



Leading learning and skills

Meeting Need: Raising Aspiration

**The North East's Strategy for LSC-Funded
Provision for Learners with
Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD):
2007/08 to 2009/10**

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1 Foreword

This document has been developed in consultation during early 2007. It is intended to provide the emerging vision and strategy to improve the choice and effectiveness of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) in the North East. The strategy is to be used to inform the collaborative dialogue between colleges and providers, the LSC, and partner agencies.

This strategy takes forward the priorities of the national strategy for LSC funded provision across the Further Education system *Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities from 2006/07 to 2009/10*.

The three national headline priorities for improvement (Investing in provision, Raising quality of provision, including workforce development and Increasing economic participation) require the region, on an annual basis, to accurately assess the current capacity of the FE system to meet the learning and skills needs of LLDD, and to effectively plan and commission provision to meet future demand.

The focus of provision and services needs to be upon meeting the individual needs of learners most effectively. The needs of LLDD are wide ranging and complex. No single agency, institution or provider can, or is able to, meet the learning and skills needs of all learners.

Therefore the effective analysis of supply and demand to support the collaborative planning and delivery of learning between providers, the LSC and partner agencies at a regional and local level is vital to success.

The development of services and provision require time to build capacity and knowledge. This strategy should therefore be seen as part of a developing and collaborative agenda which will be delivered by a region-wide action plan that will be evaluated and built upon in consultation with providers and partners to provide a united understanding and clarity of purpose to ensure that all learners are enabled to achieve their maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities and wherever possible in employment.

Dr Richard Brannen
Learning and Quality Director

2 Executive Summary

The North East's Strategy for post-16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities sets out 14 action priorities across 6 themes for delivery.

1 Strategic Analysis

Action Priority 1: Strategic Analysis

1.1 By autumn 2007 the region will have a detailed analysis of the demand for post-16 learning and skills provision from learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

2 Quality

Action Priority 2: Learning Entitlement

2.1 By September 2008 we will work with partners to ensure that the region-wide learning entitlements for young people and adults include learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Action Priority 3: Increasing Capacity

2.2 Build upon and expand existing high-quality provision.

2.3 Commission and develop new provision that responds to learner demand, particularly learners identified as having Autistic Spectrum Disorders, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or complex learning difficulties.

2.4 Improve services for people with Mental Health needs by implementing the regional Mental Health action plan

2.5 Encourage the development of specialist federations and trusts to support new and small providers to improve their capacity to respond to learner demand.

2.6 Support partnership working at a local level and across the region to share expertise and effective practice to deliver provision for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Action Priority 4: Ensuring Achievement and Positive Progression

2.7 Develop protocols for sharing information on learners' achievements, progress and assessment outcomes to support transition into and out of the FE system.

2.8 Support providers to encourage disability disclosure and identify hidden learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

2.9 Increase understanding of, and expertise in, initial, baseline and diagnostic assessment of learners' needs; and the setting of appropriate and challenging targets, and monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement.

2.10 Support providers to implement the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) programme and improve routes for progression to and from Foundation Level upwards.

2.11 Support providers to develop vocationally specific progression pathways with learners and employers as part of the FLT.

2.12 Increase the integration of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into Train to Gain and Apprenticeship programmes.

2.13 Develop learning and progression opportunities, which recognise that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and people with Mental Health needs may take longer to achieve qualifications, skills and adult status than their peers.

2.14 Enable learners aged 25 years and over to return to learning progression opportunities at key points in their lives as appropriate.

2.15 Contribute to the delivery of the regional Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs).

Action Priority 5: Quality Improvement

2.16 Eliminate consistently poor, unnecessary and repetitive provision by September 2008.

2.17 Secure specialist college membership in the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership (RQUIP), and embed the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within its regional improvement framework.

2.18 Work with QIA to establish a regional learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities peer-review project.

2.19 Build on and develop networks to support the sharing of effective practice and expertise across the FE system and between partners (from schools to adult and voluntary and community services).

2.20 Promote and celebrate best practice across the region.

2.21 Address the training priorities of teachers, trainers, tutors and support workers relating to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the FE system.

2.22 Ensure that provision that either equips learners, or people who work with/support learners, to communicate or develop their specialised skills (e.g. British sign language), is protected within the balance and mix of provision.

Action Priority 6: Centres of Excellence

2.23 Identify and build upon existing high-quality provision at a regional and local level, to support provider applications for Centre of Excellence status.

Action Priority 7: Health and Safety

2.24 Encourage and support the raising of standards and promote best practice health and safety approaches.

3 Economic Participation

Action Priority 8: Progression to Employment

3.1 Work with providers to re-focus work-preparation and independent living skills programmes, to adopt models of learning with clear endpoints linked to progression opportunities, which enable people to: develop their skills to take up voluntary, part-time or full-time employment; or live more independent and active lives in their local community.

3.2 Support providers to build on effective practice and develop partnerships with supported employment agencies.

3.3 Raise awareness among, and work with employers across the region, to increase the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities entering and being maintained in employment.

3.4 Develop high-level training programmes to support entry to higher skilled occupations.

3.5 Build on pilot activity and encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills and increase self-employment opportunities within Social Firms.

4 Accessible Environments

Action Priority 9: Capital

4.1 All new capital proposals to consider the delivery of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Action Priority 10: Transport

4.2 Build on good practice to develop a regional independent travel skills programme in partnership with Local Authorities.

4.3 Support providers to incorporate independent travel in the curriculum of all foundation learning programmes.

5 Collaborative Planning and Communicating with Stakeholders

Action Priority 11: Aligning Resources

5.1 Agree joint planning and funding strategies with Children's and Young People's Services, Connexions, Health and Adult Social Services and Jobcentre Plus to deliver the nationally agreed protocols across the region.

Action Priority 12: Working and Communicating with Partners

5.2 Develop a Regional Forum for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

5.3 Promote best practice and ensure that there is clear communication with learners, families and carers, pre-16 schools, Connexions, and Health

and Social Services regarding the provision available within each local community to support learners' transition.

5.4 Develop a Regional Employer's Forum to identify 'employer champions' and to develop strategies for better employment engagement.

5.5 Establish a Regional Advisory Group to monitor and evaluate progress and impact of the implementation of the strategy against an action plan.

Action Priority 13: Local Area Team Responsibilities

5.6 Develop a Strategy Implementation Group within each local authority area.

6 Implementation and Evaluation

Action Priority 14: Implementation and Evaluation

6.1 By autumn 2007 produce the strategy implementation action plan.

6.2 Publish annual progress reports from November 2007.

Identifying the key priorities for the planning and funding of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from 2007/08 to 2009/10

3 Introduction

1 The Government has outlined an ambitious vision for improving the life chances of disabled people so that by 2025 disabled people will have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and will be respected and included as equal members of society.

2 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has pledged that by 2015, England will be an international exemplar in providing high quality post-16 learning provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

3 In November 2005, the LSC published *Through Inclusion to Excellence: Report of the Steering Group for the Strategic Review of the LSC's Planning and Funding of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*¹. The LSC has made a public commitment to delivering the report's 40 recommendations and principles.

4 In October 2006, the LSC launched *Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*². This is the first national strategy for LSC funded provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the Further Education (FE) system³. It includes a wide range of actions that will be taken forward nationally from 2006/07 to 2009/10. The strategy is driven by the national vision:

That individuals' needs should be met through equitable and easily understood systems of planning, funding and placement, enabling all learners to achieve their goals and progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities, and in employment.

5 The LSC's third Annual Statement of Priorities, *Raising Our Game*⁴, coincided with the publication of *Learning for Living and Work*. The document

¹ <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/research/commissioned/through-inclusion-to-excellence.pdf>

² http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Learning_for_Living_and_Work_Complete_2.pdf

³ In the context of this document the term 'FE system' refers to FE colleges/providers, independent specialist colleges and schools, independent training providers, large employers who contract with the LSC, learndirect/UFI, providers of personal and community development learning (PCDL) including local authorities, providers of learning and skills for offenders, school sixth forms, special school sixth forms, and providers within the voluntary and community sector.

⁴ <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-annualstatementofpriorities-re-oct2006.pdf>

sets out the four key strategic priorities the LSC has for the learning and skills sector for 2007/08 and the actions that will be consistently applied across all regions. Development work and investment will also occur to meet identified need for particular cohorts of learners or skills areas within each region.

6 The North East LSC's inclusion strategy *Meeting Need: Improving Aspiration* is presented within the context of *Through Inclusion to Excellence* and the national strategy, priorities and vision. It is intended to complement and supplement national action, not duplicate it, whilst bringing a regional and local dimension to bear on its implementation. The strategy is based upon and informed by the research carried out in the North East in 2006 by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) and SKILL⁵, together with evidence collected from learners, providers and other agencies during the review process. The strategy will continue to be developed in light of further research into needs at a regional and local level and reviewed and revised in line with work carried out at a national level.

7 An action plan will be devised outlining how the North East LSC will implement the strategy across the region. This will be available by autumn 2007.

⁵ *Inclusion Review: Improved Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities in the North East*, LSN/SKILL October 2006

4 Regional Context

8 An analysis of existing data and information from Pupil Level Annual School Survey (PLASC) and Individualised Learner Records (ILR) was undertaken within Phase 1 of the North East LSC's regional review of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities⁶.

9 The main findings of the research are highlighted in the following, however the detail is provided at Appendix 1.

- The North East has a higher proportion of 14–19 year old students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) than the national average (15.4 per cent in 2004/05, compared with 14.7 per cent in England). In contrast, the proportion of adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower in the region than in England.
- Around twice as many young male learners than female learners in the North East are identified as having SEN. The gender ratio is not so pronounced in Further Education (FE) as it is in schools or Work Based Learning (WBL), though males continue to predominate.
- There are very few learners from black and minority ethnic groups with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the North East region.
- Dyslexia is the most commonly recorded learning difficulty or disability in FE, with moderate learning difficulties and 'other' coming second and third. In WBL, moderate learning difficulty is the most common learning difficulty or disability recorded.
- Adult and Community Learning provision does not currently appear to make a significant contribution to provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- In the North East, demand is greatest from young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who consider that help with obtaining employment is the most important reason for continuing in post-16 learning. However, there is concern that there is a lack of learning provision, particularly in E2E, to meet the demand. Moreover, there are insufficient progression opportunities available to meet the demand from young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities once they have completed college courses. Where there is demand outside the local area, there are problems with transport to permit learners to access the learning of their choice.

⁶ The review of provision focussed on people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 14-25. Data was collated from PLASC and ILR information available from FE, WBL and ACL providers.

- Recent research across the region⁷ has concluded that there is a need to develop provision to meet demand among young people and young adults with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This includes developing provision for learners with autistic spectrum disorders, improving support for learners with dyslexia, and ensuring vocational and work-related opportunities are available both generally, and specifically for young people with learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. In some areas, there is also a lack of provision to meet the demand of young people with long-term health conditions, which require them to learn at home.
- 42% of North East learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability achieved a full Level 2 at 19 in 2005, compared with 71% of those without. Nationally, 51% of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 73% of those without achieved a Level 2⁸. As with ethnicity, however, there are a number of learners for whom information on learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not available, and it is therefore difficult to draw firm conclusions.

⁷ See, for example, *Themed Review of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, Pye Tait, 2005 and *An Examination of Vocational Opportunities for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, Learning and Skills Council Tyne and Wear, 2006.

⁸ <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/NorthEast/ner-regionalstrategicanalysis200708-br-11jan2007.pdf>

5 The North East's Strategy

Defining the Client Group

10 Within the Learning and Skills Act a person is described as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons his or her age; or
- has a disability that either prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided by institutions providing post-16 education or training.

This definition applies across all LSC funded learning activity.

Principles

11 The LSC's vision for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is driven by the concept of learning for living and work. The FE system's role is to increase participation and support individuals entering education and training to achieve their ambition, whether this is to improve their lives, strengthen their career opportunities, or develop their skills; thus enabling economic participation and the development of self confidence to live independently and contribute to local communities.

12 Building upon this and the overarching ambition that England will be an international exemplar by 2015 in providing high quality learning provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the North East LSC will provide access to post-16 education and training by creating:

- Choices of enjoyable, challenging, person-centred learning experiences that enable learners to achieve their planned goals and secure their successful progression.
- Learning that will promote and develop intellectual, emotional and social skills.
- Learning that will be a creative and innovative process, which uses an individual's interests and the wider community in which they live and work as a learning context and resource.
- Opportunities to achieve social well-being and economic participation.
- Levels of skills and competency that enable learners to make a positive contribution to their community and society and to live as independently as their abilities and disabilities allow.

Key Activities for Investment

13 The North East region will directly respond to the three key priority work areas for investment identified in the national strategy:

- Investing in provision: understanding demand and building capacity
- Raising quality of provision, including workforce development
- Increasing economic participation through sustainable employment.

14 In addition, the review of provision in the region has highlighted the following specific areas for improvement:

- Local provision for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Provision for people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, including mental health needs
- Provision for people with more complex learning difficulties.

Measures of Success

15 The key outcomes of *Meeting Need: Raising Aspiration* match those of the national strategy:

- A safer environment and premises that meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation.
- Improved choices and participation in education and training
- Increased access to high-quality local provision
- Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning
- Increased flexibility in the delivery of provision
- Increased economic participation
- Increased social inclusion
- Increased levels of attainment, both in terms of qualifications and progression.
- Greater employability skills, contributing to skills shortages in the region.

6 Delivery

16 The North East LSC intends to deliver these outcomes and invest in the identified national and regional priorities within the following 6 themes.

Theme 1: Strategic Analysis

17 Whilst the regional review of provision carried out in the North East in 2006 went some way to identify the learning and skills needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, it is recognised that the information provided was fractured and limited in its scope. Understanding of demand is fundamental to our planning, commissioning and investment activities. However, the volume of partner agencies that hold information regarding people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, coupled with the significant differences in data collection specifications/learner definitions present further difficulties in planning and responding to the requirements of this group of learners.

18 To implement the three national priorities within the region, the commissioning of further strategic analysis is therefore vital for the North East LSC to address with its partners. Activity will seek to:

- Identify the planning information and data requirements across the region in regard to young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, in order to provide an accurate description of the demand for learning across the 14–19, 19-25, and 25+ age groups.
- Draw together data from Jobcentre Plus, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Children's and Young People's Services, Connexions, Health and Adult Social Services, the SEN Regional Partnership, the Youth Justice Board and Probation Services.
- Agree with partners at a regional and local authority level, the scope and timing of the information/data exchange process.
- Build on activity to develop joint planning protocols between the LSC Partnership Teams and partners in Local Authorities, Connexions and Health and Adult Social Services
- Ensure that robust information and data is used effectively to inform strategic business planning and funding cycles.

Action priority 1⁹: Strategic Analysis

19 In line with nationally led activity the North East region will have a detailed analysis of the demand for post-16 learning and skills provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by autumn 2007.

⁹ Action Priorities are not indicated in order of status.

Theme 2: Quality

20 It has recently been acknowledged¹⁰ that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are as likely to do as well in mainstream provision as those taught in independent specialist colleges, when they have access to teaching from specialists who are experienced and qualified, have high levels of support; and when programmes respond to needs and emphasise external links and community partnerships.

21 However, a demand led model of learning supports a balanced picture of provision that includes access to specialist provision for the small volume of learners who require, and meet the criteria for, specialised learning opportunities that are not provided within other sectors of learning. Therefore gaps in provision need to be coherently addressed by the appropriate balance of mainstream and specialist provision across the region.

22 Using the investment monies that have been approved nationally, the North East LSC will meet identified needs by building on and expanding existing high quality programmes, and where appropriate, commission and develop new innovative provision and services through open and competitive tendering, emphasising collaborative approaches.

23 Our aim is to secure equality of access, participation and successful progression for all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Action priority 2: Learning Entitlement

24 Therefore, by September 2008 we will work with partners to ensure that the region-wide learning entitlements for young people and adults include learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Action Priority 3: Increasing Capacity

25 Innovative delivery across the sector is of prime importance. In order to ensure learners have equal access to local provision we will:

- Build upon and expand existing high quality provision.
- Commission and develop new provision that responds to learner demand, particularly learners identified as having Autistic Spectrum Disorders, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or complex learning difficulties.
- Improve services for people with Mental Health needs by implementing the regional Mental Health action plan (Appendix 2).

¹⁰ *Current Provision and Outcomes for 16-18-year-old Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, Ofsted, January 2007

- Encourage the development of specialist federations and trusts¹¹ to support new and small providers to improve their capacity to respond to learner demand.
- Support partnership working at a local level and across the region to share expertise and effective practice to deliver provision for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Action Priority 4: Ensuring Achievement and Positive Progression

26 Good quality provision is person-centred and based on the principles of Inclusive Learning, whereby learning has purpose, positive outcomes and meets learner aspiration. To ensure we achieve our aim we will work with partners to:

- Develop protocols for sharing information on learners' achievements, progress and assessment outcomes to support transition into and out of the FE system.
- Support providers to encourage disability disclosure and identify hidden learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Increase understanding of, and expertise in, initial, baseline and diagnostic assessment of learners' needs; and the setting of appropriate and challenging targets, and monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement.
- Support providers to implement the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) programme and improve routes for progression to and from Foundation Level upwards.
- Support providers to develop vocationally specific progression pathways with learners and employers as part of the FLT.
- Increase the integration of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into Train to Gain and Apprenticeship programmes.
- Develop learning and progression opportunities, which recognise that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and people with Mental Health needs may take longer to achieve qualifications, skills and adult status than their peers.
- Enable learners aged 25 years and over to return to learning progression opportunities at key points in their lives as appropriate.

¹¹ A specialist federation and trust would build on work already underway on peer review and the nurturing of emerging provision and new providers. A number of possible models may be adopted, but the core aim would be to partner high-quality established providers (both general and specialist) with new providers to mentor and nurture emerging provision (*Learning for Living and Work*, LSC October 2006).

- Contribute to the delivery of the regional Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs).
 - Adult learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability are less likely to succeed in a full Level 2 qualification (than those without a learning difficulty and/or disability)
 - Apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability are much less likely to complete their framework (than those without a learning difficulty and/or disability)

Action Priority 5: Quality Improvement

27 The quality of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is central to our vision. As is the case for all providers, and evidenced in the LSC's *Intervention Strategy*¹², we wish to eliminate underperformance.

28 Responsibility for improving the quality of provision is first and foremost that of providers. Self-improvement must not be reliant on the anticipation of inspection, but be part of planned continuous improvement. The core of quality improvement must be providers' rigorous self-assessment. This is central to the shared approach to strategic commissioning of high quality provision.

29 The North East LSC's plans to facilitate quality improvement within the FE system fall under two strands – provision and workforce development. We will:

- Eliminate consistently poor, unnecessary and repetitive provision by September 2008.
- Secure specialist college membership in the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership (RQUIP), and embed the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within its regional improvement framework.
- Work with QIA to establish a regional learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities peer-review project.
- Build on and develop networks to support the sharing of effective practice and expertise across the FE system and between partners (from schools to adult and voluntary and community services).
- Promote and celebrate best practice across the region.

¹² [QIA Improvement Strategy](#)

- Address the training priorities of teachers, trainers, tutors and support workers relating to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the FE system.
- Ensure that provision that equips learners, or people who work with/support learners, to communicate or develop their specialised skills (e.g. British sign language), is protected within the balance and mix of provision.

Action Priority 6: Centres of Excellence

30 Work is currently being carried out at a national level to develop criteria under which providers can be formally awarded Centre of Excellence status for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The first provider will be awarded Centre of Excellence status by December 2008.

- Therefore during 2007/08, the North East LSC will identify and build upon existing high quality provision at a regional and local level, to support provider applications for Centre of Excellence status.

Action Priority 7: Health and Safety

31 All learners are entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. LSC funded organisations are expected to have an effective health and safety management system in place to support continuous improvement.

- Therefore working in partnership with key stakeholders the North East LSC will encourage and support the raising of standards and promote best practice health and safety approaches.

Theme 3: Economic Participation

32 Raising learner aspiration is central to the North East LSC's inclusion strategy. The FE system should not be seen as an endpoint for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but as part of the route map to social and economic participation, as it is for all other post-16 learners.

33 The Government aims to improve the labour market status of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Therefore, in response the FE system must deliver a step-change in provision so that, as far as is appropriate for each individual, specialist programmes for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities involve an element of 'in work' support.

Action Priority 8: Progression to Employment

34 The regional review of provision highlighted that demand is greatest from young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who consider that help with obtaining employment is the most important reason for continuing in post-16 learning. Consequently, the North East LSC will:

- Work with providers to re-focus work-preparation and independent living skills programmes, to adopt models of learning with clear endpoints linked to progression opportunities, which enable people to: develop their skills to take up voluntary, part-time or full-time employment; or live more independent and active lives in their local community.
- Support providers to build on effective practice and develop partnerships with supported employment agencies.
- Raise awareness among, and work with employers across the region, to increase the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities entering and being maintained in employment.
- Develop high-level training programmes to support entry to higher skilled occupations.
- Build on pilot activity within the region and encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills and increase self-employment opportunities within Social Firms.

Theme 4: Accessible Environments

35 To realise our vision of becoming an international exemplar in providing high quality post-16 learning provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, it is imperative that all learners are able to access learning in premises that are fit for purpose and equipped with up-to-date learning materials and equipment.

Action Priority 9: Capital

36 The development of better local facilities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will enable greater choice for learners to attend local provision. Therefore, the North East LSC's regional capital strategy and local area capital plans will support proposals which:

- Consider the delivery of provision for learners not only in terms of access, but also in the design of the learning environment and the provision of specialist learning resources.
- Regard the development of co-located collaborative provision that meets local and regional need.
- Adapt and develop facilities to provide a greater range of vocational experiences.
- Consider bids to provide semi-independent living accommodation as part of a regional independent living programme and transition planning for learners (that is, where the residential accommodation would also be used as a teaching and learning facility).
- Increase the provision of enterprise and supported employment facilities.

Action Priority 10: Transport

37 In parallel with the importance of capital developments recognising the physically accessible buildings, local provision must be accessible. Transport is not part of the LSC's remit, however the regional review of provision carried out in the North East highlighted this as a major barrier for learners accessing provision of their choice. To address this issue we will:

- Build on good practice to develop a regional independent travel skills programme in partnership with Local Authorities.
- Support providers to incorporate independent travel in the curriculum of all foundation learning programmes.

Theme 5: Collaborative Planning and Communicating with Stakeholders

38 If the LSC and the sector are to make learning truly person-centred, it is unlikely that any one institution or agency can meet the entire learning needs of an individual. Given the broad needs of individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the region, *Meeting Need: Raising Aspiration* envisages collaboration not just between providers in the FE system, but also between the FE system and other agencies contributing to a holistic, person-centred approach to meet individuals' needs.

Action Priority 11: Aligning Resources

39 Discussions are currently underway between government departments to develop nationally agreed protocols for shared funding responsibilities and partnership working. Once published, the North East LSC will:

- Agree joint planning and funding strategies with Children's and Young People's Services, Connexions, Health and Adult Social Services and Jobcentre Plus to deliver the nationally agreed protocols across the region.

Action Priority 12: Working and Communicating with Partners

40 To realise our vision, the sector must have a shared understanding of our position, intentions and our commitment to ensure the ongoing prioritisation of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

41 Learners themselves need to play a pivotal role in the development of provision, and providers need to understand the issues learners face when accessing learning, and the obstacles that prevent them engaging in learning.

- To ensure learners are proactively involved in all aspects of planning and reviewing provision within the region, we will build on existing activity and develop a Regional Forum for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

42 A major challenge in taking forward this strategy is the need to improve the mixed reputation (specifically the perceptions of learners, their families and carers and other agencies) of the FE system to be able to provide high quality, learner-centred further education and training to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

- The North East LSC will promote best practice and ensure that there is clear communication with learners, families and carers, pre-16 schools, Connexions, and Health and Social Services regarding the provision available within each local community to support learners' transition.
- Influence existing and developing IT prospectus to ensure that information is accessible to all learners.

43 The significant change that the LSC and the sector must undertake to ensure that the FE system delivers flexible, planned progression to employment as a central goal for those learners, for whom it is appropriate, requires sustained commitment from employers and profound shifts in attitudes, assumptions and behaviours.

44 The views and experiences of employers and organisations already involved in open and supported employment of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are crucial to improving the work of delivery partners and attracting more employers into this area. Similarly, the experiences and successes of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that are self-employed are vitally important.

- Building on activity already underway within the region, we will develop a Regional Employer's Forum to identify 'employer champions' and to develop strategies for better employment engagement.

45 To ensure *Meeting Need: Raising Aspiration* is implemented consistently across the region, we will establish a Regional Advisory Group to monitor and evaluate progress and impact of the implementation of the strategy against an action plan. Representation will include:

- Learners/Service Users
- Mainstream and special schools
- FE and independent specialist colleges
- Work Based Learning Provider Networks
- Personal, Community and Development Learning (PCDL) Providers
- Local Authority Children's and Adult Services
- Connexions Services
- Health and Social Services
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Youth Justice Boards, Probation and Prison Services
- Jobcentre Plus
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Employers and Supported Employment Providers
- Valuing People and SEN Regional Partnerships
- Parent/Carer Representative

Action Priority 13: Local Area Team Responsibilities

46 It is vital that in each local area there exist the appropriate relationships with providers and partners in order to:

- Align planning and funding priorities with Children's and Young People's Services to deliver collaborative plans for improvement.
- Work with Adult Social Services, Primary Care Trusts and Jobcentre Plus to develop provision for adults.
- Maximise opportunities for capital collaboration.

- Secure effective delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance at entry and during progression in learning.
- Ensure providers' development plans improve participation and monitor and improve progression.

47 Therefore, we will develop a Strategy Implementation Group within each local area.

Theme 6: Implementation and Evaluation

48 The North East LSC will develop an action plan to implement the strategy. A Regional Advisory Group will be established to monitor the implementation of the action plan and to evaluate impact. The group will be informed by local area Strategy Implementation Groups regarding delivery progress and the impact achieved upon learners, providers and partners.

49 Progress reporting will be conducted in the spring, summer and autumn of each year with a report on achievements within each academic year being published by November.

Action priority 14: Implementation and Evaluation

- The North East LSC will publish the regional strategy implementation action plan by autumn 2007.
- Progress reports will be published annually from November 2007.

7 Funding

50 The White Paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* set out the commitment to develop a new approach to funding and to move to a position where more funding is driven directly by employer and learner choice. The Leitch review endorsed this direction of travel. As a result three approaches to funding have been published as part of the consultation on a demand-led system¹³.

51 In 2008/09 the new funding approaches will be introduced in FE and work based learning, and by 2009/10, the arrangements will be fully implemented across the entire FE system.

52 In the long term, it is anticipated that the delivery of this strategy will be through providers' core funding. Additional investment funds identified nationally will be used to instigate change across the region during the 2007/08 financial year.

53 Investment levels beyond 2008 cannot be confirmed until the outcomes of the current Comprehensive Spending Review are finalised.

¹³ <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Publications/Recommended/Delivering-World-class-Skills-in-a-Demand-led-System.htm>

Appendix 1 - The North East's Context: Predicting the Future Demand for Learning

Phase 1 of the regional review undertook an initial analysis of existing data and information to clarify the context and guide researchers as to current stakeholders and their roles, existing partnerships and patterns of provision for 14-25 year old learners in the North East region. It provided an initial analysis of data from the following quantitative sources:

- Pupil Level Annual School Survey (PLASC) (2002/03 - 2004/05) 14-16 and 16 - 19 years, Special Educational Needs (SEN) status, LEAs. Analysis was carried out for the 3 years.
- Individualised Learner Record (ILR) (2002/03 - 2004/05) FE/WBL/ACL 14-16, 16-19, 19-25 years, by learning difficulty and disability

It also provided an initial analysis of the documentation relevant to the current and future level of demand and the extent to which demand is being met. This section outlines the findings of the review.

1 Analysis of 14 to 19 year old students in PLASC with Special Education Needs (SEN) – 12 partnership areas in the North East Region

PLASC data has been used to measure the volume and change in the student population who have SEN. Details on types of SEN were collected for the first time in January 2004 however due to data reliability and validity issues surrounding the first year of collection, a breakdown of SEN types is not available in this analysis for 2004.

The following tables will provide an overview of SEN in schools for the selected LEAs and highlight some of the key trends and issues in the population who may choose to undertake FE or WBL studies in the future.

Table 1 Number of 14-19 year old students in PLASC with SEN – 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region

	No. students with SEN			% students with SEN			% change in size of student population; with SEN	
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05		
England	213295	218600	228399	14.8%	14.3%	14.7%	7.1%	
Selected LEAs	Darlington	369	388	388	15.3%	14.9%	14.8%	5.1%
	Durham	2510	2234	2357	16.9%	14.6%	15.5%	-6.1%
	Gateshead	724	648	698	11.7%	10.4%	10.8%	-3.6%
	Hartlepool	451	543	585	16.4%	18.2%	20.2%	29.8%
	Middlesbrough	823	979	879	20.0%	22.8%	21.1%	6.8%
	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1363	1189	1125	17.2%	14.5%	14.0%	-17.5%
	North Tyneside	790	929	1030	13.5%	15.0%	16.8%	30.4%
	Northumberland	933	1168	1262	8.1%	9.8%	10.8%	35.3%
	Redcar and Cleveland	662	905	915	16.3%	21.0%	21.7%	38.2%
	South Tyneside	775	571	479	16.9%	12.6%	10.9%	-38.2%
	Stockton-on-Tees	736	877	804	13.6%	15.5%	14.3%	9.2%
Sunderland	1723	1612	1806	19.6%	18.1%	20.4%	4.8%	
North-East Region	11859	12043	12328	15.1%	14.9%	15.4%	3.9%	

Note: * Students with SEN have been identified in the PLASC data set through the variable 'SENstatus'.

Figure 1 Number of 14-19 year old students in PLASC with SEN by Local Education Authority – North East, 2004/05

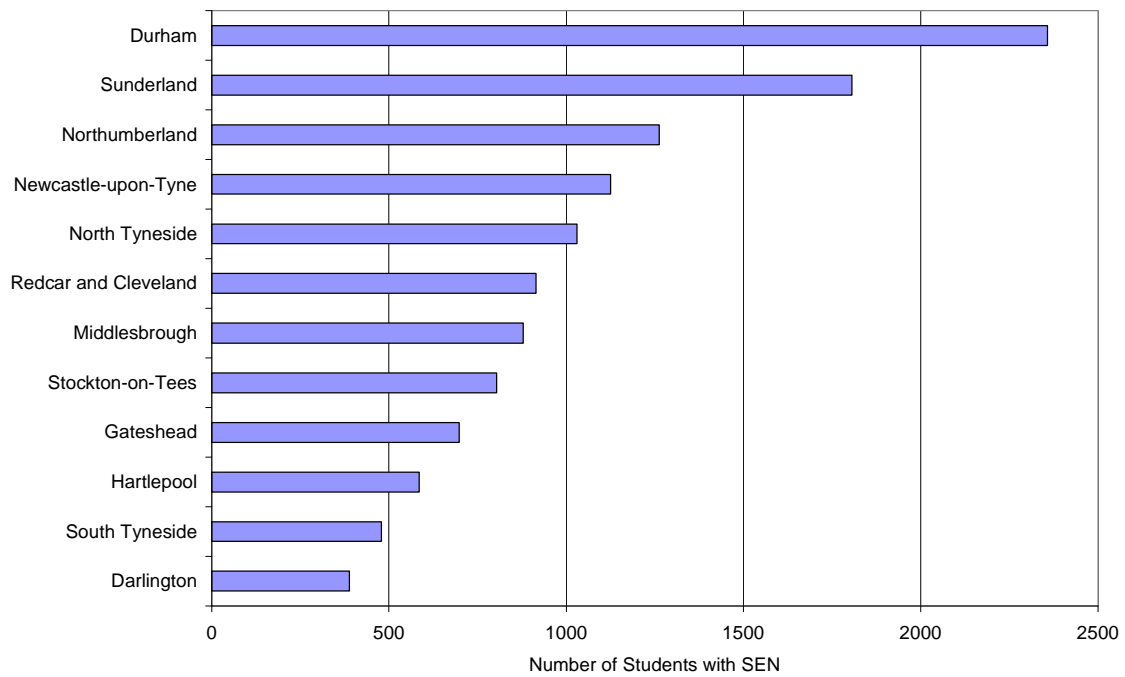


Figure 2 Percentage of 14 – 19 year old students in PLASC with SEN from 14-19 year old student population, 2004/05 – 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region

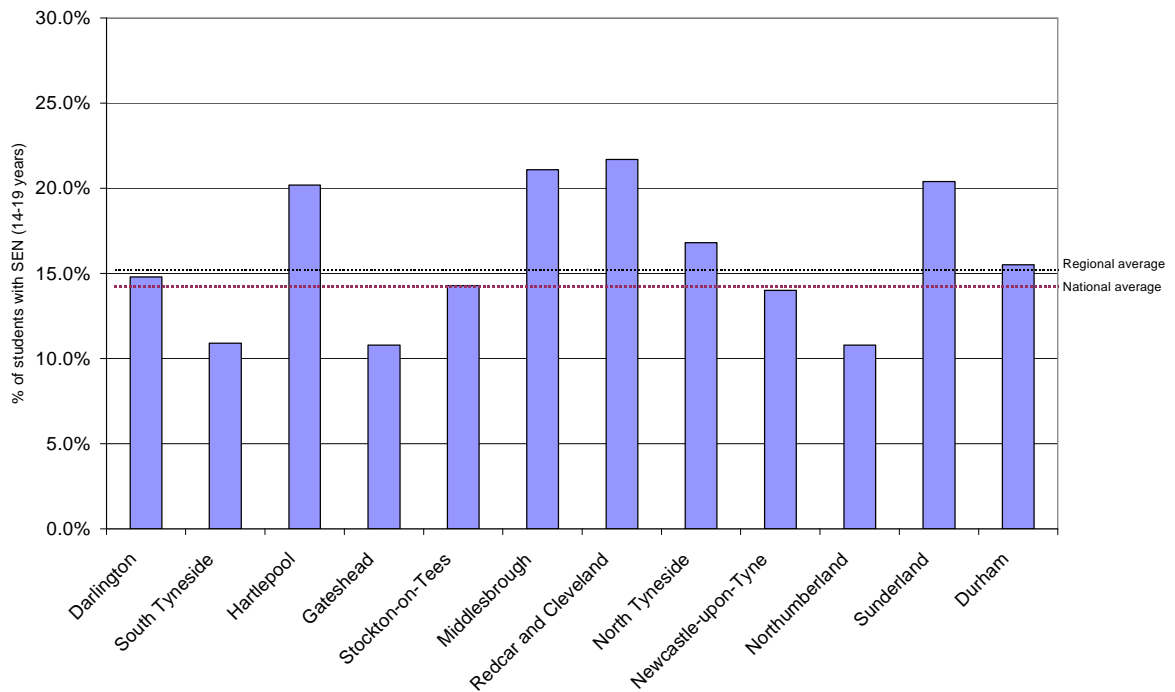


Figure 3 Percentage change in number of 14 – 19 year old students in PLASC with SEN between 2002/03 and 2004/05 – 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region

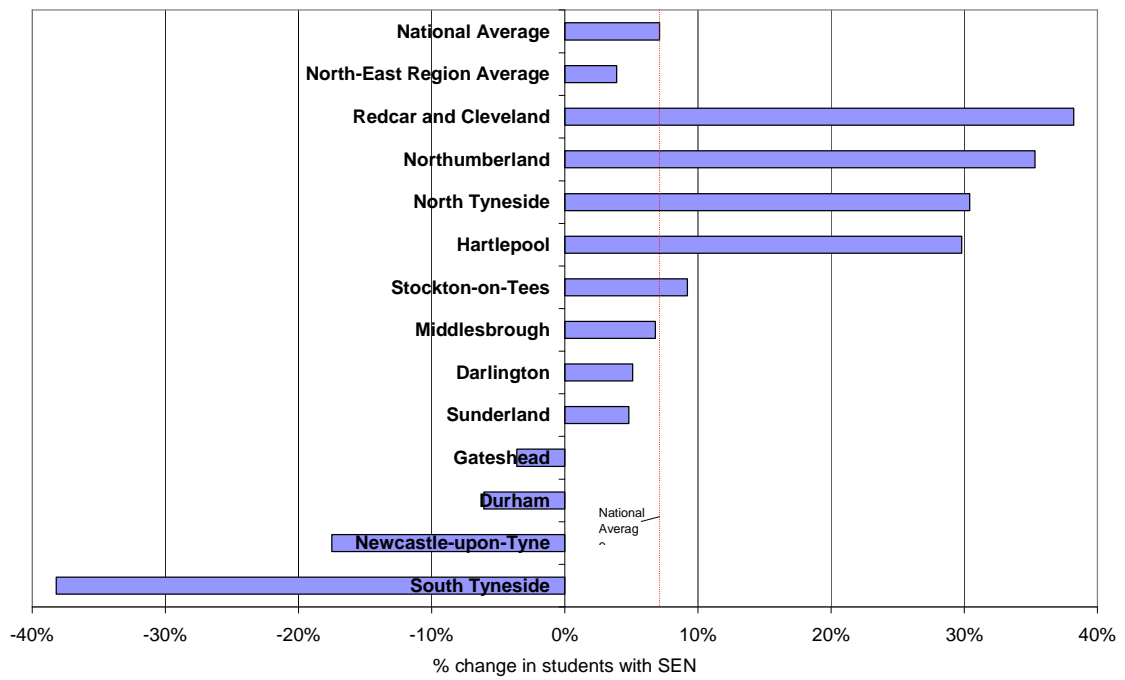


Table 2 Summary of 14-19 year old students in PLASC SEN Status – 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region

			SENstatus					Total no. of Students
			no special provision	school action	school action plus	school action plus and statutory assessment	statement of SEN.	
2002-2003	Selected LEAs	Darlington	2,038	59	116	75	119	2,407
		Durham	12,350	491	645	642	732	14,860
		Gateshead	5,449	238	240	74	172	6,173
		Hartlepool	2,294	92	108	161	90	2,745
		Middlesbrough	3,288	240	176	240	167	4,111
		Newcastle-upon-Tyne	6,543	388	399	291	285	7,906
		North Tyneside	5,077	246	207	162	175	5,867
		Northumberland	10,598	108	325	180	320	11,531
		Redcar and Cleveland	3,408	156	141	228	137	4,070
		South Tyneside	3,820	176	338	79	182	4,595
		Stockton-on-Tees	4,674	121	177	192	246	5,410
		Sunderland	7,090	510	394	334	485	8,813
North East Region			66,629	2,825	3,266	2,658	3,110	78,488
2003-2004	Selected LEAs	Darlington	2,224	159	104	1	124	2,612
		Durham	13,049	790	635	8	801	15,283
		Gateshead	5,596	325	98	0	225	6,244
		Hartlepool	2,443	255	171	3	114	2,986
		Middlesbrough	3,321	481	271	0	227	4,300
		Newcastle-upon-Tyne	6,999	490	329	4	366	8,188
		North Tyneside	5,257	352	274	6	297	6,186
		Northumberland	10,707	508	208	3	449	11,875
		Redcar and Cleveland	3,405	357	356	1	191	4,310
		South Tyneside	3,956	250	99	13	209	4,527
		Stockton-on-Tees	4,767	343	202	18	314	5,644
		Sunderland	7,310	725	376	10	501	8,922
North East Region			69,034	5,035	3,123	67	3,818	81,077
2004-2005	Selected LEAs	Darlington	2,231	166	96	0	126	2,619
		Durham	12,809	911	686	15	745	15,166
		Gateshead	5,740	398	94	1	205	6,438
		Hartlepool	2,314	289	187	4	105	2,899
		Middlesbrough	3,283	388	247	0	244	4,162
		Newcastle-upon-Tyne	6,902	480	307	0	338	8,027
		North Tyneside	5,089	492	261	1	276	6,119
		Northumberland	10,413	548	268	3	443	11,675
		Redcar and Cleveland	3,303	339	393	4	179	4,218
		South Tyneside	3,915	188	87	8	196	4,394
		Stockton-on-Tees	4,834	323	161	1	319	5,638
		Sunderland	7,034	828	478	6	494	8,840
North East Region			67,867	5,350	3,265	43	3,670	80,195

Note: 2002-3 includes recoding of pre 2002 code (when six options became five options) and caution is advised when comparing 'school action plus and statutory assessment' figures for this year.

1.1 Profile of student population (PLASC) with SEN for 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region

The following tables provide summaries of the characteristics and patterns of change for students with SEN within the 12 partnership areas of this study. Age, Free School Meal Eligibility and Ethnicity breakdowns have been listed. Please note that due to changes in recording methods, ethnicity groups in 2002/03 are not comparable to those of 2003/04 and 2004/05 and therefore have not been listed.

Figure 4 Percentage of 14-19 year old students in PLASC SEN by Gender – 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region, 2004/05

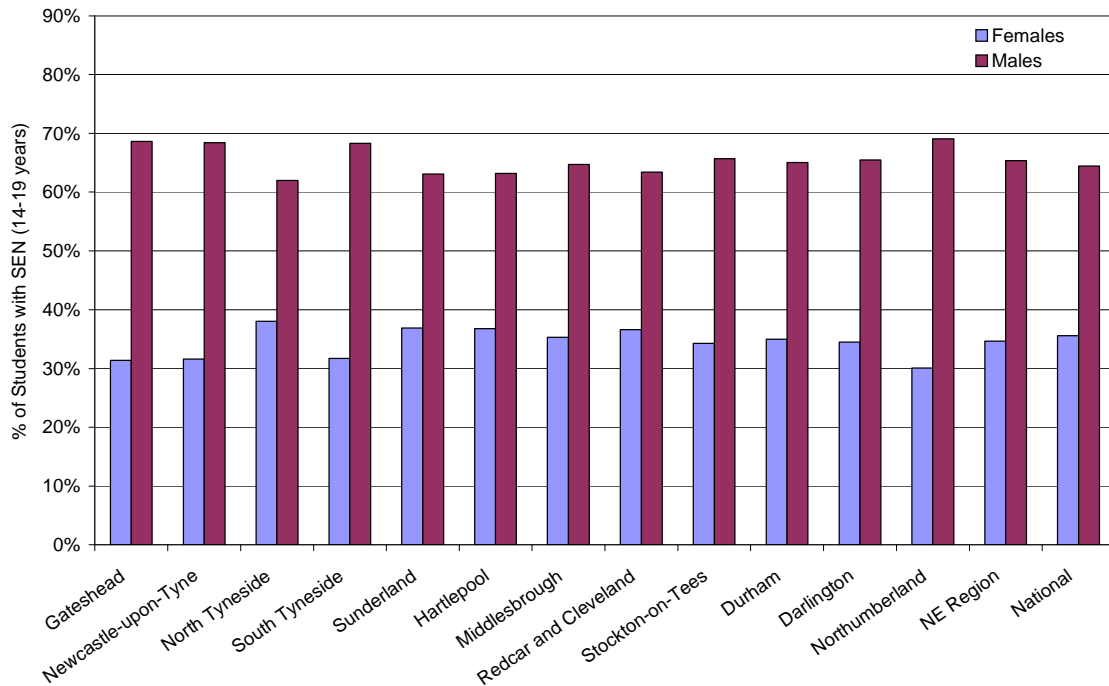
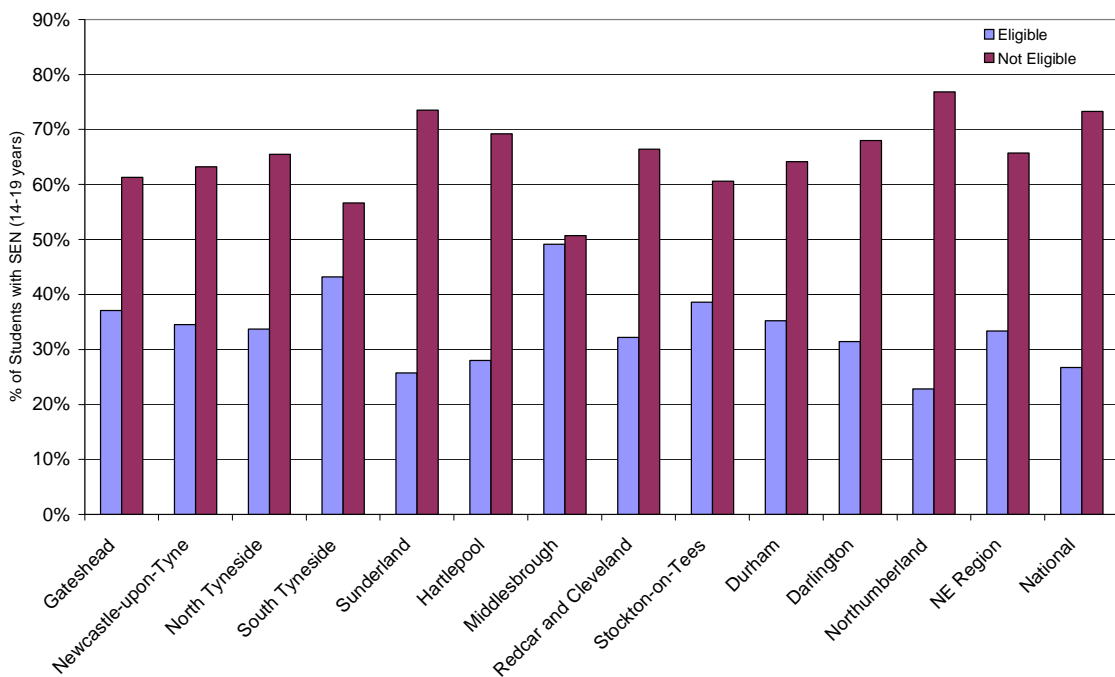


Figure 5 Percentage of 14-19 year old students in PLASC SEN by Free School Meal Eligibility – 12 Local Education Authorities in North East Region, 2004/05



Overall summary of issues in schools

- The PLASC data indicates that overall, the NE Region has a higher proportion of 14-19 year old students with SEN (15.4% in 2004) than the national average of 14.7% in the same year. The regional trend has been consistent with national changes where the proportion of students with SEN fell slightly between 2002/03 and 2003/04 and rose in 2004/05. The average SEN student population growth rate of 4% (in 2004/05) for the NE since 2002/03 however was considerably lower than the national average growth rate of 7%.
- Whilst Redcar and Cleveland (21.7%) and Middlesbrough (21.1%) host the highest proportion of SEN students for their overall student population, Durham and Sunderland have the highest number of students with SEN (2,357 and 1,806 students in 2004/05)
- Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, North Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham all have higher proportions of students with SEN from their total student populations than the regional and national averages.
- On the other hand, South Tyneside, Gateshead and Northumberland have considerably lower proportions of SEN students (all under 11%) than the regional and national averages. Between 2002/03 and 2004/05, particular LEAs such as Redcar and Cleveland, Northumberland, North Tyneside and Hartlepool experienced very large rises in their SEN student populations (increases of 30% or more). South Tyneside and Newcastle-upon-Tyne on the other hand measured substantial drops within the same time period.
- Across the region there is a consistent pattern of more male than female learners identified as having SEN. The proportions are approximately two thirds male and one third female. This follows the national SEN breakdown where 36% of 14-19 year olds with SEN are females 65% are males.
- There are very few learners from minority ethnic groups with SEN in the NE region. Nationally, this is also the case as SEN students are predominately White-British (79%) and only a small percentage of students are from Pakistani (3%), Caribbean (2%) or other minority ethnic groups. 92.2% of students with SEN are White-British in the North East compared to 90.9% of all school students in the North East.
- The measure of free school meal is used in the school sector as a proxy measure for disadvantage. The pattern that emerges shows considerable variations. Middlesbrough has the highest proportion (49.1%) of learners with SEN who are eligible for free school meals suggesting that these learners experience high levels of disadvantage. South Tyneside (43.2%) has the second highest proportion of learners eligible for free school meals. Overall, these figures of eligibility in these LEAs and the region as

a whole (33.3%) are considerably higher than the national average of 26.7%.

- In contrast, Northumberland and Sunderland have the lowest proportions of learners with SEN eligible for free school meals, which suggests relatively low levels of disadvantage amongst these learners.

2 Analysis of 14 to 25 year old learners in Further Education, Work-based Learning and Adult Community Learning with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – 12 partnership areas (LADs) in the North East Region

2.1 Further Education

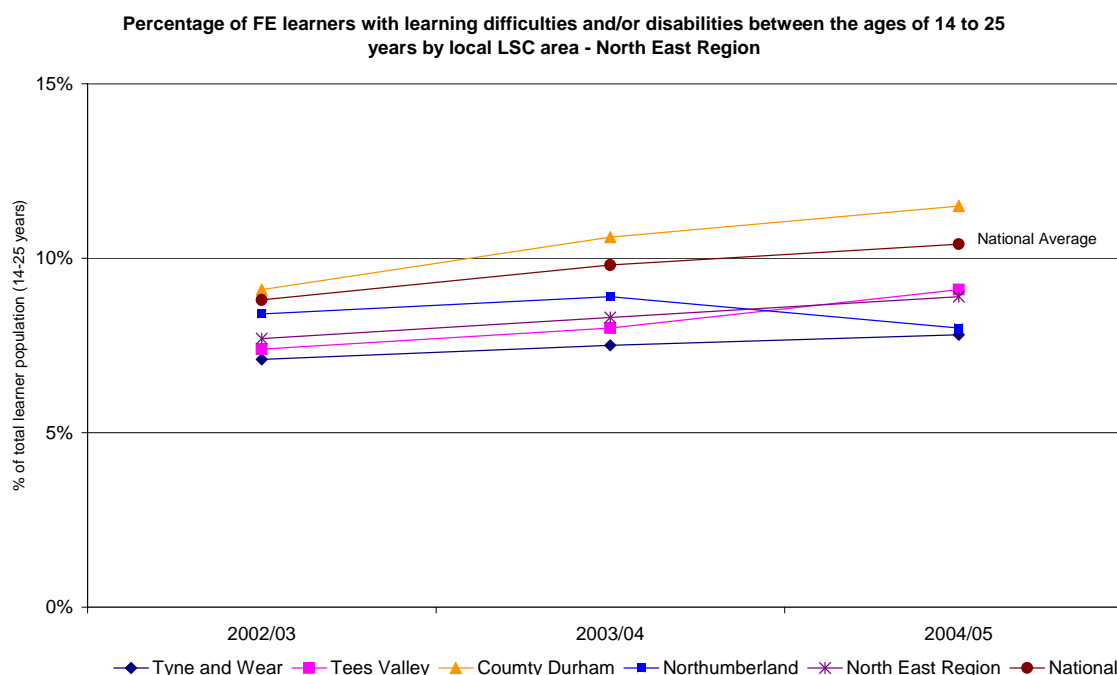
The purpose of the following analysis is to identify past and current trends in demand for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in FE and WBL across the 12 LEAs in the North East. The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) has been used for years 2002/03 to 2004/05, to identify learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and highlight key patterns and issues, which may impact future provision within the LEAs.

Table 3 Summary of 14 to 25 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) in Further Education (FE), 2002/03 to 2004/05

		No. with LLDD			% of all learners between age 14-25		
		2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Selected Local Authorities	Gateshead (a)	485	439	483	6.4%	7.0%	7.4%
	Newcastle upon Tyne (a)	659	657	677	6.8%	6.9%	6.1%
	North Tyneside (a)	416	481	481	6.9%	8.3%	7.6%
	South Tyneside (a)	342	375	516	4.9%	5.9%	7.6%
	Sunderland (a)	1,053	908	1,010	9.5%	9.1%	9.3%
	Hartlepool (b)	388	456	500	10.5%	12.3%	12.5%
	Middlesbrough (b)	421	438	610	6.0%	7.2%	8.5%
	Darlington (b)	293	240	308	9.2%	8.0%	9.4%
	Redcar and Cleveland (b)	472	488	610	7.9%	8.5%	9.4%
	Stockton-on-Tees (b)	500	293	568	6.2%	5.3%	7.4%
	Durham (c)	1,533	1,648	2,038	9.1%	10.6%	11.5%
Northumberland (d)	612	695	711	8.4%	8.9%	8.0%	
(a) Tyne and Wear Local LSC		2,955	2,860	3,167	7.1%	7.5%	7.8%
(b) Tees Valley Local LSC		2,074	1,915	2,596	7.4%	8.0%	9.1%
(c) County Durham Local LSC		1,533	1,648	2,038	9.1%	10.6%	11.5%
(d) Northumberland Local LSC		612	695	711	8.4%	8.9%	8.0%
North East Region		7,174	7,118	8,512	7.7%	8.3%	8.9%
England		135,064	148,848	158,486	8.8%	9.8%	10.4%

Note: In each year, a number of learners fail to disclose information on whether they have a learning difficulty and/or disability. At the national level this varies between 14% and 22% of all the learner population and regionally between 9% and 15%. Please note that the percentage of unknowns has been falling each year and caution is advised when interpreting the results.

Figure 6



Overall summary of issues in Further Education

The ILR data indicates that there are considerable variations in take up of FE provision by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in different parts of the North East.

- The overall percentage of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending FE in the North East in 2004/05 (8.4%) is lower than the national average (10.4%).
- There are considerable differences between LSC areas.
- County Durham at 11.5% is more than 1 percentage point higher than the national average and is well above the average for the North East. It has also seen the highest rate of growth.
- Tyne and Wear has the highest number of individuals with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities of all the LSC areas but the lowest percentage of the overall FE population (7.8%), well below the national average.
- Although Northumberland shows a small increase in numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to 711 in 2004/05, there is a decrease in the percentage of all learners.
- At LEA level, there are also considerable variations. Hartlepool (12.4%) and Durham (11.5%) have the highest proportion of learners with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, well above both regional and national averages. Durham also has by far the highest number of

individuals (2,038), nearly a quarter of the entire number of learners with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the region.

- Sunderland has the second highest number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at 1,010, although at 9.3% it is over a percentage point below the national average.
- Most LEA areas are showing an increase in numbers and percentages of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Exceptions are Northumberland (see above) and Newcastle upon Tyne where the numbers are relatively stable but the proportion is declining and Sunderland where there was a dip for 2002/03 to 2003/04 and although in 2004/05 the number rises again, it is still below the 2002/03 level. North Tyneside shows the same number of learners in the last two years but a decreased proportion.
- The gender profile of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in FE, as recorded on the ILR, is different from that for schools. Although males predominate, there is a much closer balance between the genders. It will be interesting to explore why this difference exists between FE and both schools and work-based learning.
- The ethnic profile of FE learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is predominantly White – British although there are considerably more learners from minority ethnic groups in FE (6%) than there are in work-based learning (less than 2%). There are fewer learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities compared with the minority ethnic population of all learners in the region, which is 10% in FE and 2.5% in WBL.
- In FE dyslexia is the most commonly identified learning difficulty or disability accounting for more than 20% of these learners in all LEAs. Moderate learning difficulties and 'Other' are the second and third most reported learning difficulties for all LEAs where an average of 17% and 12% of 14-19 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities report these types.

2.2 Work- Based Learning

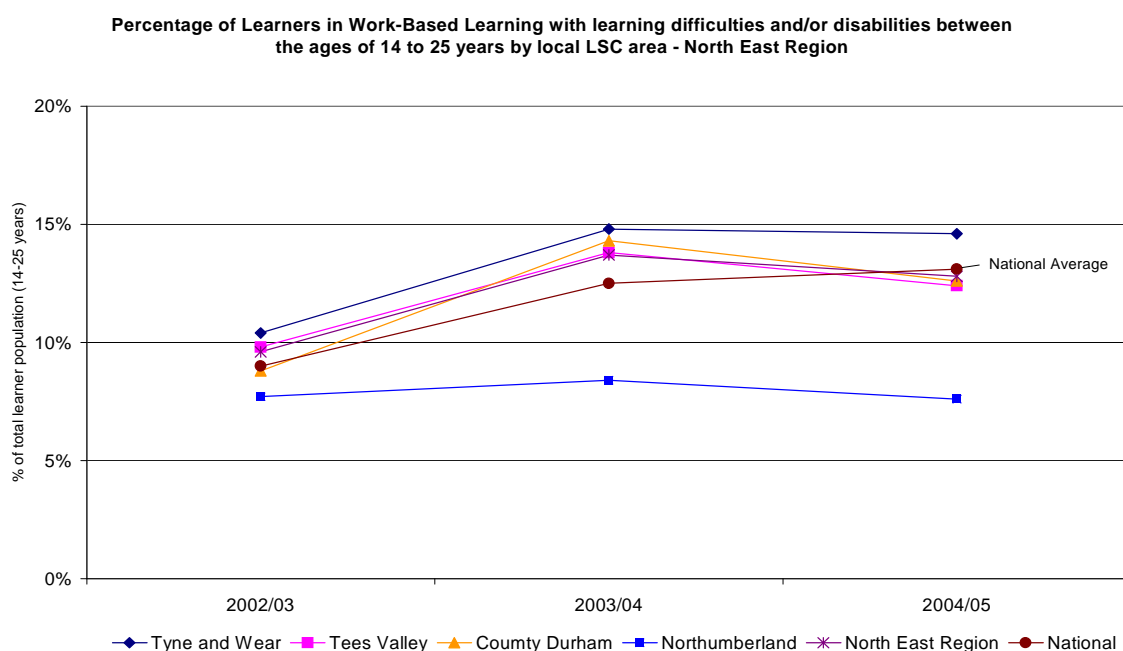
Table 4 Summary of 14 to 25 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) in Work-Based Learning (WBL)¹⁴, 2002/03 to 2004/05

		No. with LLDD			% of all learners between age 14-25		
		2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Selected Local Authorities	Gateshead (a)	247	312	358	7.1%	11.1%	13.2%
	Newcastle upon Tyne (a)	459	529	556	11.5%	16.1%	17.5%
	North Tyneside (a)	324	390	391	11.2%	15.3%	15.5%
	South Tyneside (a)	190	265	350	6.5%	9.3%	12.0%
	Sunderland (a)	785	991	705	13.1%	18.6%	14.6%
	Hartlepool (b)	350	378	265	16.8%	21.2%	18.9%
	Middlesbrough (b)	262	301	255	8.1%	12.1%	11.9%
	Darlington (b)	217	200	141	12.8%	13.8%	10.3%
	Redcar and Cleveland (b)	235	334	279	7.2%	12.5%	11.4%
	Stockton-on-Tees (b)	315	379	328	8.1%	12.0%	11.6%
	Durham (c)	910	1,099	895	8.8%	14.3%	12.6%
	Northumberland (d)	377	381	345	7.7%	8.4%	7.6%
(a) Tyne and Wear Local LSC		2,005	2,487	2,360	10.4%	14.8%	14.6%
(b) Tees Valley Local LSC		1,379	1,592	1,266	9.8%	13.8%	12.4%
(c) County Durham Local LSC		910	1,099	895	8.8%	14.3%	12.6%
(d) Northumberland Local LSC		377	381	345	7.7%	8.4%	7.6%
North East Region		4,671	5,559	4,866	9.6%	13.7%	12.8%
England		54,992	70,093	66,892	9.0%	12.5%	13.1%

Note: Similarly to FE, a number of learners fail to disclose information on whether they have a learning difficulty or disability in WBL therefore although it is a smaller proportion of learners (in 2004/04 3%); caution is advised when interpreting the results.

¹⁴ Please note that due to a change in recording categories for funding information in the ILR for years 2003/04 and 2004/05, WBL figures may include a small percentage of double counting and therefore numbers may be overstated in some cases.

Figure 7



Overall summary of issues in Work-based Learning

In work-based learning a different pattern from FE emerges from ILR data.

- The number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the North East shows a decline in all local LSC areas between 2003/04 and 2004/05 after growth in the previous year in all areas but Northumberland. This contrasts with an increase nationally.
- Northumberland is well below the national and regional averages and declining.
- In contrast Tyne and Wear is above the national and regional averages and shows the smallest decline in numbers. In 2004/05, 8% of 14-25 year old learners had a learning difficulty or disability, compared to the region average of 9% and national rate of 10%.
- In 2004/05, Hartlepool (18.9%) and Newcastle upon Tyne (17.5%) had the highest percentages of learners with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in work-based learning well above the national average.
- The highest number of learners is in Durham with 895 (12.5%), Sunderland with 705 (14.6%) and Newcastle upon Tyne 556 (17.5%) although the percentage of learners differs considerably from below national and regional averages Durham to well above Newcastle upon Tyne.
- The gender profile in work-based learning is very similar to the school profile with many more males than females. The national split of gender for

14-25 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in WBL is not as significant 46% females and 54% males.

- In Middlesbrough -94.9% of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in work-based learning are from White – British backgrounds and in all other areas the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is even smaller than in Middlesbrough.
- Moderate learning difficulty accounts for about half of all learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in work-based learning. Exceptions are Hartlepool where the numbers have declined steeply from 51% (2002/03) to 31.6% (2004/05), and Stockton where the decline is from 46% to 34.1% over the same period. The highest percentage is in Sunderland with 59.9%.
- In some areas learners identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties account for high numbers of those with learning difficulties and disabilities (significantly higher than the 4.7% national average) 58.1% in Sunderland, 25.1% in Gateshead and 21.1% in South Tyneside, elsewhere very few are reported.
- In half the LEAs in the region, dyslexia is identified in about a fifth or more of work-based learning learners (nationally this is also the case at 20.3%). In Hartlepool there are 33.5%, in Darlington 24.8%, in Stockton on Tees 20.1%, and in Redcar and Cleveland, Durham and Middlesbrough 18%.

2.3 Adult Community Learning

Table 5 Summary of 14 to 25 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Adult-Community Learning (ACL), 2003/04 to 2004/05

		No. with LLDD		% of all learners between age 14-25	
		2003/04	2004/05	2003/04	2004/05
Selected Local Authorities	Gateshead (a)	37	33	7.5%	8.6%
	Newcastle upon Tyne (a)	14	12	2.3%	2.2%
	North Tyneside (a)	14	6	10.5%	4.8%
	South Tyneside (a)	9	8	2.8%	3.8%
	Sunderland (a)	21	32	4.7%	8.6%
	Hartlepool (b)	11	6	12.0%	5.2%
	Middlesbrough (b)	*	7	*	1.1%
	Darlington (b)	8	6	9.3%	7.5%
	Redcar and Cleveland (b)	30	10	11.5%	4.1%
	Stockton-on-Tees (b)	9	14	2.1%	2.7%
	Durham (c)	17	11	2.4%	1.5%
	Northumberland (d)	18	7	5.5%	3.1%
(a) Tyne and Wear Local LSC		95	91	4.7%	5.5%
(b) Tees Valley Local LSC		60	43	4.2%	2.7%
(c) County Durham Local LSC		17	11	2.4%	1.5%
(d) Northumberland Local LSC		18	7	5.5%	3.1%
North East Region		190	152	4.2%	3.6%
England		4,559	5,111	6.3%	6.9%

Overall summary of issues in Adult Community Learning

ILR data indicates the contrast in ILR records between adult community learning provision and FE and work-based learning.

- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities between the ages of 14-25 recorded on the ILR, form a very small percentage of the adult community learning population in the North East, well below the national average.
- Currently ACL providers do not appear to make a significant contribution to provision for these learners or the data is under-recorded.

Appendix 2 – North East Regional Action Plan for Mental Health

Improving services to people with mental health difficulties NIACE/NIMHE (CSIP)/LSC Partnership Project

Aims: 1 Build Capacity of the Sectors

Objective	Action	Lead	Output	Date	Completed work	Notes
<p>Raise awareness of mental health across the whole of the Post 16 sector</p> <p>Ensure that there are opportunities for providers to share good practice and to have access to training and resources that will help them meet the needs of learners with mental health difficulties</p>	Disseminate all resources developed within the national project to all providers in the region	NIACE	All resources disseminated	March 2008		
	Dissemination of 1 in 4 newsletter to all members in the Regional network and potential members	NIACE	Newsletter disseminated	March 2008		
	Facilitate 4 Network meetings per year in the region.	NIACE/CSIP	4 Network meetings with presentations on good practice. Minutes and notes of meetings available on the website. Members handbook available to all members	March 2008	Meetings scheduled for March, June, Sept, Dec 2007	
	Ensure wide and diverse membership across the region	NIACE	Joining form available on the website and in other media. Membership data analysed to ensure fair representation	Dec 2006	Forms on NIACE Completed Dec 2006	

Ensure that each Learning and Skills Council regions include mental health in their Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)	Provision of training to learning providers in mental health awareness	NIACE/LSC/CSIP	Training in 10 Essential Shared capabilities offered throughout the region	June 2006		
				March 2007	3 in-depth programmes, 2 "train the trainers" 1 day events-delivered to a range of learning providers	
		NIACE/CSIP/LSC	Development of 1st Aid in mental health provision	March 2007	Employers event in Tees Valley March 2007	
		NIACE	Training for TUC workplace learning reps	March 2007	3 sessions of training delivered to TUC learning Representatives – further involvement planned	
	Develop curriculum and accreditation resources appropriate to the needs of learners with mental health difficulties	NIACE	OCN accredited training materials for Service Users developed by network members	Jan 2007	Disseminated across the region	Initial materials and accreditation developed – further developments by June 2007
	Links to appropriate websites and information put on NIACE/CSIP and LSC website to ensure joined up information and dissemination	NIACE/CSIP/LSC	Links to other membership	March 2008	Initial work achieved - other ongoing	
	NIACE/LSC	Mental health EDIMs in Business plan	March 2008			

<p>Support and build the capacity of the learning and skills sector and the health and social care sectors to work in partnership</p>	<p>Encourage specific reference to learners with mental health difficulties in learning provider business plans</p> <p>NIACE & CSIP to meet regularly to review partnership working arrangements and progress in implementing the action plan.</p> <p>Promotion of adult learning and skills in the Social inclusion Plans of Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities</p>	<p>NIACE/LSC</p> <p>NIACE/CSIP</p> <p>CSIP</p>	<p>Increase of number of learning providers with specific mention of mental health in their business plans</p> <p>Regular meetings of Partnership leads in NIACE, CSIP and LSC</p> <p>References in Plans</p>	<p>March 2008</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>March 2008</p>		<p>Ongoing regular meetings re achievement of this action plan</p>
<p>Build the capacity of service users/learners and carers to be involved in ensuring that learning and skills provision is non-stigmatising, accessible and compliant with DDA.</p>	<p>Ensure that learning and skills for people experiencing mental health problems is included in Local Area Agreements and Strategic Plans</p> <p>Encourage specific reference to those with mental health difficulties in learning provider Disability Equality Schemes under the Disability Discrimination Act</p> <p>Development of Service User/Learner Forum to give greater involvement in development and delivery of education provision. Development of the use of existing NHS and CSIP forums to provide feedback</p> <p>Ensure that there are procedures and processes in place so that network meetings are inclusive and accessible for service users/learners in the region</p>	<p>CSIP</p> <p>NIACE/LSC</p> <p>NIACE</p> <p>NIACE/CSIP</p>	<p>References in Agreements</p> <p>Review of learning provider DESs</p> <p>Inaugural meeting</p> <p>Setting up of forum</p> <p>Effective use of the protocols and reimbursement procedures to ensure</p>	<p>March 2008</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>October 2006 March 2008</p> <p>On-going</p>		<p>Links will be made with the LSC DeD project.</p>

<p>Development of capacity of voluntary sector to deliver education provision</p>	<p>Work with Mental Health North East and other voluntary sector organisations to identify training and development needs in the sector and ways of delivering to providers</p>	<p>NIACE/CSIP</p> <p>NIACE</p>	<p>accessibility, reward and recognition for service user/learners inclusion in Network meetings. Monitor the membership numbers and attendance of service users/learners in the region</p> <p>Approach to Big Lottery Fund for funds to develop this capacity</p>	<p>Jan 2007 outcome awaited</p>		
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2 Boost Demand for Learning

Objective	Action	Lead	Output	Date	Completed work	Notes
Develop promotional literature, campaigns and activities to inform people of the opportunities available to them, and of the benefits of learning. Encourage greater involvement of mental health services in referral and support of learners in partnership with learning providers	Ensure that all promotional literature is disseminated and that providers are aware of their use	NIACE	Dissemination of all materials	March 2008	Dissemination of materials and information	
	Promote campaigns such as Adult Learners Week and support activities developed by providers in the region	NIACE/CSIP	Dissemination of ALW materials and support activities within the region. Encourage at least one ALW activity in each Mental Health Trust area	March 2008		
	Work with the mental health Service user/Learner forum to publicise learning opportunities	NIACE/CSIP	Dissemination of information at forum meetings NIACE RPO to be invited to raise with SHA network and day services meetings	Dec 2008 March 2008		
	Develop "Prescriptions for Learning" projects to encourage more learners. Learning advisers and learning advice to be available in health centres, and other appropriate situations	NIACE/CSIP	Development of schemes, provision in place	March 2008	Pilot development work Co. Durham Jan 2007	

3 Ensure Quality of Provision

Objective	Action	Lead	Output	Date	Completed work	Notes
Listen to and involve learners about what they value in learning and what helps and supports their learning and achievement	Through the use of Inclusive meeting protocols and the re-imbursement procedures ensure that service users/learners have the opportunity to participate in and present at Network meetings	NIACE/CSIP	Service user/learner participation and input into Network meetings	On-going		
	Ensure that learner/service user involvement is written into any new bids or projects	NIACE		On-going		
	Setting up of a learner/service user forum to comment and raise issues in relation to education and training .Development of the use of existing NHS and CSIP forums to provide feedback	NIACE/CSIP	Disseminate views of Service users/learners as raised in Forum to full Network	March 2008		
			Minutes of Network, SU/Learner forum	On-going		
Identify good practice providers and support the sharing of good practice with less well-developed provision	Identify lead providers in the region and facilitate the dissemination of their good practice through Network meetings and other activities.	NIACE/LSC	Good practice providers sharing their experiences and knowledge with others at network meetings			
Recognise that different groups of learners need differentiated approaches e.g. young people with	Ensure that inclusion and support for people with mental health difficulties is embedded in current and future LSC projects, provision and pilots, such as train to gain, learning for Living and work :	NIACE/CSIP	References in programme documentation. LLDD and E&D development plans			
	Ensure that information and learning from projects in other regions e.g. Young people with mental health needs, are disseminated and built on in the region		Dissemination of any materials, briefing sheets etc	On-going		

<p>mental health needs, people who use/abuse drugs and/or alcohol.</p> <p>Development of Quality mechanisms and standards for learners with mental health difficulties</p>	<p>Promote and disseminate Quality frameworks as developed elsewhere. Participate in QIA research into quality of provision</p>	<p>NIACE</p>	<p>Dissemination of any materials, briefing sheets etc NIACE RPO to take part in research</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Feb 2007</p>		
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4 Raise Achievement Levels of Learners with Mental Health Difficulties

Objective	Action	Lead	Output	Date	Completed work	Notes
<p>Strengthen progression routes to and from Further Education and training into e.g. higher Education or employment</p> <p>Develop new curriculum and qualifications which recognise the special circumstances learners experiencing mental health difficulties</p>	Ensure that information and knowledge developed in other projects e.g. What Works project is disseminated and built on in the Region	NIACE/CSIP	Dissemination of information and materials	On-going		
	Partnership working to develop collaboration to identify and facilitate progression	NIACE/LSC	Partnership projects in Sunderland, North Tyneside, Gateshead	March 2008		Successful example in Sunderland, others in process of setting up
	Develop the recognising and recording of progress and achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA)	NIACE	RARPA included in provider's assessment plans Dissemination of examples of good practise via Network	March 2008		
	Developing new curriculum and qualifications	NIACE	Identify and disseminate existing good practice via Network. Development of new curriculum and assessment products	March 2008		Curriculum assessment tools developed by partnership Of New Coll Durham, and S Tyneside council