



Leading learning and skills

LSC East of England

LLDD needs analysis

Final report

Produced by SHM

September 2007



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Executive summary

In March 2007, the LSC East of England commissioned SHM to undertake research to understand the nature and extent of current and planned provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) within the region. The project was intended to build on the commitments set out in the LSC document *Learning for living and work*,¹ which describes the need for LSCs to root their plans to develop provision for LLDD in the context of a **regional needs analysis**.

SHM's project adopted a key principle of reflecting the **real voices and lived experiences** of those receiving learning (and associated services), as well as those providing, planning or managing it. This meant that alongside quantitative analysis to establish patterns and trends of need in statistical data made available by the LSC, SHM delivered a larger, qualitative, engagement-focused strand of work involving interviews with learners, parents, providers (including teaching staff, support staff, and management staff), and stakeholders/partners from other relevant organisations. Critically, this needs analysis has sought not only to establish gaps in current provision, but also to engage and galvanise stakeholders involved in meeting the needs of LLDD around real opportunities to improve provision across the region.

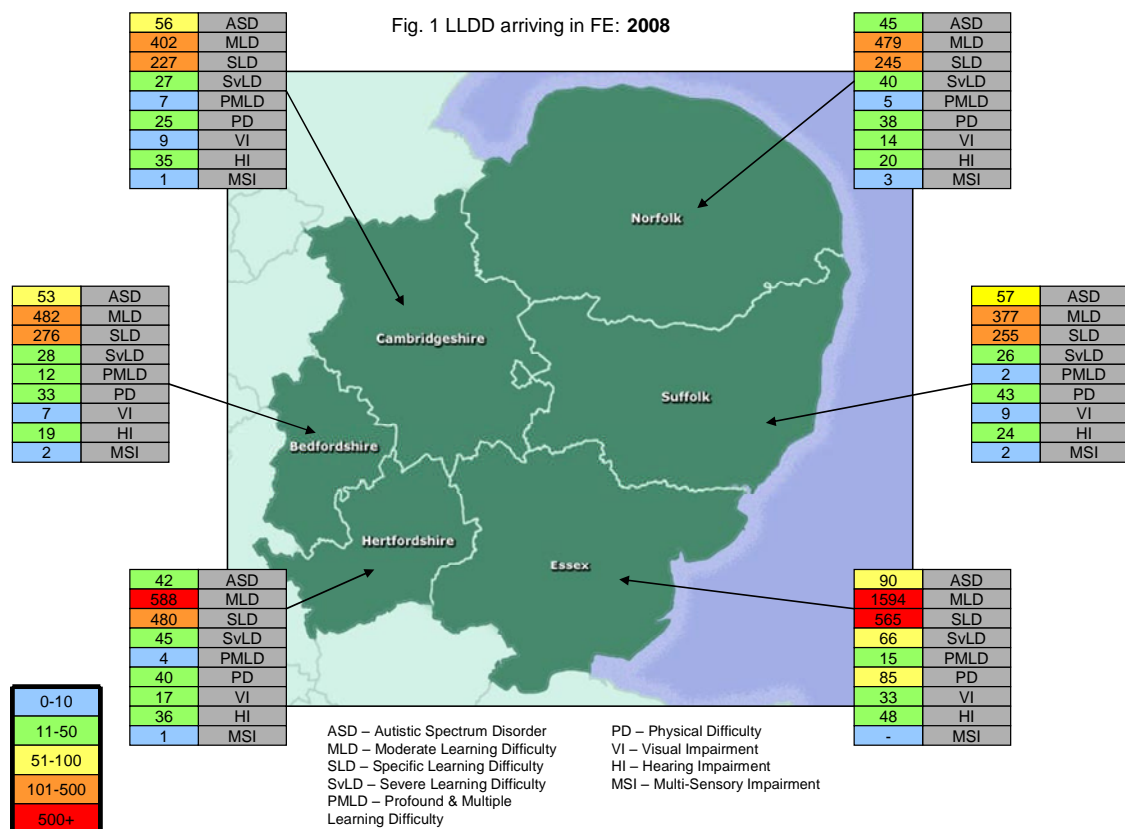
The East of England is a large, geographically diverse region. LLDD within some of the more rural parts of the region have historically faced challenges accessing provision as a result of the long distances they have to travel, and limitations in the availability of public transport (or cost of private transport). In addition, as a result of the fact that there is limited specialist residential provision in the region, historically, some LLDD with more complex needs have had to travel out of county to access provision (or simply not access learning provision at all).

¹ LSC, *Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, London: LSC, October 2006.

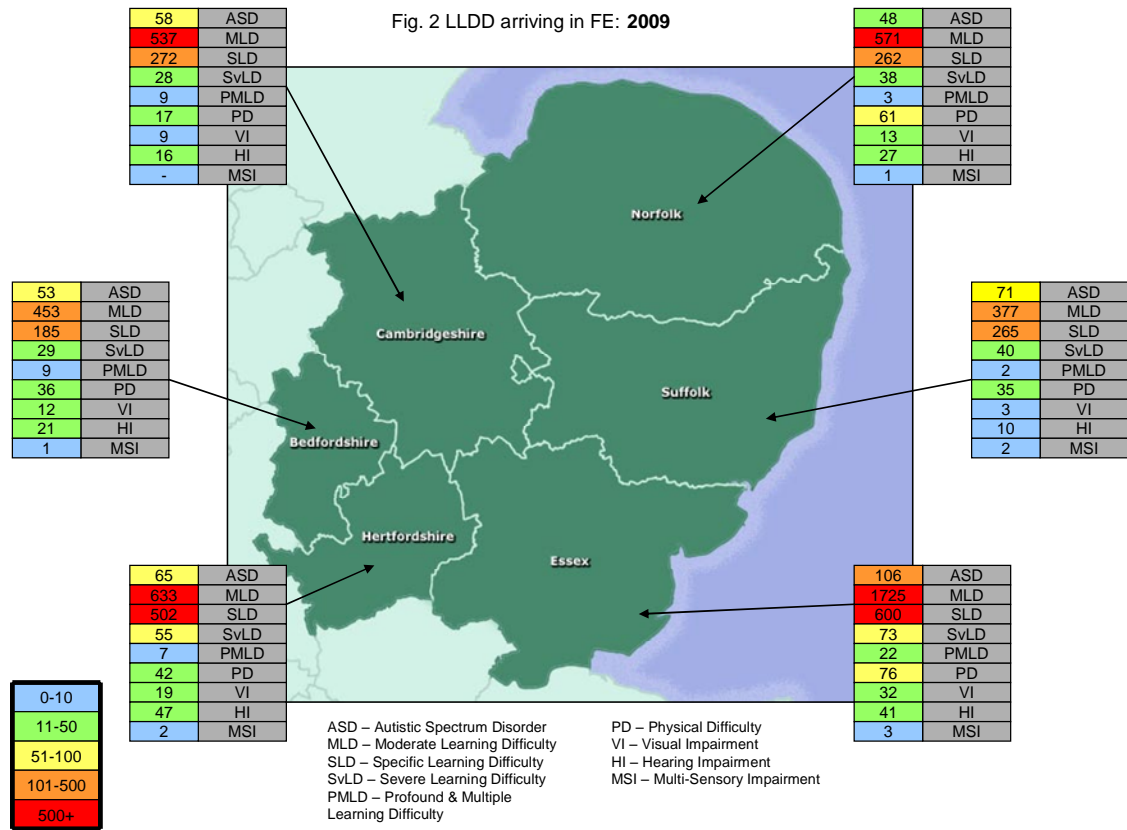
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General findings

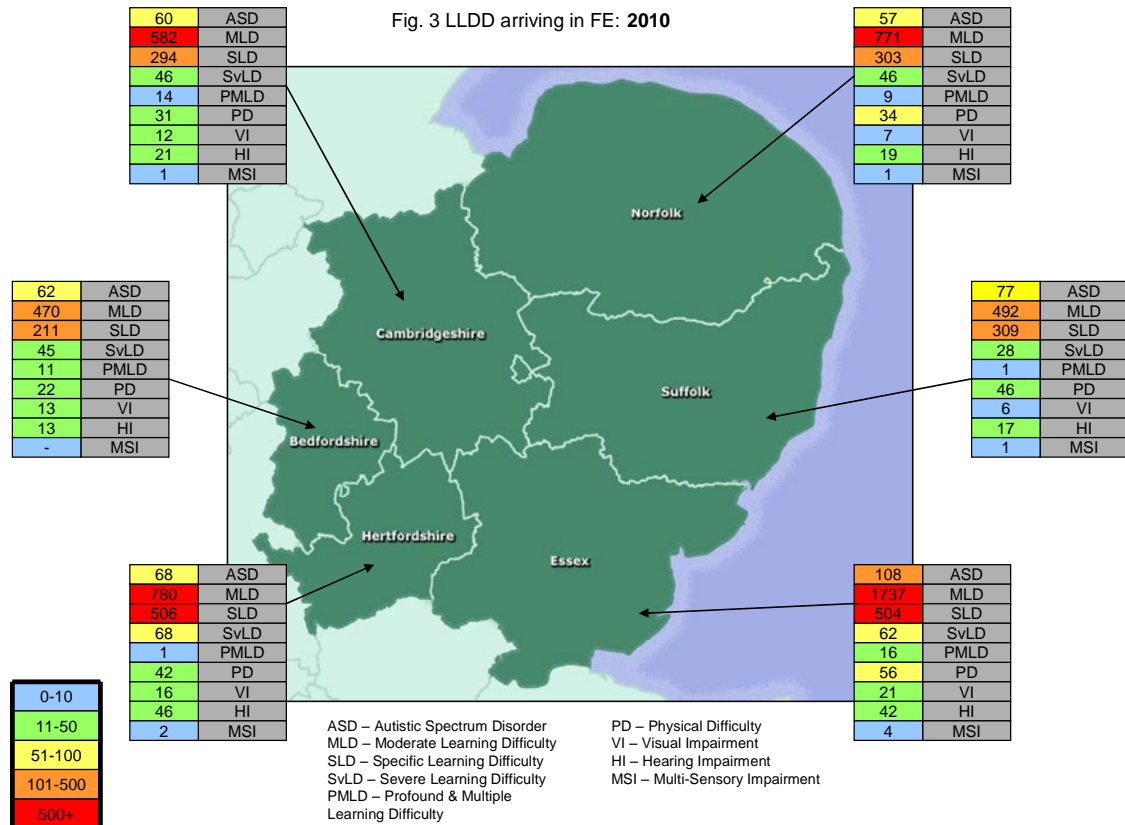
- Expressed as a percentage of the total learner cohort, there are more LLDD in FE and WBL in the East of England today than there were two years ago (13.51% in 2006-07 compared with 9.9% 2004-05).
- Figs. 1-3 below and on the following pages illustrate how the regional profile of LLDD need will evolve over the next three years.



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- There is a general feeling among professionals involved in the delivery of learning for LLDD that *Improving Choice* has succeeded in promoting the development of high quality *local* provision in each of the six LSC local areas.
- This has reduced the need for learners to be sent out of county to access provision that meets their needs.
- There is a widespread sense that FE has begun to develop the capacity, skills and resources to provide meaningful and rewarding learning experiences for LLDD.

The learner perspective

- All of the learners we spoke to indicated that they were happy in their current provision—certainly happier than they had been at school, and in many cases happier

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than they had been previously in other FE provision, in which their needs were not adequately understood.

The parent perspective

- Parents indicated that *Improving Choice* has made a difference to their child, or said that their child had definitely improved in terms of achievement, engagement, or general temperament since they had been able to attend college (or similar FE provision).
- A tension occasionally exists between the aspiration of *Improving Choice* to retain as many LLDD as possible locally in appropriate, high quality provision, and parents' desires to send their children to specialist residential provision out of county, which is perceived as higher quality and more appropriate for their needs.
- Some respondents were concerned that moving away from family and peer networks and their local community threatens rather than promotes the ability of LLDD to live independently.
- There is concern amongst some parents and stakeholders that learners with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) may not always receive as high quality a learning experience as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

The provider perspective

- Providers suggest that their own analysis and foresight activity indicates that in the next three to five years, they anticipate demand from:
 - Young people who were premature babies and whose condition has been managed subsequently by medical intervention, and who now present at school/college with a learning difficulty such as Autism or Dyslexia or complex of such difficulties.
 - Learners who have been diagnosed at school with Autism or Dyslexia. This is felt to be a result of improved awareness and understanding of these conditions and increasing sophistication of diagnostic assessment tools.
 - Learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Again, this is felt to be a result of improved awareness and understanding of these conditions and increasing sophistication of the tools available to identify and assess them.

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- Some providers are concerned about their ability to cope with upcoming demand given their existing capacity and resources.
- Some providers commented that they have no formal, co-ordinated mechanism for relating data on the level of need to the LSC.

Reflections on partnership

- Strong partnerships are felt to exist in all six of the local areas, despite the fact that the degree of maturity of these partnerships varies.
- Many parents suggest that Social Services is not as visible in these partnerships – nor as obviously supportive – as the other partners
- The evolution of the function of the ‘LSC Panel’ is felt to have contributed to improvements in the experience of learners and their families (i.e. it is now a creative, solution-finding forum rather than a strict assessment or gate-keeping mechanism).

Key challenges

- The needs analysis suggests that the following challenges need to be addressed by those working within the sector:
 - LLDD do not have as clear and coherent an understanding of their learning pathway as mainstream learners
 - Employers are insufficiently engaged in the LLDD debate and need to be brought on board and encouraged to offer meaningful opportunities to learners
 - There is an opportunity to do more to co-ordinate the development of skills and capabilities across provider organisations
 - In the face of a range of constraints, partnership working requires considerable energy and commitment to translate it from aspiration to reality
 - Ongoing skill development is important, but to be effective this needs to be delivered in the context of broader cultural change

Recommendations

- The recommendations of this review are as follows:

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- Ensure that planning conversations take place early to allow for effective action to be taken and partnerships established, and to ensure visibility of the nature and extent of LLDD demand.
- Engage providers and partners in a dialogue about the appropriate levels of resource and support, and about the other positive environmental conditions, that could enable them to respond to increased LLDD demand.
- Engage providers in a discussion about how to develop or strengthen a co-ordinated, consistent, and sustainable mechanism for gathering and disseminating information on the changing pattern of need.
- Drive for the use of assessment approaches and diagnostic tools (and associated training) that enable greater precision and sophistication in assessment.
- Promote timely, accurate, and standardised approaches to sharing information within and between organisations.
- Work with other organisations (e.g. Connexions, schools, other brokerage services) to ensure that learners and their families have access to high quality IAG to clarify expectations before learners arrive at FE.
- Promote and provide support for intensive, region-wide employer engagement activity, and encourage providers to share insights and success stories on what has proved effective in engaging employers.
- Communicate the vision for a more strategic, co-ordinated approach to learning providers responding to need within a local area.
- Explore opportunities for greater local co-ordination of LLDD activity as part of the activities suggested in the region's Learning for living and work regional implementation plan.
- Provide support for ongoing cultural change in the sector within the region, and build on the successes achieved so far through the Improving Choice Pathfinder, by delivering on the recommendations above, and especially by communicating widely strong, positive stories of good outcomes for LLDD.

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The recommendations from SHM's needs analysis are now being reviewed as part of the LSC East of England's *Learning for living and work* regional implementation plan.

1. Introduction

In March 2007, the LSC East of England commissioned SHM to undertake a piece of research to understand the nature and extent of current and planned provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) within the region. The project was intended to build on the commitments set out in the LSC document *Learning for living and work*,² which describes the need for LSCs to root their plans to develop provision for LLDD in the context of a regional **needs analysis**.

The regional needs analysis was designed to enable the LSC East of England to:

- Establish a baseline position in terms of the current profile of learning supply and demand
- Assess trends, again in relation to the profile of learning supply and demand
- Build engagement and buy-in across the region, making use of – and at the same time helping to strengthen – existing relationships and networks
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of provision, as well as opportunities to do more or improve effectiveness, and the barriers to improvement
- Establish shared priorities and actions across stakeholder groups

1.1 Structure of this document

This document is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** outlines the methodology underpinning the needs analysis
- **Section 3** examines the nature and extent of demand across the region with reference to respondent insights gleaned through the qualitative phase of work, as well as quantitative data supplied by the LSC, derived from Individual Learner Record (ILR) and PLASC (Pupil Level School Age Census) data

² LSC, *Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, October 2006.

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- **Section 4** considers the extent to which the FE sector in the region is responding to this demand
- **Section 5** identifies a series of key challenges for those working in the region responding to the needs of LLDD
- **Section 6** highlights recommended action points for the LSC and its partners

1.2 Acknowledgements

SHM would like to acknowledge the contribution to the needs analysis made by all of the respondents we were fortunate enough to talk to—too numerous to mention here, but listed in full in Appendix 2. Colleagues were extremely generous in giving up their time, and in giving the project the benefit of their experience, expertise and insight. We would especially like to thank those providers that hosted learner workshops (Oaklands College, Hertfordshire and The Phoenix Purple Group at City College Norwich, Norfolk) and that helped to arrange learner interviews:

- **Bedfordshire and Luton:** MAPS Training; Bedford College
- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough:** Phoenix School; Opportunities Without Limits (OWL)/Huntingdon Regional College
- **Hertfordshire:** Oaklands College; St. Elizabeth's College
- **Essex:** Castle Point and Rochford Adult Community College; St Nicholas School Entry to Employment (E2E) Transition Centre
- **Norfolk:** College of West Anglia; Great Yarmouth College
- **Suffolk:** Suffolk College; Otley College

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the learners and parents we have had the privilege of speaking to, who have also given generously of their time and spoken so eloquently about their experiences.

2. Methodology

The research and engagement methodology underpinning the needs analysis was designed:

- To reflect the **real voices and lived experiences** of those receiving learning (and associated services), as well as those providing, planning or managing it. This meant that alongside some quantitative analysis to establish patterns and trends of need in statistical data made available by the LSC, SHM delivered a larger, qualitative, engagement-focused strand of work. This work involved interviews with learners, parents, providers (including teaching staff, support staff, and management staff), and stakeholders/partners from other relevant organisations.
- To balance **investigative breadth and depth** by ensuring that we obtain sufficient local detail on need in each area but at the same time gather a fair reflection of provision and experience across the whole East of England region
- Not only to establish gaps in current provision, but also to **engage and galvanise stakeholders** involved in meeting the needs of LLDD around real opportunities to improve provision across the region

The needs analysis involved the following methods:

Desk research based on reviews of relevant documentation in each of the six LSC local areas. The actual documents consulted varied from area to area, but in general SHM had access to the following sources:

- Strategic area reviews and progress reports
- 14-19 area reviews
- Equality and Diversity reviews
- Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)
- Children's Trust reports
- Provider inspection reports
- Learner satisfaction survey data
- LEA/LSC data on utilisation of provision

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- Data on LSC regional allocation and spend
- Data from key stakeholders, e.g. Connexions
- Information generated through the national data-gathering strand of the LLDD Needs Analysis project

Semi-structured interviews, workshops, and site visits focused on learners, their parents/guardians/carers, their teachers (specifically, as distinct from more general provider staff), managers in provider organisations, and a range of other stakeholders. These engagement activities sought to help us answer the following critical questions:

- What is needed?
- How well is provision currently working
 - for learners and parents?
 - for specialist teaching staff?
 - for organizations and partnerships?
- What is planned or in progress?
- What are the main challenges and opportunities?

3. What does the demand for Further Education look like in the East of England?

3.1 Context

The East of England is a large, geographically diverse region. LLDD within some of the more rural parts of the region have historically faced challenges accessing provision as a result of the long distances they have to travel, and limitations in the availability of public transport (or cost of private transport). In addition, as a result of the fact that there is limited specialist residential provision in the region – only two colleges: Sense East, based predominantly in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, and St. Elizabeth's, based in Hertfordshire – some young people in other areas of the region have had to travel out of county to access provision (or simply not access learning provision at all).

However, the East of England region also happens to be one in which a great deal has been done over the last few years to improve the experiences of LLDD. The LSC in the East of England is in the process of developing a Regional Implementation Plan³ in response to the national vision outlined in *Learning for living and work*⁴ and *Through inclusion to excellence*⁵, which set out a clear national vision for learning and skills provision for LLDD. The Regional Implementation Plan also builds on the evaluation of the successful LSC East of England Pathfinder, *Improving Choice*, which sought to develop new ways of working to meet the complex needs of LLDD more effectively.⁶

3.2 Current LLDD demand in Further Education

Table 1 has been generated based on Individual Learner Record (ILR) data derived from LSC systems. The table illustrates the number of LLDD in Further Education (FE) and

³ LSC East of England, *Learning for Living and Work Implementation Plan for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities: Consultation document*, March 2007.

⁴ LSC, October 2006, *op. cit.*

⁵ LSC, *Through Inclusion to Excellence: The Report of the Steering Group for the Strategic Review of the LSC's Planning and Funding of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities across the Post-16 Learning and Skills Sector*, November 2005.

⁶ For more information about *Improving Choice* in the East of England region, please see LSC East of England, *Improving Choice in post 16 education for Young People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities: An evaluation of the East of England Pathfinder*, June 2006.

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work-based learning (WBL) relative to the total number of learners in FE and WBL, for the current academic year (2006-07). For explanatory purposes, and to enable the identification of any trends, we have also included this data for the previous academic year (2005-06).

The information in the ILR about learners' 'status' in terms of the presence of learning difficulty and/or disability is based on learners self-identifying this status at the point at which they enrol in FE or WBL.

It is worth at this stage highlighting the significant limitations of ILR data in allowing us to identify the extent of LLDD participation in FE and WBL. One limitation relates to the point above, in that learners' LLDD status in the ILR is based on their own self-identification (which may mean that someone who has what we might conventionally term a learning difficulty and/or disability elects – for whatever reason – not to describe themselves as such and therefore doesn't show up in an organisation's management information as an LLDD). Another limitation is that the ILR data set does not distinguish between different types of learning difficulty and/or disability. This means that we are unable to offer a more granular analysis of the presence of specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. School Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data, which we use later on to identify trends in future demand, overcomes the limitations of ILR data in that learners' LLDD status is based on rigorous expert assessment as part of the statementing of Special Educational Needs (SEN) process rather than self-identification; and it does distinguish between different learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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Table 1. Number of LLDD in FE and WBL (intake for the current year and previous two years), broken down by LSC local area

		FE intake 2004-05		FE intake 2005-06		FE intake 2006-07 (N.B. data incomplete)	
		LLDD 2004-05	Total Learners in FE 2004-05	LLDD 2005-06	Total Learners in FE 2005-06	LLDD 2006-07	Total learners in FE 2006-07
FE	Bedfordshire and Luton	3987 (7.83%)	50946 (100%)	4,087 (9.31%)	43,896 (100%)	2,863 (11.65%)	24,566 (100%)
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	3961 (7.79%)	50868 (100%)	3,163 (7.95%)	39,807 (100%)	1,902 (8.56%)	22,210 (100%)
	Essex	10438 (12.56%)	83101 (100%)	10,312 (14.07%)	73,298 (100%)	8,131 (15.87%)	51,248 (100%)
	Hertfordshire	4913 (10.41%)	47195 (100%)	4,481(10.48%)	42,750 (100%)	3,185 (12.49%)	25,492 (100%)
	Norfolk	4389 (8.80%)	49886 (100%)	3,872 (10.04%)	38,536 (100%)	3,624 (14.13%)	25,643 (100%)
	Suffolk	3010 (8.88%)	33907 (100%)	3,064 (12.16%)	29,640 (100%)	2,263 (14.77%)	15,322 (100%)
	Total	30,698 (9.72%)	315,903 (100%)	28,979 (10.82%)	267,927 (100%)	21,968 (13.36)	164,481 (100%)
WBL	Bedfordshire and Luton	242.6 (12.76%)	1901.18 (100%)	233 (14.57%)	1,599 (100%)	236	1511(100%)
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	345.66 (11.73%)	2946.30 (100%)	448 (14.84%)	3,018 (100%)	482 (16.13%)	2988 (100%)
	Essex	778.92 (15.20%)	5126.00 (100%)	787 (16.35%)	4,812 (100%)	820 (16.49%)	4972 (100%)
	Hertfordshire	390.53 (11.28%)	3462.20 (100%)	409 (12.81%)	3,192 (100%)	440 (13.62%)	3230 (100%)
	Norfolk	524.98 (14.77%)	3554.92 (100%)	443 (15.32%)	2,891 (100%)	417 (14.47%)	2882 (100%)
	Suffolk	336.39 (10.68%)	3150.02 (100%)	368 (11.89%)	3,095 (100%)	391 (12.29%)	3180 (100%)
	Total	2619.08 (13%)	20140.62 (100%)	2,688 (14.45%)	18,607 (100%)	2,786 (14.85%)	18,763 (100%)
Total (FE and WBL)		33,317 (9.9%)	336,604 (100%)	31,667 (11.05%)	286,534 (100%)	24,754 (13.51%)	183,244 (100%)

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It is important to note first of all the apparently significant reduction suggested by the data in the overall number of learners in FE and WBL from **336,604** in the academic year 2004-05 to **183,244** in 2006-07. This apparent reduction does not reflect a decrease in new learner entrants into FE and WBL in the real world—and certainly not one of that order of magnitude. The apparent reduction appears because the data for the current academic year is incomplete. Only the data for the previous academic years 2004-05 and 2005-06 can be considered ‘complete’.⁷ This means that, as is always the case with quantitative data, we have to be careful about the way in which we interpret this information. However, even if there are challenges with the completeness of the data, the use of percentages in the table enables us to identify proportional shifts in LLDD participation. Expressed as a percentage of the total learner cohort, it is clear to see that there are more LLDD in FE and WBL today than there were two years ago (13.51% in 2006-07 compared with 9.9% 2004-05). This insight from the quantitative data is supported by the conversations we have had with respondents across the region, who have generally experienced an increase in demand from LLDD in recent years, who anticipate further increases in future, and who recognise a need to develop capacity and capabilities in response.

The trend towards greater numbers of LLDD arriving in FE in the coming years could be explained by a number of **hypothetical** factors:

- (a) **Straightforward demographic factors:** i.e. there will simply be more LLDD in the East of England region overall in 2009 than there will be in 2008; there will simply be more learners with Autistic Spectrum disorders in Norfolk in 2010 than there will be in 2009.
- (b) **The assessment system is more effective, more widely used, and used at an earlier stage:** i.e., providers and partners are getting better at identifying learning difficulties and/or disabilities earlier in LLDDs’ lives
- (c) **There is a broader understanding of many learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the system used to classify them is more nuanced and sophisticated:** i.e. numbers of LLDD are not necessarily greater, but the system is clearer about understanding learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their

⁷ The spreadsheets supplied by the LSC contain a cautionary note concerning the incompleteness of the current academic year’s data.

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presentations. Understanding learning difficulties and/or disabilities more clearly reduces the risk that LLDD are placed in inappropriate provision and therefore decreases the potential for them to end up not in education, employment or training (NEET).

- (d) **Local LSC areas are doing a much better job of creating the conditions for LLDD to remain within the locality in appropriate provision**, i.e. through the success of *Improving Choice*.

All of these are hypotheses. It is difficult to identify any one factor or precise combination of such factors since the needs analysis provides evidence for most of them. The quantitative data suggests that overall numbers of LLDD *are* increasing. Respondents *do* feel that the system of assessment and classification is generally more sophisticated and usable, and that *Improving Choice* has made a difference in terms of enabling LLDD to remain in high quality local provision. However, there is evidence to challenge our assumptions where (c) is concerned based on the fact that there are significant numbers of LLDD across the region described as having ‘Undefined learning difficulties’. We go on to explain this further in Section 3.2.3 below.

Largely as a result of *Improving Choice*, there is a widespread sense – particularly among the parents we have spoken to – that general FE is beginning to develop the capacity and skills to provide meaningful and rewarding learning experiences for LLDD. In the coming years, LLDD of all kinds, who perhaps used only to be able to access day centre provision, will increasingly access FE. In short, the very fact that the providers in the region are getting better – and are *seen* to be getting better – at engaging LLDD means that FE is a more attractive option for LLDD, and participation figures will evidence this.

Table 2 is based on data derived from PLASC. The data shows LLDD currently in the school system who will be entering general FE (including WBL) in the next few years. The table includes data on learners currently in Year 11, who will comprise the FE intake for May/June 2008; Year 10, who will comprise the FE intake for May/June 2009; and Year 9, who will comprise the FE intake for May/June 2010. As such, the PLASC data and table

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below illustrate the scale of the need.⁸ The advantage of the PLASC data is that it is more granular than ILR data in its categorization of learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Table 2. Identified levels of LLDD in the school population

		May/June 2008	May/June 2009	May/June 2010
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Bedfordshire and Luton	53	53	62
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	56	58	60
	Essex	90	106	108
	Hertfordshire	42	65	68
	Norfolk	45	48	57
	Suffolk	57	71	77
	Total	343	401	432
Behavioral, Emotional and Social Difficulties	Bedfordshire and Luton	278	230	231
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	326	305	291
	Essex	853	713	616
	Hertfordshire	492	448	395
	Norfolk	438	349	349
	Suffolk	359	329	308
	Total	2746	2374	2190
Hearing Impairment	Bedfordshire and Luton	19	21	13
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	35	16	21
	Essex	48	41	42
	Hertfordshire	36	47	46
	Norfolk	20	27	19
	Suffolk	24	10	17
	Total	182	162	158
Moderate Learning Difficulty	Bedfordshire and Luton	482	453	470
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	402	537	582
	Essex	1594	1725	1737
	Hertfordshire	588	633	780
	Norfolk	479	571	771
	Suffolk	377	377	492

⁸ We share the LSC's view that an analysis of PLASC data provides a valuable indication of the likely scale of need in FE in years to come. However, we acknowledge that some learners may not progress from school to FE (for example, they may move out of the region) and so these PLASC figures are indicative rather than definitive. In adopting these figures, we are, in a way, assuming that the region's transitional provision and brokerage is 100% effective!

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	Total	3922	4296	4832
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	May/June 2008	May/June 2009	May/June 2010	
Multi-sensory Impairment	Bedfordshire and Luton	2	1	-
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	1	-	1
	Essex	-	3	4
	Hertfordshire	1	2	2
	Norfolk	3	1	1
	Suffolk	2	2	1
	Total	9	9	9
Severe Learning Difficulty	Bedfordshire and Luton	28	29	45
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	27	28	46
	Essex	66	73	62
	Hertfordshire	45	55	68
	Norfolk	40	38	46
	Suffolk	26	40	28
	Total	232	263	295
Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia)	Bedfordshire and Luton	276	185	211
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	227	272	294
	Essex	565	600	504
	Hertfordshire	480	502	506
	Norfolk	245	262	303
	Suffolk	255	265	309
	Total	2048	2086	2127
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty	Bedfordshire and Luton	12	9	11
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	7	9	14
	Essex	15	22	16
	Hertfordshire	4	7	1
	Norfolk	5	3	9
	Suffolk	2	2	1
	Total	45	52	52
Physical Difficulty	Bedfordshire and Luton	33	36	22
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	25	17	31
	Essex	85	76	56
	Hertfordshire	40	42	42
	Norfolk	38	61	34
	Suffolk	43	35	46

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		Total	264	267	231
		May/June 2008	May/June 2009	May/June 2010	
Speech Language and Communication Needs	Bedfordshire and Luton	64	84	122	
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	42	78	81	
	Essex	128	158	189	
	Hertfordshire	91	135	156	
	Norfolk	57	49	76	
	Suffolk	70	45	86	
	Total	452	549	710	
Visual Impairment	Bedfordshire and Luton	7	12	13	
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	9	9	12	
	Essex	33	32	21	
	Hertfordshire	17	19	16	
	Norfolk	14	13	7	
	Suffolk	9	3	6	
	Total	89	88	75	
Not Defined	Bedfordshire and Luton	176	360	364	
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	362	398	533	
	Essex	152	156	279	
	Hertfordshire	322	391	267	
	Norfolk	357	416	274	
	Suffolk	103	173	159	
	Total	1472	1894	1876	
Other Difficulty / Disability	Bedfordshire and Luton	91	43	96	
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	100	130	85	
	Essex	115	110	137	
	Hertfordshire	310	282	279	
	Norfolk	113	97	79	
	Suffolk	175	201	239	
	Total	904	863	915	
Totals	Bedfordshire and Luton	1521	1516	1660	
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	1619	1857	2051	
	Essex	3744	3815	3771	
	Hertfordshire	2468	2628	2626	
	Norfolk	1854	1935	2025	
	Suffolk	1502	1553	1769	

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	Grand total	12708	13304	13902
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3.2.1 Cross-referencing the PLASC data with qualitative insights from respondents

It is useful to consider the quantitative data from PLASC in relation to insights we have gleaned from respondents across the region about areas of future need. Providers suggest that their own analysis and foresight activity indicates that in the next three to five years, they anticipate demand from:

- Young people who were **premature babies and whose condition has been managed subsequently by medical intervention**. Some of these young people will present at school/college additionally with a learning difficulty such as Autism or Dyslexia. Their condition may also require the use of assistive technologies to support their respiratory/digestive function. Such technologies – which, whilst portable, can be large and unwieldy – may need to be accommodated within FE provision, which poses challenges for accommodation and facilities. It is not completely clear how this complex combination of conditions is recorded in PLASC data. It may be that learners are recorded as having PMLD, or it may be that the approach is to identify a ‘primary diagnosis’ – e.g. Autism – out of all of the learner’s complex needs, and it is that primary diagnosis that is recorded. Certainly, respondents’ suggestions of an increase in PMLD are not supported by the PLASC data, but the data does provide evidence of an increase in Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Of course it may be the case that there currently exists no satisfactory categorisation for such a complex combination of conditions and therefore this is recorded as an ‘Undefined learning difficulty’—something in which the PLASC data suggests a massive increase across the region. We will discuss this increase in *undefined* learning difficulties – and the challenges surrounding this categorisation – below in Section 3.2.3.
- Learners who have been diagnosed at school with **Autism or Dyslexia**. This is felt to be a result of improved awareness and understanding of these conditions and increasing sophistication of diagnostic assessment tools. The PLASC data supports the suggestion that incidences of Autistic Spectrum Disorder are on the increase in the region, with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Norfolk areas seeing the greatest increases.

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Levels of Dyslexia appear to fluctuate,⁹ but the greatest increases in numbers of Dyslexic learners impact Norfolk and Suffolk.

- Learners with **profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)**. Again, this is felt to be a result of improved awareness and understanding of these conditions and increasing sophistication of the tools available to identify and assess them. Interestingly, as suggested above, respondents' insight is not corroborated by the PLASC data, which, in most local areas, indicates a reduction in the number of learners with PMLD. Only in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Norfolk does the data suggest a possible increase in PMLD learners entering FE.

3.2.2 Impacts on LSC areas suggested by the PLASC data

In the sections that follow, we offer some reflections on the impacts of trends identified in the PLASC data on the six LSC local areas in the East of England region.

Bedfordshire and Luton

The PLASC data suggests an overall increase in the numbers of LLDD entering FE of approximately 9% by 2010. The figures show large numbers of learners with Severe Learning Difficulties (an increase of 60%), as well as a noticeable increase in learners with ASD (an increase of 17%). Perhaps more problematically, the data suggest a 107% increase over the next three years in levels of 'Undefined learning difficulties'. As we discuss below, this group may present significant challenges for providers. This is not only as a result of its sheer size, but also because there – by definition, or rather, by *undefinition* – is apparently no real clarity about exactly what the learning difficulty and/or disability is.

⁹ It is important to note that Dyslexia is recorded in the PLASC data under the category of 'Specific learning difficulty (Dyslexia)', which suggests that there are other conditions – perhaps Dyspraxia? – included in this category. Therefore, it is problematic to assume that every learner in this category has Dyslexia.

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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Overall in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, LLDD figures are set to increase by around 27% in the next three years—the largest increase in the region. Anecdotal evidence from respondents suggests that such a significant increase may at least partly be explained by the high levels of immigration in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area leading to relatively high numbers of Black and Minority Ethnic groups locally, among which incidences of some learning difficulties and/or disabilities are disproportionately high. We have not been able to support or refute such a hypothesis within the scope of this needs analysis, but certainly this is a question worth investigating further, first to see if the 27% increase can be explained; and second, to develop appropriate strategies for responding to the precise profile of need.

The most noticeable areas of increase are Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) (30%), Severe Learning Difficulties (70%), Moderate Learning Difficulties (44%), and (again) Undefined Learning Difficulties (47%). The PLASC data indicates that numbers of learners with multi-sensory impairment entering FE in the locality are likely to increase by around 15% by 2010 (from 45 in 2008 to 52 in 2010). It is important to remember that Sense East, which provides specialist residential care and education provision for learners with deafblindness, is based in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. There is clearly a need for provision such as that offered by Sense East to address the needs of the increasing numbers of learners with multi-sensory impairments in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough over the next few years. Our conversations with respondents at Sense East suggested that they are aware of the potential increases in deafblind learners in the area and fully committed to understanding how best to respond to changing levels of need.

Essex

Overall, the PLASC data shows only a 1% increase in LLDD participation over the next three years. The number of learners with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties, Specific Learning Difficulties, and Visual Impairment seem to be stable or reducing. However, in the next three years there appears to be an increase of learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (an increase of 20% from 90 to 108). Conversations with provider respondents in Essex suggest that they are already well aware of this increase in demand, and are attempting to make the necessary provisions. In the next

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three years in Essex there also appears to be an increase in the numbers of learners with 'Undefined Learning Difficulties' progressing through the school system (an increase of 84%, from 152 to 279).

Hertfordshire

Figures for Hertfordshire indicate a potential 6% increase by 2010 in the number of LLDD accessing FE. The key increases occur in Severe Learning Difficulties (51%), Autistic Spectrum Disorders (61%), as well as Moderate Learning Difficulties (32%). These increases in the data correspond with insights gleaned in our interviews with staff in Hertfordshire, who are already anticipating further increases in learners with Autism accessing FE as the condition is more widely understood and more accurately diagnosed. Staff are also anticipating greater participation in FE by learners who have "high care" physical and medical health needs". Traditionally, the only route open to these learners has been specialist residential provision because such provision can address not only their *learning* needs, but also their social and healthcare needs—something that mainstream FE has been considered ill-equipped to do. However, staff in Hertfordshire are keen to begin to find ways of accommodating learners with these conditions within mainstream FE.

Norfolk

The PLASC data show a 9% increase by 2010 in the numbers of LLDD potentially accessing FE in Norfolk. The greatest increase is in the Moderate Learning Difficulty group (61%), with ASD rising by 27%, Severe Learning Difficulties by 15% and Specific Learning Difficulties by 23%. Increases in ASD across the locality suggest that it will be necessary for other FE providers to develop skills in addressing the needs of these learners. In such circumstances it may be useful to engage staff involved with the Phoenix Purple Group at City College Norwich, who hosted a learner workshop as part of this project, and who have developed effective provision for responding to the needs of learners with high functioning Autism in a mainstream FE setting. Norfolk also looks set to experience an increase in the number of learners accessing FE with PMLD. Great Yarmouth College plans to seek 'Centre of Excellence' status in addressing the needs of PMLD under the forthcoming LSC scheme. This status would enable Great Yarmouth College to serve as a local hub of expertise for other learning providers seeking to respond to this particular area of need.

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Interestingly, in Norfolk the data suggest a significant potential *decrease* in the number of learners with ‘Undefined learning difficulties’ coming through the system (a reduction of 23%). Such a reduction *may* indicate that, in Norfolk, there is a more rigorous, sophisticated or comprehensive understanding/assessment/diagnosis of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which means that conditions that elsewhere are grouped together into the ‘Undefined’ category are, in Norfolk, more precisely understood and categorised. Further work is necessary to confirm precisely the factors to which this may be attributable.

The PLASC data show a slight reduction in the number of learners with visual impairments coming through the school system in Norfolk between now and 2010. For some years, Great Yarmouth College has been developing provision focused on the needs of learners with visual impairment, and it has recently developed a pioneering strategic partnership with Action for Blind People in support of this provision.

Suffolk

The PLASC data indicate that, overall, numbers of LLDD in FE in Suffolk could increase by as much as 18% by 2010 (the second highest increase in the region). The areas of learner need in which there are the greatest increases are Autistic Spectrum Disorders (35%), Moderate Learning Difficulties (30%) and Specific Learning Difficulties (21%). This order of magnitude of increase in demand by learners with some fairly challenging needs suggests that the developmental work already undertaken by the Development and Training Unit (DTU), established as part of the *Improving Choice* East of England Pathfinder, will have been valuable in raising awareness and preparing providers in Suffolk to respond to increases in LLDD demand.

3.2.3 Reflections on insights into the nature and extent of need

The ILR and PLASC data provides a valuable indication of the nature and extent of LLDD need in FE at present and in future. Insights from conversations with respondents broadly correspond with the trends suggested by the data—particularly around patterns of conditions such as ASD, Dyslexia, complex learning difficulties and sensory impairments. The only significant variation we identified between the quantitative evidence and the

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qualitative evidence relates to the apparent absence in the figures of need related to complex combinations of ‘high-care’ physical/medical need and learning difficulty. However, we recognise that this apparent absence could be as a result of the way in which the precise need is recorded in PLASC.

So the region can take some comfort from the fact that there appear broadly to be no ‘surprises’ as far as future need is concerned. But there are some issues to which we are alerted by the needs analysis, which need to be taken seriously by the LSC and its partners.

Some providers are concerned about their **ability to cope with upcoming demand given their existing capacity and resources**. As one respondent working in a mainstream FE college setting commented, “Our funding for LLDD is ring-fenced. Last year we supported 214 students, and this year we are expected to support 300 students with same budget. This puts us in a difficult position in which we have to decide: do we overwork support staff and risk frying them, or do we dilute the support each learner receives?”

Recommended action point for the LSC: Planning conversations need now to reflect the findings of the needs analysis to ensure that there is at least visibility of the appropriate resources and support necessary for providers to enable them to respond to increased demand.

All of the providers we spoke to were acutely aware of the need to be future-focused in order to understand the profile of future demand—and all of them welcomed the LSC needs analysis. Some providers that are linked in some way to special schools (e.g. offering transition support) suggested that they had developed systems enabling them to monitor demand coming through the school system in their partner institution(s). However, some providers commented that they have **no formal, co-ordinated mechanism for relating data on the level of need to the LSC**. The need is visible – and in some cases, significant – but providers are unable to share this insight with the LSC in a meaningful way.

Recommended action point for the LSC: We recommend that the LSC examines this matter and uses the occasion of the publication of this needs analysis to engage providers in

a discussion about how to develop or strengthen a co-ordinated, consistent, and sustainable mechanism for gathering and disseminating information on the changing pattern of need.

According to the PLASC data, the greatest increases in need across the region relate to the so-called ‘Undefined’ category. We cannot help but feel that such **significant increases in such a vague category of need** is problematic—and poses probably the most significant challenge to the region as far its ability to anticipate and respond to need is concerned.

The categorisation of the data suggests that there is a large number of young people progressing through the school system whose needs are not completely understood. One therefore has to ask the question: how can an FE learning provider properly anticipate or respond to a need that is ‘undefined’? It is not clear whether this need is ‘undefined’ because it has not been subject to proper assessment at school, or whether it has been assessed but the outcome of the assessment was inconclusive, or whether it is not clear if the learner has a learning difficulty and/or disability or some other problem affecting their ability to perform at school, or whether the information on need has simply not been shared properly between one organisation and another (i.e. because people are worried about the potential stigmatising impacts of ‘labelling’; because people are reluctant to self-declare their exact condition because they think it might prevent them from getting a place in FE—both of which we heard periodically from respondents).

As far as monitoring and responding to LLDD need is concerned, the ‘undefined’ category is potentially doubly problematic: not only does it not specify precisely which types of learning difficulty and/or disability are present within the learner cohort; it does not necessarily denote the presence of a learning difficulty and/or disability in the cohort *at all*. This is because learners fall into the ‘undefined’ category simply if they are designated ‘School Action’.¹⁰ School Action status indicates that the learner is experiencing a

¹⁰ “The triggers for intervention through *School Action* could be the teacher’s or others’ concern, underpinned by evidence, about a child who despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a child’s identified area of weakness;

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difficulty, but that whilst this difficulty requires interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies, the difficulty can be addressed and managed using resources (including the involvement of the SENCO) available *within* the school (School Action is distinct from School Action *Plus*, which denotes that the nature of the difficulty is such that the support of *external* services needs to be sought). Learners can be designated School Action not necessarily as a result of the presence of a learning difficulty and/or disability; learners could be designated School Action and be showing up in the statistics as 'undefined' **due to other issues eg truanting, bullying, school phobia etc.** This has the potential to inflate artificially the 'undefined' category and give a skewed view of the number of learners within the cohort potentially with a learning difficulty and/or disability.

Depending on which way you look at it, this either is a problem or it isn't. On the one hand, if the prevalence of learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the 'undefined' category can be demonstrated to be overstated, this is a good thing. Moreover, the designation School Action denotes that whatever difficulty is present can be managed fairly easily by the learner's school without recourse to additional external support. This suggests that learners in the 'Undefined' category will have relatively mild and moderate needs that can be easily managed by FE providers. But is it not a bad thing to have such a degree of unclarity and imprecision in the way in which learner need is categorized in the first place?

Even though it seems likely that, despite their number, learners in the 'Undefined' category will not in fact pose a significant resource challenge when they arrive in FE, the discussion above does suggest two potentially problematic impacts:

shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematics skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas; presents persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school; has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment; has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum." (DfES, *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*, London: Crown Copyright, November 2001, (ref: DfES/581/2001), p.52-53.

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- (i) Because learners needs are not understood, FE is not able to respond to those needs properly, meaning that the learners **may** receive inappropriate provision and a sub-optimal learning experience—and therefore run the risk of dropping out, and potentially becoming NEET.
- (ii) In the face of lack of clarity about the need and uncertainty therefore of how best to respond, FE itself has to devote time and resources to assessing the need. Respondents in the needs analysis identified this as a significant area of concern. They rely on accurate and timely information being supplied from schools as part of the LLDD transition process, and on LLDD arriving in FE with their need largely, if not wholly, already identified. The arrival in FE of a large cohort of learners with ‘undefined’ needs suggests that FE will have increasingly to devote capacity to conducting assessments, and this may present a significant drain on already limited resources. Certainly, the need for FE increasingly to devote time to undertaking learner assessments could militate against the engagement of FE providers who have already demonstrated a reluctance to come on board with the LLDD agenda.

Recommended action point for the LSC:

- Drive for the use of assessment approaches and diagnostic tools (and associated training) that enable greater precision and sophistication in assessment, to ensure that, where possible, learners are assigned to a more accurate category of need.

4. How is the sector doing currently in responding to this demand?

4.1 Impact of the *Improving Choice* East of England Pathfinder¹¹

There is a general feeling among professionals involved in the delivery of learning for LLDD that *Improving Choice* has succeeded in promoting the development of high quality *local* provision in each of the six LSC local areas. This has reduced the need for learners to be sent out of county to access provision that meets their needs. LSC staff in all six local areas suggest that the number of learners accessing out of county provision has fallen dramatically since the arrival of *Improving Choice* (though they are keen to emphasise that there are still learners with significantly complex needs for whom specialist residential provision out of county does represent the only appropriate option).

4.2 Regional overview: Ability of provision to respond to learner need

Despite the advances made by *Improving Choice*, there is concern amongst some parents and stakeholders that learners with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) may not always receive as high quality a learning experience as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). This is because in many cases the needs of learners with PMLD are felt to be such that only specialist, discrete provision can meet them. A more plausible case can usually be made for retaining learners with MLD in local FE provision because their needs are not felt to be as obviously complex. However, whilst this may seem feasible in theory, in practice it can be problematic because general FE can sometimes fail to meet even the needs of those with more **moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities**.

Developing this point further, one transition co-ordinator was keen to point out that learners with MLD might indeed ‘fall through the net’ as far as receiving high quality learning is concerned. However, she emphasised that just because learners with PMLD are, to an extent, ‘in the net’ (as a result of their obvious complexity of need), we shouldn’t assume that they are receiving any better an education. As she said, “Just because they’re known to, say, Mencap, doesn’t mean they are learning.” This comment, and the many others we

¹¹ For more information about *Improving Choice* in the East of England region, see LSC East of England, 2006, *op. cit.*

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heard like it, suggest that we must not be complacent about learners with PMLD who are apparently known to and engaged by services; attention must be paid to ensure that they receive a high quality learning experience.

There is a general aspiration among FE providers to integrate LLDD within the wider learner population. Where it is possible and appropriate to do so, this can involve including LLDD into standard mainstream programmes in the classroom. Where it is not possible and appropriate to do this, some FE colleges run discrete programmes for LLDD alongside their mainstream offerings. Even in these instances, at the very least, providers are keen to encourage LLDD to integrate more fully into the daily (social and cultural) life of the college. Some of the discrete, specialist provision for LLDD we encountered tended to be delivered in carefully-located facilities within the college estate (care is taken when locating such facilities because for many learners the numbers of people moving around and the noise produced in the main college areas were felt to be distracting, disruptive, or frightening)—e.g., in City College Norwich, Suffolk College, and the College of West Anglia. However, we often heard colleges describe their aspirations to site the discrete provision more centrally so that LLDD have an opportunity to come into contact with learners without learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to access general college facilities. Some colleges such as City College Norwich are establishing ‘buddy’ or ‘learning mentor’ schemes that encourage LLDD to work alongside learners without learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, from the LLDD perspective, the main thing they want from such ‘buddying’ schemes is the opportunity to experience the aspects of college provision *outside* of the classroom (e.g. shops and social spaces such as the refectory or the gym). College staff see such schemes as offering benefits to non LLDD in terms of raising their awareness of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and equality and diversity matters more generally. In turn, this is felt to support institutions’ work on the inclusion agenda.

4.2.1 How well is provision working for learners and their parents?

All of the learners we spoke to indicated that they were happy in their current provision—certainly happier than they had been at school, and in many cases happier than they had been previously in other FE provision, in which their needs were not adequately understood, let alone addressed. Many learners described their experiences of being in

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school as feeling disjointed and disorientating—characterised by repeated movement between institutions because a school could not cater for their needs and suggested that they were better suited elsewhere, because they were being bullied and their parents requested to move, or because their condition had been incorrectly interpreted as ‘bad behaviour’ leading to their exclusion and transfer. Many learners spoke of the importance of their friends at school, and some spoke with great pride about the fact that, because arrangements were in place to allow them to progress easily from school to college, they had been able to maintain their friendship groups. In some cases, learners pointed specifically to the fact that they had retained their school friends as a factor in helping them to manage emotionally the transition to college (and cope with the experience of learning in an initially unfamiliar environment).

All of the parents we spoke to either indicated explicitly that *Improving Choice* has made a difference to their child or said that their child had definitely improved in terms of achievement, engagement, or general temperament since they had been able to attend college and that their child is now in an establishment much more suited to their needs and capabilities.¹² Many parents explained that they had had difficulties in the past. They told stories of their children being excluded from schools because their learning difficulties and/or disabilities were interpreted as bad behaviour, or of their children foundering in provision because the school was unable to cater properly for their needs or plan a meaningful progression pathway into more suitable provision. Many of the parents’ stories hitherto were characterised by having to:

- ‘Fight’ for their child’s rights
- Get to know the system intimately – and develop relationships with key people: service managers, decision makers, headteachers, principals – to apply pressure and put their case across directly
- Maintain great stamina in dealing with bureaucracy when decision after decision did not go in their favour
- Sacrifice jobs and spare time not merely to support their child, but also to liaise with the relevant authorities to *secure support for their child* in the first place.

¹² It is important to note that we did not speak to any parents who failed to access appropriate provision for their child through *Improving Choice*. Parents with these experiences may hold a different view of *Improving Choice*.

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Stakeholders and learning provider staff described a tension that occasionally surfaces between the aspiration of *Improving Choice* to retain as many LLDD as possible locally in appropriate, high quality provision, and parents' desires to send their children to specialist residential provision out of county, which is perceived as higher quality and more appropriate for their needs. Although we only heard this infrequently from parents themselves – who tended to have had a positive experience of *Improving Choice* – respondents reported parents' objections to *Improving Choice* as being based around the following kinds of statement:

- “My child is *entitled* to a three year residential placement” (LSC and provider staff are quick to highlight that any parental expectation of an “entitlement” is misplaced because this is not reflected in the legal/administrative framework underpinning the LSC learner placement system.)
- “Specialist residential college is as close as my son/daughter will ever get to University”
- “Sending our son/daughter to specialist residential college will provide some **respite for us**”
- “Specialist residential college offers the best chance of my son/daughter **developing independent living skills**”

Whilst residential college placements are attractive to parents because they can promote independence by encouraging LLDD to establish their own identity away from their family home, and develop independent living skills, some respondents were concerned that moving away from family and peer networks and their local community threatens rather than promotes the ability of LLDD to live independently. When LLDD return from their residential placement it is often difficult to reconnect with their community and friendship networks, and as a result, LLDD are more dependent on support than they would otherwise be had they stayed locally and developed their independence *in the context of* local resources and networks. The other challenge presented by abstracting learners from their local context and sending them out of county is that it removes an opportunity to provide support for families. By retaining learners locally and meeting their needs in a holistic, person-centred way, one has an opportunity to “help the learner’s *family* progress, as well

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as help the learner progress.” If learners are sent to specialist out of county provision, this opportunity to ‘develop’ the family’s capacity is lost.

Tensions also occasionally arise between what parents want and what teaching staff believe is best for their child. Many young LLDD have a complex combination of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. That they are experiencing adolescence, with all of the challenges associated with that particular phase of life, adds further challenges into the mix. And as a result of this, in some cases as the young person begins to establish their identity and autonomy from their parents, a difficult interpersonal dynamic within the family can add a further layer of complexity. Teaching staff explained to us that in some cases a challenging interpersonal dynamic between learner and parent is one of the most difficult things they have to address, one of the most problematic and de-stabilising things that the learner has to face, and certainly one of the most difficult and controversial issues that teachers have to raise with parents.

4.2.2 How well is provision working for teaching staff?

The teaching staff we spoke to were all extremely passionate about their work and deeply committed to helping LLDD to learn to achieve their potential. Conversations with staff suggest a very strong sense of their belonging to a community of professionals working for the good of learners. Teaching staff feel nurtured and supported by the organisations to which they belong.

4.2.3 How well is provision working for organisations and partnerships?

Strong partnerships are felt to exist in all six of the local areas, despite the fact that the degree of maturity of these partnerships varies. In all areas there is a strong relationship between FE/schools and the local Connexions service, and this relationship is felt to be critical in supporting the ‘LSC Panel’ process that reviews learners’ needs and allocates *Improving Choice* funding as appropriate, and in guiding learners’ transition into FE. In all areas regular meetings are held with participation from all relevant local agencies. Very often, from the parent’s perspective, Social Services is not as visible in these partnerships – nor as obviously supportive – as the other partners (e.g. the LSC and Connexions).

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The evolution of the function of the 'LSC Panel' in some LSC areas is felt to have contributed to improvements in the experience of learners and their families in relation to local provision. This relates to the fact that the LSC Panel has evolved to become a creative, solution-finding forum rather than a strict assessment or gate-keeping panel. In instances in which a learner is not granted *Improving Choice* funding, the Panel works creatively using the available expertise and resources of Panel members, in close collaboration with the learners parents, and on the basis of a robust understanding of the learners' needs, to identify and recommend a meaningful learning pathway (and appropriate care provision) for them.

5. Key challenges

The East of England region is already doing a great deal to respond to learner need, but it has an opportunity to do more. In conducting the needs analysis, we have identified five key challenges to which we believe that the sector in the East of England needs to respond if it is to build on its successes to date. These challenges formed the basis of discussions at an event held on 3rd July 2007 with key stakeholders to review findings from the regional needs analysis. Colleagues' insight and feedback has been incorporated into this section.

5.1 Challenge 1: LLDD do not have as clear and coherent an understanding of their learning pathway as mainstream learners

One of the most striking findings to emerge from the needs analysis is that, in general, LLDDs' sense of their learning pathway is that it is complicated and disjointed. Certainly the experiences of learners we spoke to suggest that their learning pathways are more complicated and disjointed than those of 'mainstream' learners. The standard narratives of choice, purpose, direction and progression that underpin mainstream learners' learning do not feel to LLDD like they apply. When we asked LLDD about their lives and especially about their previous experiences of learning, their stories were characterised by discontinuity, a lack of a clear sense of direction, and with some notable exceptions, a sense of being 'done to' rather than being an active agent in their education. It is important to note that learners generally reported that, once in FE, their sense of being more of a protagonist in their learning began to grow. However, although many expressed an ambition to work or to continue in learning, a few were unclear about exactly how to make that happen; some were unclear about how that fitted into their lives more broadly; and many were unclear about whether they would be able to do it (or some had unrealistic aspirations about what they would be able to achieve).

It is important to acknowledge the progress that has been made through *Improving Choice* to improve the transition points and smooth the joins between learning institutions, encourage services that provide support to LLDD to join up more seamlessly from the learner's point of view, and stimulate the development of high quality local learning provision that enables learners to remain within their family, friendship and community networks rather than break these links to access out of county provision. We found lots of innovative thinking and provision designed to help learners transfer seamlessly from one

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institution to the next, including interventions designed to familiarise learners with the institution to which they are moving before they actually make the transition, and measures designed to ensure that support is continuous across different institutions. Also, there is much evidence to suggest that learner-centred approaches to planning and needs assessment are embraced widely within the region. In particular, a number of institutions use Person Centred Planning techniques to place the learner at the centre of planning discussions, and involve their parents and other significant stakeholders.

However, the needs analysis suggests that even though progress has been made to make provision more seamless, there is another challenge that still needs to be addressed: learning providers might now be more joined up, but learners still lack a sense of an overarching, joined-up 'narrative' for their learning.

There appear to be a number of factors that militate against learners being able to establish a coherent narrative for their learning:

- Haphazard sharing of information between organisations – and sometimes *within* organisations – which requires learners to re-tell their story each time they enrol at a new institution, thus creating a sense of repeatedly 'starting from scratch'. In some cases, information is shared but it is out of date; in other cases information is simply not shared because the individuals in the 'sending' organisation consider it to be potentially stigmatising.
- A history of repeated transfers between schools. A number of learners explained to us that they had moved between institutions on a number of occasions either because the school could not cater for their needs and suggested that they were better suited elsewhere, or because their condition had been incorrectly interpreted as 'bad behaviour' leading to exclusion from school.
- Transfers to and from FE institutions in different areas – including out of county provision – which can involve uprooting learners from their friends, family and community, and create problems when the time comes for them to reintegrate.
- Uncertainty about the continuation of funding. Bearing in mind that LSC funding is time-limited for two to three years, some learners and parents are unsure what will

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happen after the point at which their funding ends. As a result, they tend not to think too far ahead.

- Uncertainty about the sustainability of provision as a result of the fact that some current FE provision – especially transitional provision – is *pilot* provision and learners and parents are anxious that it could be discontinued.

5.1.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Practitioners' most common response to this challenge is to ask whether in fact it is appropriate to suggest that 'mainstream' learners' more seamless pathway is an ideal to which we should aspire in planning provision for LLDD. Practitioners suggest that in order for learners to have a clear, coherent story for their learning, their pathways need, almost by definition, to be fixed and rigid. Such rigidity is not appropriate for learners whose needs may change over time, and for whom provision therefore must be flexible and responsive. In order to help learners for whom the standard stories do not apply because the rigid pathways on which they are based are not appropriate, practitioners suggested the following measures:

- Robust early planning is absolutely crucial, because it is only on the basis of planning insights that the FE sector can anticipate the nature and extent of learner demand and organise itself accordingly. Practitioners agree that the sector needs to start planning for LLDDs' arrival in FE much earlier than it currently does—before learners reach Year 10. Currently, too many learners reach this point with no clear idea of what their options are and what to do next. Planning is the critical foundation on which subsequent partnership arrangements and delivery approaches will be based. Practitioners tend to agree that effectively anticipating need in advance is even more important than guiding or motivating learners later on.
- Learners need clear and appropriate information, advice and guidance (IAG) before they enter FE to explore their needs and aspirations and also to explain to them how the different aspects of their FE programme will respond to these needs. This also depends on greater engagement with special schools pre-16—an area in which the LSC recognises that it needs to improve. A key part of this process is finding ways to give learners a voice and a stake in tailoring their educational package. Learners also need an

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‘exit strategy’ out of FE, again based on timely and appropriate IAG, and support for transition out of FE. Both the pre-entry and ‘exit strategy’ planning needs input from Social Services, WBL, and voluntary/community organisations, and should take the form of a ‘career plan’ or ‘life plan’ which brings into alignment different organisations’ views of what a sufficiently aspirational, but appropriate and feasible pathway looks like. This ensures a holistic package for the learner, and lays the foundations for consistency of approach across different organisations/services (learning, health care, social care). For this collaborative, multi-agency planning to be effective, there needs to be greater understanding by organisations of the role of other organisations (a point related to the ‘cultural change’ challenge noted in Section 6.5). The person-centred planning approaches already widely used within the region are acknowledged to be an excellent starting point for this collaborative planning.

- Encourage learners to define a goal and *aim high*. Practitioners agreed that LLDD are as entitled to have high expectations as their ‘mainstream’ peers, and should receive help to enable them to strive to achieve their goals. It should be explained to LLDD how the provision that is offered is aligned with their aspirations. LLDDs’ sense of a clear goal to work towards is critical as it prevents them from ‘drifting’. One of the challenges in goal-setting is the finite nature of *Improving Choice* funding. As we have highlighted above, one of the factors that contribute to LLDD having a fragmented ‘story’ for their learning is the uncertainty surrounding their funding situation. Practitioners agree that there is a need for plans for LLDD that extend beyond the two or three years of *Improving Choice* funding.

5.2 Challenge 2: Employers are insufficiently engaged in the LLDD debate and need to be brought on board and encouraged to offer meaningful opportunities to learners

Respondents in the needs analysis felt that the role of employers is critical in moving the sector forward as far as LLDD is concerned. Many respondents are keen to ensure that a large number of meaningful work opportunities are available for learners, and a greater diversity of work experiences than has traditionally been offered to LLDD—which for many years tended to be based on volunteering in charity shops. There is widespread recognition across the region of the value of what some respondents term ‘work engagement’—that is helping learners understand the spirit of work, support the

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development of generic work skills, and, for those that have the capability, prepare them for employment.

However, many respondents suggest that employers in the region are not as engaged in this debate as they should be. As a result, opportunities for learners to progress out of FE and into employment, or for learners to gain some exposure to the world of work while they are in FE, are limited. Respondents suggest that discrimination within the workplace is the main factor preventing employers from seeing the value of employing LLDD. Anecdotal evidence suggests that employers are unwilling to commit to the expense of making the necessary modifications to premises and facilities that could enable LLDD to work, and that employers perceive the 'risks' of employing LLDD in some industrial environments as being prohibitive.

Employers' unwillingness to offer employment opportunities to LLDD has the effect of creating a 'log jam' in the FE sector in which learners, having potentially developed some useful skills, simply cannot make the transition into employment. The learners simply remain in FE, presumably until their funding runs out, at which point they run the risk of becoming NEET. It is also worth noting that in some cases an all too great awareness of limited opportunities for employment has an impact on the expectations and aspirations of LLDD who are at an earlier stage in the FE system. And this can be another factor influencing learners' learning narrative described earlier.

(Note: There are some notable examples of links having been established between providers and employers, but this is still very much the exception rather than the rule. We also recognise that it is not possible or appropriate for every LLDD to progress into full employment. However, for many learners who we spoke to, work and the sense of independence that it brings, is central to their aspirations.)

5.2.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Practitioners agree that engaging employers in the region to get their input into the discussion around LLDD is hugely important, and that employer engagement will become easier when momentum is increased and a critical mass of organisations come on board.

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However, there is a difference of opinion among practitioners about which types of organisation to engage first to build this critical mass. Some practitioners feel that larger employers are often easier to engage than small or medium-sized enterprises simply because they have more time and resources to devote to this area of activity, and many are keen to deliver on high profile targets for corporate social responsibility. Other practitioners suggest that smaller organisations are easier to engage since this can be done (at least initially, informally) on the basis of a personal relationship. Staff from New Age Training (which hosts the Mayflower project) in Bedfordshire and Luton, suggest that in their experience, they have been most effective in engaging employers in instances in which the employer has a vested interest in the LLDD agenda because, for example, they have a family member with a learning difficulty and/or disability. It is obviously difficult to identify organisations with a vested interest in the LLDD agenda without having some sort of prior relationship in place. Through the use of roadshows and case studies of learners who have gone into jobs/work placements, The Mayflower has had some success in Bedfordshire and Luton in raising employer awareness and sharing good practice and success stories.

One way of challenging employers' expectations about LLDD is to establish work placements for LLDD that then (in the instances in which it is appropriate) enable the LLDD to progress into full employment. This approach gives LLDD an experience of working life and independence and at the same time enables employers – without the need for a long-term commitment, which may be off-putting – to see that LLDD can be valuable team members and assets to their organisation. This could be enabled by the creation of specialized, appropriately narrow job descriptions for LLDD geared to the execution of highly-specific (but nevertheless important) tasks within a wider process or job role. This would enable an employer to see clearly that an LLDD can do something useful for them (and also understand what an LLDD can't do). One practitioner cited the example of a female LLDD who works one day a week in an office shredding paper. This LLDD gains job satisfaction from her role and from the sense of independence and professionalism it encourages; it is clearly within her capability; and it provides a context for her to gain experience of a workplace. From the employer's point of view, having the learner in the office has served to remove some of the stigma, mystery and apprehension surrounding LLDD.

There is a recognition that providers' capability to engage employers – and employers' capabilities and capacity to take on LLDD – varies greatly across the region. This variation in capacity and capability needs to be understood so that targeted strategies to employer engagement can be developed in each of the six local areas—with regional co-ordination as necessary, since in general, practitioners are keen for greater opportunity to cross-pollinate ideas and share good practice regionally. In particular, practitioners feel that there is an opportunity to do much more to engage public sector organisations in the region.

Finally, practitioners recognise that as they seek to engage employers, the sector is not standing still. There are increasing numbers of learners coming through the FE system with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) who want to go into employment—employment provision needs to be made available that responds to this demand.

5.3 Challenge 3: There is an opportunity to do more to co-ordinate the development of skills and capabilities across organisations

Through *Improving Choice*, great progress has been made in increasing local learning providers' capacity to respond to the needs of LLDD. Through the needs analysis and other recent programmes, the LSC is taking steps to enhance its understanding of current and future need (for instance, the arrival in FE of learners who were premature babies and whose condition has been managed subsequently by medical intervention, learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorder [ASD] and Asperger's Syndrome, learners with PMLD). Responding to learners' needs effectively requires organisations to identify their own needs in relation to current and future cohorts and develop their provision – including facilities and staff skills – accordingly.

Evidence from the needs analysis suggests that *Improving Choice* has prompted the development of extensive training opportunities within the region—particularly in Suffolk and Bedfordshire and Luton where respectively the Development and Training Unit (DTU) and Mayflower, established under the *Improving Choice* Pathfinder, have sought to build capacity and develop skills among the learning workforce.

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What makes these training approaches effective and compelling is that they do not rely simply on publishing a training prospectus of skills-based programmes and getting people to sign up; they are based on a commitment to:

- work in partnership with learning providers to understand exactly what the staff skill need is, based on the needs of the LLDD cohort in that organisation at that time (and in future)
- deliver tailored training to build capacity and meet that need.

Whilst progress has undoubtedly been made in building capacity and addressing skills gaps within the sector, insights gleaned from the experience of the Mayflower and DTU suggest that a co-ordinated and more tailored approach to training that is sensitive to the organisational context in which learning will be delivered is the most effective way of equipping organisations to respond properly to the needs of their learners. By understanding the context and the resources available to an organisation, one also creates the conditions for the development of a sustainable training model based on a ‘cascade’, in which staff are able to upskill their peers themselves.

5.3.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Practitioners suggest that a more co-ordinated approach to developing skills and capabilities would be one in which:

- Training is focused on areas of current and future need (based on existing and future cohorts), and responsive to the specific institutional context in which learning is delivered.
- Training addresses the development of appropriate attitudes and values as well as practical skills—to build or strengthen the culture of inclusion within the organisation.
- Recognises prior skills and offers continuity of developmental support for staff who have already received some training and who wish to enhance their practice.
- There is a collaborative, more strategic approach to ‘buying in’ training in which organisations in an area jointly identify local need and undertake training together (or decide to specialize in particular skill areas [broadly a ‘Centre of Excellence’ model] and

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share these skills locally [see below]). At present, such an approach is being delivered at Great Yarmouth College, through a partnership with Action for Blind People; Huntingdon Regional College, through a partnership with RNIB; City College Norwich and Easton College in Norfolk are working in collaboration; and the DTU in Suffolk is delivering training to the learning support assistant [LSA] group in each of Sense East's colleges. Practitioners indicate training should involve WBL, healthcare and social care organisations, as well as specialist agencies such as RNIB and Sense. This joint collaborative approach could be supported by peer reviews of institutions' training provision—something that is already taking place in some

- Conditions are created for a more sustainable training cascade, in which staff from one institution who have particular expertise, e.g. in Autism, train not only other staff in their organisation, but also staff in other local organisations, who have less extensive knowledge of that particular condition. This could also create the conditions for staff to put to good use locally skills that become 'redundant' when a course involving particular LLDD is discontinued.
- Opportunities for skill development or awareness-raising are offered to staff who do not deal with LLDD on a daily basis, but who nevertheless come into contact with them from time to time, or to staff who do not deal with LLDD directly.
- Learners have an input into discussions about what staff skills are needed.

Practitioners feel that accreditation could be an extra incentive for teaching staff participating in training, and also for staff from care/community/voluntary groups. Units could be completed as part of individuals' continuing professional development (CPD).

5.4 Challenge 4: In the face of a range of constraints, partnership working requires considerable energy and commitment to translate it from aspiration to reality

The report on the evaluation of the *Improving Choice* Pathfinder made a number of recommendations for effective partnership working in the region, recognising the conditions in which partnership is currently most successful.¹³ In general, the needs

¹³ LSC East of England, *Improving Choice in post 16 education for Young People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities: An evaluation of the East of England Pathfinder*, June 2006, pp.11-13.

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analysis identified a strong ethos of collaboration and partnership in all six local areas at the level of aspiration—and, in most cases, at the level of delivery. However, some respondents indicate that in some larger, more complex organisations, it can be difficult to establish a sense of partnership *within* the organisation, let alone between that organisation and others.

Unsurprisingly, the effectiveness of partnerships seems to be influenced by features of local context such as institutional or administrative boundaries, funding constraints, aspects of organisational culture, and the historic relations between the participating organisations. There are occasionally tensions between agencies concerned with delivering learning and agencies concerned with delivering care, which reflect wider and fundamental debates around the definition of these terms and what they comprise. Respondents report that such tensions are often the cause of frustration and inertia, but in the most effective partnerships they are felt to be productive and creative.

In general strong links exist between feeder schools and FE. Multi-agency steering groups are felt to be effective in providing local strategic leadership. Specifically, the problem-solving and solution-finding function of the LSC Panel is felt by many to be an excellent example of effective, learner-centred partnership working.

Although there are a number of formal delivery partnerships and governance structures in place, it is striking how much significance respondents in the needs analysis place on informal, personal relations and networks. These are felt to be critical to the process by which new ideas are developed and good practice shared (although this is not to say that many respondents would not value more formal, structured approaches to sharing good practice). But as well as supporting innovation, these relations are important to facilitate routine information sharing. In some instances, particularly those in which sensitive information about learners (that could potentially be stigmatising) is concerned, informal conversations between professionals are as important as the formal, institutionalised systems for exchanging information. A number of respondents suggested that maintaining these informal networks of key individuals is difficult in the face of so much organisational and role change within the region.

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A number of respondents suggested that the health sector is not as fully engaged as it might be. The needs analysis indicates that learners with more complex medical needs (e.g. learners who were premature babies whose condition has been managed subsequently through medical intervention and who now to some extent self-manage their condition through the use of personal medical equipment) are likely to be accessing FE in years to come. The presence in FE of learners with such needs will require input from health services alongside input from learning and care providers—not to mention further specialist skills development on behalf of FE staff.

5.4.1 Conclusions and recommendations

With the publication of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Department of Health (DH), and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) joint strategy, *Progression through partnership*, there is now a structure in place for partnership working to support LLDD.¹⁴ Practitioners recognise that effective partnership is critical to the delivery of an appropriate learning, healthcare and social care service to LLDD. Partnership has an important reciprocal relationship with the planning process that is designed to anticipate and respond to learner need: organisations need to work in partnership to pool and exchange the information about LLDD upon which planning decisions are made; the outcomes of those planning decisions necessarily require organisations to work together in a joined-up way to deliver as seamless a service as possible from the learner's perspective.

There is general agreement that there is an opportunity for greater regional co-ordination of LLDD activity within the East of England, and a regional strategy group could be the vehicle to facilitate this. This regional strategy group could provide a governance framework into which local steering groups will feed, as well as a mechanism for capturing and sharing good practice within the region. Practitioners are keen to ensure that any such regional partnership mechanism incorporates much greater engagement from health services than has been the case to date in local areas. In order to reduce staff's time commitment to a greater number of meetings, they are keen to explore the use of innovative online means, e.g. discussion fora, blogs, and online communities.

¹⁴ DfES, DH and DWP, *Progression through partnership: A joint strategy between the DfES, DH and DWP on the role of Further Education and training in supporting people with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve fulfilling lives*, London: HM Government, June 2007.

To promote the spread and ‘mainstreaming’ of LLDD awareness, practitioners suggest that members of LLDD steering groups seek to become involved in other local groups and committees, e.g. Train to Gain.

5.5 Challenge 5: Ongoing skill development is important, but to be effective this needs to be delivered in the context of broader cultural change

The *Improving Choice* Pathfinder has demonstrated what can happen if learning is delivered in a way that is more flexible and more closely tailored to the needs of LLDD. Evidence from the needs analysis suggests that this flexibility has a real impact on outcomes for learners—learners who, under normal circumstances, would face significant challenges in standard FE provision.

The challenge now is to understand how to take the lessons from the experience of the Pathfinder and spread these across the region. We need, however, to be sensitive to the fact that this degree of flexibility in delivery may present challenges for learning providers and other organisations (i.e. social services, health organisations), which are larger, more complex, and traditionally organised in quite rigid ways. As well as posing challenges for the structure of organisations, the Pathfinder also suggests changes in the ways in which organisations relate to one another. Putting the LLDD at the centre of provision and fitting services – learning services, care services, health services – around them requires new configurations of organisation and new ways of working across organisational boundaries. Evidence from the needs analysis suggests that organisations are working hard to present a more seamless and co-ordinated offer to learners, but this is often frustrated by challenges related to the strictures of the current funding regime, the limitations of organisational remit, and entrenched professional culture—an over-reliance on ‘the way we’ve always done it’. To respond to these constraints requires considerable creativity and energy on behalf of organisations, and a commitment to make it work for learners on behalf of the professionals involved. Respondents agree that provision such as the ‘In Control’ model of individualised budgets have the potential to support organisational working across boundaries with the learner at the centre.

Many respondents agree that in addition to training designed to build capacity and develop specific skills related to working with LLDD (e.g. Autism awareness, Makaton, British Sign Language [BSL], ASDAN) – which are of course critical – there is a need for training to support cultural or mindset change among organisations to enable them to engage fully with the opportunities presented by *Improving Choice*. Respondents from the learning sector go a little further than this suggesting that a crucial part of the mindset shift is not merely about working effectively in a multi-agency partnership; but also about emphasising the primacy of *learning* in that partnership, and helping individuals with care of health roles to understand those roles in relation to the delivery of learning. Such training is concerned not only with skills development, but with supporting understanding and instilling particular kinds of values.

5.5.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Practitioners agree that much has been achieved in the region as far as responding to LLDD need is concerned. Many agree that providers that haven't engaged historically with LLDD are seeing the success of others and coming onboard. But practitioners also agree that there is an opportunity to do more. *Improving Choice* has created the conditions for change, but there is a need to maintain momentum and energy around LLDD. *Progression through partnership* will go some way to achieving this, but the risk, of course, is that, given the structural changes to the DfES hastened by the arrival of the new Prime Minister, as one respondent put it, "the strategy is two weeks old and two weeks out of date". Many practitioners feel that the personalisation agenda within FE, and in particular current initiatives concerned with personalised funding and individualised budgets (through the 'In control' project¹⁵) offer important opportunities to respond more effectively to the needs of LLDD. However the policy climate may be shifting, above all there is felt to be a need for *local and regional* momentum to be maintained and efforts to be redoubled.

As far as support for ongoing cultural change is concerned, much emphasis was attached to the availability and dissemination of strong, positive stories of good outcomes for LLDD.

¹⁵ For more information about the 'In control – Dynamite project', please see DfES, DH and DWP, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

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These stories are important for everyone working in the sector; however, they are felt to be particularly important for parents, since such stories can encourage parents to adjust their views of LLDD where these are either unrealistic or too limited in ambition, and parents can use their son's or daughter's own stories to change the views of others. Stories of strong, effective *family support* leading to good learner outcomes are also felt to be extremely important, as, of course, are stories involving the successful engagement of employers.

Practitioners feel that the next phase of cultural change in the sector will be characterized by further collaboration and innovation—which will require support from the LSC and other partners, and, quite likely, changes to funding and planning structures. Organisations will recognise what they can and can't offer to LLDDs and work more strategically with other local partners to refer LLDD to them when they can offer a more appropriate learning experience. Such approaches are dependent on responding to the challenges above concerned with support for joined-up skills development (Section 6.3) and partnership working (Section 6.4).

6. Recommended action points for the LSC

Based on the findings from the needs analysis, we suggest that the LSC East of England consider the following actions:

- (a) Ensure that planning conversations take place sufficiently early to allow for effective action to be taken and partnerships established (Section 5.1.1), and that such conversations reflect the findings of the needs analysis to ensure that there is widespread visibility of the nature and extent of LLDD demand within the region. (Section 3.2.3)
- (b) Engage providers and partners in a dialogue about the appropriate levels of resource and support, and about the other positive environmental conditions, that could enable them to respond to increased LLDD demand in the short, medium and long term. An important part of this discussion is the recognition that resource may need to be provided to support greater numbers of FE providers in assessing LLDD need at the point at which LLDD enter FE—in line with recommendation (d) below. (Section 3.2.3)
- (c) Engage providers in a discussion about how to develop or strengthen a co-ordinated, consistent, and sustainable mechanism for gathering and disseminating information on the changing pattern of need. (Section 3.2.3)
- (d) Drive for the use of assessment approaches and diagnostic tools (and associated training) that enable greater precision and sophistication in assessment. (Section 3.2.3)
- (f) Promote timely, accurate, and standardised approaches to sharing information within and between organisations (between school and FE, and between learning organisations and other organisations [e.g. social services] if necessary and appropriate). (Section 5.1)
- (g) Work with other organisations (e.g. Connexions, schools, other brokerage services) to ensure that learners and their families have access to high quality IAG to clarify expectations before learners join FE. (Section 5.1)

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- (h) Promote and provide support for intensive, region-wide employer engagement activity, and encourage providers to share insights and success stories on what has proved effective in engaging employers and helping LLDD to progress meaningfully into employment in whatever form. (Section 5.2.1)
- (i) Communicate the vision for a more strategic, co-ordinated approach to learning providers responding to need within a local area. This vision will involve ‘joined-up’ approaches to training that enable clusters of local learning providers to develop awareness and capability across their local area in an efficient, strategically-focused way. The vision could also describe a situation in which, when local provider partnerships reach a sufficient state of maturity, they offer a ‘campus’-style arrangement, in which an organisation refers an LLDD to a partner organisation if that organisation can be demonstrated to be better equipped to respond to that learner’s particular need. Such an approach could link into the LSC’s planned ‘Centre of Excellence’ programme for providers demonstrating exemplar practice in responding to the needs of LLDD. (Section 5.3.1)
- (j) Explore opportunities for greater local co-ordination of LLDD activity as part of the activities suggested in the region’s *Learning for living and work regional implementation plan*.¹⁶ (Section 5.4.1)
- (k) Provide support for ongoing cultural change in the sector within the region, and build on the successes achieved so far through the Improving Choice Pathfinder, by delivering on the recommendations above, and especially by communicating widely strong, positive stories of good outcomes for LLDD. (Section 5.5.1)

¹⁶ LSC East of England, *Learning for Living and Work Implementation Plan for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities: Consultation document*, March 2007.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Bibliography

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Appendix 1 – List of respondents participating in the needs analysis

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Sue – Management and Personnel Services

Katrina O'Brien – Bedford College

Lynn Macqueen – IWG Education and Research

Harriet Martin – Luton Borough Council

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Roger Gale – Sense East

Ian Radford – Huntingdon Regional College

Karen Charlton – Huntingdon Regional College

Phil Pike – Phoenix School, Peterborough

Mandy Green – Phoenix School, Peterborough

Linda Ferguson – Phoenix School, Peterborough

Jenni Hepworth – Connexions

Leo Bishop – Peterborough Primary Care Trust

Essex

Mike Henson – Castle Point and Rochford Adult Community College

Paul Sampson – St Nicholas School E2E

Lynda Ingham – Southend Council

Steve Bailey – Mencap

Hertfordshire

Steve Lerwill – Oaklands College

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Sarah Moreland – Oaklands College

Paul Dolman – St Elizabeth’s Residential College

Patricia Halliday – Connexions

Marian Stevenson – Herts County Council

Jill White – Hertford Regional College

Norfolk

Isobel Brewin – City College Norwich – Phoenix Purple Group

Danusia Latosinski – City College Norwich – Phoenix Purple Group

Cerys Hawksworth – College of West Anglia

Lesley Tizard – College of West Anglia

Nick Morgan Baker – Great Yarmouth College

Carol Holness – Great Yarmouth College

Jean Simpson – Connexions

Steve Sargent – Norfolk Social Services

Suffolk

Andy Gooding – Suffolk College

Shane Smeaton-Small – Suffolk College

John Blyth – Otley College

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Boyd – Suffolk College

Annalise – Suffolk College

Cheryl Sharland – Suffolk County Council