

The London Strategic Action Plan for Skills for Life in London:

**Summary of evidence for
literacy, numeracy and key skills**

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Contents

	Pages
Introduction	1
Executive summary of evidence and recommendations	2
What do we mean by Skills for Life?	7
Demographics and characteristics of people with literacy, numeracy and key skills needs	10
The balance of the Skills for Life portfolio	19
Overview of literacy, numeracy and key skills provision in London	19
Employment focused provision	34
Advice, guidance and referral services	42
Quality and success	44
The literacy, numeracy and key skills workforce	45
Acknowledgements and list of contributors	51
List of sources	52

Introduction

The delivery of high quality, appropriate provision of literacy, numeracy and key skills is vitally important to the success of London's economy and communities.

In 2005, the London Skills Commission focused on examining supply and demand issues for ESOL to develop a strategic action plan for better co-ordination and delivery of this crucial Skills for Life element. The clear intention was to carry out the same exercise for literacy, numeracy and key skills. This work began in autumn 2005 and has now resulted in the development of a joint strategic action plan for literacy, numeracy and key skills. Together, the two form the London Strategic Action Plan for Skills for Life.

London's Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) Flagship for Skills for Life group is overseeing this vital work and commissioned this document to set out the **headline findings** and **analysis** for literacy, numeracy and key skills in London. It is intended to accompany the evidence base for ESOL to provide a comprehensive picture of the key issues for Skills for Life in the Capital. These documents inform the discussions and thinking that are shaping the London Strategic Action Plan for **all** Skills for Life across London.

The work to bring greater coherence and effectiveness to literacy, numeracy and key skills is part of a complex and dynamic range of activity that provides the wider context for planning and development. This includes the recent review of the Further Education (FE) sector (the Foster Review), the Leitch Review of Skills, the Green Paper on 'Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment' and 'Youth Matters' to name but a few. As well as these key developments, our work now also embraces London's contribution to the staging of a successful Olympic Games in 2012. It is also vital in the development and delivery of the Train to Gain initiative, as well as London's City Strategy pathfinders and local strategic planning including Local Area Agreements.

Literacy, numeracy and key skills underpins all these developments, and a vital part of ensuring the success of these strategies and developments will be to ensure that the Skills for Life Strategic Action Plan is integral to planning and implementation from the highest level to the learner and employer.

This is a challenging and moving backdrop against which to establish ground-breaking joint working in London. Strategic partners such as the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, the London Development Agency and others are also all undergoing significant organisational change. But these partners and members of the Flagship group clearly acknowledge that the challenge must be met if London is to possess the world class skills that it needs.

This document summarises the evidence base that has informed the development of the plan, drawing together information from the key stakeholders in literacy, numeracy and key skills to create a meaningful picture of supply, demand, need and issues. The document begins with an executive summary of evidence and the six goals that have been agreed as the framework for plan development, and continues with a number of sections to provide illustrative detail.

The evidence gathering phase to identify the key facts and issues for literacy, numeracy and key skills development in London has been underway since October. Draft plans for ESOL and for literacy, numeracy and key skills have now been drawn up to provide the working documents that will guide SfL development across the Capital.

These plans mark a major milestone in the development of joint working in London. Through the London Skills Commission's SfL Flagship Group, London's key strategic partners have joined together in collaborative planning that is having a real impact on establishing a coherent approach to SfL provision in the capital.

Executive summary

The key issues emerging from the evidence base that are helping to shape the three year Strategic Action Plans for literacy, numeracy and key skills include:

Strategic development and planning

- There is a need to continue the work that has been started to improve regional coordination and joint working between partners so that there is a coherent approach to plan all SfL areas. The strategic development being spearheaded through the emergent regional body for SfL and ESOL specification matrix is equally applicable to literacy, numeracy and key skills.
- It is imperative that that consideration of SfL is incorporated into the ongoing development, planning and implementation of all learning, skills, regeneration and renewal initiatives and programmes, including Train to Gain, the Olympics and others. If this is not achieved from the highest level down, it is unlikely that the full potential impact of SfL provision and public investment will be realised.

Need and demand

- London leads the other regions on the achievement of the Government's Skills for Life targets, but the need for literacy, numeracy and key skills remains significant, with numeracy representing by far the greatest skills need.
- Demand does not reflect the level of need, consistent with the evidence that those with poor SfL tend not to perceive themselves as such. There is still stigma attached to having poor SfL skills, for young people as well as adults. These factors strongly indicate a need for a range of effective 'marketing' techniques, including moving away from the 'deficit model' and starting from the more positive stance of what skills a person possesses rather than lacks.
- The significant number of young people leaving school without adequate literacy, numeracy and key skills is a major concern and contributes to the continuing need for post-16 provision.
- There are indications that some groups are particularly reluctant or unable to access provision, including the 'workless' group, 'white males' not in employment, people with moderate learning difficulties, offenders, young people (particularly in the NEET group) and low skilled employees.
- Restrictions on LSC funded guidance services limits the support that Next Steps providers can give to people with SfL needs, often those more likely to require this help. High quality engagement work, for example, the activity of the SfL Compact for Libraries and other outreach using 'trusted intermediaries' contributes much needed additional support.

Needs and demand: key facts

- The DfES estimates that over 900,000 of working age people (19%) in London have literacy skills below Level 1, and a staggering 2.3m (48%) have numeracy skills below level 1.
- Figures for those with no qualifications – 2001 Census figure of one million, and the Labour Force Survey's 700,000 – support the validity of DfES estimates.
- In 2004/05, there were over 2,000 young people who did not gain any GCSE passes, and a further 8,000 not gaining English and Maths passes, underlining the need to address SfL issues in the statutory sector, as well as indicating the need for SfL support for young people.
- The majority of the 'rolling population' of 7,000 prisoners have SfL needs and over half are likely to be dyslexic.

Investment and enrolments

- The vast majority of literacy, numeracy and key skills provision is funded by the LSC. Around two thirds or more appears to be delivered through FE colleges. Adult and Community Learning and work-based learning providers are also important delivery partners. Other significant funders include the London Development Agency (LDA) and Jobcentre Plus (JCP). Responsibility for JCP provision is now in the process of transfer to the LSC.
- Agencies other than the LSC have difficulty in disaggregating data for their literacy, numeracy and key skills provision from other activities. The LDA is currently involved in developing data capture that will enable this to happen, but significant gaps will remain from other funders and funding streams. Planning the right mix of provision to meet priority learner needs is dependent on having common data for **all** provision. This is especially important to preserve provision that is vital in helping people to learn and work, but that does not contribute to the SfL PSA target.
- Although literacy, numeracy and key skills do not have the same scale of waiting lists as ESOL, there are reports of a lack of provision to meet the **demand** for literacy as well as the **need** for literacy, numeracy and key skills to support existing learners in vocational learning. Evidence of unmet demand is further reinforced by Ufl London region figures showing that learndirect centres attract around three times their profiled number of learners.
- If demand for SfL was stimulated further, it would outstrip supply at current investment levels, and it is unlikely that there are enough sufficiently skilled teachers to meet any increased demand, particularly for numeracy. There is also a lack of consistent investment for initial teacher education and professional development.

Investment and enrolments: key facts

- In 2004/05, local London LSCs (FE stream) invested a total of nearly £72m in literacy, numeracy and key skills supporting 168,833 enrolments:
 - £43m in literacy provision (85,250 enrolments)
 - £17m in numeracy provision (40,500 enrolments)
 - £12m in key skills provision (43,000 enrolments)
- National LSC invested £6.5m in learndirect SfL provision (65,627 enrolments)
- Jobcentre Plus invested around £5.3m
- A significant part of the £12m offender learning budget is likely to have been spent on SfL activity

The range and nature of provision

- Literacy represents around one fifth of **all** LSC SfL enrolments, and is more popular than key skills or numeracy in terms of take up. Around two thirds of LSC funded literacy and numeracy provision is delivered at Entry and Level 1.
- Literacy, numeracy and key skills (LSC and non-LSC funded) are delivered in a variety of different ways including traditional discrete courses, learning embedded with vocational training or leisure activities, family learning and on-line with learner support in learndirect centres.
- People with literacy, numeracy and key skills needs have a wide range of requirements, motivations and aspirations. There remains a significant amount of provision that is not sufficiently responsive to these different needs, although learning embedded into vocational training is becoming more common place. The SfL Quality Initiative is continuing to work with providers to encourage this approach.

- Some practitioners see a conflict between 'education' and 'assessment' which may result in missed opportunities for learners. An example is the perception of on line provision as 'testing rather than learning'. The development of blended learning (paper and IT based) approaches and better collaboration could bring significant benefits to learners.
- Key skills are currently delivered as part of LSC Apprenticeship frameworks. Some young people and employers remain unconvinced of the need for the teaching of key skills in its current form, although many employers cite lack of communication etc. as a significant skills gap. Employers are also keen for Apprentices to have adequate numeracy and literacy skills at the beginning of their training, indicating a need to address these skills needs in schools and pre-Apprenticeship, including through Entry to Employment.
- There is a 'divide' between key skills and the other SfL. The links between literacy and communication, and numeracy and application of number are not apparent in the delivery of these skills areas. The overall 'framework' appears to be too rigid and assumptions are made about adults having key skills that they may not possess. However, key skills would need to be skilfully taught and embedded to avoid putting learners off. Literacy and numeracy embedded in vocational training could deliver elements of key skills eg: numeracy as part of construction training will involve application of number, literacy as part of hospitality training would include communication in customer care skills.
- The work led by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to develop Functional Skills is continuing. At this point in time, it is not clear how this will impact on key skills and the rest of the current SfL portfolio. A close watching brief will be required to ensure that regional strategy and planning keeps abreast of developments.
- It remains a challenge to sell the business case for SfL to employers, but there are some good examples of successful job-focused provision. Unsurprisingly, a key success factor is the development of customised training, whether for employees or prospective job entrants. Partnership working between employer, provider and trade unions is an effective model of delivering SfL in the workplace. However not all employers are unionised (especially smaller employers) or want to work with unions, and not all unions are prepared to put in the resources to learning.

Range and nature of provision: key facts

- In 2004/05, there were 401,992 LSC funded enrolments for **all SfL** (excepting GCSEs). ESOL represented 54%, literacy 22%, key skills 11% and numeracy 10%.
- For LSC funded **literacy, numeracy and key skills** provision in 2004/05:
 - 57% of all enrolments were from women. 63% were from those aged over 19. 19% of all enrolments were from the Black or Black British African ethnic group – the largest BME representation.
 - London East had 31% of all enrolments, followed by London Central with 25%. London East had the highest number of numeracy (29%) and literacy (58%) enrolments as a proportion of all its enrolments. London South and London West had proportionally higher key skills enrolments at 34% and 36% respectively.
 - 68% of all numeracy enrolments and 67% of all literacy enrolments were onto courses leading to DfES approved SfL qualifications.
 - 23% of all literacy and numeracy enrolments were reported to be at Level 1 and 36% at Entry Level.

Quality, achievement and success

- A significant number of LSC providers are judged through inspection as satisfactory or above, but there are still some that are delivering provision that is not of acceptable standard. OfSTED's 2005 report, *Skills for Life in Colleges: One*

Year On, states that the quality of teaching and learning in the colleges visited in 2003-04 improved slightly in literacy and numeracy, and that it is better for adults than for 16 to 18 year olds.

- During 2003-04, the Adult Learning Inspectorate participated in 33 inspections of prisons and young offenders' institutions. Although there was a slight improvement on the previous year, in just over 60 per cent of prisons overall education and training provision was inadequate. Leadership and management of education and training in prisons were substantially poorer than those in other types of provider.
- Although London leads the way in achievement of the SfL PSA target, achievement rates are still too low in many providers. In 2003/04, just under one third of all LSC funded SfL **learners** achieved a qualification. That said, around 70% of 'approved' literacy and numeracy **learning aims** result in a qualification, but for key skills the rate remains far lower. Completion and achievement rates in literacy and numeracy are frequently poorer for 16-19 year olds, compared with those of adult learners.
- Teaching culture is a key factor in the achievement of qualifications. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some teachers, although dedicated to delivering quality learning, are reluctant to help learners prepare for and take tests. There is little use of on-line testing outside of learndirect centres, although it is more cost effective than paper-based methods and may also be attractive to learners. Funding and targets hinder greater collaboration – whichever provider delivers the test gets the output. This barrier needs to be removed to promote greater partnership working.
- A key challenge in developing a joint regional Action Plan for SfL is to ensure that **all** providers, funded through **all** sources deliver provision to appropriate quality standards. Ensuring that quality standards and processes are appropriate for the wide variety of providers is essential.

Quality, achievement and success: key facts

- For LSC funded literacy, numeracy and key skills provision in 2004/05 the achievement rate for learning aims leading to a DfES approved qualification was 72% for literacy and numeracy, but only 22% for key skills.
- 31% of **all SfL** learners achieved a qualification in 2003/04.
- 62% of teaching was good or better in lessons for adults compared with only 52% in lessons for 16 to 18 year olds.
- In 2003/04, in one London LSC, the Level 2 literacy achievement rate was 28% for young people and 65% for adults. In another London sub-region, the Level 1 numeracy achievement rate was 11% for young people and 25% for adults.
- Learndirect centres currently deliver around 14% of the regional SfL test target.

The literacy, numeracy and key skills workforce

- As with the ESOL workforce, there is an urgent need to continue the professionalisation of the literacy, numeracy and key skills workforce. There are more unqualified teachers in the Adult and Community Learning, work-based learning and voluntary sectors, reflecting the additional difficulties that these sectors face in accessing teacher training. Professional Development Centres have tended to focus their support more on FE Colleges. The need for key skills teachers to be qualified does not appear to be as important for employers as it is for literacy and numeracy teachers.
- Some teachers do not feel they need training or qualifications. These include those with older qualifications and those who work on low-hour contracts who may not see themselves in a career. This factor, combined with the traditional 'volunteer route' to becoming a SfL teacher has resulted in a non-professional image which also adversely affects employer commitment to change.

- The whole organisation approach advocates vocational staff delivering embedded SfL activities. Whilst there are merits to this, many vocational staff have SfL needs themselves and will require significant training to gain the skills and qualifications required, and some may not want to teach SfL. A range of options for embedding SfL in vocational training should continue to be pursued, including SfL teachers and learning/learner support staff working alongside vocational staff.
- The ageing nature of the SfL workforce has implications for the need for succession planning to replace existing experienced teachers who will shortly be leaving the profession or reducing hours.

Workforce: key facts

- There are an estimated 6,000 SfL teachers in London. 50% teach in ESOL, 21% in literacy, 11% in numeracy and 13% in key skills. The remaining 5% teach GCSEs.
- An estimated 1,500 permanent and 3,000 non-permanent SfL teaching staff do not have a full teaching qualification.
- 53% of SfL teachers are employed on a permanent basis (but not necessarily full-time) and 47% are employed through an agency (23%), either fixed-term (19%) or on a casual basis (5%).
- 72% of the workforce is female; however amongst younger teachers there is evidence to suggest that the gender balance is slowly shifting.
- 29% of teachers are aged 50 or over and 5% are aged 60 or over.

The six strategic goals for SfL in London

Alongside the evidence gathering and analysis presented in this document, the SfL Flagship Group have been developing its early ideas to take forward a Strategic Action Plan that will address all four areas of SfL. This work has been informed by the evidence, and by the work already undertaken to develop the Plan for ESOL. To address the key issues and findings, six strategic goals have been agreed:

- **Goal 1** Reflect the differing needs, characteristics and goals of 14-19 year olds and adults requiring Skills for Life through tailored specifications for provision.
- **Goal 2** Ensure that people have the Skills for Life that they need for work by delivering job-focused specifications and establishing regional coordination for employment-focused Skills for Life.
- **Goal 3** Target public investment on priority Skills for Life groups through a financing model that makes the best use of public resources, and that stimulates private sector investment.
- **Goal 4** Ensure that promotion of SfL learning is targeted on identified priority groups.
- **Goal 5** Ensure consistently high quality across all Skills for Life specifications, recognising its essential role in underpinning all curriculum provision.
- **Goal 6** Coordinate London's Skills for Life provision through a Regional body that develops and delivers a coherent regional purchasing strategy. The body will be led by the LSC, under the auspices of the RSP, with the integral involvement of the LDA, JCP and other key partners.

Of course, the priorities and actions necessary to achieve these goals will differ for literacy, numeracy and key skills. For each of these SfL areas, a detailed strategic action plan will be drawn up, using the structure of the existing ESOL plan. This will enable London to have a coherent, consistent suite of plans with which to shape the development of SfL provision over the next three years.

What do we mean by Skills for Life?

To provide a context for the summary of information about the supply of literacy, numeracy and key skills provision, it may be helpful to outline very briefly the terminology used in this document and what is meant by Skills for Life. This will not include exploring all the nuances and complexities involved in the discussions about what Skills for Life should or should not embrace, or how it should be viewed, but is intended as a brief guide for those not so familiar with this skills area.

DfES Skills for Life	Includes English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), literacy, numeracy and Key Skills that are mapped to the DfES core curricula and standards and that lead to DfES approved qualifications. Maths and English GCSEs delivered in the post 16 sector are also a part of the DfES definition of SfL and ICT is due to become part of the portfolio.
DfES SfL approved qualifications	The suite of around 120 qualifications recognised by the DfES and QCA as falling within the DfES portfolio of approved accreditation for all of the SfL areas (a list is available). These currently range from Entry 1 to Level 2 for ESOL, literacy and numeracy and Levels 1 and 2 for Key Skills. 80% of LSC funded provision is expected to lead to these qualifications (from Entry 1 to Level 2).
Target bearing qualifications	Only DfES approved qualifications from Entry 3 to Level 2 are counted as part of the Government's SfL PSA target. This includes qualifications for literacy, numeracy, ESOL, Key Skills and GCSE Maths and English (post 16). The way in which the target is reached differs across the SfL areas (see below). London Region LSC and the LDA are both required to meet their share of the SfL PSA target.
DfES approved ESOL	Includes reading, writing, speaking and listening. Offered from Entry 1 to Level 2. All four skills must be assessed to result in a qualification that is target bearing. Achievements from Entry 3 to Level 2 contribute to the PSA target.
DfES approved Literacy	Includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, but only reading is tested by the National Tests at Levels 1 and 2. At Entry 1-3, literacy is assessed by portfolio or set questions. Achievements from Entry 3 to Level 2 contribute to the PSA target.
DfES approved Numeracy	Includes all the key areas of number skills. National Tests at Levels 1 and 2 that test the range of numeracy skills. At Entry 1-3, numeracy is assessed by portfolio or set questions. Achievements from Entry 3 to Level 2 contribute to the PSA target.
DfES approved Key Skills	Refers to 6 areas of learning that can be achieved from Level 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ application of number, communication and ICT (assessed by portfolio and test) ▪ improving own learning and performance, problem solving and working with others (assessed by portfolio only and commonly referred to as the 'wider Key Skills'). <p>Achievement of application of number and communication at Levels 1 and 2 contribute to the PSA target. Other key skills will be included in the 'Framework for Achievement' for Apprenticeships and NVQs, and will vary according to the sector/occupation. Achievement of Frameworks and NVQs is dependent on achievement of these key skills, but these do not register as part of the SfL PSA target.</p>
GCSE Maths and English	Where GCSE Maths and English are delivered in the post 16 sector, these achievements contribute to the PSA target.

The requirements of the PSA target cause difficulties because provision below Entry 3 and above Level 2 does not count towards the target. There is a danger that funding may be diverted from the essential building blocks of pre-entry and Entry 1-2 provision and from the higher level SfL required by some sectors including Health.

In the case of ESOL, whole qualifications must be achieved rather than the parts that are most relevant to the learner or employer. In addition, because only reading is tested for the literacy PSA target achievement, if there is pressure to achieve the target people may not receive adequate support for other skills areas (writing, speaking and listening).

The 'division' between Key Skills and literacy, numeracy and ESOL also causes difficulties in that it is an artificial divide that reflects the PSA SfL Target and achievement of Apprenticeship frameworks rather than how learners acquire skills. Key Skills are seen as a separate SfL 'subject' whereas they are in fact the practical application of the other SfL.

There is provision that is described as ESOL, literacy, numeracy or key skills, but that is not mapped to the DfES approved core curriculum or leads to DfES approved qualifications and achievement of the PSA target. This does not necessarily mean that such provision is of poor quality or not fit for purpose. Indeed, some high quality tailored provision (for learners or for employers) may be difficult to 'fit' within current structures. This includes customised training and 'employability skills' that may draw on elements of key skills and the other SfL.

Greater flexibility in accommodating these highly valuable programmes within the DfES portfolio would make the PSA SfL Target more relevant to proven good practice being delivered on the ground.

Some other terms that are frequently used in relation to the delivery of SfL include:

Embedded	This term is used in different ways, but generally refers to SfL provision that is delivered as part of vocational training, orientation/social inclusion or leisure activity. The SfL element may be delivered at the same time as the other learning, by the same teacher or with two teachers working together. Some people also use the term to describe SfL that is taught in a separate class, but that is linked very closely to a vocational course eg: using jointly developed materials etc. SfL delivered in the workplace can also be embedded.
Contextualised	This is very similar to embedded, but may more usually refer to teaching materials or the design of courses, rather than the physical aspects of delivery.
Stand alone	This refers to SfL classes that are delivered separately from other provision. The term can be confusing as it can be used to describe provision that is not embedded or contextualised (which would generally be regarded as poor practice), or provision that may be linked with other types of learning but delivered in separate classes.

Functional skills

'Functional skills' are the successor to Skills for Life. Roll out is planned for 2010, but pilots are due to begin earlier. Functional Skills are intended to serve adults and young people, and are designed to address elements of the 14-19 Education and Skills Reform White Paper and Skills White Paper through the development of Functional Skills of English, ICT and Maths.

The QCA is leading on the design of a framework for these skills, and the initial definitions of function skills that have now been published are shown below. It is intended that Functional Skills will be not only a set of qualifications in their own right, but will also underpin and support other qualifications such as GCSEs.

Generic definition of functional skills

Functional skills are those core elements of English, maths and ICT that provide an individual with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and at work. Individuals of whatever age who possess these skills will be able to participate and progress in education, training and employment as well as develop and secure the broader range of aptitudes, attitudes and behaviours that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live and work.

In the case of **English** this means that:

- Each individual is confident and capable when using the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and is able to communicate effectively, adapting to a range of audiences and contexts. This will include being able to explain information clearly and succinctly in speech and writing, expressing a point of view reasonably and persuasively and using ICT to communicate effectively.
- In life and work each individual will be able to read and understand information and instructions, then use this understanding to act appropriately and to analyse how ideas and information are presented, evaluating their usefulness, for example in solving a problem. They will be able to make an oral presentation or report, contribute to discussions and use speech to work collaboratively in teams to agree actions and conclusions.

In the case of **maths** this means that:

- Each individual has sufficient understanding of a range of mathematical concepts and is able to know how and when to use them. For example, they will have the confidence and capability to use maths to solve problems embedded in increasingly complex settings and to use a range of tools, including ICT as appropriate.
- In life and work, each individual will develop the analytical and reasoning skills to draw conclusions, justify how they are reached and identify errors or inconsistencies. They will also be able to validate and interpret results, to judge the limits of their validity and use them effectively and efficiently.

In the case of **ICT** this means that:

- Each individual is confident and capable when using ICT systems and tools to meet a variety of needs in a range of contexts. For example they will use ICT to find, select and bring together relevant information and use ICT to develop, interpret and exchange information, for a purpose.
- In life and work each individual will be able to apply ICT safely to enhance their learning and the quality of their work.

It is intended that these skill areas incorporate the skills currently included in Key Skills and that application of them will include the variations required for literacy and for language. Further information and updates can be found on www.totallyskilled.co.uk

Demographics and characteristics of people with literacy, numeracy and key skills needs

Estimating the need

It is clear that there are considerable numbers of people in London who still do not have good literacy and numeracy skills. The table below summarises the range of figures that are useful in providing an indication of the scale of need.

Source	Cohort	Number	% of London population
DfES Skills for Life Survey (2003)	Number of 16-65 year olds at Entry level 3 or below for literacy	925,975	19%
	Number of 16-65 year olds at Entry Level 3 or below in numeracy	2,303,045	48%
Census 2001	Number of 16 to 64 year olds in London who have 'no qualification'	971,480	20%
	Number of 16 to 74 year olds in London who have 'no qualification'	1,257,929	24%
Labour Force Survey Winter 2004/5	Number of people 16 to 64 years olds in London with no qualifications or who have responded 'don't know'	710,250	15%

It is important to bear in mind that the Skills for Life Survey and other similar pieces of research provide estimates of need, not confirmed figures. That said, the similarities of scale shown across this range of figures indicates that they are likely to be reasonably good indicators of the need in London.

Having no qualifications is generally accepted as having a significant correlation with poor levels of Sfl. The proportions of London's population estimated to have poor literacy skills and to have no qualifications are very similar. What is striking is that the estimated proportion of those with poor numeracy skills is more than double this, underlining the view of many experts and practitioners in the field who emphasise the dire state of London's literacy levels. This also supports the recent emerging finding from the National Research and Development Centre for Sfl that some people with numeracy needs possess good skills in other areas.

A continuing need

The figures for the working age population indicate the scale of current need. However, the number of 16 year olds leaving school without GCSEs in Maths and English provides an indication of some of the annual 'flow' of young people entering the working age population who are highly likely to have literacy and numeracy needs. The DfES figures below show that around 12,000 of London's school leavers from the last academic year did not gain Maths and English GCSEs. The figures indicate that, in line with overall achievement trends, more boys are not achieving Maths and English GCSEs. About twice as many boys than girls do not gain any GCSE passes.

2004/5 provisional GCSE results - London	Boys	Girls	Total
Total number of pupils at end of KS4	36,898	36,778	73,676
Pupils gaining less than 5 A*-G GCSEs, including not gaining English and Maths	4,834 13%	3,273 9%	8,107 11%
Pupils not gaining any GCSE passes	1,328 (4%)	846 (2%)	2,174 (3%)

Even without the additional cohort of young people not appearing on school registers, the vast majority of whom will have Sfl needs, 12,000 represents a significant number of 16 year olds who lack the essential skills for further learning and work. These skills will almost certainly include key skills – communication and the application of number – and there is evidence to suggest that even those young people who attain Maths and English GCSEs still lack these skills.

Despite more young people staying on in education, there has not been an improvement in Sfl levels amongst this cohort. There is a particular issue with numeracy, since, whilst evidence suggests that it is rare for someone with an A* to C in English to be classified as having Entry 3 or lower literacy, it is more common for this to occur in Maths – highlighting the fact that the Maths curriculum and/or delivery in schools does not adequately equip young people with numeracy skills.

In addition to school leavers, other people may also 'join the group' of those with SfL needs. For example, a significant number of the people with ESOL needs who come to live and work in London will also have numeracy needs.

Different skills levels

London has more 16-64 year olds with literacy skills below level 1 (19.4%), than nationally (16%), and slightly more with numeracy skills below Level 1 (48.3%) than nationally (47%). The tables below show the numbers and proportions of people estimated to be at the range of levels that go to make up these cohorts.

Literacy	Number	% of London population
Entry Level 1 Skills	222,800	4.7%
Entry Level 2 Skills	108,655	2.3%
Entry Level 3 Skills	594,520	12.5%
Total at Entry level 3 or below	925,975	19.4%
Numeracy	Number	% of London population
Entry Level 1 Skills	302,785	6.3%
Entry Level 2 Skills	794,985	16.7%
Entry Level 3 Skills	1,205,275	25.3%
Total at Entry level 3 or below	2,303,045	48.3%

It is generally acknowledged that there is a particularly 'big leap' from Entry Level 2 (E2) to E 3. A person with E3 skills for example, is likely to be much better equipped to succeed on a job preparation programme than a person with skills below this level. This being so, it is clear that there is a significant group of about 350,000 people who lack the literacy skills to even be able to engage in this type of learning programme without significant additional support. In addition, there is an even larger group of around one million people who lack numeracy skills at EL 3. There will be many who lack both literacy and numeracy skills, and are placed at severe disadvantage because of this. Unsurprisingly, social class is also identified as a determining factor, with more than one third of those in social class 5 classified at EL 3 or below in literacy, including 12% at EL 1 or below and a similar pattern noted for numeracy.

Regional spread and variations

Figures at LSC sub-region, Borough and ward levels have been produced for the Skills for Life Survey using a modelling approach which results in 'discrepancies' between the total figure for London when these are added up. However, the scale and proportions of skills levels and needs can still be ascertained and are helpful in understanding the regional variations of needs. The table below shows that London East has the highest incidence of people with below Level 1 literacy and numeracy skills and London South the lowest. London West has the second highest incidence.

People with skills at Entry Level 3 or below by London sub-region

	Literacy		Numeracy	
London North	94,490	14%	372,900	55%
London West	116,600	12%	580,100	62%
London Central	90,520	9%	435,300	42%
London East	211,100	17%	804,200	63%
London South	79,640	9%	318,100	37%
Total	592,350		2,510,600	

Borough level figures reveal the extent of the huge variations in skills levels, as the table overleaf illustrates. The correlation between rankings derived from the Indices of Deprivation, DfES SfL Survey figures and 2001 Census figures for those with no qualifications can also be seen, along with some interesting deviations.

Newham has the highest estimated incidence of poor literacy (38%) and numeracy (78%) in London, and the second highest proportion of working age people with no qualifications (30%). Islington has a relatively low incidence of poor

literacy (8%), but ranks high on the Indices of Deprivation (6) and 21% of the population have no qualifications. The 'top seven' Boroughs in terms of poor literacy and numeracy are: Newham, Southwark, Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Haringey – all with poor literacy rates of 18% and above, and poor numeracy rates of 55% or above. Of these, Haringey has the lowest incidence of poor numeracy and it is interesting to note that there are several other Boroughs that have relatively lower incidences of literacy, but where poor numeracy skills are clearly a very significant issue. These include Bexley, Havering and Merton.

Deprivation indices, Sfl Survey estimates and Census results by Borough

Ranking – Indices of Deprivation	Borough	Skills for Life Survey				2001 Census figures 16-64 year olds with no qualifications	
		Literacy		Numeracy		No	%
		No.	%	No.	%		
4	Tower Hamlets	24,240	18%	84,440	64%	40,520	30%
5	Hackney	24,520	18%	81,350	60%	34,815	26%
6	Islington	9,395	8%	61,560	50%	26,995	21%
11	Newham	59,900	38%	122,800	78%	47,835	30%
13	Haringey	26,620	18%	81,700	55%	30,491	20%
17	Southwark	30,740	19%	96,780	59%	35,151	21%
19	Camden	9,210	7%	52,850	39%	21,477	15%
23	Lambeth	22,200	12%	96,550	51%	32,292	17%
39	Westminster	12,290	10%	33,890	26%	18,090	13%
41	Greenwich	22,380	16%	81,660	59%	35,802	26%
42	Barking and Dagenham	19,340	19%	61,950	61%	34,687	34%
47	Waltham Forest	22,690	16%	103,900	72%	35,890	25%
57	Lewisham	25,440	15%	103,300	62%	34,825	21%
65	Hammersmith & Fulham	7,515	6%	49,160	41%	17,918	15%
81	Brent	34,400	19%	118,100	66%	37,857	21%
99	Ealing	26,980	13%	126,500	62%	38,574	19%
102	Hounslow	21,400	15%	88,840	62%	29,762	21%
104	Enfield	26,500	15%	97,600	55%	43,411	24%
116	Kensington and Chelsea	5,620	5%	33,400	30%	12,506	11%
128	Wandsworth	10,860	6%	60,810	32%	25,117	13%
140	Croydon	27,500	13%	119,100	56%	42,171	20%
163	Redbridge	23,750	16%	85,810	56%	32,415	21%
166	Hillingdon	22,870	15%	90,690	59%	32,934	21%
193	Barnet	20,670	10%	97,490	48%	33,134	16%
212	Bexley	8,695	6%	85,070	62%	32,927	24%
214	Havering	12,730	9%	63,660	46%	36,950	26%
220	Merton	11,870	9%	54,280	43%	20,817	16%
226	City of London	215	4%	1,475	28%	441	1%
232	Harrow	17,440	13%	72,310	54%	22,896	17%
236	Sutton	14,100	12%	50,310	44%	22,282	19%
238	Bromley	20,500	11%	72,400	39%	33,905	18%
266	Kingston upon Thames	8,940	9%	36,110	37%	13,979	14%
301	Richmond upon Thames	8,990	8%	29,670	26%	12,596	11%
		640,510		2,495,515		971,462	

Gender, age and ethnicity

Information on the ethnicity of those with literacy, numeracy and key skills needs is not readily available because of the way in which scoping projects such as the Skills for Life Survey are conducted. However, if having low or no qualifications is accepted as having a significant correlation with having poor SfL, the 2001 Census figures provide some indication of the proportions of people from each ethnic group. It should be borne in mind that these figures will also include those who have ESOL needs as well as those with other SfL needs.

People with no qualifications by ethnic group

	Number with no qualifications	As a % of total ethnic group	As a % of the total number of people with no qualifications
Indian Asian	74,466	22	5.9
Pakistani Asian	23,048	23	1.8
Bangladeshi Asian	42,290	45	3.4
Other Asian	15,524	15	1.2
Total Asian	155,328		12
Black Caribbean, Black or Black British	63,502	25	5
Black African, Black or Black British	33,608	13	2.7
Other Black, or Black British	5,707	17	0.5
Total Black	102,817		8
Chinese	14,206	22	1.1
Total Chinese	14,206		1
White & Black Caribbean mixed	6,887	23	0.5
White & Black African mixed	3,247	17	0.3
White and Asian mixed	5,474	16	0.4
Other mixed	5,640	16	0.4
Total Mixed	21,248		2
British White	789,806	25	63
Irish White	63,821	34	5
Other White	88,705	18	7
Total White	942,332		75
Other ethnic group	21,998	25	1.7
Total Other	21,998		2
Total	1,257,929		100%

Within ethnic groups, those from Bangladeshi Asian and Irish White backgrounds have significantly higher numbers of people with no qualifications. Within the Bangladeshi group this will be a strong indicator of ESOL needs, but these people may also have significant numeracy needs. Those from Irish backgrounds are more likely to have literacy (and numeracy) needs, along with other groups where there are significant numbers with no qualifications, but where the language of country of origin is more likely to be English. This would include Black Caribbean and Mixed backgrounds. However, since the Census data is about ethnic origin, not nationality, it will be the case that amongst all groups there may well be those who are English speaking and that consequently may have literacy rather than ESOL needs.

Emerging findings from NRDC research (2005) indicate that older women are more likely to have barriers to numeracy than men. The Skills for Life Survey concluded that men and women appear to have similar levels of literacy but men appear to have higher numeracy levels, even when controlling for differences in education and employment. This may relate to the sectors of work where men are more likely to be employed and where they may receive 'on the job' training. The study also concluded that age is not a particularly significant determining factor, although there is a tendency for the youngest and oldest to be at slightly lower skill levels than in other age groups. There is evidence to suggest that younger people were still developing skills since whilst full time education had ended, most were not yet settled in a career. These findings are in line with the 2001 Census figures.

Characteristics of those taking up SfL learning

LSC enrolment figures and information provided through the recent LDA SfL Survey (December 2005) provide data for profiling some of the characteristics of those with literacy, numeracy and key skills needs who are **in learning**.

The LDA SfL Survey was intended to provide a snapshot picture of SfL provision and found that 86% of organisations with SfL as a key activity identified BME groups as a main user group, 73% identified women; 27% employees; 23% refugees; 13% lone parents and 13% asylum seekers. This indicates that organisations are serving many LDA and regional priority groups well. However, one notable exception is people with disabilities, highlighted by just one organisation. This may be a feature of the sample of organisations responding to the questionnaire, but may also highlight that further work is required to target this group more effectively. More detail on the scope and nature of the Survey can be found on page 26 and it is referred to at other appropriate points throughout the report.

2004/05 LSC enrolments by gender

Gender	Key skills	Literacy	Numeracy	Total
Female	20148	53232	23736	97116
Male	22788	32042	16887	71717
Total	42936	85274	40623	168833

57% of all enrolments are from women. Just over half of key skills enrolments are from males which may reflect a greater take up of Apprenticeships by young men. However, the trend is reversed for literacy and numeracy where 62% and 58% of enrolments respectively are from females. These figures confirm other evidence that suggests that men are more difficult to attract into SfL provision. Encouragingly, emerging findings of the National Research and Development Centre indicate that, unlike this general female dominated demographic for adult learning, significant numbers of men are engaged in learning in the workplace.

The LDA survey highlighted that for literacy and ESOL provision there tend to be more women than men, although this varies from provider to provider. However, numeracy appears to have a greater representation from men. Key skills present a very mixed picture with no particularly clear trend.

2004/05 LSC enrolments by age

Age group	Key skills	Literacy	Numeracy	Total
16-18	33079	12508	12695	58282
19+	10015	68504	23913	102432
Under 16	452	873	492	1817
Total	43546	81885	37100	162531

Of a total of 162,531 enrolments 63% are from adults aged 19+, and 36% from the 16-18 age group. Unsurprisingly, over three quarters of key skills enrolments are from the 16-18 age group, reflecting the delivery of this SfL area as part of the Apprenticeship framework. Literacy and numeracy enrolments follow the more usual SfL trend with 84% and 64% respectively coming from the 19+ age group. That said, it is interesting to note that there is a significantly higher proportion of numeracy enrolments in the 16-18 age group.

The LDA SfL Survey identified that the most frequently cited age group of learners for literacy, numeracy and ESOL is 25-64, although a few providers also have significant representation in the 20-24 age group. For key skills the picture is different, with slightly higher representation in the 20-24 age group. This indicates that key skills, however it is interpreted by providers, is delivered to a slightly younger age group. Only one provider reported any users over 65 years of age and this was a very small proportion.

The ethnicity data for LSC 2004/05 enrolments reveals that 28% are from the White British group, followed by 19% from the Black or Black British African group and 11% from the Black or Black British Caribbean group. It is interesting to note that,

whilst the 2001 Census figures show nearly 64,000 White Irish people with no qualifications, there are only around 1,700 enrolments from this group. This could indicate a difficulty in engaging this cohort, or that these individuals do not perceive themselves as having SfL needs. Amongst Asian groups, those from Pakistani backgrounds are significantly less than those from Bangladeshi or Indian backgrounds.

Ethnic background	Key skills	Literacy	Numeracy	Total
Asian or Asian British - any other	1410	2844	1275	5529
Asian or Asian British - Bangladesh	1414	3709	1616	6739
Asian or Asian British - India	2310	3514	1558	7382
Asian or Asian British – Pakistan	1169	2016	904	4089
Black or Black British – African	7913	15135	8928	31976
Black or Black British - any other	1472	2102	1100	4674
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5498	8684	4639	18821
Chinese	344	885	373	1602
Mixed - any other Mixed background	796	864	473	2133
Mixed - White and Asian	304	472	244	1020
Mixed - White and Black Africa	658	1133	627	2418
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1362	1298	789	3449
White - any other White background	2344	7549	2414	12307
White - British	11067	24906	11366	47339
White - Irish	356	1001	363	1720
Not known/not provided	1475	3313	1223	6011
Any other	3044	5849	2731	11624
Grand Total	42936	85274	40623	168833

Figures for learndirect provision shown in the table below indicate that whilst there is more take up from Black or Black British groups (25%), the incidence is not as high as for other LSC funded provision. 19% of learners are from Asian or Asian British groups. It is interesting to note that 42% of learners taking up ESOL are from White groups. This could be a further indication of the increase in take up from people from the EU Accession states, in line with the findings presented in the ESOL evidence base.

Learndirect Course	All Learners	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Mixed	Ethnic Group Not Known	White	Other
Skills for Life Total	29,706	5,584	7,507	197	920	854	12,795	2,118
Literacy	16,049	3,410	4,415	130	510	311	6,137	1,223
Numeracy	8,865	1,299	2,533	50	253	140	4,231	401
ESOL	6,749	1,458	1,187	49	206	170	2,847	841
Certs in Numeracy & Literacy	9,702	1,847	2,395	76	279	314	4,348	524
Lifeskills/Lifestyles	1,336	305	356	7	42	14	546	66
Workbased	1,134	103	285	1	35	28	613	69
Unknown	422	54	73		9	28	247	11

The LDA SfL Survey found that amongst BME groups, a particularly striking feature is that 'Black African' groups are frequently represented across literacy, numeracy and key skills. There is also a very diverse mix of ethnic groups in the literacy area, suggesting that learners may be accessing literacy because of a lack of ESOL classes or that literacy provision is being used as a progression route after ESOL learning. Interestingly, there appears to be lesser representation from EU Accession State learners than might be expected, particularly in ESOL provision.

SfL and employment

Low level literacy and numeracy skills are strongly associated with being unemployed or employed in lower level occupations. Moser states that those with poor basic skills are up to 5 times more likely to be unemployed or out of the labour market. The 2003 Skills for Life report shows this was particularly the case for numeracy, with more than 6 in 10 of those employed in routine or semi-routine work having Entry Level 3 or lower numeracy skills.

Good literacy and numeracy skills tend to be associated with good wages and lower level skills were strongly associated with lower incomes. The SfL Survey suggested that those with Entry Level 3 numeracy or below earned £8,000 less than those with Level 2 or above. Nearly seven in ten full time workers with Level 2 or above numeracy earned more than £20,000 a year before tax. Those with Entry 3 or lower level numeracy are less than half as likely to earn this amount. The correlation between earnings and literacy are slightly less strong but still significant. Emerging findings from the NRDC indicate a correlation between low numeracy skills (rather than literacy) and being in low skilled manual work.

The 2001 Census figures provide information on who holds qualifications across the employment sectors. The table below shows that those employed in the construction, hotel and restaurant, and agriculture/forestry/fisheries sectors have the highest incidences of no qualifications. Construction and hospitality are two of London's key sectors. In addition, wholesale/retail and repairs, and transport and communications are also highly important sectors and again show significant levels of the workforce with no qualifications.

	Number with no qualifications	As a % of total sector workforce	As a % of all people with no qualifications across all sectors
Agriculture, hunting forestry fishing	2,884	25%	0.6%
Mining and quarrying, manufacturing, utilities	56,743	18%	11%
Construction	49,987	26%	10%
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	103,764	20%	21%
Hotels and restaurants	40,382	26%	8%
Transport, storage and communications	57,530	17%	12%
Financial intermediation	14,696	4%	3%
Real estate, renting and business activities	57,696	7%	12%
Public admin, social security	16,238	7%	3%
Education	21,359	8%	4%
Health and social work	38,864	11%	8%
Other	32,445	11%	6%
Total	492,588		~100%

Data provided from the LDA SfL Survey on the employment status of users shows that 'unemployed' people form the highest proportions of users for many providers of literacy, numeracy and key skills. However, there is a large representation of those described as 'low skilled/in unstable work' taking up ESOL provision. Economically inactive groups are also represented, but are more likely to be those looking after children than those who are sick or incapacitated. Organisations were also asked what proportion of users has no or below Level 1 qualifications. There were a range of responses from 6% through to 100% demonstrating the wide range of provision and diversity of learners.

Groups/areas that appear not to be being served

Local LSCs and LDA funded organisations were asked to provide information about groups or geographical areas that they felt may not be being adequately served by current provision. LDA feedback included:

- **Sectors:** Hospitality, Cleaning, Warehouse and Distribution(ESOL), construction (key skills), care professions (literacy/ESOL for Asian women), Food Production.

- **Disadvantaged groups:** ex-offenders and UK residents (literacy).
- **Ethnic groups:** Recent migrants to UK from Poland, Somalia (via Holland); need is for ESOL; scale - 1000s, Bangladeshi women (all SfL areas).
- **Geographical areas and ethnic groups:** Latin American and Bengali people in Westminster (ESOL).

Local LSC feedback highlighted some particularly acute geographical areas of need:

- **London North:** N15 and N17 postcodes, Lea Valley, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Enfield.
- **London South:** Cray Valley, parts of Sutton, Croydon and New Addington.
- **London East:** Barking & Dagenham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, South Lewisham, Hackney Wick.

Feedback also identified some target groups that were felt to be less well served including offenders, people with learning difficulties and disabilities, older white males, manual workers in the public sector, people with mental health needs, people who are homeless and the NEET group.

This is not intended as an exhaustive analysis of those groups and areas in London that are less well served, but summarises the feedback received during this information gathering phase. However, it is clear that there is a complex picture of need across the capital and it may be helpful to carry out further data gathering to add detail.

Some key impacts on and issues for those with poor SfL

There is a complex weave of cause and effect for poor SfL, and it is likely that someone with particularly poor SfL will have a range of other needs resulting from the conditions that may have prevented skills acquisition. This serves to highlight how SfL is intertwined with many other social, personal and economic factors that themselves link to a wide range of government agendas and priorities. This can range from school achievement, skills acquisition and economic development to health initiatives and parenting. Some particularly significant characteristics are outlined below.

- **Socio-economic deprivation and exclusion** – It is accepted that low levels of literacy and numeracy are closely linked with social and economic deprivation, although the way in which statistics are produced makes it a challenge to show an unequivocal correlation. Recent NRDC findings show that low level numeracy skills have a particularly strong impact and women with poor numeracy are likely to be ‘exceptionally disadvantaged’. The Literacy Trust (April 2004) provide useful summaries of the link between poor literacy, social exclusion and Government initiatives to tackle the ‘combination of linked problems including unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown’. This is particularly important when considering the agencies that should be involved in joint working, and investment, to address these complex issues. Neighbourhood Renewal and Sure Start are both cited by the Trust as key initiatives.
- **Health and welfare** - The Moser report highlighted that those with low skills are more prone to ill health. The Literacy Trust report also quoted research demonstrating that participation in learning produces positive health and social outcomes, though learners, especially those who face the greatest obstacles need adequate support. Poor SfL is a major drawback when trying to access local services or participate in local communities, and research shows that this group is indeed less likely to be involved in community organisations. Recent NRDC research also supports this, finding that numeracy has a particularly strong negative impact on life opportunities and participation in civic and community life, which in turn affects physical and mental health.

- **Educational history** There is widespread reporting of the strong correlation between respondents' level of literacy and numeracy and their educational history. Moser mentions that "unsatisfactory teaching at school, poor health, and missing large chunks of school through moving around are all factors".
- **Intergenerational/parenting** – The 2001 DfEE report stated that nearly all parents interviewed said that they helped their children with reading, writing or maths, but groups with Entry level 3 or below were less likely to and were also less confident about it when they did. The Moser report particularly reflects on the negative 'intergenerational' effect of poor basic skills. This is confirmed by NRDC (2005), with the additional finding that parental literacy seems to be more important than numeracy in intergenerational transfer of skills, with *"literacy skills below Level 1 casting a shadow on the potential achievement of children"*. Support for adults which complements strategies for children should continue to be developed eg: Family Learning.
- **Offending** - Longitudinal studies show that there is a strong correlation between poor adult SfL and criminal behaviour and those with poor skills are over represented in prisons and young offenders' institutions. Figures published in the December 2005 Green Paper 'Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment' also point to the clear link between poor skills levels, economic exclusion and offending. 37% of prisoners have at or below Level 1 skills in reading, 52% of male and 71% of female prisoners have no qualifications and 67% of prisoners were unemployed at the time of imprisonment. Poor educational history is another key factor, with 30% of prisoners having been regular truants and 49% of male prisoners having been excluded.
- **Other difficulties and disabilities** – Some adults with poor literacy and numeracy will also have specific difficulties such as dyslexia or have hearing or sight problems which in turn could have affected their schooling. The British Dyslexia Association estimates that 4% of the population is severely affected by dyslexia, and 10% of the population 'show some signs' of the condition. However the BDA also points out that 'precise statistics cannot be given since the varying criteria and severity of the learning problem have to be taken into account'. Specific strategies may need to be included to tackle this.
- **Perceptions of skill levels** – Various reports highlight how few adults regard their reading, maths or language skills as below average, even those with the lowest level skills. The 2003 DfES Skills for Life survey reported that adults with poor literacy skills may not necessarily recognise that their skills are limited. The 2001 DfEE report specifically looked at people's perceptions of their literacy and numeracy skill levels.
 - Over half of those with Entry Level 1 or lower literacy said their everyday reading was very or fairly good.
 - Two thirds of those with Entry Level 1 or lower numeracy felt they were very or fairly good at number work.
 - Only 2% felt their weak skills had hindered their job prospects or led to mistakes at work.

It concluded that many people either:

- Do not realise the negative effect their weak skills have on their lives
- Have found jobs that demanded a level of skills that they could cope with
- Or they have developed coping strategies so their limitations are not exposed.

This is an important angle which SfL programmes and providers will need to address to engage successfully with those who require skills training.

- **The skills 'chasm' at Entry Level 2** - In 2005, the NRDC highlighted how much disadvantage increases *"as you go down the various steps on the scale of illiteracy"*. Whilst the decline in advantage from level 2 to entry level 3 follows a smooth gradient, 'fortunes plummet' for people in the next band down, entry level 2. *"The big gap between entry level 2 and higher levels points to a concentration of socio-economic problems for this group, including social isolation and depression, especially for men."*

The balance of the SfL portfolio

Before focusing attention specifically on literacy, numeracy and key skills provision, it is worth setting these three SfL areas in the broader context of the four areas (including ESOL).

As discussed later, SfL provision is supported by a range of partner investment. That said, the LSC funds at least 80% of provision, and therefore, provides a good indication of the proportion of investment and provision in the four main SfL areas.

The table below shows the LSC's FE funding stream expenditure and enrolments for SfL in 2004/05 (with the exception of GCSE Maths and English which form a small additional part of the total SfL portfolio). Enrolment figures are based on FO5 data for the academic year 2004/05. They are likely to increase slightly as data is refreshed frequently, but the figures serve to provide a good indication of the **scale** of current provision.

		ZUNA*	ESOL	Key skills	Literacy	Numeracy	Totals
London Central	Funding	1,708,164	44,403,231	3,056,788	10,825,006	4,629,265	£61,084,664
	Enrolments	2846	62,301	10,431	21,356	9,874	105,240
London East	Funding	7,852,287	33,598,545	2,193,998	13,321,091	5,737,461	£54,641,894
	Enrolments	8707	55,716	7,271	30,639	15,145	110,219
London North	Funding	4,199,241	21,017,254	1,828,288	4,987,253	1,740,272	£31,706,230
	Enrolments	4806	30,047	5,825	9,869	3,826	51,785
London South	Funding	1,075,817	13,456,584	2,081,087	4,909,981	1,940,931	£22,010,130
	Enrolments	897	19,699	9,430	11,840	5,723	47,661
London West	Funding	4,852,534	29,004,223	2,411,172	9,034,023	3,219,052	£44,930,738
	Enrolments	5687	42,383	9,979	11,570	5,723	74,005
Total expenditure		19,688,045	141,479,838	11,571,333	43,077,354	17,266,981	£233,083,558
Total enrolments		22,943	210,146	42,936	85,274	40,623	401,922

*'zuna' enrolments are onto provision leading to units of DfES approved qualifications, rather than whole qualifications and are mainly for ESOL

Relative balance by expenditure and enrolments

	ESOL & zuna	% of total	Key skills	% of total	Literacy	% of total	Numeracy	% of total	Totals
Total expenditure	141,479,838	67%	11,571,333	5%	43,077,354	20%	17,266,981	8%	214,373,637
Total enrolments	210,146	54%	42,936	11%	85,274	22%	40,623	10%	388,910

Analysis of the total enrolments and expenditure by SfL area shows the predominance of ESOL. If ZUNA enrolments are also included, this indicates that ESOL accounts for nearly 70% of all SfL expenditure and 58% of enrolments. This is important to bear in mind especially with regard to issues of prioritising target groups and types of provision (job/community focused etc.). With a finite pot of public investment, balancing the four areas of provision is complex and challenging, especially given that a number of funders are involved in addition to the LSC.

Overview of literacy, numeracy and key skills provision in London

Now that the overall balance of provision across the SfL areas has been summarised, specific focus will be put on presenting the key information for literacy, numeracy and key skills.

Investment and learners

Identifying the total public investment in these SfL areas, and the number of learners supported presents similar challenges to those noted in the accompanying evidence base for ESOL. The table below summarises the actual and estimated figures for 2004/05 gathered to date. There are some key points to bear in mind for this data:

- LSC figures include literacy, numeracy and key skills. As for the figures above, enrolments are based on 'FO5' data for the academic year 2005/06, which may increase slightly as data is refreshed frequently.
- For LSC provision, the term 'key skills' refers specifically to the Application of Number and Communication.
- Data for JCP and LDA provision will relate to literacy and numeracy, but may also include some other 'generic' work preparation skills that may be similar to elements of SfL key skills. Other funding streams such as ALG, Neighbourhood Renewal etc. will also include a similar range of provision.
- ESF funding supports part of LSC, LDA, JCP, ALG and South London Connexions provision, and will therefore span all the various manifestations of literacy, numeracy and key skills. The summary figures shown below will include some elements of ESF. To demonstrate the level of support provided through this source, a separate summary is shown later in the report.

Funder/type	Expenditure (£)	Learners	Data source and comments
LSC	233,083,558	174,750	04/05 figures for the FE funding stream. Smaller volumes will be delivered through ACL, work-based learning and other streams. Learner figures are estimated from the number of enrolments
JCP	5,291,122	3,000	04-05 expenditure for literacy and numeracy on Basic Employability Training and Short Intensive Basic Skills. Learner numbers are estimated from the total number of starts on these programmes.
LDA	Not calculated to date.	1,526	Number of learners taken from the LDA SfL Survey. This figure is yet to be confirmed through further, more detailed data capture.
Learndirect	7,115,521	35,000	04/05 from London Regional Ufl includes national tests for literacy and numeracy as well as other literacy and numeracy packages.
Offender learning (prison & probation)	12,000,000 for all learning (SfL) and vocational	62,177 achievements	Learner figure represents literacy and numeracy achievements for people in custody. There will be additional numbers on probation/non-custodial sentences.

The LSC accounts for the largest amount of investment in literacy, numeracy and key skills in London. Whilst responsibility (and funding) for provision delivered to JCP customers is now being transferred to the LSC, JCP will remain a key partner, working in close collaboration with the LSC to ensure that its customers' needs are met.

It has not been possible to provide learner numbers and expenditure for some funders and funding streams. The most crucial of these include the Association of London Government, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Deal for Communities. Currently, data capture systems for these areas of funding do not specifically identify learning activity. This means that the only way in which provision could be identified is through detailed survey work with each of the Boroughs. The remit for this evidence base is to collate and analyse existing research and data, and therefore this activity is beyond the scope of this work. That said, the LDA, which also has similar difficulty in quantifying its SfL data has now undertaken a survey to gain a snapshot of provision and is currently involved in developing its systems so that it can contribute to joint regional data capture that can identify learners, expenditure and outputs/outcomes. Details of the outcome of the survey are shown on pages 26-28.

There is an urgent need to identify the provision delivered through all funding streams and it is strongly recommended that partners including the ALG, GOL and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consider undertaking the type of work being implemented by the LDA.

Although the LSC is by far the largest funder of SfL, it has, in common with the LDA, the driver of the Sfl PSA target. Whilst this situation remains, it is crucial that other more flexible public investment is targeted on priority provision and groups that these organisations find it difficult to support because of the need to allocate resources to meeting targets. It could be, and is argued that there is a need to review the efficacy of the Sfl PSA targets, but in the meantime, if London's learners are to be adequately served, it is imperative that all the possible sources of public investment in Sfl are coordinated through the proposed regional purchasing strategy. This can only be achieved if sufficient and consistent data is available across all provision.

Key issues for provision

There is a wide range of literacy, numeracy and key skills provision delivered across funders. The mix of provision for literacy and numeracy is more diverse, including non-accredited and accredited learning, ranging from 'first steps' learning through to Level 2 courses. Currently, key skills is delivered only within the LSC Apprenticeship framework, and therefore, mainly to young people. The key issues for provision are presented in the executive summary, but it is worth providing some additional detail here, including:

Literacy: The emerging findings of recent NRDC research confirm other earlier work in stressing that where action is taken to improve very low literacy levels, the skills and life prospects of people can be significantly improved. However, it may take 200 hours or more of learning to move up one National Qualification Framework level, and those with poor skills levels often lead 'chaotic' lives which require flexible, chunked learning. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Sfl qualifications may not have enough flexibility, and even if they have, the way in which the PSA target is measured means that providers are under pressure to ensure that learners achieve whole qualifications. This point applies across all Sfl areas.

Numeracy: This Sfl area has the largest scale of need, and the NRDC research highlights that people are fearful of the subject, and not complacent as some other research has suggested. Those lacking numeracy skills can be very skilled in other areas and so it presents particular challenges both for attracting those with needs and delivering provision that acknowledges the huge variation in other skills levels that exists within this group of potential learners. The research also identified that most adults lacking skills want to be able to carry out 'everyday' maths including helping their children with homework, counting change and preparing tax returns. This suggests that financial literacy courses and family learning could be particularly effective in accessing new learners. Since personal debt has become a headline issue for the UK, including numeracy as part of debt counselling might also prove very beneficial. There is a variety of work being carried out to address the capacity and effectiveness issues for numeracy provision, details of much of this work can be found on www.maths4life.org.

Key skills: Key skills achievements are low and there are a number of unresolved problems with the way in which these skills are delivered as part of the Apprenticeship framework. Currently, all Apprentices must complete key skills in order to achieve a full Apprenticeship framework qualification. However, young people have varying skills levels and needs that are at odds with this 'one size fits all' approach. Some enter Apprenticeships with poor levels of numeracy, literacy or Language and others do not. A much more flexible approach is needed if young people are to be engaged. In addition, it is assumed that adults possess key skills, as they are often not taught as part of literacy and numeracy provision. It may be the case that very similar skills are delivered through embedded literacy and numeracy provision, or through employability skills. That said, employer feedback indicates that there are still too many adults as well as young people that do not have sufficient communication, teamwork and other essential skills for the workplace. As with the other Sfl areas, work is continuing to try and improve and further develop key skills, including a Key Skills Support Programme (see www.keyskillssupport.net for further details).

As discussed earlier, the work that is currently being undertaken to develop Functional Skills may resolve some of these issues and it will be vital to keep abreast of this initiative and, where possible, contribute to the development process.

Summary of provision funded by major partners

Learning and Skills Council

The detailed breakdown figures for LSC provision in this section are for FE funded LSC provision. Additional provision is delivered through other LSC funding streams including Adult and Community Learning (ACL) which incorporates Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC), Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) and Family Learning. Work-based Learning (WBL) and Workforce Development (WfD) also support job-focused and employer-focused SFL, including the Union Learning Fund. There are other smaller LSC 'pots', for example, the Widening Adult Participation Action Fund (WAPAF) and the Local Intervention and Development fund (LID).

Total literacy, numeracy and key skills enrolments for FE, ACL and WBL are around 245,000, indicating that around 60% of enrolments are through the FE funding stream. This will include enrolments in FE colleges and at other providers that hold college franchised provision. The LSC is also the funder of learndirect which includes SFL delivery and now has responsibility for all offender learning (probation and prisons). Details of funding and learners on this provision are provided later in this section.

The figures for FE enrolments for 2005/06 show a total of nearly £72m supporting 168,833 enrolments. London East has the greatest number of enrolments and expenditure, closely followed by London Central. Of these three SFL areas, literacy enrolments represent 50%, key skills 26% and numeracy 24%. London South and West have proportionately significantly higher levels of key skills enrolments at 34% and 36% respectively. London East has the highest proportion of numeracy enrolments at 37% of all enrolments. London North has only 9% of all numeracy enrolments.

LSC	Key skills	Literacy	Numeracy	Total	Expenditure (£)
London Central	10,431	21,356	9,874	41,661	18,511,059
London East	7,271	30,639	15,145	53,055	21,252,550
London North	5,825	9,869	3,826	19,520	8,555,813
London South	9,430	11,840	6,055	27,325	8,931,999
London West	9,979	11,570	5,723	27,272	14,664,247
Grand Total	42,936	85,274	40,623	168,833	71,915,668

Level of learning

For the LSC (and LDA), only qualifications from Entry 3 and above are 'target bearing'. Whilst current national and regional LSC guidance does not exclude target-bearing provision from being funded, the pressure to achieve targets and squeeze on funding could result in a move away from supporting provision below this level. It should be stressed that there remains a very significant need for literacy and numeracy learning opportunities at pre-entry and Entry 1 and 2.

This vital role of first steps provision is raised in a number of research papers including The Literacy Trust which strongly argues that "a cross-cutting family and community-focused literacy strategy would help to open up opportunities for partnership working and support mainstream service delivery." The NRDC's report "Community-focused provision of adult literacy, numeracy and language: an exploratory study", identifies the key features of successful community provision which includes having a holistic approach, having concern about learning situations, and integrating basic skills into other learning. Funding was seen as 'absolutely critical'.

Reports also stressed that taking the first steps back into learning as an adult can be extremely daunting, especially if early experience of education was not positive. The support of community partners if there are additional factors involved such

as poor housing, debt, family upheaval, personal problems such as addiction or criminal behaviour is highlighted as crucial. In addition, a clear acknowledgement that progress is not going to be straightforward and may include several starts and restarts and opting in and out of learning will be crucial in planning the most effective mix of provision.

The following tables show the distribution of LSC funded enrolments onto provision for 2004/05 by LSC area and 'notional' level of provision. Notional level refers to the level at which the Learning Aims Database (LAD) codes a particular learning aim enrolment. This will include provision that leads to one of the DfES accredited qualifications and provision that leads to qualifications outside of this portfolio. Provision in the 'not coded' category includes activity that may lead to a qualification that cannot be coded by the LAD eg: some Open College Accredited qualifications. It will also include 3 hour assessments carried out by providers (which are now no longer funded).

Most numeracy and literacy delivered is at Entry level. However, it is worth bearing in mind that LSC data capture does not easily disaggregate within that overall category, so this will include Entry 1 to Entry 3. As outlined earlier, the most significant change in skills level takes place between Entry 2 and 3 and it would therefore be very helpful to carry out further analysis to see how many learners are enrolling at the three different entry levels, and progressing from one to the next.

Literacy

LSC	Entry	L1	L2	Other	Grand Total
London Central	7,628	4,684	1,712	7,332	21,356
London East	12,202	8,288	1,896	8,253	30,639
London North	3,903	1,052	223	4,691	9,869
London South	4,670	2,549	831	3,790	11,840
London West	4,386	2,555	830	3,799	11,570
Grand Total	32,789	19,128	5,492	27,865	85,274

For literacy, 38% of all enrolments are at Entry level, 22% at L1 and 6% at L 2. 33% of all provision falls in the 'other' category. These trends are broadly followed in each of the sub-regions with a few notable exceptions. 48% of London North's provision is 'other'. Enrolments onto entry level provision are highest in London South and London East at 39%.

Numeracy

LSC	Entry	L1	L2	Other	Grand Total
London Central	3,365	2,682	636	3,191	9,874
London East	5,008	3,982	1,536	4,619	15,145
London North	1,825	828	303	870	3,826
London South	1,911	1,086	602	2,456	6,055
London West	2,126	1,337	519	1,741	5,723
Grand Total	14,235	9,915	3,596	12,877	40,623

For numeracy, 35% of all enrolments are at Entry level, 24 at Level 1 and 9 at Level 2. 32% of all provision is 'other'. These figures show that literacy and numeracy enrolments broadly follow the same trends. Interestingly, London North has the lowest proportion of enrolments onto 'other' provision, in contrast to the picture for literacy. This sub-region also has the highest proportion of Entry level provision at 48%.

Key skills

LSC	L1	L2	Grand Total
London Central	4,051	6,380	10,431
London East	4,011	3,260	7,271
London North	3,059	2,766	5,825
London South	2,728	6,702	9,430
London West	6,054	3,925	9,979
Grand Total	19,903	23,033	42,936

The overall figures for key skills enrolments show a slightly greater number on Level 2 provision, although London East, North and West have higher proportions on Level 1 provision than on Level 2. London West has the highest proportion of Level 1 enrolments at 60 and London South the highest number of Level 2 enrolments at 71%.

DfES approved and 'other' provision

DfES approved Sfl qualifications have now been fully introduced and all LSC funded providers are tasked with moving towards the target of 80% of provision leading to these qualifications. The following table shows the number and percentage of LSC funded 2004/05 enrolments that did not lead to a DfES approved. All LSC funded key skills provision falls within the DfES portfolio and is therefore not included in the table.

LSC	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Other	% of Total	Other	% of Total
London Central	7,332	34%	3,191	32%
London East	8,253	27%	4,619	30%
London North	4,691	47%	870	23%
London South	3,790	32%	2,456	40%
London West	3,799	33%	1,741	30%
Grand Total	27,865	33%	12,877	32%

London East had the lowest proportion of enrolments onto literacy provision that does not lead to DfES accredited qualifications, and London North the lowest proportion for numeracy. By contrast, London North shows nearly half of all literacy enrolments onto other provision, whereas London South has the highest proportion of numeracy enrolments onto other provision. The average proportion of enrolments onto other provision is more or less the same for literacy and numeracy.

These figures indicate that progress was being made in 2004/05 towards moving more enrolments onto provision that leads to DfES approved qualifications. Early figures for 2005/06 indicate that further progress is being made.

Other funders, particularly the LDA, are beginning the process of ensuring that the qualifications offered by their providers in line with DfES requirements to raise quality and improve consistency.

Who delivers LSC funded provision?

The majority of provision is funded through the LSC's FE funding stream. 78% of providers use this source of funding, including General FE Colleges and other private and voluntary sector providers. To give an indication of the spread of provision across those delivering the greatest volume of provision, the following table gives 2004/05 figures for enrolments.

Provider	Enrolments			
	Key skills	Literacy	Numeracy	Total
1. City and Islington College	2,962	4,091	1,888	8,941
2. Lambeth College	255	4,602	3,850	8,707
3. Tower Hamlets College	525	6,177	1,839	8,541
4. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College	4,172	2,507	1,346	8,025
5. Havering College of Further and Higher Education	33	4,382	3,402	7,817
6. Lewisham College	2,987	1,921	1,682	6,590
7. College of North West London	1,240	3,173	1,451	5,864
8. Southwark College	2,140	2,813	740	5,693
9. Carshalton College	3,214	1,369	689	5,410
10. College of North East London	816	2,554	1,976	5,346

The highest number of key skills enrolments are at Ealing, Hammersmith and West London, Carshalton and City and Islington colleges. Havering has the lowest number of key skills enrolments. Literacy enrolments are particularly high at Tower Hamlets College and much lower at Carshalton College. Lambeth and Havering colleges have the highest enrolments on numeracy courses, and Carshalton the lowest.

Feedback from local LSCs confirms that a variety of delivery organisations are involved in SfL learning. Of those providing information, the general trend is for around 60%-70% of literacy and numeracy provision to be delivered in FE colleges, with the remainder being delivered through adult education providers. For key skills, as one might expect, the picture is different with provision being split between FE colleges and work-based learning (WBL) providers. London East is notable in reporting that 62% of its key skills provision is delivered through WBL providers.

Learndirect

Learndirect is an increasingly significant deliverer of Skills for Life provision. The table below shows the breakdown of SfL delivery for 2004/05.

Course	Enrolments	Learner Count	Funding
Skills for Life Total	88,703	29,706	£9,436,856
Literacy	36,618	16,049	£3,889,301
Numeracy	18,723	8,865	£1,861,930
ESOL	7,925	6,749	£1,863,048
Certificates in Adult Numeracy and Literacy	22,781	9,702	£1,364,290
Lifeskills/Lifestyles	1,425	1,336	£317,154
Workbased	845	1,134	£117,889
Unknown	381	422	£23,246

Literacy and numeracy expenditure accounts for just over £7m supporting nearly 35,000 learners. These figures include the five geographical hubs as well as the NHS, Trade Union and Careconnect hubs. Each learner represents an average of three enrolments, and, of those learners taking certificates in literacy and numeracy, there was an average of 2.3 tests per learner.

It is interesting to note that the balance of provision across the SfL areas is very different than for other LSC funded provision. ESOL represents the smallest proportion, probably reflecting the greater amount of learner support required in this skill area, as well as the challenges posed by the current ELLIS packages. This may change now that learndirect holds the contract for delivery of the Entry Level 3 ESOL test linked to the new citizenship requirements.

The table shows that learndirect has a slightly higher proportion of learners taking up numeracy in comparison to literacy than is the case for other LSC funded provision. However, the proportion is still much lower than for literacy, further underlining the need to stimulate the take up of numeracy provision.

Around one third of all provision is delivered by centres in London East. 37% of literacy learners and 33% of numeracy learners are from this sub-region. This reflects the pattern of provision for other LSC funded SfL. London West has the next largest share of learners at 20%. However, it is surprising that London Central, traditionally a high volume sub-region, has only 13% of all SfL learners.

Jobcentre Plus

As reported in the ESOL evidence base, Jobcentre Plus support for SfL is delivered as part of programmes such as the 26 week Basic Employability Training (BET) and 8 week Short Intensive Basic Skills (SIBS). Whilst the majority of activity on these programmes is focused on developing SfL, data capture is not as detailed as for LSC programmes and therefore it is only possible to provide estimates of expenditure and learner numbers. JCP accounting processes also do not differentiate between ESOL, literacy and numeracy.

The table below shows the total numbers for the BET and SIBS programmes in 2004-05 in London.

Opportunity Type	Referrals	Starts	Leavers	Completers
Basic Employability Training	28 764	11 316	9 206	4 703
Short Intensive Basic Skills	1 700	711	629	423
	30 464	12 027	9 835	5 126

As reported in the ESOL evidence base, the majority of SfL activity is ESOL. Expenditure on literacy and numeracy for 2004-05 is estimated at £5,291,122 which represents around a quarter of total SfL investment. It is reported that literacy represents the majority of the non-ESOL provision, once again demonstrating the lack of demand for and supply of numeracy.

Current JCP contracts do not stipulate compliance with the DfES SfL qualifications, but this will change, especially with the proposed transfer of JCP SfL provision to the LSC to take place in 2006. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many JCP customers are at pre-entry level, and provision starts at Entry Level 1.

JCP's focus is on the 'worklessness' group, including those on Incapacity Benefit and Income Support. These customers typically will have a wide range of needs including significant SfL needs. Work is currently underway to review how best to respond to the range of JCP customers, to ensure that SfL activity supports individuals to gain employment. However, the issue of improving the continuity of learning and opportunities to gain qualifications after job entry remains a key issue as it is for ESOL.

London Development Agency

As reported in the evidence base for ESOL, the LDA supports a variety of SfL provision, mainly delivered as elements of larger programmes. Because of this embedded approach, and due to the nature of the LDA's targets and reporting frameworks it has traditionally been challenging to disaggregate SfL activity from the other elements of programmes.

In October 2005, work began to address this issue. A survey of 55 LDA providers has now been carried out to provide a 'snapshot' of the nature and extent of LDA supported SfL. The survey is intended to give an indication of what SfL provision is being delivered. This will inform the development of ongoing data capture systems that will enable the LDA to identify more precisely its support for SfL, enabling the Agency to plan SfL so that it aligns with LDA priorities and fits with the overall regional purchasing strategy. The work will make a significant contribution to the joint data capture development that is a key activity outlined in the London Skills Commission Strategic Action Plan for ESOL, which will also be broadened to encompass all SfL activity in the forthcoming full version of the Strategic Action Plan.

Some key findings from the survey include:

- 22 organisations identified SfL as a main part of their work. SfL activity is funded wholly or partly by the LDA. 14 organisations had more than one source of funding, the most frequently cited was the LSC. Others included NRF, learndirect, ALG and charitable trusts. This points to the complexity of SfL funding and the necessity of joint planning to avoid duplication and maximise the impact of public investment.

- Most LDA funded SfL activity is embedded or linked to employment focused activity. Vocational training and job brokerage were stated as main areas of work by 49% and 40% of respondents respectively. Half of organisations report that a significant amount of their provision is either 'pre-employment' or 'job-focused'. The majority of organisations either link separate SfL provision to vocational training, or deliver it during vocational training or deliver it in the workplace. 5 organisations deliver part of their SfL provision in community settings.
- Interestingly, IAG was the most frequently cited other area of work (62%), indicating that organisations funded by the LDA are also likely to be a first point of contact for learners. This could be worth further investigation in view of the need for greater capacity and expertise in first point of contact services as discussed later in the report.
- Of the 22 organisations that offer LDA funded SfL activity, the breakdown by subject area is as follows (some organisations offer more than one SfL area):

Area	Number of projects	Number of learners
Literacy	11	543
Numeracy	7	363
ESOL	11	589
Key skills	8	620
Total	N/A	2,115

The higher number of literacy and ESOL providers is in line with LSC trends where literacy and ESOL represent the largest proportions of provision. The relatively low proportion of numeracy learners underline the challenge in stimulating demand amongst priority groups with numeracy needs. Interestingly, ESOL learners account for 28% of learners reported through this survey, compared with around 57% of LSC enrolments. It may well be that there are additional ESOL learners on LDA funded provision that have not been identified through this 'snapshot' and this should be picked up when more detailed data capture is implemented. There is a seemingly high proportion (29%) of key skills learners. It should be noted it was not stipulated that respondents report on only DfES portfolio SfL activity, and the key skills provision that these learners are engaged in is likely to encompass a wide variety of skills.

- As shown below, between a half and two-thirds of providers deliver learning that is accredited.

Area	Number of providers	Number of providers where learning is accredited
Literacy	11	7
Numeracy	7	5
ESOL	11	8
Key skills	8	3

Of those providers that do not use accreditation, two are in the process of introducing it. Others use success measures that are focused on 'distance travelled' including Individual Learning Plans, individual and group assessment, lesson observations and exit assessments. Some providers commented that accreditation was not appropriate for their provision because it only formed a small part of the total package offered to learners and is used for support or access to vocational learning. There were other comments about the expense and time involved in enabling learners to gain qualifications, as well as the unsuitability of qualifications. This may reflect that wide range and flexibility of SFL interventions supported by LDA. It is interesting to note that key skills has the lowest likelihood of accreditation. This may reflect the comments made earlier about the interpretation of what constitutes this skills area.

- It is very encouraging that the majority of providers know the destination of their learners, with relatively few appearing in the 'don't know' category. For literacy and numeracy, a significant number of individuals appear to go into further learning, although around a fifth of organisations reported between 10% and 74% moving into jobs. ESOL provider

responses show a good combination of individuals moving into learning or jobs. The jobs proportions vary from 10% to 48% which is very encouraging for this group. Key skills has jobs cited a little more frequently as a destination, with similar rates to literacy.

- A range of good practice activities were highlighted including:
 - **Embedded learning:** not only combining SfL delivery with vocational training (childcare, construction, hospitality and catering), but also with health and arts courses to attract those less likely to engage in SfL learning. This demonstrates that provision addresses employment needs as well as social cohesion and wellbeing.
 - **Customised approaches:** to suit the individual needs of learners and of employers. This includes significant time spent on the early stages of IAG, assessment and planning, as well as providing bespoke training for those in particular sectors.
 - **Addressing disadvantage:** including provision designed and delivered by BME people to ensure cultural sensitivity, long term commitment to progression for learners from a highly deprived area, seeing them through from ESOL EL1 to L1 and specialist SfL training for deaf people.

With the recent development requiring the LDA to contribute to the SfL PSA target, it is all the more important that adequate data capture is in place. It also has an impact on the type of SfL provision that the Agency funds since some of it will now need to be target bearing. This is particularly important when considering the flexible SfL support for activity such as job brokerage where qualifications may not be appropriate, or, where they are required, may not be achieved until after an individual has been in work for some time. This will need creative and flexible solutions to ensure that learners' needs and targets can both be met.

Libraries and Museums

As revealed in the ESOL evidence base, a data sampling exercise, undertaken within London library service during February and March 2004, revealed that library staff referred an average of 1,124 adults with basic or essential skills needs to learning providers each week. This gives an annual prediction of more than 56,000 referrals each year.

Libraries act as a gateway to formal learning as well as offering informal opportunities e.g. by providing space and access to computers for independent study. The role of library staff tends to be signposting or referring potential learners to formal provision, delivered in the library, and provided by the LEA or FE College. The role of libraries in delivering literacy and numeracy varies enormously – in some instances the library simply provides a room and may do some signposting whereas in more proactive libraries, library staff have received awareness training, work with tutors to identify appropriate book-stock and work with Sure Start programmes to deliver family learning.

The Association of Libraries and Museums (ALM) has established a London Skills for Life Compact. This Compact is intended to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of SfL activities (ESOL, literacy and numeracy) in libraries and museums across all London Boroughs. The activities are intended to support the development of the libraries as key outreach, engagement and referral points. Three types of incremental engagement with the compact have been developed:

- **Standard compact:** to include SfL being incorporated into an Local Authority's (LA) plan for its libraries, some library staff attending SfL awareness courses, promoting SfL campaigns, hosting some events that have SfL elements and establishing links with local colleges etc.
- **Medium compact:** including all the activities of the Standard Compact, and in addition to establish a steering group at LA level, have a greater number of LA and library staff trained in SfL awareness as well as some staff training towards a Level 2 Learner Support Qualification, and hosting learning-specific events, tasters and IAG sessions.

- **Advanced compact:** all of the above, plus regular meetings with at least one college, staff qualified in Level 2 Learner Support, additional outreach and partnership activities, hosting at least one 30 hour course per year in partnership with a SfL provider and offering the National Tests followed by referrals where appropriate.

This is just a summary of the three types of compact engagement. The full description includes elements at LA and branch library levels, and also distinguishes between 'essential' and desirable elements. What is clear is that by implementing this Compact across London, the library service has the potential to become an even more important player in engaging new learners in SfL activities and providing the much needed additional supported IAG that these learners often require if they are to successfully progress into other learning.

An issue for library staff supporting literacy and numeracy learners is the complexity of provision, the range of qualifications available and the number of initiatives and promotional campaigns, for example Get On, Gremlins and RaW. The Compact should help in ensuring that campaigns can be successfully communicated to learners.

As would be expected, libraries currently vary in their engagement with the elements of the Compact. Some are already taking a more hands-on role in delivering literacy and numeracy. For example, a pilot project is being developed in Croydon to help ex-offenders make the transition from prison to vocational training. The library service will work in partnership with the probation service and adult education providers.

Museums are another conduit for helping adults in particular develop literacy skills. An example of the successful development of museums' work in this area was the London Museum Club, which was funded by the DfES to demonstrate the ways in which museums could contribute towards raising attainment for adult learners with language and literacy needs. The project was a partnership between four large central London museums, three small local museums, three local further education colleges and London Underground. Other examples include oral history projects.

As highlighted in the ESOL evidence base, most of the provision in London libraries is delivered by colleges and adult education institutes who therefore "own" the learners and keep the data. This is a key factor in developing ways of better co-ordinating provision. In addition, each Borough has developed provision in its own way and feedback indicates that libraries are keen for there to be a more strategic approach across London with all libraries having a minimum common offer of service to which all learners who enter through the library service will be entitled.

Offender learning

The LSC is in the process of assuming full responsibility for funding all offender learning in prisons and in the community. For London, these new arrangements will come into effect in August 2006. Contracts for the delivery of the new offender learning and skills service have now been awarded by the LSC.

Statistics for SfL achievements in prisons for 2004-05, shown below, reveal a surprisingly high number of numeracy achievements in comparison to LSC funded provision. Because of the particular conditions presented by learning in prisons this apparently high level of engagement in numeracy learning could be to do with the availability of classes rather than higher than usual demand. This appears to be the case for ESOL where it is likely that a significant number of prisoners take up literacy classes because there is no ESOL provision available. However, it is encouraging to see good take up of numeracy provision and it may be worth investigating further the reasons for this.

	Entry Level	% of total	Level 1	% of total	Level 2	% of total	Total	% of grand total
Literacy	7268	32.6%	13266	52.4%	9438	59.5%	29972	47.2%
Numeracy	13983	62.7%	11894	47.0%	6328	39.9%	32205	50.7%
ESOL	1050	4.7%	161	0.6%	109	0.7%	1320	2.1%
Total	22301	35%	25321	40%	15875	25%	63497	

It is very helpful to have figures for SfL achievements in the prison population, however, quantifying the provision delivered in these institutions and the profile of those that take it up is a challenge. A significant amount of work has taken place to estimate the type and volume of provision on offer this year (2006). SfL appears to be delivered under a number of headings that may include English, Social and Life Skills, Maths and ESOL. There are also other areas such as Dyslexia Assessment and Support, Assessment/Induction, Preparation for Employment, Open and Distance Learning and Computing/ICT that also may contain SfL elements.

The largest proportion of provision for most prisons comes under 'English', and there is also a significant proportion of ESOL in some institutions. However, it is important to highlight the scale of the provision. For example, the minimum levels of provision reported include one large high security prison with 37 hours of ESOL provision and 73 hours of English provision per week. Another institution that is largely used for those on remand reports 40 hours of ESOL and 38 hours of English per week. Given that the need for SfL is high (estimated at around 60%-75% of all offenders), it is likely that the current volumes are not sufficient to meet needs.

Funding for offender learning is tight, with a total annual budget of around £10m – £11m for prisons. There are around 7,000 people in prisons in London at any one time, with around 12,000 moving through the institutions each year. Amongst this group there is a very variable take up of learning. Factors influencing take up include gender (about 90% of women take up learning as opposed to around 20% of men), and other issues including the availability of provision, the attitude to being in custody and the 'status' of the individual. For those on remand, it is particularly difficult to engage in meaningful learning experiences because of the likelihood of going to court and being moved.

Offenders typically have a wide range of 'disadvantage factors' that will also affect their ability and willingness to take up learning. In addition to the educational and economic issues discussed in the section on demographics, over two-thirds of offenders in London have two diagnosable mental illnesses and around the same proportion are substance misusers. Since a wide variety of vocational and leisure activities are also delivered, it would be useful to know if SfL is embedded in any of this provision. The time constraints for this piece of evidence gathering have prevented further investigation.

The Government's Green Paper '*Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment*' stresses the vital part that SfL has to play in reducing the numbers of people that return to a life of crime on release from prison. Re-offending rates are high. Nationally, 61% of males are reconvicted within two years. The rate is highest for young adult offenders aged between 18-20. In addition, nationally, each year approximately 125,000 children have a parent enter custody, creating further adverse 'ripple effects' on children's education, attainment and economic prospects. In London the overall re-offending rate is 69%. There are around 1,300 'prolific offenders' responsible for approximately 60% of London's crime.

The national and regional evidence underlines the urgency of addressing the skills and employment needs of offenders, and SfL plays a highly significant role in this, given the level of need. In addition, international research (NRDC, 2005 – *Linking literacy programmes in developing countries and the UK*) point to the '*power of learning in family and community settings, in which literacy and numeracy learning are combined with approaches which aim to help resolve conflict and support rehabilitation*'.

Whilst literacy, numeracy and key skills provision is quite different from ESOL, there are similar issues in relation to offender learning. These include the need for flexible and portable provision, the importance of embedding SfL in vocational provision that enables prisoners to acquire the full range of skills sets to get a job on release and the need for robust management information systems and learner tracking. These issues are highlighted in the Green Paper and a number of proposals put forward to address them, including the 'Offender Learning Campus' which encapsulates a much more joined up approach across the various bodies and institutions (see Chapter 4 of the Green Paper for detail).

It will be vital to ensure that the 'profile' of SfL is maintained as the ideas in the Green Paper are further developed and implemented. This should include contributing to the current consultation processes and through the work that is being carried out between the Offender Learning and Skills Unit and the LSC.

The Green Paper includes the prison and probation services. As reported in the ESOL evidence base, in April 2004, the LSC assumed responsibility for SfL provision delivered through the Probation Service. Transitional arrangements are currently in place for funding this provision pending the introduction of the new integrated offender learning and skills service (OLASS) in August 2006. The allocation of funding in the London region is supported by a partnership plan agreed jointly between London Probation and the LSC and managed by a Partnership Board. Probation Service activity will be subsumed under the overall NOMS structure as soon as is practical.

The London Probation Service (LPS) exceeded its 2004-05 SfL qualifications target by 18% - a tremendous achievement which reflects the success of the partnership between LSC and LPS over 2004-05. Funds in 2004-05 represented just under £3 million and will remain broadly the same in the current year.

However, targets have been increased and the SfL Awards for the London Region in 2005-06 were 1,436. The tables below show the breakdown of these awards by Level, with the highest number of Awards in Literacy at Entry 3 and Level 1. ESOL achievements are notably low which may reflect the volume and appropriateness of provision available, as well as the difficulty in helping ESOL learners to achieve qualifications, particularly given the additional barrier of being an ex-offender.

	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3	Level 1	Level 2	Total
Literacy	127	108	259	330	101	925
Numeracy	36	32	206	147	35	456
ESOL	17	27	11	0	0	55

ESF Objective 3

As discussed in the ESOL evidence base, ESF supported SfL activity is another area where it is not possible to disaggregate fully SfL from other types of learning and support. It is also difficult to disaggregate fully the different areas of SfL support. For example, projects may offer a combination of ESOL, literacy and numeracy support, and may also deliver what they would term 'key skills', although this is often not DfES approved key skills. All this aside, it is useful to provide some **estimates** for ESF investment to show the impact of this funding stream, particularly in supporting areas of SfL activity that may not contribute to the SfL PSA target.

Estimates will include funding for training additional SfL teachers and training of other staff to deliver SfL opportunities. It must be stressed that these figures are **cautious estimates**, and figures for individual Co-financing Organisations are for different years. That said, when the amount of additional 'hidden' SfL support that is provided through many ESF projects is taken into account, the total figure will be higher.

Ecotec carried out an evaluation of the 2004 tendering rounds that would cover planned (although not necessarily delivered) activity through to 2006. Analysis of the planned support for disadvantaged groups is fairly minimal which may be due to data issues, but reveals the following:

Target Group	No of Projects	Value of projects	% of overall budget
People in need of ESOL training	178	£54,600,730	31%
People with basic skills needs	151	£47,528,081	27%

There are other target groups such as BME, refugees and asylum seekers, ex-offenders etc. that may have SfL needs and are not included in these figures. Conversely, because this particular part of ESF data capture enables providers and/or CFOs to identify learners in more than one group, it may be that, for example, ex-offenders are largely included in the categories of those needing ESOL or basic skills.

It should be noted that the project value figure will be for a whole project that may include activity other than SfL. Ecotec also notes interpretation of target group classification varies amongst CFOs and so there may be some inconsistencies in the data presented.

Nonetheless, it is clear that a significant amount of ESF support is targeted on those with SfL needs. It is interesting to note although ESOL expenditure is higher than for 'basic skills', proportionally the difference is not as great as it is for LSC funded provision.

Planned ESF supported SfL activity 2006-08

To provide an indication of the SfL support likely to be made available through ESF support, an analysis of recent and current ESF Objective 3 co-financing prospectuses has been undertaken. To have a complete picture of the Skills for Life content of the overall ESF programme, this information would need to be viewed along with project information from the earlier part of the programme, 2000 –0 5. The prospectuses analysed were those issued by the Co-financing Organisations (CFOs) that ran tendering rounds in 2005, namely:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| ▪ London North LSC Underspend Round | January 2005 |
| ▪ London East LSC | June 2005 |
| ▪ London South LSC | June 2005 |
| ▪ London West LSC | October 2005 |
| ▪ Pan-London LSC Underspend Round 1 | November 2005 |
| ▪ LDA | October 2005 |
| ▪ JobCentre Plus | October 2005 |

Also considered were the prospectuses relating to the tendering rounds recently launched which are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| ▪ Pan-London LSC Underspend Round 2 | January 2006 |
| ▪ South London Connexions | January 2006. |

Other relevant CFOs, namely London Central LSC and ALG, did not run tendering rounds during 2005 and their plans for any further rounds have not yet been publicised. Activity under the current ESF programme has to be delivered by mid 2008 and all the CFOs are charged with ensuring the maximum possible usage of ESF funding over this remaining period. This means that it is likely that there will be further tendering rounds over the next year and this should be monitored.

Whilst the information below gives an indication of the ESF programme's intentions, the tendering process may result in the selection of projects that do not exactly meet the specifications, or indeed there may be difficulties in the eventual project delivery. It therefore would be helpful to carry out further work to gather information from the actual selected projects to gain more comprehensive information on Skills for Life provision in the programme.

Co-financing round	No. of specifications including Sfl	Total funding £	No. of likely projects	Type of provision			Total learners	Employment status		No. of Skills for Life qualifications	
				S/A	Voc Sfl	Learn Sfl		Unemployed	Employed	Accred Sfl quals.	Quals not specified
London North LSC	1	850,000	1	1	0	0	520	0	520	330	0
London East LSC	3	1,750,000	3 (N/S)	0	1	2	640	360	280	50	0
London South LSC	6	1,143,175	6	3	1	2	930	700	230	95	75
London West LSC	10	3,011,000	23	0	23	0	1506	400	1106	271	0
Pan-London LSC I Underspend	2	886,000	3	0	3	0	600	600	0	320	0
LDA	5	9,600,000	19	4	15	0	4000	2800	1200	2270	960
JobCentre Plus	4	7,000,000	N/S	0	1	0	2,500	2,500	0	0	Job outcomes
South London Connexions	1	170,000	1 (N/S)	0	0	1	394	394		0	0
Pan-London LSC II	17	41,558,341	22	0	20	2	11,360	10,920	440	4830	
TOTAL	49	65,968,516	78	8	63	7	22,450	18,674	3776	8161	1035

NB: **S/A** – stand alone Skills for Life projects **Voc (Sfl)** – vocational projects with Skills for Life element **Learn (Sfl)** – learning project with Skills for Life element.

Key points:

- Skills for Life activity is planned to be included in at least 78 projects to the overall value of £66m for 22,450 beneficiaries, 83% of whom are unemployed and 17% employed.
- 8 projects (10%) are 'stand alone' Skills for Life projects with the overwhelming (81%) being vocational projects with a Skills for Life element and 9% essentially learning projects for young people with a Skills for Life element.
- It is planned that 8161 Skills for Life qualifications will be achieved with potentially a further 1035. Within the Pan London LSC II round it is also planned to carry out 6150 Skills for Life diagnostic tests.
- A number of projects within the LDA specification stated "Basic Skills". For some of the specifications it is clear that this means basic vocational skills, though for others it could also potentially be Skills for Life activity. Projects in this category number 13 and are to the value of £3,822,000. 1690 beneficiaries (all unemployed) would be involved and 1390 'basic skills' qualifications achieved.

Conclusions for funding and provision

This overview of the main areas of funding and provision of literacy, numeracy and key skills highlights that there is the same level of complexity as has been found with ESOL. Indeed, when the four Sfl areas are taken together, the absolute need for clarity in planning and resourcing across the capital and between the key funding bodies can be seen. The progress that is already being made in joint approaches to planning and resourcing ESOL provision will bring undoubted benefits to these other vital Sfl areas.

Employment focused provision

The importance of ensuring that SfL is woven into all employer-facing provision is paramount. To achieve this, it is vital that SfL is embedded, from the strategic level down to implementation, in all employment-focused initiatives and strategies. This includes Train to Gain, LDA supported job-brokerage and skills development programmes, provision for JCP customers and new drives to tackle worklessness.

As outlined later in this section and in other parts of the evidence base, there is a wide range of work taking place to embed SfL across organisations and within vocational and other types of learning. It is essential that this approach is mirrored at a strategic level. The idea developed at the Windsor event to draw up a checklist to ensure that SfL is considered as part of wider employment strategies would be a useful first step. This would also provide the top level leadership required to step up the impact of SfL in London.

There are some important differences when considering employment focused literacy, numeracy and key skills provision, in comparison to ESOL. For ESOL, the prime motivator for employers to ensure that their employees have sufficient English language skills is for 'compliance', primarily with health and safety legislation. In addition, for employers specifically recruiting outside of the UK, for example, the NHS recruiting nurses from the Philippines and bus companies recruiting from EU Accession states, there is a need to ensure that these workers have sufficient English language to carry out their jobs effectively.

For literacy, numeracy and key skills, the attitudes of employers, and employees, are different:

- **Literacy:** there is a significant groundswell of opinion amongst employers that if people emerge from statutory education without adequate literacy skills, the state should ensure that this situation is rectified.
- **Numeracy:** for those people who have been educated in the UK, employers' attitudes would be similar to literacy. However, evidence suggests a significant number of people with ESOL needs also have numeracy needs. Recent NRDC research indicates that numeracy skills are consistently in demand from employers.
- **Key skills:** Currently, key skills are delivered through Apprenticeship frameworks. Achievement rates are low and evidence suggests that many employers and learners do not see the relevance of key skills as they are currently being delivered. That said, employer feedback confirms that communication and application of number are skills that they expect employees to have.

A wide variety of sources confirm that employers need and want employees to have appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy and key skills for the occupations in which they are employed. It is interesting to note that whilst these skills are cited as gaps by a number of sectors and employers, there is reluctance amongst some employers to accept that the solution is then to address these gaps through training!

Sectors Skills Councils

The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), National Employers Panel (NEP) and other national and regional bodies are involved in a variety of research and development work to address SfL issues as part of wider employability. Asset Skills has the 'lead' for SfL across the SSCs and has a SfL strategy. The cleaning industry that forms part of this SSC has particularly heavy SfL needs, but it is recognised that SfL is a cross-cutting need for all sectors and a vital part of London's economic development rests on meeting the SfL requirements of employees and those wishing to move into work.

'Employability – Reporting Progress' (DfES, Dec 2005), describes the early stages of one area of SSC work that is intended to ensure that nationally accredited vocational and occupational qualifications provision reflects the requirements of employability, including functional levels of SfL. Five SSCs – ConstructionSkills, Cogent (chemical, pharmaceutical etc.), e-skills UK, Skills for Health and Skillsmart Retail have been involved in reviewing a range of vocational qualifications from levels 1-3 to assess their coverage of the employability skills required for these sectors.

Unsurprisingly, there is a high degree of commonality between the SSCs on the SfL aspects of employability that they felt were important, particularly amongst Skillsmart Retail, ConstructionSkills and Skills for Health where literacy, numeracy and communication were all rated as important. Interestingly, e-skills UK did not identify 'literacy', but did identify speaking, listening and writing! This indicates that literacy may be taken to mean only reading.

In assessing how effective the current vocational qualifications are in ensuring that these skills are acquired, some very useful findings include:

- **ConstructionSkills, Skills for Health, e-skills UK and Skillsmart Retail** all reported a need for work on literacy and/or numeracy.
- **All five SSCs** felt communications was adequately covered for the time being, but should be the subject of regular review. Skills for Health stressed this, since health sector complaints often are the result of poor staff communication.
- **Skills for Health** reported a complex picture for numeracy, probably because of the differing roles within healthcare. This indicates a need for particular attention to ensure that numeracy coverage is appropriate for varying roles.

The report stresses the need for SSCs, along with awarding bodies, to take account of the current and emerging requirements for literacy, numeracy and key skills. In addition, it also highlights the importance of reviewing the SfL content of vocational qualifications alongside the developments on Functional Skills.

Although this work involved only five SSCs, and, relies upon SSCs accurately interpreting the employability needs of the range of employers that might be represented across their sectors, perhaps one of the most useful outcomes of the work is the trialling of the 'decision tree' that was used to assess how effectively qualifications address employability skills requirements. This 'decision tree' is part of a project being undertaken by Candace Miller and Anne Harper which aims to:

- Identify and evaluate what employability means for a sector;
- assess how effectively present and planned qualifications arrangements address employability;
- plan action to address employability within Sector Qualifications Strategies (SQSs), and
- implement solutions for employability.

No SQSs have yet been developed. However, this approach appears to be useful and could very helpfully sit alongside the 'specifications matrices' being developed for SfL in London, as well as the wide range of work being undertaken to embed SfL into vocational learning.

One slightly concerning aspect of this DfES paper is the emphasis on literacy and numeracy as part of short-term employability strategies. Whilst there is a strong feeling that SfL learning should form the first steps of any vocational ladder of learning, it is also clear that to sustain and progress in employment also requires continued SfL learning for some. In addition, evidence shows that there are significant numbers of people stuck at the lowest level occupations because their SfL abilities mean that they are unable to gain promotion or move to higher skilled jobs.

There is other work being carried out by Sector Skills Councils, both research to reach a better understanding of the skills needs and gaps in sectors, and development of approaches to address these. Feedback from Assetskills highlights that,

as is the case with employers, SSCs vary greatly in size and structure. In addition, some SSCs will have very large national employers, for example, the National Health Service, and this requires different ways of working. About a third of SSCs are currently active in work on developing SfL in their sectors. For some, higher level skills are more of a priority, although given the findings on numeracy needs it is likely that even in sectors where higher level skills are the 'norm', there will be some skills gaps.

The 'Olympic effect' is also encouraging SSCs to focus on SfL issues. SkillsActive report that the Sports Leaders UK programme is embedding literacy and numeracy skills in its activities. There are a range of other areas in which literacy and numeracy is either already embedded or work is taking place to do so. These include the after school sports and leisure activities – a key part of implementing the Government's 'Youth Matters' agenda, sports materials being developed with learndirect, customer care training for the health and fitness sector and training volunteers for the Olympics.

Although strictly not an SSC, The Employers Organisation (for Local Government) is developing a SfL strategy for Local Authorities. It has developed a "Go Award", which LAs will gain if they sign up to certain principles – Barking & Dagenham have recently joined. The Employers Organisation is working with Investors in People to ensure the "Go Award" is recognised in the accreditation, as SfL is now becoming a mandatory element of IiP.

The Organisation is also running three SfL pilot projects in the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, and Lambeth, with the aim of rolling these out to all Boroughs. The Barking and Dagenham project "Embedding Workplace Basic Skills Project", is largely focused on literacy and numeracy skills, but also some language skill development. Designed in co-operation with the unions, mainly the GMB, it has buy-in from the Chief Executive and senior management team and works with local providers. The approach is to stress that the employees are also members of the community and are also parents, in an area where children are under achieving and there is a need to raise standards of literacy and numeracy.

Getting employers on board

It remains a challenge to sell the business case for SfL to employers, but there are some good examples of successful job-focused provision, funded through a variety of sources including the LSC and LDA.

The difficulty of convincing employers of the business case is well reported and experienced. It is interesting to note that an evaluation of the Union Learning Fund (York Consulting, 2002) found that "*most employers made their assessment of its (Union Learning) impact based on personal methods such as observation & conversation*". This provides a useful pointer for promoting the effectiveness of learning – if observation and conversation are key ways in which employers comment on the usefulness of training, these should be exploited when planning promotional activities.

A key issue in constructing a business case is being able to assess the economic impact on business. Employers contributing to the Open Agenda Ideas Building Event in December 2005 echoed York Consulting and other findings in highlighting the desire to be able to 'put a figure' on the benefit that investment in learning might bring. This is a notoriously difficult exercise, and includes the issue of shorter and longer term benefits. Although it is clearly essential to be able to identify what the business benefits of learning might be, it is also vital that we avoid this becoming an obstacle to getting on with the task of involving more employers and employees in SfL learning.

Unsurprisingly, a key success factor in selling the business case to employers is the development of training that is customised, whether for employees or prospective job entrants. Employers contributing to the Open Agenda Ideas Building Event in December 2005 were keen to underline the huge importance of involving them at the earliest stages of planning SfL provision. It was clear that without this early 'buy-in', employers were much more likely to feel that training was not being designed to meet their needs and/or the needs of their sectors.

Involving employers at the earliest stages of planning can also help to develop consortia approaches that can be effective in two key ways. In the case of large employers, a well coordinated and appropriate mix of SfL providers can sometimes better meet the variety of needs, for example, a college, ACL provider and learndirect centre could provide a variety of approaches, teaching and learning styles and locations that meet the employees' and employer's needs. In addition, employer consortia can be very helpful in addressing the needs of smaller employers. This can either be achieved through a provider delivering SfL to employees with common training needs from 'clusters' of small employers. In addition, groups of smaller employers could use the training facilities of larger employers.

Partnership working between employer, provider and trade unions is an effective model of delivering SfL in the workplace. The Union Learning Fund is providing a valuable way of engaging employees through a highly effective partnership model. Discussions highlighted that Union Learning Representatives may not have the full range of skills sets (or confidence) to take forward ideas for learning in the workplace. This should be addressed as part of the overall development strategy for the Skills for Life workforce. Whilst Union Learning is clearly effective, it is recognised that not all employers are unionised (especially smaller employers) or want to work with unions, and not all unions are prepared to put in the resources to learning. Therefore, this valuable element of workplace learning should be seen as one of a range of possible interventions and not a universal solution.

The table below provides a breakdown of Union Learning Fund learners in the London Region since 2001, however there is a problem in capturing regional SfL data as many contracts are national. In addition, it funds wider workforce development and the data does not clearly differentiate the SfL learners.

	Total number
Skills for Life learners	1,710
ICT learners	2,369
NVQ Level 1	18
NVQ Level 2	52
FE Course Attendees	98
ESOL learners	413
Other courses	4,405
Total learners	9,065

Source: SETUC, 2006

The total spend across projects is £649,936, with the average spend per learner being £71.70.

Interestingly, taking a 'whole organisation approach' to engaging employers may be particularly effective. Middle managers and supervisors may have their own literacy and numeracy needs. Addressing these issues helps to raise awareness of the benefits of learning, as well as creating more of a 'learning culture' within an employer. These key staff can be trained to identify literacy and numeracy needs in their own teams, and create a supportive environment for people to take up learning. Of course, this is only likely to be effective where there is a commitment from the highest level to support learning in the workplace. It is encouraging to note that the Investors in People standard has now recognised that basic skills evidence should become a mandatory part of the award and will be formally incorporating it in the next review of the award.

Other key issues

In addition to persuading employers to become involved in developing the SfL of their employees, there are a number of other key features arising from discussions and examples of successful provision that should be carefully considered in developing successful work-focused literacy, numeracy and key skills:

- **Brokerage:** feedback indicates that ineffective brokerage between employers and learning providers remains. As with learner IAG, this front end service is vital. It is widely acknowledged by all that the first point of contact for any customer is vital in winning a 'sale'. Brokerage providers need to ensure that they have a proper grasp of the products that are available for employers, and the services eg: designing bespoke training packages. There are signs that this is not the case, and that the response time is too slow.
- **Delivery:** needs to be flexible, to work around shift patterns where required and to be delivered in the workplace – some of which can be very demanding. On-line learning can be particularly helpful, especially since it can also help to develop employees' ICT skills as well.
- **Provision and qualifications:** also need to be flexible, tailored and responsive. This has implications for some traditional types of provision that currently does not have this flexibility, as well as the DfES approved SfL qualifications where feedback suggests that further work needs to be done to ensure that qualifications are fit for purpose and flexible enough to meet the range of SfL needs and goals.
- **Numeracy:** presents a larger problem than literacy, but is less likely to be addressed. It is a skill that is in constant demand across sectors. The relative lack of numeracy learning is due to a variety of reasons including literacy being seen as 'the priority', people being particularly fearful of maths and numeracy, and a severe shortage of numeracy teachers (not just in the workplace, but across the board).
- **'Positive' testing:** Quick tests like the scratch cards used in 'Move On', and use of the on-line DfES national tests for literacy and numeracy can help boost learners' confidence if used in a positive way to highlight how much a learner knows, rather than how much they need to learn.
- **Group sizes:** often need to be smaller than a typical 'classroom'-based group because there may not enough employees to create a full size group, and to take into account shift patterns.
- **Teachers:** need to have not only the right teaching qualifications and specialisms, but also the broader skills sets to work with employers and employees in a variety of settings.
- **Providers:** need the right skills sets to successfully engage with employers and develop close relationships at the earliest stage.
- **Funding:** currently isn't flexible enough and formula funding does not cover the additional costs of delivering in the workplace, background development and adaptation/contextualisation of materials. Pilot projects often get more flexibility around funding, but the problems come when the provision is mainstreamed and programmes 'meet the real world'. Pilots are usually built on short-term funding, often focussing on one group of workers or area of the workforce.

Examples of employer-focused work

It would be inaccurate to paint a negative picture of issues and problems for employer-focused provision. Employers do invest in training – in time and goodwill and well as finance. There are examples of successful partnerships between employers and learning providers, with one contributor emphasising that they were very impressed with the providers that they use (Lewisham College, CoNEL and South Thames College).

A sample of successful partnerships are now being used to help shape employment-focused specifications for ESOL provision and it is to be hoped that this can be rolled out to encompass literacy, numeracy and key skills.

Those contributing to the evidence base for this document have provided some **examples** of what they feel are good employer-focused activities. Of course, this is **not intended to be an exhaustive list** of success stories, but a sample of some provision that could be helpful in stimulating thought and ideas on this key aspect of provision. Of particular interest is the key involvement of Trades Unions and Union Learning Representatives. The key themes discussed in this section can be seen 'in action' in these examples which aim to provide a flavour of the activities and issues.

- **3 Royal Mail pilot projects:** Mount Pleasant, with London Central LSC in partnership with London Central LSC, the College of North East London and the TUS and funded through the Trade Union Learning Fund stream. Hounslow and Greenford in London West, using Nottingdale Technology and Acton Training Centre with short term funding from London West LSC. An important learning point from the work was the need to establish a good, daily rapport between the local Royal Mail contact and the tutor to discuss issues. From the West London models guidance is being developed to help local mail centre managers set up SfL training locally with the workforce. Royal Mail are currently adapting the Deloitte toolkit, and expecting national take up by mail centres and local delivery centres in 2006.
- **'Get On Local Government':** a national initiative that aims to encourage local authorities to take a more proactive approach to developing the SfL of their workforce. Good examples of engagement include Barking & Dagenham.
- **Unison:** develops and funds a very wide range of activity, in partnership with employers and SSCs, including Assetskills. Priority sectors include cleaning, catering and care, but education is also becoming a priority to ensure that classroom assistants have adequate SfL.

Particular examples in London include working with Lambeth and Greenwich for street sweeping staff and in Camden for care staff in Social Services, as well as staff in the Housing and Education Departments. Contributors noted that it can be difficult to get a corporate approach in Local Government and the next step should be to develop a corporate strategy in each Borough, including HR, for recruitment and retention, so that it becomes the norm rather than an 'add-on'.

Unison is also working closely with the NHS (Lewisham Hospital, Kings College Hospital), especially with ancillary staff (porters, domestics etc) and Health Care Assistants (HCA). They are working with HCAs to "grow own nurses". On mainstream nursing programmes it was found that former support staff had a high drop out rate often due to loss of confidence. Their care skills were well developed but they often felt that these skills were less valued alongside 18 year olds who had study skills. It was noted that it was easier to develop corporate strategy in NHS, as nationally there is a learner entitlement. The Widening Participation Strategy Unit (replacing the NHSU hosted by Skills for Health SSC) is doing work corporately around progressing HCAs, both those who do and don't want to be nurses. Other areas of Unison's work include with private contractors Medirest (Compass), Sodexo etc and with universities (London School of Economics, UCL, SOAS) working with portering, security, cleaning and maintenance staff.

- **College of North East London:** working with bus companies Metroline and Arriva. Metroline working in partnership with the Transport and General Workers Union and the College. Metroline provided a bus and the College kitted it out with IT equipment. Work progressed onto delivering SfL courses for staff and then widened out to family members. Metroline has also kitted out learning centres at two of their garages, and gave time off for their TU Learning Representatives to support learning centres and drive the bus. The employer also rearranges shifts in order for TU reps to be able to accommodate learning. The project has been running at least 3 years.

The College also does a variety of work with a number of Boroughs including Enfield, Haringey, Barnet and Waltham Forest to improve SfL levels. It has joined forces with Unison to deliver a large project in Barking and Dagenham which has now become much more successful since the Union became involved. There is a partnership agreement between the unions and employers to reach those with most need or those who have never had training e.g. street cleaners & environmental services staff. The Learning Centre has been identified as the best workplace model in England and has been nominated for a public service award.

Other joint CoNEL/Unison work includes activities with Local Authorities delivering to classroom assistants in Tower Hamlets and Haringey using a communication skills course and linking it to the national tests, and working with the NHS at Newham, Great Ormond Street and University College Hospital.

- **Communication Workers Union:** Key activities funded through the Union Learning Fund include work with the BT Telephone Exchange Learning Centre in Edmonton to develop a “pod” with learndirect, as well as courses at Lewisham College, “*especially helpful for people who don’t want managers to see they have basic skill needs*”. The particular difficulties faced by those who are on part-time contracts and often working more than one job were raised in discussions. People in this situation find it especially hard to find the time to access learning even when they are motivated to do it.
- **Orpington College:** working at Orpington Bus Garage with First Bus. First Bus provided the training room and the College developed a programme including ICT as the initial ‘carrot’ to entice learners in. The training was designed to be particularly flexible, including learndirect materials and to cater for any level of skill need. Staff have begun to regard the training room as a ‘rest room’ creating a very positive learning environment, and there are reports that the working culture of the garage as a whole has improved. A key factor has been staff getting to know the teachers, confirming the absolute importance of developing this relationship. The company has revised rotas to accommodate learning and tests, however, despite the success of the project, First Bus are not keen to put finance into the training.
- **Lewisham College:** manages the Learning Centre for construction workers at Canary Wharf, a partnership between the College, UCATT and Canary Wharf. It uses ICT to deliver learning, much of which is linked to health and safety training. The College also runs courses with the Prison Officers Association at Belmarsh Prison, which is about to be rolled out to other prisons. These activities are financed through the Union Learning Fund.

Embedding SfL into vocational learning

The ESOL evidence base reported on the developments to embed this area of SfL into vocational learning, and detail can be found there of regional work to take this forward. The importance of this work for all areas of SfL is vital to:

- improve the contextualisation of SfL provision;
- equip learners with a broader skills set so that they are more job ready, and
- stimulate progression of learners by requiring them to study for vocational qualifications alongside SfL.

Feedback from a variety of sources indicates that there is considerable work taking place to embed SfL within vocational contexts. This includes provision funded by the LSC, LDA and JCP, as well as some provision supported through other sources of funding such as ALG. At a national level, the SfL Strategy Unit update (Sept 05) reported on the SfL Materials for Embedded Learning that are now available which include:

- Trowel occupations
- Social care
- Horticulture
- Family health
- Effective communication for international nurses
- Catering
- Hospitality
- Retail
- Warehousing
- Entry to Employment
- Sports leadership
- Skills for construction
- Painting operations
- Production line manufacturing
- Cleaning
- First aid
- Health and safety (with manual handling)
- ICT and Food hygiene

Other materials planned for launch in late spring 2006 include Transport, Early years, Hairdressing, Community skills, Family life: the growing child and Family life: focus on parenting.

The materials are all mapped to the Adult Core Curricula for Literacy and Numeracy and to the Key Skills Standards and the National Occupational Standards wherever relevant, with curriculum coverage grids provided. This means that they should be suitable for useful for vocational/community-based provision and for SfL teachers wishing to embed literacy, language and numeracy into other learning programmes. PDF and Word versions of the materials can be accessed through www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/embeddedlearning.

There is also a recently published National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) report on embedded teaching and learning approaches, based on a series of seven case studies. The project built on work carried out by NIACE (Developing Embedded Basic Skills, 2003) and LSDA (Grief and Taylor 2002) and examined what is meant by embedded teaching and learning.

It will be important to evaluate regularly the effectiveness of embedded materials, alongside evaluation of the qualifications for literacy, numeracy and key skills in order to ensure that both meet the needs of individuals and employers. The ongoing work of the NRDC will make a major contribution to this, and the final report of the evaluation of the first batch of the Skills for Life Materials for Embedded Learning is due to be published in April 2006. It may be helpful to carry out additional regional evaluation to ensure that London's specific regional conditions and needs are being met by the materials. This can be contributed to the ongoing national work.

The QCA is leading on a three year project 'Embedding Skills for Life in Vocational Qualifications', working with awarding bodies and their partners to improve opportunities for embedding literacy, language and numeracy in the development and delivery systems for new or existing qualifications. A first group of eight awarding bodies is developing and will be trialling models of embedding. Key activities include:

- training programmes for awarding body staff and the wider assessment professionals working for awarding bodies, such as external verifiers, to build understanding and commitment to SfL throughout their organisations, including the concept of embedding
- support focused on learning and teaching SfL within vocational qualifications rather than on the qualification accreditation process, and a tutor support pack
- a guide for centres with examples of good practice of embedding and templates to steer the process
- using awarding body regional advisers to raise awareness and improve quality of embedded delivery in centres
- a marketing plan to promote the value of SfL within
- guidelines for developing new vocational qualifications with embedded SfL
- reviewing part achievement of SfL at vocational qualification unit level and developing mechanisms to manage tracking, recording and production of a coherent statement of SfL achievement across a set of units
- accessibility of SfL awarding body systems to simplify the process for non-SfL awarding bodies wishing to embed SfL in their vocational qualifications

This work should help to improve the quality and extent of embedding within teaching, learning and qualification infrastructures. This is clearly a vital piece of the jigsaw since developing embedded materials alone will not produce the culture change required to really push forward the implementation of embedded approaches to SfL learning.

Creating better support from welfare to work

The development of the ESOL Strategic Action Plan highlighted as a priority the need to address the current lack of continuity of learning from welfare to work. This issue is also a priority for literacy and numeracy. For key skills, the situation is slightly different in that DfES approved key skills is largely delivered as part of work-based learning programmes.

For literacy and numeracy in particular, the issues are similar to those for ESOL. The key factors that currently prevent a strong pathway of learning that continues on job entry include:

- the absence of destination data for learners leaving and/or completing courses;
- funding systems that are inflexible and that do not follow the learner;
- disjointed advice and guidance – there is a need to integrate IAG for learning and IAG for jobsearch so that individuals are able to access the ‘whole package’ and be referred to the most appropriate provision;
- lack of literacy and numeracy teachers that are skilled and/or prepared to deliver to employed learners, particularly in the workplace,
- and lack of joining up (funding, planning and targets) between agencies, particularly the LSC and JCP.

Research also points to a gap between teacher and employer expectations of adequacy in communication levels, indicating that learners are not supported enough to move into appropriate employment by schemes such as work placements, job search skills and workplace training.

Actions are in place to begin to address these issues for ESOL and it is strongly recommended that similar work takes place to improve continuity of learning for those with literacy and numeracy needs. In addition, models such as the Offender Learning Campus could also be reviewed in light of the ideas for creating better cohesion between the various services that a disadvantaged person requires if they are to learn and work successfully.

Advice, guidance and referral services

Delivering an effective range of ‘front end’ services is crucial to ensuring that individuals are referred to the most appropriate learning provision. This not only means that the learner is able to gain the skills they require, but also makes sound economic sense by increasing the likelihood of learners accessing only that provision which is most appropriate for them.

Adults

Funding for IAG is under increasing pressure. Adult services funded through LSC sources must prioritise those without a Level 2 qualification. Whilst this is appropriate in terms of targeting those with fewer qualifications (and probably skills), it is not the case that all people with a Level 2 qualification have adequate levels of SfL. Indeed, the evidence shows that a large number of these people will at the very least not have adequate numeracy skills in particular.

Leaving aside this issue, the reduction in the ‘guidance’ element of IAG, commented on the ESOL evidence base, is also of concern with respect to literacy and numeracy. Anecdotal evidence from a variety of sources including IAG providers, learning providers and strategic partners highlights that the reduction in the ‘guidance’ element of IAG has particular implications for those with SfL needs. Whilst issues of language (need for interpreters etc.) may not be critical for the other SfL areas, being able to provide services that can pick up on literacy and numeracy needs generally requires more in-depth and longer term service provision than is currently funded. There are also indications that some IAG is not flexible enough in terms of timing and in offering support such as childcare.

The removal of the 3 hour funding for assessment at providers is further eroding the support for front end services. Without adequate IAG and assessment, potential learners will continue to be at risk of being 'lost' or referred onto provision that is inappropriate. This is a false economy. By building better front end services, it is likely that learners will be better served and public investment more effectively deployed.

One IAG network commented that they, and other networks, have a wealth of information in relation to gaps and needs but that there is currently no formal mechanism for feeding this back into the system to inform the development and planning of provision. There is an indication that providers would welcome this opportunity and it could for example, be incorporated into a monitoring report.

Although IAG advisors appear to be well-trained and the Matrix accreditation system provides a good method of quality assuring services, feedback suggests that providing more staff with SfL awareness training could be beneficial.

Young people

Whilst IAG services for young people may be slightly better resourced than that for adults, feedback from Connexions services indicate that a significant number of young people are not participating in literacy and numeracy provision for a range of inter-related reasons. Like adults, young people with poor literacy, numeracy and key skills suffer from lack of confidence, feel stigmatised and are too embarrassed to attend local provision. Some also feel unable to attend provision in another area because of concerns over the gang culture and of not "being from round here". In addition, many young people with literacy, numeracy and key skills needs have other social barriers such as homelessness or drug problems.

There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that the training allowance is not enough of an incentive for young people to stay in education. Some of them prefer unskilled work, which pays more than £40 per week but in the longer term keeps this group in unskilled, poorly paid labour and perpetuates the adult basic skills problems. This is compounded the fact that some young people have insufficient knowledge of the labour market and do not recognise that they have literacy, numeracy or key skills needs. It is likely that the 'jobs pull' effect is more evident in areas where the labour market is buoyant, characterised by a greater number of job vacancies and lower unemployment rates. Evidence points to a greater number of employed 16-19 year olds with poor SfL in these areas.

One of the biggest priorities is getting young people on the most appropriate provision at the start of their programme – the more effectively this is done, the greater the likelihood of retaining them. The importance of local knowledge and the role of personal advisors are critical to this process. Personal advisors need to know that the provider to which they are referring a young person has the capacity to support young people both in terms of their basic skills development and other needs. There is some evidence of insufficient local provision to meet the wider range of needs beyond literacy, numeracy and key skills, and teachers with the right skills sets for working with young people.

Connexions services report that providers, particularly those offering the LSC programme Entry to Employment (E2E) are being more selective in their recruitment because of the need to improve retention and achievement rates. Diagnostic assessments are nearly always carried out by a provider post-referral from Connexions. Young people who do not meet the required level are turned away by the provider and often are lost to the system. In a pilot project, London East Connexions has recently employed a SfL worker who will train personal advisors in carrying out diagnostic assessments with the intention of improving the referral process.

There is evidence of the need for pre-E2E provision to meet the needs of young people whose literacy, numeracy and key skills are below entry level 3. These also tend to be the NEET group. A number of providers are either already delivering or are seeking funding to deliver pre-E2E provision and early indications suggest that demand is high.

The way basic skills is presented and the environment in which it is delivered are very important in recruiting and retaining young people. Connexions services are piloting different ways to overcome barriers e.g. London East will be offering support within its one-stop shops and also in its main base in Stratford where they are setting up a learning centre equipped with a job search facility and computers. Another Connexions service has used “quick wins” such as food hygiene and health and safety qualifications to motivate young learners. South London Connexions are also using ICT as a hook and have a mentoring project in a youth offenders unit. This Connexions Partnership also has a number of specifications in its new ESF prospectus designed to encourage the delivery of SfL activities that are attractive to young people. It would be very helpful to evaluate the effectiveness of all these pilots to determine the key success factors for young people so that they can inform the further development of mainstream services.

The role of the school is critical in setting young people on the correct path but some schools tend to prioritise GCSEs rather than vocational including reading and writing, team-work etc. There is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that schools that also put emphasis on vocational skills are better at supporting young people with Sfl needs. There is also anecdotal evidence that some schools are not picking up dyslexia needs. The continuing development of Functional Skills will clearly have an impact on 14-16 provision, and it will be important to maintain a watching brief on this to ensure that the strategic plans for Sfl in London can inform and respond to this work.

Developing and diversifying front end services

Discussions that have taken place during evidence gathering and in developing ideas for advice and guidance for people with Sfl needs have underlined the importance of providing a range of ‘ways in’ for learners. The ALM Compact discussed earlier in this document is a good example of how a range of agencies can and are involved in engaging people in Sfl learning.

The Open Agenda report of the December 2005 Windsor event highlights the importance of ‘trusted intermediaries’ in drawing those who are reluctant or anxious into learning. These intermediaries could include people working in a range of non-learning environments including doctor’s surgeries, community-based organisations and Citizens Advice Bureaux, as well as those based in learndirect centres who may identify learners who need greater support than can be offered by them.

It is clear that there is pressure on ‘mainstream’ IAG services – both adult and those for young people. Further building the capacity and expertise of other organisations could not only help to alleviate this pressure, but also provide the wide variety of routes that people need to take the first step of engagement. Strategic diversification could also help in attracting those groups that evidence suggests are not currently engaging in learning.

Assessing quality and success

All Sfl provision is subject to quality controls which vary according to the funding body. The LSC, as the largest funder of Sfl and as an organisation whose primary focus is learning has the most comprehensive quality framework, and evidence gathering for this document has focused largely on LSC provision. However, the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) Chief Inspector’s Annual report and other sources have also been drawn on.

The introduction of the new Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) in April 2006 heralds coherent commissioning of quality improvement activities across the post-16 sector. This should support a more coordinated approach to delivering the quality elements outlined in the Sfl Action Plan.

Learner achievement

Achievement rates are one indicator of quality. Figures current at August 2006, show the achievement rates for 2004/05 learning aims that led to DfES accredited qualifications as follows:

Subject Area	Aims	Achievements	Achievement Rate	Target Bearing
Key Skills	42936	9599	22%	42936
Literacy	85274	61595	72%	24839
Numeracy	40623	29175	72%	17571
ESOL	210146	151068	72%	31433

It is clear that whilst rates for literacy, numeracy and ESOL are good, key skills rates remain poor. Some reasons for this have been discussed earlier in the report. Whilst it is hoped that the 2005/06 rates show an improvement, it is apparent that there is still considerable work to be done to drive up achievement.

Of the achievements, numeracy has the highest proportion that is target bearing at 43%. By contrast, target bearing achievements represent 29% of all those for literacy, and just 15% for ESOL. This provides strong evidence for the significant amount of ESOL provision below Entry 3, clearly indicating the need at this level.

Provider quality

London LSC details of inspection grades for literacy, numeracy and key skills show a range of quality amongst providers. That said, the majority of LSC providers are good or satisfactory, receiving Grades 2 (21%) and 3 (69%) for literacy and numeracy provision, with Tower Hamlets College being judged as exceptional. There is still some unsatisfactory provision (10%), which is mainly found in Borough-based Adult and Community provision. It is encouraging to note that the majority of grades indicate satisfactory or above quality of provision. In addition, recent re-inspections, notably in London North, indicate an improving picture.

The ALI report largely reflects the range of London focused evidence gathered. As noted in the ESOL evidence base, there are areas of provision and sectors where poorer quality remains, or where it is difficult to judge the quality of provision. Improvements have been noted in the offender learning sector, and are likely to continue with the complete transfer to LSC control in August 2006.

For those providers delivering non-accredited provision, whether it be community or job-focused, success must be measured in other ways. David Sherlock noted the 'sleeping giant' of adult and community provision in its role to support community renewal. The report also confirmed a key finding of this evidence gathering – that progression is a vital measurement – enabling funders and inspectors to judge the impact of provision in creating pathways to further learning or to **sustainable** employment with prospects. It is widely noted and commented on that the inability of funders to track learner progression and destination is currently a fatal flaw in data capture.

As with ESOL, literacy and numeracy provision is also franchised out by colleges to other providers, raising quality issues because of longer contracting chains from the LSC to the end delivery organisation, and because of the reduced funding available to providers (and therefore learners) after college top slicing. This may also be a feature of some LDA funded provision, where sub-contracting chains and current data capture methods prevent close assessment of quality and impact.

That said, the recent LDA SfL survey identified that many organisations hold a quality standard which at least provides some indication of the overall quality of the provider. The most common form of quality mark is Investors in People (IiP), with 46% holding this standard and a further 13% working towards it. Of the responding organisations with SfL as a main activity, 56% either hold IiP or are working towards it. Customer First is the next most common quality standard, with 5 SfL organisations holding this award. 11 organisations report a recent positive ALI/OfSTED inspection.

Work is now underway to develop simple yet effective joint data capture for the key funding partners, beginning with the LSC and LDA. It will be important to link these developments to the national work taking place on the unique learner number and the NOMIS system for offenders. However, these national developments should not be allowed to hold back any regional progress that could be made in the meantime since the issue of data capture is crucial to the effective implementation of quality standards and the proposed regional purchasing strategy.

The SfL workforce

Overview of issues

Some of the workforce issues raised in the evidence base for ESOL also ring true for those teaching literacy, numeracy and key skills. These include:

- the 'precarious' nature of employment conditions - 53% of teachers are employed on a permanent basis (but not necessarily full-time) and 47% are employed through an agency (23%), either fixed-term (19%) or on a casual basis (5%)
- the demography of the workforce - 29% of teachers are aged 50 or over and 72% of the workforce is female, although amongst younger teachers there is evidence to suggest that the gender balance is slowly shifting. The ageing nature of the SfL workforce has implications for the need for succession planning to replace existing experienced teachers who will shortly be leaving the profession or reducing hours.
- the need for a better qualified workforce - 46% of literacy, numeracy and key skills teachers do not have qualified teacher status, and a significant number of teachers also need to improve their 'personal' skills levels ie: their own numeracy, literacy and key skills qualifications.
- the need for more teachers to have broader skills sets that enable them to teach effectively in a range of settings including the workplace, prisons and the community.
- the barriers and difficulties faced by staff in accessing teacher training and continuous professional development (CPD), particularly those working in sectors that have traditionally had less access to this support
- the challenge of getting more vocational teachers qualified to teach SfL in order to take forward the principle of embedding SfL learning within vocational learning.

There are also some factors that are specific to those teaching literacy, numeracy and key skills, including:

- the need for key skills teachers to be qualified does not appear to be as important for employers as it is for literacy and numeracy teachers (and SfL generally is not seen as a priority for workforce development amongst many employers);
- the particular shortage of numeracy teachers and apparent difficulty in recruiting them.

The qualifications structure

We will explore all these points in more depth in this section, but to understand more effectively the issues for the SfL workforce, it may be helpful to outline the current qualification structure. NIACE has produced a useful summary:

The Skills for Life teaching qualifications are available at three levels, which reflect the different roles and responsibilities taken by staff and volunteers. These are shown in the table, along with the entry requirements for training at each level.

Qualification and NQF Level required	Role Title	Responsibilities	Requirements for entry onto the course
Level 4 Certificate for Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL subject specialists	Teacher/Subject Specialist To qualify as a teacher of literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy you will also need an adult teaching qualification	Leads the Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs the learning programme • Carries out diagnostic assessment • Guides and supports teaching and learner support assistants 	Educated up to A level and have the potential to succeed on a university level course.
Level 3 Certificate in Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL support	Subject Support/ Teaching Assistant	Supports the Teaching Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts screening • Contributes to initial assessment • Contributes to teaching 	Preferably GCSEs, especially in English and/or Maths
Level 2 Certificate for Adult Learner Support	Learner Support	Supports the Learner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and screens learners • Signposts learners to appropriate learning opportunities • Supports learner under supervision of qualified teacher 	May not require any formal qualifications, but will need to be educated up to CSE/GCSE level of equivalent

To qualify as a **teacher** of literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy an individual will need:

- a level 4 Subject Specialist qualification in either literacy, language or numeracy **and**
- a generic adult education teaching qualification

Teachers who do not possess a Level 4 qualification will not be barred from continuing to teach adult literacy or numeracy. However, it is expected that in the interests of parity and equal opportunity and in the light of inspection requirements, that existing teachers will take up opportunities to obtain the new specialist qualifications as part of their continuing professional development.

How many SfL teachers are there?

The London Strategic Unit's June summary of evidence for the SfL workforce estimates 6000 Skills for Life teachers in London. Of these, "50 % are teaching ESOL, 21% literacy, 11% numeracy, 13% key skills and 5% GCSE. Between 2003 and 2005 there was a 40% increase in the total number of teachers but the proportion for the different subjects did not vary significantly. There is an uneven spread of SfL teachers across the sub regions with the highest in Central and the lowest in North and South. While this broadly reflects patterns of demand in the London region, there are large reservoirs of learner need in literacy and particularly in numeracy where more teachers will be needed more acutely in the future."

The evidence base also provides a wealth of other information about the SfL workforce. Estimating the number of literacy, numeracy and key skills teachers is difficult given the lack of consistent source information and the fact that some teachers teach both literacy and key skills or literacy and ESOL. In addition some providers e.g. voluntary and community organisations are not required to report on their workforce.

Key issues in more depth

- **Training and professional development:** As with the ESOL workforce, there is an urgent need to continue the professionalisation of the literacy, numeracy and key skills workforce. There are more unqualified teachers in the Adult and Community Learning, work-based learning and voluntary sectors, reflecting the additional difficulties that these sectors face in accessing teacher training. Professional Development Centres and the SfL Quality Initiative have tended to focus support more on FE Colleges because they are the largest providers by volume. However, given the acknowledgement of the importance of first steps learning and provision that is closely developed and delivered with

employers, it is vital that organisations and teachers in sectors other than FE are able to benefit from professional development and support to improve other aspects of quality.

Even when training is available, some teachers do not feel they need it because they have extensive experience, or feel that if they are on temporary, low volume contracts that they shouldn't be expected to train. These factors, combined with the traditional 'volunteer route' to becoming a Sfl teacher have resulted in a non-professional image which also adversely affects employer commitment to change. There is a view that teacher training should be more flexible and that requirements and standards should not be so strictly interpreted. For example learndirect staff are often put on a level 3 course that is designed for classroom support teachers i.e. they are being squeezed into a framework that does not really work for them in the absence of a more appropriate qualification.

- **Numeracy teachers:** Funders and providers report are reluctant to market numeracy because of the insufficient number of trained, qualified and experienced teachers to respond to any increase in demand. Some teachers who currently teach numeracy have come from a literacy or ESOL background and lack the level of maths to train as a numeracy teacher. The current expectation is that numeracy teachers should have a Level 4 qualification in maths – although most of the activities on the numeracy teacher training courses are at Level 3. This appears to be either putting off people from applying to become numeracy teachers or attracting maths teachers who then apply mathematical approaches to practical numeracy teaching – neither of which is resulting in any significant increase in the numeracy workforce.

Where an individual is the sole numeracy teacher (often the case is smaller providers), it is difficult to find a way of releasing them for training. This indicates a need for particularly flexible learning, including on-line, and ways to incentivise providers and teachers to engage in training. One approach that has been piloted on a small scale is to set up classes taught by experienced numeracy teacher trainers who can then support trainee teachers in-situ and act as role models and mentors.

An initiative is currently underway, led by LLU+ and supported by the NRDC, to attract teachers to numeracy teaching. Teachers from a variety of sources will also be involved in the collection of data, by completing questionnaires or taking part in in-depth interviews.

- **Key skills teachers:** Teachers delivering key skills to young people through the Modern Apprenticeship Framework see themselves more as assessors, sometimes lack the skills to embed key skills in a vocational context and often lack essential literacy, numeracy and key skills themselves. Initial teacher education and professional development are not seen as needed by many key skills teachers and their employers. This culture may be partly responsible for the poor achievement rates for key skills highlighted in the previous section. Although achievements are also adversely affected by the prescriptive nature of the Apprenticeship framework, it is clear that the nature of the workforce also plays a key role. The issues are compounded by the fact that a significant proportion of Apprenticeships are delivered outside of the FE sector – in organisations that traditionally have less access to teacher training and development and greater barriers to accessing it.
- **Literacy teachers:** The level 3 literacy teaching qualification is not perceived by some as being fit for purpose. Literacy specialist subjects are biased towards linguistics and there is a view that there is a need for a pre-level 4 course, particularly for literacy (and ESOL) teachers to help those without an understanding of linguistics develop the knowledge that will enable them to complete the level 4.

Literacy teachers face particular challenges because of the 'blurred line' between ESOL and literacy. The differences between literacy and ESOL are not always clear-cut and there could be a better-developed interface between them. There are increasing numbers of asylum seekers or refugees who have learned their English language in this country but not in a formal way. They then find their way into literacy but these are not appropriate for them and neither are currently available ESOL classes. In addition literacy teachers lack an ESOL specialism and vice versa. The need for

better cross training so that a trained teacher is able to support the development of literacy, numeracy, ESOL or key skills should be available as CPD for SfL teachers.

- **Teaching learners with learning difficulties or disabilities:** It is not unusual to find learners with learning difficulties who are unlikely ever to progress beyond Entry Level 2 or 3 in SfL classes. This diversity of learners has implications for CPD as teachers need to be able to analyse effectively their learners' needs and differentiate their learning materials accordingly.
- **Embedded SfL teaching:** The 'whole organisation approach' adopted by the SfL Quality Initiative advocates vocational staff delivering embedded SfL activities. Whilst there are merits to this, many vocational staff have SfL needs themselves and will require significant training to gain the skills and qualifications required, and some may not want to teach SfL. A range of options for embedding SfL in vocational training should continue to be pursued, including SfL teachers and learning/learner support staff working alongside vocational staff.

The OfSTED report of October 2005 highlights " A significant minority of vocational teachers have weak literacy and numeracy skills themselves and too many of them do not have a Level 2 qualification in English and/or mathematics. A significant number have a GCSE pass at grade C or above but still have weaknesses in their literacy or numeracy skills. However, they are expected to teach such skills as part of their college's approach to embedding literacy and numeracy development within vocational teaching".

- **Funding for teacher training:** Funding arrangements for teacher training provision in literacy and numeracy are variable and, in many cases, are short term only. This has led to uncertainty for providers and staff and a lack of confidence to plan for the future. It has been stated that for 2005/06 the funding priority appears to be in numeracy and ESOL with less priority given to literacy. This is causing concern amongst some teacher training specialists in literacy,

There is also a concern that there seems to be less funding for full subject specialist qualification which combined with the increasing difficulty that providers are facing to release staff, could lead to a misleading picture of there being less demand than there actually is.

The London Strategic Unit for the SfL Workforce (LSU) has now drawn up a workforce development strategy for the SFI workforce in London and is currently engaged in a range of activities to help address the issues raised in this section. Staff are working closely with a range of agencies to add to identify some of the additional detail required to prioritise workforce development activities. It will be important for the Regional Body for SfL to continue to work closely with the LSU to ensure that strategies and priorities are aligned.

Endnote

This summary of the evidence to inform the development of a Strategic Action Plan for SfL in London has highlighted some of the key issues that will need to be addressed to enable literacy, numeracy and key skills provision to meet the needs of individuals and employers across the Capital.

As with the Strategic Action Plan and Evidence Base for ESOL, it is a starting point. Successful implementation rests upon continued review and incisive analysis of the demand for, and supply of provision in London. It is also dependent on identified agreed, shared priorities and actions that partners can make real and active contributions to taking forward. Common data capture and clear specifications for provision are the essential foundation, to inform the emerging process for coherent, joined up regional purchasing of provision to develop these essential skills.

List of contributors and acknowledgements

The list of contacts shown below include the **main** contributors to this evidence base, there are many others that have provided confirmations, documents and discussions and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those that have taken the time to do this. We would also like to point out that many contributors to the ESOL evidence base also provided information and comment on literacy, numeracy and key skills.

For London LSCs, the main contacts that have coordinated information gathering or contributed on specific areas of SfL are shown. However, we would like to thank the many staff from across local LSC teams (ACL, WBL, WfD, Research etc.) who have all contributed vital information as well as their time in discussing a wide variety of issues. In addition, the skills and input of Santosh Sandacca-Appalsawmy, Oznur Kiamil, Stephen Horwood and Andy Holt have been invaluable in interrogating LSC databases and presenting meaningful analyses of regional information that underpin this evidence base document.

We would also like to thank all contributors to this work, and recognise the enthusiasm and commitment that has been shown in drawing together information in a very short period of time.

Where email addresses are a standard format for an organisation, one has been provided to show the format.

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List of Sources

The **main** sources that have informed the evidence base are listed below. In addition, information from a wide range of websites was accessed and qualitative and quantitative information provided by key partners and other organisations, including 'work in progress' that is yet to be published.

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