



Leading learning and skills

Review of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark

A Framework for Lambeth and Southwark

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Introduction

This report describes a framework for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. The framework has seven elements, with twenty-four components specific to the two boroughs. The elements are:

1. A strategy for employability and employment
2. A shared vision and strategy for adult and community learning
3. A strategy for learners with mental health difficulties
4. Increased local capacity
5. Increased flexibility
6. Continuous professional development opportunities to support the framework

The views and experiences of learners

The intention is that the framework is applicable to the whole of London, though specific components may vary depending on local circumstance.

The framework builds on the well-established provision, sophisticated understanding of practitioners, and willingness of services to work together, evident across Lambeth and Southwark. An evolution is proposed which sharpens thinking and practice in the light of the changing expectations of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the government's inclusion agenda, and the Learning and Skills Council's own report: 'Through Inclusion to Excellence'. The principles and practice of inclusive learning inform the whole report.

There are 3140 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities currently in learning and skills provision in Lambeth and Southwark. Some 4026 pupils with special educational needs are in years 9 to 14 in local schools. These figures alone indicate the importance of a coherent shared vision and strategy for provision; one which encompasses also the learning needs of those five-and-a-half thousand Lambeth and Southwark residents with mental health difficulties.

What learners want

As part of the review, we asked learners what they wanted from their learning. They wanted more say in decisions about their futures, more choices after school, earlier and greater focus on employment, and learning that led to jobs. Learners with complex and severe learning difficulties also wanted more choices, as well as more local provision, and for their different abilities to be recognised. All learners wanted to be listened to, and for things to change as a result of what they said.

What practitioners want

Practitioners in the two practitioner seminars held during the review set out their vision for learners and the planning principles they considered should inform the framework. They wanted learners to be active citizens, contributing to society, able to work where this was right for them, and able to articulate their aspirations and to make choices. Practitioners wanted there to be real choices for learners, based on greater realism about options once they leave education and training. They wanted greater flexibility in the system, so that learners' changing needs could be met sensitively and effectively. They wanted to see the breakdown of artificial barriers between provision, based on funding streams, organisational cultures, or misperceptions about each other's values and work. They considered it vital that learners could engage in learning at different times in their lives, and they wished to see the same value and respect attributed to learners who were not able to work, as to those who could. Practitioners want the Learning and Skills Council to build on existing expertise and experience, and to invest in change. They also wish to share the analysis and information provided in this report.

Improving life chances?

The report asks whether enough is being done to improve the life chances of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. Are the right things being done in the right way? It concludes that despite the commitment, skill and hard work of everyone involved with these learners, some things have to change, and more could be done.

Pat Hood
August 2006

About the report

In the first three sections of the report, the statistical and other evidence gathered during the review is set out in detail and analysed. The fourth section provides insights into what learners said about their learning, and about practitioners' views. Section 5 describes the framework for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. Annex A pulls together the main findings and recommendations.

Section 1: Existing provision

Overview of learners by residence and learning difficulty/disability

This section of the report looks at existing post-16 provision in Lambeth and Southwark, beginning with an overview of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who currently attend provision in the area, and who either live in Lambeth and Southwark or travel in from other areas. Learners are shown by their primary disability or learning difficulty. Statistics are drawn from the Learning and Skills Council's Individual Learning Record and do not include school sixth forms.

Figure 1 shows learners with a primary *disability*.

Figure 2 shows learners with a primary *learning difficulty*.

Figure 1: Students with self-declared LDD (funded & unfunded) – area of residence & by type of disability

	Lambeth & Southwark	Other area (inc unknown)	Total	% from L&S
Visual impairment	77	48	125	61.6
Hearing impairment	81	86	167	48.5
Disability affecting mobility	139	54	193	72.0
Other physical disability	166	47	213	77.9
Other medical condition (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	132	64	196	67.3
Emotional/behavioural difficulties	83	24	107	77.6
Mental ill-health	479	112	591	81.0
Temporary disability after illness (e.g. post-viral)	12	13	25	48.0
Profound complex disabilities	10	1	11	90.9
Multiple disabilities	91	32	123	74.0
Other	275	108	383	71.8
All with disability	1545	589	2134	72.4
No disability	404	169	573	70.5
Not known/information not provided	316	117	433	73.0
Total:	2265	875	3140	72.1

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Figure 2: Students with self-declared LDD (funded & unfunded)–area of residence & by type of learning difficulty

	Lambeth & Southwark	Other area (inc unknown)	Total	% from L&S
Moderate learning difficulty	352	82	434	81.1
Severe learning difficulty	181	35	216	83.8
Dyslexia	422	228	650	64.9
Dyscalculia	7	0	7	100.0
Other specific learning difficulty	70	24	94	74.5
Multiple learning difficulties	39	7	46	84.8
Other	153	42	195	78.5
All with learning difficulty	1224	418	1642	74.5
No learning difficulty	641	365	1006	63.7
Not known/information not provided	400	92	492	81.3
Total:	2265	875	3140	72.1

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Comment

The two figures show:

- a total of 3140 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending post-16 provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council and from other sources, either living in Lambeth and Southwark or travelling in from other areas to study
- nearly three-quarters of learners attending provision in the area live in Lambeth and Southwark

The largest group of learners is of people with dyslexia, 650 learners, of whom about two-thirds live in the area.

The second largest group of learners is of people with mental health difficulties, 591 learners, of who over 805 live in the area

The third largest group of learners is of people with moderate learning difficulties, of who over 352 live in the area.

The next largest group is of learners with sensory disabilities, 292 learners, with visual or hearing disabilities. Less than half of those with hearing disabilities live in the area, whilst nearly two-thirds of those with visual disabilities live in the area.

The relatively small number of learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, 107 learners, is unlikely to reflect the real number of learners with such difficulties. Young learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties are amongst those least likely to self-assess as having difficulties. However, of those identified here, over two-thirds live in the area.

Almost all the small group of learners with profound complex disabilities, 11 learners, live in the area. It is worth looking at this group alongside learners with multiple disabilities, 123 learners, nearly three-quarters of whom live in the area. Both groups of learners require high levels of expert support, including the provision of adapted accommodation. These figures do not include learners with the most severe and complex disabilities who attend specialist colleges, and who are described later in the report.

Learners with severe learning difficulties constitute another significant group, 216 learners, of who over 181 live in the area.

Learners by age and learning difficulty/disability

To find out more about the profiles of these learners taking part in existing provision, we look next at their ages by type of learning difficulty and/or disability.

Figure 3 shows learners with a primary *disability*.

Figure 4 shows learners with a primary *learning difficulty*.

As in the earlier figures, information is based on learners' self-assessment.

Figure 3: Students with self-declared LDD (funded & unfunded) – age by type of *disability*

	Under 16	16-18	19-25	26 & older	Total
Visual impairment	3	7	12	103	125
Hearing impairment	4	38	15	110	167
Disability affecting mobility	2	4	7	180	193
Other physical disability	4	8	16	185	213
Other medical condition (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	1	15	19	161	196
Emotional/behavioural difficulties	38	25	15	29	107
Mental ill-health	65	9	45	472	591
Temporary disability after illness (e.g. post-viral)	0	0	0	25	25
Profound complex disabilities	0	0	0	11	11
Multiple disabilities	1	9	20	93	123
Other	7	34	61	281	383
All with disability	125	149	210	1650	2134
No disability	11	132	103	327	573
Not known/information not provided	35	86	83	229	433
Total:	171	367	396	2206	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Figure 4: Students with self-declared LDD (funded & unfunded) – age by type of *learning difficulty*

	Under 16	16-18	19-25	26 & older	Total
Moderate learning difficulty	62	108	60	204	434
Severe learning difficulty	1	16	42	157	216
Dyslexia	10	80	142	418	650
Dyscalculia	0	0	2	5	7
Other specific learning difficulty	7	34	12	41	94
Multiple learning difficulties	7	11	6	22	46
Other	7	56	16	116	195
All with learning difficulty	94	305	280	963	1642
No learning difficulty	67	48	69	822	1006
Not known/information not provided	10	14	47	421	492
Total:	171	367	396	2206	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Comment

The two figures show:

- most learners self-assessing as having emotional and behavioural difficulties are under 18 years old.
- the majority of learners with mental health difficulties are aged 26 and over
- the majority of learners with sensory difficulties and learners with physical and mobility difficulties are aged 26 and over
- a surprising number of learners with dyslexia are aged 26 and over, perhaps because their needs have been assessed for the first time during Skills for Life provision

Learners by type of funding and learning difficulty/disability

We identify next learners funded by the Learning and Skills Council and by the European Social fund (ESF) distributed via LSC.

Figure 5 shows learners with a primary *disability*.

Figure 6 shows learners with a primary *learning difficulty*.

Figure 5: Students with self-declared LDD – funding stream by type of disability

	Student has no LSC funding	Student has LSC &/or ESF funding	Total
Visual impairment	5	120	125
Hearing impairment	14	153	167
Disability affecting mobility	7	186	193
Other physical disability	23	190	213
Other medical condition (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	10	186	196
Emotional/behavioural difficulties	62	45	107
Mental ill-health	44	547	591
Temporary disability after illness (e.g. post-viral)	0	25	25
Profound complex disabilities	6	5	11
Multiple disabilities	15	108	123
Other	46	337	383
Total with a disability	232	1902	2134
No disability	29	544	573
Not known/information not provided	107	326	433
Total:	368	2772	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Figure 6: Students with self-declared LDD – funding stream by type of learning difficulty

	Student has no LSC funding	Student has LSC &/or ESF funding	Total
Moderate learning difficulty	98	336	434
Severe learning difficulty	73	143	216
Dyslexia	63	587	650
Dyscalculia	0	7	7
Other specific learning difficulty	26	68	94
Multiple learning difficulties	12	34	46
Other	14	181	195
Total with a learning difficulty	286	1356	1642
No learning difficulty	14	992	1006
Not known/information not provided	68	424	492
Total:	368	2772	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Comment

The two figures show that the majority of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are in provision funded by LSC or through the ESF.

Levels of programmes

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not an homogenous group, but instead range from learners with physical, sensory and other difficulties studying at Levels 4 or 5 or higher, and learners with cognitive difficulties studying at Pre-Entry Level. Figures 7 and 8 show the range of programmes being followed by learners in current provision.

Figure 7 shows level of programme by primary *disability*.

Figure 8 shows level of programme by primary *learning difficulty*.

Figure 7: Students with self-declared LDD (funded & unfunded by LSC) – highest level studied by type of disability

	Level 1 & Entry	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4, 5, or higher	Other	Total
Visual impairment	35	28	9	1	52	125
Hearing impairment	50	19	15	1	82	167
Disability affecting mobility	83	25	9	0	76	193
Other physical disability	95	44	21	3	50	213
Other medical condition (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	84	20	17	1	74	196
Emotional/behavioural difficulties	35	7	2	0	63	107
Mental ill-health	157	85	35	2	312	591
Temporary disability after illness (e.g. post-viral)	3	3	2	0	17	25
Profound complex disabilities	7	0	0	0	4	11
Multiple disabilities	44	7	6	0	66	123
Other	168	66	40	4	105	383
All with disability	761	304	156	12	901	2134
No disability	263	83	81	6	140	573
Not known/information not provided	144	104	60	5	120	433
Total:	1168	491	297	23	1161	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Figure 8: Students with self-declared LDD (funded & unfunded by LSC) – highest level studied by type of learning difficulty

	Level 1 & Entry	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4, 5, or higher	Other	Total
Moderate learning difficulty	201	36	13	0	184	434
Severe learning difficulty	142	1	2	0	71	216
Dyslexia	202	161	122	11	154	650
Dyscalculia	2	0	1	0	4	7
Other specific learning difficulty	39	12	4	0	39	94
Multiple learning difficulties	19	3	1	0	23	46
Other	104	23	22	1	45	195
All with learning difficulty	709	236	165	12	520	1642
No learning difficulty	289	126	89	5	497	1006
Not known/information not provided	170	129	43	6	144	492
Total:	1168	491	297	23	1161	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Comment

The two figures show that the majority of learners with moderate or severe learning difficulties are following Entry and Level 1 programmes, or Pre-Entry or non-accredited programmes shown as 'Other'.

There are very few learners with moderate learning difficulties on Level 2 programmes. Just under two-thirds of learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties on 'Other' programmes, with about another third on Entry and Level 1 programmes. Very few of these learners are on Level 2 programmes. Physical and sensory disabilities cover the entire ability range, but the majority of learners with physical and mobility difficulties in Lambeth and Southwark are following Entry/Level 1 and Level 2 programmes. Only 9 out of 125 learners with visual disabilities are studying at Level 3, and only 15 out of 167 learners with hearing disabilities are studying at Level 3. Learners with dyslexia, another disability which covers the ability range, are distributed from Entry to Level 3. Over half of the learners with mental health difficulties are on programmes in the 'Other' category, which includes non-accredited programmes.

Types of programme

Analysis of information provided by the Learning and Skills Council indicates:

- the majority of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are on programmes within the Preparation for Life and Work programme area
- Arts, Media and Publishing attract the next largest group of these learners, particularly learners aged 26 and over
- Information and Communication Technology attract the next largest group, again particularly learners aged 26 and over
- learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are least well-represented in Education and Training, Social Sciences, and, surprisingly, in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment

- very few learners aged 16-25, 4 learners, take part in Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, activities which are recognised as providing valuable real-life learning opportunities for young people with learning difficulties, and with emotional and behavioural difficulties

Modes of Attendance

The next figure shows the modes of attendance of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending provision in Lambeth and Southwark. It does not include learners resident in Lambeth and Southwark who are attending specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Modes of attendance are shown by age, and by receipt of LSC funding.

Figure 9: Students with self-declared LDD – age by funding stream & mode of attendance

	Under 16	16-18	19	20-25	26 & older	Total
Student has no LSC funding						
Full-time	6	5	1	6	3	21
Part-time	93	52	2	24	176	347
Sub-total	99	57	3	30	179	368
Student has LSC &/or ESF funding						
Full-time	4	266	37	102	260	669
Part-time	68	44	28	196	1767	2103
Sub-total	72	310	65	298	2027	2772
Total:	171	367	68	328	2206	3140

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Comment

The figure shows:

- the majority of full-time learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are funded by LSC or the ESF
- the majority of part-time learners are funded by LSC or the ESF
- there are 669 full-time LSC/ESF funded learners
- there are 2103 part-time LSC/ESF funded learners

Place of study

We look next at where learners study. Figure 10 shows the seven further and adult education providers located in Lambeth and Southwark, and the numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who attend them as a percentage of the student group. The numbers are based on learners' self-assessments.

Figure 10: Lambeth or Southwark located institutions–students with & without LDD (LSC funded & unfunded)

	Considers self to have LDD	Does not consider self to have LDD	No information provided	Total	% with LDD
BEC Ltd	31	412	37	480	6.5
Blackfriars Settlement	36	200	15	251	14.3
Lambeth College	1219	12828	6795	20842	5.8
London Borough of Southwark	105	533	139	777	13.5
Morley College	751	11850	0	12601	6.0
Myrrh Ltd	20	585	53	658	3.0
Southwark College	978	8675	13	9666	10.1
Total:	3140	35083	7052	45275	6.9

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Comment

The two biggest providers are Lambeth College and Southwark College, with Morley College a significant provider. At Southwark College, ten per cent of learners identify themselves as having a learning difficulty or disability. Adult provision run by London Borough of Southwark includes 13.5% of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whilst the smaller Blackfriars Settlement has 14.3% of its learners, 36 learners, with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Young learners in further education

The two further education colleges provide together for some 2197 learners who identify themselves as having learning difficulties or disabilities. Numbers are based on ILR returns. Lambeth College has 1210 of these learners, some 185 young learners of whom are on discrete courses, and 85 learners aged under 21 years supported on mainstream programmes. The college has eight full-time courses which range from Pre-Entry to Entry Level 3, distributed across its Clapham, Vauxhall, and Brixton centres. A variety of Level 1 programmes are offered. A Prince's Trust Team Programme provides opportunities for disaffected young people, some of whom are likely to have social and emotional difficulties.

Southwark College has 978 learners who identify themselves as having learning difficulties or disabilities, with about 20 of these learners on discrete programmes, and some 50 learners on Entry Level programmes. The college also offers a range of Level 1 programmes. About 100 learners are supported on mainstream programmes. Four of the college's Entry to Employment (E2E) learners have assessed themselves as having learning difficulties or disabilities, though in reality there are likely to be more E2E learners with difficulties. Both colleges offer Skills for Life provision at Entry Level and Level 1.

Learners in specialist independent colleges

In addition to learners attending provision based in Lambeth and Southwark, twenty learners resident in these areas are currently funded in specialist colleges. These placements are purchased individually by LSC using a funding matrix system which identifies the levels of specialist support required by each learner, with matrix cell H being learners with the most complex needs, and hence the highest level of support requirements.

An analysis of information provided by LSC shows, in Figure 11, the number of learners from Lambeth and Southwark who are attending specialist colleges.

Figure 11: Specialist college placements for learners resident in Lambeth and Southwark in 2005/06

	No of learners	Approx cost
Lambeth	15	£800,000
Southwark	5	£230,000
Total	20	£1,030,000

Source: Learning and Skills Council

Comment

Figure 11 identifies twenty learners attending specialist colleges, and their overall cost of £1,030,000. It is important to stress that learners attending specialist colleges usually have more than one complex disability. Most of the Lambeth and Southwark learners are in band H of the funding matrix. This indicates that the majority of them have complex needs and require very specialist teaching, support and therapies, accommodation, and technical aids. LSC reports that health and social services contributions to funding the Lambeth and Southwark placements are minimal. Lambeth's and Southwark's experiences in relation to contributions from other services differ from that of other local LSCs, where more contributions are made. The LSC needs to pursue joint funding with social services at a strategic level.

Learners on Entry to Employment programmes

In Lambeth, NACRO and TBG deliver E2E programmes. In Southwark, BOSCO, Southwark College, and Springboard are the E2E providers. In the year ending May 2006, there were 15 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities resident in Lambeth who attended E2E provision in the borough. In the same period, 144 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities living in Southwark attended E2E provision in that borough. Of course, some learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend E2E provision out of the two boroughs. In 2006, 41 of these learners from Lambeth and from Southwark attended E2E programmes elsewhere. Overall, a total of 200 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities resident in the two boroughs take part in E2E programmes.

Learners on European Social Fund programmes

The London Central Learning and Skills Council distributes European Social Funds to over thirty projects for disadvantaged and socially excluded young people, including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose needs cannot be met in other provision. The projects draw on the experience of national voluntary organizations such as Nacro and Raleigh International, as well as local organizations such as Roots and Shoots, and BOSCO, to develop practical learning activities, away from large institutions and classrooms, for young learners who often experience considerable emotional, social, and learning difficulties, and who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Activities range from two-day workshops which serve to direct learners to appropriate provision, short programmes for learners in care or leaving care, and longer programmes

lasting up to forty weeks. Considerable care is given to finding activities which motivate disaffected learners, for example building and repairing cars and bikes, arts, music, drama, horticulture, and sports. The main focus of all the programmes is on developing employability by improving self-confidence, helping with literacy, numeracy, and communications, assisting with job-seeking or planning the next step, and by supporting young people into the next stage of their lives. Some programmes are at Pre-Entry Level. Wherever possible, learners are encouraged to work toward qualifications, with short qualifications such as Health and Safety used to enable learners to experience success, and to motivate them to attend and work hard.

Information from LSC indicates a total of 959 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from central London taking part in March 2006 in these thirty programmes. Figure 12 shows the number of these learners who are from Lambeth and Southwark. The headings NEET/ESF and LSC/ESF refer to the two funding arrangements for programmes.

Figure 12: Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities resident in Lambeth and Southwark taking part in ESF funded projects, March 2006

	NEET/ESF	LSC/ESF
Lambeth	25	135
Southwark	29	111
	54	246
	Total: 300	

Source: Learning and Skills Council ILR F05 04-05

Figure 12 shows that just under a third of the total number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities taking part in ESF programmes in central London come from Lambeth and Southwark.

14-16 provision

Available information about 14-16 provision is incomplete, but it is worth setting out what has been received by way of emphasising the importance of this provision and its part in easing young people into the next stage of their education or training.

There are active 14-16 flexibility initiatives in both boroughs. Southwark has a Pathfinder project with overall about 800 learners involved. It has not been possible to identify separately those learners taking part who receive support under School Action Plus or School Action. Southwark College reports that about 40 Statemented pupils from special schools and about 6 Statemented pupils from mainstream schools take part in its link programme. These numbers are planned to rise by some 14 pupils in September 2006. Lambeth College report some 147 pupils on its discrete link programme for pupils with a range of special educational needs. Pupils on link programmes do not always progress into full-time provision within the same college. Sometimes, pupils attend link courses in more than one college. The College also runs extensive Level 1 and GCSE 14-16 programmes for learners with a range of learning abilities. In 2005-07, some 42 learners took part in GCSE Engineering, NVQ Level 1 Motorbike Maintenance and Repair, City & Guilds Level 1 Hairdressing, and Level 1 Beauty Therapy. From September 2006, 36 14-16 places will be

offered by 5 other providers as Lambeth College has reduced its earlier offer. Two Lambeth special schools will participate in the new programme. Schools have to pay full costs for the programmes. Staff estimate that about half of learners taking part in 14-16 programmes will have some kind of learning need. Special schools usually want programmes designed just for their learners. Lansdowne School is cited as an example of what an innovative special school can do to forge links with other organisations in order to secure work placements and other extension opportunities for its pupils. The school also offers placements for learners from other schools and from colleges.

Comment

Until this year, LSC has paid for link provision, but schools now have to purchase the programmes. There are serious consequences for small special schools if they have to purchase this provision; many do not have sufficient funding. Valuable opportunities for assessment and for introductions to college life and vocational learning will be lost.

Planners and practitioners have expressed concerns about the impact of the new Diploma on 14-16 link provision, in particular that individually designed programmes may be subsumed by a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. There is concern about how the new Diploma will be implemented at the Foundation level, with a call for strategic planning to begin now. Unless each learner has a well-developed individual learning plan with a named person responsible for its co-ordination, then learners may well find it difficult to make coherent sense of their learning as they move between the different providers delivering the Diploma. Staff who know most about learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be involved in deciding how the Foundation Diploma is to be implemented in Lambeth and Southwark.

Learners in adult and community learning

We look next at the main providers of adult and community learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. In Lambeth, all provision for adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is contracted out to Lambeth College, the main provider, Morley College, and the Community and Voluntary Education Centre (CAVE). Lambeth College offers some twenty-six discrete programmes, including programmes specifically for people with mental health difficulties, and a further eight programmes for adults with complex disabilities. In 2005/06, there are 350 enrolments on the programmes which are distributed across the college's three centres. Learners also take part in mainstream provision. Morley College offers three discrete programmes with 23 *enrolments*, as well as support for learners in mainstream programmes. CAVE provides two programmes with 16 *enrolments*.

Overall, the enrolments for discrete provision within the borough translate into 126 individual learners, 12 more than in April 2005. Some 300 other learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are on mainstream courses, though management information systems are not able to establish whether this figure relates to actual learners or to the number of enrolments. All courses are delivered during the day. The majority of learners are enrolled on between 3 and 8 courses per week.

In Southwark, the borough runs four programme areas delivering courses in two centres. About 15% of its ACL learners declare themselves to have learning difficulties or disabilities. Some 51 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take part in seven discrete courses. Two of these programmes in Arts and Crafts are delivered in day centres. A further 22 learners take part in chair-based exercise programmes delivered in day centres. Many adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are integrated into Skills for Life provision, with a higher proportion of learners with learning difficulties in Pre-Entry Level classes.

There are 388 *enrolments* for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the borough-run provision. Less than 18% of the borough adult learners are aged 60 and over. The borough has planned a reduction in the proportion of older learners on its programmes, from 2001 when over 60% of learners, including those with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, were aged 60 and over. Southwark Adult Learning Services has a close relationship with Maudesley Hospital which, for example, rents rooms at the Peckham Centre where it runs art classes for people with mental health difficulties, staffed by its own specialist tutors.

Southwark College runs two programmes for adult learners with learning difficulties, currently based at its Grange Centre. Some 146 learners take part in activities based at the Centre, attending from a couple of hours a week to much longer. Learners range in age from mid-twenties to fifties and older. The college also runs at its Bermondsey Centre two programmes for adults with mental health difficulties.

This part of the report has described the main current provision in Lambeth and Southwark. The next section of the report examines future demand for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Section 2: Future demand

In this section of the report, we look at likely future demand for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is important to bear in mind at this point that meeting this demand effectively does not mean simply providing 'more, or less, of the same'. It is better instead to ask how innovation and collaborative working can provide the coherent, flexible responses that learners need, and that enable them eventually to secure employment, achieve greater independence, or move into further training or education.

Demand from young people

We begin with an over-view of pupils with special educational needs in Lambeth and Southwark.

Figure 13: Pupils with SEN in Lambeth and Southwark – Years 9-14, by residence and SEN status

Resident in:	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement of SEN	Total
Lambeth or Southwark	1785	1087	659	3531
Not L or S	186	142	103	431
Not known	50	33	17	100
Total:	2021	1262	779	4062

Source: PLASC January 2005

Comment

Figure 13 shows that there are 4062 pupils with some form of special educational need attending years 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 in schools in Lambeth and Southwark. The majority of these learners live in the area, and are likely to expect to attend local provision if they move into the learning and skills sector. Some 3282 of these learners are not in receipt of a Statement of Special Educational Needs but are receiving support in mainstream schools.

Figure 14 shows the types of schools attended by pupils with special educational needs.

Figure 14: Pupils with SEN in Years 9-14, by type of school and area of residence

Residents of:	Academies	City Technology College	Community	Community special	Foundation	Foundation special	Voluntary aided	Total
Lambeth or Southwark	229	160	1821	318	45	47	911	3531
Not L or S	19	16	164	46	29	28	129	431
Not known	6	4	52	9	3	1	25	100
Total:	254	180	2037	373	77	76	1065	4062

Source: PLASC January 2005

Comment

Figure 14 indicates that the largest numbers of pupils with special educational needs, 3102 pupils, are in community schools and voluntary aided schools. There are surprisingly few in City Technology Colleges, and very few in Foundation Schools. Community special schools and Foundation special schools have over ten per cent, 449, of these pupils; an indicator of the number of pupils with more severe or complex needs. The next figure looks at learners by year of study.

Figure 15: Pupils with SEN in Years 9-14, by year of study and area of residence

Residents of:	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Total
Lambeth or Southwark	1238	1205	945	87	40	16	3531
Not L or S	112	159	137	14	7	2	431
Not known	28	38	32	0	0	2	100
Total:	1378	1402	1114	101	47	20	4062

Source: PLASC January 2005

Comment

Pupils with the more severe or complex special educational needs are more likely to stay into years 12, 13 and 14 at school. There are 168 pupils in these years, of which only 23 are not resident in Lambeth or Southwark, leaving 145 pupils with more complex or severe needs who are likely to want local provision or specialist college provision if they move into the learning and skills sector. These pupils are in addition to those children with complex needs who are in out-of-borough placements (see Figure 18). There is an increase in pupils with special educational needs in years 9 and 10, compared with those in year 11. Further examination of pupils in earlier secondary years and in primary schools would indicate whether this increase was a significant trend.

As one example of what we might expect to see, there is a growing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders coming through primary schools because improved diagnosis and broader definition of the disability have led to a national increase in the numbers of children identified as having some form of autism. Recent studies indicate that one per cent of children in Great Britain may have autistic spectrum disorders. Similarly, as a growing number of infants with complex and severe disabilities survive into childhood, we would expect to see more pupils with these disabilities moving from primary to secondary school, and then into the learning and skills sector.

It is outside the remit of this Review to conduct a detailed examination of health statistics about disabilities and learning difficulties in newborn babies, or to look at the numbers of primary school children with specific disabilities or learning difficulties. However, if the Learning and Skills Council is serious about *long-term planning* to meet needs, and about securing the right size of budget to enable it to do so effectively, then it may wish to include in its forthcoming pan-London work a survey of relevant London health and primary school data in order to identify likely future numbers, and any specific trends in particular disabilities or learning difficulties.

Figure 16 provides an overview of the nature of the learning difficulties and/or disabilities of children in years 9 to 14 in Lambeth and Southwark.

Figure 16: Lambeth and Southwark pupils – primary SEN by SEN status in Years 9-14

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement of SEN	Total
Unspecified	896	1	0	897
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	2	4	109	115
Behaviour, emotional & social	294	550	199	1043
Hearing impairment	6	8	6	20
Miscode ?	1	0	0	1
Moderate learning difficulties	636	370	186	1192
Multi-sensory impairment	0	0	1	1
Other difficulty/disability	41	50	15	106
Physical disability	6	5	38	49
Profound & multiple learning	0	1	9	10
Speech, language & communication	63	86	43	192
Severe learning difficulty	1	2	58	61
Specific learning difficulty	73	182	107	362
Visual impairment	2	3	8	13
Total:	2021	1262	779	4062

Source: PLASC January 2005

Comment

Figure 16 identifies the four largest groups of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which are:

- 1192 pupils with moderate learning difficulties
- 1043 pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties
- 362 pupils with specific learning difficulties
- 115 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders

These figures reflect the national picture, where learners with moderate learning difficulties and learners with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties are the largest groups in the schools, and in the learning and skills sector.

Figure 16 shows also that 897 pupils are receiving support under School Action but do not have their learning difficulties or disabilities identified in the database.

Figure 17 enables us to find out more about the smaller numbers of Statemented pupils and these larger groups of non-Statemented pupils and in particular, whether there are differences in the numbers in each year cohort. The figure shows the numbers of pupils in year groups 9-14 who are supported under School Action, School Action Plus or who are Statemented.

Figure 17: Lambeth or Southwark pupils – year of study by SEN status

	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
School Action	693	731	552	39	6	0	2021
School Action Plus	450	439	341	18	14	0	1262
Statement of SEN	235	232	221	44	27	20	779
Total:	1378	1402	1114	101	47	20	4062

Source: PLASC January 2005

Comment

Figure 17 serves to emphasise points made earlier about the large numbers of non-Statemented pupils with special educational needs who may move into the learning and skills sector over the next three or four years. Numbers of Statemented and non-Statemented pupils are fairly consistent in years 9 and 10. The dip in numbers of non-Statemented pupils in year 11 and onwards is because most of these learners leave school at the end of years 10 or 11; a point that is discussed later in the report.

An important part of the over-all picture of likely demand from school leavers is the number of Statemented pupils in out-of-borough placements. Places are funded elsewhere by the two boroughs either because of where pupils live, parental choice, or because local schools cannot meet their needs. Figure 18 provides information about these pupils.

Figure 18: Lambeth and Southwark Statemented pupils in out-of-borough placements – 2006

	No. of Statemented pupils in out-of-borough placements	No. of these pupils in years 9-14	No of pupils in years 9-14 in special schools
Lambeth	453	273	52
Southwark	-	146	74

Source: *Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark*

Comment

In Lambeth, the main disabilities and learning difficulties of the pupils placed out-of-borough are learning difficulties, autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and language and communication difficulties. Although some pupils placed out-of-borough may be in special units or classes in mainstream schools, the 52 pupils placed in special schools are likely to have the most complex needs, and require tailor-made curricula and high levels of expert support if they move into the learning and skills sector.

In Southwark, the main disabilities and learning difficulties of pupils placed out-of-borough in years 9-14 are learning difficulties, dyslexia/specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and sensory disabilities; seventeen pupils have hearing disabilities and seven pupils have visual disabilities.

Together, the boroughs place 126 pupils with Statements in out-of-borough special schools. Some of these pupils may be academically able, for example, this may be true for those attending Mary Hare School for the deaf, whilst others may have complex or severe disabilities, for example, those attending the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy or the Royal School for Deaf Children. It is not possible to identify accurately from information provided those pupils with the most complex and profound disabilities who are likely to require the most specialist provision and high levels of support if they move into the learning and skills sector. However, if we put to one side the six pupils attending the Mary Hare School who *may* be relatively able, then there are about 120 pupils who may have relatively complex needs, in the sense that they have more than one disability.

It is worth summarising the fewer, but important numbers of pupils with sensory disabilities currently placed out of borough, and who may want local provision when they leave school. Currently, 23 pupils with sensory disabilities are placed out of Lambeth and Southwark, of

whom 13 have visual disabilities, and 20 have hearing disabilities. There are currently 45 learners aged 16-18 with sensory disabilities in provision in the boroughs now, of whom 38 have hearing disabilities, and 7 have visual disabilities.

Looked-after young people

Looked-after young people, those in the care of social services, include learners with considerable emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, and are amongst those least likely to leave school with qualifications. Figure 19 shows the number of these learners in Lambeth and Southwark in contact with Central London Connexions (CLC), by age, and by whether they are in employment, education or training (EET).

Figure 19: Looked-after young people in Lambeth and Southwark – March 2006

	Supported aged 13-19	Supported by CLC aged 16-18	In EET
Lambeth	165	77	52
Southwark	216	98	74

Source: Central London Connexions

Comment

Figure 19 shows that there are 232 looked-after young people aged 13 to 19 in the two boroughs, who are in contact with Connexions. Of these, 57 are aged 13 to 16, and therefore likely to require provision in the learning and skills sector during the next three years. Young people without stable families and who often have troubled lives, find it difficult to move successfully and easily into adulthood, and require sensitive support, encouragement and early experiences of achievement if they are to stay in education and training beyond 16. Of the 175 young people aged 16 to 18 years shown in Figure 19, 126 are in employment, education or training, leaving 49 who are not engaged. It is important to emphasise that the figures shown concern only those young people with whom Connexions is in touch. The service reports that all London boroughs continue to prioritise this area of work.

Young offenders

Young offenders are some of the most vulnerable young people in our society, with the majority experiencing some form of learning difficulty, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or mental health difficulties. Figure 20 provides information about the participation in education, training or employment of young offenders supervised by the Youth Offending Teams (YOT), in the two boroughs.

Figure 20: Young offenders supervised by YOT, by participation in EET in 2006

	Total supervised	In ETE
Lambeth	141	83
Southwark	82	60

Source: Central London Connexions

Comment

The Keeping Young People Engaged programme, funded by the Youth Justice Board, has achieved a gradual increase in the numbers of young people entering employment, education or training after returning from detention and training orders. A Personal Adviser in each Young Offenders Team follows each young person into custody in order to support their training programme and prepare for their release. The aim is for young people to be engaged within three weeks of their return to their community.

Concerns about learning opportunities for young offenders centre on the rapid turnover of learners from institution to institution, with learners staying perhaps two or three weeks before being moved on. Learners take part in initial assessment after initial assessment as they move from place to place, with very little time for even skilled staff to design or deliver an individual learning plan. Often records of assessments and learners' portfolios of work do not move with them, meaning that learners learn the same things over and over again. Their fragmented and unsatisfactory experiences of learning, along with their other difficulties, can make it particularly difficult for learners to settle into education or training when they return into the community. Large colleges, classroom-based sessions, or much that feels like 'formal' learning, may well be daunting and unattractive to these learners, who require individualised, supportive and practical vocational learning opportunities in informal settings.

Adult learners

It is difficult to estimate likely future demand for adult and community provision, and to make a clear distinction between future demand and any current unmet demand. The latter issue is discussed in the next section of the report. We cannot know for certain how many young learners will wish, as they grow older, to take part in adult and community learning, nor do we know how many adults will move into the area, or how many adults will decide to take up education for the first time.

One straightforward approach is to consider the younger learners already in provision and then to use experience and understanding of their learning difficulties and disabilities to estimate whether they are likely to want adult and community learning, bearing in mind individual aspirations and needs. We can look again at Figures 3 and 4 which provide details of these learners by age and by disability or learning difficulty. Turning first to learners aged 16-18, and considering the largest groups and their possible wish later to take part in adult and community learning, we could reach the following estimates:

- 108 learners with moderate learning difficulties
may not wish to take part in ACL, but likely to need Skills for Life provision or work-based learning
- 80 learners with dyslexia
may wish to take part in Skills for Life provision
- 45 learners with hearing impairment or visual impairment

may wish to take part in ACL, depending on any other difficulties

- 25 learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties
not likely to want ACL provision
- 16 learners with severe learning difficulties
very likely to want ACL provision
- 9 learners with mental ill-health
very likely to want ACL provision

Out of this cohort of learners aged 16-18, about 25 learners are most likely to require ACL provision and about 188 may require Skills for Life provision. These 25 learners are most likely to require specially designed provision or integrated support. Learners with sensory disabilities are more likely to require interpreters, loop facilities, or other specialist adaptations in order to take part in mainstream classes. Of course, this approach takes into account only the likely requirements of learners already in the learning and skills sector.

We can use the same approach for the next age cohort, bearing in mind that many of these 19-25 year old learners will already be in adult and community learning, and with the same caveats about individual wishes. In this way, we can make some estimate about continued demand for such provision. Looking at these learners, we could reach the following estimates:

- 142 learners with dyslexia
some likely to require continued Skills for Life provision
- 60 learners with moderate learning difficulties
likely to require Skills for Life provision or part-time vocational learning in college or work-based learning
- 45 learners with mental health difficulties
very likely to wish to continue in ACL provision
- 27 learners with hearing or visual impairments
may wish to take part in specially designed or supported ACL provision

Out of this cohort of learners aged 19-25, some of whom are already in adult and community learning, about 87 learners are likely to wish to continue their involvement, and to require either specially designed provision or integrated support. Some 188 learners are likely to wish to continue either Skills for Life or work-based learning. Of course, like any other learner, these learners may wish to take part in any kind of adult and community learning.

Young learners with complex needs are amongst those most likely to need adult and community learning as part of individual Person Centred Plans when they leave specialist colleges. Figure 11 provided information about the 20 learners currently placed in these

colleges. Given the levels of severity of their disabilities, we can estimate that all these learners could require some form of adult and continuing education as part of their individual packages when they leave college. This group of learners is likely to need either specially designed programmes or high levels of support in integrated provision.

With all the caveats about people’s individual wishes and interests, and not taking into account newcomers to the area or adults taking up provision for the first time, an analysis of the figures given here provides *some* indication of future demand for adult and community education from those *learners already within the learning and skills* sector. Figure 21 provides a breakdown by disability and learning difficulty and by the type of provision that may be required.

Figure 21: Likely demand for adult and community learning by adults with learning difficulty or disability and type of provision

Type of learning difficulty/disability	Numbers of learners	Possible type of provision
Moderate learning difficulties	168	Integrated Skills for Life provision
Dyslexia	150	Mix of integrated & specialist Skills for Life provision
Sensory disabilities	72	Any, but may require interpreters, adaptive equipment, adapted accommodation
Severe learning difficulties	68	Likely to require specially designed provision or supported integration in ACL as part of Person Centred Programme (PCP)
Mental health difficulties	51*	Likely to require specially designed provision or supported integration in ACL as part of treatment plan
Complex & severe disabilities (from specialist colleges)	20	Likely to require specially designated provision or supported integration as part of PCP

Source: Analysis of Learning and Skills ILR data * under-estimation

It is essential to bear in mind those older learners aged 26 and above who may already be in adult and community learning. The largest group of these is the 472 adults with mental health difficulties, followed closely by the 418 adults with dyslexia, and 213 adults with sensory difficulties. Some 204 adults have moderate learning difficulties and 157 have severe learning difficulties. Some 365 adults aged 26 and above have some form of physical or mobility difficulty. All these adults are already within the Learning and Skills sector, and experience suggests that most of them are likely to wish to continue within adult and community learning.

People with mental health difficulties

Mental health costs the country £10 billion each year,¹ with one in four of the population experiencing mental health difficulties at some point in their lives. As a matter of urgency, the learning and skills sector must find its own responses to this national need.

Of children coming through the schools nationally, aged 11 to 16 years, 12.6% of boys, and 10% of girls will experience some kind of mental ill health, including eating disorders, depression, phobias, and behavioural and emotional difficulties. From 2002 to 2005, the

¹ Richard Layard, *Mental Health: Britain’s Greatest Social Problem*, 2006.

number of children with mental health difficulties has risen by 40%.² Figures in this report for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, 'other or non-specified' and moderate and severe learning difficulties, conceal within them children with the full range of child mental health difficulties. Some further analysis which involves the school services' educational psychologists and child mental health experts would be necessary and valuable to identify those children particularly at risk of mental health difficulties into adult life, and so likely to need additional support or specialist provision if they move into the learning and skills sector.

In Southwark alone in 2002, there were 4196 people with enduring mental health difficulties known to health and social services. A further 26000 people were treated for lesser illnesses such as anxiety and depression. More recently, in Lambeth in 2006, there are some 1450 people with high levels of support needs because of their mental health difficulties, and a further 2000 people who require support and who are known to health and social services. The 51 or so learners identified in Figure 21 are a considerable under-estimation of the potential demand. Some of these adults will be able to hold down jobs and to live their lives with little or intermittent support. However, nationally, only 24% of people with long-term or recurring mental illness are in work, the lowest rate for any of the larger disability groups. People with more severe illnesses require consistent, long-term support in order to get through each day, and education can be an important part of that support.

Nationally, some 70% of sentenced prisoners have mental health disorders. In summer 2006, LSC London region launched a new integrated offender learning and skills service for offenders in custody, working with providers, voluntary organisations and others to commission education and training for offenders in the community. The strategy should take into account the level of mental health difficulties amongst offenders, as well as their other learning difficulties.

Young people and adults with mental health difficulties need differentiated responses from the learning and skills sector. A 'one-size' does not fit all. However, whatever the age or difficulty of the learners, the best support is provided by learners, services and agencies working together, well co-ordinated and with a shared purpose, with education and training making its unique contribution by helping individuals maintain and develop skills, remain in the community, live as independently as possible, and where realistic, work in open or supported employment.

The Learning and Skills Council is supporting a small two-year project with NIACE, MIND and other partners to consider how best to meet the needs of people with mental health difficulties. It is a recommendation of this report that the Pan-London Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Advisory Group focuses particularly on these learners, being careful to make distinctions between their varying needs, and that the Group works with health and social services, MIND, the Richmond Fellowship, Maudsley Hospital, and other partners, to review and improve the responses of the learning and skills sector in London, building on some of the good work already underway in colleges, voluntary organisations' provision, and in adult and community learning provision.

² Department of Health.

Finally in this section, we look at a summary of possible demand.

Summary of possible demand

By using the analysis of different learner groups presented earlier, we can now attempt a summary estimate of potential demand for learning and skills provision in the next three years in Lambeth and Southwark. It is important to bear in mind the following points:

- the summary is based on information about learners known to the education and training sector
- learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities include those who are academically and vocationally able, as well as those operating at Pre-Entry Level and Level 1
- learners may not follow the routes we anticipate
- descriptions in MIS and ILR systems are necessarily approximate, and do not encapsulate everything about individual learners
- information about adult learners is less robust than that about young people and children
- numbers for adult learners with mental health difficulties are likely to be an under-estimation
- new learners will move into the area
- existing learners will leave the area
- not all residents of the two boroughs will wish to attend provision in the area

There is no assumption here that the provision required in future will be the kind of provision currently in place. The next section of the report says more about what kind of provision may be needed.

To end this section of the report, Figure 22 summarises potential demand in the next three years, focusing on the biggest groups of learners and on learners who may have need for the highest levels of support.

Figure 22: Summary of potential demand for next three years from learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for learning and skills provision in Lambeth and Southwark

Young people: not Stated	
Moderate learning difficulties	1006
Unspecified	896
Emotional and behavioural difficulties	844
Specific learning difficulties	255
Speech, language and communication	149
Leaving care (looked-after children)	381
Leaving Young Offenders Institution	223
Young people: Stated	
Emotional and behavioural difficulties	199
Moderate learning difficulties	186
Complex or severe (out-of-borough placements)	120
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	109
Specific learning difficulties	107
Severe learning difficulties	58
Physical disabilities	38
Sensory disabilities	14
Adults	
Moderate learning difficulties	168
Dyslexia	150
Sensory disabilities	72
Severe learning difficulties	68
Mental health difficulties	51*
Complex and severe (specialist college placements)	20

* Likely to be under-estimation

In the next section of the report, we examine unmet need by taking a broad definition of the term which includes learners not in education, employment or training as well as the need for new kinds of provision.

Section 3: Unmet need

This section of the report examines aspects of unmet need, including those young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not participating in education or training, or who do not have the right progression opportunities.

First destinations of school leavers

We look first at where young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities go when they leave school. As background, in 2005 in Central London, 87.1% of all year 11 school leavers went into a learning activity, 6.6% were unemployed, and 3.1% had an unknown destination. Less than one per cent of all learners moved into employment that did not offer further training.

Figure 23: First destinations of Year 11 school leavers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark

	Lambeth	Southwark
Within FT education	72	155
Total:		
<i>GCE A/AS/A2</i>	11	9
<i>Voc A level</i>	0	0
<i>GNVQ Intermed</i>	3	8
<i>GNVQ Found</i>	4	16
<i>NVQ Level 3 or equiv</i>	2	7
<i>NVQ Level 2 or equiv</i>	3	21
<i>NVQ Level 1 or equiv</i>	21	33
<i>GCSE courses</i>	1	4
<i>Other FT courses</i>	27	57
<i>Continuation of 2-year</i>	0	0
<i>HE</i>	0	0
<i>Gap year</i>	0	0
FT training	5	15
Total:		
<i>Found Mod Apprenticeships</i>	0	0
<i>Other Govt-supported training</i>	4	3
<i>Other LSC-delivered training</i>	1	12
Full-time employment	2	8
Total:		
<i>Advanced MA</i>	0	0
<i>Foundation MA</i>	0	2
<i>Other GST</i>	0	1
<i>With training to NVQ2</i>	0	1
<i>With locally recognised good quality training</i>	2	2
<i>Without training</i>	0	2
Vol and PT activities	0	4
Total:		
<i>FT vol work</i>	0	1
<i>PT vol work/personal dev opps</i>	0	0
<i>PT education</i>	0	1
<i>PT employment</i>	0	2
NEET	9	23
Total:		
<i>Available to labour market</i>	6	17
<i>(Figure does not include details of learners not available to labour market, out of contact, no response or who refused to participate)</i>		

Source: Central London Connexions

Comment

Figure 23 shows that the majority of school leavers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark went into full-time education; the largest number, 84 learners, into 'other' full-time courses at Pre-Entry and Entry Levels. The next largest group, 54 learners, went into Level 1 or equivalent, and 24 learners went into Level 2 provision. Only 20 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities went into full-time training, and only 10 went into full-time employment, with 2 of these being jobs without training.

The Connexions service reports an increase since 2005 in the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in employment, education or training. Thirty-two learners not in provision or employment (NEET) are identified in figure 23, though this is a conservative estimate which does not include those young offenders, learners leaving care, and others at risk who have emotional and social difficulties often coupled with poor literacy and numeracy, and who form a significant part of the NEETS cohort.

Making a significant difference?

Providers, Connexions, funders, individual staff and parents can be rightly proud of ensuring that the majority of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are in some form of education or training. However, the vital question is whether the education and training provided makes an appreciable difference for the better to the lives of learners. Do young learners need what is currently on offer, take part for as long as is beneficial, and experience the life-transforming effects that we promise them when they leave? Most importantly, do those learners who are able to do so, move into employment which is the aspiration of the majority and their key to adult status and economic independence? Are their needs being met in the best possible way, or does provision need to be rethought? The debate about the kind of provision young learners need will be explored later in the report, after taking into account the views of learners themselves.

Destination of college leavers

We look next at the progression and destinations of young people in education and training, beginning with learners in the two further education colleges. LSC no longer records this information as part of the ILR, so Figure 24 is based on figures provided by Lambeth and Southwark Colleges.

Figure 24: Progress and destination information about young learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark further education colleges – 2004-06

	2004/05		2005/06 (to date)	
	Lambeth College	Southwark College	Lambeth College	Southwark College
Entry to Level 1		81	20	25
Level 1 to Level 2		163	Not known yet	253
Further training	Not available	111		
Employment		4	2	Not yet available
Voluntary work		12	2	
ACL			4	
Independent living				

Source: Lambeth and Southwark Colleges

Comment

The main value of Figure 24 is to demonstrate that colleges need to do even more to track and record the destinations of their learners. Staff report that although close checks are kept on the destinations of learners on discrete provision, more needs to be done to monitor the destinations of learners on mainstream provision, or who move from discrete to mainstream provision. Whilst both providers are rightly proud of the numbers of learners progressing to higher levels of programmes, they are not as aware as they need to be about whether these learners then move into employment.

Destinations of E2E learners

We look next at what happened to the 157 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending E2E provision based in Lambeth and Southwark in the period August 2005 to May 2006, bearing in mind that a further 41 learners attended E2E programmes outside the boroughs.

Figure 25: Destinations of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on Lambeth and Southwark based E2E programmes – August 05-May 06

	Lambeth	Southwark	Total
Full-time employment	4	18	22
Unemployed	0	13	13
Self-employed	0	1	1
Entered further education	1	4	5
Full-time education/training	0	34	34
Continued existing programme	3	36	39
Other (including pregnancy)	0	36	35
Destination unknown	7	1	8
		Total:	142

Source: Learning and Skills Council

Comment

The figure shows that nearly 44% of learners leave their E2E programmes with positive destinations, compared to 39% for the whole London region. Although it is not clear what the 'other' category in the figure includes, in Lambeth and Southwark, 56 learners, 39%, left without recognised positive outcomes. The Connexions service reports an overall increase in the number of learners leaving E2E provision without recognised outcomes, indicating a lack of progression pathways for these learners.

Destinations of ESF project leavers

We turn next to the destinations of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leaving ESF projects based in Lambeth and Southwark.

Figure 26: Destinations of learners with learning difficulties on Lambeth and Southwark based ESF programmes – March 2006 (includes LSC and NEETS ESF projects)

	Lambeth	Southwark	Total
Full-time employment	3	0	3
Full-time education/training	2	0	2
Part-time employment	1	0	1
Voluntary work	0	1	1
Unemployed	1	6	7
Other	1	1	2
Destination unknown	6	4	10
			Total: 26

Source: Learning and Skills Council

Comment

Figure 26 indicates that the majority of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending Lambeth and Southwark ESF projects left to become unemployed or to unknown destinations. Only 7 out of 26 learners progressed to recognised positive outcomes.

Need for renewed focus on employment

It is often argued even when learners do not progress to employment, or to further education or training, that they have achieved other positive outcomes. Young people may achieve their first-ever qualifications, improve their literacy, numeracy, and communication skills, take part in work experience, and find out more about the realities of the workplace. Learners often grow in self-esteem and confidence, and improve their social skills. Achievement of these things may lead in themselves to enhanced life chances. However, for most young people, work is the main arena in which they want to deploy their new capacities. If that arena is not available, then new individual gains are often lost, and society and the national exchequer have lost the contributions these young people could bring.

This report contends that there is not enough focus on developing employability and on securing employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. This insufficient focus constitutes an unmet need for current and future learners, one which requires a rethink of provision. The major providers are eager to refocus and reshape what they do. LSC must also rethink its own contribution to the employability agenda by providing more tailor-made work-based learning opportunities for these learners, and by ensuring that specialist providers are not funded in a year-by-year fashion which makes it difficult for them to plan ahead effectively for their organisations and thus for their learners.

Engagement with employers is piecemeal, with individual providers and agencies duplicating each other's efforts as they work hard to secure placements or employment for individual learners. There is no strategic vision for employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and, as a consequence, no borough-wide strategy for securing employment for those learners. There can only be meaningful approaches to developing employability for individual learners if there are realistic chances of their securing

employment. LSC needs to support the innovative ideas being considered by both colleges, which are described later in the report.

Effective, appropriate work-based learning will become even more important as the significant number of learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and with moderate learning difficulties move into the learning and skills sector over the next three years. Learners themselves want more choice when they leave school. College is not right for everyone, and some learners flourish in well-supported work-based learning run by organisations specialising in meeting their needs.

Broader definition of work-based learning

As well as concentrating on employability and employment for learners able to work in the open market, a broader definition of work-based learning is required which takes into account the capacities and aspirations of learners with severe learning difficulties, or with autistic spectrum disorders, or other disabilities which may mean that full-time open employment is not realistic. Supported employment and social enterprise initiatives offer the best routes into greater independence and adult status for many of those learners who want to work, and can work. There are not enough strategically planned opportunities in Lambeth and Southwark for less able learners to develop employability skills and to work in supported settings.

There is more about employability and employment and the kind of provision required, later in the report.

Learners with complex disabilities

Parents, practitioners, providers, social services, voluntary organisations and other agencies report that there is not enough *local* provision for young people with complex disabilities. It is useful, at this point, to draw together from earlier in the report and then to summarise in Figure 27, the five main points which demonstrate potential demand and then to look at current provision.

Figure 27: Not enough local provision for learners with complex disabilities

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 20 learners with complex needs currently placed in specialist colleges.2. Some 60 pupils in years 9-14 with complex needs currently in out-of-borough placements.3. Some 145 pupils in years 12-14 in special schools who have complex and severe needs.4. Of these, 115 pupils have autistic spectrum disorders, and5. 10 have profound and complex disabilities.

Sources: LSC and LB Lambeth and Southwark

Comment

Both further education colleges have Pre-Entry provision, though neither is equipped, staffed, funded, and in some instances, trained, to meet the highly specialist support and

curriculum needs of learners with the most complex and profound disabilities or challenging behaviours. Neither has the right kind of purpose-built accommodation and specialist equipment that these learners require. There is no intention here of removing the choice of specialist residential provision for those learners whose needs are best met in this way, and who wish to live away from home. However, not everyone wants to be away from home, or at least, not all of the time. Some learners and their carers prefer day provision, or provision which is flexible enough to enable learners to have some experience of residential, independent living whilst spending the rest of their time living at home and travelling into college each day. At present, the only option for some learners is residential college.

This report recommends that LSC supports and helps develop local provision for learners with complex disabilities, taking care to differentiate between learners with profound and complex disabilities, and learners who have autistic spectrum disorders plus challenging behaviours or other complex disabilities. New local provision should build on the expertise of two nearby specialist colleges, Nash and Orchard Hill, as well as on the strengths of the general further education colleges. In supporting new development, LSC should have regard to these learners' likely progression requirements for adult and continuing learning. More is said later in the report about how further education and specialist colleges can work together to develop what is needed, with practical support from LSC.

Adult learners

Quantitative evidence of unmet need amongst adult learners is difficult to secure for understandable reasons. Learners do not have the same entitlements as younger people, data is not collected as rigorously, funding issues, including which service should pay for what, serve to confuse matters, and no-one is sure what constitutes 'adequate' provision.

Evidence about adult learning opportunities has been received from providers, borough education services, social services, Lambeth Parents and Carers Forum, employment agencies, Lambeth Learning Disability Partnership, individual parents, practitioners, inspection reports, visits to provision undertaken as part of the review, and from learners themselves.

The main points from this evidence are summarised in Figure 28.

Figure 28: Summary of main points concerning unmet need for adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

1. There is not enough adult and community provision in Lambeth; both college providers have waiting lists.
2. There are not enough local opportunities for adults with complex needs, including progression opportunities for those leaving full-time provision in both boroughs.
3. There is not enough adult and community provision for people with mental health difficulties.
4. There are not enough employment and voluntary community activities in both boroughs, leading to 'bottlenecks' in adult provision of learners who could progress into part-time or supported work or voluntary activities.
5. Classes are not always delivered at times and locations which suit learners; the long summer break is particularly difficult for learners wishing to take part in integrated classes.
6. Support is not always available for learners wishing to take part in integrated classes.
7. Adult learning and individual learning plans do not always fit with individual Person Centred Plans, where these are in place
8. There is not enough formal partnership working between social services and education providers and planners; the 'externalisation' of social services offers valuable opportunities for reviewing and reshaping provision.
9. Not enough use is made of the potentially valuable contributions to be made as providers by voluntary organisations.

Comment

There is no coherent, shared vision for adult and community learning in the two boroughs, and no common understanding of its purposes between providers, learners and their advocates, social services, and other partners. In some instances, adult and community learning is viewed almost as a substitute for day care, with an expectation that learners will attend for as many hours as possible and for as many years as possible so that parents and carers can work and get on with their lives.

Parents contrast adult education with college or school, and some find it understandably hard to get to grips with the changes brought about in their own lives because their son or daughter is no longer in full-time provision. In other instances, parents work hard to put together the right package of learning, leisure activities, community involvement and independent living. They speak warmly of the benefits of learning, citing the development of new skills and confidence, and praising the support received from college staff. Others view further education colleges as unable to meet the needs of learners who require high levels of support.

This apparent inability is contrasted with that of Orchard Hill specialist college based in Surrey, which is able to secure funding to support adults with complex needs, and thereby provide progression opportunities for these learners from Lambeth and Southwark. Although Morley College does not have extensive provision for these learners, it is seen by some parents as inclusive and open in its approach, and willing to support learners with complex needs.

Parents and others may not always understand the funding and other constraints which affect an organisation's responsiveness and may themselves be coping with difficult circumstances. Some parents and learners are anxious about changes in provision, although at Southwark College considerable care is being taken to rethink an outdated model of adult learning. Inspectors have raised concerns about the quality of some provision and indicated that there needs to be more offered, and at times that suit learners.

There is not enough formal partnership working between providers, commissioners, social services and relevant voluntary organisations and advocate groups. Reorganisations within social services offer valuable opportunities for better partnership thinking and planning.

All in all, there is much to do by way of reshaping provision, starting first with a vision for adult and community learning to which all partners contribute, but which is led by education, and realistic about what the service can and should provide. Providers, social services, parents and carers and voluntary organisations are keen to work together to bring about change for the better.

School leaving age

As part of this look at unmet needs, it is worth considering briefly some of the apparent inequalities that happen to pupils as they approach the end of their schooling. There are no written policies for the school leaving age of pupils with special educational needs in Lambeth and Southwark. Lambeth education staff indicate that the lack of a policy is a concern, and that not all pupils are ready for college at sixteen. In Southwark, although there is no written policy, the expectation is that pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools and pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and with emotional and behavioural difficulties in special schools, will generally leave at sixteen, unless the school has a sixth form which can meet their needs. Learners with severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, or complex needs are expected to leave at age nineteen

It is not certain how well these assumptions work in practice. During this review, school head teachers reported that it was sometimes hard to secure funding for pupils with complex needs to stay on at school. One parent described the difficulties she experienced with a 20-year old son with autism, apparently in part-time adult education, when the expectation would be that he leaves school at 18 or 19, then moves into full-time further education until he is 21 or 22.

Although it was beyond the remit of this review to examine further the issue of school leaving age, there are apparent inequalities and unmet needs which should be explored. Both education authorities should develop written policies for the school-leaving age of pupils with special educational needs so that pupils, parents and providers know what to expect. Pupils with more severe or complex needs, including autism, should stay in school until they are aged 19, providing the right kind of age-appropriate pre-vocational and independence curriculum can be provided which includes link provision and work experience where this is appropriate. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties or with emotional and behavioural difficulties often flourish best at sixteen and earlier when they take part in practical, vocationally-focused learning either in the workplace or at college, or in flexible arrangements which enable them to keep a safe and secure base at school whilst trying out work-based learning and vocational opportunities in college.

Summary of unmet need

This section ends with an overall summary of unmet needs.

Figure 29: Summary of unmet needs

1. No vision or strategy for employment and employability for these learners.
2. Not enough young and adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress into employment.
3. Not enough strategic engagement from employers.
4. Not enough choice when learners leave school
5. Insufficient focus on employability and employment for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the further education colleges.
6. Not enough work-based learning at Entry and Level 1, including E2E provision.
7. Not enough specialist providers, including voluntary organisations, for work-based learning and E2E.
8. No secure funding for school/college link programmes.
9. No policies on school-leaving age for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
10. No vision or strategy for adult and community learning for adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
11. Not enough formal partnership planning between LSC, providers, the boroughs, social services, parents and carers, and learners.
12. Not enough local provision including progression opportunities for young people and adults with complex needs.
13. No learning and skills strategy for people with mental health difficulties.
14. No social enterprise initiatives and not enough supported employment opportunities for learners who cannot move into open employment.

Before going on to consider how best to met these needs, we listen first to what practitioners, and most importantly, learners themselves, say they want.

Section 4: Improving life chances?

In this part of the report, we ask whether enough is being done to make significant differences to learners' lives, or whether new and different interventions are needed in order to really improve life chance. We begin by looking at what learners themselves say.

The views of learners

Learners' experiences and views of their learning are at the heart of this review. To help capture these, ten focus groups were held in May and June 2006 in which 92 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities took part. Learners included young people and adults experiencing the full range of learning difficulties and disabilities, including mental health difficulties, in full and part-time courses, adult and community learning provision, Entry to Employment programmes, and school/college link programmes.

So that learners could speak freely, the groups were run by an experienced external facilitator, and no staff were present. Independent communicators were used in sessions that included deaf learners. The two further education colleges hosted the sessions, and drew learners together. The review team is grateful to them for their valuable assistance.

Not enough choices for younger learners

Young learners did not feel instrumental in key decisions about their learning and said they did not have enough choices. They felt that decisions about link courses and coming to college were made for them, rather than being their own positive choices. Link provision was seen as too much like school rather than as an exciting introduction to further education, and a valuable opportunity to try out new vocational areas in purpose-built settings. Learners said they had no choice about taking part in link programmes which were presented as an extension of schoolwork and a mandatory part of their school timetable. They said there was little choice when they left school; they were expected to go to college, and there was little help for those who wanted something different. School staff did not tell them about different options, as one young man put it, '*they [teachers and Connexions advisers] try to persuade you to go to college; everything is focused on college. They need to tell us about different jobs and what they are about*'. Another learner commented, '*teachers don't give us choices, it's college or nothing*'. Learners felt that although their views were asked for, they were not always taken seriously. A young woman commented, '*I'm fed up with people asking me what I want to do; nothing ever happens*'. A young man explained that he wanted an apprenticeship in carpentry or joinery, but did not feel his aspirations were respected, although he was clear about the kind of learning he wanted: '*I need to be hands-on. I learn best with my eyes and hands, by watching someone do something, then doing it myself*'.

Link programmes were not seen as a preparation for full-time further education. Once young learners were on link provision, they were sometimes disappointed at what was on

offer. There were not enough vocational options, and learners did subjects which schools wanted them to do, such as science or IT, rather than activities which gave a real taste of vocational training, or which helped them to think about possible jobs. One learner said, *'I don't know why we come to college to do this, we already do it at school ... I need to do more active subjects'*. All the young learners wanted jobs, and once in further education, wanted to be on vocational programmes which related to the jobs, and which gave them the practical skills for work. They considered they had little choice about their courses, and some felt strongly about being placed on discrete programmes. One learner said, *'I want to be in the normal world – people look at you differently when you have been to a special school'*. He said that discrete programmes were for people with more severe learning difficulties than he experienced; the courses were *'silly, they have pretend shops and things'*, and did not relate sufficiently to his everyday world. Deaf learners felt particularly strongly about being placed on discrete provision just for them. One learner said, *'I'm not improving, I'm not comfortable, all my confidence has gone'*. Others felt discrete provision was a regressive step; *'I'm worried that I won't be able to cope with anything, my abilities will go down so much'*.

Learners who were on vocational courses were very positive about the practical parts of their programmes, which they enjoyed thoroughly. All these learners wanted to work, and many already had ideas about jobs, including painting and decorating, hairdressing, cleaning cars, and working at Tesco's. They did not enjoy the theoretical parts of their courses which were seen as too much like school.

Courses were not considered as a preparation for a particular job and for working life, but rather as a way of passing time. Learners did not always see the connection between the jobs they wanted, or knew they could get, and the programmes they were on. One learner said, *'I'll probably get a job in Tesco's when I've done Level 2 in Sports; I'm in Sports because I've always liked sport'*. Another learner on an E2E programme said, *'I want to be an electrician but nothing I'm doing here will help me with that'*. Learners on Entry to Employment programmes did not see their learning as preparing them for work. Perceptions included *'keeps me off the road'*, *'gives me some money'*. They felt there was too much classroom-based work, and not enough practical, vocational learning. All the E2E learners wanted to work, but none was clear about what they wanted to do next. Not all learners on a vocational courses, including E2E, had work placements, and where they did, the placements did not always relate to the jobs learners wanted. Sometimes learners said they had little choice about their placements, and had to take what was available. Pupils on link courses experienced a similar lack of choice in their work experience at school.

Young learners felt little urgency about making the move into work, and talked about *'staying on'* or *'doing another course'* without always knowing what those courses might be, or how they might further their ambitions for jobs.

Comment

The description of learners' experiences and views should not be taken as a criticism of college, school or Connexions staff, rather as an indication of the lack of real choices for

learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the absence of any strategic planning for employability and employment for these learners in Lambeth and Southwark.

Learners are not offered choices after school because there are few choices to offer. Staff work hard to ease learners into further education because they consider this to be the best next step, because there is very little work-based learning for these learners, few employment prospects, and because they are concerned that young people do not become lost to the system. Link courses do not offer sufficient vocational experiences because they are paid for by schools which understandably see them as opportunities to extend their own curriculum, rather than as an introduction to what another sector can offer. Further education staff have worked successfully to establish 'rungs in the progression ladder', to open up vocational programmes, and to retain a core of discrete provision. A learner's interests are often used to 'hook' them into learning, so, for example, a sports course might be used to motivate a learner into attending college and achieving a first-ever qualification. Work placements are hard to find for schools and colleges, and each one represents hours of work to establish and support.

The 'readiness' idea

The 'readiness' idea prevails in some schools and college teams whereby certain learners are considered to need more time to mature, grow in confidence, and to develop everyday coping skills, before they are ready for the 'real world'. The irony is that some learners may have experienced rather more of certain aspects of the real world than their teachers. There is something to be said for the 'readiness' idea, although it should be challenged in the same way as the outdated idea of 'readiness for reading' has been challenged in primary education. Some learners will never be ready *unless the right interventions are made*. The question is whether the right interventions are being made to significantly improve 'readiness' and young learners' life chances, and to provide the keys to successful adult life through economic independence and work.

Making the right interventions

Discussions with experienced staff during the review suggest considerable interest and willingness to engage in a debate about what constitute the right interventions to increase young learners' life chances. For example, does moving a learner through each level of a programme increase significantly their employment prospects? Providers want to review what they do and how they do it in the light of the national focus on employability and employment and their own aspirations for their learners. They wish to move further towards delivering flexible individual learning plans, rather than courses, and fully understand the need to work with other providers to secure the required flexibility. More is said about flexibility in the next part of the report.

Not enough choices for adult learners

Most adult learners had been at college for a number of years, and most saw themselves as continuing at college. Many of these learners could not remember how they had heard about college, probably because they had been referred by other agencies. Even younger learners who had previously attended full-time courses were not aware of choosing actively to attend adult and community learning provision. None of the learners said they had achieved qualifications at school, though probably younger learners would have received some awards. Some learners had taken part previously in employment placements often in voluntary organisations, for example on a farm, in Pizza Hut, Asda, a garage, or in charity shops. Another learner works with his father delivering goods to customers. Other learners stay at home or take part in social groups run by organisations such as Mencap when they are not in college.

Although some learners in one college would like jobs, most found it difficult to say what job they would like. One learner said he wanted to be a postman but did not think this would be possible. Another said he would like a part-time job '*helping people*'. In the other college, no learners wanted to work, despite some having taken part in full-time pre-vocational programmes and being able enough to hold down supported employment. Instead, they wanted '*more courses*'. Adult learners at this college did not appear to view their programmes in college as preparation for anything; instead they saw them as positive and enjoyable ways of spending their time.

Very few adult learners took part in work experience or in other activities which might help them into part-time or supported employment. In one college, some of these learners do progress into vocational programmes, for example, one person was moving into Level 1 Catering in the coming year. Otherwise, there was little indication that as a matter of course and where it was appropriate and realistic, adult learners would be guided toward training which might lead to employment, or into employment itself.

Comment

Like the rest of the population, adult learners with learning difficulties and disabilities have different capacities and aspirations; some wish to work and are clearly able to do so, whilst others have never had employment presented as an attractive option and positive choice and so find it difficult to envisage themselves as workers. For other older learners or those with more complex needs, work is not realistic or desirable, and adult education is there to help develop new skills, maintain existing skills, and, as for other adult learners, for leisure, recreation, and to promote health and well-being.

Recognising different capacities

In Lambeth and Southwark, there is not enough differentiation between adult learners who could work and those for whom it is not realistic. This comment is not a criticism of staff who have worked hard to establish provision to meet high levels of demand, exacerbated by

the closure of some day centres and lack of other daytime activities. Both colleges report waiting lists for their provision. Providers have continued to offer pretty much more of the same, in the absence of any strategic shared vision about the different purposes of adult and community learning for these learners, and in the absence of real, strong alternatives to adult education classes. It is now time to review the curriculum and to put energies into developing with social services and voluntary organisations the differentiated progression routes that learners need. Providers will need practical help from LSC to explore options and to develop new schemes.

Making the right opportunities

Learners who could flourish in part-time or supported employment need these opportunities to exist. There are no social enterprise initiatives for these learners. Despite the efforts of some employment schemes, there is not enough supported employment. Worryingly, there is reported resistance in some quarters to the very idea of employment.

Both the main providers are keen to explore social initiatives and employment opportunities, and work undertaken as part of this review has brokered meetings between one college, MacIntyre, and a well-known national voluntary organisation with successful experience of setting up social enterprises for adults with learning difficulties. Other work conducted during the review will lead to colleges' involvement in national employment projects, and to the involvement of senior staff from National Mencap in assisting with employment schemes.

Shifting expectations

Some of the responses from adult learners in the focus groups, and from learners met during the rest of the review demonstrate the extent to which learners' expectations may need to shift in order that they might see themselves as workers. The expectations of some parents and carers, and indeed of some staff, may also need to change if learners are to take their place as active, working adults with the increased self-esteem, status, new skills and social rewards that work can bring.

Equal valuing of learners not able to work

The emphasis on employability and employment within this report does not imply in any way that learners who are not able to work have less value or status than those who can. On the contrary, the small steps in learning achieved by learners with complex and severe disabilities should be recognised and celebrated. The five stages of the RARPA approach provide valuable help to providers in ensuring that 'value added' to learners during their time in adult education is captured properly. By attempting to make clear that people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not an homogenous group but individuals with differing capacities and aspirations, the intention is to draw attention to the variety of

opportunities required to meet these different abilities, and which do not exist at present. A 'one size' does not fit all.

Integrated learners

Only a few learners receiving additional support on other programmes took part in the focus groups; they included learners with mental health difficulties and learners with physical disabilities. They all attend college on a part-time basis. All had done other courses at college or universities, with one learner holding a science degree achieved before she had become ill. Another had joined his course after completing discrete programmes.

All the learners were positive about their courses, and about the support they receive. One learner was particularly impressed by the speed with which his college had supplied an adapted computer. Staff at college had helped them choose the most appropriate courses.

Some of the learners wanted jobs in the future, but felt this might be difficult for them because of their illnesses. All the learners considered that their current courses would give them skills that would be useful for employment. They felt also that the courses gave them an interest and a means of meeting other people. One learner had been at the college for three or four years, and did not want to work. She wanted '*more courses*'. Another learner hopes to enrol for an Open University course next year, and thinks the skills she is gaining at college will help her succeed at degree level.

Comment

The groups included adult learners who were realistic about the options currently available to them and about the constraints imposed by their illnesses on their employment potential. However, if the right flexible options exist, many adult learners with mental health difficulties can hold down jobs with supportive employers. A vision and strategy for employment for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities must include people with mental health difficulties, of whom there are over five-and-a-half thousand receiving high levels of social and health services support in Lambeth and Southwark.

The views of practitioners

As well as paying careful attention to the views of learners, the review has included two seminars for practitioners from local providers, nearby specialist colleges, voluntary organisations, and services including Connexions, social services, and the two boroughs. Over twenty people attended each seminar. Their vision for learners, and the planning principles they wish to see espoused by LSC and its partners, form part of the introduction to this report. Practitioners considered also what they perceived as the main issues in Lambeth and Southwark, looked at what worked well, and discussed the factors that served to impede learners' progress and achievements. We begin by looking at what practitioners thought worked well.

What worked well?

Practitioners thought the curriculum available locally was broad and diverse enough to meet most needs, though there were significant gaps for some learners. There were examples of effective work placements and links with employers, and of successful Pathfinder programmes between schools and colleges, as well as other partnership activities. The Person Centred Planning Transition schemes being piloted by DfES and the Department of Health were cited as developments which would help produce more coherent jointly-planned provision. The Learning Disability Partnership Board now had an education sub-group; a recognition of education's important role as a partner with health and social services. The sub-group provided valuable evidence to this review. Colleges had understood and responded to a pressing local need by developing programmes targeted at learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Senior managers, some of whom took part in the seminars, were viewed as supportive, interested in the work, and keen to promote its development. Staff were skilled, experienced, and often held high-level specialist qualifications. The outstanding and good quality of some provision had been recognised by inspectors.

Factors that impede learners' progress and achievements

Practitioners said there was not enough of the right provision and progression opportunities for some learners, including those with more complex and severe learning difficulties. Because providers did not have access to enough information about the changing profile of learners' needs, these were not always recognised and responded to. To help with planning, there was a plea for the outcomes of the review to be shared with providers. There was not enough local expertise in some specialisms, for example, in profound and complex disabilities, challenging behaviours, complex autistic disorders, and acquired brain injuries.

There were not enough employment opportunities, including forms of supported employment and social enterprise. The E2E programme did not last long enough and did not have enough funding to undertake the long-term work with vulnerable learners that would lead to outcomes that meant something to employers. Different organisations had different priorities and criteria for success in their work with learners. The lack of a common funding mechanism for additional support meant that learners moved from receiving high levels of specialist support in specialist or further education colleges, to far less support in adult and community learning, even when their support needs had not altered, or even in some instances, grown more severe. Learners with 'invisible' disabilities, such as emotional difficulties, in E2E provision, received far less funding for support than learners with 'recognised' learning difficulties in colleges, even though the impact of emotional difficulties on a young person's life might be more damaging than learning difficulties. Short-term funding for some provision hindered the long-term planning that learners require.

Access to information about over-all provision was difficult to secure for practitioners who sometimes knew little about what other providers did. It was even harder for learners and their parents and carers to find out for themselves what was available. Learners did not always receive independent advice about different options.

The expectations of learners and their parents or carers could stand in the way of real achievement of potential. Expectations amongst practitioners also needed to be challenged; even the best practitioners could become complacent about their work.

The main issues for practitioners

Practitioners asked whether the existing pattern of provision was really what was needed. They wanted to *'get out of our silos, and use our expertise in better ways'*. New partnerships between phases and between different kinds of providers were needed in order to build the flexibility that learners needed. Voluntary organisations, specialist colleges, and community-based providers had a crucial role in increasing the over-all capacity of the rest of the sector. One perceptive comment was that centres of excellence for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be innovative enough and of such high quality that learners without disabilities were attracted to them. Practitioners did not know enough about each other's work: for example, some social services staff did not know that college learners had individual learning plans, and providers did not always understand the funding constraints affecting each other's provision. Practitioners did not visit each other's provision, and their views of each other were sometimes out of date.

In order to drive and support the evolution of provision, practitioners wanted more opportunities to share their thinking, and to develop new skills. The seminars, discussions and visits during the review had provided a much-appreciated taste of the value of professional debate about the ways in which practice and provision could evolve.

Comment

Although practitioners were rightly proud of aspects of provision in Lambeth and Southwark, they understood that it must evolve in order to match changing expectations and to respond properly to the government's agenda for employability and employment, as well as the recommendations of 'Through Inclusion to Excellence'. They were enthusiastic about the kind of flexibility explored with them during the review, but asked legitimately about the support they could expect from LSC. The flexibility initiative described in the next part of this report goes some way to answering this question.

Improving life chances?

This part of the report began by asking whether enough was being done to change learners' life chances. Although learners often enjoy what they are doing, many of them see little connection between their learning and what is going to happen next to them in real life. They do not feel instrumental in decisions about their own lives, and feel strongly that there

are not enough choices for them. They want jobs, but often do not get them when they leave full-time learning or training. When they do get them, they are not always in the vocational areas they pursued on their programmes.

Adult learners have restricted options; those who can work, often don't, and those who are unable to work have limited progression opportunities, even if they are able to secure provision.

The most thoughtful practitioners understand that provision needs to evolve. They recognise that more can be done to improve life chances, and are eager to engage in finding the right kind of interventions. Improving life chances begins at the strategic level, with vision and strategy, informed by learners' views and the experience of practitioners. The final part of this report sets out the main elements of that strategic response.

So far in this report, we have considered the evidence and issues that point to the need for a coherent strategic framework for learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision in Lambeth and Southwark. In the next part of the report, we look at the elements of that framework.

Section 5: A framework for Lambeth and Southwark

This last section of the report sets out the main elements of a framework for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. Each element and its main components are described, together with recommendations for action by LSC and its partners. The aim is to provide a coherent strategic framework which helps to push forward expectations, thinking, policy and practice. However, change requires investment; providers which are already stretched cannot do it all on their own. They need practical support from LSC.

The framework begins with the element concerning employment. It is important to stress again that learners for whom work is not a realistic option are valued as highly within the framework as learners who can gain employment.

Element 1: A strategy for employability and employment

There needs to be a shift in expectations for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark, beginning with a strategy for employability and employment. The strategy would include the following components:

Targets for employment

As part of its London Learning and Skills Plan, LSC should work with its partners to identify targets for numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities expected to progress into employment over the next three years. The definition of employment used should include full-time employment in the open job market, part-time work including work in community and voluntary organisations, supported employment, and work in social enterprises. Setting targets would help to evaluate the impact being made by their learning on learners' life chances.

Broader definitions of employment

Too narrow a definition of employment serves to limit possibilities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and does not provide sufficient recognition of their real achievements.

The LSC and its partners should use a broader definition which encompasses open and supported employment, part-time work, involvement in social enterprise initiatives, and work in community and voluntary settings. With this broader definition, employment becomes a more realistic goal for more people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Employer Advisory Group

In common with providers across the country, Lambeth and Southwark providers struggle to engage employers in the futures of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Each provider reinvents the wheel, expending hard work and time setting up and maintaining work placements or trying to place learners in employment, sometimes with little idea of what is available in the job market. There is a pressing need for LSC to take a

strategic lead in drawing together employers pledged to provide placements and jobs for these learners, and who can advise on vocational curricula, job markets, and work-related issues. Such a group might be part of the Careers Academy described later in this part of the report, although it should include also representatives from work-based learning, community and voluntary organisations, and social enterprises. The LSC should use its clout to attract private and public sector employers with social consciences to take part, and should convene and run the group in partnership with providers.

More work-based learning at Entry and Level 1

School-leavers need more options when they leave school and some college learners could move more rapidly into work-based learning if the right opportunities were available. Over the next five years, some 2235 pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and with emotional and behavioural difficulties will leave school in Lambeth and Southwark. Most of them will want jobs but few will move straight into employment. Some will benefit from college, but others will flourish best in practical work settings removed from formal classrooms.

There is not enough specialist work-based learning at Entry and Level 1 for school-leavers or learners leaving college. Next year's requirement for 60% progression into recognised outcomes from E2E programmes will serve to further exclude young people who could have benefited from the mix of vocational learning, personal and social development, Skills for Life and strong pastoral support offered by the best of these programmes. ESF funding is a stop-gap only for existing programmes which already have waiting lists.

There needs to be greater understanding that learners with Entry and Level 1 qualifications coupled with experience in the workplace can and do get work. Employers take the qualifications as evidence of work discipline, self-organisation, willingness to learn, understanding of the demands of work, and other attributes of an effective worker,³ rather than as evidence of technical vocational skills. These attributes are what many employers, particularly small and medium business employers, want in their workforce.

In order to provide more of the right opportunities, LSC should work with existing and new providers to establish at least 100 additional Entry and Level 1 work-based learning places in Lambeth and Southwark over the next three years.

More specialist providers in work-based learning

Not enough use is being made of the experience and skills of high quality specialist providers of work-based learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The LSC should add to its portfolio of providers by including organisations such as Rathbone, Barnardo's, the Rainer Trust, the Shaw Trust, and others with specialist knowledge of providing work-based learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The two main existing specialist providers, BOSCO and Roots and Shoots, are likely to be inspected in the next inspection cycle. Inspectors may conclude that these providers require further investment from LSC in order to continue their valuable work.

³ National Review of the Use of Entry Level Qualifications, undertaken by Pat Hood for QCA, 2004.

Including work-based learning in 14-19 strategy

Work-based learning providers should be included in strategic discussions about 14-19 provision, including how the new Foundation Diploma is to be implemented in Lambeth and Southwark. As part of its search for new partners, LSC should explore the extent to which City Technology Colleges could deliver more work-based learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Vocational school/college link provision

Colleges and schools need to consider link programmes an introduction to vocational learning, where this is right for the learners, rather than as a chance to offer subjects which learners view as '*more school*'. Colleges and schools should evaluate the purpose and content of the programmes to assess if pupils are taking part in motivating and exciting introductions to vocational learning and college life, or whether it is '*more of the same*' but in a different setting.

Link programmes for Statemented pupils should be paid for by LSC as part of its statutory responsibilities for these learners, providing programmes act as an introduction to further education. These learners must not miss out because their schools cannot afford to purchase programmes.

Special schools should be included in strategic discussions about the implementation of the Foundation Diploma.

Re-focusing the college curriculum

College staff have worked hard to establish the different rungs in the progression ladder for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work undertaken as part of the review with the two further education colleges indicates a willingness to consider how provision could evolve even further through a stronger emphasis on employability and employment. Experienced and skilled staff believe more could be done.

College staff have begun to review the purposes of their provision, and to think again about what it is they are preparing learners for. Learners should be on vocational programmes which relate directly to the jobs they want and which they are likely to get when they leave college. Staff need to consider whether learners' life chances are improved significantly by their working through the different levels of vocational programmes over three years when shorter further education experiences more closely associated with specific jobs might make bigger differences. Staff believe that too long a time in college can lull learners and their parents into a false sense of security about their futures.

There needs to be a greater sense of urgency and a stronger understanding of colleges' primary roles in preparing learners for their next step. The best next step for most learners includes a job.

Colleges need to track and record learners' first destinations more effectively than they do now, and then to use this information to decide what might need to be done differently with these learners. As part of their self-assessment processes, colleges should set targets for the expected numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities moving into

employment, using the broad definitions offered above. These targets would contribute to targets within the LSC's own plan. However, colleges should not be judged by the numbers of these learners moving into employment. Such judgements could serve to encourage to focus on learners most likely to be employed. Both the further education colleges are inclusive in their vision and practice, and strongly committed to working with learners with the full spectrum of learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with complex needs.

Careers Academy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Colleges are keen to develop different kinds of interventions in order to make significant differences to their learners' lives. Most practitioners and managers want to see a sharper focus on employability and employment, along with the right shift in provision. A Careers Academy would be a powerful tool for bringing about the required changes.

Careers Academies were originally an American concept, developed philanthropically by the financial services sector as a workforce diversity initiative aimed at getting able members of under-represented groups into 'back-room' jobs in the sector. The first pilot took place in Brooklyn High School, located in inner-city New York.

The UK Career Academy Foundation involves 56 major UK and international household-name companies, and aims to expand from the finance sector into IT, marketing, and human resources. Lewisham College and Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College have developed successful Careers Academies with the UK organisation.

Each Academy involves a curriculum focused on specific jobs in specific occupational areas, often with a specific employer, a mentoring or coaching scheme, paid internship, and an employer advisory group. The aim is that the host organisation develops its own capacity to deliver training for specific jobs, links with employers, and so on, and then becomes independent of the parent initiative.

There is much here for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many of whom leave without employment after years in further education or training. One of the biggest benefits would be the sharpening of a college's attention to preparing learners for employment.

Previous Academies have worked with Level 3 learners. Considerable work would be needed to explore the idea's applicability for Level 1 learners. The final product might look different from the original, but could still serve the same purpose. There are models in the States of Junior Academies for 14-16 year olds which may well have features which could be adapted for Level 1 learners, for example, stronger pastoral support. It would be worth exploring Junior Academies as well as the Academy idea in general to test their usefulness. Lambeth College is already undertaking preliminary explorations.

Social enterprises

There are not enough alternatives to open employment in Lambeth and Southwark, despite the efforts of some voluntary organisations and employment agencies. Some learners require the support, slower pace, and micro-training provided by social enterprises run jointly by voluntary organisations, social services, and further education and training

providers. Social enterprises provide progression routes for learners leaving further education, and real opportunities for supported work for older learners who currently have few alternatives to adult learning or day centre provision. Both further education colleges are keen to explore their possibilities. As part of this review, MacIntyre and National Mencap have undertaken to explore with the colleges possible ideas for social enterprises. MacIntyre is a voluntary organisation with a well-established reputation for bringing together the right partners to set up ventures such as a sandwich-making and delivery business and bakery and coffee shop. Mencap National's employment initiative is supported by DfES and social services; senior staff from Mencap propose involving the colleges in national supported employment projects. The LSC is an essential partner in these initiatives.

This element of the framework has been concerned with employability and employment. We turn next to the second element of a shared vision and strategy for adult and community learning.

Element 2: A shared vision and strategy for adult and community learning

There needs to be a shared vision and strategy for adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities developed by LSC, providers, the two boroughs, social services, voluntary organisations, and advocacy groups. The vision and strategy is likely to have the following components:

Joint working group for adults and community learning

Other services, agencies, and advocacy groups do not feel fully involved in the planning processes for adult and community learning. They are sometimes not clear about what this part of the sector should be expected legitimately to provide. Hard-pressed parents and carers sometimes look to education to fill gaps in other services, or to provide the continuity offered by school and full-time college. Changes within social services make partnership working and innovation more possible than perhaps in the past, for example, Southwark social services is particularly keen to support changes in the model of provision for adults at Southwark College.

Providers need to be clear about what they are offering and why, and to be able to explain what they do to users and other partners. They need also to take more into account the employability and employment agenda set out in this report, and the opportunities presented by social enterprises and supported employment. The needs of learners using day centres should not be forgotten.

A joint working group, convened by LSC, with a remit to design a vision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, would help bring about a real sharing of views and experiences, and support better partnership working.

More provision for adult learners

All the evidence, including that from inspections, points to the need for more adult and community learning provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in

Lambeth and Southwark. Both main providers have waiting lists. However, 'more' does not mean simply more of the same. The social enterprise schemes, supported employment ideas and new provision for learners with complex and severe needs (described later) all contribute to changing the curriculum mix. As a significant part of this shift in thinking about adult provision, Southwark College is eager to reshape the model it uses by taking greater account of the different capacities of its adult learners and by relocating learners from its Grange Centre to its Bermondsey Centre. In this way, learners become more included in the community life of the college and more progression opportunities become available to them. Lambeth College is also beginning to reshape its adult provision.

The LSC should work with the boroughs and with providers to establish new provision for 50 adult learners over the next three years, with Lambeth College, which has the greatest capacity, taking the lead. Morley College should play a part by increasing its discrete classes from three to five, and perhaps extending the curriculum it offers.

New provision is for new learners. It is not the chance for existing learners to 're-cycle' or to increase their already significant numbers of hours. New provision is an opportunity for learners on waiting lists, learners leaving residential colleges or other full-time college provision, or learners with no experience of adult learning. Some of these learners are likely to have complex needs, and providers will need to think and plan carefully about how best to meet them, taking into account the additional progression opportunities for adult learners described later.

New classes should be dispersed, so that learners have easy access to a centre near them.

Provision at times that suit learners

Most current provision takes place during the day, though Southwark College has begun twilight sessions for some learners. Evening travel arrangements can sometimes be difficult for learners. However, daytime only classes do not meet everyone's needs or wishes. Providers should consult potential and current learners, and their parents and carers, about likely demand for early evening provision. If there is sufficient demand, changes should be made to current timings.

More progression opportunities for adults with complex and severe needs

The social enterprises and supported employment ideas, together with the proposed increase in provision, will serve to broaden opportunities for younger learners and those who are able to manage and benefit from adult education classes. However, adult learners with profound disabilities, severe autistic disorders, challenging behaviours, and other complex and severe disabilities may require more specialised and supported progression opportunities once they leave specialist colleges or general further education. Funding for the right levels of specialist support is difficult to acquire within adult and community learning provision, which has nothing comparable to the matrix funding used in specialist colleges or the additional support mechanism in further education colleges.

There are not enough progression opportunities for adults with complex and severe needs in Lambeth and Southwark. Learners with complex and severe needs have as much right

to adult education as other learners, though we need to be clear about its purposes for them.

Provision needs to be local so that vulnerable and physically frail learners are not spending too long travelling, and so that parents and carers can contribute where possible by bringing and collecting learners. Parents and carers, and indeed other providers, speak highly of the opportunities made at Orchard Hill Specialist College, based in Surrey, which has used innovative approaches to securing funding in order to offer opportunities for adults with profound disabilities, severe autism and challenging behaviours. Learners travel now to the college from Lambeth and Southwark; a fair distance for these learners. The college is interested in establishing a local 'hub' in the boroughs.

Although it has not been possible within the scope of the review to help establish where the hub could be sited, it is strongly recommended that LSC and the further education colleges continue to work closely with Orchard Hill College to identify a site and to set up this much-needed provision. Some thought has been given to the Redfearn Centre as a possible site, though discussions have not been held formally with the borough of Lambeth.

Any accommodation would require investment by LSC and its partners to put in place the highly specialised facilities required by these learners. The aim should be to establish up to 15 part-time places for adults with profound disabilities, severe and complex autistic disorders and challenging behaviours by Autumn 2007. Any new development should be designed to dovetail with other arrangements which involve Nash College, described later in this section of the report.

Element 3: A strategy for learners with mental health difficulties

The growth of mental ill-health has been described as the 'elephant in the room' of our society; always there, very large, but rarely talked about. More people experience mental health difficulties than are unemployed, and one in four of us will have these difficulties at some time in our lives.

Lambeth and Southwark have some 5,500 people receiving high levels of support from health and social services because of mental ill-health. The two further education colleges offer specially designed provision, as well as supporting learners in ordinary classes. Other providers make their valuable contributions. However, there is no coherent strategy for the learning and skills sector's response to learners with mental health difficulties.

A Pan-London learning and skills strategy for learners with mental health difficulties

Whatever happens in Lambeth and Southwark should be part of a coherent Pan-London learning and skills strategy for learners with mental health difficulties. Such a strategy should fit with strategies for prisoners and ex-offenders, many of whom have mental health difficulties, and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

People with mental health difficulties, health and social services, and voluntary organisations should take part in the design of London's learning and skills response to the

needs of these learners. The strategy should aim initially to drive mental health higher up the LSC's own agenda, to help providers improve their responses, and to draw attention to the very best practice and partnership working.

Multi-agency conference: learning and skills for people with mental health difficulties

A starting point for the strategy might be a pan-London conference, led by LSC and run in partnership with health and social services mental health specialists, advocacy organisation service users, learning and skills providers, MIND, the Richmond Fellowship, the National Schizophrenia Association, Young MIND, King's Fund, and other organisations such as NIACE, aimed at sharing and celebrating best partnership practice, and to outlining the contribution made by the learning and skills sector. LSC should provide £10K to support this conference.

The LSC should work with partners to put in place a London-wide strategy for learners with mental health difficulties by 2008, and to include this in its London Learning and Skills Plan.

Element 4: Increased local capacity

An important theme of the review has been the need to develop more local capacity to meet increasingly complex needs by building on existing good practice. More comprehensive and strategically planned provision should draw on expertise and experience currently 'locked up' in specialist colleges or scattered in pockets across the two boroughs. The components that contribute to increased local capacity are:

Two Centres of Excellence

Both further education colleges have the capacity and strategic vision to become Centres of Excellence. Lambeth College received a grade 1 for its provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in its last inspection; Southwark College achieved a grade 2 for its provision. Each has different aspects of provision which it wishes to showcase as a Centre of Excellence. As part of the review, discussions have been held with both colleges about their particular areas of specialism and their plans to develop and reshape provision. As a result of these discussions and the expressed wishes of the colleges, it is recommended that Lambeth College becomes a Centre for Excellence for learning difficulties and profound and complex disabilities, and Southwark College becomes a Centre for Excellence for sensory disabilities.

An important dimension of Lambeth College's increased capacity to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties is the proposed co-location on a shared site of Nash College, a specialist college run by the Shaftesbury Society, which works with learners with the most profound and complex needs. More is said about the co-location below. A second important dimension is the college's wish to work in partnership with the proposed new 'hub' from Orchard Hill College, again specialising in the most severe and complex disabilities. Lambeth College already has 'in-house' expertise in working with the full range of learning difficulties and complex needs. There is strategic commitment from governors, Principal, senior managers and practitioners to a Centre of Excellence at Lambeth College. LSC should act to confirm the college as a Centre by the end of 2006.

Southwark College also enjoys considerable in-house expertise and experience in meeting a wide range of learning needs. It has well-established, high quality learning support for learners who have visual or hearing disabilities, with long-founded links with City Lit's Centre for the Deaf, which provides an expert team of teachers of the deaf, and its own college specialist co-ordinator and expert team for supporting learners with visual disabilities. The college is keen to explore the idea of becoming a Centre for Excellence for sensory disabilities, as part of its internal reshaping of provision begun as part of this review.

Co-location of Nash Specialist College

Much of 'Through Inclusion to Excellence' is concerned with achieving greater flexibility across the different 'silos' in the learning and skills sector. Flexibility should be about achieving a closer match to learners' needs, with saving money coming second to ensuring learners can move between different kinds of provision and providers as they need to, rather than stuck in the 'sausage machine' of specialist college or further education college or work-based learning. Co-location is one way of achieving greater flexibility, and of making more effective use of scarce specialist knowledge and facilities.

Co-location is an idea drawn from the schools sector whereby a specialist provider shares a site, or is located very close to a mainstream provider. The aim is for learners to move backwards and forwards, taking what they need from each curriculum and from specialist facilities on both sides. Learners with disabilities who might have been relatively isolated in specialist provision have opportunities for different kinds of integration, access to specialist vocational facilities, drama and music workshops and so on, better progression opportunities, and, if they wish, perhaps the chance to live at home whilst enjoying highly specialised teaching and support. Learners with disabilities in the mainstream provider benefit from access to highly trained, specialist staff, adapted facilities, hydrotherapy pool, and so on. Other learners can take part in work placements, research activities, and joint projects with learners from the specialist college. Staff on both sides are able to share and develop innovative approaches, to train together, and to develop their over-all capacity to meet ever-more complex needs. High-level research projects, for example, on cognitive development, help the idea develop the right kind of cutting edge required to attract funding, sponsors, local pride and support. As part of this review, preliminary discussions have been brokered and supported between Nash College, a Shaftesbury Society organisation, based in Bromley, Kent, Lambeth College, and LSC staff.

Nash College must move from its present unsuitable site and is keen to find a partner for co-location. The Principals of both colleges, with the support of their governors and of their local LSCs, are exploring co-location whereby Nash College would move onto a new purpose-found site alongside one of Lambeth College's new Centres. Discussions are continuing, and LSC will do all it can to help the two colleges find an appropriate site and to work out the strategic and other implications of co-location. If successful, this will be the first co-location in the country between a specialist college and further education college. There is no blueprint for this kind of development, and LSC should contrive to offer all the practical support it can to the two colleges.

Orchard Hill Specialist College hub

This report has described already the wish of Orchard Hill Specialist College to develop a local hub in Lambeth or Southwark, probably in relation to Lambeth College. The development by Nash College of local residential and day provision for young people with complex and severe needs, the development by Orchard Hill College of provision for adults with severe autism and challenging behaviours, together with Lambeth College's own expertise and provision, add up to a considerable enhancement of local capacity, and greater choice and opportunity for learners with complex and severe disabilities.

Element 5: Increased flexibility

This report has argued for a rethinking and reshaping of provision within Lambeth and Southwark, building on the good work already in place in order to better deliver the employability, progression, participation, and inclusion agendas to which government, planners, providers, and people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are committed. The kind of evolution described is made possible by the sophisticated understanding and experience of practitioners, the good quality of existing provision, and the informed involvement of the LSC which is willing to undertake a comprehensive analysis and review of what is offered to learners. Providers are committed to change, but need practical help and a catalyst for the flexibility between providers which these agendas require. An important catalyst would be the flexibility project outlined below.

Flexibility project

Recommendations so far have concentrated on strategic issues, on new provision and new partnerships. It is time to look at what real flexibility would mean for individual learners. It is recommended that LSC provides £100K to fund a one-year flexibility project in Lambeth and Southwark. Findings and outcomes from this project could be disseminated across London, and contribute to the thinking of the Pan-London Advisory Group for Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. As part of the review, preliminary talks about the project have been held with providers which are keen to take part. Although more detailed work with providers is needed to develop a full specification for the project, an outline can be provided.

Outline specification: A flexibility project in Lambeth and Southwark

Purpose:

To develop better and more flexible opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Aims:

- i) To open up new pathways for learners by making flexible use of the curricula, resources, facilities and expertise of different providers to deliver individual learning plans
- ii) to enable providers to work together to deliver coherent, effective individual learning plans
- iii) to involve special and mainstream schools, general FE colleges, specialist colleges, work-based learning providers including E2E providers, adult and community learning providers, and voluntary and community-based providers, in creating more flexible individual opportunities for learners.

Methodology:

- i) Identify a cluster of providers willing to take part; the involvement of specialist colleges and work-based learning providers is essential
- ii) identify a cohort of 25 or more learners with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities able to benefit from more flexible provision
- iii) explain the project to these learners, and seek their agreement to take part, involving parents and carers where appropriate
- iv) design individual learning plans with these learners which enable them to make good use of expertise and facilities outside their 'host' provider; an example of such a programme might involve:
 - 3 months in a host general further education college, to develop self-management skills, pre-vocational/vocational skills, and to choose a work-based learning option
 - 2 months in a residential specialist college to develop independence skills away from home, to experience intensive interventions, and to try out other vocational areas or to continue vocational learning in a new setting
 - 1 month in the host college, to reflect on the residential experience and to be introduced to the work-based learning provider

- 2 months in work-based learning to understand the demands of the workplace, to further develop vocational skills
- 1 month back in host college to plan next step

Learners could equally as well start their flexible journey from a work-based learning provider, specialist college, or special school. The different parts of the individual learning plan would change, depending on the needs of the learner.

- v) put in place and deliver individual programmes based on these learning plans, making effective arrangements with different providers in order to do so
- vi) appoint a named, experienced tutor for each learner with the remit to act as a fixed, stable point of reference for the learner by providing skilled personal support, helping the learner to manage their learning plan, working with the learner to identify and record their progress and achievement, making visits and maintaining contact whilst the learner moves between provision, and so on; the role of the tutor is crucial and it will need to be carefully delineated
- vii) monitor the experiences of learners, explore and resolve organisational issues as they arise.

Personnel:

Appoint two seconded/part-time project workers with in-depth understanding of the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, experience of working in a variety of organisations, clout and credibility to work at all levels within organisations, experience of development work, and ability to work to a steering group.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- i) Monitor and evaluate learners' experiences and views
- ii) monitor and evaluate the experiences and views of involved staff
- iii) identify what works well, and what acts to hinder flexibility, and other key messages from the project.

Accountability and management:

- i) Report regularly to the London Region LSC and to the Pan-London Advisory Group for learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The project goes beyond co-location or link programmes as routes to flexibility. It starts with how best to deliver the experiences that will make significant changes to learners' achievements. It will be vital to involve only those learners who can manage movement between the different settings, and to deploy only the most experienced staff for the important role of tutors. Systems and processes for co-ordinating learners' programmes must be rigorous; communications between staff in the different providers must be first-class, and learners must understand what they are doing and why, if flexibility is to succeed.

Challenges for LSC

The flexibility project element of the framework presents a challenge for LSC. It must find a *simple* mechanism for funding the kind of learning programme envisaged here – learning that really moves learners out of silos.

There is a related challenge for awarding bodies if the flexible learning programme is to be accredited. It would be worth involving an awarding body at the outset of the project. There may be mileage in exploring how the project might contribute to work for the new Foundation Diploma.

If the Lambeth and Southwark project is successful, then a similar approach could be used across the rest of London.

Organisational and curriculum changes identified within the framework cannot take place effectively without the support of professional development for staff. The next element of the framework is concerned with ensuring that staff receive the support they require.

Element 6: Continuous Professional Development Opportunities to support the framework

Practitioners do not know enough about each other's work, and do not have enough opportunities to share ideas and practice, and to develop networks. Professional development opportunities tend to be concerned, properly, with an organisation's needs rather than with supporting the strategic aims of the provision as a whole. Practitioners attending the review seminars were enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn more about each other's provision and to think about wider development matters. Other discussions and visits undertaken as part of the review indicated considerable interest in professional development activities between organisations.

Staff need new and enhanced skills if the initiatives described within the framework are going to be successful. Increased local capacity includes the increased capacity of staff to work with a broader range of learners, to open up new vocational pathways, to make best use of social enterprises, and so on. The main component of this element is a series of continuous professional development events aimed at developing this capacity.

Continuous professional development events to support the framework

Professional development events serve a number of purposes. They provide practical advice on a targeted subject; they enable staff to benchmark their own practice and to

share what they do well and to learn from others, they enable practitioners to find out more about other providers' provision, and they strengthen professional networking. In Lambeth and Southwark, such events should be used to support the implementation of the framework described in this report. Over the coming year, six events could be planned which focus on:

- i) approaches to developing employability (drawing on work-based learning and E2E providers, general and specialist colleges, social enterprise and supported employment schemes as well as on other vocational programmes)
- ii) sharing best practice in adult and continuing learning (drawing on ACL providers, voluntary and community organisations, specialist colleges, and perhaps involving NIACE)
- iii) working effectively with learners with mental health difficulties (drawing on ACL, voluntary organisations and health and social services)
- iv) working effectively with learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties (drawing on ESF projects, E2E providers, mainstream and special schools, pupil referral units, and further education colleges)
- v) working with learners with profound and complex disabilities (drawing on specialist colleges, ACL providers and health and social services)
- vi) sharing early messages from the flexibility project, and show-casing best practice

Outcomes from the events might include agreements on specific action research to be undertaken by practitioners in different organisations and bench-marking activities, peer perusal, shared action plans, partnerships, approaches to self-assessment, visits, and so on.

Support from LSC

Change requires investment. Providers which already have good provision require an indication of LSC's commitment to the agenda spelt out in this report. It is recommended that LSC provides £25K to support the six events outlined here, beginning in Autumn 2006.

The final element of the framework is the most important: the views and experiences of learners.

Element 7: The views and experiences of learners

Learners' views and experiences are an integral part of the planning process. They provide the most important touchstone for the success of any initiative. We have seen in the review that even learners in good provision do not always feel they are receiving what they want, or feel involved enough in decisions about their learning. Providers seek the views of learners as part of their self-assessment processes. However, they do not always ask them about

their over-all experiences within the sector, about their transitions between different phases, or about their aspirations. It is difficult for learners to be forthright about matters when the person asking the questions may be someone they know and like. We need to bear in mind the words of the learner earlier in the report who said sadly that she was fed-up with people asking her what she thought, because nothing ever changed whatever she said.

There are two components to this element, both of which are relevant to the whole of London.

External survey of learners' views and experiences

It is recommended that LSC commissions a bi-annual external survey of learners' views and experiences across the whole of London. It should involve well-known advocacy groups such as Skill, People First, MIND, and others, in collecting and analysing views. The outcomes of the work should be used to inform and change strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for the London region.

Learner group for London Region LSC

LSC is committed to putting the learner at the heart of all that it does. As evidence of that commitment, it should establish a learner group to work in tandem with its Pan-London Advisory Group for learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The learner group's expertise and experience should inform the deliberations of the Advisory Group. Skill has considerable experience in convening and supporting such groups.

LSC will need to provide funding of some £5K for such a group, which will require trained facilitators to help it make its most effective contribution.

Extending the framework across London

In this last part of the section, we look at how the framework for Lambeth and Southwark can be adapted for the whole of London. The intention is that the seven elements of the framework will be applicable across London. The elements are:

1. A strategy for employability and employment
2. A shared vision and strategy for adult and community learning
3. A strategy for learners with mental health difficulties
4. Increased local capacity
5. Increased flexibility
6. Continuous professional development opportunities to support the framework
7. The views and experiences of learners

Extensive experience of London provision suggests that many of the components within each element are likely to be relevant to other areas within the region, for example, most provision will need to focus more tightly on employability and employment, all areas in London need to increase their capacity to work with more complex needs, all providers need to work more flexibly, Centres of Excellence are needed, and so on. There may be instances where local circumstances differ from Lambeth and Southwark, for example, it

may not be the case that all areas need to increase their adult and community learning provision, and there may be areas with more work-based learning suitable for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We will know more as the Pan-London review gets underway.

A summary of the findings and framework recommendations is next in Annex A of the report.

Annex A: Summary of findings and framework recommendations

The seven elements of the framework for Lambeth and Southwark are:

1. A strategy for employability and employment
2. A shared vision and strategy for adult and community learning
3. A strategy for learners with mental health difficulties
4. Increased local capacity
5. Increased flexibility
6. Continuous professional development opportunities to support the framework
7. The views and experiences of learners

Each element has specific components, detailed below.

Element	Key findings	Specific components and recommendations
<p>A strategy for employability and employment</p>	<p>i) No strategy or targets for employability ii) Not enough focus on employability and employment iii) 2235 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties leaving school over next five years iv) A narrow definition of employment v) Little strategic employer engagement focused on these learners vi) Not enough specialist work-based learning at Entry and Level 1 vii) Not enough specialist voluntary organisations and work-based learning providers viii) Work-based learning providers not included enough in 14-19 strategic planning ix) School/college links not considered enough as introduction to vocational learning x) Possibility that special schools may not be able to afford link programmes xi) College curriculum needs refocusing xii) Colleges need to track and record these learners' destinations more effectively xiii) Not enough alternatives to open employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for employability and employment to include targets for learners moving into employment, using broad definition of employment • LSC to reflect in London Learning and Skills Plan actions relating to tackling worklessness with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities • LSC to establish high-level Employer Advisory Group focused on learners with learning difficulties/disabilities • Wider recognition that Entry/ Level 1 serve as routes into employment • Adopt broader definition of employment • LSC to work closely with providers of entry level and level 1 work based learning provision to ensure current provision mix is appropriately responsive to need of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to ensure involvement of specialist wbl organizations where appropriate. • LSC to review the effectiveness of current WBL provision in meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities when planning elements of provision to be competitively tendered in the future and to seek new specialist partners with expertise in LLDD • LSC to include work-based learning providers in 14-19 strategic planning discussions, and in the Pan-London Advisory Group's work • Local Authority and LSC to ensure that the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are at the centre of planning curriculum development for 14 to 19 year olds • LSC and providers to re-evaluate purpose of school/ college links; new focus on vocational learning, where appropriate for learners • LSC & boroughs to review current mechanism for funding school/college link provision for Statemented pupils to ensure these learners do not miss out on link opportunities • Special schools to be included in Foundation Diploma discussions • Further education colleges to continue work begun as part of the review to sharpen focus on employability and employment • Further education colleges to track and record learners' first destinations more effectively and use the analysis as part of their self-assessment • Further education colleges to set internal targets for employment, using broad definition, and contribute to LSC targets • LSC to support exploration of Careers Academy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities • Providers to continue work begun in the review to explore social enterprises and supported employment; LSC to be active, supportive partner

Annex A

Element	Key findings	Specific components and recommendations
2. A shared vision and strategy for adult and community learning	i) No shared vision or strategy for adult and community learning ii) Services, agencies, advocacy groups do not feel included in strategic decisions iii) Little shared clarity over purpose of ACL iv) Not enough provision for adult learners; 'bottlenecks' as learners are 'recycled' v) Not enough account taken of employability/employment agenda vi) Not enough differentiation between learners who can/could work, and those who require leisure/creative provision vii) Timings of classes may not suit all learners viii) Not enough local progression opportunities for adults with complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC to establish joint working group to agree vision and clarify purposes of ACL • LSC to work with providers to consider establishing provision for 50 new adult learners over next three years; Lambeth College to take lead; Morley College to extend its provision by two classes • Providers to continue work begun during review to re-shape their adult provision and develop more progression opportunities through social enterprises and supported employment • Providers to ask learners about suitability of timings for classes, and make necessary changes • LSC to work actively with Orchard Hill Specialist College to establish local hub for 15 adult learners with complex needs and challenging behaviours during 2007/08 • • see also recommendations under Element 1 and Element 4)
3. A strategy for learners with mental health difficulties	i) No strategy for learners with mental health difficulties ii) Providers make valuable provision iii) Some 5500 people in Lambeth and Southwark receiving high support because of mental ill health iv) Not high enough on LSC's agenda, and not in the London Learning and Skills Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC to work with partners to put in place London-wide strategy by 2008, and to include this in London Learning and Skills Plan • LSC to kick-start development of strategy with multi-agency conference on learning and skills for people with mental health difficulties
4. Increased local capacity	i) Not enough local capacity, expertise to meet complex needs ii) Expertise 'locked up' in different providers iii) Good provision in both further education colleges can be invested in and built on iv) Greater capacity can be achieved through involvement of specialist colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lambeth College to work toward gaining centre of excellence recognition for its work with learners with learning difficulties and complex needs through the achievement of appropriate national standards as these are developed • Southwark College to work toward gaining centre of excellence recognition for its work with learners with sensory disabilities through the achievement of appropriate national standards as these are developed) • LSC to work actively to support co-location of Nash Specialist College on new shared site with a new Lambeth College Centre <p>(and see recommendation about Orchard Hill Specialist College hub under Element 2)</p>

Annex A

Element	Key findings	Specific components and recommendations
5. Increased flexibility	i) Need for rethinking and reshaping of provision in light of changing national agenda ii) Providers committed to change, but require practical help from LSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC to provide £100K for flexibility project for Lambeth and Southwark, for one year beginning Autumn 2006 • Further work to be undertaken on specification in conjunction with providers • Findings of project to be disseminated as part of the Pan-London work • LSC to devise mechanism to fund the kind of learning described in project specification, and to work with awarding bodies on accreditation/Foundation Diploma issues
6. Continuous professional development opportunities to support the framework	i) Providers do not know enough about each other's provision – gets in the way of flexibility ii) Not enough opportunities to share/develop practice between providers iii) Practitioners need support if the framework is to be implemented effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC to consider funding to support six CPD events aimed at supporting elements of the framework • Outcomes to include action-research, peer perusal, shared action plans, partnership arrangements, collaborative working, greater flexibility
7. The views and experiences of learners	i) Learners' views and experiences integral to planning process ii) Learners do not feel sufficiently involved in decisions about their futures iii) Need for regular surveys which capture learners' experiences across whole learning and skills sector, rather than in one organisation iv) Pan-London planning should be informed by learners' views and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC to develop mechanisms, to include focus groups of learners with ldd, to ensure that learners views are contributing to the Pan London Planning process • LSC to consider providing funds, to convene and support a Learners' Group to contribute to the work of the Pan-London Advisory Group for learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Annex B Sources of evidence

Evidence for the review was contributed by:

London Central LSC	Nash College
Lambeth College	Orchard Hill College
Southwark College	The Redfearn Centre
London Borough of Lambeth Children and Young People's Services	La Retraite RC Girls School
London Borough of Southwark Children and Young People's Services	Lansdowne School
Lambeth and Southwark Adult Social Services	Learning Disability Carers Forum Lambeth
Central London Connexions	Education sub-group of Lambeth Learning Disability Partnership Board
Lambeth Adult Learning Services	Work-based Learning Alliance
Southwark Adult Learning Services	MacIntyre
Morley College	Mencap Now
BOSCO	Participants in two practitioner seminars
Roots and Shoots	Learners in ten focus groups
	Individual parents

Key documents included:

Through Inclusion to Excellence, LSC, 2006
Inclusive Learning, FEFC, 1996
The London Learning and Skills Plan, LSC, March 2006
Draft London Region Strategic Framework for learners with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, LSC, 2006
Inspection report, Lambeth and Southwark, 14-19 Area Inspection, Ofsted/ALI, 2004
Lambeth and Southwark 14-19 Area-wide Post-inspection Action Plan, 2005-2008
Individual providers' inspection reports and strategic plans and prospectuses
Transitions, Interim Report, Social Exclusion Unit, 2005

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