- Learners must complete the Appeals Application Form and submit it within 10 days of the receipt of their final approved results.
- Appeals received after this time period will not be processed.
- Appeals should be made directly through the Training Department
- The Staff Training & Development Officer will review the application and discuss grounds for appeal with the Training & Education Committee and the learner, ensuring to explain the options available to them.
- KARE will commit to a re-assessing of a learner's work, this will not be completed by the original assessor. Learners will be made aware that re-marking can lead to a downward review of grades as well as an upward review. The learner will decide if this is an option that they want implemented.
- The learner will be informed of the outcome of the re-assessment and if the result is accepted they will be put forward for internal verification and external authentication.
- If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome they will be advised of the repeats process.

Repeats Process

If it is necessary for a learner to repeat part/all of the programme module the following steps will be taken:

- The learner will complete the Request to Repeat Assessment Form and submit it to the Training Department
- A discussion with the Staff Training and Development Officer, Tutor, Learner and where appropriate line manager or keyworker will take place.
- A decision, which will be approved by the Training & Education Committee, will be made identifying the steps the learner needs to take, which may include:
  - o Repeating the entire course i.e. completing the course in its entirety and resubmitting all work for assessment

- o Repeating part of the course i.e. attending some classroom sessions and resubmitting some work for assessment
- o Resubmitting some work for assessment without being required to attend classroom sessions

Diagram 25: Learner Repeats & Assessment Result Appeals Process
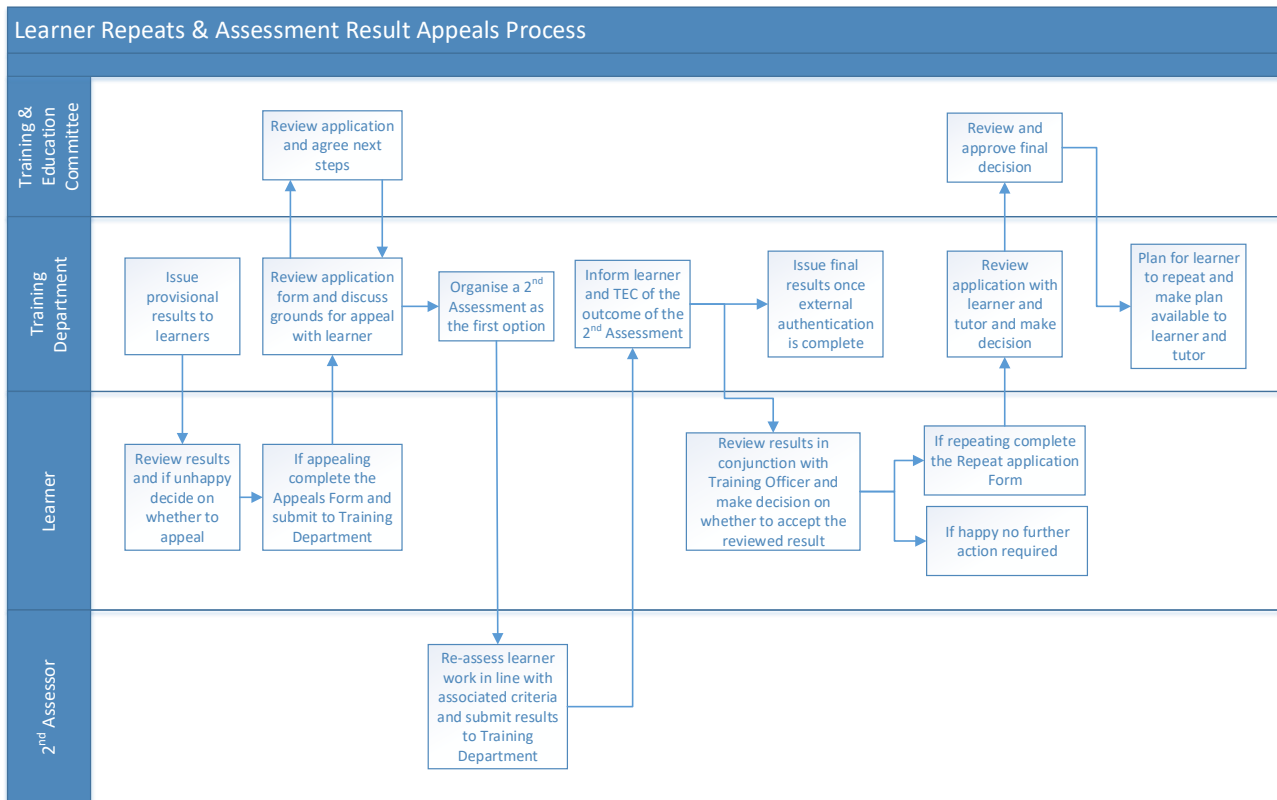
6.5   Continuous Improvement of Assessment Practice

The Training and Education Committee have overall responsibility for assessment of QQI programmes of learning in KARE. Therefore they are best placed to monitor the effectiveness of the processes underpinning assessment and this is done in conjunction with the Training Department and the Lifelong Learning Departments. Reports from Internal Verification, External Authentication and the Results Approval Process provide clear insights into the effectiveness of the assessment process and this feedback coupled with feedback from assessors and learners supports KARE to ensure effective assessment practice. The Training and Education Committee use a 'Plan, Do & Review' process in relation to assessment practice as follows:

Diagram 26: Continuous Development Process

6.6 Supporting Documentation

- Training Delivery & Assessment of Learning Handbook
- Internal Verification Guidelines
- External Authentication Guidelines
- Sample Results Pack
- Tutor Verification Form
- Request to Repeat Assessment Form
- Appeal of Result Form

Section 7: Supports for Learners

7.1   Background and Context

KARE understands the need to provide a range of appropriate supports to its learners. As stated previously learners in KARE are both staff and service users within the organisation and it is in the best interests of both the learners and the organisation that appropriate supports are in place. We are in a unique position where the organisation is invested in the service users and staff as they are the mainstays of the organisation and they are also invested in the organisation as both employees and individuals receiving services. Relationships are built up over time spent in the organisation and the overall ethos of KARE is ensuring that everyone has the required supports and resources to effectively engage in their primary roles. In KARE we strive to provide a supportive teaching and learning environment and ensure that supports for learners are built into all elements of the teaching and learning process. We encourage learners to be actively involved in their learning and also in identifying specific supports that they may require. Communication with learners is open and ongoing and this ensures that our policies and procedures continue to meet learners' needs.

7.2   Policy on Supports for Learners

Background to the Policy

This policy comes from the recognition that all learners, regardless of the level of learning, require some degree of support in order to successfully negotiate the teaching and learning process. Given the diversity of the learner groups in KARE it is necessary to identify different levels of support and we continuously monitor and review the supports and resources provided to learners. This ensures that supports are based on current best practice, that they are fit for purpose and most importantly are accessible to all learners.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all learners have access to appropriate supports in order that they can fully participate in their chosen programmes of learning and that they are supported to achieve their potential.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all learners enrolled on a QQI programme of learning within KARE i.e. service users, staff, volunteers, community employment and KWETB funded traineeship participants

Pastoral Care

KARE strives to ensure, through its policies, procedures and practices, the well-being of all within the organisation i.e. service users, staff, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders. We strive to ensure that all stakeholders feel valued and respected and are provided with the supports required to effectively engage in the key activities of the organisation. The need is to ensure that this approach is inextricably linked with teaching and learning within the organisation in terms of promoting learners' personal and professional development and facilitating them to reach their full potential. This is achieved through the provision of a supportive teaching and learning environment, underpinned by a total communication ethos, and the development of relationships based on mutual respect and trust. To this end the following supports are provided to learners:

- Access to line manager support for staff and key worker support for services users. This support ensures that learners can engage on a one-to-one basis in order to identify issues, set goals, develop action plans and identify the supports needed to overcome issues
- Access to a clinical team, which has the capacity to provide specific supports to service users for example social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapy, speech and language therapy and behaviour management support
- Access to an Employee Assist Programme for staff, which provides support with physical, mental and social health and wellbeing and also provides confidential support and counselling to staff in managing work, learning and personal issues
- Access to the course tutor to whom they can approach for specific course questions and/or issues
- Access to specific support through the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning department to whom they can approach for advice, supports, additional resources or help with other issues at any stage

KARE have adopted the following policies and procedures in order to ensure the wellbeing of key stakeholders within the organisation:

• Child Protection & Welfare Policy	• Talent Management Policy
• Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy	• Flexible Working Arrangements Policy
• Trust in Care Policy	• Individualised Planning Policy
• Dignity at Work Policy	• Performance Management Policy
• Guidelines for Working with Families	• Statement on Positive Aging
• Lifelong Learning Policy	• Total Communication Policy
• Equal Opportunities Diversity in the Workplace	
• Supporting a Culture of Safety, Quality and Kindness HSE Code of Conduct	
Please see Supporting Documentation Section 7 for copies of these policies	

Staff as Learners Supports

As well as the supports identified under pastoral care, KARE also provide a range of supports to staff as learners as follows:

KARE Model of Mentoring

KARE have developed a mentoring programme that all learners enrolled onto a QQI validated programme of learning are encouraged to engage with. Mentoring in KARE is a process that always involves communication and is relationship based. It can be described as the activities conducted by the mentor(s) with the learner in order to support them to negotiate the teaching and learning process successfully both within and outside of the classroom.

Mentoring is seen as a three way process that involves the learner, the tutor and the line manager. This process is mutually beneficial to both the learner and the organisation as it ensures learners are facilitated to learn effectively in the teaching and learning environment and also to effectively transfer what they have learned to the workplace. It provides the opportunity for one-to-one and three way communication and the process is underpinned by the Mentoring Toolkit, which was developed by KARE to support learners to identify specific learning support needs, to set learning and work practice goals, to participant in the mentoring process and to review and evaluate the process and also to critically reflect on their experiences. Workplace mentors i.e. line managers do not have a role in assessing learning.
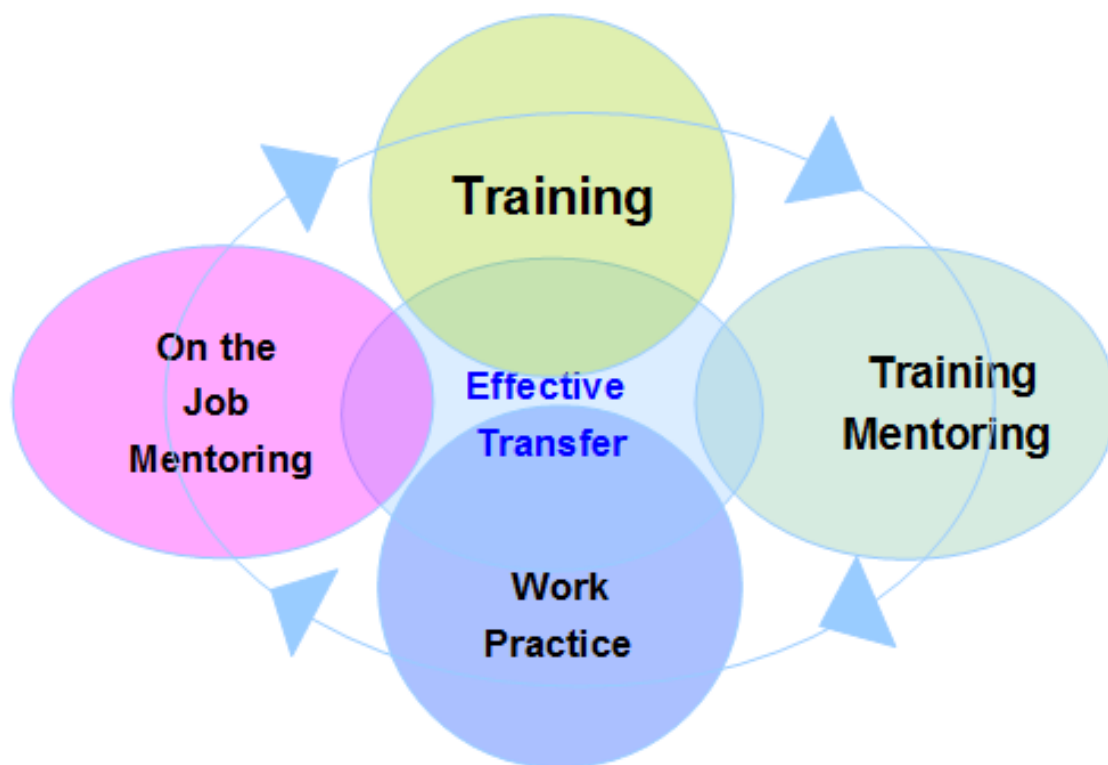
Study Skills & Assessment Programme

Staff as learners are encouraged to engage with the Study Skills and Assessment Programme, which provides input into the following key areas:

- What is Study?
- Practicalities & Requirements
- Learner Expectations
- Learning Strategies
- Notetaking
- Writing for Assessment

This programme is delivered as a live training session and is also provided as an online training resource so that learners can revisit the programme and access the information as required throughout their learning journey.

Performance Management

All staff engage with the performance management process in KARE and this process is outlined in Section 4:4.4 Policy on Managing Staff Performance. This ongoing process supports staff to identify the challenges they face in all areas of performance i.e. work

practice and training and education. Through this forum learners are encouraged to identify what has worked well for them and what challenges they face in carrying out their roles. Issues with learning and the transfer of that learning into the workplace are often captured during performance management and learners are supported to set goals in order to overcome identified issues.

Information Technology

KARE have a dedicated IT Department which provides ongoing support to learners for training and education including:

- Access to a fully equipped computer room, where they can book time in for working on associated assessments where necessary
- An IT equipment lending scheme, where learners can borrow laptops in order to complete assessments and access online training
- Access to a Learner Management System (LEAP), where specific programme module resources are provided
- A helpdesk, which learners can contact about specific issues, for example password resets.
- Access to printers and photocopiers

Additional Supports and Resources

A range of supports have been put in place to ensure learners are given every opportunity to successfully complete the programme. These supports are as follows:

- Pre-course discussion between line manager and learners to familiarize themselves with programme objectives
- Opportunities to submit for assessment in a variety of presentation formats to accommodate learners with diverse needs
- Comprehensive and accessible learner handbooks which provide information on all aspects of the programme

Career Development Support

Staff as learners in KARE fall into a number of different categories i.e. permanent staff, fixed term contract staff and community employment participants. Regardless of employment type all staff are provided with opportunities to engage with training and education programmes within the organisation. KARE recognise the need to support staff with their

professional development and career progression within the organisation. This is seen as beneficial to both staff and the organisation and this is conducted through the following mediums:

- **Talent Management**

  Talent Management is a common umbrella term for the attraction, identification and development of people with potential to help ensure that an organisation can meet its future needs for people. KARE's talent management policy aims to provide a framework for the organisation to attract and develop talent so that potential successors have the necessary qualifications and competencies to apply for leadership/management roles when they arise. This policy applies to positions that are key to the management and development of KARE and to people whose goal is career progression into key leadership/management positions.

- **Performance Management**

  KARE encourages staff to use the Performance Management process to discuss their career ambitions and agree appropriate goals to support this. Line managers are key in supporting this process and ensure that staff are provided with appropriate information to achieve their goals.

- **Individual Learning Planning (ILP)**

  Community Employment (CE) is a labour market initiative funded through the Department of Social Protection (DSP). It is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged to get back to work by offering part-time work placements with sponsoring organisations. Progression into employment or further education is a key output of the programme, therefore the ILP focuses on both of these elements.

  KARE is a sponsor of two CE programmes i.e. The Adult Supports Programme and The Childcare Programme. Participants on these programmes are supported to engage with the ILP process in order to identify career goals and to develop an action plan as to how to achieve their career goals. CE participants are managed by a placement line manager, who mentor them in relation to their work practice and also by their CE supervisor, who supports them with career planning, organising training needs and engaging with them in relation to effective job seeking. These programmes work really well and a high

percentage of participants are recruited into the organisation on completion of their CE programme.

Service Users as Learners Supports

The following supports are provided to service users as learners on QQI validated programmes of learning:

Literacy Assessment

This is an assessment of functional literacy skills and supports service users to identify their learning style and learning level. The main aim of the literacy assessment is to determine the person's skill level and interests. It is broken up into four stages:

1. Recognising and matching daily living signs, symbols and written words e.g. visual timetables, diaries, days of the week, personal details and/or the ability to write and recognise own name
2. Recognising and matching social sight words, phonics, sequencing, picture and object words and basic numeracy e.g. date of birth, numbers 1-10, personal address, months of the year and seasons
3. Recognising the Dolce First 25 Word List and reading vocabulary. This stages includes using a phone, telling the time, recognising other's names, recognising numbers 20-100, and basic money skills i.e. recognising coins and notes and matching amounts.
4. Demonstrating the ability to read a menu or TV guide, understanding dates, reading books/magazines, writing a card, addressing an envelope, simple addition and subtraction and understanding price tags and bus timetables

The literacy assessment produces a written report, which is used to guide those supporting the person to make appropriate choices in relation to learning. Once the learner's skill level is established this may be used as an indicator to identify their entry level to QQI training.

Mentoring

Mentoring for service users happens in a number of different ways including:

- Tutor Mentoring, which ensures that learners have access to their course tutor to discuss any issues, queries or requests that they may have
- The service user has access to their key worker who provides specific supports in relation to follow up work and/or assessments that may need to be completed between classes.

The key worker can also act as a contact point between tutor and learner and can support any goals that have been set as part of the teaching and learning process

- Access to other staff who may act as a support worker in order to ensure that the person has the required supports to achieve their potential. This is dependent on the person's individual needs and will be organised through the person's unit leader
- Access to the Lifelong Learning Department who can assist with specific issues that may not be resolved at tutor level

Study Skills Programme

Service users who enrol on a QQI programme engage with a study skills programme, which covers the following areas:

- Learning Styles
- Learner Agreement
- Classroom Etiquette
- Alertness Skills
- Setting Learning Goals
- Skills for Learning
- Skills for Assessment

Individualised Planning

Service Users are encouraged to engage with the individualised planning process in KARE and this process is outlined in Section 3:3.2 Policy on Programme Development. This ongoing process supports service users to plan for all the key areas in their lives, including formal education, and to identify the supports required to achieve their identified goals. The identified supports are provided to the service user through the appropriate resource and are monitored and reviewed as part of the individualised planning process.

Education Guidance Support/Individual Education Planning

Learners have the opportunity to engage with the Lifelong Learning Department in order to get specific education guidance, support and information about how to map their previous learning to opportunities for the achievement of a major award. This may lead to the development of an individual education plan, which will provide guidance on what the learner needs to do, the support required to do it and on the monitoring and review of the

process. Learner plans and recommendations are recorded on CID, our service user information database, and other stakeholders will have access to these in order to support their implementation and review.

Assistive Technology

According to the World Health Organisation "*assistive technology enables and promotes inclusion and participation, especially of persons with disability, aging populations, and people with non-communicable diseases. The primary purpose of assistive products is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, thereby promoting their well-being. They enable people to live healthy, productive, independent and dignified lives, and to participate in education, the labour market and civic life"* (www.who.int).

KARE strive to promote inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities in all areas of their lives including education and training. We work to ensure that learners have access to universal technology and an understanding of how technology can support their learning. KARE have developed a process for managing assistive technology as a support for learners with specific needs as follows:

- Learner enrols onto a QQI validated programme of learning
- Specific supports to complete training are identified, these supports may include the use of assistive technology
- The Lifelong Learning Department carry out an Assistive Technology Assessment to identify the learner's skills in the area of technology and make a decision on whether assistive technology can support or enhance their learning
- Where appropriate referrals are made to the Assistive Technology Officer, Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist who can offer more specialised advice
- Once agreed the learner is supported and encouraged to use the identified technology
- The tutor will continuously monitor and review the effectiveness and engagement of the learner with the technology and feedback to the relevant person i.e. the keyworker or unit manager

Additional Supports and Resources

A range of accessible supports have been put in place to ensure service users as learners are given every opportunity to successfully complete the programme. Accessible supports are those that ensure learners can easily access and understand the information being

provided to them and are underpinned by the principles of universal design for learning and total communication. Supports offer multiple means of representation and engagement and therefore learners can communicate and demonstrate learning outcomes in a way that works best for them. These supports include:

- Comprehensive and accessible learner handbooks that provide clear and accessible information to learners on the programmes of learning offered by KARE
- Accessible course information sheets, which includes course overview, delivery, location, timetable and tutor information
- Use of accessible materials and resources during course delivery i.e. using appropriate visuals, audio and digital materials and resources
- Adapted resources and materials depending on learner ability and learning level
- Use of different modes of learning and assessment

Career Support/Development

KARE as part of Adult Services has always provided the opportunity for people who use the service to gain and maintain paid employment in the open labour market. We do this through Supported Employment, which is a system designed to support people who want to be part of the workforce, to find and keep a job and at the same time, help employers to fill vacancies and build diversity in their workforce. This process is underpinned by the Supporting People to Work/Have a Career Policy, which follows best practice guidelines as outlined by the European Union of Supported Employment Framework. There are two key areas that the policy supports as follows:

1. Pre-employment which provides the opportunity to get training and/or experience in the skills required to work, what it is like to have a job and what a particular type of job might be like. KARE Adult Supports provide opportunities for this work place training through Project Search, Project OWL, work experience and job sampling.
2. Paid employment, which supports individuals to achieve paid employment in a job of their choosing in the open labour market.

KARE employ a number of employment officers and job coaches in order to support this process. Service Users as Learners in KARE have opportunities to transfer their learning into the workplace if this is something that they are interested in doing. QQI Programmes of learning at levels 1-3 support service users to develop skills required for the world of work, these include communication, interpersonal skills, technology, career planning and work

experience. KARE have two dedicated employment placement projects i.e. Project Search, which is based in Naas General Hospital and Project Owl, which is based in Dáil Éireann. These as well as the supported employment programme are identified progression options for service users within the organisation.

Training & Education Complaints Process

KARE aim to provide a training and education environment where all stakeholders i.e. learners, staff and others feel confident in providing both positive and negative feedback on their experiences.

In achieving this KARE commits to:

- Safeguarding the rights and dignity of all those engaging in training and education and providing a safe environment in which to make a complaint
- All complaints, criticisms or suggestions, whether oral or written will be taken seriously and handled appropriately and sensitively
- The complaints handling process will be implemented without fear, favour or prejudice towards the complainant, or the person or service about which the complaint was made
- A designated Complaints Officer will be appointed through the Training & Education Committee to ensure training and education complaints are appropriately managed
- The Complaints Officer will communicate with the complainant throughout the process and endeavour to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction as close to the point of contact as possible
- The complaints process will facilitate the gathering of essential and appropriate information to ensure the effective management of the complaint without compromising the rights of the parties involved.
- All information obtained through the course of complaint management will be treated in a confidential manner and in line with current Data Protection (GDPR) and Freedom of Information legislation.
- It is the responsibility of all staff involved in training and education to engage with, respond to and resolve complaints at the first point of contact wherever possible.

Making a Complaint

KARE believe that it is important that matters of complaint be brought to our attention to enable investigation of those complaints with the aim of a satisfactory resolution. We strive to deal with most matters of complaint through informal processes in a spirit of conciliation.

- A complaint can be made in person, by telephone, by letter or by email to the designated complaints officer
- If a complaint is being made about a particular person and the person's name is being given, the complaint must be written, giving details such as dates and locations so that the person dealing with the complaint can check the facts of the complaint.
- A complaint must be made within 3 months of the date of the action giving rise to the complaint. The Complaints Officer may extend the time limit for making a complaint if they are of the opinion that special circumstances make it appropriate to do so.
- Where a complaint does not meet the agreed time frame the Complaints Officer will notify the complainant within 5 working days of the decision to extend/not extend time limits to accepting a complaint
- When a complaint has been received, KARE will endeavour to deal with the complaint effectively and efficiently.
- Complaints being dealt with through formal investigation will be acknowledged within 5 working days and will outline to the complainant the steps to be taken in investigating the complaint and the time limits for the completion of the investigation.
- KARE will endeavour to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant in strict accordance with the process for managing complaints in KARE.

Dealing with Complaints

KARE will make every effort to resolve complaints at the point of contact. Where this is not possible KARE will seek the consent of the complainant to resolve it through informal resolution.

This will involve:

- Clarifying the complaint

- Informing all parties of their right to be accompanied by a support person to any meeting/s held in relation to the complaint
- Meeting/s with the complainant giving them an opportunity to give their version of events and to provide evidence/explanations to verify the complaint.
- Meeting/s with other relevant parties giving them an opportunity to give their version of events and to provide evidence/explanations in relation to their actions.
- Confirming the outcomes/agreement reached in any discussion with the participants
- Giving the complainant the opportunity to identify what they would like to happen as a result of making the complaint.
- Managing the expectations of the complainant and being clear with complainant about what can and cannot be achieved through the investigation
- Determining the sequence of events leading to the complaint and the root causes of the complaint.
- Ensuring any conclusions about the complaint are based on a logical flow to the evidence supporting the complaint.
- Affording the person concerned the opportunity to consider any adverse proposed findings or criticism and to make representations in relation to them.
- KARE may offer Mediation by a mutually agreed 3rd party to attempt informal resolution of the complaint. Both the complainant and those to whom the complaint relates must agree to use Mediation
- Where a complaint cannot be resolved by Informal Resolution the Complaints Officer will, if appropriate, set up a formal investigation into the complaint

7.3   Supporting Documentation

- Child Protection & Welfare Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
- Trust in Care Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Statement on Positive Aging
- Talent Management Policy
- Flexible Working Arrangements Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Individualised Planning Policy
- Lifelong Learning Policy
- Total Communication Policy
- Total Communication Policy Easy Read Version
- Equal Opportunities Diversity in the Workplace Policy
- Guidelines for Working in Partnership with Families
- Supporting a Culture of Safety, Quality and Kindness HSE Code of Conduct
- Mentoring Toolkit
- Literacy Pre-Assessment Checklist
- Literacy Referral Form
- Supporting People to Work/Have a Career Policy
- KARE Staff Handbook
- Policy on Managing Complaints in KARE
- Policy on Managing Complaints in KARE Easy Read Version

Section 8: Information and Data Management

8.1   Context

Reliable data is crucial for the effective management of both staff and service users within the organisation. As stated previously KARE learners are staff and service users and we gather information that may be considered sensitive such as:

- Personal Information i.e. Names, Dates of Birth and PPS Numbers
- Contact Information i.e. Addresses, Telephone Numbers, Personal Email Addresses
- Next of Kin

There are very good reasons for gathering this information for example payroll, revenue, personnel files and HSE reporting.

8.2   Information and Data Management Systems

All systems used to manage learner information in KARE are GDPR compliant. There are a number of systems to manage information and these are:

- **Time Management System** (TMS)**,** which is currently where we hold all information relating to a staff member's employment i.e. personal and contact details, contract details, pay details, bank details, occupational health details, line management, work rota and clock card, leave entitlements, performance management records and training details. It is a one stop shop in relation to employee details and there are a number of settings in relation to access rights. These include the lowest level of access i.e. employee access, where staff have access to their own information stored on the system and the highest level of access i.e. super-user, which is given to staff in specific positions for example HR, Adult Supports and Training Administration.

- **Client Identification Database** (CID), which is the system used to manage service user information in the organisation. CID hosts relevant information in relation to service users including personal and contact details, family details, individual support plans, and communication plans.

8.3   Training & Education Information and Data Management Systems

- **Learner Engagement Activity Platform** (LEAP), which is KARE's Learner Management System. This is a comprehensive system to manage information relating to training and education for learners in KARE. This system will gather the minimum required information to manage learner information effectively. Learners are enrolled onto programmes in LEAP and have access to all required information in order to successfully navigate their programme of learning. There are a number of access levels to LEAP as follows:
    - o Site Administrators, who have full administration access
    - o Teachers, who have access to learner information associated with the programmes that they teach and assess on
    - o Learner, who have access to the available information of the programme they are enrolled on and their own information

- **QBS,** which is the system provided by QQI to manage their certification process. We use this system to upload learner information for the purpose of submitting learners for QQI certification. The key information provided to this system includes personal information i.e. names, dates of birth and PPS numbers. We also upload learner results and this holds specific information in relation to the awards that learners have achieved.

8.4   Policy on Information and Data Management

Background to this Policy

This policy has been developed to replace what were two separate policies on Record Management and Data Protection. The policy has been developed in line with best practice, and relevant legislation and regulation including:

- Freedom of Information Acts 1997, 2003 and 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019

All KARE policies which include the management of information are relevant to this policy. Policies of particular relevance are:

- Use of Information Technology & Communications Technology

- Use of CCTV and Monitors
- Staff Handbook
- Individualised Planning Policy

Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that KARE keep accurate records of all its activities and decisions and that they are created, managed, stored and disposed of in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all KARE staff, CE and Traineeship participants, volunteers, students on placement and those working on behalf of KARE including the Board of Directors.

This is an overarching policy in relation to all information created, received and maintained in order to carry out the business of KARE.

It applies to records of all formats including:

- Paper based records
- Audio-visual records
- Electronic records i.e. records which are generated electronically and stored by means of technology

Note: Data Protection Legislation states that consent cannot be sought from a child under the 'age of consent' which is 16 years; in such cases KARE will obtain consent from a person holding "parental responsibility" for the child.

Policy Statements for Records Management of all types of Information

General Statements

- KARE will ensure that records are kept in a manner which enables:
  - Easy appropriate access to specific information in a timely manner
  - KARE to perform its functions successfully, efficiently and in a legal and accountable manner
  - Continuity of service in the event of a disaster
  - Protection of the rights of all stakeholders including employees, people who use the service, Board members etc.
- Staff will ensure that all records are managed in accordance with this policy.

- Staff will treat all records as important property of the organisation.
- Records will be kept as long as is required for KARE business and in line with current legislation and regulation.
- 3rd parties contracted to provide a service to KARE will have a Data Processor/Joint Controller Agreement which clearly states how any records they have access to as part of the contract will be managed and who has ultimate ownership of them.
- A Data Sharing Agreement will be established between KARE and public bodies/other service providers with whom it shares personal information for the purposes of carrying out its business. The Agreement will outline what data is being shared and how it will be used.
- Line Managers will ensure that their staff are trained in the creation and management of records as appropriate to their role.
- All Record Management Systems will be developed and maintained in line with current best practice.
- Key Activity Owners will ensure that record management systems are in place as appropriate to support the proper management of associated information.

Creation and Capture of Records

- Staff will create full and accurate records in accordance with agreed processes and procedures and in line with best practice.
- Staff will ensure they use agreed formats for recording particular types of information including templates and reporting forms as relevant.
- Staff should never alter a record so that the original record is no longer visible e.g. by erasing, deleting, removing, nor should they add content to the record later. Where a correction is required to a record, this should be done in a transparent way and the correction should be dated and signed.

Maintenance and Storage of Records

- Staff will maintain and store records in accordance with agreed processes and procedures.
- Staff will ensure that they move records from any temporary storage arrangement such as temporary files etc. into the relevant record management system at the earliest possible opportunity.

- Non-electronic records will be kept in suitable storage conditions that ensure they are protected from damage.
- Line Managers will ensure electronic records are stored appropriately on KARE's systems.

Security of, and Access to, Records

- KARE will ensure that there are appropriate security/permission levels in place for all records and access to these records is based on a need for such information.
- Staff will not disclose information or provide access to records to anyone who is not authorised to have such access.
- Freedom of Information and Data access requests will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Retention and Disposal of Records

- KARE will ensure that there are clear retention periods and methods of disposal for all record types in line with relevant regulation and legislation. A document of retention schedules will be managed by the Archive Administrator and held on KARE connect.
- Line Managers will ensure all records in their area are retained and disposed of in line with KARE's policy.

Policy Statements for Data Protection for Personal Information

(GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation)

Fair, lawful and transparent processing of personal information

(GDPR Principle 1) and Purpose limitation (GDPR Principle 2)

- KARE need to process (e.g. capture, maintain, use, delete etc.) personal information about people to carry out its work. KARE will do its best to make sure people understand why we are doing this and how the information will be used.
- If KARE needs to process an individual's personal information for any reason other than to carry out its work, KARE will get the permission of that individual or in the case of a child their representative. When the individual does not want this, their wishes will be recorded and respected.
- When a person has difficulty understanding or giving permission they will be supported to make their decision.
- KARE will only keep personal information for as long as necessary.
- Where KARE keeps personal information on an individual, the individual has a right to:

I. Know from where KARE got the information about them

II. Know why KARE keeps information about them

III. Know to whom KARE gives information about them

IV. Know how KARE uses information about them to make decisions

V. A copy of the information KARE keeps about them

- A person can ask to see the information KARE keeps about them by contacting the relevant manager.

- In a few cases, it may not be possible to give a person the information they ask for because KARE must follow the rules laid out in the current Data Protection legislation. (see www.dataprotection.ie)

- KARE will ensure that any personal information will only be processed for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes.

Ensuring personal information is adequate, relevant and not excessive

(GDPR Principle 3)

- As part of the standard Process Review, Process Owners in KARE will review the personal information gathered by that Process and make sure it is only what is needed for that process.

- If a staff member thinks something should be changed about how personal information is processed, they should inform their Line Manager, who will in turn ask the Process Owner to review this practice.

Keeping personal information accurate, complete and up-to-date

(GDPR Principle 4)

- Line Managers will make sure personal information held in their area is kept accurate and up-to-date.

- KARE will ensure that periodic reviews/audits are carried out to ensure that personal information held is accurate and up-to-date.

- Any individual has a right to have any inaccurate information about them corrected or erased. To do this the individual should contact the relevant manager, asking for the inaccurate information to be corrected or deleted. They should give reasons and be able to prove that the information is wrong.

Retention and Disposal of personal information

(GDPR Principle 5)

- KARE will maintain Record Retention schedules which set out how long personal information should be kept and how KARE will dispose of it.

- Records will be destroyed in a way that is irreversible and ensures there is no reasonable risk that the information may be retrieved, e.g. shred paper records, delete computer-based records from the recycle bin, certified destruction of computer hard drives from old equipment.

Keeping personal information confidential, safe and secure

(GDPR Principle 6)

- KARE will keep personal information safe and secure by:
  - Securely locking non-electronic personal information away when not in use.
  - Storing electronic information on KARE's servers, secure cloud systems, password protected PCs or encrypted laptops.
  - Not putting any personal information on memory sticks, even temporarily.
  - Using passwords/PINs on computers and smart phones
  - Immediately downloading any photos or videos onto password protected computers and deleting them from phones or camera/camcorder
  - Following KARE's guidelines when using email, fax or when talking about people on the phone or in person

- Staff will have restricted access to information based on their role. Students on placement in KARE may be given or have access to personal information, the level of access will be based on their placement objectives and will be approved by the Line Manager.

- Companies contracted by KARE to process personal information will have a Data Processing Agreement in their contract governing the processing of personal information and detailing their responsibilities.

- When staff share personal information with relevant people in KARE, they will only tell them the information they need to know, at the time they need to know it and nothing more.

- Staff will only share an individual's personal information with someone outside of KARE with permission from that individual. However, staff may need to share personal information without permission from the individual in certain circumstances such as:
    - If they are in immediate danger
    - Medical emergency
    - Law or court order
    - Concern of abuse or neglect
- A staff member will talk to their Line Manager if they are unsure about using or sharing personal information.

Ensuring Accountability for Data Protection

(GDPR Principle 7)

- KARE will have a named person to act as Data Protection Officer, see Appendix 1 of The Data Protection Records Management Policy (available in Section 8 Supporting Documents)
- KARE will keep relevant logs and assessments in line with the requirements of GDPR such as Processing Logs and Data Protection Impact Assessments.
- KARE will provide training for staff to help them understand how best to manage and protect personal information.
- Staff will inform their Line Manager as soon as possible after they become aware that personal information has been lost, stolen or shared with somebody not entitled to it. They will also report the incident on the Data Breach Report
- The Data Protection Officer will review Data Breaches in consultation with relevant others and decide on the actions required in line with GDPR requirements.
- Line Managers will ensure an individual whose personal information has been lost, stolen or shared with somebody not entitled to it, is informed of the breach, in line with the principles of Open Disclosure. See Appendix 2 of The Data Protection Records Management Policy (available in Section 8 Supporting Documents)

All information required to effectively manage the QQI training and education activities within KARE will be managed in line with KARE's Data Protection Records Management Policy (available in Section 8 Supporting Documents). In terms of the retention and disposal of records The Training Department will ensure that all learner information, learner work submitted for assessment and records pertaining to assessment and certification will be held

securely and in line with the retention guidelines of KARE. The Training Department will ensure that learner work submitted for assessment will be disposed of within 6 months of certification.

8.5   Supporting Documentation

- Data Protection Records Management Policy

- Open Disclosure Statement

Section 9: Public Information and Communication

9.1   Context

KARE's main objective as an organisation is to provide services to people with intellectual disability and as such we recognise that effective and appropriate communication is fundamental in achieving our strategic priorities. Open and effective communication is also important in achieving transparency as an organisation funded through the HSE and also as a sponsor of Community Employment and a Traineeship, which are funded by the DSP and KWETB respectively. The main public information and communication channel is the KARE website, www.kare.ie. Our website hosts our annual reports, strategic plans, policies and information on governance.

Education and training in KARE is not commercially driven and we are not in the business of recruiting learners from outside of the organisation. Learners in KARE are internal to the organisation i.e. staff and service users, therefore information and communication on QQI validated programmes of learning is underpinned by the Internal Communication Policy and is managed through internal communication systems for example KARE Connect, our intranet, CID, our client information system and through email and other appropriate communication tools.

9.2   Policy on Public Information and Communication

Background

KARE is committed to promoting a culture of open communication, involvement and information sharing. We strive to ensure that all information and communication provided in relation to KARE's QQI training and education activities is accurate and reliable and this policy sets out the organisation's approach to internal and external communication of same, the target audience and channels used for providing information and communication.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that KARE provides information and communication that is clear, effective, accurate and accessible, thereby reducing opportunities for misinformation and lack of clarity.

Scope

This policy covers all information relating to QQI validated training and education programmes provided by KARE

Roles and Responsibilities

There are a number of departments involved in ensuring the provision of clear and transparent communication and information as follows:

- The Information Communication Technology Department, who manage information on the KARE website and KARE Connect
- The Training and Education Committee, who approve specific information and communication in relation to QQI training and education activities within the organisation
- The Training Department, which includes community employment, who manage direct communication to staff as learners and also LEAP, which is currently in development and will provide us with a learner management system
- The Lifelong Learning Department, who manage communication and information to service users as learners

Public Information

The KARE website is the main public communication forum and there is a dedicated page that provides information on training and work experience opportunities within the organisation. This information focuses on how to access our Community Employment programmes and our Traineeship programme. It also provides information on the training associated with those programmes i.e. the QQI Level 5 Major Awards that are available to learners recruited onto these programmes.

On an annual basis the KARE Community Employment Supervisors attend a jobs fair, organised by the DSP. This jobs fair is an opportunity to connect face to face with people who are interested in engaging with training and education and work experience within the social care and childcare sectors. This is a valuable opportunity to provide specific information on the training opportunities available and to explain how the process works. Printed materials are disseminated and these provide further information and contact details for follow up questions which may arise.

KARE are invited to attend career days in local second level schools to provide information on education and training opportunities offered within KARE. The target audience for this is individuals with intellectual disability who have completed their second level education and who now want to transfer to adult services in their local area. This supports individuals to

make informed choices about their future and also offers opportunities for them to continue their education and achieve further accreditation.

Learner Information

KARE works to ensure that the information provided to learners within the organisation is clear, accurate and easily accessible to all learners, regardless of the level of learning. We achieve this using the following approaches:

- Lifelong Learning organise and run open days for services users within the organisation, who are currently involved in education or who are interested in returning to education. These days are also open to new entrants into the organisation. The open days provide a forum for:
    - Identifying the programmes of learning available to service users as learners, which is important for both service users and their support staff
    - Opportunities for learners to get some educational guidance and advice on what learning is available to them
    - Distribution of programme prospectus and other specific programme information
    - Open and frank discussion on what is involved when a person enrols onto a QQI programme of learning
    - Opportunities to meet with tutors, assessors and also to hear of previous learners' experiences.

- KARE produce a QQI prospectus of learning for each level of learning within the organisation. The Level 5 prospectus is hosted on our intranet, KARE Connect, and staff as learners have access to this through their KARE staff account. This prospectus provides key information on QQI validated programmes of learning including:
    - An overview of QQI and the National Framework of Qualifications
    - Roles and responsibilities in relation to QQI training and education within the organisation
    - Information on QQI awards i.e. major and minor awards, the associated credit values and grading
    - Specific programme information i.e. mandatory and elective modules and the associated learning outcomes and assessments
    - Course delivery and mentoring, access, transfer and progression
    - The assessment process and submission for certification

- o Contact details for further information i.e. KARE Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Departments
- We also produce individual Programme Learner Handbooks at all levels of learning and these provide clear and accessible information on the programmes on offer including:
  - o Tutor Contact Details
  - o QQI Learner Contract
  - o Major and Component Award Specifications
  - o Access, Transfer and Progression options associated with the programme
  - o Special Course Requirements, if Applicable
  - o Course Schedule and Location
  - o Mentoring
  - o Assessment and Reasonable Accommodation
  - o Assessment Regulations and Penalties for Violation of Regulations
  - o Submission of Assessments
  - o Deadlines, Late Submissions, Incomplete Assessment, Deferrals and Repeats Process
  - o Plagiarism
  - o Results & Issue of Same
  - o Appeals Process
  - o QQI Assessment Glossary of Terms
  - o Assessment Submission Cover/Declaration Sheet

- Learners in KARE will have access to LEAP, the learning management system, which will host information and resources for specific training programmes. This is in its infancy, however the plan is that it will be a one-stop shop for information in relation to education and training in the organisation i.e. training plans, scheduling, training resources, links to online delivery, attendance, evaluation and reporting.

Protection for Learners

QQI training and education in KARE is not commercially driven and we do not charge fees to learners as they are internal to the organisation i.e. staff and service users. Therefore we are not compelled to make arrangements in relation to the protection of enrolled learners.

9.3 Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

KARE will publish the following documentation on LEAP, our internal teaching and learning platform and on our KARE public website, www.kare.ie:

- Quality Assurance Policy Documents
- QA Manual
- Self-Evaluation Reports
- Programme Evaluation Reports
- Quality Improvement Plans
- Other documents as relevant to QQI training and education activities within the organisation.

9.3   Supporting Documentation

- Internal Communication Policy
- Sample KARE Prospectus
- Sample Learner Handbook
- KARE CE Programme Information
- KARE Traineeship Information

Section 10: Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

10.1 Context

KARE's Mission is that we work in partnership to support people with disabilities and their families to create a present and future that fulfils their personal potential, therefore we recognise that we need to build relationships that lead to collaboration and information sharing. In supporting people with intellectual disability and promoting their inclusion in their communities and the wider society KARE collaborate with their peers and with key stakeholders. KARE are a member of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers, which are the national umbrella organisation for voluntary/non statutory agencies providing direct service provision to people with intellectual disability. There are sixty members who have a common goal to provide best practice in service provision. This provides a forum for information sharing and collaboration and KARE currently sit on 2 sub-committees within the federation. This approach is one which involves the overall organisation and as such includes training and education.

10.2 Policy on Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

Background to the Policy

This policy has been developed to demonstrate how KARE work with other parties in their training and education activities and also how they manage their collaborative arrangements in relation to QQI validated training and education. For the purposes of this policy a collaborative arrangement is defined as linking with another organisation for the purposes of supporting learners to have access to quality programmes of learning both within or external to the organisation.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency with regard to collaboration and arrangements that may be put in place in order to ensure all parties involved in education and training understand the scope of their involvement, their role and responsibilities.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all parties involved in education and training including the development, delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of QQI validated programmes of learning

Peer Relationships with the Broader Education and Training Community

KARE have substantial links with the broader education and training community in terms of promoting and supporting inclusion in education. KARE currently link with the following:

Gaisce

Gaisce is a self-development programme for young people up to 25 years of age. It is under the patronage of the President of Ireland. Its main aim is to have a programme which fits the needs of every young person who wishes to participate. There are 3 award levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold. KARE approached Gaisce as they felt that this would be an appropriate programme for service users to engage in as it fits with the ethos of the organisation and also provides national recognition to service users. The Gaisce programme fits very well with the work of the Lifelong Learning Department and they support service users to access, progress and achieve certification through this programme.

Kildare & Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB)

One of KARE's key values is community inclusion i.e. where people with intellectual disability are supported to participate and contribute to their local community. KWETB are seen as a substantial provider of training and education in the KARE catchment area and we have a number of service users who are being supported to access courses run by KWETB in their local communities. KARE have also forged links with KWETB through Project Search and they are the providers of accredited training for this programme. This relationship has developed over the years and a number of learners have achieved success and have gone on to transfer their learning into work situations. KARE in conjunction with KWETB support staff and service users who are providing tuition on community education programmes run by KWETB in relation to creative expressions and wellbeing. This is in its infancy, however the expectation is that it will be further developed and provide more opportunities for staff and service users in KARE to get involved.

Marie Keating Foundation

KARE believe strongly in education for all and access to information in a way that suits the individual's learning style. The Marie Keating Foundation came to KARE in 2005 and delivered a Women's Health Programme to service users. It became evident that this programme was not accessible to the service users in terms of delivery and content. As a

result KARE and The Marie Keating Foundation worked together to develop an accessible programme to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. The overall outcome of this programme not only met the needs of our service users but of other marginalised groups within the community. This programme continues to be delivered in KARE and it supports women to look after their overall health and wellbeing.

The Healthy Living Centre

KARE have collaborated with the Healthy Living Centre in order to support learners to complete the Healthy Food Made Easy Programme. This is a programme funded by the Department of Health and the course content is based on the most up to date healthy eating guidelines from the Department. The course covers basic nutrition and cookery that helps people to change to a healthy diet, plan meals on a budget and make easy to cook meals. As part of the programme a tutor is provided and KARE service users have benefitted greatly from this collaboration. We have also had further collaboration in running this programme with learners from the Newbridge Resource Centre and the Newbridge Youth Development and Training Centre.

The Creative Well

This project is supported by Kildare County Council Arts Service, HSE Kildare West Wicklow Mental Health Services, HSE Health Promotion, Kildare County Mental Health Association and Kildare County Library Service. KARE recognise that we have a duty of care in terms of supporting all people within the organisation with their health and wellbeing and have collaborated with the Creative Well to support individuals to express themselves in a creative way. KARE also have a Level 2 Programme in Creative Expressions and this collaboration has supported learners who are enrolled on this programme to develop competencies that support their creative expression journey.

An Garda Siochana

As part of the Level 2 Programme Towards Independent Living, KARE have an arrangement where members of the Naas and Newbridge Community Guard Division support the delivery of the personal safety module. This is a very beneficial arrangement as learners engage at a high level with this programme and have the opportunity to recognise the role of the Gardai in the community and also to build positive relationships with the Guards in their local community.

Maynooth University

As part of the Service Learning Partnership Group in conjunction with Maynooth University, KARE were involved in developing an initiative which would provide access to higher education for persons with an intellectual disability. The outcome of this was the Inclusive Learning Initiative Programme. This programme aimed to give learners with intellectual disability the opportunity to learn, explore and participate in third level education. It was established to ensure that learners would be formally recognised for their learning using the existing accreditation structures in the university. This programme ran for approximately eight years and KARE had a number of service users who graduated from the programme. This programme is no longer in operation, however KARE continue to support learners in further, community and higher education on their enrolled programmes.

KARE have also been involved in the Unlocking Freedom Project with Maynooth University and this project led to a continuous professional development programme for staff working with adults with diverse learning abilities in adult, further and community education. This was a European Research Project led by the Disability Federation of Ireland. KARE staff and service users were part of the Irish Advisory Committee who worked on putting materials and resources together for the CPD programme.

External Partnerships and Second Providers

KARE do not engage any external parties to act as second providers on behalf of the organisation, neither do we engage in collaborative provision of QQI validated programmes. We are first providers in our own right for the delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of our QQI validated programmes of learning.

KARE sponsor a Traineeship in Intellectual Disability Support in partnership with KWETB. As sponsor of this programme we act as second providers for KWETB in the delivery of the training associated with the programme. KWETB have full responsibility for the quality assurance of the QQI validated training associated with this programme and are responsible for submitting learners' details and results through QBS. KARE are responsible for the day to day oversight and management of the programme and as such learners come under the remit of our quality assurance in terms of teaching and learning, assessment, learner support and monitoring and review. This arrangement is underpinned by a service level

agreement, which clearly outlines the respective roles of KWETB as the first provider and KARE as the second provider.

KARE do not benefit financially from sponsoring this programme, however KWETB provide funding for a programme coordinator and assistant coordinator to manage the programme. They also provide a resource budget to meet the costs generated by the programme. Learners on the programme are provided with the opportunity to achieve a Level 5 Major Award in Intellectual Disability Practice and to engage in substantial work placements in KARE locations. They are supported to transfer their learning into the workplace through the mentoring process as outlined in Section 7 Supports for Learners. The key driver for KARE in sponsoring the programme is to provide training and education based on current best practice in order to support the development of a qualified workforce to enhance service provision to people with intellectual disabilities. This has resulted in a high progression rate from the programme and many of the learners are recruited into KARE and other organisations providing services within the social care sector.

KARE also sponsor 2 Community Employment Programmes and we act as first providers in relation to the provision of QQI validated training opportunities to the programme participants. Each programme is managed by CE Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors. The supervisors and participants are employed by KARE, who are grant aided by the Department of Social Protection to do so. Participants are expected to engage with training and education while on the programme and this is one of the key performance indicators in terms of programme outcomes. CE participants have an employment contract with KARE and are learners in their own right and as such are supported to identify career goals and engage with training and education that will help them to achieve their goals. They are also supported and mentored to transfer their learning into the workplace. Community Employment is a valued programme in KARE and as learners can engage with these programmes for up to three years it serves as a recruitment pool for the organisation, with a high percentage of participants progressing into fulltime employment with KARE.

Expert Panellists and Authenticators

KARE recognise the need to engage with external persons for specific purposes in relation to its QQI validated education and training activities. Namely these are engaging external representation for the Training and Education Committee, external evaluators for the

purpose of self-evaluation of programmes of learning and also engaging with External Authenticators as part of the Assessment of Learners process.

KARE commit to following an agreed criteria in relation to engaging external persons to sit as part of the Training and Education Committee and also to providing them with the terms of reference of the associated committee. An external representative on the Training and Education Committee will:

- Be independent of the organisation
- Declare actual or perceived conflict of interest
- Have a background in training and education
- Have significant experience of working with committees

External evaluators will be appointed by the Training and Education Committee and will be selected and engaged based on their qualifications and expertise in the area of programme evaluation.

External Authenticators will be appointed by the Training and Education Committee and will be selected and engaged using the process and criteria identified in Section 6: Assessment of Learners and specifically 6.2 Policy on the Assessment of Learners.

10.3 Supporting Documentation

- KARE/KWETB Service Level Agreement
- CE Contracts
- KARE Charter for Gaisce
- Unlocking Freedom
    - https://illicoproject.com/
    - https://illicoproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/unlocking-freedom-cpd-programme-maynooth-university.pdf
- Inclusive Learning Initiative
    - https://epale.ec.europa.eu/bg/node/35634
    - http://www.fedvol.ie/_fileupload/Seminars/Indiv%20Funding%20and%20Inclusive%20Ed%20event/Saranne%20NFVB%20Joint%20PPT%20September%202015.pdf
    - https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/adult-and-community-education/news/inclusive-learning-initiative-ili-representing-ireland-investt-project-2015
    - http://www.kare.ie/lifelong.php
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs7whhQsIVQ

Section 11: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

11.1 Context

KARE is committed to continuous improvement in all its activities in order to identify gaps in best practice that need to be improved on. Using the EFQM framework the organisation regularly reviews it activities, through team plans, regular internal audits and internal monitoring visits in our community houses. This is where KARE outline and score the key performance indicators that are associated with individual teams. This results in clearly defined improvement action plans. Regular internal audits are carried out to ensure the organisation is meeting their agreed objectives. This is supported by external audits by HIQA in terms of our residential services and audits by external companies on our administrative policies, procedures and practices.

In relation to its QQI Quality Assurance it is committed to regular evaluation, monitoring and review of its programmes and services. It is through the continuous process of planning, doing and reviewing that self-evaluation of programmes will be coordinated by the Training and Education Committee to ensure that they will involve an External Evaluator and they will be informed by input from relevant stakeholders, including learners. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of training programmes and on the effectiveness of the quality assurance system that supports them.

11.2 Policy on the Self Evaluation, Monitoring and Review of QQI Programmes

Background

KARE recognise that they are ultimately responsible for the quality of its training and education provision; the implementation and evaluation of these QA procedures; and on-going enhancement. Conducting self-evaluation, monitoring and review activities provide us with the opportunity for reflecting on our practice and identifying actions that will lead to the improvement of quality. Therefore, we will ensure that adequate resources are allocated to self-evaluation, monitoring and review of QQI validated programmes of learning and the associated activities that support their development, delivery, assessment and review.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate how KARE monitors and reviews its QQI validated programmes of learning to ensure that they are in line with national standards and that they meet the needs of both the organisation and its learners and to report on same.

Scope of the Policy

This policy covers all QQI validated programmes of learning leading to national awards offered by KARE

Purpose of Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

In conducting self-evaluation, monitoring and review the main outcomes are to ensure that:

- The quality and standards of QQI validated programmes of learning are being maintained, reflecting national standards and the associated levels of the National Framework of Qualifications
- A culture of quality in relation to training and education activities is established and maintained within the organisation, which is underpinned by quality assured policies and procedures that are regularly monitored and reviewed
- QQI validated programmes of learning remain current, fit for purpose and are underpinned by theory and best practice within the relevant sector in order to ensure that learners needs and experiences are met effectively
- QQI validated programmes of learning are delivered to the highest teaching and learning quality standards
- Any issues arising in relation to the quality of QQI programme development, delivery and assessment are identified and addressed on a timely basis

Assignment of Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the management of self-evaluation, monitoring and review of QQI validated programmes of learning sits with the Training and Education Committee. It is their responsibility for ensuring that adequate resources, expertise and time are given to the evaluation process. There are others involved to support the effective coordination and conducting of self-evaluation, monitoring and review as follows:

- Training Department
- Lifelong Learning Department
- Tutors and/or Assessors
- Learners
- Internal Verifiers
- External Authenticators
- External Evaluators

Internal Self-Monitoring

Programme monitoring and review is coordinated by both the Training and Lifelong Learning Departments. It is conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes and specific programme modules. This is carried out using the following approaches:

- Training Department Risk Register, which outlines the associated risks specific to the training department and to the development, delivery, assessment and monitoring of QQI Validated Programmes of Learning. Audits take place annually or as required and this is conducted in line with the KARE's Quality, Risk and Safety Department

- Learner review and evaluation is carried out using reaction evaluations, which are taken at the end of each programme module and are submitted to the Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department. This provides learners with the opportunity to rate their overall satisfaction level with the training delivery and content

- Learner Post Learning Review and Evaluation, which provides learners with the opportunity to provide feedback on training having had time to reflect further on their experience of training and also on what they are doing differently as a result of the training i.e. what have they learned and how are they using it in practice

- Programme Module Team Review and Evaluation, which is planned and scheduled to ensure that it takes place annually. This provides a clear opportunity for those involved in the development, delivery, assessment and review of specific programme modules to give their feedback on what is working well and more importantly what needs to be improved

- Internal monitoring and review is a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the Training and Education Committee and it is through this forum that action planning and implementation is reviewed and agreed

- Information gathered through the internal verification and external authentication process and the subsequent reports generated by these processes are reviewed and feedback is taken on board as part of internal monitoring

Self-Evaluation, Improvement and Enhancement

Monitoring and evaluation is crucial to the success of programmes of learning, the enhancement of the learner experience and is essential to the continued quality of teaching and learning activities in KARE. While internal self-monitoring is an ongoing process within

the organisation and focuses on individual programme modules, the reports developed through this process provide information for the full self-evaluation of programmes and associated services. Self-evaluation is planned and conducted in order to evaluate a QQI validated programme of learning in its entirety.

This includes evaluation of:

- Associated programme modules
- Programmed development, delivery and review
- Associated teaching and learning materials and resources
- The teaching and learning environment
- Assessment strategies and their effectiveness
- Learner attainment and progression in terms of the transfer of learning
- Supports for learners
- Learner experiences of teaching and learning whilst on the programme
- Staff recruitment, selection and development
- Internal stakeholder feedback i.e. senior management and line managers
- External stakeholder feedback, where relevant

Frequency of Self-Evaluation

KARE will commit to:

- Ensuring that a QQI validated programme of learning is evaluated every 3 years
- Producing an annual self-evaluation plan and schedule, which will be circulated to all stakeholders

Internal Monitoring & Self-Evaluation Timelines		
Event	**Review Timeline**	**Associated Inputs/Outputs**
Training Department Risk Register	Annually or more frequently as required	Updated Risk Register to include appropriate controls & Audit Report
Internal Programme Monitoring & Review	Annually	Learner & Programme Team review and evaluation, internal verification and external authentication reports
Self-Evaluation of Programmes	Every 3 years or more frequently if required	Programme Evaluation Report & Programme Improvement Plan

Methodology

Self-Evaluation of programmes will follow a consistent methodology as follows:

1. An annual self-evaluation plan will be developed and agreed through the Training and Education Committee, this plan will be published on KARE Connect

2. The Training Department and/or Lifelong Learning Department will convene a self-evaluation team, which will be representative of a range of stakeholders including programme tutors, assessors, learners and an external evaluator

3. An action plan will be developed and agreed with the self-evaluation team and responsibilities will be allocated

4. Programme evaluation feedback will be generated using the following approaches:

   a) Capturing results from internal self-monitoring in relation to learner evaluations, programme module team evaluations and other relevant stakeholder feedback

   b) Capturing appropriate feedback from internal verification and external authentication reports

   c) Organising and facilitating learner focus groups, where learners are invited to provide feedback on specific programme activities

   d) Organising and facilitating line manager focus groups, where managers are invited to provide feedback on specific programme activities and also the effectiveness of the transfer of learning on improving service provision (for staff as learners)

   e) Organising and facilitating service user support staff focus groups, in order to capture the effectiveness of the learning programme on meeting the needs of service users as learners

   f) Discussion with the wider stakeholder group in order to measure the success of programmes in meeting their goals e.g. the Department of Social Protection

5. Using the Self-Evaluation Checklist, all associated feedback to be collated, organised, prioritised and graded by the self-evaluation team

6. Using the organisation templates the team will develop the Programme Self-Evaluation Report and the Programme Improvement Plan, which should include:

   a) Overall programme findings under the specific self-evaluation headings

   b) Programme strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations

   c) Actions agreed, allocation of responsibility and deadlines for implementation

7. Approval of the Programme Self-Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan by the Training and Education Committee

8. Submission of Programme Self-Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan to QQI

9. Publication of Programme Self-Evaluation Report and Programme Improvement Plan on KARE Connect

10. Quarterly review of the Programme Improvement Plan as part of the Training and Education Committee meetings

The External Evaluator

The role of the external evaluator in relation to the self-evaluation of programmes of learning is to bring independent expertise to the self-evaluation process and to ensure that KARE's self-evaluation process is fit for purpose and produces the expected outcomes. The external evaluator will:

- Act as an independent auditor of the evaluation process
- Make recommendations on the self-evaluation methodology in line with national best practice
- Support KARE to effectively implement the self-evaluation process and advise the organisation of best practice that they have observed
- Verify and evaluate the findings of the self-evaluation process
- Support the development of the Programme Self-Evaluation Report and the Programme Improvement Plan

Selection of External Evaluator

External Evaluators recruited by KARE to be involved in the self-evaluation process will have:

- o Education, training or industry experience in the broad subject areas of the programme being evaluated
- o Experience in national and/or international certification systems
- o Experience in one or more of the following:
    1) Programme design
    2) Programme delivery
    3) Programme evaluation
    4) Cross moderation of standards

5) External verification of standards

6) Auditing of quality systems

7) Centre accreditation

Diagram 28: Self-Evaluation of QQI Programmes of Learning Process
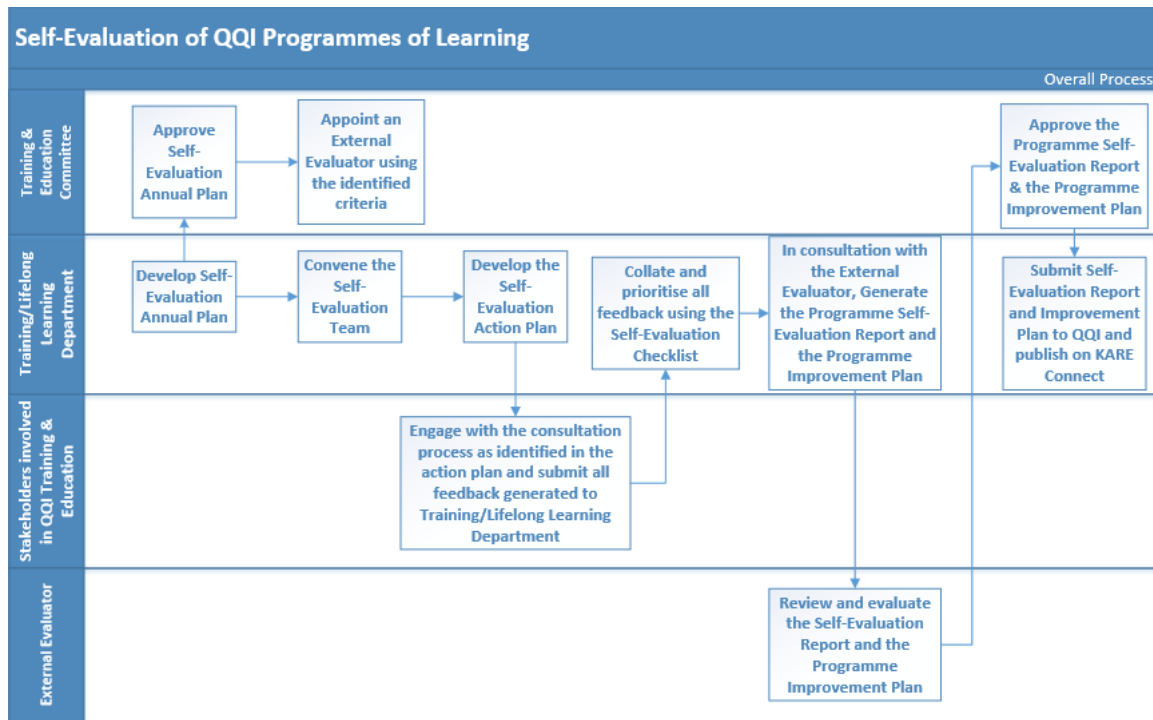
11.3 Provider Owned Quality Assurance Engages with External QA

As stated previously KARE is committed to a programme of ongoing self-evaluation, monitoring and review as part of the quality assurance mechanisms in place, both at an organisation level and for QQI validated training and education activities. This facilitates regular reporting on the activities of the organisation, allows for identification of success and areas for improvement, and provides KARE with assurance of compliance with national standards.

KARE's Quality Department ensures that each department within the organisation has a risk register, which outlines and measures risks specific to each department. Internal risk audits are conducted annually or when required and this supports the organisation to identify risk and develop controls to alleviate risk. This is a key tool to manage quality assurance within

the organisation and ensures that each department is aware of and implements actions in order to ensure the delivery of a quality service.

KARE, as a provider of services to people with intellectual disability are governed by national standards. These standards are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure compliance and best practice. Those involved in monitoring and reviewing KARE are:

- HIQA, who are responsible for the quality and safety of residential services and they are our regulators. They have a judgement framework, which they use to monitor and review KARE's policies and practice. There are 2 key areas which HIQA focus on and these are:
  1. Governance and management, where they seek to ensure that we have the capability to deliver safe and suitable services
  2. Service provision, where they check to ensure that our practices are in line with the identified National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities

- HSE, who are our primary funders monitor and review in a number of key areas including:
  1. The HSE are responsible for monitoring day services and ensuring that KARE are meeting the New Directions Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities
  2. Integrated Management Reporting (IMR) – KARE have quarterly IMR meetings with the HSE, where quality and risk are two key agenda items. KARE present results from key performance indicators of core activities at these meetings

- Like all other organisations KARE are subject to inspections by the Health and Safety Authority in relation to health and safety at work

- EFQM, whose framework underpins quality assurance within the organisation. KARE engage with them every 3 years to monitor and review quality systems, cross organisational quality assurance and the connectedness of the quality of all aspects of our activities

- External Auditors are engaged to review and sign off on the financial results of the organisation on an annual basis and they provide commentary on the quality and accuracy of all related activities

- Department of Social Protection (DSP) monitor KARE in relation to its Community Employment programmes. On an annual basis financial, training and management audits are conducted by the DSP to ensure compliance and each year the books of accounts are audited by an external auditor

KARE keeps up to dates with the laws and regulatory requirements through membership of the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, HSA, IBEC, HIQA and the Service Arrangement process with HSE. We measure compliance through our Governance Checklist, Inspections & Audits by HIQA, HSA, and TUSLA. HIQA inspection reports are brought to the board and actioned. Audited accounts and the Safety Statement are reviewed annually by the board. All polices reviewed regularly and Annual returns are made to Charity Regulatory Authority.

11.4 Supporting Documentation

- KARE Audit Database
- Sample Audit Report
- Sample HIQA Report
- Training Department Risk Register
- Self-Evaluation Checklist
- Sample Programme Self-Evaluation Report
- Sample Programme Improvement Plan
- National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities
- New Directions Interim Standards for New Directions, Services and Supports for Adults with Disabilities