

RPL Practitioner Network (Ireland)

Learning Unlocked -
RPL and the Learner
Experience

*Learners tell their RPL stories
and share insights*

16 May 2025, 2 pm – 3.30 pm



RPL Practitioner Network (Ireland)

- RPL Practitioner Network (Ireland) Steering Group
- RPL in FET Network (ETBI)
- RPL in HE office
- PLAIO publication www.plaio.org
- PLAIO webinar 'Recognizing All Learners- Inclusion and Exclusion in RPL', 11 June 2025, 10 am EST
- eQval dissemination webinar (MTU) 'European Quality Standards in Validation of LOs from Volunteering' 29 May, 10 am
- RPL PN national event (in person) 5 November 2025
- RPL PN LinkedIn page and group, follow us on X, formerly Twitter, and <https://rpl-ireland.ie/>



Agenda

2.00 – 2.10	<i>Introductions and Context</i> Siobhan Magee, Co Convenor RPL Practitioner Network
2.10 – 2.35	<i>Meet the Learners</i> Higher Education, Community and Voluntary Education, Further Education and Training
2.35 – 2.55	<i>Panel Discussion 'Insights from Learners'</i>
2.55 – 3.10	<i>Breakout Rooms</i> Opportunity to discuss the RPL learner experience
3.10 - 3.15	<i>Feedback from Breakout Rooms</i>
3.15 – 3.25	<i>QQI National Update</i>
3.25	<i>Close</i> Karina Curley, Co Convenor RPL Practitioner Network



Meet the Learners- conversations

Higher Education, Cathy Power, DCU with
Karina Curley, RPL PN and DCU

Community and Voluntary Education, Ijeoema
Iraognanchi, Longford Women's Link, with
Ruby Cooney, RPL PN and Aontas

Further Education and Training, Aisling Barron
with Siobhan Murray, RPL PN and Donegal ETB





Aisling Barron

My RPL Journey

Early Life and Career Crossroads

Grew up in
Ballyshannon

Left school at 17,
no Leaving Cert

Tried
hairdressing, but
dropped out

Felt lost at 19,
unsure of
direction

Family, Caring, and New Opportunities

Worked various
jobs before
starting a family

Became a carer
for in-laws for 8
years

Cared for mother-
in-law until her
passing in 2020

Introduction to Football Coaching



STARTED BY TAKING SON TO
FOOTBALL TRAINING IN 2010



BECAME CLUB TREASURER,
THEN STARTED COACHING
UNDER-8S



DEVELOPED A PASSION FOR
COACHING AND COMMUNITY



COMPLETED PDP 1 COACHING
BADGE IN 2017

Embracing the Coaching World

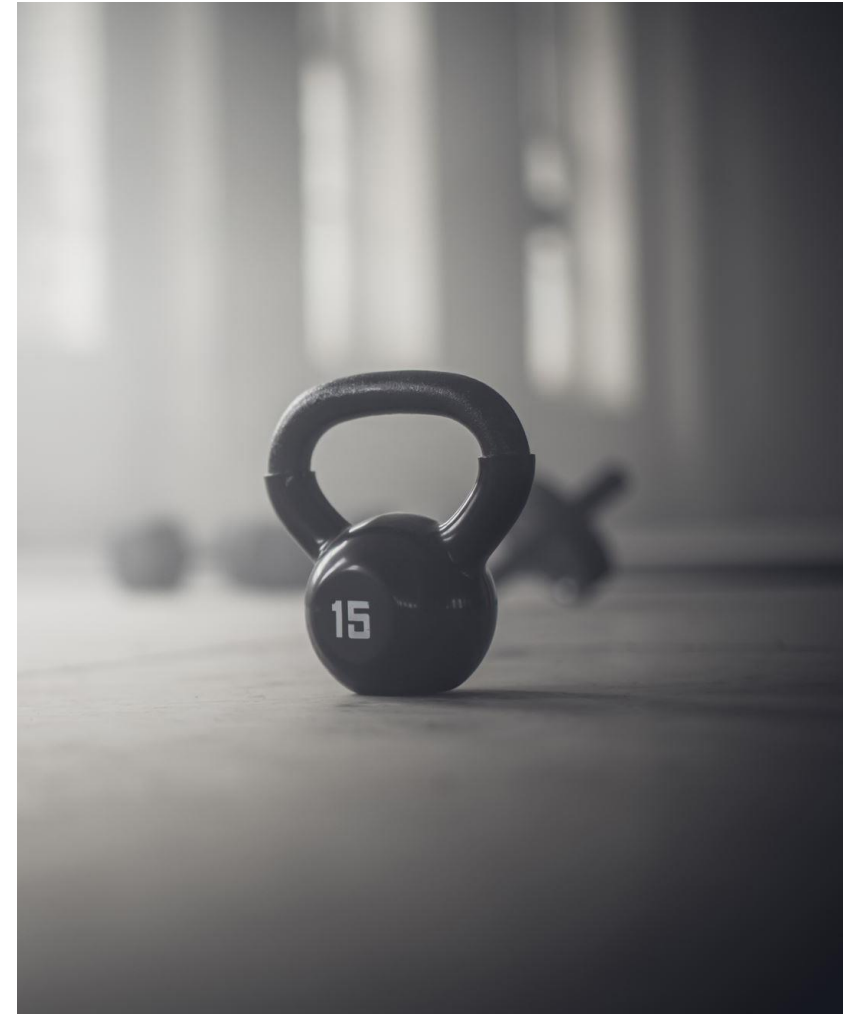
Gained confidence coaching teams, including Finn Harps Academy and Donegal Women's League

Sought guidance from **Denis McDaid** who introduced me to **Maeve Fenton** after family losses

Maeve encouraged further learning and enrolled in ECDL course

My RPL Journey Begins

- Started **NFQ Level 6 QQI Sports, Recreation, and Exercise** programme online.
- Found *Sports Psychology* module challenging but persevered with support.
- **Maeve** encouraged me to connect with **Donegal ETB RPL Office** for remaining modules.
- Application was accepted and began working towards my Major with the support of my Mentor: **Aoife Gallagher**.



The RPL Documentation Process

Aoife provided step-by-step support

Completed modules: *Soccer Coaching, Sports Industry Practice, Communications, Work Practice, Personal and Professional Development*

Achieved **distinctions** in all modules

Awaiting results for final modules: *Safety Management and Exercise and Fitness*

Strong family support throughout

Development through the RPL Process



COMPLETED ADDITIONAL
COACHING BADGES: PDP 2, PDP
3, D-LICENSE, UEFA C-LICENSE



RPL HELPED SHOWCASE
LEARNING AND PROGRESS
SINCE 2017



RPL ASSIGNMENT EVIDENCE
SELECTED FOR INCLUSION IN A
YOUTH COACHING HANDBOOK



DEVELOPED PROFESSIONAL
CONFIDENCE THROUGH
REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Acknowledgements



Thanks to:

Donegal ETB
and the RPL
Office

Maeve Fenton,

Aoife
Gallagher

Family:
Brendan, Ché,
Zak

Paul McCosker
and Denis
McDaid

Insights from Learners Facilitated Panel

Panel Facilitator – Michelle Nugent,
former RPL Learner and current RPL
Mentor, LCETB



Breakout Room Discussion Topics

- *How can we improve the RPL experience for learners and reduce the challenges that they face ?*
- *Key takeaways from today's session.*



QQI update



Policy perspectives

- Clarifying Recognition and RPL/validation- discussion paper notes:
 - Recognition policies are concerned with qualifications, national and 'foreign'
 - RPL or validation is concerned with learning outcomes,- previously unaccredited learning-acquired before requesting validation
 - Both can benefit from credit accumulation and transfer policies and systems, and each require transparency tools- publicly available information- to work
 - Clarity matters for data purposes; data matter to inform policy and infrastructure / service investment
 - Certified or documented RPL outputs are recognised internationally under the LRC and GRC.

QQI update



General

- Significant programme of policy development- grateful for your contributions in consultation
- Consultation closed on Green Paper on ATP; Consultation Report and White Paper - September 2025
- Consultation closed on Green Paper on Qualifications at Levels 5 and 6. Consultation Report and White Paper - June 2025
- Masterclass on 12 June entitled 'Assessment design for a time of artificial intelligence' by Phil Dawson at DCU on 12 June
- QQI Research priorities- RPL- what would you like to see? Interested in your perspectives!

International and Global

- Global Recognition Convention- specific ref to RPL, substantial difference
- Automatic Mutual Recognition- is similar possible for the validation of skills?
- Union of Skills- includes validation of skills, recognition of qualifications, skills portability initiative, comprehensive approach to E/T (Commission Communication)
- Council Recommendation on a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System in HE
- CEDEFOP Interactive Guidelines and 2023 Inventory- check it out, enrich your practice!

Continuing the cross-sectoral RPL conversation

- <https://rpl-ireland.ie/>
- Follow us on X, formerly Twitter, @rpl_network
- LinkedIn RPL PN LinkedIn Page and RPL PN LinkedIn Group
- RPL Practitioner Network national event, 5 November 2025

