

## **Establishing the parameters for WBL – an exploration of issues from a customer’s perspective**

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This paper will explore the issues to provide the readers an informed guide to discuss and negotiate with the accrediting body to achieve a clear and facilitative WBL learning contract

### **Why WBL is top of the learning and training agenda in the health services?**

“Working Together – Learning Together” (DoH, Nov 2001) emphasizes the importance of developing and equipping staff with the skills they need to deliver patient centred care in the NHS

- The government White Papers e.g. NHS Plan, Shifting the Balance of Power, Liberating the Talents
- The Trusts have to meet the service improvement objectives and targets;
- The logistic challenge to managing time off for learning against competing service objectives and targets;
- The need to ensure learning and training contributes to the Trusts’ performance targets, star rating outcomes and organisational demands;
- The trusts to reduce the number of complaints through better educated workforce
- To address the employees’ difficult experiences of making decision between service requirement and attending courses;
- To overcome the shortage of pool of staff to cover the course attendees;
- Interprofessional working
- Fitness for purpose – Professional bodies
- The Committee of General Practice Education Directors: “PDP would use practice based and other novel forms of learning”
- Agenda for Change
- Knowledge and Skills Framework
- The new General Medical Services contract

### **The accrediting body**

- Does it offer WBL and to what level?
- What is their support system for their WBL learners?
- What is the level of their capacity to support and collaborate with the learner’s organisation, through WBL to meet their service improvement objectives and targets?
- Has it the capacity and flexibility to design and provide bespoke partnership that meets the needs of both the organisation and the learner (employee) for a better workforce through a range of qualifications- NVQ, university certificate, diploma, degree, masters and doctorate?
- When a learner is enrolled on WBL skill based specialist programme that is accountable for the learner during the learning process?
- How keen is the body to roll out WBL?

### **Professional bodies current attitudes towards WBL**

- NMC accepts WBL as part of CPD for re-registration but will a WBL skill based specialist programme be acceptable for registration?
- GPs’ PDP is looking to practice-based learning – towards re-validation
- AHP is considering
- Will acquiring new specialist skills meet the bodies’ statutory duty to protect the public safety?
- Can WBL safeguard professional standards, gate keep professional entry and identify if learning has occurred (Barnett: 1994)

- Apparent increase in community nurses struck off – a blip (NMC)? (Community Practitioner: Dec 2003)
- Does learning through WBL meet the criteria to modernise and strengthen professional self-regulation?

### **The curricular content and outcomes**

- How the academic level is decided?
- Are the descriptors available for different academic levels?
- Core learning areas? And core outcomes?
  - \* communication
  - \* personal and professional development
  - \* health safety & security
  - \* service development
  - \* quality, clinical governance
  - \* evidence-based practice
  - \* equality diversity and rights
  - \* partnership working
  - \* job based knowledge and skills.
  - \* legal, ethical issues
- How outcomes are assessed?
- What are being assessed and in what form? – reflective and reflexive skills- how are they developed?
- Can and should the core dimensions of the Knowledge & Skills Frame be achieved through WBL?

### **Learner as a client**

- Is WBL replacing time off for learning?
- How and when the teaching will take place if any?
- What kind of evidence is acceptable?
- Can my learning be in chunks – project based instead of modular base?
- How do I know that I am practising at a particular level?
- Will I be made aware of the criteria for the level I am studying?
- How will I be assessed? Tick boxes or?
- Will specifications for different level of reflection be made available to assist my learning?
- How do I know what I don't know?
- How will I be supported in the workplace?
- Will my WBL learning be reflected in the agenda for change?
- Will KSF recognise the skills acquired through WBL?
- If learning in WBL is modular how my various complex skills are discriminated for assessment purpose?
- In what ways will WBL help me to develop my clinical cognitive behavioural training to be a clinical specialist?
- When reflective is reflexive and how WBL will help me to develop skills to discriminate?
- Can and should my learning at work be pigeonholed into modules for assessment e.g. knowledge, communication skills; interpersonal skills, negotiation skills etc?

### **Employer/organisation as a client**

- why should I subscribe to WBL?
- what is required of the organisation to embed WBL into the staff development strategy?

- will WBL solve the problems of staff development such as protected learning time and European Working Time Directive?
- how safe and competent will my clinical staffs who have undertaken WBL say renal nursing/ Orthopaedic procedures in a GP practice?
- will my staff's learned knowledge and skills be recognised/validated by their professional body to be fit for practice for the specialism?
- in the context of clinical governance how will WBL address both service developments needs and staff professional needs?
- how to foster a close link between clinical governance, WBL and clinical effectiveness?
- is WBL appropriate for all staff groups?
- how can effective partnerships be developed between academic institution and own organisation to introduce WBL?
- How will WBL help to achieve the closer involvement of patients and the wider community in pursuing WBL?
- is there support from academic institution to help a Trust to develop the capacity to implement WBL in the workplace?
- what are the practical ways to implement WBL in GP practices to enable GPs and practice nurses to meet their PDPs to develop their special interest or nurses in specialist nursing areas?
- how the partner accrediting body will support employees to develop their professional/personal development?
- How will WBL develop an organisation into a learning organisation to maximise internal knowledge and skills creation and management?
- How will WBL impact on Agenda for Change and KSF?
- Will WBL be emancipatory for the organisation as well as practice change driven?
- Will WBL encourage/instil evidence-based practice?
- Can statutory and mandatory training be through WBL

## Reference

Community Practitioner: Sept 2003

DoH (2001): Working Together – Learning Together, a Framework for Lifelong Learning for the NHS

DoH (2003): The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework and Development Review Guidance

DoH (1997): The New NHS – Modern and Dependable, CM3807

DoH (1999): Making a Difference

DoH (2000) The NHS Plan – A plan for investment, a plan for reform