

**Learning for Living and Work in London**  
**Review of provision for learners with learning difficulties**  
**and/or disabilities in the LSC London Region**

**Report 2: Findings and recommendations**  
**from the qualitative evidence**

**Pat Hood**  
**April 2007**  
**Revised November 2007**

## **Contents**

Introduction

Main findings and recommendations

The views and experiences of learners

The views of practitioners, providers, and partners

Transition for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Provision in colleges

Work-based learning

Learners with complex and profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Learners with mental health difficulties

Adult and community learning

Voluntary organisations

Acknowledgements

## **Introduction**

In late November 2006, London LSC commissioned a major review of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in its region. The findings and recommendations from the Review were to provide a significant contribution to the new regional strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, developed in response to the LSC report, *'Through Inclusion to Excellence'*, and the implementation document, *'Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities'*. Both these reports took forward the principles of inclusive learning, and placed them within the context of an expanded learning and skills sector, and a new focus on employability and employment.

London is proud of its long commitment to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the region boasts some of the most creative practitioners and managers in the country. London LSC has demonstrated its strategic commitment to the learners by commissioning, first, the Lambeth and Southwark Review, planned as a precursor to the London Review, and then this Review of the whole region. LSC is developing an ambitious high-level strategy, which links recommendations from the Review to mainstream initiatives such as Train to Gain, as well as actions specific to learning difficulties and disabilities. *'Mainstreaming'* brings enormous benefits to learners, *as long as their involvement and success is monitored specifically.*

## **Two Review reports**

There are two reports from the Review:

- Findings and recommendations from the data analysis
- Findings and recommendations from the qualitative evidence

The two reports should be read in conjunction with each other.

## **About this report**

In this second report, we describe the issues identified during our qualitative surveys and fieldwork which involved over two hundred organisations and individuals. As well as setting out in the report what needs to be done, we describe examples of innovation and creative partnership on which London can build.

Our intention has been to pursue themes that emerged from our Lambeth and Southwark Review, and which provided starting points for the London Review. Themes included the need for a shared London vision for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which encompassed:

- improved opportunities and choices, including employability and employment
- joint strategies for learners with profound and complex needs
- London-wide strategy for learners with mental health difficulties

- increased local capacity to meet a wider range of needs
- increased flexibility between providers
- professional development which supported the strategy

Most importantly, we wished to put learners' views at the heart of our work. For this reason, our report begins with their voices.

### **Innovation and creativity**

We found examples of innovation and creativity right across the region. These were designed and led by providers and practitioners who were 'ahead of the game', knew what needed to be done, and were getting on with it. LSC was often a supportive partner in these initiatives. Sometimes, practitioners and managers had found ways round the systemic barriers erected by inflexible funding mechanisms. Lessons from these initiatives, such as the Lambeth and Southwark flexibility project, are valuable because they point the way for the changes LSC itself must make.

### **Inequalities across the region**

There are still too many inequalities of opportunity for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in London. Too much depends still on where a learner lives including, for example, whether a learner will be placed in a specialist college. Some doors remain closed for too many learners, most noticeably in work-based learning. Here, despite the sterling efforts of a few excellent providers, we found a dispiriting picture of lost opportunities. We identify as a first priority for LSC the increase of work-based learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Developing strategic partnerships: action now**

LSC cannot tackle on its own the ambitious agenda set out in the Review. Individual providers need the right partners in order to sharpen employability, increase their flexibility, open up options for learners, and contribute to local capacity. It takes time to develop strategic partnerships, as many practitioners know. Because they recognise that getting services and providers to work together takes time, and because they are concerned that issues may be 'kicked into the long grass' whilst joint strategies are being agreed, providers want to send a clear message to LSC. The message is, 'Action now. Please do not wait until all the partners are on board before implementing key recommendations'. There are things that can be done now which will make a significant difference for the better, for example, establishing a team of Ambassadors for Mental Health, or encouraging cross-borough working. We set out ten priorities for London LSC in the next part of this report.

### **Inter-dependent recommendations**

It is always easier to implement a handful of straightforward, stand-alone, recommendations. Our evidence indicates that such a simplistic approach will not work.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not sit neatly in one part of the sector. Issues concerning their participation and achievement run like threads through all provision, and all strategies. These issues are fundamental to equality and diversity in London. We make no apology for recommending a series of interdependent actions which affect nearly all LSC's activities.

### **Different stages of development**

No Review starts with a clean slate. We recognise, in making our recommendations, that some boroughs and sub-regions are already working to action plans which they commissioned in advance of this Review. Some are well along the way with tackling the issues we describe. Other areas require encouragement and support. We think sub-regions and boroughs can learn more from each other than they do now.

### **Evolution for improvement**

Nearly all the practitioners and providers we met during our Review recognised that change was needed. They perceived it as evolution, taking forward what was best, and discarding what did not work well. We are heartened by the vigour and commitment of the best practitioners and managers, and by the energy LSC has demonstrated in its development of a London Strategy for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

### **The report consists of:**

- issues and discussion grouped under nine headings, with summaries in boxed text at the end of each section
- examples of innovation and partnership flexibility, shown in boxed text

At the start of this second report, we provide:

- i) Ten priorities for London LSC
- ii) Main findings and recommendations from our qualitative work
- iii) Summary of findings and recommendations selected from our first quantitative report

**Pat Hood**  
**April 2007**  
**Revised November 2007**

## Priorities for LSC

The recommendations in our two Review reports will take LSC and its partners three or more years to implement. To assist the development of a realistic implementation plan, we set out here ten priorities arising from our work.

### Ten priorities for LSC

- i) Improve data collection and analysis to support effective regional and local planning
- ii) Establish in each sub-region a forum for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so their views can inform planning
- iii) Establish a London Transition Protocol for young people and adults
- iv) Work with providers to set strategic targets for employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including supported employment and social enterprise
- v) Establish in each sub-region a strategic forum of employers focused on learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which, amongst other activities, advise on opportunities arising from the Olympic Games
- vi) Establish in each sub-region at least one partnership association aimed at increasing capacity, focused on potential Centres of Excellence, and including employment and social enterprise schemes
- vii) Increase the amount of specialist work-based learning and Entry and Level 1
- viii) Set up London Ambassadors for Mental Health, the London Exemplary Employer scheme, and at least one supported employment scheme with Mental Health Trusts in each sub-region
- ix) Develop local capacity for complex needs by establishing at least one partnership association, including health and social services and voluntary organisations, for these learners in each sub-region, based on potential Centres of Excellence
- x) Work with partners to establish i) accredited London professional development programme for staff working with complex needs; ii) training programme for work-based learning staff; iii) training programme for Connexions and JobCentre Plus staff.

## Main findings and recommendations

Main findings and recommendations from the Review’s second report on the qualitative evidence are summarised here in chart form for ease of reference. The summary concentrates on findings and recommendations which are of most relevance to strategic planning for the whole of London. LSC sub-regional teams, providers, and partners will find in the body of the report discussions about specific aspects of provision, together with examples of innovative practice.

Findings and recommendations are grouped under section headings. Care has been taken not to replicate recommendations set out in our first report.

The summary chart follows next:

<b>Main findings and recommendations from the qualitative evidence</b>	
<b>Findings: Learners’ views &amp; experiences</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
1) Learners want more say in decisions about their futures. 2) Learning opportunities do not always prepare learners for the next stages of their lives. 3) Some learners spend too long in provision. 4) There are too few choices when learners leave provision.	1) LSC to support the establishment of learners’ fora in each sub-region, and to ensure learners’ views inform strategic planning. 2) Providers to review their effectiveness in preparing learners for the next stages, and to stop ‘recycling’ learners. 3) Providers and partners to work with LSC to expand choices – see below.
<b>Findings: Views of practitioners, providers, and partners</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
1) Too many inequalities across the region. 2) Inflexible funding and provision act as barriers for learners. 3) Not enough local provision for learners with ASD, with severe challenging behaviours, with complex disabilities, and with mental health difficulties. 4) Not enough specialist professional development opportunities, especially for working with complex needs, and mental health difficulties. 5) There needs to be joined-up strategy for offenders – most of whom have some form of learning difficulty and/or disability, or mental health difficulty.	1) London-wide strategic framework should set out a London entitlement for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. 2) LSC to work with providers and partners to support innovation and flexibility to meet full range of learners – see below. 3) As part of its workforce development strategy, LSC to work with HE providers, and other CPD providers to establish substantial training programmes for staff working with learners with complex needs, and with mental health difficulties. 4) LSC to link its Offender Learning Strategy to its strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

<p><b>Findings: Transition for young people</b></p> <p>1) Coherent 14-19 policies are needed which include the full range of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>2) There needs to be a London Protocol for Transition Planning, overseen by an effective Transition Planning Group in each borough.</p> <p>3) Connexions Personal Advisers, and JobCentre Plus staff require specialist training.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>1) As part of its 14-19 initiatives, LSC to work with local authorities to develop coherent policies, including policies for school-leaving ages, which include the full range of learners.</p> <p>2) LSC to build on existing practice and on-going work to adopt a London Transition Protocol, and to work with partners to strengthen the Transition Planning Group in each borough; arrangements to include adults – see below.</p> <p>3) Connexions to identify specialist training needs, set targets for numbers of staff to be trained 2007/08, and seek training from providers and others.</p>
<p><b>Findings: Provision in colleges</b></p> <p>1) Examples of innovation and excellence; practitioners are sometimes 'ahead of the game'.</p> <p>2) Not enough strategic-level employer engagement.</p> <p>3) Insufficient focus on employability, and not enough use made of destinations and job market data.</p> <p>4) Not enough options for learners when they leave.</p> <p>5) Colleges need to deliver individual flexible programmes, not courses.</p> <p>6) Centres of Excellence should be resource centres, not just programme providers.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>1) LSC and providers to set targets for employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>2) LSC to provide strategic lead to engage employers in each sub-region, with specific focus on learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>3) LSC to extend cross-borough approaches being tested in Lambeth and Southwark, and other innovations, including flexibility project, 'Can-do' website for employers, coherent work placement services, social enterprises, in each sub-region.</p> <p>4) LSC to build on developments in Lambeth, Southwark, Sutton, Richmond, and in excellent WBL to develop Centre for Excellence criteria outlined in this report.</p>
<p><b>Findings: Work-based learning and ESF-funded provision</b></p> <p>1) A dispiriting picture of lost opportunities; not enough learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities taking part in WBL; those that participate do not succeed as well as their peers.</p> <p>2) Examples of excellent specialist provision; not enough specialist providers.</p> <p>3) Too many barriers exclude too many learners.</p> <p>4) WBL viewed as 'second best' option.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>1) LSC to give strategic priority to increasing numbers of specialist WBL providers.</p> <p>2) LSC to work to remove barriers identified in this report, using the few excellent providers to test innovation and flexibility, and inter-agency support to move learners into employment.</p> <p>3) LSC to commission more Entry and Level 1 WBL learning provision.</p> <p>4) WBL to be presented as 'first choice' option for school-leavers who can benefit.</p>

<b>Findings: Learners with complex and profound disabilities</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) No shared understanding of unique role of further and adult education for learners with complex and profound disabilities.</p> <p>2) Insufficient strategic planning to meet current and future needs; significant differences between boroughs in specialist college placements.</p> <p>3) Uncertainties about funding requirements.</p> <p>4) Not enough skilled and confident staff to meet current or future needs.</p> <p>5) Examples of local innovation.</p>	<p>1) LSC to support providers in developing a shared vision for further and adult education for these learners, building on existing best practice.</p> <p>2) LSC to use Review outcomes and PLASC analysis to identify provision required in each sub-region, and to share its analysis with providers.</p> <p>3) LSC to clarify funding requirements, including those for non-accredited programmes.</p> <p>4) LSC to work with partners to establish a substantive, accredited, training programme for staff working with complex needs.</p>
<b>Findings: Learners with mental health difficulties</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Learning and Skills sector not yet equipped to meet needs of current and future learners with mental health difficulties.</p> <p>2) There is not enough accessible, tailor-made information, advice and guidance.</p> <p>3) Providers do not always have the right framework, or staff the right skills to work effectively with these learners.</p> <p>4) Too few employment and employability opportunities</p> <p>5) Too many funding barriers to participation  <b>(Pat, can't read this bit - off the page).</b></p>	<p>1) LSC to include actions and targets for improving participation and retention of these learners.</p> <p>2) LSC to work with service-user groups to develop 'Learn Well' website designed by and for people with mental health difficulties, linked to e-prospectus.</p> <p>3) LSC to establish 25 expert London Ambassadors for Mental Health</p> <p>4) LSC to work collaboratively with partners to support London Exemplary Employer scheme, Work Well employment scheme</p>
<b>Findings: Adult &amp; community learning</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) There is a pressing need for joined strategy, and joined-up funding, between services.</p> <p>2) It is difficult to meet current demand, and serious concerns about meeting future demand.</p> <p>3) Funding barriers act as barriers to participation.</p> <p>4) Learners stay in provision for too long because there are not enough other options available for them.</p> <p>5) Transition planning is not well-developed.</p> <p>6) Parents and carers want to be more involved.</p> <p>7) Most transport arrangements are unsatisfactory.</p> <p>8) Good ACL providers should be developed as Centres of Excellence.</p>	<p>1) LSC to work with partners to develop a London response to the forthcoming inter-departmental framework for joint working.</p> <p>2) LSC to work with health and social services and others to develop a joint strategy for funding adult learners with the most complex needs.</p> <p>3) LSC to encourage providers to develop differentiated pathways for adults, including social enterprises, supported work opportunities in each borough.</p> <p>4) LSC to adopt the London Transition Protocol, referred to above, and to extend its use to adult learners.</p> <p>5) LSC to include parents and carers representatives in its consultations on its London Strategy for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.</p> <p>6) Local authorities to review their transport arrangements to ensure they are meeting the requirements of the DDA, and that transport is provided in ways that best suit learners rather than logistical requirements.</p> <p>7) LSC to encourage good ACL providers to develop as Centres of Excellence.</p>

<b>Findings: Voluntary organisations</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Voluntary organisations should be an integral part of planning, and provision and services for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; their potential is not used fully.</p> <p>2) Many voluntary organisations already have good local links with providers.</p> <p>3) Voluntary organisations are keen to offer increased provision/support services if strategic partnerships and funding arrangements are appropriate.</p>	<p>1) LSC to encourage selected voluntary organisations as new providers of services and provision by entering into London-wide agreements and contracts.</p>

For ease of reference, a selective summary follows of the main findings and recommendations from the first Review report which was based on our analysis of data provided by LSC and its partners.

**Findings and recommendations selected from the first Review report:  
data analysis and evidence**

The summary chart follows next:

<b>Main findings and recommendations from Report 1: data analysis and evidence</b>	
<b>Existing provision Findings: Numbers of learners</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Some 48,000 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified on the ILR database.</p> <p>2) Over 25% of learners have some form of learning difficulty; the largest number have moderate learning difficulties.</p> <p>3) Nearly 4,500 learners have sensory disabilities.</p> <p>4) Over 3,000 learners have mental health difficulties – a considerable under-estimation.</p> <p>5) Over 6,000 learners experience dyslexia.</p> <p>6) Nearly 2,500 learners have profound and complex disabilities, or multiple learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders.</p> <p>7) Lambeth and Islington have the largest numbers of learners.</p> <p>8) Over 25,000 learners are adults, aged between 25 and 59 years; there are nearly twice as many adults as younger learners.</p> <p>9) There are 11,225 learners in adult and community learning provision – an under-estimation.</p>	<p>1) LSC to consider in its strategic plan how to provide the right mix of local provision to meet current needs, including those of the majority of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are adults, and the large numbers of learners with moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties who are likely to achieve best in practical, employment-focused provision.</p> <p>2) LSC to work with partners to find out more about the real extent of participation by people with mental health difficulties.</p>
<b>Findings: Anomalies in data</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Too many learners without full information about their learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the ILR database.</p> <p>2) Too many of these learners are 16-18 year olds in full-time provision.</p> <p>3) Too many discrepancies concerning learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and with moderate learning difficulties.</p> <p>4) Self-declaration does not work, and leads to under-estimates of numbers of learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and learners with mental health difficulties.</p> <p>5) Levels of representation by learners with particular difficulties, eg sensory disabilities, vary from sub-region to sub-region.</p> <p>6) Missing data for ACL provision in some boroughs.</p>	<p>1) LSC to make it a priority to work with providers to secure accurate information about learners.</p> <p>2) LSC to work with provider practitioner groups to explore discrepancies, and to agree consistent definitions.</p> <p>3) Providers to review how supportively they seek information from learners; LSC to work with practitioner groups to tackle self-declaration issues.</p> <p>4) LSC sub-regional teams to examine causes behind variations in representation.</p> <p>5) LSC to work with ACL providers to secure accurate data about adult learners.</p>

<b>Findings: Placements in specialist colleges</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Accurate data about placements were difficult to secure.</p> <p>2) Significant differences in placement patterns between sub-regions.</p> <p>3) Too little contribution to the costs of placements is made by other services.</p>	<p>1) LSC to improve its database for placements in specialist colleges, so it can be used to contribute to strategic planning.</p> <p>2) LSC to examine causes for differences, and work toward consistent London region placement policy.</p>
<b>Findings: Work-based learning provision</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) There are some 4,376 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in work-based learning provision in London.</p> <p>2) The largest group of learners has moderate learning difficulties.</p> <p>3) Learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties are under-represented in some sub-regions.</p> <p>4) Learners with mental health difficulties, with mobility difficulties, and with sensory difficulties are significantly under-represented in work-based learning provision across the region.</p> <p>5) Most learners are on Level 2 programmes.</p>	<p>1) LSC to examine the factors which lie behind the under-representation of certain groups, and to encourage more specialist organisations, including voluntary organisations, to become work-based learning providers with the right expertise to support learners with a wider range of disabilities than those currently taking part.</p>
<b>Findings: ESF-funded programmes</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Significant anomalies in data for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on ESF-funded programmes.</p> <p>2) Very significant variations between boroughs in participation by these learners.</p> <p>3) Only 10% of the total number of ESF-funded learners appear to have learning difficulties and/or disabilities - likely to be a considerable under-estimation.</p>	<p>1) LSC to ensure it has accurate data for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on ESF-funded programmes.</p> <p>2) LSC to examine variations in participation between boroughs, and take actions with existing and new providers to encourage more learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the NEETs group to join programmes which are tailor-made for these learners.</p>
<b>Findings: Adult and community learning</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) There are 11,225 learners (under-estimation) in ACL provision.</p> <p>2) Apparent low levels of participation in some boroughs.</p>	<p>1) LSC to secure accurate data for ACL provision.</p> <p>2) LSC to work with providers to examine apparent low levels of participation in some boroughs.</p> <p>3) LSC sub-regional teams to undertake further analysis of types of learning difficulties and/or disabilities most prevalent amongst ACL learners, as contribution to identifying continuing and future potential demand.</p>

<b>Findings: Levels of programmes</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) The majority of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including learners with mental health difficulties, appear to be studying at Level 2, thereby making a significant contribution to the sector's Level 2 targets.</p> <p>2) LSC data do not allow the identification of numbers of learners studying at Pre-Entry, Entry, and Level 1, making it difficult to do justice to these learners.</p> <p>3) There are anomalies in the data, concerned with definitions of learning difficulties and disabilities.</p>	<p>1) Providers and LSC to make clearer to government the contribution these learners make to the sector's Level 2 targets.</p> <p>2) LSC to collect data in ways which identify numbers of learners studying at Pre-Entry, Entry and Level 1.</p>
<b>Findings: Unmet need</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>1) There is not enough choice for school leavers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>2) Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are over-represented in the NEETs groups.</p> <p>3) One-third of 'looked-after' young people are not placed in provision or employment by age 19.</p> <p>4) There is not the right mix of work-based learning provision for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, with physical disabilities, and with sensory disabilities.</p> <p>5) Current ESF-funded programmes do not lead to satisfactory outcomes for most learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>6) There is not enough local provision for learners with complex or severe disabilities.</p> <p>7) There is not enough of the right kind of provision or support for people with mental health difficulties.</p> <p>8) Not all colleges keep records of the first destinations of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>9) Large numbers of offenders have learning difficulties, emotional and social difficulties, or mental health difficulties, including personality disorders.</p> <p>10) Evidence of unmet need for adult learners is more likely to be secured through analysis of qualitative evidence in the second report.</p>	<p>1) LSC to receive an annual report from Connexions on the intended destinations of Year 11 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; colleges to keep destinations data for these learners.</p> <p>2) LSC to undertake a specific examination of issues connected to ethnicity and learning difficulties and/or disabilities, working closely with representative community groups.</p> <p>See also recommendations for second Review report.</p>

Findings: future demand	Recommendations
<p>1) LSC policy change about PLASC data meant that a PLASC analysis was not undertaken in time for the Review, making it difficult to identify future demand.</p> <p>2) The numbers of school-age children with mental health difficulties has increased.</p> <p>3) The numbers of school-age children with complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorders and language and communication difficulties has increased.</p> <p>4) Nationally, spending on residential special school placements for school pupils has increased, with an average cost of £57,000 per placement.</p> <p>5) Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are likely to constitute the two biggest groups coming through the schools sector.</p> <p>6) Adults constitute potentially the largest number of learners seeking provision in the next ten years.</p> <p>7) There are 3672 learners aged 21 to 24 years currently in learning; at least a third of these learners will seek adult and community learning provision.</p>	<p>1) LSC to undertake as soon as possible an analysis of PLASC data, identifying future demand from Year 7 onwards by type of learning difficulty/ disability, by age, and by Statement, School Action Plus, and School Action pupils, identifying significant trends in future demand for specific types of provision.</p> <p>2) LSC to take strategic account of current 'out of borough' residential special school placements when deciding on the volume of new provision required for learners with the most complex and severe needs.</p> <p>3) LSC to ensure it commissions the right mix of ACL provision by using the Review's analysis to undertake borough by borough analysis of the profile of potential future ACL learners.</p>

We turn now to the findings of our fieldwork, beginning with the views and experiences of learners.

## **The views and experiences of learners**

### **Introduction**

We began the qualitative work for the Review by talking to learners. Some 100 learners took part in a series of focus groups in March 2007. Learners ranged in age from 11 years to 62 years, and they experienced the full range of learning difficulties and disabilities, including profound and complex disabilities, and mental health difficulties. Learners attended general further education colleges, specialist college, and sixth form college. In our Lambeth and Southwark Review, we had talked with over 120 learners in colleges, and on work-based learning programmes, and in adult and community learning. Their views and experiences were very similar to those expressed here.

### **Choosing provision**

Many learners said they had not made decisions about their current provision; parents, teachers and Connexions advisers either made the decisions or were highly influential in the process. One eighteen-year old student with Asperger's Syndrome said, 'I didn't really decide to come here – I was trying to say I didn't want to come'. Another sixteen-year old learner said, 'I was forced to come by teachers and Mum and Dad'. Another learner said bluntly, 'My Mum made me'.

This decision-making process, and the options available to school-leavers, together with other transition issues are discussed in a later section of the report.

Learners liked to study in provision near home, preferably within easy travel distance. Of course, there are learners for whom 'home' is not a supportive shelter, or safe place to be, and interviews with these learners undertaken as part of other research<sup>1</sup> indicates that, *most of all*, they want to leave home, and begin new lives for themselves.

Facilities were important for learners and parents who looked for the right kind of adaptations, accommodation, and support. One young woman said, 'They've got good facilities for wheelchair users, like lifts and slopes; they've very few stairs'. Another learner with dyslexia said, 'I wanted to go to another college, but my Mum made me come here because they provide the best support'.

Learners liked to come to places they knew through attending link programmes, or because relatives and friends were there. Whilst learners felt link programmes helped them to get to know about college, it might be argued that link programmes can serve to close off other options, unless the college link programme is part of a taster leavers' programme during which learners try out work-based learning as well as college, and then decide for which they are best-suited.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Review of Opportunities for Employability for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities in Tyne and Wear', Pat Hood, Tyne and Wear LSC, 2005.

## **Choosing a programme**

Many learners, especially those with severe or moderate learning difficulties, did not see a link between their choice of programmes and their future lives. College, or work-based learning, or adult learning, was what you 'did', rather than being preparation for employment or more independent living. Learners with physical and other disabilities were clearer about the relationships between their chosen programmes and future aspirations. One comment might be that it is a characteristic of learning difficulties that some people might find it hard to understand the connections between experiences, particularly when a person may have little concept of time passing. Another comment would be that lots of young people are undecided about their futures, whether they are taking A/S Levels or on Entry-Level vocational programmes. We should not expect more from these young people than we do for all young people. However, we can do more than we do now to help them see connections between their choice of programmes and the next stages of their lives. We can also ensure there are more choices available to them when they leave school. Most learners look at one option only when they leave school; sometimes this is one college, when college may not be the best place. If there were more specialist work-based learning providers, able to provide the right skilled support, and more flexible programmes, such as those described later in this report, which combine elements from different providers, then learners would have more choice.

## **Ensuring a real link between choosing programmes and next steps**

It is of course easier to help learners understand the link between what they are choosing to do and the next stages of their lives, if such a link really exists. Too many learners on Entry-Level programmes do not get the vocational subjects they want to study. One learner with learning and visual disabilities said, 'I picked a subject I wanted to do, and when I came here, I didn't get it. I was supposed to do Media and they put me on Business'. Another said, 'I really wanted to do Business, but they said I should do Art and Design; Business is for very clever-minded people', and another learner said, 'I wanted to do fashion design but I didn't get a place'.

Practitioners may say that learners are being guided away from courses for which they do not have the right levels of skills. Two points might be made here. First, that work on realistic expectations and the world of employment needs to start earlier with learners so that when they leave school, they have some realistic ideas about their capacities and likely employment. Second, that learners' literacy and numeracy levels often get in the way of their joining vocational programmes for which they have the practical capacities.

Some learners felt their programmes were designed around their disabilities rather than their vocational interests. One learner said, 'Everything I do has Asperger's in front of it'.

## **Preparing for employment or more independent living**

Many learners did not see a relationship between what they were learning and what they would do next. One nineteen-year old learner said, 'After I leave, I want to work; we're not doing things that will give me the skills to get a job'. Another learner said, 'It's alright, but I can learn more in things I do outside here'. Learners felt they were not always helped to see the links between their programmes and future jobs. One young woman with physical disabilities on an Entry Level programme said, 'They don't always advise you properly; they don't say – 'if you do this course, this will happen'. Sometimes programmes appear to be used as 'hooks into learning' for learners who do not know what they want to do, so exciting learning opportunities are used to engage learners who can then try out different options. This can work well, as long as learners are then helped to make programme choices which prepare them for realistic jobs.

## **Work placements**

Work experience can be one of the most effective ways of preparing learners for working life. However, learners did not always have these opportunities, and when they did, they did not always have a say in what they were going to do. In addition, work experience did not fit always with what learners wanted to do when they left. Sometimes, the idea seemed to be to provide enjoyable or exciting activities for learners rather than those that provided insights into the disciplines, requirements, and rewards of real work. For example, one learner said, 'I was on a work-placement at a circus, ushering people into their seats, but that's not what I really want to do; after here, I'm going to a shop to do retail'. Of course, placements *can* be exciting *and* linked to real job prospects. At other times, placements were based on unrealistic understanding of industry demands and competitiveness. For example, learners with severe learning difficulties sold programmes in a well-known theatre, even though jobs for most would not be likely in the highly competitive theatre world. Other learners took part in placements which bore no relation to what they wanted to do. One young woman wants to work in a music shop, but is doing a placement working with children. Another learner wants to be a furniture upholsterer, but is doing a gardening work experience.

## **The 'continuous course'**

Sometimes, as we saw in our Lambeth and Southwark Review as well as in this work, the 'tasting' process can go on for a long time. Learners move for years between courses, or different levels of programmes, or between colleges, or work-based provision, because there are no other options available. For example, one learner had attended several colleges, working towards GNVQs, doing part of a BTEC First, then into a Performing Arts course, and then into a sound-engineering course. He is now on a pre-access course. Another learner did a course in a Yorkshire college, then went to a London college for two years, then into other provision. Another learner has attended two London colleges, and yet another learner, three or more colleges. One learner captured the idea of indefinite courses when she said, 'I think the course is continuous'. The same sense of 'drift' was reflected by an older learner with an acquired disability

when she said, 'They don't really talk to us about what we might do in the future ... they might do that in July, that is when they tell us what we are going to do next time'.

### **Not enough options**

Practitioners keep learners within the system because there are so few other avenues open to them, either in terms of work, or in meaningful activities. Although there is considerable rhetoric about 'employer engagement', practitioners told us it was too often down to overworked staff making 'phone call after 'phone call to secure work placements or job interviews, or escorting learners to Job Centres where staff had little idea of the capacities learners could bring to employment. For learners who might benefit from participation in social enterprises or other supported employment, or who required individual packages of community activities and learning, there were still too few available choices. Understandably, work placements and other opportunities depended too often on the contacts established by staff, rather than on the expressed wishes of learners.

### **Learning as a social experience**

Learners do not learn effectively if the social environment is not right. Learners in our sample were often positive about their social experiences of learning, which included getting to grips with large buildings, older and sometimes more boisterous learners, and for learners from special schools, sometimes their first experiences of extended inclusion. Younger learners enjoyed the more adult environment and the extended sense of independence it engendered, though this freedom has its down-side. Many young learners were anxious about unstructured time during breaks, and some worried about the noise and bustle of busy environments. Younger learners worried about travel, or about what they perceived as unsafe areas outside their buildings. However, other learners enjoyed using newly-developed travel skills, and learners who required transport were generally happy with these arrangements.

Over-all, younger learners enjoyed the social experiences of college and work-based learning. One young man commented, 'It's a more grown-up environment, and we are treated with respect'. Others enjoyed not having to wear school uniform. Rules were seen as more relaxed, though this could present difficulties for some learners who were used to the more explicit regulations of school.

For older learners, especially those with acquired injuries, it was often a great relief to meet people with similar disabilities to themselves. This could help motivate them, and shift some of their focus away from their new disability and toward their programmes. Learners also valued opportunities to learn how to understand and manage their disabilities. A thirty-five year old former law student with physical and visual disabilities acquired after illness said, 'Meeting other people with disabilities has helped a lot; sometimes you think you are the only person who is disabled, and then you meet other people. We have a class that tells us about disability'. Another learner said, 'I've learnt

I'm not the only one affected by Asperger's; I used to say to myself, it's only me ... but now I see people who are worse off'.

### **Support for learning**

Most learners were happy with the support they received. The skilled teacher's capacity to help learners understand something was valued highly. One learner said, 'In class, you can ask the teacher for help, and they always try ... they break it down if you don't understand'. Another learner said staff 'explain it to you in ways you can understand'.

Other learners spoke highly of the help they received from learning support staff. One learner with a visual disability described how support staff assisted him by taking notes, or reading what teachers had written on the board. One college provided Braille support for learners who required it, other providers were praised for their support for dyslexic learners. Learners like to receive support from people they get to know well. One learner with complex disabilities said, 'I feel well-supported; I have 1:1 support all day; it's usually the same people so that makes it easier for me. I like the continuity'. Another learner said, 'Our support needs are assessed really well; they give you lots of time to tell them what support you need'.

### **Support for independence**

Sometimes, support can encourage dependence, rather than helping to develop greater independence. Very few learners were involved in deciding the nature and extent of the support they received, despite the comment of our last learner. Support was not geared always to helping learners become more independent learners. Sometimes, the right aids and equipment were not in place at the right time, so learners were more dependent on others than they wanted or needed to be. One learner spoke of waiting two months at the start of his programme for a laptop, and said, 'They should have known and got it sorted, because I told them in plenty of time'. Another learner said, 'I can't use a mouse with my right hand; here I have to use a mouse (because of the laptop provided), so I have to use the same hand to type and use the mouse' – a tiring and time-consuming process.

We know from our other Review work in London, that even carefully designed support plans do not always include targets for the development of independence. When they do, the impact on learners can be liberating as they learn on their own, manage their own equipment, or just ask for help without prompting. One learner said, 'Now I have an electric wheelchair, I can go anywhere'. Another learner demonstrates that often learners flourish with less support and more carefully structured challenge, he said, 'I have learnt that left to my own devices, I can do things as well as most regular people'.

## **Progressing to work or independence**

Learners on work-based learning programmes are most likely to know about their next steps, but, even here, we found that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are less likely to move into employment than their peers. Most learners in other provision were unclear about what they would do next, and often these next steps are not connected to their programmes. One learner is doing a Business course but wants to work in a shop; another is on a Performing Arts course but wants to work in an office; another person on the same course wants to work in a sports outfitters.

Some learners have part-time or voluntary jobs which may lead to full-time work. One young man gets paid for a one-day-a-week job working as a painter and decorator. Others attend community-based provision run by voluntary organisations such as Mencap or Rathbone, which will form part of their individual packages once they move on.

## **Personal and social learning**

Whilst actual programmes may not relate to learners' likely jobs, other important skills were being learnt which students saw as relevant to their next steps. These skills included becoming more independent, dealing with new situations and new people, speaking in a group, working as a team, and so on; all skills which are transferable either to work or more independent living. The issue is that these skills could be taught more often within the context of employability and chosen vocational areas for those learners for whom work should be an option.

## **Comment**

In this part of our Review, learners themselves have described many of the issues we will explore further in the report. In summary, these issues are:

### **Key issues raised by learners**

- i) Lack of real choices after school
- ii) Not enough say in decisions about their futures
- iii) Programmes which do not always relate to vocational ambitions
- iv) Learning which does not always prepare learners for the next stage of their lives
- v) Support which is not always planned or delivered in ways that promote independence
- vi) The 'continuous course' whereby learners move from programme to programme or between providers for too many years
- vii) Too few options when learners leave provision, either in employment or in packages of activities which include learning

In the next section of the report, we listen to what practitioners, and representatives from other services and organisations described as their main challenges, and provide examples of what they thought worked well in the London region.

## **The views of practitioners, providers, and partners**

As part of the Review, the consultancy team conducted five seminars for practitioners, providers, and partners in January 2007. Nearly 60 senior managers, practitioners, and advocate organisations, attended from colleges, work-based learning, adult and community learning, voluntary and community organisations, schools, Connexions, local authorities, health and social services, and other organisations. In addition, other groups contributed to this part of the Review, in particular, the South London Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Strategy group and Connexions Advisers based in South London. As part of the Lambeth and Southwark Review, we also held a series of practitioner seminars. The views expressed during those seminars, tallied almost exactly with those of participants in the later seminars.

Participants were invited to offer their views in two main areas:

- i) What were the main issues affecting the participation, progress, achievement and successful transition of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?
- ii) What worked well?

The views of these experienced and committed people are captured below.

### **The main issues**

#### **Expectations**

Participants considered the issues of expectation lay behind much of what did not work well, particularly in relation to the employability agenda. Learners and their families did not always see employment as a likely option, partly because of the so-called 'benefits trap' whereby learners, and their families, might lose money if a job were started, and partly because learners and their parents and carers had not been helped sufficiently and early enough to see that work was a possible goal.

Participants considered employers' attitudes toward people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be a very real challenge for them, and for learners themselves. They wanted to see providers becoming exemplary employers, along with local councils and other publicly-funded bodies, as well as private businesses. They wanted to see the moral and social cases put for engaging these potential employers, as well as the hard business case. Employers needed advice and support when they employ disabled people, examples included providing advice on adaptive technology which would enable a person to do a job. They looked to LSC for a more strategic lead on employer engagement, which was too often left to individuals or teams of practitioners.

Lastly, participants considered that the attitudes of staff working with learners played sometimes a part in forming unrealistic expectations of what learners might be able to do. Such attitudes included allowing learners to continue in provision year after year because the expectations were that learners were unable to do anything else, or placing

learners in programmes which did not relate to potential real jobs because learners were not expected to move into work, or because staff themselves were not aware sufficiently of the jobs that were possible for learners.

### **No strategic framework**

Participants said there were still too many inequalities in London. For example, the quality and availability of provision still depended too much on where a learner lived. This was especially true if the learner had complex needs, or mental health difficulties. Some colleges were considered not to provide the right support for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, or for learners with physical disabilities. In other colleges, integrated learners were considered not to enjoy the same quality of learning as those on discrete programmes. It was often difficult to secure funding for Pre-Entry Level programmes. Work-based learning staff did not have access to the same kinds of professional development opportunities as colleagues in other provision. Access to adult and community learning was viewed as being at risk in some areas. Arrangements too often depended on short-term funding when what was needed was long-term planning supported by long-term funding. A strategic framework was needed, which set out an entitlement for London learners, and which could be implemented in ways which achieved greater consistency and equality across the capital.

### **Inflexibility**

Participants spoke feelingly of the difficulties they experienced in bending provision and funding to suit learners' needs. Very often, practitioners had a vision of what learners really needed, but could not secure it because funding mechanisms or provider inflexibility got in the way. For example, although work-based learning suited some learners best, the time-scale and recognised outcomes for Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes served to exclude many learners who might benefit from the real-life learning they offered. Other providers did not offer enough Entry Level vocational programmes to enable learners to take steps into vocational learning. Some providers did not think beyond delivering courses, when what was needed was the design and delivery between different partner providers of real individual learning programmes. We look later in the report at how innovative providers are working together to secure flexibility for their learners.

### **'One shot – get it right'**

Participants considered learners have little chance to rethink what they want to do, to get things wrong and start again, or even to be ill, for example, with a mental illness, and then to have a second chance. In effect, we expect some of the most vulnerable learners to make the right decisions first time, even when they may have little access to advice and guidance. Once first decisions are made, learners move into the 'sausage machine' of either specialist college or further education college or work-based learning, when for many, different elements from each of these could be put together to best

meet their needs. Participants saw the 'sausage machine' as an aspect of inflexibility, and also as part of the 'get it right first time' expectation of these learners.

### **Not enough choices**

Participants said there were not enough choices for young learners leaving school, and not enough options for adult learners who would benefit from social enterprises or supported employment. Transition from school was not always supported by the right information; providers sometimes found themselves working with learners without receiving important medical information, or the outcomes of assessments. As we saw earlier, learners themselves felt they were not sufficiently involved in decisions when they left school. Learners were placed in colleges because work-based learning was viewed often as not being able to support learners with more complex needs, even when such provision would have been in the learners' best interests. Work-based learning staff themselves wished to work with a wider range of learners but considered there were too many barriers built into the system to make this possible.

Connexions staff commented that sometimes boroughs competed for resources, leading to gaps in provision in some boroughs. When learners left provision, there were not enough employment routes open to them, either in the open market or in supported schemes or social enterprises.

For learners for whom work was not an option, there were not enough adult and community learning or individual packages of learning and other activities. Options were even fewer for learners with more complex and severe needs, and concerns were expressed about real and potential cuts in services for these learners, including anxiety that LSC may 'cut funding' for learners with complex needs, as it focuses on Level 2 learners. For learners with mental health difficulties, there were not enough opportunities for supported work, although there were examples of effective tailor-made programmes.

### **Not enough local provision**

Seminar participants and views from other groups indicated there was not enough local provision for learners with complex needs, including Autistic Spectrum Disorders and severe and complex epilepsy, young learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, learners returning home from residential specialist colleges, and learners with mental health difficulties. Their views reflect the findings set out in our first report on data analysis conducted as part of the Review.

### **Not enough specialist professional development**

Participants were aware that the effectiveness of a more inclusive learning and skills sector depended largely on the skills and expertise of its staff. If they were to be asked to work with learners with more complex disabilities, for example, the growing number of learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, then they wanted training in order to do it

well. It was not enough, in their view, for LSC to send fewer learners to specialist colleges, or to stimulate the development of new local provision. Staff wanted access to accredited professional development which would equip them to meet new needs. The request for more specialist training was a strong theme in our Lambeth and Southwark Review, where, for example, staff were working with a growing number of learners with head injuries.

We look next at what participants considered worked well. Specific examples from the seminars were followed-up in our fieldwork, and are described later in the report. We look here at some of the elements for success.

## **What works well?**

### **Well-planned transition**

Participants wanted to see well-established, effective local transition groups strengthened and given some say in the use of resources. They wanted to see greater consistency in transition planning, with agreed protocols for school-leavers and for adults. Effective local authorities and schools had developed transition plans, for example Islington has an Integrated Transition Planning Protocol which supports an integrated planning strategy. Sutton has a draft Transition Protocol, with a Transition Unit which manages a Transition Tracking database. Data is held on young people aged 14 to 25 years who are Statemented or on the Children or Adults with Disabilities Register. The database is used to inform regular transition planning meetings which identify complex transition cases which require early planning and joint working.

Adults need transition plans too when they move into part-time or community learning. Adults with mental health difficulties, in particular, require transition plans based on Person-Centred Planning. Islington's strategy includes both Children's and Adult services, and involves Adult Mental Health services, employment services, and voluntary and community organisations. A transitions worker has been appointed to deliver the strategy's action plan. Effective transitions cannot take place without accessible information. Connexions in North London has produced a directory of local college courses, training providers, and details of specialist residential colleges. Information about progression pathways, websites, and telephone contacts are provided. This independent information enables learners and their parents and carers to make better-informed decisions, and to find out about a variety of options. As an aide to providers and employers during transition, Get Paid and partners in South London have produced a leaflet on effective working with learners with Autistic disorders.

We say more about transitions in the next section of the report.

## **The right learning opportunities**

Learners need the right curriculum delivered in the right way if they are to succeed and progress. In Lewisham, partnerships had been formed between schools, work-based learning providers and the college to deliver flexible provision which enabled learners to draw what they needed from different providers. In Barnet, vocational link courses were specifically tailored for years 10 and 11 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Other providers were working with MENCAP to deliver its two new City and Guilds accredited qualifications: Personal Progression Through Practical Life Skills, and Personal Progression Through Practical Work Skills. The qualifications are recognised by QCA, and practitioners considered they offered the kind of practical learning which is of most value to students with severe learning difficulties, with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, or other learning difficulties. Some specialist providers were involved in 14-19 developments, including the Specialist Diploma, though more practitioners wished to be involved.

Havering College had worked hard to design a curriculum which really met learners' needs and which included progression to supported employment. Staff at Nightingale School had embedded literacy and numeracy provision in recognition that this was the best way for their learners to develop these skills. The school had found resources from the DfES Standards Unit helpful.

We say more about curriculum and learning opportunities throughout the report.

## **Developing employability**

Far-sighted providers worked in partnerships to design and deliver employment opportunities. Bromley College co-ordinated an Into Work group of local providers and services which aimed to get learners into work. Other providers linked with Mencap Pathway Schemes, and Richmond College and local work-based learning providers jointly delivered Skills for Life as part of their joint effort to more help learners into employment. Elsewhere, Connexions was based in an Entry to Employment (E2E) scheme in order to help learners focus early on employment. Orchard Hill College and Carshalton College are working in partnership with Hawk Training to develop social enterprise and employment opportunities for learners with complex needs.

We say more about employability throughout the rest of the report.

## **Options for adult learners**

Some providers used Person Centred Planning as a focus for collaborative work with adults. Westminster Adult Education Service works with local primary and secondary schools to extend opportunities for its learners. The process is reciprocal, with learners and staff exchanges. Seminar participants considered that the development of options

for adults depended on effective multi-agency working which was led by a single agency; in Enfield, social services has taken this important role. In Brent, a café project has provided adult learners with real work experience, whilst in Ealing, some day service provision have been converted into 'Links' employment centres, and a local Tesco's has recruited twenty learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Harrow Adult and Community Learning service delivers learning in local mosques and temples, and in Bromley, the adult education service provides the 'I Can Manage' course designed to enable adults with physical disabilities to live more independently whilst receiving 24-hour care.

We look further at adult learning later in the report.

### **Focus on learners with mental health difficulties**

Providers and services were very aware of the growing numbers of learners with mental health difficulties. In Lewisham, the community education service delivered Artslift and Mindlift programmes tailor-made for these learners. Joint work between social services and adult education to modernise day centres for people with mental health difficulties was underway in Havering. Other ACL services have strong links with MIND, for example, in Bromley, Harrow, and Enfield. In Hounslow, the ACL service has good links with a local psychiatric hospital which wants the service to extend its provision. Westminster ACL has good partnership arrangements which enable it to run six courses in conjunction with local hospitals, and Lambeth College has well-established links with the Maudesley Hospital. Other providers provide 'niche' programmes for members of local ethnic communities. For example, Lewisham community education services has worked with local mental health services to enable members of the Turkish community with mental health difficulties to enrol in adult and community learning. Elsewhere, Brent ACL is involved in the local Mental Health Services Asian Centre in Kingsbury.

Providers, including voluntary organisations, worked hard to assist people with mental health difficulties into employment. The Worknet course in Bromley supports people into work, using its links with The Priory group, local hospitals and community mental health groups. Practitioners considered small, community-based provision to be an essential part of the right mix of opportunities for learners with mental health difficulties.

We say more about learners with mental health difficulties later in the report.

### **Effective use of technology and technical aids**

Whilst practitioners considered there not to be enough understanding generally of the liberating power of technology for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they cited examples of innovation which worked well. Amongst these was the Ability Net, a national charity helping disabled children and adults to use computers and the internet by adapting their technology, providing assessments, training, a loan bank, helpline, and other resources. In 2005, the organisation assisted some 490,000 people

nationally, including carers, employers, teachers, and of course, people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

A summary of the main issues raised by practitioners, providers, and partners, follows next.

### **Key issues raised by practitioners, providers and partners**

- i) Expectations of learners and their families, staff, and employers sometimes served to limit opportunities for learners
- ii) No London-wide strategic framework, and too many inequalities and inconsistencies across the region
- iii) Inflexibility of funding, provision, and practice
- iv) Not enough choices for young people or adults
- v) Not enough local provision
- vi) Not enough specialist professional development
- vii) Transition could work well
- viii) The right flexible learning opportunities could be provided if providers worked together
- ix) Far-sighted providers and agencies were working together to deliver employability
- x) Person Centred Planning provided an effective focus for designing options for adult learners
- xi) Specific focus on learners with mental health difficulties could work well
- xii) Technology has an important part to play

The major issues raised in the seminars are explored throughout the report.

The next section of the report focuses on issues of transition for young people. It includes findings from our fieldwork, key issues with examples from our visits and interviews, and a round-up of main points.

## **Transition for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

### **Introduction**

Young people need to make the right choices when they leave school if they are to progress into employment or into more independent living. Our first report showed that too many young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were in the NEETs cohort, and too many 'looked after' young people were without provision or employment. Other evidence from learners and providers has told us that learners did not always go into the provision that was best for them, but instead explored only one option, or stuck with a provider they knew already. Other learners with mental health difficulties experienced considerable difficulties in finding provision, but they were not alone. Too many young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities experience difficulties in taking the next step after school.

We have seen in our first report that growing numbers of pupils with complex needs, including mental health difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and language and communication disorders are coming through London schools. We also reported on the large numbers of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and those with moderate learning difficulties who will form the biggest cohorts of school-leavers.

Transition processes need to be robust enough, and sensitive enough, to deal effectively with young people with complex needs, sometimes compounded by difficult life circumstances. In this section of the report, we examine what happens now in London, identify key issues, and describe some of the most innovative practice on which London can build its strategy.

### **Every Child Matters**

The Every Child Matters agenda permeates the new structures and processes related to young people and their families. Children's services and trusts are undergoing very considerable change, and providers and other agencies need to be aware of the implications for their own work. Chief amongst these implications is the need to work collaboratively and holistically, with the young person as an active participant in decisions about his or her future. However, learners have told us that they are not involved enough in decision-making, and practitioners, parents and carers say there is not yet enough effective strategic collaboration between providers and services.

### **Local authority policies at 14+ years**

As part of our exploration of this holistic and collaborative approach, we looked at how local authorities took account in their policies of the transition requirements of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many local authority officers considered policies did not take sufficient account of the needs of these young people. We found the same situation in Lambeth and Southwark, where, for example, there were no coherent policies for the school leaving ages for pupils with different kinds of

learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Within each local authority, it was often difficult to identify the key person with oversight for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 14-19 years, and then through to 25 years. Developments in children's services have not yet always established the named contact person for these learners. In addition, many boroughs have not yet streamlined and co-ordinated responsibilities across all their services for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Access to effective advice and guidance**

Learners need effective specialist advice and guidance if they are to make the right decisions about their futures. The theme of training for Connexions staff has arisen time and time again in the Review. Practitioners told us there are too few Connexions Personal Advisers with the right levels of expertise required to work with the growing numbers of learners with complex needs, or who are very vulnerable. Advisers do not always know about the range of options open to learners, thereby helping to restrict choices for young people. The issues are particularly sharp for young learners with mental health difficulties. A trained and experienced Personal Adviser told us, 'There is a lack of trained specialist PAs for these learners ... and the caseload is growing'. A Headteacher of a child and adolescent psychiatric unit told us:

'If the Connexions Adviser has no experience, then training is vital. It is all about relationships, and the person needs to be aware of the complexities of the case. We work on a totally multi-disciplinary basis with health and care ... Connexions are an integral part of the admissions and transition process'.

The Headteacher considered their provision fortunate in having a skilled Connexions Adviser working with learners.

### **Planning for transition**

Although most boroughs have some form of transition planning group, they are not all as effective as they should be. Planning groups do not always have sufficient clout to make strategic decisions, or to bring about change. Our fieldwork highlighted the factors which prevented transitional planning groups from working well. These included:

- i) Lack of robust data about the number of learners and their needs; not enough information about provision
- ii) Very significant changes in people's roles and responsibilities, especially in the new Children's Services
- iii) Transfer of young people from Children's Services to Adult Services, and the need sometimes to 'start from scratch'
- iv) Lack of the right, or any representation from LSC, employers or schools
- v) Processes which do not take enough account of non-Statemented young people who still have significant needs

- vi) Poor communication between professionals involved in working with a learner
- vii) Inadequate or unmet timetables for reviews, assessments, information sharing, and referrals – particularly for specialist college placements
- viii) Not being able to get learners into appropriate work-based learning programmes

Where transition planning groups worked well, the following elements were in place:

- i) Effective inter-agency working
- ii) A named agency or individual co-ordinator to lead the process
- iii) Early identification of need, and plenty of time to review and plan
- iv) Young people and their families involved fully in the process of planning and decision-making
- v) Use of Person Centred reviews as focus for collaboration between services and provider
- vi) Common understanding and agreed aims for transition between the involved services and providers

Examples of effective transition planning groups included the following:

**Kingston Transition Action Partnership: using Person Centred reviews**

The Partnership brings different professionals together, and has sub-groups which look at different aspects of transition. A transition manager has been in post for seven years, supported by full-time transition workers. The development of Person Centred reviews is seen as a very positive way to design exit strategies for learners, as well as providing a forum for sharing information in ways that actively involve the young person.

**Hillingdon Strategy Group: protocol for transition**

The Group was set up after the Joint Area Review inspection to improve transition across the borough. The Group meets every half-term, and is working on protocols for transition, as well as on other transition-related research. A transition worker visits pupils in 'out of borough' placements in order to help inform decisions about their futures. The Group is piloting Person Centred reviews at Moorcroft School for pupils with severe learning difficulties, and hopes to pilot the approach with mainstream schools.

### **Islington Integrated Transitional Planning Group: 'the team around the child'**

The Group has developed an integrated transition planning protocol, and is now producing accompanying guidance. A team of multi-disciplinary workers specialising in transition support for learners, uses the principle embodied in the Children's Act of 'the team around the child'. The Group is developing a DVD about Person Centred Planning, and intends extending its work to other learners.

### **Sutton Transition Group: Transition Champion**

The Group operates at strategic and operational levels to oversee transition arrangements in Sutton. Membership includes parents and carers, statutory and voluntary agencies, as well as provider representatives. The Group meets four times a year, and is chaired by Sutton's Transition Champion.

## **A London Transition Protocol**

Every London borough does not have the same effective arrangements as those in our sample. If they did, learners would always have choices, always move into provision that was right for them, and always have the right support at the start of their new programme. If transition arrangements were always successful, then providers would have the information they needed about a new learner when they needed it, and in a format that was most useful to them. Parents and carers would not be as anxious about next steps. Transition from school would be planned as one stage in a longer-term Person Centred Plan. Learners would feel they were making decisions about their own futures. Our evidence indicates that these indicators of successful transition are not in place consistently across the region; too much depends still on where a learner lives.

We recommend the development of a London Transition Protocol, based on the principles of Person Centred Planning, which can be used across the region. The design of the Protocol should draw on existing best practice, including work which is underway presently to bring different agencies and providers together in the development of a protocol. Any existing work should be reviewed in the light of the London Strategy for Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, and the forthcoming joint publication from DfES, Department of Health, and DWP, which sets out joint responsibilities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We recommend that versions of the Protocol are used for young people, and for adults. We say more about the Protocol's use with adults later in the report.

**At a minimum, the London Transition Protocol for young people should include:**

- Timeline for Reviews, transfer of information, referrals, including referrals for specialist college placements
- Learner's longer-term aspirations, ambitions and goals, including employment and/or more independent living
- Learner's decisions about their next step
- How the learner was involved/supported to make choices
- Number of choices explored by the learner
- Learner's work placements (where appropriate)
- Transition plan: actions to be taken by professionals and by the learner, with key dates
- Named person responsible for co-ordinating the Transition Plan
- Period of time learner could spend in next provision
- Intended outcomes from that provision (open/supported employment, greater independence, social enterprise, etc)

The Protocol should include clearly delineated responsibilities for the different agencies involved with the young person. We recommend that each borough establishes or strengthens its Transition Planning Group, informed by the London Transition Protocol, and that LSC works with local authorities and other partners to support these groups.

We turn next to another essential element of successful transition for many young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities: early experiences of vocational learning.

### **Early experiences of vocational learning**

We said previously in this report, and in our Lambeth and Southwark Review, that learners wanted early experiences of vocational learning, and that these experiences helped learners to see themselves as potential workers and young adults. They also provided success and motivation through real-life learning opportunities. The new Foundation Tier should help make these opportunities more accessible. Although *all* young people should have these experiences where they are appropriate, they are particularly important for potentially disaffected learners, and for learners who are otherwise at risk of 'dropping through the net'. The schemes described next show how some innovative providers are meeting the challenge through partnerships.

### **Nightingale School, Wandsworth: partnership for progression**

Nightingale is a school for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It has designed a raft of BTEC/City and Guilds accredited programmes to attract its learners, including painting and decorating, bricklaying, motor mechanics, catering and hospitality, sports and recreation, and music technology. Key skills are embedded across the curriculum. Partnerships with housing associations enable learners to practise their vocational skills in real work situations. Progression routes have been agreed with South Thames College which has guaranteed places on NVQ courses and apprenticeships for successful learners. The school is well-supported by stakeholders, including Wandsworth local authority.

### **Cotelands Pupil Referral Unit: successful transition for vulnerable learners**

Cotelands PRU shares a site with John Ruskin Sixth Form College. The Unit works with very vulnerable learners, including school refusers, teenage parents, learners with emotional and social difficulties, and other young people 'at risk'. There is a nursery on site, and help for teenage mothers is provided by the teenage maternity team. A year 12 teacher co-ordinates transition arrangements. Former pupils act as mentors to support young people as they move into college. As a result of the effective planning and support, retention is high, and learners succeed in their college courses.

### **Barnet Remotivation Programme: engaging young people through vocational learning**

The programme, run and funded by Barnet schools and agencies, is aimed at disaffected or excluded young people, most of whom are under School Action Plus or School Action. Colleges and training providers work together to deliver fifteen-week courses in carpentry, construction, bricklaying, media, dance, sports, technical theatre, and so on. Learners are supported by a counsellor and behaviour specialist. Vocational support assistants are trained to work with young people with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. A specialist Connexions Adviser places learners in work or further training. Last year, 95% of year 10 students and 60% of year 11 students achieved positive outcomes, proving that early intervention works.

The success of schemes like these is encapsulated in the words of Barnet learners who said:

‘I was treated like an adult’  
‘It was easier to work and behave’  
‘I want to be in college more often’  
‘I like my work placement’

So far in this part of the report, we have argued that effective transition depends on coherent policies, access to the right advice and guidance, consistent Protocols which describe the responsibilities of each agency and most importantly, on the active involvement of the learner. We have said also that experience of vocational learning not only provides practical activities which best suit many learners, but also begins the journey whereby young people see themselves as capable of holding a job. We look next at some of the issues surrounding the transition of young people with the most complex disabilities, some of whom may work eventually in social enterprises or other supported employment, others of whom may progress to more independent living.

### **Transition for young people with complex disabilities**

Schools told us that there was not sufficient college link provision or work-based learning ‘tasters’ for pupils with complex disabilities, including learners with complex Autistic Spectrum Disorders. These learners have very specialised requirements, including alternative modes of communication, and local colleges are not always able to provide what is needed. One school transition mentor said ‘No-one will think outside the box in the college’. Schools are concerned that there is not enough local choices for the growing number of school-leavers with complex disabilities. Some schools want to expand their 16+ provision, partly because of the lack of local choice, coupled with difficulties in securing funding for residential college placements. Priory School in Croydon, and Linden Lodge School are amongst those keen to extend their provision.

Forward-thinking schools wish to develop as ‘one stop shop’ resource centres, similar to those being developed by the colleges described in the next section of the report.

As well as delivering health and social services, and education on the same site, some schools are aiming to provide more choice for learners with complex needs through co-location with a ‘mainstream’ school. A new sixth form college in Haringey will have a large resource provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and careful attention is being paid to transition issues for young people who are non-verbal, non-ambulant, and who require assistance with all their personal care.

As well as the patchy availability of appropriate link provision for learners with complex needs, schools told us that colleges did not always have the right Pre-Entry provision for some of these learners. Colleges told us it was growing more difficult to secure funding for Pre-Entry programmes, making it more difficult to provide local opportunities for these learners. If LSC wishes there to be more local, and therefore less expensive,

provision, then it makes no sense for there to be unnecessary barriers to funding. Of course, a college has to demonstrate it has the right expertise, the right curriculum, and the right partnerships before funding can be agreed. As Lambeth College, and other innovative London colleges, are finding, successful provision for learners with the most profound and complex disabilities takes rigorous strategic thought and planning, investment by health and social services, and vigorous, committed leadership. Orchard Hill specialist college is developing local 'hubs' which will bring its expertise to more of these learners.

Learners with complex needs include those with sensory disabilities who have additional learning difficulties or mental health difficulties. Special schools, like specialist colleges, report growing numbers of such young people. These learners require careful support through transition if they are to remain in their after-school provision; for example, some deaf young people drop out of college in their first year, not primarily because of their deafness, but because of their mental health difficulties. Blanche Neville School works well with Enfield College which has a deaf communication team. The team visits the school to meet and assess learners, and to identify their support requirements well in advance. The school and college work together to design and deliver learners' individual transition programmes. Both partners agree that the key to effective link provision is to have named people responsible for information sharing and planning. The school praises its Connexions Adviser who is a specialist in working with young deaf people.

### **Transition to work-based learning**

Although a whole section of this report looks at work-based learning, some points are worth making here. These include:

- most transition is viewed as transition to college
- work-based learning is not seen as an option for most learners
- too much vocational learning on link programmes or in schools takes place in classrooms, and not in real-life situations

Schools told us there was not enough work-based learning at the right levels for their learners. We know from our first quantitative report that too many learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not in any provision. Experience indicates that many of these learners will have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. These learners flourish in work-based learning, with the right support. Instead of being seen, as it too often is, as a second choice for a few, work-based learning should be a realistic option for a wider range of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A summary follows of the key points from this section on transition.

### **Key issues concerning transition**

- i) Local authorities and Children's Trusts need coherent 14-19 policies for the full range of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including policies about school-leaving ages
- ii) Connexions Personal Advisers require training to work with these learners
- iii) Each borough to establish/strengthen its Transition Planning Group; LSC to support this work
- iv) A London Transition Protocol for young people and adults to be developed, based on existing work and good practice
- v) Early experiences of vocational learning should be available for all learners who can benefit from them, including learners at Pre-Entry Level
- vi) There needs to be more local college and work-based learning opportunities and partnerships for learners with complex needs
- vii) Work-based learning should be seen as a first choice by more learners
- viii) More specialist work-based learning provision is needed

In the next section, we look at issues and examples of innovation in further education colleges, including work with offenders.

## **Provision in colleges**

### **Introduction**

London is fortunate in the quality of its college provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, in the skills and commitment of practitioners, and in the well-informed leadership demonstrated by Principals and senior staff. There is much creative, innovative, and diverse provision built up over the years by some of the most experienced practitioners and managers in the country. The majority of practitioners wish to evolve their provision so that learners experience better life chances.

Often in the Review, we found practitioners 'ahead of the game'; they knew what needed to be done, and had the expertise to do it. However, they felt hampered by funding mechanisms, qualification requirements, and lack of options for their leavers. We recommend that the new London Strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities builds on the work and ideas of the very best practitioners and managers, and that the implementation of the strategy is driven by providers themselves. Colleges will be key amongst these providers, but we have found the same desire to innovate and move forward amongst other kinds of providers and their partners in voluntary organisations and other services. In this part of the report, we set out the issues described to us in our interviews and visits with college staff. We then explain the activities of the Lambeth and Southwark Review Implementation projects, designed as test-beds for elements of the London Strategy. We draw some of the messages arising from this important work, and say something about Centres of Excellence. We end the section by considering offenders with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Insufficient focus on employability**

Reflective, confident practitioners told us they could do more to develop learners' employability skills. Skilled staff recognised that sometimes the focus had become centred on the *process* in which the learner was involved, rather than on the *outcome* that learning should help achieve. Teachers talked about 'front-loading' learners' programmes, that is, thinking first about where a learner was likely to move onto, and then making sure he or she acquired the knowledge, skills and understanding they needed to get them there, keep them there, and enable them to flourish.

Staff and learners knew there was sometimes little correlation between possible jobs and present vocational courses. For example, learners on a particular business and administration course were not likely to secure work in those areas; or learners on the second year of their Performing Arts course, were unlikely to move into related employment.

## **Greater realism**

There are hard issues here for practitioners, and for learners. No-one wishes to cut off chances for learners, or limit the breadth of their learning experiences. However, further education is not school, and it has a different purpose from school where there is rightly emphasis on breadth of experience. The best practitioners told us that there needed to be a sharper, and harder, realism about young people's lives, so that college was real preparation for real-life, including work, rather than as many learners saw it, a 'continuous course'.

## **Using destinations data**

Achieving greater realism about learning programmes depends partly on knowing where learners have gone after college. We found that information about learners' destinations was not always collected and used systematically, including the destinations of learners who are moving from integrated provision. Where colleges had used data well, for example, at Lewisham College, staff knew to which employment areas learners were moving, and could make sure they offered courses in these areas. Southwark College is amongst other colleges thinking hard about their vocational offer in the light of a new focus on destinations and job market data. Elsewhere, City and Islington College is rethinking its vocational provision for these learners, and has established a new post of quality manager for this particular area in order to assist the process.

## **Delivering individual programmes, not courses**

Practitioners felt hamstrung by the perceived need to deliver courses, rather than individual learning programmes. In this respect, they had less flexibility than staff in specialist colleges where funding and contractual requirements support the delivery of specific individual learning programmes for named learners. Staff were as creative as they could be, mainly by entering into collaborative arrangements which enabled learners to experience some individualised elements of learning programmes. Some of the most far-sighted staff, for example, at Lambeth College, planned to move almost entirely to the delivery of individual programmes, using the principles of Person Centred Planning to support the process. This is fundamental change at its most challenging, and staff were allowing some three years for the work.

## **Inflexibility**

We have heard already how school staff and others sometimes perceive colleges as inflexible in what they can offer and how they can do it. The emphasis on delivering courses, rather than on individual learning programmes is one aspect. Another is the 'all college, and nothing but college' experienced by some learners. Of course, the 'sausage machine' we described earlier in the report is *not* the fault of colleges; inflexibility is built into the system through funding mechanisms, artificial walls between

different kinds of providers, and so on. It is difficult for learners to take what they really need from across the whole range of learning opportunities and resources. We describe later in this section how some groups of providers and partners are working to achieve greater flexibility.

### **Too few options after college**

Learners often spend too long in college, moving through all the different levels of a vocational course, or moving from one vocational area to another, or moving from vocational to adult provision. Staff say there are too few choices available to learners. There are not enough varieties of supported employment opportunities or straightforward jobs, not enough work-based learning options, and not enough choice for adults. Learners may spend three or more years pursuing vocational courses, and then be unemployed. Adult learners may stay in college for ten or more years, with no expected outcome, and the intention of 'doing another course'.

The lack of opportunities in the outside world is not the fault of colleges. However, innovative practitioners are doing more to influence the destinations of their learners by entering into partnerships with voluntary organisations, and by working strategically with employers. We describe some of these activities later. Providers cannot change the world on their own, but they are working 'with the grain' of government policy, and LSC's own agenda described in *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, when they contribute to reshaping and broadening the opportunities open to their leavers.

### **Learning for independence**

It is worth saying something briefly here about the consequences for pedagogy of the employability and independence agenda. Practitioners told us that further education should not 'feel like school'; it should be supportive, but it should be challenging. We know, from our discussions with learners, that college was seen too often as 'like school' in its demands on the learner. The best further education teachers raised the bar for learners, with high expectations that they would manage their own work as much as possible, ask for help without prompting, work collaboratively with their peers, listen to each other, and complete tasks – all pre-requisites for employability, and for flourishing adult life.

As well as rethinking their pedagogy to provide more challenge to learners, some London colleges are also reviewing their strategies for learning support. They want learning support to be deployed flexibly as and when it is really needed, and to be focused on helping the learner become as independent as possible. This means that learning support plans should include targets for increased independence.

We turn now to the innovative activities underway as part of implementation of the Lambeth and Southwark Review. There is, of course, other innovation in the region, particularly in the ten or so development projects funded directly by LSC as part of encouraging greater capacity. We concentrate on the Lambeth and Southwark work

because it was initiated in order to test approaches and ideas that would help inform the larger London Review.

### **The Lambeth and Southwark Review**

In 2006, LSC commissioned a Review of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Lambeth and Southwark. The Review was planned as a pre-cursor to the London Review, and its outcomes have contributed to this report.

There are four main elements to the Review. They are:

- Improving employability
- Developing local capacity: co-location, and sensory centre
- Opening-up options for adult learners
- Increasing flexibility

Each is now described in turn.

#### **Improving employability**

- Lambeth and Southwark Colleges are reviewing their vocational offers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; realigning offers with realistic local employment opportunities
- Lambeth College is leading development of 'can-do' website for employers, showcasing learners' abilities, to be used across both boroughs
- Coherent placement services project is aimed at developing a commissioning approach whereby services work collaboratively, and to targets agreed with the colleges
- Social enterprises are being developed by both colleges with voluntary organisations, MacIntyre and Camden Society

#### **Developing local capacity: co-location**

- Nash College and Lambeth College: first-ever co-location between specialist college and further education college
- Nash College, part of Shaftesbury Society, for learners with the most profound and complex disabilities; college needs to move from existing site
- Lambeth College, Grade 1 for its learning difficulties and disabilities provision; high levels of expertise and commitment
- Shared vision and values
- Support from governors and Shaftesbury Society
- Project director is overseeing development, site-search, finances, etc
- Working groups on governance, finance, curriculum
- LSC's active support vital to success
- Orchard Hill specialist college to establish a local 'hub' as part of the initiative

### **Developing local capacity: sensory centre**

- Southwark College is working with RNIB, RNID, and Royal School and College for the Deaf, to develop a new sensory centre
- The centre will provide assessments, technical aids, advice, training, and employment services
- Southwark College has well-established provision for learners with sensory difficulties
- RNIB is already working in partnership with other colleges across the country – this will be a 'first' in London

### **Opening-up options for adult learners**

- Both lead colleges are developing better differentiated pathways for adults, including supported employment/social enterprises; working with social services and voluntary organisations
- Leisure and well-being provision still available for learners for whom any kind of work is not feasible
- Both colleges reviewing length of time learners have spent in provision; moving learners on to next stage
- Southwark College moving provision to more inclusive campus

### **Increasing flexibility**

- Colleges working with specialist colleges, work-based learning providers to design and deliver flexible individual learning programmes
- Learners to experience 3 or 4 months in college, then residential provision to improve independence skills, then work-based learning, then back to college to plan next steps
- Cohort of learners identified to start September '07
- Providers working with LSC to design flexible funding mechanism

## **Comprehensive actions**

The Lambeth and Southwark work demonstrates the complexity and comprehensiveness of the actions required to tackle the challenges described in this report. It is not enough to change one aspect of provision. For example, it is not enough just to review the length of time adults spent in college, without doing something about the opportunities for them when they leave. It is not enough to be more employment-focused in college without doing something to change employment prospects after college, and so on. If any one aspect of provision or thinking is

changed, then the unchanged aspects act to block any real impact. We do not think complexity is the preserve of work with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We see any successful developmental improvement as requiring inter-dependent complex actions. The Lambeth and Southwark work, with its inter-dependent parts, serves to remind us that systemic change is what works best. We recommend that there is wider dissemination of the messages arising from the Lambeth and Southwark implementation initiatives, to encourage and support other partnerships.

### **Other initiatives**

As part of the London Review, two other initiatives were begun. These are in very early stages, but it is useful here to touch on them because they indicate how partnerships between the right partners can help develop greater local capacity. Lewisham College and Treloars, a specialist college for learners with complex physical disabilities, are considering a joint proposal to LSC for the development of a Centre for Excellence for employability and employment for learners with physical disabilities. Remploy, along with Treloars, would provide employment placement services, Treloars would provide specialist expertise and support, and Lewisham College would provide the vocational and academic opportunities. The proposal builds on an existing partnership between the providers, both of which are Beacon Colleges.

A second initiative in very early stages is between City and Islington College and Ruskin Mill College, a specialist college for learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and mental health or other difficulties which make them particularly vulnerable. The partnership would focus on the learning opportunities provided by an inner-city farm and café, together with the performing arts.

Another initiative, begun before the Review, is underway between Orchard Hill College, a specialist college, Carshalton College, and Hawk Training, focusing on a high-street shop. Orchard Hill is particularly pro-active in seeking out partnerships which enable it to share its expertise with learners with severe and complex disabilities.

### **Shared vision and leadership**

None of these initiatives could flourish without vision and leadership. Each one is supported fully by well-informed, vigorous Principals, Chief Executives, and senior staff in partner organisations. The partners share a vision of what is possible for learners, and are willing to take risks and to 'think outside the box' to get there. It goes without saying, that LSC's understanding and support are vital for the success of each initiative.

### **Centres of Excellence**

As part of the Review, we have given thought to those characteristics of the initiatives which appear applicable to Centres of Excellence. There is no suggestion here that only colleges are fitted to lead the development of such centres. In our view, work-based learning providers such as Roots and Shoots and the Harington Project, or adult

and community learning providers such as those in Richmond, are equally well-placed to act as Centres. However, because our thinking has been informed by the Lambeth and Southwark initiatives, we share it here.

### **Suggested criteria for Centres of Excellence**

- i) Demonstrable, qualifiable need for existing/new provision
- ii) Measurable outcomes for learners, including open/supported employment, social enterprises, greater independence
- iii) The right partners with the right expertise for the learners, including health/social services where appropriate, voluntary organisations, employment services, employers, etc
- iv) Shared vision and values concerning learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- v) Evidence of good quality provision, either Grade 1 or 'high end' Grade 2 for learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision in inspection, together with other nationally recognised acknowledgement, eg Beacon Status
- vi) Proven capacity to innovate and develop new flexible approaches to designing and delivering provision
- vii) Well-thought through strategies for involving learners in planning the Centre of Excellence
- viii) Range of vocational/academic programmes at the right levels for target learners
- ix) Employment/transition services as part of the Centre
- x) Assessments, advice, support and training services as part of the Centre

Our thinking is that Centres of Excellence should be more than just deliverers of provision. The work underway in Lambeth and Southwark, and elsewhere in London, indicates that support services, assessments, advice, training, and very importantly employment and transition services, are required as much as provision itself. A Centre of Excellence should be a focus for a range of services, including employment placements and transition planning. There is much to be learned from the development of new Children's Centres which act as a 'one-stop' shop based on an holistic approach to the learner and the principles of Every Child Matters. These principles and those underpinning Person-Centred Planning, as well as the approaches developed through inclusive learning, offer a robust framework for the development of Centres of Excellence.

Next in this section, we look briefly at the learning needs of offenders.

## **Offender learning**

Offenders are some of the most vulnerable people in our society. National figures suggest that nearly 70% of all offenders have some form of learning difficulty or disability, mental health difficulty or personality disorders. Research undertaken in 2005 by the Youth Justice Board showed that 31% of young offenders alone had mental health difficulties, 25% had learning difficulties, and most others had emotional and social difficulties. Although LSC is developing a learning strategy for offenders, we include them in the Review to encourage 'joined-up strategy' by LSC, and as a reminder that these learners should be considered also as part of London's strategy for learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Information about offenders**

Currently there is little reliable, objective information about the number of offenders in London prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs) who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This reflects the situation nationally. Responsibility for identifying and supporting these offenders rests with individual establishments and as a consequence the quality of the service they receive depends on the interest and ability of staff within each establishment. Estimates of the number of offenders with learning difficulties and/or disabilities vary widely and attempts to identify these offenders and assess their needs is a complex process, especially in the current context of overcrowding and its consequences such as the frequent transfer of offenders from one establishment to another. However, there is general agreement that significant numbers of offenders have learning difficulties of one kind or another. For example, information from one of the three OLASS areas in London indicates that at least 40% of offenders have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, though this is likely to be an underestimation. Many of these offenders have learning difficulties in relation to literacy and numeracy and equally high numbers have a personality disorder or a mental illness. Some offenders have a combination of all of these. The LSC has commissioned a project to identify and assess the needs of offenders entering prisons and YOIs across London. Initial findings from this project are expected in April 2007.

## **Developing learning opportunities for offenders**

Staff involved in prison education told us that offenders' learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not always identified, and there needed to be specialist teachers in each prison and YOI who have expertise in working with learners with these difficulties, and who can act as points of reference and advisers for other staff. Curriculum research and development was needed to establish appropriate programmes for the growing number of offenders with personality disorders. Partnerships with other agencies with specialist expertise need to be developed or extended in order to bring in the expert help that learners often required, and to extend learning opportunities for them. Other Transition Centres, such as that described below, should be planned, and links needed to be strengthened between learners' programmes and likely employment prospects.

## Learning initiatives

Dyslexia Action is actively involved in identifying and screening offenders who have dyslexia. The London Centre has produced a report evaluating the screening of 100 offenders in HMP Brixton and is planning to work in partnership with Kensington and Chelsea College to provide training for staff who work with offenders in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and HMP Latchmere. Several voluntary organisations such as the Leonard Cheshire Foundation, Mencap with its No-one Knows programme and the Shannon Trust with its Toe by Toe programme, are all actively involved in supporting offenders who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These programmes, some of which use fellow offenders as tutors, have been shown to have good success rates and the added benefit of raising the self-esteem of the offenders who act as tutors.

One college told us about its work in helping offenders move on after their sentences.

### **Transition Centre, Park Royal Estate**

Kensington and Chelsea College holds the contract for the learning and skills provision at three London prisons (Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs and Latchmere House) and one YOI (Feltham). In order to help offenders resettle in the community at the end of their sentences, the college is planning to develop a 'transition centre' on the Park Royal Estate. The centre will provide vocational training (Level 1 and above) in construction and media. The proposed centre has been welcomed by the Park Royal Partnerships whose Employment Division brokers jobs for 300 employers on the Estate and whose market intelligence supports the training sectors selected. It is hoped that the ex-offenders will be able to progress to jobs on the estate once they have successfully completed their training.

The Centre will cater for ex-offenders who have been released from prison in London, those who are returning to London after serving prison sentences elsewhere in the country and for offenders who have been released on temporary licence. There are also plans to make provision available on separate days for 14-19 year old learners from local schools. Schools in Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal Borough are interested in sending pupils to the centre for the Specialised Diploma Gateway and for other vocational training that they will develop in partnership with Kensington and Chelsea College.

The Centre has the potential to make a significant contribution to the resettlement of offenders and to keeping young people who are at risk of offending out of custody.

Finally, we summarise the issues discussed in this section about provision in colleges.

### **Key issues concerning provision in colleges**

- i) Some excellent innovative provision, creative practitioners, and well-informed, committed Principals and senior managers
- ii) Practitioners recognise the need for change, and are often 'ahead of the game'
- iii) There is insufficient focus on employability
- iv) There needs to be greater realism about learners' futures, and better use of destinations data and local job market information
- v) Colleges need to deliver flexible individual programmes, not courses
- vi) There are too few options after college
- vii) Learning and learning support in colleges need to promote independence
- viii) Messages from the Lambeth and Southwark initiatives should be more widely disseminated
- ix) Centres of Excellence should be resource centres, not just providers; suggested criteria for their approval arise from the Lambeth and Southwark initiatives
- x) There needs to be joined-up strategy for offenders with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

We look next at learners in work-based provision.

## **Work-based learning**

### **Introduction**

At its best, work-based learning (WBL) provides an effective alternative route to employability and employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and provides a stimulating learning environment that other providers find difficult to replicate. In particular, many learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and with moderate learning difficulties, respond positively to their experience of WBL. We found in our statistical analysis, and were told by practitioners, that there was not enough WBL provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in London, with only 4,376 identified as such in the ILR database. In WBL, the issues of effectiveness, funding, participation and progression are inter-linked, and serve to include or to exclude learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In this section of the report, we look at how these issues affects these learners.

There are very few WBL providers running programmes specifically for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We visited two as part of the fieldwork for the Review, but they are very much exceptions. Most WBL providers run standard foundation programmes at Level 1 such as Entry to Employment (E2E) and Modern Apprenticeships (MA) at Level 2, with a small minority of learners having a specifically identified learning difficulty and/or disability. Connexions also report that more WBL at Entry Level is required in London. Some providers are large and operate nationally, but most in London are small local providers without the resources to provide adequate support for learners with complex or multiple difficulties. In spite of this, most providers running E2E programmes have some learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We look first at issues concerning the effectiveness of WBL for these young people.

### **Effectiveness: what is a successful outcome for learners on foundation programmes?**

At foundation level, some WBL providers told us they take the most disadvantaged challenging learners and help them to make progress towards employability. A key issue is the LSC definition of successful outcomes from Foundation Level programmes. For example, early leavers from E2E into work are not recognised as successful outcomes by the LSC. This distorts occupancy and progression rates so that they appear to be worse than they really are.

### **Length of stay for Entry Level learners on E2E**

The main measure of success for the LSC is progression to a Level 2 programme. Many entrants to E2E have skills at Entry Level, and providers need to move learners from Entry Level to Level 1, and near to Level 2 for acceptance to a Modern Apprenticeship. So, another key issue is the average length of stay on E2E programmes. Across London, this is around 22 weeks. As one WBL manager said: 'If

it takes a learner 17 years to reach Entry Level, it is not surprising that it is very difficult to get that learner to Level 1 in 22 weeks'. Some providers have developed strategies to extend length of stay:

**The Harington Scheme Ltd: increased length of stay to help learners succeed**

There are about 45 learners each year on E2E. Unusually, all of the learners have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as Harington was established for this purpose. The vocational focus is horticulture. The scheme manager has negotiated an average length of stay on the E2E programme of 59 weeks compared with the average length of stay of 22 weeks in London. As a result of the extended duration, learners with multiple difficulties are able to make very good progress. Learners develop very good vocational, personal and social skills. Progression rates into employment, further education and training are particularly good given the learners' significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Another provider visited during our fieldwork, had a below average length of stay and yet had very good outcomes achieved by unusually effective use of the review process. Around 35% of the learners on this programme were identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities:

**Chelmer Training Ltd: very effective monitoring, reviews, recording of progress to achieve high progression rates**

There are about 45 learners this year on E2E. Learners receive a detailed and personal initial assessment that is the basis for a learning plan with measurable targets. Individual reviews are used by tutors to monitor progress and re-set targets. Tutors make good use of the process of Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) to involve the learners in their programmes. Learners engage with this process and try hard to be successful. Progression rates are very good, having risen in the past four years from 26% to 70%. Retention is very high at 90% and the achievement rate for external qualifications is also high at 73%. All of this is achieved with an average length of stay of 15 weeks, lower than the average for London.

The work of both these specialist providers may be worth exploring further by the LSC as potential Centres of Excellence.

## High levels of support needed by some learners to help them to succeed

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can and do succeed in WBL. Depending on the nature of their learning needs, some learners may require a high level of support to help them to make good progress. Most providers were aware of, and sensitive to, these learning needs and told us they provided a wide range of support. This may include: one-to-one help from tutors; specific support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL; support for dyslexia; access to a qualified counsellor; and sometimes help with other issues such as anger management. Providers told us that the cost of this support must be met without any additional funding, and that there is a disincentive to recruit a high proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

One small provider gives very effective personal support for learners:

### **Choices 4 All West London: very effective personal support for learners**

Choices is a small provider with 15 LSC-funded learners on an E2E programme, in addition to a few other learners. Choices told us it did not receive any exceptional support funding but provides very effective support for learners, all of whom have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The vocational focus is on hospitality, catering and office practice. Learners receive travel training to increase their self-confidence, and they have weekly access, if needed, to a counsellor. Links with local specialist services are well-used, for example to help with emotional and physical issues. Learners choose an advocate from a member of the teaching staff with whom to discuss daily concerns. Some learners have been referred to Choices because other providers say they have been unable to cope with them. Following an initial behavioural assessment, tutors use individual strategies to help learners to progress and to develop appropriate behaviour.

## The process of assessing additional learning needs

The accurate assessment of learners' specific learning needs is fundamental to planning an individual learning programme with appropriate targets. The quality of this assessment is variable across WBL providers. Some providers told us that they carry out a basic set of tests designed to identify a level of key skills, a learning styles assessment and little else. Other providers said they use a wide range of diagnostic tools to make more comprehensive assessment of learners' needs. The Harington Scheme undertakes extensive assessment during the induction period:

### **The Harington Scheme Ltd: effective assessment of learners' needs**

The unusual six-week induction period includes a work taster week in horticulture, and the induction is used effectively in planning the learning programme. A range of assessments is carried out during the induction. These include risk assessments, a vocational profile, and a literacy and numeracy diagnostic assessment. Learners have an interview with a life coach, and further assessments in personal and social skills. Staff also make their own thorough assessments of progress in 'soft skills' such as workplace behaviour, working with others, attendance and time-keeping, and health and safety. These assessments are carried out on entry to the programme and then during the programme. Staff told us that learners respond well to this close monitoring of progress.

At Choices 4 All, learners also take part in thorough assessments:

### **Choices 4 All: thorough assessments**

Learners have an interview with a tutor and the opportunity to try tasters before they start the programme. On entry, they have a psychological assessment, a key skills initial assessment, an ESOL diagnostic assessment (if appropriate), a learning styles assessment and dyslexia screening. Unusually, learners also undergo a physical assessment of their motor skills. The range of assessments is completed by a behavioural assessment after which an individual plan is agreed with behavioural targets, in addition to the learning plan.

We look next at issues of participation and local capacity in work-based learning.

### **Participation and local capacity**

Our Review has demonstrated the need for more work-based learning at Pre-Entry Level, Entry and Level 1. The number of learners with skills at these levels may have been consistently underestimated by the LSC. As the Leitch Report says, 'More than one in six young people leave school unable to read, write and add up properly'. An attempt to address this is the Foundation Learning Tier Trial which is running in London this year, funded by the LSC, aimed at approved providers who have a majority of learners at Entry Level. One provider included in our fieldwork, Choices 4 All, has been included in this trial.

Most providers told us that they have an almost open-entry policy on recruitment to E2E. They turn away only those potential learners with custodial sentences involving

harm to people, or with court appearances pending. A few providers, conscious of the LSC targets for progressing from E2E, have a more selective approach to recruitment. A manager of an E2E programme in East London, with very few learners identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, told us that 'Connexions do not refer Entry Level students for our hospitality and tourism programmes, so we don't have learners with skills below Level 1; it is not a problem for us'.

### **Poor information available about WBL opportunities**

A key issue described already in this report, is the inadequate information available to school leavers and others seeking training opportunities. Most referral to E2E across London is through the Connexions Service, but practitioners and others consider there to be little consistency of approach to referrals for potential learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Providers say that Connexions Advisers are not always fully informed about the wide range of WBL provision in their areas. Some recruitment is by word of mouth, but schools tend to provide less information about WBL than about other opportunities, in particular about colleges.

### **Conflicting programmes and targets**

Connexions Advisers are said by providers to raise the option for young people to enter E2E only after all other options have been explored. It is seen as a 'second-best' choice. The combination of this and the introduction of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) have severely affected numbers of young people entering E2E. E2E providers feel that it is unreasonable to expect young people to enrol onto an E2E programme of 16 to 30 hours per week without a guarantee of accessing EMA, when they can enrol onto the current Activity Agreements Pilot Scheme and automatically receive a payment. We found that the issue of conflicting programmes and targets aimed at the same group of young people impacts adversely on E2E providers. The LSC target for numbers of learners on E2E across London this year has not been met. Greater capacity to work with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities would mean more of these learners could be recruited, and more targets met.

### **Introduction of the Education Maintenance Allowance**

Providers, Connexions Advisers and learners told us that the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), introduced in September 2006, has had a detrimental impact on the recruitment of young people, especially to E2E. It is means-tested and the maximum value is less than the training allowance that was in place previously. Some providers report a decrease of 30% to 40% in numbers on E2E this year, and EMA is stated as the main reason. Commissioning more foundation programme provision will not necessarily lead to an increase in the volume of training without a review of the EMA. A manager in East London told us that 'this year 36% of those referred to us for E2E attended for interview, but last year it was 68%'. Another manager said that only five of their 16 eligible learners are receiving any EMA. 'It has the biggest impact on the learners with the biggest problems'.

## **Insufficient qualified specialist staff**

Participants in the practitioner seminars told us that WBL staff did not have the same professional development opportunities as staff in other provision. In WBL provision, very few providers seek to 'specialise' in training for learners with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities. On the majority of programmes there is only a small proportion of these learners. Most providers said they did not have tutors with specialist qualifications or training for providing effective support for learners with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities. For large providers with a small number of these learners, the need for some staff to have specialist expertise is not usually recognised. In WBL, the approach is that all tutors are expected to teach their subjects and also to provide both academic and pastoral support for learners. In most instances, this does not include help for learners who have specific learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities. Some exceptions include the large voluntary organisations such as Rathbone or Barnardo's, where staff often have the right skills to work with the most challenging young people. The Harington Scheme offers an example of highly specialised support:

### **Harington Scheme Ltd: excellent use of qualified specialist support staff**

An unusual feature of this provision is that the learners have the opportunity to work with a life coach who is a qualified psychotherapist. This is very effective in addressing inappropriate behaviour, but also in supporting learners with significant personal issues. Qualified speech and occupational therapists are also available to help learners on an individual basis. Specialist support is available for learners with dyslexia and sensory impairment. A Connexions Adviser provides advice about training and employment opportunities. Employability skills are supported by vocational tutors through observation and feedback in the workplace. Other personal support, including help with housing and substance abuse, is provided through regular review sessions carried out by well-qualified staff. For example, one tutor has an MA in Education with a particular focus on learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Unusually for WBL, all of the tutors have teaching qualifications.

We look next at issues concerning employability, employment and progression.

## **Employability, employment and progression**

There is not enough focus on developing employability skills and progression into employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. WBL providers are uniquely placed to address this and to play an important role in contributing to the development of learners' skills that enable economic participation. By 2010, the LSC

will not fund providers to deliver work preparation programmes that do not focus on learning in the workplace, and the supported employment model.

### **Use of work experience and supported employment**

Although the main focus for WBL programmes is on the development of employability and occupational skills, managers told us that finding appropriate work placements in London is difficult. One of three core strands of E2E is vocational, and yet we were told that some programmes have no work experience for learners. Elsewhere, providers said this experience may be limited to a simulated work environment or brief workplace visits. Some occupational areas have specific issues about work placements. For example, there are age restrictions for working on building sites and rigorous screening for working with children that excludes some E2E learners. Where providers are successful in securing good work experience and/or supported employment the experience of the learners is greatly enhanced. We found the same insufficient focus on employability and difficulties in securing work experience and employment in our work with colleges.

Chelmer Training provided good work experience for its learners.

#### **Chelmer Training Ltd: good work experience opportunities**

Learners' programmes are well planned, and flexible timetabling ensures that learners have individual programmes. Learners told us they cover all three areas of E2E including the vocational strand. Learners work towards an in-house qualification in jobsearch and prepare well for going out on placement. They have clear targets to ensure that they carry out activities in preparation for their placement. Work placements are used effectively to motivate learners. Learners said they chose the occupational areas they are interested in. Chelmer manages work placements well and has targets for the number of learners in placements at any time. Workplace checks are recorded thoroughly. Tutors said learners respond well to assessment and feedback in the workplace. Good contact is maintained between employers, work-placement staff and tutors.

The Harington Scheme has set up its own supported employment scheme:

### **Harington Gardeners: supported employment**

Harington Gardeners is a subsidiary arm of the Harington Scheme established to provide supported employment opportunities for learners, all with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The assistant gardeners are offered paid employment and the opportunity to gain real work experience and further develop their gardening skills. This initiative offers a step towards employment for current and former learners who cannot go straight into work. The Harington Gardeners generate income which meets about half of the costs of the training centre. The gardeners told us they provide garden maintenance services in north London and, customers include many private households as well as local organisations, schools and estates. In addition to this supported employment scheme, Harington has a wide range of productive partnership work which helps to improve the learners' experience. Staff say that links with employers provide good-quality work placements which build learners' confidence and employability skills.

### **Insufficient inter-agency working**

Providers are good at making use of local services and agencies to enhance the experience of their learners and to provide extra support when needed. They considered themselves to be less effective at establishing a systematic approach to inter-agency working, particularly with regard to training and employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Too much depends on the contacts made by individual staff. Very few providers felt able, on their own, to offer these learners comprehensive advice about the full range of opportunities for their progression after leaving their current programme.

However, in South London, a group of work-based learning providers collaborate effectively. The South London Working Together to Employment Group has a membership that includes Connexions, Shaw Trust, Remploy, MENCAP Jobmatch, Bromley Autistic Trust, Bromley College, Disability Employment Advisors, British Legion Industries and Employment Services, Access to Employment. The aim of the group is to provide support to learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to assist their progression into employment. The group meets three times a year.

We look next at funding issues.

### **Funding issues**

The LSC is currently planning the introduction of a single system of additional learning support from August 2007. The main funding currently within WBL to provide extra support for learners is made through funding for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Additional Social Needs (ASN). These funding streams are available to support

learners on Modern Apprenticeships who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but these funds are not available to support learners on E2E programmes. The only additional funding for learners on E2E is Exceptional Learning Support (ELS). Very few providers in our Review appear to know about this funding. Only one of the two providers with 100% learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has accessed this funding. That manager reported that it was becoming more difficult, year on year, to obtain this funding. Other providers told us they either did not know about ELS or that they considered it too difficult to access to be worth the time and effort.

### **Availability of exceptional learning support funding**

Two of the providers visited during the Review had recruited only learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The ILR database showed a similar profile of identified needs of their learners; most had moderate learning difficulties and some had multiple difficulties and/or disabilities. This analysis is provided in our first Review report. Choices 4 All received no additional funding to support these learners. The Harington Scheme is successful in obtaining Exceptional Learning Support Funding to pay for some travel costs and, significantly, for one to one support for learners:

#### **The Harington Scheme Ltd: effective use of exceptional learning support funding**

The Scheme is successful in obtaining exceptional learning support funding and told us it uses it mainly to pay for additional support for learners. As a result of the high level of personal support, much of it being one to one, learners with multiple difficulties are able to make very good progress. The support is intensive and flexible, and covers behavioural and personal issues, in addition to help with employability skills. Staff said the extent of the individual support would not be possible without the additional funding. Learners develop very good vocational, personal and social skills. Progression rates into employment, further education and training are particularly good given the learners' significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **No incentive to identify accurately specific learning needs**

Our first Review report included analysis of WBL data. Almost all learners on E2E programmes have some kind of learning difficulty and/or disability but this is not reported accurately on the ILR database. There are two main reasons for this. One is that providers complete fields L15 and L16 without enough information about the learners and without enough understanding of the categories listed in these fields. The second reason is that there is a disincentive to identify learners as having additional learning needs without having access to additional funding to support these learners. There is not a consistently held view of the meaning of the categories. 'Moderate

learning difficulties', is often used by providers as a proxy for learners having literacy and numeracy needs. Not surprisingly, the largest proportion of learners, 37%, identified as having a specific learning need fall into the moderate learning difficulties category. We found the same confusion over categories in our other analysis of the ILR database described in our first Review report.

### **Underestimation of the numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

Learners are invited to declare their own learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As practitioners and learners told us, many learners prefer not to do so, except for dyslexia, and others are vague about the nature of their additional support needs. Learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and with mental health difficulties are particularly unwilling to declare. In most instances, because no additional support is available for learners on E2E, managers acknowledge that inputting to L15 and L16 is of little significance to them. One provider gives staff a checklist to go through with learners at interview, and this includes the full list of categories from L15 to L16, but this is unusual. Most providers say they rely on the learners' self-declared learning needs in addition to tutors' observations during the first two weeks of programmes. Connexions Advisers should contribute to the identification of additional support needs but providers say they do not always do so. Little or no information about learners' previous experience, attainment and support needs is received by providers. There is an underestimate of the numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in WBL, and too much misleading information about the nature of their learning difficulty and/or disability.

### **Lack of capital funding for WBL providers**

The lack of capital funding for WBL providers impacts adversely on the learning experience of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, there is no funding available for the purchase of specialist equipment or the adaptation of equipment or machinery except through ELS. Purpose-built accommodation and/or the adaptation of buildings to meet the needs of learners are not possible. The LSC is able to consider exceptional circumstances and one example of this was found during our fieldwork. Choices 4 All in West London have received a specific grant for ILT equipment and accommodation, but this is not generally available to providers. If accommodation is not suitable for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and equipment not adapted to their capacities, then even fewer of these learners will take places in WBL than do now. We found in our statistical work that very few learners with sensory difficulties, and very few learners with physical disabilities took part in London WBL.

### **Opportunities lost**

Our Review found that a great deal more needs to be done to include learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in WBL. At present, too many factors conspire actively to exclude them. WBL is not viewed as a realistic option or 'first choice' for the

majority of these learners, when all we know about how learners learn best tells us that real-life learning, geared to the adult world of work, can motivate many learners like no other learning experience. Despite the excellence of a few providers, we found a dispiriting record of lost opportunity for learners who could benefit the most from what properly resourced, equipped, and staffed WBL can offer. A summary of issues follows next.

### **Key issues concerning work-based learning provision**

- i) WBL viewed as 'second best' or not an option for most learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- ii) Not enough specialist WBL providers
- iii) Requirements for E2E exclude many learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- iv) Not enough funding for high levels of specialist support
- v) Few staff have specialist qualifications or access to specialist training
- vi) No incentive to identify accurately specific needs
- vii) Inaccurate data about learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on WBL programmes
- viii) Lack of capital funding for accommodation adaptations excludes learners with sensory and physical disabilities
- ix) Insufficient inter-agency working to support learners into employment
- x) Not enough focus on employability
- xi) Difficult to find work placements
- xii) A few excellent providers

We make specific recommendations in this report about WBL, but we emphasise here that LSC needs to work vigorously with existing providers, and to enter into contracts with new specialist providers, if London learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are going to enjoy anything like equality in their access to work-based learning.

We turn next to learners with profound and complex disabilities.

## **Learners with complex and profound learning difficulties and disabilities**

### **Introduction**

In our first Review report, we identified some 3000 learners with complex and profound learning difficulties and disabilities currently in London provision; a likely under-estimation because not all learners in adult and community learning will be included. We described the 500 or so learners with complex needs in specialist colleges, and the £23 million spent by LSC on funding these places in 2006/07. We described too, the growing numbers of children with complex and profound disabilities coming through schools, with 1% of all UK children projected to experience Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and as an indicator of complexity of future needs, we touched on the £27,000 average cost nationally of a residential specialist school placement. We cited research undertaken for South London LSC which anticipated, in the next five years, a 200% rise in Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the area, and a doubling of the numbers of children with communication difficulties.

### **Developing local capacity**

Essential elements of the Through Inclusion to Excellence agenda depend on local capacity to meet more complex needs. The intention is that learners with complex needs will choose local (and less expensive) provision rather than move away from home to study because local providers cannot meet their needs. LSC remains committed to funding places for those learners with rare, or hard to meet needs where it makes sense to cluster scarce resources in a specialist provider. Increasingly though, and informed by forthcoming guidance from DfES, Department of Health, and DWP, joint funding will be sought for such places.

The big question is whether there is sufficient local capacity in London, and if not, what needs to be done about it? In this report, we are defining capacity not just in terms of the number of available places, but also the professional capacity of providers to meet the learning and support requirements of learners with complex needs in high quality provision.

### **Essential partnerships**

A single provider acting on its own cannot meet the needs of these learners. Partnerships with parents and carers, other services, voluntary organisations, advocacy groups, local authorities, and others, are at the heart of the most effective responses. Partnerships need to be strategic, able to deliver joint funding where it is required, and operating within a shared quality assurance framework, as well as concerned with delivery.

## **Variety of models**

The most important litmus test for any model is the extent to which it delivers better life chances for the learner. There is no single preferred model of provision which can guarantee such benefits, and we see dangers in adopting a 'one size fits all' approach, regardless of the learners' needs and local circumstances. For example, co-location is an approach which is feasible in only a few situations. In the Nash/Lambeth Colleges co-location described earlier, the model works partly because Nash College has to move site, and Lambeth College is in the middle of a new-build programme. Co-location is an expensive model, certainly on the scale envisaged in Lambeth.

A less expensive, but just as effective an approach is the 'hub' outreach approach being developed by Orchard Hill College in South London, and by City and Islington College with Ruskin Mill College, and Lewisham College with Treloars. In this approach, the specialist provider 'exports' its expertise to share it with a partner with other strengths, for example, in vocational learning. Together, the partners increase not only the numbers, but also the quality and range of local provision.

Another approach is for an existing provider to decide it wishes to extend its provision, or to provide new opportunities for new groups of learners. The same principles apply: existing provision must inspire confidence, the right partners must be in place, and there must be a demonstrable need for the provision. We look now at what is happening for learners with the most complex needs in London.

## **No clear understanding of the unique role of further and adult education**

The unique role of further and adult education for learners with the most complex disabilities has not yet been properly defined. Much of what is on offer in London colleges and adult and community learning could take place equally well elsewhere, and learning may be more effective in other settings, for example, at home. Most colleges are not yet making firm partnerships with families, carers, residential home staff, or social services, which enable them to deliver individual learning plans across the whole of the learners' lives rather than just at college. The power of Person Centred Planning has not yet been realised. Practitioners told us about inconsistencies in funding, different inspection expectations, inappropriate focus on Skills for Life, and the acceptance or otherwise of non-accredited provision, all of which served to deplete their professional confidence in what was best for learners.

Uncertainty about the purpose of further and adult education for people with complex needs, inconsistent messages from LSC and the inspectorates, the considerable investment required in accommodation and equipment, work involved in forging new partnerships, and the specialist skills needed, all served to deter providers from offering provision for these learners.

## **Insufficient strategic planning to meet new needs**

Providers told us that more learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit Disorders, severe behavioural difficulties and disabilities and/or learning difficulties coupled with mental health difficulties, were seeking provision. Many providers expressed their concerns at their inability to provide an appropriate curriculum, or to cope with learners' behaviours. Even the most experienced staff said they needed additional specialist training to work productively with the learners coming to them.

Providers told us they wanted better strategic planning, and greater consistency about specialist college placements. They wanted to be able to plan three or four years ahead in order to meet the anticipated growth in learners with more complex needs. They wanted to know more about the numbers and needs of their potential learners, and to know which of these might be placed in specialist colleges, and which might seek local provision. Providers described their concerns to us:

### **Bromley College: increase in learners with more than one disability/difficulty**

Staff said, 'At Bromley College, there has been a noticeable increase in learners with autism, mental health difficulties, and severe and complex behavioural difficulties. Many students have more than one disability. We are concerned as national figures indicate the number of learners on the autistic spectrum will increase, and this is borne out by increased provision in local schools.'

### **Havering College: increase in learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders**

Staff said, 'There are more learners with complex needs coming into college. There has been an increase in learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. We are also finding that learners from mainstream schools coming on to our Entry Level provision require higher levels of support. Local borough information indicates ... there will be an increase in learners with more severe learning difficulties/ disabilities in 2008/09.'

### **Tower Hamlets College: increase in learners with challenging behaviours and more complex needs**

Staff said, 'There is a rising number of young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, including those with higher support needs, and the College is currently considering providing specialist provision for these learners. There is also a rise in numbers of learners presenting challenging behaviours, and more severe disabilities.'

Providers thought they would receive in future even more learners with complex needs, both because there were more of these learners coming through schools, and because they anticipated it would become less easy to secure residential placements. LSC needs to share information about future demand with providers, which told us that they did not always receive forecasts from boroughs. However, one manager pointed out that ‘even if we resolve the local difficulty (of securing information), many of our learners come from other boroughs’.

### **Differences between boroughs in specialist college placements**

In our first Review report, we described the differences between boroughs in the numbers of learners with complex needs placed in specialist colleges. We asked whether differences were down to policy, or to an accumulation of local circumstances, for example a local provider with particular expertise, long links with certain specialist colleges, or expectations that specialist colleges were where certain learners ‘went’.

We asked also about the impact on local provision of decisions for specialist placements. We have described earlier in this section the concerns of local providers who were not clear about the policies that lay behind placement decisions, and whether in future, they would be expected to make provision for the kind of learners who were currently placed elsewhere.

### **Uncertainties about funding**

Practitioners told us they were uncertain how to secure funding for learners with complex needs; they anticipated more jointly-funded provision, with health and social services expected to contribute. LSC is perceived to focus on accreditation as a requirement for funding, and providers are reluctant to place confidence in the RARPA process instead of accreditation, given what they see as LSC’s ‘silence’ on non-accredited achievement. They consider themselves caught, as Ofsted often states as a weakness that provision is too accreditation-driven.

As part of providers’ understandable attempts to secure funding and because Skills for Life are seen as a passport to funding, practitioners told us that more learners with complex needs were undertaking accreditation in Skills for Life that did not match their learning needs or long-term goals.

### **Not enough confident and skilled staff**

Many college managers and staff told us they have neither the skills nor the confidence to develop appropriate curriculum or strategies to promote learning for learners with complex disabilities. We should not be surprised about professional capacity when it is increasingly difficult for practitioners to access accredited specialist training. Time and again during our Review, practitioners told us they needed more training in order to work with learners with complex needs. LSC must heed what practitioners say, and work with its partners to stimulate the provision of more professional development

geared to staff working with the most complex needs. New local provision depends on staff with the right skills to deliver it.

Training should include Person Centred Planning, designing individual packages of provision, and the role of 'commissioners' who will broker services and support, an approach being piloted in Brent by Mencap and partners, as well as curriculum design and delivery, supported employment and social enterprise.

### **Insufficient local capacity**

Given all we have described in this section, it should be no surprise that there is insufficient local provision for learners with complex needs; the size of the specialist college budget alone is an indicator. Very few London colleges have provision for these learners. Managers told us, 'We are unable to meet the needs of learners with extremely low cognitive levels', and, 'We are unable to meet the needs of learners requiring regular physiotherapy or speech and language therapy; there appear to be barriers to accessing these services to support further education learners'. Too much of what is in place depends on the goodwill and creativity of the practitioners and their colleagues in nursing, psychology, psychiatry, and therapeutic services. Strategic planning between all the partners is urgently required.

### **Creative responses to challenges**

The best practitioners design their own creative responses to challenges in order to secure what their learners need. We highlight next some of the examples of innovation explored during our Review, and supported by LSC.

#### **Collaboration and appropriate curriculum design**

Havering College is currently working with the Adult Learning Disabilities team within Havering Social Services, which have sponsored a job coach for the ROSE (Realistic Opportunities for Supported Employment) programme. The College is working with them to modernise day-care provision, and staff currently teach a weekly Work Preparation session at one of the centres.

The College considered that the programme it offered to its students with the most severe learning difficulties did not meet all learners' needs as independent living skills and preparation for employment were not included in the course. For the 2007/07 academic year, the programme was redesigned to include subjects such as Everyday Skills, Travel Training and World of Work. However, the College is only able to supplement the funding to enable one group to attend College for five days. The College went ahead, aiming to reduce to four days in the second year, and with a third year for learners to attend work through the ROSE programme, where this was appropriate.

**Tower Hamlets College: flexibility in curriculum design to meet individual needs**

At Tower Hamlets College, there is a flexible approach to learners across the discrete provision. The learner is put at the centre of the process and the programmes tailored to meet their needs and interests. Adult learners have access to a modular curriculum which they have largely shaped. Younger learners have a strong tutorial system and opportunities for progression into mainstream provision. The College was one of the Learning for Living Pathfinders and piloted digital Person Centred Plans (PCPs). This work has now been extended into an internal action research project looking at ways of supporting learners to self-assess.

**Hammersmith, West London and Ealing College: provision for learners with Asperger's Syndrome**

Hammersmith, West London and Ealing College has a specialist centre to support learners with Asperger's Syndrome. The Gatehouse is an important resource because it offers a secure base for students with Asperger's Syndrome, and a chance for them to discover their full potential. One-to-one support is offered when students access mainstream courses. A developmental curriculum tailored specifically for their needs including Independence and Social Skills, one-to-one tutorials and study skills is built into students' timetables to fit around their mainstream course. Staff say, 'The main emphasis of this new provision is integration into college life. The provision we are offering will give individuals the chance to study the course of their choosing and allow them to be as socially integrated into college life as they wish'.

**Haringey Sixth Form Centre: new provision for learners with complex needs**

Haringey Sixth Form Centre is due to open September 2007. It is planning the curriculum for students at Pre-Entry, Entry and Level 1. The College is expecting 600 students in the first year, increasing to 1,200 in the second year. Students from year 11 at the three special schools in the borough are transferring to the Centre. The special schools are William C Harvey for students with severe and profound learning needs; students from Moselle with general and ASD needs, and students from The Vale School with additional needs associated with physical disabilities. There will be 50 students with Statements from the special schools, as well as a few more from mainstream schools in the borough. Staff from the special schools are moving with the students.

We end this section with a round-up of the issues affecting provision for learners with the most complex disabilities.

**Key issues concerning provision for learners with the most complex disabilities**

- i) Local capacity is about securing good quality provision, as well as increasing the number of places
- ii) There are a variety of partnership models to help develop local expertise, with examples under way
- iii) There is no shared understanding of the purposes of further and adult education for learners with complex needs
- iv) There is insufficient strategic planning to meet current and present needs
- v) Providers do not understand apparently different policies between boroughs over specialist college placements
- vi) There are uncertainties about funding and accreditation, and mixed messages from the inspectorates
- vii) There are not enough skilled and confident staff
- viii) There is insufficient local capacity
- ix) There are examples of local innovation

We look next at learners with mental health difficulties.

## **Learners with mental health difficulties**

### **Introduction**

One in four of us will experience some form of mental health difficulty during our lifetime. Mental health difficulties cost the nation some £10 billion a year in medical and support costs, social consequences, and lost employment.<sup>2</sup> Only 24% of people with long-term or recurrent mental health difficulties are in work. Some 70% of offenders have mental health difficulties or personality disorders. In our first Review report, we discussed the 3,000 learners with mental health difficulties currently in London provision, and indicated that this was very likely an underestimation of the real number. We pointed to the growing number of children with recognised mental health difficulties in the region. The Department of Health says that from 2002 to 2005, the number of children with mental health difficulties nationally has risen by 40%; London has experienced a similar rise.

### **The Disability Discrimination Act**

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act was amended in 2005 to include the redefinition of a mental health illness as a disability. Providers are required to make accommodation for learners with mental health difficulties. Of course, many go beyond that minimum requirement, and offer programmes and support specifically tailored to these learners.

### **LSC commitment**

In 2006, LSC published its 'Improving services for people with mental health difficulties', setting out its intentions toward these learners. LSC focuses on the collaboration required between Mental Health Trusts, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Prison and Probation Services, JobCentre Plus, and other key partners, in order to improve learning opportunities and to help people find and keep jobs.

### **NIACE/NIMHE initiative**

Key to the LSC's national strategy is its funding of a NIACE/National Institute of Mental Health in England initiative aimed at improving learning and employment opportunities. Some £400,00 a year has been provided for a network of eight specialist regional co-ordinators who run support activities for practitioners and partner agencies, assist with provider plans for mental health difficulties, support service-user groups so that learners' views and experience can contribute directly to the development of policy and provision, develop learning materials, and provide a regular newsletter. The NIACE/NIMHE network has some 1200 members nationally. In London, the experienced co-ordinator is based in LSC's own offices, and she reports that this provides valuable opportunities to offer expert advice to LSC staff, as well as to providers. NIACE and LSC will run their third Annual Mental Health Conference in summer 2007.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Mental Health: Britain's Greatest Social Problem*, Richard Layard, 2006.

## **Potential Centres of Excellence**

Barnet College has received LSC funding to develop itself as a possible Centre of Excellence for learners with mental health difficulties. A further ten colleges have received LSC funds to develop ideas which link the worklessness agenda, including learners with mental health difficulties, to the opportunities presented by the Olympic Games.

Other colleges and ACL providers undertake extensive work with learners with mental health difficulties, for example Lambeth College has long-established links with the Maudesley Hospital and Islington ACL services provide learning in mental health day centres. Most London colleges and ACL providers have some provision for these learners, though they remain under-represented in work-based learning.

Despite the very best efforts of providers, agencies such as NIACE, and LSC, our Review indicates that much more needs to be done if the learning and skills sector is to meet effectively the growing numbers of younger learners with mental health difficulties coming through schools, as well as to expand opportunities for those already in its provision. We look now at some of the issues shared with us by providers, other agencies, and people with mental health difficulties.

### **Not enough easy access to information and advice**

Learners with mental health difficulties and practitioners told us it was difficult to find out about provision. The very nature of a person's illness meant that they were unlikely to have the resources needed to find their way into a big college, or take the first steps into ACL classes, without strong support and plenty of accessible advice. Often, potential learners did not see the usual prospectuses and websites as 'being for them'. There was considerable support for the idea of a website of learning opportunities, designed specifically for and by people with mental health difficulties who understood what people wanted. Such a site could be linked to LSC's e-prospectus.

Practitioners said that Connexions Personal Advisers needed training in working with people with mental health difficulties. They were not always aware of the implications of a person's illness, including the kind of provision they could manage. For example, sometimes very able learners want gentle, non-academic steps back into learning because this is all they can manage at this point in their lives.

### **Self-disclosure does not work**

We said in our first Review report that self-disclosure of a person's disability or learning difficulty does not work well for learners with mental health difficulties, or for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is still too much social stigma attached to the idea of mental ill-health for learners to feel secure enough to disclose their difficulties without fearing they might be used to exclude them from provision. For younger learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, often the very nature of

their needs means they may not have the self-awareness and confidence to disclose them. Difficulties around self-disclosure mean that figures for current numbers of learners with these difficulties will be an underestimation.

Providers should look at how they ask learners about their difficulties. In other work undertaken by the Review team<sup>3</sup>, the ways in which providers asked for disclosure were shown to either encourage the sharing of information, or to act as a deterrent. Bald statements in enrolment materials, such as, 'Do you have a learning difficulty or disability?', without an explanation of why the information is required, or of the support that can be offered, can appear threatening to learners who may be anxious about a new venture. Learners need privacy and support for disclosure, and clear statements that questions are being asked so that assistance can be provided, not in order to 'filter' people out. NIACE is producing a leaflet for learners on the 'pros and cons' of self-disclosure.

### **Organisational capacity**

Experienced college counsellors told us that too often the emphasis within providers was on crisis intervention, rather than on developing a framework that would support learners and the staff working with them. As part of that framework, practitioners said they wanted professional supervision if they were tutoring learners with mental health difficulties. Education is one of the few services working with people with mental health difficulties which does not, *as a matter of course*, provide supervision for staff working closely with sometimes severely ill learners.

### **Practitioners do not have enough skills and confidence**

Staff felt they lacked the skills and expertise to work with learners with mental health difficulties. They were concerned by the growing numbers of young learners arriving with eating disorders, histories of self-harm, substance abuse, or other indicators of emotional, social, and mental health difficulties. Their experiences are echoed by those of staff in schools. An excellent recent report commissioned by NASUWT, and undertaken by Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust, provides a comprehensive survey of teachers' experiences of identifying and managing pupils with mental health difficulties.<sup>4</sup> The report, which should be required reading for all education policy-makers, includes amongst its findings, points which are particularly relevant to the learning and skills sector. These include:

- teachers cannot always distinguish between emotional and behavioural difficulties, and mental health difficulties
- inadequate support for pupils with these difficulties affects the well-being and performance of all pupils

---

<sup>3</sup> *Review of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities in Surrey*, Pat Hood, LSC, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> *Identification and management of pupils with mental health difficulties: A Study of UK Teachers' Experiences and Views*, NASUWT, 2006

- the impact of unmet need increases teachers' tasks, and diminishes their job satisfaction and well-being

In addition:

- schools received inadequate support from psychologists
- pupils needed earlier interventions
- teachers did not always have the skills to implement strategies that pupils needed
- teachers had no specific training on mental health

The report describes the kind of help pupils find easier to accept. They preferred school-based services, such as the school counsellor, rather than external mental health services. All these points could be made equally well about provision in colleges, work-based learning, and ACL provision.

### **Insufficient sharing of information**

Practitioners in our Review told us that they often did not receive accurate information about a learner's mental health difficulties. This could be true even when a young learner came straight from school, with recent assessments. Information was not shared between services, or between services and providers. There were issues of confidentiality to address, and better practice around self-disclosure could help ensure those who really needed to know about someone's illness in order to provide the right learning and support, had sufficient information.

### **Other barriers to participation**

Practitioners and learners told us about other barriers to their taking part in education and training. These included:

- learners have to retake their courses and examinations if they fall ill during their programme; there is no arrangement for 'credit transfer'
- learners have to pay fees again if they are too ill to continue a course, and then wish to restart the following year
- learners are not entitled to fee concessions, so cannot always afford to begin courses if they are accepted
- 'first steps into learning' provision may disappear
- Insufficient understanding of ethnicity and mental health issues

We look next at issues of employability and employment.

## **Employability and employment**

Some 40% of incapacity benefit claimants have mental health difficulties. MIND, the mental health charity, says that Government efforts to move people off benefit and into work will only succeed if employers' negative attitudes to people with mental health difficulties are tackled head-on. There needs to be more opportunities for people to develop employability skills and to move into employment. The initiatives we propose next are designed to encourage and engage employers. Two initiatives were proposed during our Review, which were supported strongly by providers and partners.

### **Exemplary Employers**

The first proposed initiative, called 'Exemplary Employers in London', involved recognition by LSC and its partners in mental health services of employers who took pro-active action to recruit and support employees with mental health difficulties. Colleges, work-based learning providers, ACL providers, and LSC itself, would take the lead, and annual awards would be given to those Exemplary Employers in London who meet certain criteria. Achievement of the awards would allow a London employer to use a logo or sign indicating, 'Exemplary Employer'. Practitioners were keen to involve the Lord Mayor of London in this idea.

### **Work Well**

A second initiative was proposed by the Programme Director for Wellbeing, Inclusion and Psychological Therapies at the London Development Centre. Again, the idea was well-received by practitioners. A number of Mental Health Trusts in London are beginning to brand themselves as 'positive about employing people with mental health difficulties'. When they develop their disability equality schemes, the Trusts are considering best practice in the recruitment of people with a history of mental illness. There is increasing recognition of the corporate social responsibility which could be exercised by the public sector, frequently the biggest employer in any borough, and the NHS in particular. Vacancies in the NHS include administrative and estates staff, as well as clinical positions. Some of these vacancies can be filled very well by individuals with a history of mental illness. Some of the newer clinical roles, such as Support Time and Recovery roles seem best filled by people with such backgrounds.

The proposed initiative, tentatively named Work Well, would involve employment partnerships between Mental Health Trusts, education and training providers, and employment services. The mental health trusts would provide placements for workless people identified by the employment services as having histories of mental ill-health. Whilst the person was in their placement, the education and training providers would provide the right skills to enable them to become fully competent. Once the placement and training are complete, the person can take up a substantive post, or move into other employment.

These initiatives are well-worth carrying forward as part of the London Strategy. However, we point again to the dispiriting picture of participation by people with mental health difficulties in work-based learning provision. More specialist providers, such as MIND, Richmond Fellowship, Rainer, and others are needed to encourage learners with mental health difficulties into work. Two London examples show what is possible:

#### **Bromley Horizon House: support into work**

The 'club-house' concept put into practice by Horizon House and Marks & Spencer and Gap in Bromley show what can be achieved when the right partners get together. Horizon House supports people in recovery from mental illness to provide transitional employment placements. Members of the 'club-house' receive support from care staff and other members, without affecting their benefits. If a person is ill, then either another member of the 'club', or a care worker takes their place. The 'club' provides supported transition into work, and a bridge between training providers and employers. The two employers are enthusiastic about the scheme.

#### **Harrow: Sunrise Volunteer Project**

In Harrow, people with mental health difficulties have trained at college to provide complementary therapies such as manicures, or Indian head massages, to patients in hospital. MIND and staff from the Central and North West London Mental Health Trust developed the Sunrise project with service-users. The idea is to extend the role of volunteers within the Harrow Mental Health Services. The volunteering experience is planned as a first step back into paid employment for the learners. Sadly, the project has lost its funding, and is now looking for other finances.

Adult and community learning providers are particularly active in the mental health field:

#### **Harrow ACL: flexible provision in the community**

Harrow ACL has effective links with MIND, and delivers provision in four-day centres for people with mental health difficulties, in partnership with social services. An estimated 400 learners use the centres each year. The service has learning centres based in community settings used by people with mental health difficulties. Provision has decreased as a result of a cut in funding.

### **Islington ACL: Education and Employment Project**

The Education and Employment Project delivers steps into education and training for people with mental health difficulties, through the ACL contract with City & Islington College. College tutors provide 'First Steps in Beauty' classes which include visits to the College's main sites to encourage progression into other courses. The service also runs short courses in healthy eating, and a Follow Your Dream 10-week course designed to develop learners' confidence.

### **Lewisham Community Education: Mindlift**

Lewisham Community Education began classes for people with mental health difficulties in 1998, and currently has 19 different classes running. Topics include 'coping with anxiety' and 'improving self-image'. A life-coach has been used to support learners. The service's Mindlift provision includes work with learners who have mental health difficulties and who are involved in the criminal justice system.

Other work focuses on members of the local Turkish community who have mental health difficulties – a need identified by a Turkish staff member. Classes in traditional Turkish crafts attract people of different ages, and act as first steps into education.

Further funding has been secured to fund work with black minority ethnic women, and a group for women of mixed heritage.

We finish these examples with the testimony of a specialist worker employed by Connexions to support young people with mental health difficulties in Islington. Her testimony is instructive because it shows how effective partnership, 'around the individual', and which *includes learning*, can change lives.

### **Islington Connexions: expert support and learning to change lives**

'I am employed by Connexions to support young people with mental health difficulties. These young people are involved with the CAMHS team and/or receiving home tuition from The Whittington Hospital. They may be receiving psychotherapy, seeing an outreach nurse, or be an in-patient at an adolescent psychiatric unit. There are two people I want to tell you about:

Sarah, aged 16, is depressed and isolated. I worked alongside the CAMHS team, a psychiatrist, social workers, and teacher, to provide high levels of support for her. I helped Sarah apply for her college course, and she is now attending college, off her medication, and thinking about her future options.

Jason, aged 18, experiences psychosis. He was at a psychiatric unit, where I met him informally. Because of Jason's illness, he found it difficult to develop trust in anyone, so it took a while to develop a relationship. I assisted Jason to apply for a six-month training course, and visited him several times to see how he was getting on, and particularly how well he was managing travelling to his course. I continued to have regular contact with Jason's community health worker now he is pursuing other opportunities.'

### **London Ambassadors for Mental Health in Learning and Skills**

The examples serve to demonstrate what can happen when skilled staff use their expertise in mental health to develop learning opportunities which engage learners. However, practitioners told us frequently that there were not enough of these skilled and confident people in colleges, work-based learning, or in ACL. The NIACE initiative shows the need for expert resources in the shape of trained and experienced staff who understand the issues, have the right links to Mental Health Trusts and voluntary organisations, and know what needs to be done. However, the London region co-ordinator for the NIACE initiative works currently across two regions. More qualified and experienced staff are needed to help develop local capacity.

We recommend the development of a team of London Ambassadors for Mental Health in Learning and Skills. The team would include specialists in working with young people, offenders, and adults, with mental health difficulties. Its remit would be to develop and improve further education, work-based learning and ACL provision for these learners, with a focus on employability and employment. Outcomes could include the development with colleges and work-based learning providers of new social enterprises, supported employment schemes including job coaching, and support for employers wishing to be considered for the Exemplary Employer Award. Some

members of the team would identify employment and training opportunities in preparations for the Olympics.

We end this section of the report by summarising the issues concerning learners with mental health difficulties.

### **Key issues concerning learners with mental health difficulties**

- i) LSC and NIACE provide a valuable regional support network; providers want even more support
- ii) Learning and skills sector not yet equipped to meet the needs of increasing numbers of pupils with mental health difficulties coming through schools
- iii) Under-estimation of numbers of learners with mental health difficulties in current provision
- iv) Funding requirements, and fee concession regulations, act as barriers to participation
- v) There is not enough accessible information and specialist guidance
- vi) Providers did not always have the right frameworks to support learners
- vii) There are not enough practitioners with appropriate skills and training
- viii) Information is not shared between services and providers, so learners do not always receive the support they need
- ix) There are too few opportunities for employability and employment, with very few learners identified with mental health difficulties in work-based learning in London; more specialist providers are needed
- x) London Exemplary Employer and Work Well employment initiatives would engage employers
- xi) London Ambassadors for Mental Health in Learning and Skills would work across all providers, including prison education, to develop opportunities
- xii) There are examples of innovation which should be built on

LSC cannot tackle issues concerning learners with mental health difficulties on its own, but it can do more to encourage providers, including specialist work-based learning providers, to develop the programmes and support these learners need. Although LSC needs strategic partners to implement that part of its strategy concerned with mental health, providers want to see action now, because they know from their own experiences that developing partnerships takes time.

We move next to considering adult and community learning provision.

## **Adult and community learning provision**

Adult and community learning is an entitlement for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For many of these learners, ACL classes offer a lifeline by providing opportunities for them to develop employability skills, increase independence and coping strategies, practice and maintain existing skills, including communication skills, and to learn for enjoyment and well-being. The best ACL provision offers experiences of integration, and opportunities to learn in a 'community of learners'. At its very best, ACL is an integral part of a Person Centred Plan, linked to activities in the community, supported employment or social enterprise where this is appropriate, and to independent or supported living.

London has a rich and varied pattern of ACL provision, planned and delivered by creative managers and practitioners who advocate powerfully on behalf of their learners. In our first Review report, we identified some 11,225 learners in provision. We said that this number is an under-representation because LSC data was not complete, and because not all learners declare their difficulties.

In this section of the report, we examine major issues identified during our fieldwork and by participants at the practitioner seminars, and then look at examples of innovation.

### **Funding levels which act as barriers to participation and flexibility**

Providers identified reductions in levels of ACL funding as the biggest barrier to participation and flexibility. There were serious concerns about their abilities to continue to support current learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, never mind to develop new initiatives or attracting new groups of learners. For example, Enfield has the lowest ACL budget nationally at less than £1 per adult learner per year. Providers report that requests for further funding have been unsuccessful, and they point to significant areas of unmet need in the borough. In Westminster, non-accredited provision is funded within Personal and Community Development Learning. The provision is identified as Grade 1, but as PCDL funding is reducing, courses are being cut. Providers report that it is increasingly difficult to secure funding for learners with complex needs. Where there are many of these learners, they can absorb much of the funding; for example, in Harrow, 4% of the learners are using 25% of the funding. Providers say there is a significant discrepancy between levels of funding and actual costs of provision. Because adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities require what is termed a 'disproportionate' share of funding, they are hit harder when funding is cut, even though LSC states it is important not to cut this area of provision.

### **Funding through Further Education budgets**

Two ACL providers we visited, Richmond Adult Community College, and Bromley Adult Education College, fund discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through LSC Further Education funding, and also access Additional Learning

Support funds through this route. Learners appear better 'protected' by this combination of funds.

Bromley Adult Education College told us it could not provide the provision it does by just using ACL funds. The College faces a budget deficit next year, with a reduction in its FE and ACL budgets. It hopes to protect its provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by using Skills for Life funding.

This approach adopted out of necessity by many providers, has its dangers. Nationally, we know from the inspectorates, that too many learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are following Skills for Life programmes, when their needs and interests would be better met by other learning programmes. Practitioners are concerned also about the apparent confusion over funding for non-accredited programmes, although others are successfully running programmes using RARPA to evidence 'distance travelled'. For example, City and Islington ACL uses RARPA, and the Essential Skills Mencap framework for Pre-Entry Level programmes.

### **No Additional Learning Support funds**

Providers said the lack of ALS funds was a significant barrier to the participation of learners with the most complex needs. It was a mistake to think because learners attended for only a few hours a week, that they did not require skilled support. Although learners living in supported residences might bring care workers with them, these staff did not always have the training to provide support in an educational setting. In the Lambeth and Southwark Review, we saw what highly skilled support staff could do, working as part of a team with an experienced teacher, to enable learners with complex difficulties to manage and complete tasks on their own, communicate with other learners and with staff, and to take pride in undertaking real-life activities, such as making a pizza.

### **Unmet need**

The 'expensiveness' of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was a constant theme in our Review. In particular, ACL providers say there is not enough money to do what is required now, never mind to meet new needs. They are aware of unmet needs, such as provision for learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, with profound and complex needs, with severe challenging behaviours, and with mental health difficulties. Good work with these learners is cost-intensive, and requires staff with high levels of skill, adaptations to buildings, and specialist equipment. The cost is too high for ACL providers to bear alone.

### **The need for joined-up strategy**

The forthcoming joint-departmental document, 'Progression through Partnership', referred to earlier in the report, should provide a framework within which different services can plan and fund opportunities together using the principles of Person

Centred Planning, with staff taking on a brokering role to draw together services with and for the learner.

Of course, this joint framework which has taken so long to develop, will take some time to affect what is happening on the ground. Meanwhile, providers are anxious that both provision and skilled staff may be lost, and that they know of potential learners who could benefit from provision, but cannot do anything about them. They say there is not yet sufficient joined-up thinking and planning on the ground to enable them to work as effectively as they need to with other services.

### **Short-term funding does not work**

Joined-up strategy should be supported by joined-up funding. At present, providers say short-term funding makes it difficult to sustain innovative projects, particularly for adults with mental health difficulties. The message to LSC is that short-term project funding, including ESF funding, does not work. Potential partners want reassurance that an initiative is sustainable before they enter into agreements. One major voluntary organisation told us they would not be interested in partnership working with ACL providers if there were no commitment to long-term funding. Each year, uncertainty about ACL funding affects providers' abilities to plan ahead.

Practitioners told us they felt under increased pressure from statutory agencies and parents and carers to accept adult learners. Sometimes, when providers query the educational rationale for such requests, they are told they are not acting in accordance with 'Valuing People', or that they are not committed to life-long learning. Practitioners are at the 'sharp end' of cuts, and decisions about who can and should benefit from ACL provision.

Local day service reorganisation is leading to increased demand for ACL places for adults with complex needs. In one borough, the Day Service Restructuring Plan includes opportunities for service users to have increased access to further education and ACL provision. It is not clear if these plans have been made in conjunction with providers, or if there is enough capacity to meet increased demand. The Plan does not identify the purposes and outcomes of such increased access.

As a practitioner told us, 'Everyone recognises the issues, but they are looking to each other for the answers'.

### **'Revolving doors'**

The 'revolving door' syndrome has been described extensively in national reports about adult learning. In our activities in London, we met learners who had been moving through course after course for twelve or more years, with no end in sight, and no measurable outcomes.

Forward thinking providers in London are trying to limit the number of years learners remain in programmes which are funded entirely by LSC. However, one ACL provider stipulates that individual learners can remain on one course for a maximum of five years, but could then move to another course for five years. An ACL provider described the practice of recycling learners as 'human warehousing'. This may sound strong, but the reality is that if the same learners stay in programmes year after year, other learners cannot have places. We experience then the kind of 'bottlenecks' identified in the Lambeth and Southwark Review, and which are prevalent throughout London and the rest of the country. Many providers have reduced 'bottlenecks' by identifying learners who are not progressing in their learning, rather than by developing supported options onto which learners can progress.

There is no single database which enables learners to be tracked as they move between FE and ACL provision, making it difficult sometimes to work out how many years a learner has been in provision.

### **Not enough options**

Practitioners act usually for the very best of reasons in keeping learners in programmes year after year. They are aware of the limited options available to learners, particularly in areas where day-centres are closing. However, it might be argued that by providing in this way for learners, practitioners made the need for new options even less pressing.

We look later in this section at how innovative providers are working with voluntary organisations and other providers to develop differentiated pathways and options for adults which include social enterprise and other community-based schemes.

### **Unsatisfactory transport arrangements**

Learners who cannot travel independently require transport to take them to their learning. Sometimes, 'learning comes to them', in a day- centre, hospital, or residential home. For most adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, being a member of a learning community is an essential part of their learning experience.

We found few examples of satisfactory transport arrangements in our Review. Practitioners told us that transport was limited, taxi services were sometimes inadequate, and wheelchair users could not use the public bus service. Some local social services have cut back on the provision of transport. One provider told us a local day centre was used like a 'bus station', with service users being transported from their homes to the centre in the morning, then out to ACL provision, then back to the centre, and then on to home. Other providers said learners were responsible for making their own transport arrangements either privately or with social services. The majority of providers relied on social services to transport learners.

Some providers find ways around transport difficulties. For example, Havering ACL fits its learners around the transport needs of the school run by starting sessions at

10.30 am, although staff say that some learners spend long periods of time on buses. Another provider puts on a course for a large residential home where staff ensure learners can attend. The difficulty is that although learners live together, they do not have common learning needs. The residential home will not lay on transport for individuals. The provider has decided to compromise on educational values in order to ensure learners receive some learning opportunity.

The 'tail wags the dog' too often where transport is concerned, with decisions about who can participate, when they participate, and even what learners can do when they are in provision, decided by the logistics of transport, and not the learners' needs.

### **Not enough involvement of parents and carers**

Practitioners sometimes believe mistakenly that because learners are adults, then parents and carers need not be involved as fully in decisions about their learning as might be expected with younger learners. We found the same perception in colleges, as well as in ACL provision. Providers do need to involve parents and carers in making decisions about future provision or developing new initiatives. Southwark College provides an example of well-thought through consultation with parents in the information and consultation day organised as part of the reshaping of its adult provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. College and social service staff ran the day together, with carefully designed opportunities for parents, carers, and of course, learners, to give their views. The day was led by the College Principal whose commitment to the newly-shaped provision guarantees its success.

We recommend at the start of this report that parents and carers are involved in consultations for the London Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Strategy.

### **Shortage of professional skills for work with some disabilities**

Providers told us there was a need for training in working with learners with more complex needs, with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, with severe challenging behaviours, and with mental health difficulties. Some providers were aware of professional training needs, and were pro-active in developing their workforce. For example, Enfield ACL had run seventeen training courses in 2006/07, and worked collaboratively with other boroughs in the Eastern sub-region. Harrow ACL has produced on its website an e-learning course designed to raise awareness of disability and hidden disability. Tutors are required to complete the course as part of their contractual arrangements. The service also offers the course to its partner voluntary organisations.

### **The need for Person- Centred Planning and transition protocols and plans**

We found social services involved in our Review to be at different stages in developing Person- Centred Planning (PCP). Some had 'not started yet', whilst others reported, 'PCPs are now fully written. However, most were still in the early stages of the work. As PCPs will be used to plan and hold together the person's individual experiences,

including their learning opportunities, this patchy development means that a key vehicle for planning is sometimes missing. This can make it harder for ACL providers and other services to plan rationally and to make best use of scarce resources. It also makes it more difficult to design transition plans with learners. We found no examples of transition plans for adults during the Review, although there is a pressing need for their development as we have seen during our discussions of bottlenecks and the lack of options available to adults. Some boroughs are leading the way. For example, in Ealing, day services have prioritised for the PCP process young people in transition, and people with complex disabilities. Staff report that PCP is having a very positive impact, and that service-users feel more in control of their lives. There are implications for how provision is commissioned, because PCP requires flexible, small-scale services designed around learners' needs, rather than large-scale bulk contract services. Some senior managers consider LSC may be more interested in large-scale providers.

We recommend that the London Transition Protocol recommended earlier is adapted for adult learners, to fit with the PCC process, and to make it easier to plan next stages with a learner. The protocol should include the responsibilities of agencies involved with the learner, opportunities for employment (where appropriate), their learning history, arrangements for the sharing of information, details of the learner's individual package of activities, and, most importantly, how the learner is to be involved in making decisions about their future, and how parents and carers are to be involved in the process, where this is appropriate.

### **Developing options for learners**

Planning for the future only makes sense when there are enough choices for learners. Innovative providers are pushing forward the boundaries of their own provision to design options for their learners. Some of these options are for employability and employment, including social enterprise. We describe some of these next.

#### **Richmond Adult Community College: social enterprises**

Richmond Adult Community College has developed three social enterprises. The Garden Gang grow vegetables for sale on a vegetable patch at College. The learners manage the business side of the enterprise. A local commercial garden design company offers progression into paid employment for some learners.

The Greetings Card Company is run in conjunction with social services so that direct payments can be used to pay for support workers to assist learners run the company. Last Christmas, the Company handled orders for 300 cards from LSC, and 200 cards from the Financial Times.

A third enterprise, The Zig Zag Theatre, is getting under way.

The College is keen to become a Centre of Excellence for its work with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Brent ACL: real work experience**

Brent ACL runs a successful café staffed by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on work experience. The café is jointly funded with social services, which also identifies the work placements. The ACL supplies the teaching staff, whilst social services take responsibility for the kitchens. Learners have gone on into paid employment at Pizza Express and other local cafés.

Cafés and food are popular as social enterprises; Elfreda Rathbone runs 'Flapjacks' in Camden, staffed by people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We described earlier how Lambeth College and MacIntyre were working together to develop a bakery and café based on existing enterprises in the College.

### **Re-organising provision**

The most effective ACL providers are re-organising their provision completely in order to provide differentiated opportunities for their learners, and to maximise funding opportunities. For example, Richmond Adult Community College plans to re-organise its learning difficulties and disabilities provision over the next two years into three distinct areas: the Richmond Business Services based on its business enterprises, Community Enterprise to include unemployed learners, and Club Richmond, for full cost adult education and personal development.

Most of the ACL providers we talked to in our Review were reviewing their learning difficulties and disabilities provision, and all of them were aiming to protect opportunities for these learners. An increasing number of ACL providers are in discussions with voluntary organisations both as a way of protecting opportunities, and to extend choices for learners. Barnet ACL is in early discussion with the Richmond Fellowship with a view to a more formal partnership, whilst Westminster ACL is in a partnership with Westminster Education Service Advocacy Project aimed at helping learners into paid work. Harrow ACL works with local specialist voluntary organisations to widen opportunities for learners with visual disabilities.

We end this section on adult and community learning with a summary of the main issues identified during our fieldwork.

### **Key issues concerning adult and community learning provision**

- i) Funding mechanisms act as barriers to participation and flexibility
- ii) No additional learning support (ALS) funds
- iii) Current unmet need which cannot be tackled, and future demand which it will be very difficult to meet
- iv) The need for joined-up strategy between services
- v) Short-term funding prevents proper long-term planning
- vi) 'Revolving doors' whereby learners are kept in provision for too long
- vii) Not enough options for learners
- viii) Unsatisfactory transport arrangements
- ix) Not enough involvement of parents and carers
- x) Shortage of professional skills in working with some disabilities
- xi) The need for Person- Centred Planning and the London Transition Protocol and transition plans
- xii) Encouragement and support needed for ACL provider developing innovative provision, for example by enabling them to become Centres of Excellence

Finally, in our report, we look briefly at some of the major voluntary organisations working in London.

## **Voluntary organisations**

The voluntary sector is too important a part of London's provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to omit it from this Review. In this last section of the report, we outline our discussions with some of the main voluntary organisations working with these learners. We asked about their existing provision and services, about their plans to extend or change provision, or to develop strategic partnerships with other providers.

### **Mencap**

Mencap is one of the UK's biggest voluntary organisations for people with severe learning difficulties and related difficulties. It has one of the most extensive and successful employment services for these learners; the services are to be reviewed as part of shaping a strategy for the next five years. Many colleges and ACL providers in London have links with Mencap, through its Gateway Club, its employment placement services, parents' groups, or other aspects of its services. London partnerships include a Croydon project with people who have lost their day- centre provision and would like to link to ACL, and in Harrow where Mencap works with social services to find jobs for learners. The Mencap *Essential Skills Award* is widely used, and its two new Awards: *Personal Progression Through Practical Work Skills*, and *Personal Progression Through Practical Life Skills* provide support for the differentiated pathways discussed in this report.

Mencap indicates it is interested in developing new provision with LSC-funded organisations.

### **Remploy**

Remploy has reshaped itself in the last few years, with a focus on supporting people with disabilities into work. It recently gained its first LSC contract, in the West Midlands, to examine funding sources and provision for employability in the area. The organisation is working in partnership with Mencap in the same region, again on employability issues. In London, Remploy is working with Hawk Training in Twickenham to help people with learning difficulties gain qualifications in retail, and it is in discussion with Lewisham College to provide employment placement services alongside Treloars as part of a new initiative described earlier in this report. Remploy has set itself ambitious targets for placing disabled people into employment.

Remploy indicates it is actively seeking partnerships with FE and ACL providers.

### **Richmond Fellowship**

The Richmond Fellowship supports people with schizophrenia. In London, it operates mainly in North London and Wandsworth, focusing on providing employment advice. The organisation also delivers LSC-funded learning programmes in Enfield, and has

good links with Enfield College. Last year, the Fellowship provided training, advice, and guidance across six London boroughs. It is working with the Mental Health Trust in Brent on a user employment programme which identifies real jobs. The Fellowship views social enterprises as stepping-stones to real work, and says they should generate real income for people.

The Richmond Fellowship indicates it is willing to enter into partnerships with other providers that directly benefit learners.

### **ShawTrust**

ShawTrust is a direct provider of educational provision for people with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It has small-scale provision at Clamp Hill in Stanmore. Elsewhere, the organisation has a long-standing partnership with Canterbury College. ShawTrust cites short-term funding as a major disincentive to partnership working. Although it wishes to extend its provision, it cannot access 'mainstream' funding, and ESF funding is unsatisfactory because it is short-term.

ShawTrust is interested in extending its provision, as long as long-term funding can be secured.

### **RNIB**

The RNIB has undergone considerable change in the last five years, with a radical rethinking of its direct educational provision, and a focus on partnerships to provide specialist support services to other providers. It now has six agreements with further education colleges to provide specialist support and services for students with visual disabilities. Its first partnership with Liverpool College, was awarded a Grade 1 as part of the College's learning difficulty and disabilities inspection. In London, RNIB is discussing its first agreement in the capital with Southwark College as part of the development of a sensory centre.

RNIB indicates it is interested in extending its provision of support services, including employment services.

### **RNID**

RNID provides expert advice and guidance, rather than direct provision. It identifies lack of awareness amongst staff as the biggest barrier for deaf students. RNID sees its main role in developing links which lead to the subcontracting of its specialist support services.

### **Scope**

Scope works with people with cerebral palsy and with complex disabilities. It is currently planning a major initiative with a higher education provider aimed at offering a

'permeable' curriculum whereby learners can access opportunities which match their particular talents. The institute provides training for teachers and for therapists, and the intention is that the partnership will benefit all learners.

Scope indicates it is keen to develop joint leisure activities.

### **London MIND**

MIND supports people with mental health difficulties; and acts as a powerful national advocate on their behalf. It has established eleven affiliates across London, with a focus on learning and employment.

MIND indicates it is keen to enter into partnerships with learning providers.

### **Strategic partnerships with voluntary organisations**

This is by no means an exhaustive survey of voluntary organisations and what they might offer either as direct providers or as partners offering specialist support. Two points are worth making. First, many practitioners have good local links with voluntary organisations, nurtured over many years. However, too often these links are dependent on individuals finding the goodwill and time to foster the relationship, and to maximise its benefits to learners. We would like to see more strategic-level partnerships, like those being led at Principal and Director levels in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Islington, and elsewhere in London.

Second, we recommend that LSC brings more good voluntary organisations into the fold, particularly in work-based learning where their expertise is so much needed. At present, they are sometimes on the edge of the action, when they are able to play a much more integral part in provision than they do now.

This is the last section of our second Review report. The main findings and recommendations from the fieldwork are summarised at the start of the report, along with recommendations from our first report. We have highlighted ten priorities for London. On the next page, we thank those people and organisations who contributed to the Review.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Review team was:

Pat Hood, Director  
Carol Tennyson  
Stuart McCoy  
Brian Simpson  
Matthew Griffiths  
Anne Heywood  
Alison O'Brien  
Chris Pickup  
Sheena Prater

The team wishes to thank over 200 individuals and organisations for their vital contributions to the Review, in particular the learners who took part in focus groups, and the practitioners who attended seminars. We are grateful to everyone who gave their time to share views and experiences.

Thanks are due to Elaine McWilliam and Ben Finnegan at LSC, who supported the work, and Caroline Allen, Chair of the LSC London LDD Strategy Group, for her encouragement and support.

Thanks are due also to David Hughes and Doug Norris at LSC, for their strategic support for the Review.

The Review team wishes to dedicate its work to the memory of Ricky Griffiths, a vibrant young man with complex disabilities, who died shortly after the Review began. He showed us what was possible.