



# **DISABILITY ISSUES** FOR POST-16 PROVISION

August 2005

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## **1. Introduction**

This report has been commissioned by ELWa as a contribution to the ongoing exploration of the extent to which education and training provision across the post-16 learning sector provides fully inclusive and equal access to learning for people with disabilities.

ELWa has documented its vision that all individuals should be given the opportunity to achieve their full potential and learn new skills throughout their lives. To make that vision a reality, ELWa is striving to ensure that provision is learner focused; flexible and responsive to individual, business and community needs. It should be accessible to all, with parity of esteem between vocational and academic learning. It is understood that this requires the promotion of successful collaboration along with a coordinated and evidence-based approach to policy development and implementation.

The research reported here was undertaken by Dysg in liaison with Skill to explore the extent to which post-compulsory education and training provision in Wales provides fully inclusive and equal access to learning for people with disabilities. Part of its remit was to note any gaps in provision and to identify implications for the future funding and delivery of post-16 provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD).

## **2. Background and context**

In April 2001 the National Council for Education and Training for Wales (NCETW) was given a statutory responsibility under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 for funding post-16 learning in Wales. ELWa is required to 'have regard' to the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity between them and other learners.

2.1 Relevant legislation The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), Part IV, modified by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), outlaws discrimination against disabled students and applicants, in that they cannot be treated 'less favourably' than their non-disabled counterparts without justification (Phipps, Sutherland and Seale, 2002; Davies, Doyle and Robson 2004).

Part IV of the DDA was implemented in stages, starting in September 2002 with the main implementations relating to not treating disabled students unfairly. In September 2003 came the requirement on post-16 learning providers to supply auxiliary aids and services. The remaining physical features, such as widening doors and installing ramps and lifts, are required to be in place by September 2005. Although the DDA Part 4 does not cover work-based learning providers, they are covered by the earlier parts of the DDA and the implications for practice are similar.

## 2.2 The Welsh context

The current legislation focuses attention on improving resources and facilities and supporting and protecting all learners with impairments in all aspects of their studies. In 2002 the National Assembly for Wales voted unanimously to accept the validity of the social model of disability and acknowledged the need to mainstream this principle in the policies of the National Assembly for Wales. This social model focuses on the barriers created by society that disabled people face, rather than on an individual's physical, sensory or learning impairments, or mental health issues. These barriers are created because those responsible for designing facilities and for arranging activities have not acknowledged the personal requirements resulting from impairment. This can lead to disabled people being excluded and prevents them from having equality of opportunity in many important areas of their lives, such as education and employment.

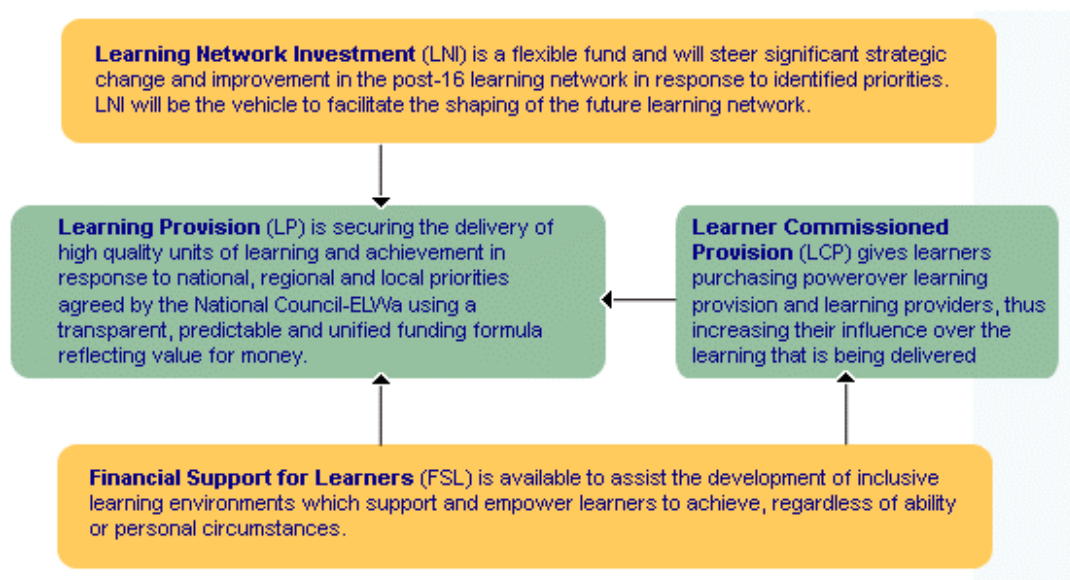
Disability Wales suggest that disability is at a higher level in Wales than England with just over 16% (1 in 6) of the Welsh population having a disability compared

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with just over 14% (1 in 7) in England. In recognition of the additional costs of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ELWVa set aside a total of £4.14 million for supplementary funding through the Recurrent Funding Methodology (RFM) for further education (FE) provision during 2003/4. However, Wales is reported to be one year behind England in fulfilling the legislation of the DDA (DRC 2003), although in their research case studies failed to identify any significant differences in perceptions between the two countries.

Assessment of need and support for learning and learners will in future be made available through the National Planning and Funding System (NPFS). This is intended to be firmly focused on the needs of learners and has been designed to encapsulate the various strands of learning provision and developments which will assist with ELWVa's aims to fund strategically planned learning opportunities supported by provider capacity and infrastructure development. The National Funding System (NFS) is designed to address the inequities in resource allocation with a view to improving access, supporting diversity, promoting equality or opportunity and reflecting wise use of money. The NFS is composed of four streams of funding, which are represented below:<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Information and diagram taken from ELWVa documentation ([www.elwa.org.uk/elwaweb/elwa.aspx?pageid=1404](http://www.elwa.org.uk/elwaweb/elwa.aspx?pageid=1404)).

This new approach to funding aims to bring coherence to the learning and skills sector. Each part of the sector has previously operated within a different funding mechanism. The National Funding System will be introduced progressively over a number of years from the academic year 2005/6 to ensure a level playing field and to simplify the resourcing of post-16 learning.

All forms of support for provision for LLDD will be funded from the Financial Support for Learners (FSL) stream. In order to inform their thinking in relation to all aspects of funding provision for post-16 learners and facilitate collection of information and data relating to current and future funding and provision for LLDD, ELWa has gathered a group of specialists in LLDD provision and finance. These were initially drawn from local education authorities (LEAs) to identify the issues in the school sector; however, more recently the group has been extended to include representation from FE and work-based learning (WBL).

### **2.3 The Welsh post-16 learning sector**

A recent survey undertaken across England and Wales (DRC 2003) found evidence of good practice in meeting the requirements for the DDA in some further and higher education institutions and discovered instances of lack of understanding in others. The survey also found that the requirements of the DDA had been implemented inconsistently, casting doubt on whether disabled students would have equally positive experiences at all institutions.

There were 25 FE institutions (including the WEA South Wales and YMCA) and some 120 contracted providers of WBL within Wales at the time the research was initiated. In the current financial year some 57,000 learners are involved in work-based learning. In addition there are 22 LEAs with around 172 schools providing for some 27,000 16–19-year-old learners. Many LEAs are also involved in providing adult and community learning (ACL) provision alongside provision from colleges and through approximately eight sponsored bodies. The post-16 sector is not only diverse in terms of categories of providers, but also within each

category there can be a wide range in terms of size; age range of learners involved; curriculum or programme areas offered to learners; context for learning – whether urban or rural, specialised or general; and ability to make learning available bilingually or through the medium of Welsh or through part-time, full-time or other flexible learning such as traditional distance learning or through the use of technology. This adds up to a complex sector with a wide variety in infrastructure, resource requirements, statutory context and governance.

While the impact on all providers of the DDA is similar overall, the timescale for implementation and parts of the legislation relating to different sectors of provision varies. Due to existing variation in funding processes and accountability across providers, some resources to meet the needs of disabled learners have been available to certain types of providers but not others. Additional capital resources, for example, have been available to FE colleges, but this was not the case for non-college-based WBL or ACL providers. During the course of the research ELWa has been developing and piloting its National Planning and Funding System. The development has had to take account of the existing variation across providers and some of the sectoral issues relating to LLDD, which are outlined below.

### **2.4 School sixth forms**

Provision for LLDD in school sixth forms is complex and surrounded by legal duties and codes of practice. Under the Education Act 1996 local education authorities have a legal duty to provide special educational provision for pupils with a statement of educational need (SEN).

A statement of special educational needs is drawn up by the LEA in accordance with a national SEN Code of Practice for Wales. The issuing of a statement follows a multi-professional assessment of a pupil's needs and the LEA reviews the statement every year in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. Every LEA must, by law, provide the educational support detailed in each pupil's statement of special educational needs. Unless a statement lapses, is amended



or ceased by the LEA in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice for Wales, a statement will remain in place until the end of the academic year in which the pupil reaches 19 years of age. LEAs manage their limited resources to ensure that the needs of young people with statements of educational needs are prioritised.

There are four main types of provision for LLDD in schools: LLDD in mainstream schools, LEA-designated resourced provision within mainstream schools, LLDD in special schools and specialist placements ('out of county' placements). This research has focused principally on the provision of LLDD in mainstream schools.

Pupils with statements of special educational needs are, where appropriate, taught in mainstream schools. The 'inclusion policies' of LEAs are aimed at improving the accessibility of mainstream education. The SEN Code of Practice for Wales, however, identifies levels of action or intervention needed to address the needs of pupils with SEN. The lowest level is called 'school action'. This is the level at which a teacher or special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) identifies a child with SEN who needs additional or different support to that given as part of the general curriculum. Parents should be informed of, and consulted on, this and any further action, which may involve some redeployment of resources by a school to address a pupil's difficulties or lack of progress with no external additional support. 'School action plus' involves input by external agencies that may need to be drawn from LEA central services. This results in the request for help from outside services or specialist help to meet a child's needs. This should be done after a meeting with parents, the SENCO and other colleagues involved with the child.

The next level of intervention is a formal statutory assessment, following which a statement may be issued by the LEA. Where it is felt the child still has extra needs which have not been met in the previous stages, the school may ask for a statutory assessment of the child. Parents also have the right to ask for a statutory assessment of their child.

There is no standard policy across LEAs in Wales over the issue of statements for LLDD. Many young people have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which do not require a statement.

Apart from statementing, there is no single national method of assessing disability or of determining appropriate levels of support. The SEN Code of Practice (para 6:12) suggests that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) might be identified by referring to:

- evidence from teacher observation and assessment
- their performance against level descriptors in the National Curriculum
- standardised screening or assessment tools.

There is no national approach to the funding of LLDD in mainstream schools, including sixth forms. Each local authority has its own approach to funding individual support needs within mainstream schools. LEAs vary in their use of central support services and the delegation of statemented provision to schools.

### **2.5 Post-compulsory provision outside of schools**

The system of statementing does extend to FE provision or any other post-compulsory provision outside of school sixth forms (SSF). The information they contain can, if available, provide the follow on providers with valuable information when determining learners' additional support needs. Under Section 140 of the Learning and Skills Act, in the final year of compulsory schooling every LLDD with a statement of educational needs is entitled to an assessment of learning needs. ELWa has a legal duty to have regard to these assessments. Careers Wales are contracted by the National Assembly to compile these assessments. Assessments are not required for those learners on school action or school action plus, information on these learners needs is not, therefore, routinely available to FE institutions or other providers.

## **2.6 FE institutions**

FE institutions offer all LLDD the opportunity to study in mainstream or in discrete or bespoke provision. Programmes of study designed exclusively for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are discrete by their nature and funding for these small classes is made available via a programme area weight in the existing recurrent funding methodology (RFM).

Additional support to enable providers to make their mainstream provision accessible is currently funded separately from the RFM via a system of supplementary funding. In the autumn term each year, FE institutions list on a return for ELWa, the level and type of additional support needs of each LLDD in mainstream. ELWa applies a set of national hourly rates against specified types of support. After technical support is funded in full, human support allocations are pro-rated. Pro-rating is a consequence of the demand for additional learning support greatly exceeding the level of funding available, even when national hourly rates are applied. The actual levels of expenditure by FE institutions on additional learning support is not known.

The system of supplementary funding does not involve labelling and there are no age or financial limits to the levels of support that can be claimed. The system is based on the level of support an individual learner needs.

The level of input and the extent of audit trail associated with each individual learner is the same whatever level of support is claimed. In addition, as claims are made within the limits of the funding year, FE institutions do not know the level of funding they will receive until the end of the first academic term. An advance payment in August each year assists in this regard.

The means of assessment of LDD in current practice in FE is not dissimilar to that recommended in guidance for schools. Standards of assessment inevitably vary from institution to institution, but at present LLDD funding in FE is conditional to the FEI maintaining a clear audit trail, including evidence relating to means of assessment for each LLDD.

## **2.7 Work-based learning**

Work-based training providers are presently able to access an aids and adaptations fund. This fund was accessible at any time by providers. The level of contribution made used to depend on local negotiation, but recently the management of this funding by ELWa has been brought closer to that for FE supplementary funding.

## **2.8 Adult community learning**

There is little information about funding provision for LLDD in community learning. However, one key feature that is particular to this form of provision is that it is primarily part-time. This might mean that, under a claims-based system, by the time a provider makes a claim, the learner is likely to have finished his or her course. Also, it may be assumed that for most of this provision the total cost per LLDD would be less than in other sectors, as the majority follow part-time courses. This might not be the case with equipment, however.

### 3. Aims, objectives and scope of the research

The overall project **aim** was to collect and analyse data and information relating to expenditure on provision of high-quality learning support that facilitates fully inclusive and equal access to learning for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, noting any gaps and shortages in provision.

The objectives as stated in the original specification were to investigate the following areas.

1. What **approaches** to meeting the learning needs of learners is followed by learning providers and colleges? How effective are they?
2. Where do providers go to get different types of **learning support**? To what extent do providers know what learning support is available? To what extent do providers collaborate with each other over post-16 provision for LLDD?
3. How are learner's **needs assessed**? To what extent do providers use external expertise when assessing learning need? Who advises the learner? What is the extent of this advice? How much of an input do disabled learners themselves have in the decision-making process?
4. How do providers work with other statutory bodies when determining need?
5. Are disabled learners being offered the same **breadth of opportunity** as other learners?
6. How will inclusive learning influence demand for learning support and the effectiveness of its use? Is the system sufficiently flexible to meet disabled learners' needs? Are there any gaps in provision?
7. What are the **financial implications** for providers and colleges? What do providers pay for each type of learning support? What is the cost of providing 'discrete' provision? What does this 'buy'? What factors determine how providers allocate their funds to provision for LLDD at present? What are the regional variations? Make a statistical analysis of costs (costs of support for a learner with exactly the same learning needs between types of providers).

8. What models of **good practice** exist within work-based learning and full-time, FE-based provision for disabled learners in Wales? How could Welsh providers improve? Are there any examples of good practice from other countries that could be transferred to Wales?
9. Identify areas for future research or further investigation.

These broad areas of investigation were informed by a series of subsidiary bullet points during the inception of the project. This required some substantial refocusing of research effort with changes to the scope, methodology and structure of the research agreed before its initiation.

The term LLDD is often used to describe learners with learning difficulties and disabilities; however, its meaning is known to vary in different contexts. A more precise definition is available from the DDA 1995, which defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities'. Furthermore, Disability Wales suggest that disability is not about physical, sensory or learning impairments, or mental health issues. Disability is about the exclusion of certain people from social, economic, cultural and political activities because those responsible for designing facilities and arranging activities have not acknowledged personal requirements resulting from impairments. They suggest that:

- **impairment** is any injury, illness or condition that causes a loss or change of a physical or psychological function. The majority of the population will experience some degree of impairment in their lives as a temporary or permanent condition
- **disability** is the loss or limitation of opportunity to take part in society because of social, attitudinal or physical barriers.

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For the scope of this research, disability will be defined as a physical disability, mental health problem or learning difficulty. Impairments will only be included where they lead to a disability.

To ensure consistency in the research, and for the benefit of participating providers, the following categories of learners to be considered were identified:

- those with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and clarified above
- those with learning difficulties (conditions that may inhibit an individual's ability to gain knowledge without expert intervention)
- those with a Statement of Special Educational Need
- those who were 'self declared'
- those who were identified via initial assessment as having some additional need.

All types of post-16 learning providers were involved in the study including FE institutions, private and public training providers, places of work-based learning, school sixth forms and organisations in the voluntary sector. The project also aimed to include a geographical spread of providers and a balance between Welsh speaking, bilingual and English-speaking learners and providers.

## **4. Research**

### **4.1 Underpinning principles**

The research was approached in a manner which sought to ensure a balance in the data collected: geographically, by type of provider and provision and with consideration of the issues of rurality, bilingualism, equality of opportunity and social deprivation.

Throughout the research care was taken to ensure that participants were involved in shaping research; informed consent was obtained along with authorisations to use any data. The right of participants, both institutional and individual, to withdraw from the research and maintain confidentiality was recognised. Basic information about the purpose, methods, findings and use to which the findings would be put were made available to participants in an appropriate and accessible manner on initial contact and at the start of all interviews.

### **4.2 Involvement of stakeholders**

Stakeholders were involved principally through:

- consultation with the Dysg Equality and Diversity Network – members assisted in the survey development and were kept informed and consulted electronically and in meetings throughout the research
- a small informal advisory group (see list of participants in appendix 3) including a disabled learner – this group was consulted regularly and met twice, once to advise on the method and documentation and later to assist in interpretation of the data and discuss recommendations.

### **4.3 Research team and supporting expertise**

The research was undertaken by a small team, which included researchers with wide knowledge and experience of pre and post-16 learning including SEN education, accessible learning, ILT and Welsh medium education (see list of



members in appendix 3). Expert advice was available at an initial meeting and throughout the project by e-mail and phone from the relevant LSDA researcher managers and the Policy Director for Further Education at SKILL. All members of the research team participated in drawing up the interview schedules and analysing the information attained through the case studies and other activities.

### **4.4 Method**

Initially the project was intended to cover FE colleges and work-based learning provision. Following the extension of the project to cover the whole post-16 sector the views of expert advisers were sought on the most appropriate data collection methods. Given the comprehensive information requirement, demanding involvement of a variety of managers, practitioners and learners a provider case study method was advised and adopted for the main part of the research. In order to make the collection of information manageable it was agreed to refocus the main part of the data collection from the sample on Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 7. Information relevant to the remaining objectives would still be collected; however, this would be incidental to the main focus of activities.

The following approaches were used in the research:

- case studies with a representative sample of providers involving:
  - collection of qualitative and quantitative data from providers
  - collection of learner views and experiences
- review of relevant literature
- review of available statistics
- review of support available from relevant agencies and organisations.

The research was carried out between September 2004 and May 2005. The literature, data review and initial identification of support organisations were undertaken early in the research period to inform the case study activity.

#### 4.4.1 Case studies

The providers to be involved were selected in consultation with ELWa and liaison with Estyn. In parallel with this research, Estyn were undertaking a survey of the support within further education colleges and work-based learning companies for 16–19 year olds with additional learning needs. It was considered important not to overburden providers with information requests. Providers selected included:

- **three colleges of FE**, including rural, tertiary, large, small, bilingual and a general FE college with at least one college undertaking community learning activity
- **five sixth form schools** with the involvement of staff from the five relevant LEAs as LEAs often share responsibilities for LLDD in schools – (including rural, large, small and bilingual providers) – 15 days
- **six WBL providers**, including rural, large and small
- **three LEA ACL providers**, including rural and urban
- **one direct funded voluntary sector ACL provider** .

More than 3,000 LLDD were involved with the learning providers selected.

Interview schedules were developed for use with a range of appropriate staff within a range of selected providers operating across the areas of further education, work-based learning, adult and community learning and school sixth forms. An interview schedule was developed for use with relevant learners within the providers selected for in-depth study. Expert advice was used in the development of schedules, and stakeholder engagement was key in refining the schedules, with the learner representative on the Advisory Group playing a major role in finalising the learner interview requirements.

Given the lack of any shared definition of LLDD the researchers, in consultation with ELWa and advisers, decided to use the most comprehensive categorisation of learning difficulties and disabilities in use in the sector. This was that used with

the PLASC, which categorises LLDD into 15 different groups (question 3 in appendix 5).

Four pilot case study visits were undertaken, one with each type of provider, to ensure the schedules were appropriate. Following these pilot visits a meeting of the research team and consultation with an expert adviser resulted in minor revisions being made to the interview schedules, which can be seen in appendix 5. A further 14 visits to providers were then undertaken.

Each selected provider received a letter from ELWa, the text of which had been agreed with the research team, outlining the aims and purpose of the research, identifying Dysg as the organisation undertaking the research and requesting their cooperation. Following this initial contact from ELWa a member of the research team made contact with the provider, informing them in more detail of the research requirements and explaining that this research was not part of any audit or inspection process. Providers were assured that any findings would be fed back to them and that all data would remain confidential within the project team. Collated results only would be reported and examples would not be attributed to specific respondents without the express permission of the provider involved.

Case study visits varied according to the type of provider, number of staff involved and the ease or difficulty in accessing the information required. During the visit providers were requested to facilitate learner interviews. The process for this varied across providers. In some cases researchers were introduced to groups of learners and those willing to be interviewed were self-selected. On other occasions providers had informed learners before the visit and then made arrangements with those who volunteered to be interviewed. All involvement of learners was voluntary and undertaken within their normal learning environment in circumstances in which they felt comfortable. Care was taken to inform them of the aims and purpose of the research in a manner appropriate to their needs.

Researchers spent an average of two days with each provider and learners, and then further time was needed to follow up data requested. More time was required for work with schools than other providers as this often involved visiting the school and the LEA concerned.

### **4.4.2 Brief review of available literature and data**

The initial literature review was undertaken using existing case studies. Because overall resources were reduced, it was limited to previous LSDA and Skill research carried out between 1998 and 2004. The survey of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) on the DDA in post-school education in England and Wales (DRC 2003) was also included. The review is brief and only provides a synthesis of key issues and the implications for practice seeking to draw out:

- good practice in ensuring equality of access and meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, including issues of provider collaboration
- models of funding of provision and learner support for LLDD and the financial implications for providers and statutory bodies
- effective approaches to assessing and meeting the learning and support needs of learners.

In parallel a review of information was undertaken using statistical data and related literature provided by ELWa. The data was extracted by ELWa from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR); in addition, a draft report on the ELWa Customer Satisfaction survey conducted during the summer of 2003 was provided. From the LLWR data, only that relating to individuals with disabilities or learning difficulties in FE institutions and work-based learning providers for 2001/02 was available at the stage the review was undertaken.

Very little of the available literature is specific to Wales, so references to English studies predominate in the initial review of literature. In addition, data made available at the early stage of the research was limited. A review on support in

further education colleges and work-based learning companies for 16–19 year olds with additional learning needs (Estyn 2005) was published at a late stage in this research. Despite this report being available only after the completion of the literature review, the issues it raises have been considered and are included in our deliberations.

### **4.4.3 Identification and information collection from support organisations**

A questionnaire was developed (see appendix 4a) seeking to identify organisational remit, any support provided for learners or learning, and the extent to which they sought to influence the learning agenda of Wales on disability issues. Dysg was able to draw on information already available through existing links with organisations in relation to the Dysg Equality and Diversity Network. This was reviewed and checked against the questionnaire requirements through telephone contacts and e-mail. In addition members of the Equality and Diversity Network were asked to identify and supply contact details for organisations they had found to be useful, and an internet search was undertaken to locate any other relevant organisations. Questionnaires were supplied to all organisations identified and brief telephone interviews with analysis of the websites where little response was available were used to gather the information required.

### **4.5 Issues which impacted on the research**

The study was undertaken during the year leading up to the implementation of the NPFS. Provider attitudes to the NPFS vary and a number of providers involved in the research raised concerns about its effects.

Although providers were given notice of the study and were invited to support the research, it was difficult in a number of instances to make arrangements and actually carry out the interviews. One work-based learning provider that had initially been selected withdrew from the research because it had recently had little involvement with supporting LLDD. With a small number of providers there was reticence in participating in the study and some limited antagonism to the detailed requirements of the research. By far the majority of providers were

constrained by workload pressure and simple lack of staff time, as the interviews required a significant amount of time and data collection from providers. All of these had adverse effects on completing the research.

Many providers had difficulty in providing accurate data. In franchised provision this was in part because franchisors did not appreciate the need for the data for this research project, but generally it was a result of the complexity of systems and the varied ways in which information is gathered and held by providers, which meant that our data needs could not be extracted. In addition, the different sectors, and in some cases providers within a sector, collect different data and collate it in different formats so that comparative data was simply not available.

In any new funding system it is critical that data collection needs are identified and providers are supported in their understanding of any categories so that there is a common approach to data collection and comparative or collective analysis can occur. The current lack of a clear common classification of learner disabilities and needs provides an example of how the lack of a common approach can have adverse effects. Different sectors use different classifications and it became clear during the research that many providers are unclear what some of the categories mean or include. One provider recognised that it tended to generalise need against the 'specific learning difficulty' category and was unclear of the difference between this category and 'moderate learning difficulty' (see appendix 5a for categories).

Equally, it was very evident that many providers did not understand the current funding arrangements; a significant proportion of providers did not claim financial support because they were unclear about what they could or could not claim. In a number of cases providers recorded only what they claimed for via ELWa, but made no clear record of any additional spend they funded through other means. Where financial support was either not available, or perceived not to be available, providers reported that their spending was often limited to what they could afford,

and did not necessarily relate to what learners actually needed. These issues made it difficult to gather information on real costs.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1 Summary review of literature**

The initial brief review of literature was undertaken at the earliest point in the research with the specific purpose of informing the development of the case studies. The literature reviewed at that early stage focuses in the main on research undertaken in the English post-16 education sector, as very little literature or research is available that relates specifically to Wales. As a result it deals with learning undertaken within a different infrastructure from that of Wales. However, there are fundamental issues such as disparities of funding across the four main providers, terminology differences and learner views common to both countries. A summary of the relevant information from that initial review (appendix 1) is provided here, interspersed with more recent Welsh-based research undertaken by Estyn.

Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2004), in a study looking at the development of a common funding approach for additional learning support, identified the detrimental effects of disparate funding and perceptions of lack of funding within the post-16 sector. As a result of their findings they made a series of recommendations covering all post-16 learning providers. Their key recommendation is the need for constant monitoring of existing and proposed changes to LLDD funding mechanisms. This is intended to ensure that learners, irrespective of sector, have entitlement to support and that all providers are sufficiently informed and resourced to provide this entitlement. They also recommended a two-tier system of funding with a threshold for requirement of specific claims, such that a great deal of the currently perceived administrative burden imposed by claiming for all learners could be removed from providers.

In their survey of provision for and support given to LLDD in post-16 provision in Wales, Estyn (2005) focused attention principally on colleges and work-based learning companies, because of the perception that most young people with additional learning needs do not stay on at school post-16. The survey drew on evidence from Estyn inspection reports and information from visits made by Estyn college general inspectors. There were additional discussions within further education colleges, work-based learning providers, LEAs and Careers Wales about the support needs of these learners and how their needs were met.

The research identified and described positive experiences for learners and produced a small number of case studies of good practice. Other results of the Estyn survey were:

- Standards of achievement are high and learners make progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good and sometimes excellent.
- Most learners are well supported but a few do not receive the health or psychological support they need.
- There is less close working with parents or carers, voluntary agencies, Careers Wales advisers, employers, social services and other external agencies in work-based learning than within other providers.
- There are too many significant barriers preventing learners with learning difficulties and disabilities from accessing an appropriate curriculum and adequate support; as a result they are hindered from being integrated into vocational areas of colleges and work-based learning effectively.

Overall the report found that learners with learning difficulties and disabilities too often do not have equality of opportunity and therefore they do not achieve as well as they might.



This Estyn survey confirms for Wales the overview from the few studies undertaken in recent years. These have identified little change for disabled learners from the experiences described in a study undertaken in 1996. Since the 'Student Voices' (Skill 1996) research was undertaken by Skill on behalf of the Tomlinson committee on learning difficulties and/or disabilities, little emphasis has been placed on the perspective of the learner. A recent LSDA project, published as *Count me in FE* (Anderson *et al.* 2003), which included Welsh FE colleges, has sought to redress the balance by focusing on students' experiences, with the aim of giving students a voice about what inclusive learning means to them, what helps them to feel included and the barriers they have faced. The methods used in the project aimed to reflect positively the recommended emancipatory and participatory practice for studies involving disabled people. The study reported that colleges that held regular meetings with students about the support they received were seen by learners to be taking their views seriously (Anderson *et al.* 2003).

The organisations that were considered successful in fulfilling the changes imposed by the DDA (DRC 2003) were those that focused on the learner's needs rather than their impairment. These institutions also regarded themselves as a community resource, drawing on their community to develop good practice, rather than simply meeting the needs of current students within the organisation. The DRC recommended that learners should be given termly student satisfaction questionnaires (DRC 2003) so that problems can be addressed regularly and not just at the end of academic years or courses. Further information is included in the literature review in appendix 2.

Listening to learners and the general needs of those with disabilities and learning difficulties could assist institutions in providing services that reduce the barriers perceived by individuals with disabilities. An NFER (2003) survey of young disabled people aged 16 to 24 for the DRC listed an alarming number of barriers perceived by this group including:

## Disability Issues for Post-16 Learning Provision

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- Of the quarter (27%) of young disabled people who did not go on to further or higher education, 30% feel they were prevented from doing so for a reason relating to their disability/ impairment.
- Of those young disabled people who feel they were prevented from going on to higher or further education:
  - 60% say they did not feel that sufficient support would have been provided to enable them to complete the course
  - a quarter says they were advised not to go on to higher or further education by their school
  - over a quarter think that transport would have made it difficult for them to go to university or college
  - 16% think that accommodation would have made it difficult.
- 38% of young disabled people have experienced problems using public transport.

Recent research also focuses concern on the lack of consistency across providers on the treatment and assessment of LLDD:

*There is undue variation between LEAs within Wales in the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Learners with statements in some areas have very similar levels of need to learners without statements elsewhere ... This means that there are more learners on school action plus and school action in these areas. These learners do not benefit from a written assessment of their training needs by Careers Wales advisers (Estyn 2005).*

This highlights concerns about progression from schools into other post-16 learning. Learners who have been statemented have a right to an assessment of their needs at 16, a service that is provided by Careers Wales. These students therefore have a learning and skills plan, which is available to their next provider. Without a statement the onus for assessment of needs falls wholly on the new learning provider.

As a result of these and other factors only one in 20 disabled people participated in learning at a college of further or higher education or university – compared with one in 10 of the rest of the UK population.

### **5.2 Summary review of data**

It was only possible to glean a relatively small amount of information from the dataset supplied in the initial stages of the research by ELWa. The most recent Lifelong Learning Wales Record data available at the time of the review was that for 2001/02, which covered learners within FE institutions and WBL only. Data from the ELWa Customer Satisfaction Survey was only available at that time for learners in FE institutions. While there are concerns over the reliability of the data in relation to the methods by which learners are recorded as having a difficulty or disability, and inconsistencies between the datasets in recording disabilities and learning difficulties, some analysis was possible. This indicates that during the period covered the number of LLDD involved in study was low in relation to the percentage of those with disabilities or learning difficulties believed to be within the population in general. In addition, there was under achievement (less than 50% achieved their qualification aim) in general for LLDD. Other relevant findings include:

- The lowest overall participation from the lowest socio economic group had the lowest overall participation in learning and displayed the highest proportion of LLDD.
- Learners with learning difficulties show a slightly increased tendency to take the opportunity to leave full-time education at 16; however, this group also showed a lower incidence of progressing into full-time employment than the general population.
- General levels of satisfaction with experiences at school were lower among LLDD than among the general population.
- There was a disparity in the ability to study non-accredited courses between those in further education institutions and work-based

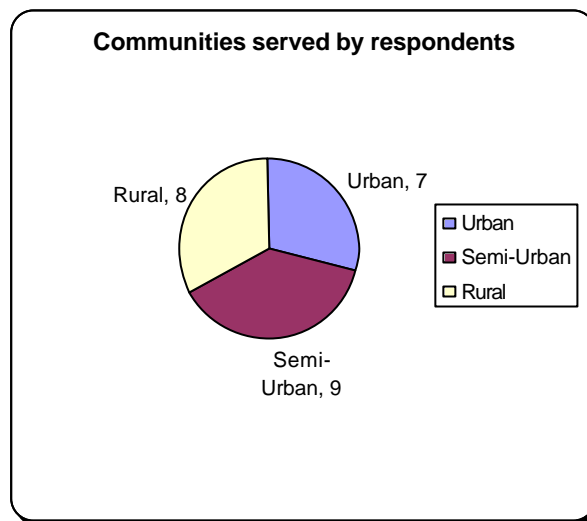
learning, which may be related to the different requirements in FE and WBL for learning outcomes and the effect of this on the funding of such provision.

ELWa data provided for the Success for All survey (Estyn 2005), which became available at the later stages of the fieldwork for this research, indicates that in further education in 2002/03, 10,704 learners were recorded as having a disability. This represents just over 4% of all learners. Colleges claimed additional funding for 824 learners with moderate learning difficulties who were studying on mainstream programmes. This comprises 0.3% of learners. In work-based learning, ELWa data shows that there are 2,311 learners registered as having a disability on work-based learning programmes. This represents 4% of the total number of learners. ELWa's PLASC database for September 2003 suggests that 26,541 post-16 learners were recorded as having a disability in schools. Of these learners, only 151 had moderate learning difficulties. This represents 0.6% of learners.

### **5.3 Provider case studies**

Case study results for each provider were recorded with reference to provider type but without identification information in a spreadsheet matrix (appendix 6). A similar matrix was used for the learner responses (appendix 7). This made more detailed analysis and graphic representation of the data where appropriate possible.

The project was successful in ensuring that there was a wide geographical distribution of providers. In addition, a good distribution in terms of urban and rural providers was achieved. The graph below shows the types of communities that providers involved in the study considered that they served.



As a result of the issues outlined above, many providers were unable to give detailed financial data. In one case, data that was not available during the visit, but which the provider promised to supply in the following one to two weeks, has never been made available. This is despite repeated requests to named contacts and a direct approach to the chief executive. In the case of this provider, therefore, it has been possible to include the qualitative responses within the case study report (appendix 8) but the lack of quantitative data has resulted in this information not being available within the matrix of provider responses (appendix 6) and therefore the number of case studies for graphics purposes is 17 in total.

Overall six providers were able to supply some detailed financial data. These included two colleges of FE, three ACL providers and one school sixth form. For the majority of schools separate costing data for sixth form provision was not available.

#### **5.4 information collection from support organisations**

Information on support organisations active in Wales can be seen in appendix 4b. Where providers referred to their use of these organisations the details have been included in the relevant section within the findings below.

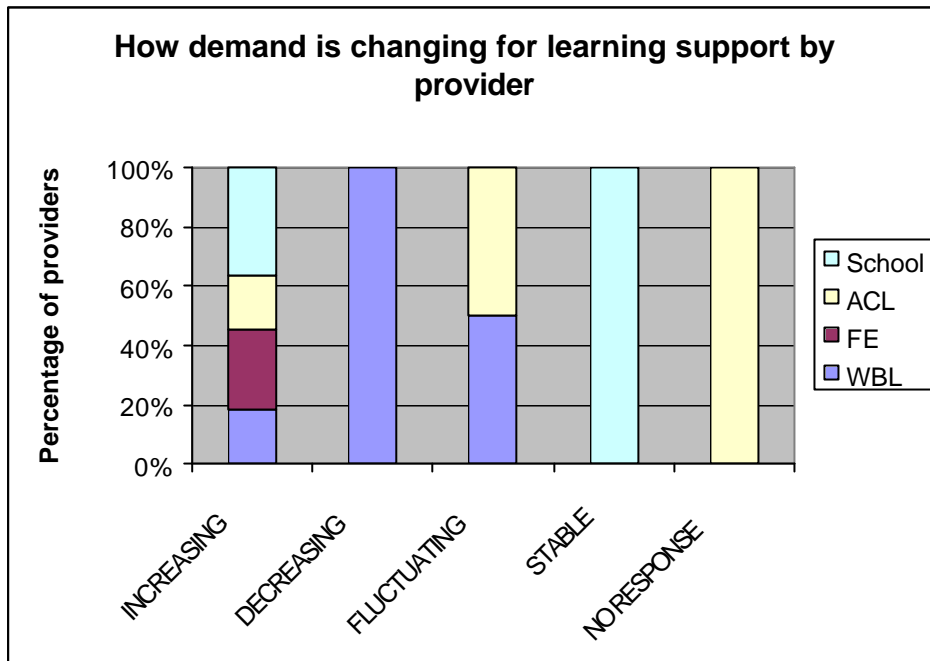
## 6 Findings

### 6.1 Costs of learning support

Providers were unable to identify accurately or fully the true **total costs** involved in supporting LLDD. This was due in part to demands on time and the workload of relevant staff, but more importantly because organisations collect data in such differing and complex ways that they were not able to distinguish specific costs relating to LLDD within a large, general and wide-ranging provision. However, the research was able to identify a number of valid and reliable findings to explain the costs of learning support and the issues surrounding this topic.

Most providers (around 70%) reported that the **number of learners** requiring support is increasing and hence the overall costs for individual providers is also increasing. This is partly because of raised awareness by learners (and/or their parents or partners) who then seek out and request additional support, but it is partly the result of providers screening more candidates and improving their identification of those with need.

The graph below shows that within the 70% of providers in the study that felt that demand was increasing all types of provider are represented, while only one sixth-form provider felt that demand was stable.



ACL providers also referred to closer working relationships with social services resulting in more referrals and increased need for such provision.

The loss of residential centres across many areas of Wales has resulted in FE colleges, ACL, training providers and the voluntary sector supporting more discrete groups of learners whom traditionally they would not have encountered (approx 51% of learners in the case study research were being supported by discrete provision – see appendix 6, question 2). These learners tend to be those with the most specific and specialist needs, so the cost of supporting them can be high (they need specialist equipment, one-to-one support and specially trained staff).

Training providers also found that changes in legislation requiring those on incapacity benefit to participate in training in order to return to the workplace has resulted in increased demand for additional learning support.

The most significant cost of supporting LLDD relates to **staffing**. A range of staff are used to support such learners across the sectors but the biggest spend is on

learning support assistants who are generally paid £5–10 an hour (see appendix 8). However, the term learning support assistant is used to describe staff with a multitude of roles across different providers, so some further work with reference to job roles and pay scales may be needed in order to provide clarity and meaning to this evidence.

The cost of using external or contract staff with specific expertise, such as psychologists, was highlighted as a significant cost to providers. In most instances these costs were incurred when specialists were employed to assess learners' needs, identify any specialist equipment required and/or provide evidence for funding claims; they were not used specifically to provide learning support or aid learning taking place. For example, educational psychologists (approx £100 per hour) often require an hour to perform an initial assessment of a learner and three hours of administration or organisation time followed by an hour of feedback to the learner. Identifying or assessing a learner's needs for specialist equipment can therefore cost more than £500. Some providers quoted figures up to £9,000 per year in assessing learner equipment requirements (£100 per hour for clinical psychologists, £200–300 for RNIB assessments, and so on).

Other staff costs, identified in the table below, include the use of communicators, sign language interpreters, basic and key skills specialists, teachers and lecturers, assessors, verifiers and technical support. Many providers also depend on significant amounts of voluntary support (one ACL provider benefits from over 240 hours of unpaid volunteer support time per academic year).

Although work role titles may differ across the sector, the following table is an overview of the average hourly costs incurred by centres:



Category of staff	Range of average cost/hour
Learning support assistants, NNEB, communicators, drivers, trainers and admin support	£5–10
Lecturers	£9.70–22.50
Assessors and verifiers	£9.59–30
Sign language interpreters and dyslexia tutors	£15–20 but some quotes referred to £25 or £30
Dyslexia managers	£20–25

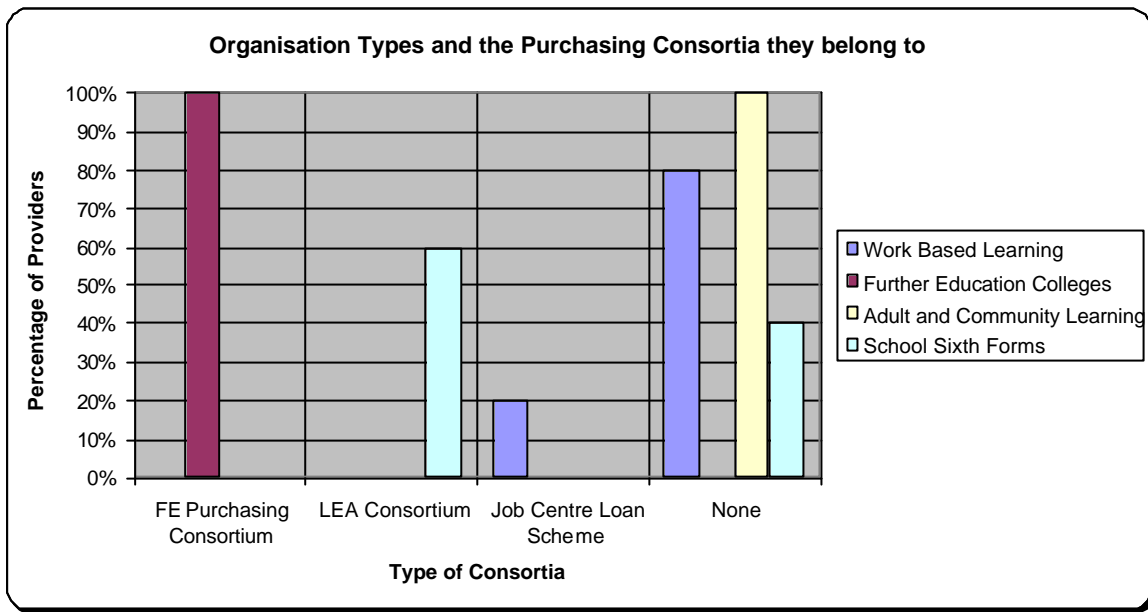
Most providers related the cost of staff to quality. Since many support workers are employed on part-time or short term contracts it is not always possible to attract or employ the quality of workers required and it is not easy to retain good staff since they progress to positions with more secure employment. There were also additional costs incurred in frequent recruitment of such staff. The view was expressed that availability of a set budget secured for a reasonable period might make providers more willing to retain support workers on fractional or longer contracts, which would reduce recruitment costs and support the drive for improved quality, as the levels and standards of support workers available would be more consistent.

All providers had purchased **specialist equipment** in 2003/04 and this was reported to be a significant proportion of the cost of supporting LLDD, particularly as the equipment often has a short life span before it becomes outdated, and also because it can usually only support one learner. The FE sector has been able to reduce some of these costs (by approx 10–25%) by establishing the FE purchasing consortia (although they are not always able to access or source the specific equipment necessary) and LEAs can occasionally gain benefits via purchasing through a central system, but in reality as purchases are often one-off requirements, any reductions are small. Many providers were open to the

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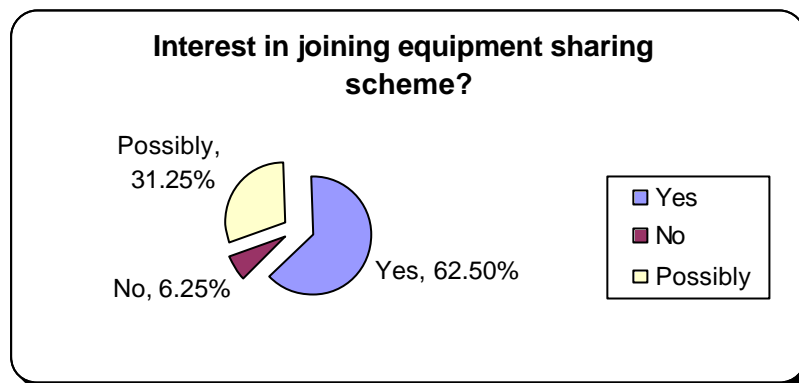
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possibility of a central purchasing system (as identified by Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2004), see appendix 2), but felt if this was to be developed it must not delay access to equipment for the learner, which is already often too slow.



One of the main delays identified for accessing equipment was procurement requirements. One provider cited the need to obtain three quotes before a purchase could be approved for equipment, which may be difficult to track down in the first place. ACL providers tended to report that their purchases were influenced by what they could afford rather than by what they needed.

Few providers (12.5% of all school sixth forms) were aware of sharing schemes whereby equipment is held centrally and made available to a range of providers for loan or rental and there were mixed reactions to such schemes. Questions of bureaucracy, obtaining the most up-to-date and appropriate equipment, maintaining equipment and quality of provision were all cited as issues.



**Training** in the use of specialist equipment was a concern for some providers if this had to be purchased separately from the supply of the item, since training costs can be excessive (up to £1,000 per day plus supply cover).

**Maintenance** costs were not reported to be an issue by delivery staff but this may be because they are often subsumed into general department or whole provider maintenance budgets.

The need to keep **class sizes** small for a number of learner types supported via discrete provision also adds to the cost of such a service. This may be because of specific needs of learners or to provide a stable, safe environment for learners who would feel intimidated or uncomfortable in larger groups, for example those with mental health problems or those with poor levels of basic skills. A number of providers recommended a group size of no more than eight learners for this type of provision.

**Transport** costs can also be considerable and add to the expense of supporting LLDD. As these costs tend to be covered by individual institutions they are considered in section 6.5 in this report.

A number of providers highlighted **hidden costs** in supporting disabled learners or those with learning difficulties, which are often subsumed into general, whole centre provision and cannot be separately identified. Such costs include the use

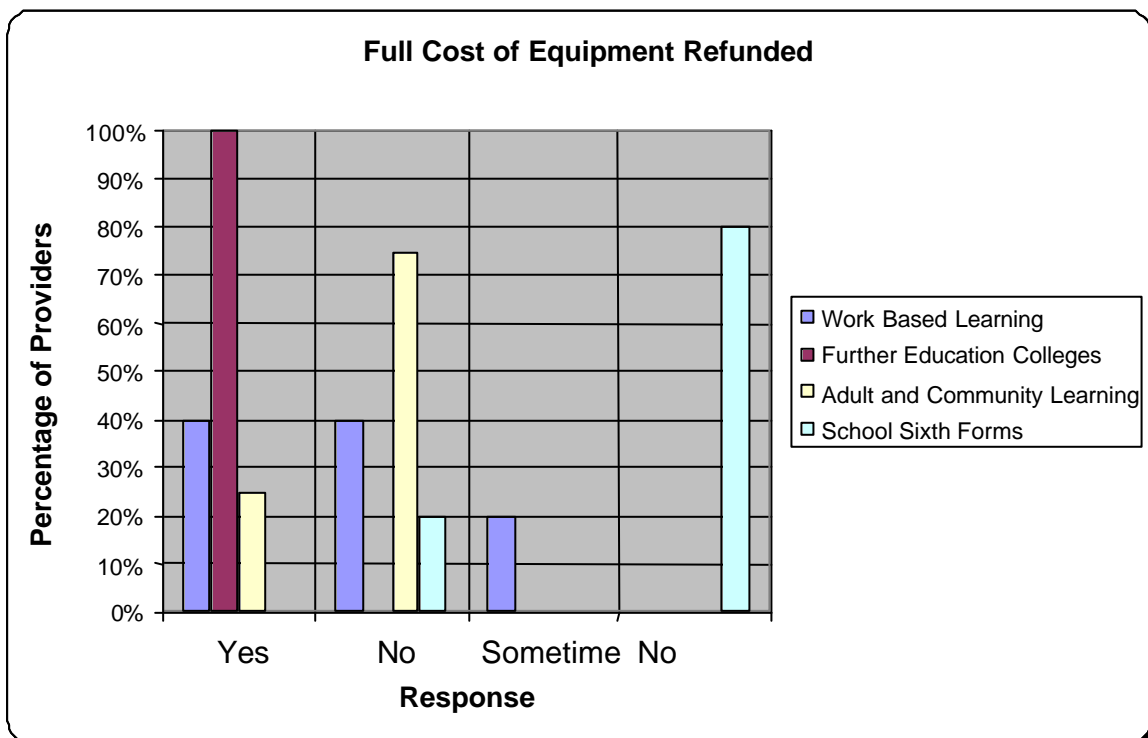
## Disability Issues for Post-16 Learning Provision

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or payment of technicians, additional pastoral support, providing handouts on coloured paper rather than white, and the additional expense of increased photocopying.

Of those interviewed, the **income received** to support LLDD varied greatly; colleges received between £300,000 and £695,000 in 2003/04 with schools accessing various amounts depending on the system employed by the LEA. There was no consistent or average income for ACL or training providers, with all those interviewed providing different data formats, which meant that data could not be compared across the providers (see the case study report in appendix 8).

It is interesting to note, however, that colleges of FE where funding is clearly available identify that they always receive full reimbursement for equipment costs; the situation is unclear with work-based providers and ACL, where there can be some confusion over the resource available.



Few providers had managed to access **funding** other than from ELWa. Small amounts had been obtained from Job Centre Plus (JCP), via LEAs where relevant, or as a result of commercial activities, and there was a tendency to move away from European funding because of the administrative burdens it carries. Some small levels of provision had also been funded by social services to support severely disabled learners and/or those with mental health problems. Support from parent–teacher associations (PTAs) or charity fundraising also assisted the purchase of resources in a number of institutions.

### 6.2 How learners' needs are met

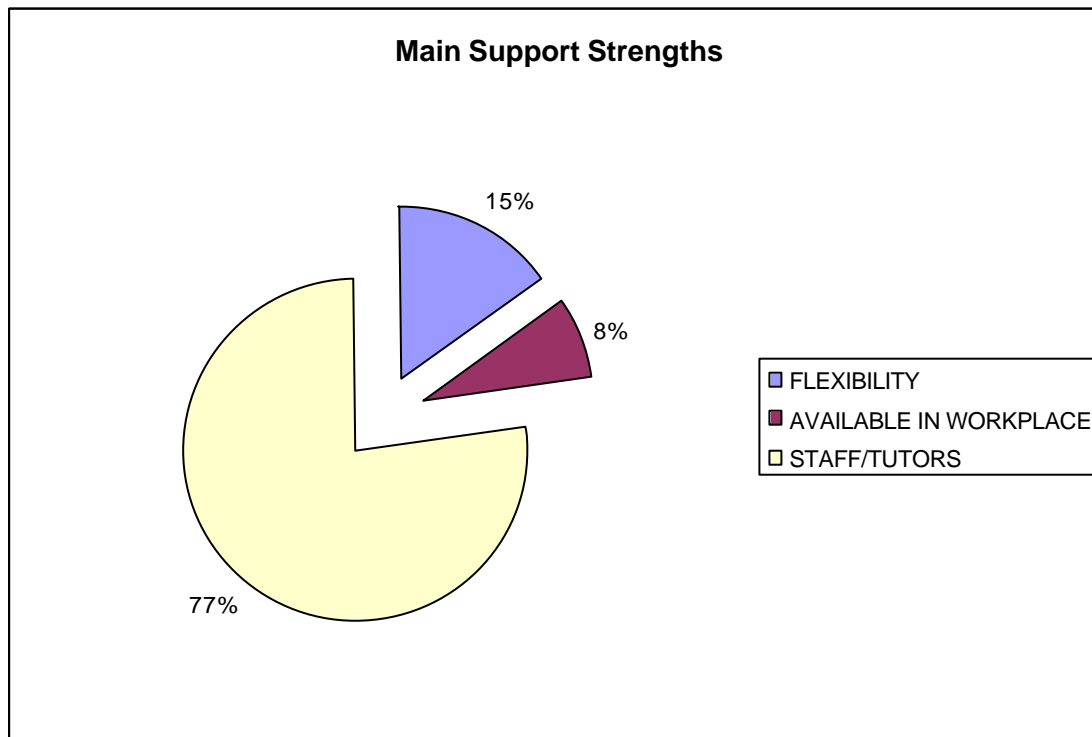
Few providers reported that they were unable to meet the needs of potential learners. Where this did occur, it tended to be where students suffered from profound and/or multiple difficulties, and colleges felt they had not got the resources or equipment to support them. ACL providers felt there were occasions when learners' needs had not been met because of more general cost restraints, e.g. often a learner wanted to follow a programme for which there were insufficient numbers to make viable groups, it was this fact rather than not being able to support a particular difficulty or disability which prevented participation.

Learners in the study required a **range of support**. Those in integrated provision tended to require support with dyslexia or physical support to access buildings or equipment, while those in discrete provision required basic literacy and numeracy support, learning pitched at a low level or in relation to life skills and/or support to gain confidence and self esteem.

The Statistical Overview (appendix 1) shows that those with learning difficulties are less likely to **achieve the qualification** they are aiming for than those without learning difficulties, or indeed those with or without disabilities. The case study research was unable to gather conclusive evidence either to confirm or contradict this claim, since insufficient data was obtainable regarding qualification achievement. However, if this is the case, it raises the question of whether learners' needs are being met and also reflects comments received from

practitioners that learners are being forced to pursue unsuitable qualifications because of current funding structures and pressure from parents. This area of work may require further investigation.

The student interviews from this research conclusively recorded that **learners** felt their needs were being met with the exception of two learners who reported that some additional writing support would have been beneficial (see appendix 7). The main strengths of the support provided were identified as staff, flexibility of support and its availability, particularly availability in the workplace for WBL learners.



As already noted many providers also depend on significant amounts of voluntary support (one ACL provider benefits from over 240 hours of unpaid volunteer support time per academic year), support from PTAs or charity fundraising.

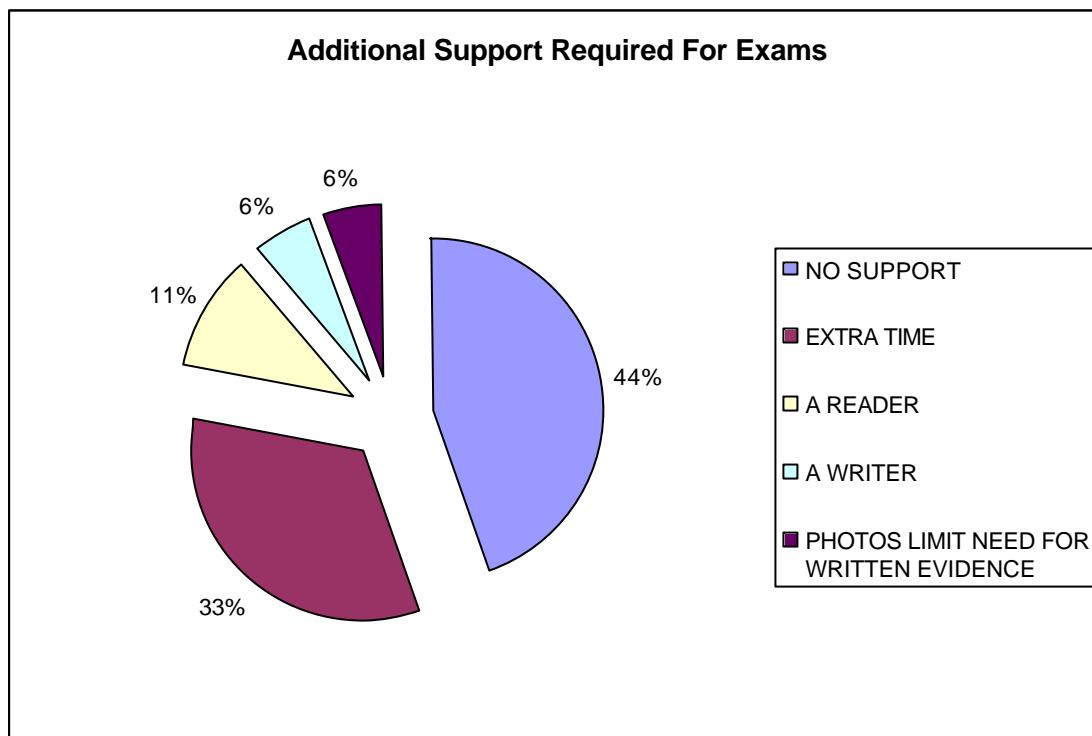
Some ACL and WBL practitioners interviewed did not realise that support for LLDD was available. Even where providers were aware of the availability of funds, practitioners stated that they sometimes did not make claims because of the administrative burden and protracted nature of the process. Providers reported problems in **accessing support** quickly enough for learners on short (10-week) programmes as the need for three quotes, or that the ELWa approval process took too long to make resources available within the time required.

### 6.3 What learning support is offered to learners and providers, and by whom?

This survey involved providers that in total provided for over 3,000 LLDD with a variety of differing needs, studying a range of courses across both integrated and discrete provision including Alevels, BTEC, NVQs, Basic Skills, Clait and entry level programmes (see the Learner Matrix in appendix 7).

Three major types of support were offered by providers:

- **support for learning** included literacy and numeracy support, specific help for those with dyslexia or dyspraxia, small group teaching and 1 to 1 assistance
- **physical support** in the form of specialist equipment including laptops, screen readers, adapted toilets, footrests for use in the classroom, and assistance in getting to the learning venue
- additional support in preparation for and at times of **assessment** including extra time, readers, writers, enlarged print papers and translation; one learner was supported by staff taking photographs as evidence of his work.



The research did not specifically question which external agencies were used by providers for support, but in replying to other questions providers made it clear that a range of organisations supported them in certain elements of their work, including:

- the DRC
- disability organisations such as RNIB and the Dyslexia Association
- professionals such as psychologists, social workers and dyslexia tutors
- LEAs
- Estyn, ELWa, ACCAC
- teaching associations and organisations including Dysg.

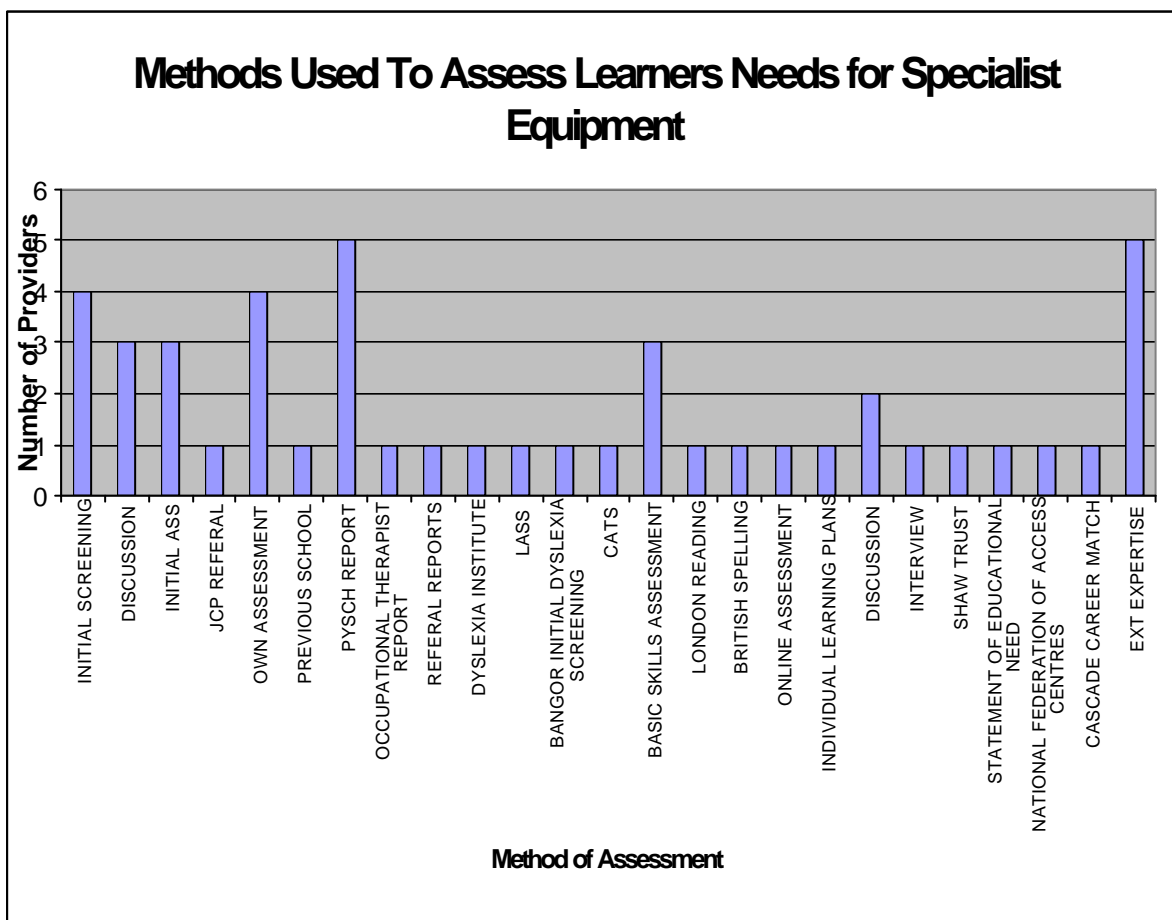
#### **6.4 How learners' needs are assessed and by whom**

In line with the findings from the literature review (appendix 2, section 8), this survey concluded that there is disparity of how providers assess the needs of



LLDD and found that many institutions have individualised strategies that may affect the level of funding and support provided to students depending on the level of sophistication and detail in the assessment process (appendix 6; questions 12 and 20).

All providers perform some measure of initial assessment or screening and there is growing interest in using new technologies for this activity.



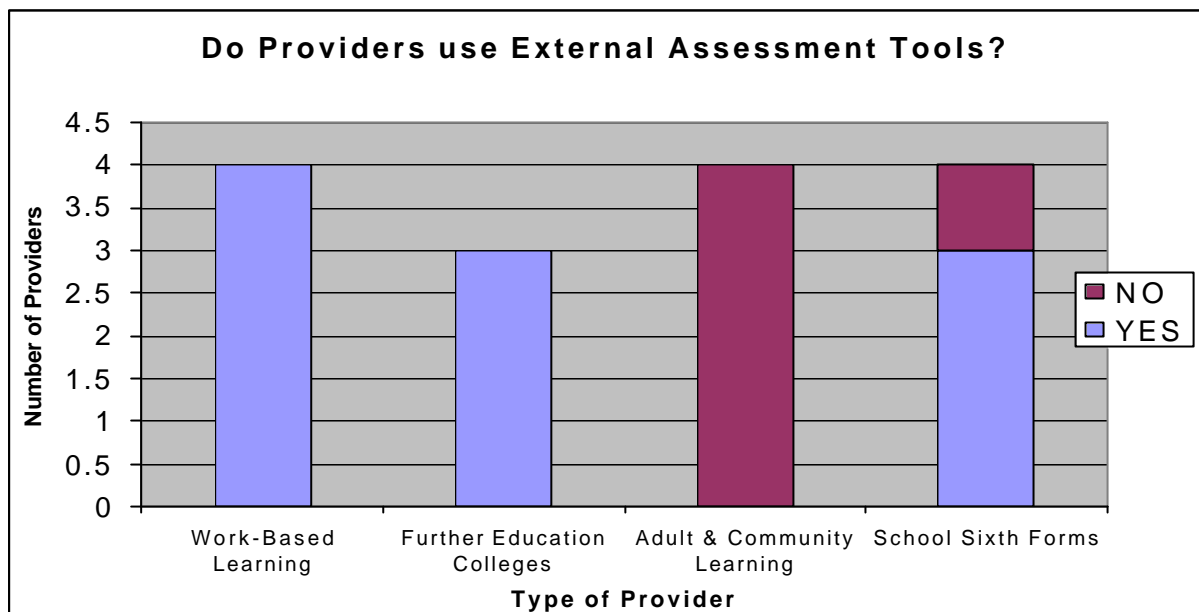
In the **schools sector**, much of the screening and assessment is performed pre-16 with these records and any statement of educational need being passed forward for post-16 use. School staff generally carry out the initial screening, cognitive assessment tests such as CATS, or NFER cognitive ability tests pre-16,

with LEA staff including psychologists or other external specialists being used to make assessments for specialist equipment. Although each LEA uses their own system (as identified in section 2), the research shows that the common code of practice supports a small measure of consistency across the sector pre-16, which tends to be continued into the support offered post-16 within the same LEA.

In the **FE sector**, initial assessments identify learners who have difficulties in basic skills (literacy and numeracy). If problems are highlighted the learner may be assessed by dyslexia teams, in-house staff or via other professional diagnostic assessments. While most FE centres have their own internal systems and procedures there is no consistent approach used across the sector, so there is a variety of approaches, quality and cost implications.

**Work-based learning providers** use a multitude of assessment tools to assess learner support needs. All use an initial assessment and basic skills screening to identify problems, with half the providers following this up with further diagnostic testing where required. Discussions between learners and in-house staff feature strongly in the assessment of need and selection of any specialist equipment required.

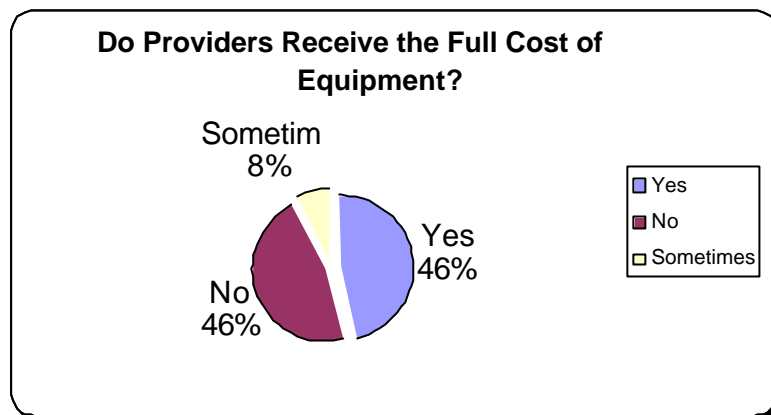
Within the **adult and community education** sector, initial assessments are again used to identify needs but Social Services and individual care and learning plans are also key to providing relevant and useful information to support the identification of need and specialist equipment that should be made available.



**Learners** reported that assessments were carried out sympathetically and usually took around 20 minutes although some required up to two hours (appendix 9).

### 6.5 Financial implications for providers in meeting the needs of disabled learners and ensuring provision is equitable

Most colleges and some training providers receive the full cost of any **equipment** purchased for LLDD. However, other training providers and ACL providers have to fund any requirements themselves and LEAs tend to fund or supply any requirements in the schools sector (see graph below). This results in inequitable provision as not all providers can afford to fund all the necessary equipment required. As a result, too often purchases are made on the basis of what can be afforded rather than what is needed, and the deployment of a 'best fit' approach in some situations, which may not always be appropriate or relevant.



A range of issues and costs that influence the financial position of providers and therefore the benefits for learners were highlighted by the research.

- Virtually all providers reported the need for **forward planning** and access to funding early in the academic year. In the schools sector, providers are aware of which learners are likely to continue into post-16 provision and because their needs are known and any equipment provided pre-16, progression can be seamless and efficient. In the FE sector, providers often have some awareness of who may enrol onto courses and their needs several months before learning begins. However, since learners do not always stick to their original plans this can change and so claims cannot be processed and support purchased until the learner has actually registered and the learning programme has begun. This can lead to delays in providing support from a few weeks to several months and can and does affect retention and achievement (appendix 8). Some providers do use their own funding to cover these costs until additional funding claims and approval from ELWa is received, but this is not viewed by providers as acceptable in cash-flow terms or in terms of demonstrating committed, effective support for learners from ELWa.
- Due to the current funding methodology, providers can only claim financial support for those learners who are actually registered and who have begun their programme of learning. This means that providers are unable to plan ahead or

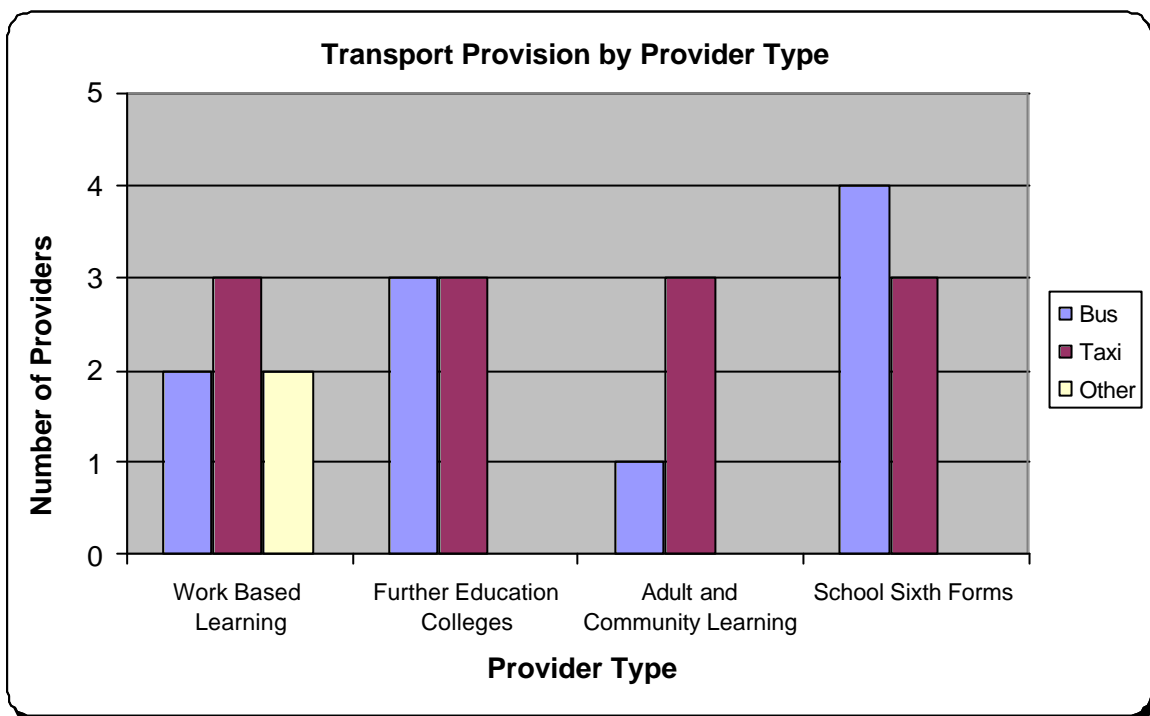
anticipate need, which can result in ***ad hoc arrangements*** evolving. For instance, when building work needs to take place, there is a review of learners' needs, and an attempt to meet them, but this is done in a haphazard way. A systematic, whole college approach would provide a more beneficial and efficient end result for the longer term.

- Larger providers have identified the benefits of placing some ***support (either staff or equipment) in central places***, for example, learning resource centres, so that a number of learners can access and benefit from the additional provision. Currently provision is given individually; individual learners are supplied with a piece of equipment or gain access to a support person at certain times. Placing some provision centrally enables individual learners to access areas of the college that they may not normally be able to visit and means that they are not tied to the place where equipment is based, hence enabling a more 'normal' or equitable service to be offered. Such support may include the use of large keyboards and screens for ICT use, specialist software on PCs, dyslexia tutors on hand for short-term, immediate assistance, and so on. Where such support is offered currently the provider is funding the provision themselves but they highlight the more efficient use of resources in this pooled approach.
- In the very small sample of learners interviewed in this study, few required ***assistive technology*** to access computers. However, some providers are raising this as a significant issue since costs for product site licences such as screen-reader technologies are high. There is therefore a tendency to buy individual site licences, which then means learners cannot access any PC situated around the learning environment but are limited to using their own laptop. This deprives learners with LDD of open access and equity with non-LLDD students.
- As recognised in the literature review (appendix 2; section 7, page 12) ***transport*** costs also add to the burden of supporting LLDD. Most providers (82%) arrange and fund taxis or minibuses for a range of learners (see appendix 6, question 10),

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the costs of which varied among those interviewed from £40,000 per year (ACL) to £300,000 (an FE college). In a number of areas this is paid for or subsidised by the LEA. However, this is not consistent across learning providers or geographical areas of Wales and can impact substantially on general budgets for providers as well as the feeling of inclusivity for learners.



- A further area of concern is **personal support** for LLDD and assistance during non-teaching time such as during lunch breaks or private study periods. Again much of this cost is funded via general budgets and if a provider has a substantial number of LLDD needing this support other provider needs and costs cannot be funded, which may affect the quality of provision and the learning environment for all students. Feedback from the Dysg Equality and Diversity Network indicates that there is substantial concern in relation to the responsibilities of providers under the DDA to meet personal and medical needs of learners. Documents outlining concerns and current views of relevant bodies

on this issue can be seen on the Equality and Diversity Network portion of the Dysg website at [www.dysg.org.uk](http://www.dysg.org.uk).

- As reported above, the cost of **screening** more learners and the follow up activity for an increasing number of learners is resulting in an increase in the overall costs for this area of work. Often initial screening takes place during the early stages of delivery of a programme so that students may miss out on delivery time. However, support staff are often needed to perform the screening activities and hence this may add to costs as both delivery staff and support staff are available to the students at the same time (double staffing for at least one lesson). One college reported that screening used five full-time members of staff for three weeks to perform the initial screening on all full-time students. This has cost implications for double staffing but also reduces the availability of support staff to other learners who have already been screened. ACL and work-based learning providers reported that the time required to screen learners was supported from their own budgets and financial support was not available to identify those who needed additional support.

Many providers have used their own resources to develop their own **screening tools**. This appears to be an inefficient use of multiple providers' resources and does not provide consistency of approach across providers within or between different parts of the sector. Alternatively, a number of providers use commercially available resources but these are costly in terms of initial fees plus annual licence fees (for example, a screening package used by a provider within Skill Build with an initial purchase cost of £7,000 plus £4,000 yearly licensing fees for use on more than one computer). A common approach across Wales may provide more consistent results, which providers may find beneficial particularly when learners move from one institution to another and may provide some cost benefits if purchased in bulk.

- Providers also report pressure on finances since some LLDD require to have **learning reinforced** several times or benefit from repeating a programme due to

short-term memory problems. Clearly such providers are only funded to support learners through a programme once. Equally, for a number of learners **progression** means **diversification** since they are unable to study at a higher level and hence they move sideways to learn a new subject or skill. This is equally true for those with low levels of confidence or possibly mental health problems who need to experience success and gain confidence at one level, possibly repeatedly, before they are willing or able to move to a higher level of study. The current funding methodology does not often support this type of need or progression route and hence providers feel they are financially penalised by supporting learners in this manner.

- For other learners progress is slowed as a result of their disability or learning difficulty. This means that **additional learning time** is needed not only from classroom assistants or specialist support workers but also from general teachers, for example mental health students often demonstrate an irregular pattern of attendance and therefore need to catch up on lessons missed and cannot cope with standard delivery patterns of traditional providers, or those suffering from dyslexia may require longer to complete learning.

Those suffering from disabilities or learning difficulties also often take longer to engage in the learning process and need a period of **non-accredited learning** in order to gain confidence, build relationships and trust tutors or support workers and commit to a full programme of study. With the exception of providers taking referrals from Job Centre Plus (appendix 2) this approach is generally not funded and places a financial burden on providers for the process of engaging such people. This requirement for extra time will need to be acknowledged within a funding methodology based on average learning times to ensure that learners with some disabilities or learning difficulties are catered for when integrated into mainstream provision.

- There is concern that the improved delivery and facilities for disabled learners combined with the government's aim of reducing numbers receiving incapacity



benefit by getting them back to work could affect the **numbers of learners** enticed back to education and requiring support, and hence the demands on any future funding.

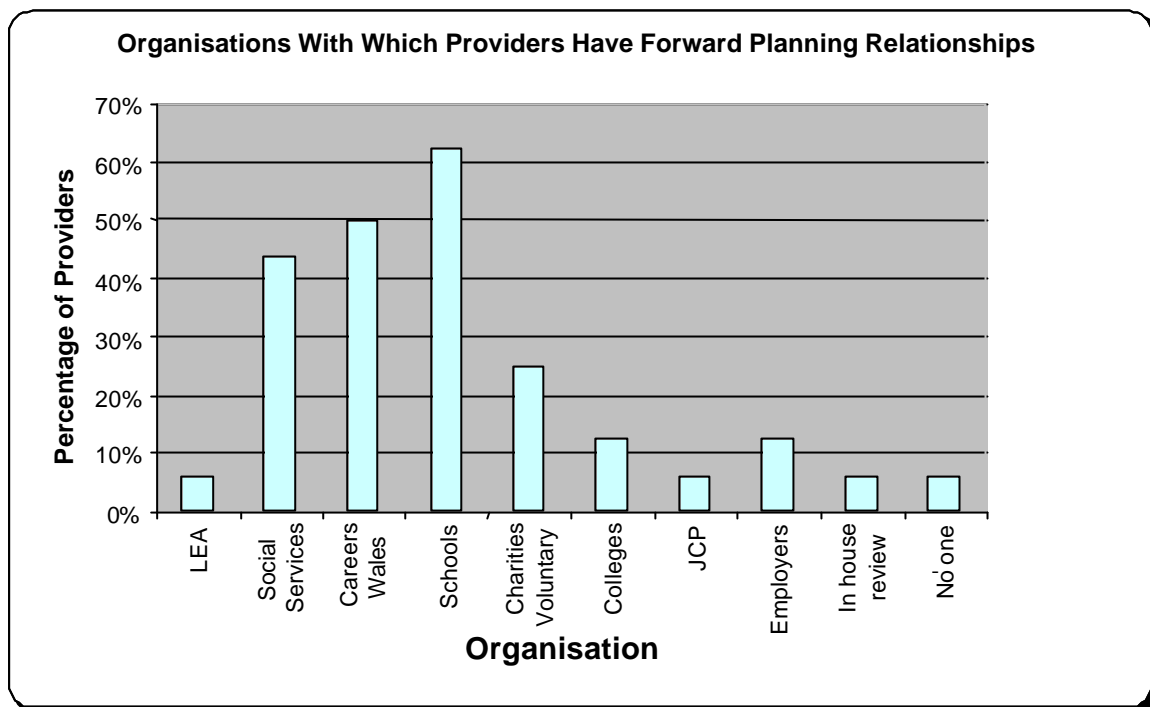
- As more learners are identified with learning needs, so the need to support these during **examination/assessment** opportunities also increases. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has a common agreement across awarding bodies for the type and amount of support available to different types of learners. This can range from additional time (increasing the cost of invigilation fees), the use of adapted examination papers (possibly requiring the learner to be in a separate examination room from other learners (and increased cost of an additional invigilator), to the use of readers or an amanuensis, a support person who undertakes written work at the dictation of the learner (cost identified as £6.36 per hour by one provider – appendix 8), all of which add to the cost of supporting the learner through the learning and qualification achievement process. Generally, providers felt much of the additional cost of preparing such students for external assessments (for example exam technique, additional revision and preparation time) was subsumed into their general budget with additional costs related to the actual assessment remaining low (around £2,000 to £5,000 per year).
- The **administrative burden** of submitting and managing individual claims was also cited as being excessive in some instances; generally where a centre was dealing with large numbers of LLDD. At least one provider reported that the form filling is so complex and time consuming that they do not use it or make claims, which has financial implications for the provider and impacts on the resources available and quality of provision to the learner. In addition to this, significant time is used to attend **meetings** to aid progression from one institution to another (such as college co-ordinators and the LEA or SENCOs, or between various agencies supporting a particular learner through case meetings or meetings with social services). These additional meeting costs may be directly linked to providing learning for LLDD but can also affect the quality of support and the

provision offered or made available if such meetings clash with timetabled support for a learner or use up staff time allocations when they could be supporting learners.

- One college reported that although it had ***in-house expertise*** (appendix 8), because these staff were employed by the college, ELWa would not fund their use, hence the college has to pay for external specialists if they wish to claim the costs back or finance the use of in-house specialists themselves. The provider views this as inefficient and unfair.

### **6.6 How disabled learners are offered the same breadth of opportunity as other learners in the same locality**

Most providers identified a range of organisations and partners with whom they ***liaise to share*** information, good practice and identify future demands and needs. The graph below displays the relationships identified by those providers within the study that provided information (94% responded).



Most commonly, FE colleges have working relationships with school SENCOs to support progression opportunities and aid transition arrangements. However, statements do not transfer on from the LEA and there is an understanding that, unless the learner and parents agree, it appears that schools or LEAs cannot share information contained within the statement because of the need to stay within the provision of data protection legislation. Very often it is up to the receiving provider to identify that the learner might have been statemented and negotiate access to the information with learners, parents and LEA or school. Not all schools are efficient in passing on information relating to learners who were not in receipt of a statement of special educational needs but were subject to school action or school action plus, and practice varies within LEAs and across Wales as a whole.

The assessment of learning needs (ALN), undertaken by Careers Wales for statemented learners ought to be available to the post-16 providers, but this is not always automatically the case. The ALN is not, however, as detailed as

information held by the school; this is highlighted by Estyn in *Success for All* (2005). Estyn highlights the lack of transfer of information as a major barrier to successful learning, indicating the overemphasis that may be placed on data protection issues and outlining a number of specific examples across a range of provision. The report also states:

*Providers are sometimes reluctant to exchange information with one another. This is because some providers see themselves in competition with others, for example schools with colleges and colleges with work based learning providers (Estyn 2005).*

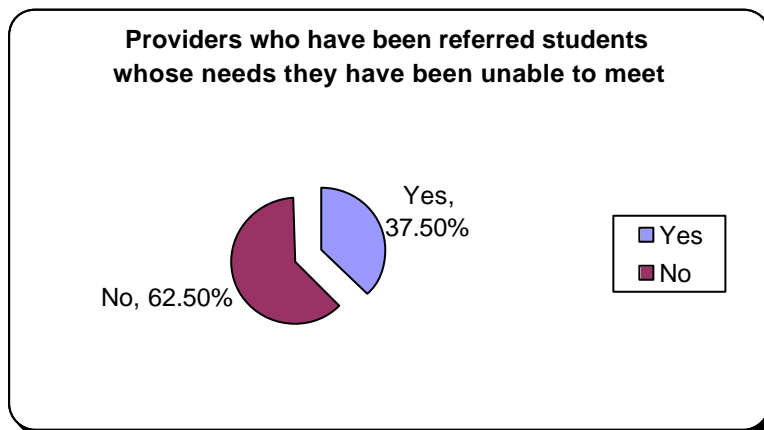
Strong feelings on this issue have been expressed by those considering the research findings at the Dysg Equality and Diversity Network. Several examples were cited by Network members with one college outlining a case where a student, late in the process, informed them that he was allowed additional time at his previous provider for external examinations. When the head of the SEN department contacted the other college they confirmed that this was the case. The head of the SEN department asked for the relevant documentation to be sent so that he could action the additional time. This was refused on the grounds that the provider could not release the information. Thus duplication of assessment of need and paperwork was required with associated additional costs. The delay in disclosing this information could have cost the learner the additional time he was eligible for.

*This practice of not passing information on runs counter to the Welsh Assembly Government's aspiration for professionals to work together to improve the outcomes for vulnerable children and young people (Estyn 2005).*

The research and associated literature therefore clearly shows that there is not always an efficient transition from one provider to another and support is not always available immediately, so that learners with LDD may be disadvantaged at the beginning of their new studies compared to learners without LDD.

In terms of **provision of information** from sources other than learning providers there is mixed feedback. Some training providers report that no information is passed to them while other providers gain considerable support and information from Social Services and/or mental health teams.

There is little evidence to date that **14–19 partnerships or CCETs** are influencing or considering the needs of these learners in strategic planning arrangements. Certainly there is significant evidence (appendix 8) to demonstrate that most providers are working individually with their own selected partners to plan at a very local and individual provider level rather than more broadly, which may generate more opportunities for learners through a more efficiently planned and provided approach. Indeed, just over a third of providers had been referred learners whose needs they were unable to meet. How this compares with non-LDD learners is unknown.



The initial review of data (appendix 2) suggests that a small proportion of LLDD work-based learning students follow courses that do not offer a **qualification**. There is no information as to whether this could also be the case for learners without LDD. However, the case study research suggests that FE and adult community education provision has overcome this by offering at least Open College Network (OCN) accreditation.

Further, the initial review of data (appendix 2) highlights the numbers of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties following NVQ provision; however, this study has not compared this data with non-LDD learners so no conclusions can be drawn on equality of opportunity against **qualification type studied**

The initial review of data (appendix 2) also suggests that there are fewer disabled learners and those with learning difficulties **studying full-time** than students without such problems. The reasons for this are not identified but the case study research suggests it may be because of issues with transport or reliance on other people to get to the place of study; because they need to access personal and/or medical care and support; and a result of reduced levels of confidence. Short courses are offered and encouraged for this type of learner to enable them to build achievement and give them confidence to support involvement in further, longer periods of learning in the future, and to develop the ability to concentrate for long periods of time. This all affects learners' options to select from the full range of provision available locally, and can reduce their range of choice.

A number of providers reported that LLDD were unable to access equal provision due to **lack of availability of carers** to support learners and **inappropriate mainstream support** resulting in LLDD 'getting stuck' in discrete provision because the mainstream is not geared up to support such learners (appendix 8). This clearly does not support equality of opportunity.

The **tensions** between personal, physical and educational support for such learners also influence what learning such a person can access. For example, one centre cited a learner for whom they were financially supported for learning but because nobody would fund a hoist for the toilets the learner was only able to attend for short periods or not at all, hence reducing equality of access to learning. Equally, another learner was funded for adapting IT equipment but because a hoist was not funded the learner could not access the teaching room. A more holistic and collaborative approach by a range of support agencies could

only serve to extend the range of opportunities available to LLDD and raise the level of equality of opportunity.

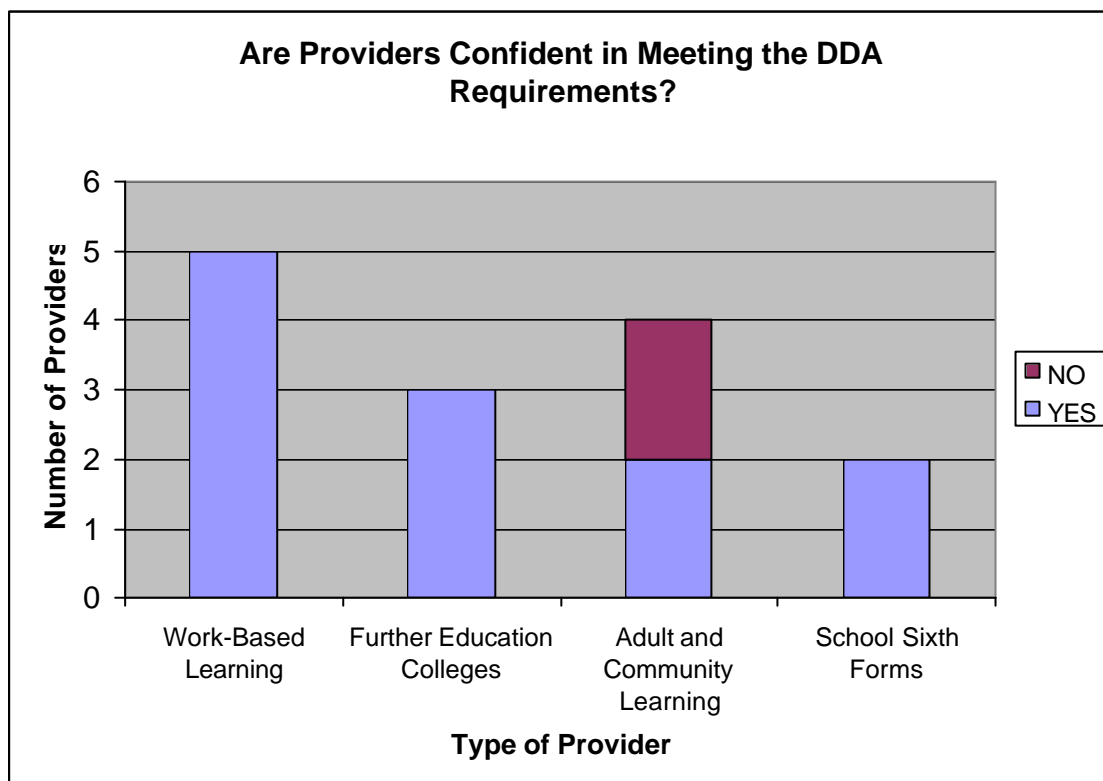
### 6.7 Models of good practice

While learners and providers were able to list a range of criteria they felt encouraged and supported good practice (appendices 8 and 9), the research team also identified a number of activities that other providers may benefit from being informed of. Some of them are described below.

- One school produced a booklet for all staff explaining various preferred learning styles and how to support each type in the classroom. It then went on to explain various tests used by the provider, for example NFER cognitive ability tests, what the scores meant and **implications for teaching**, with tips on how best to provide for learners with certain scores. This was a very practical document offering classroom delivery staff relevant tips and approaches to build into their teaching.
- One FE college has developed a **learning support consultative committee** made up of employers, SENCOs from local feeder schools, social services, the LEA, Careers Wales and key staff from the college. The committee meets once a term to consider issues including forward planning.
- One FE college highlighted a well-developed **multi-agency support** mechanism in mental health. The mental health advocacies, college disabilities service manager, tutors and occupational therapists work together to ensure potential learners get to college and stay there – if they have not seen a learner for three days they speak to one another to check what is happening and provide any necessary support.
- Another FE college highlighted its **induction programme** for new staff where there is significant input for LLDD learning support and provision, what is available, how learners can access it, how staff can link to the learning support

team, what help is available to staff, and so on. This is followed by an **annual training day** for all staff on learning support.

Most providers placed the **DDA** high on their agenda and had implemented training sessions, risk assessments and so on, and all but three of the providers interviewed (two ACL providers and one school) felt confident that they could make the reasonable adjustments required of them by the DDA.



**Learners** were generally very positive about their experiences unlike some of the recent research identified in the literature review in appendix 1. However, due to the size of the sample and various means of identifying learners to participate in the research it cannot be considered that the learners interviewed were fully representative of the views of LLDD across post-16 learning in Wales.



Learners often assessed the assistance provided by teaching and support staff as representing 'good practice', but this has to be considered in the context of the relatively little other experience that many of the learners had with which to compare the support they received. However, the support offered was appreciated and felt to contribute to learners gaining confidence, becoming independent and generally encouraging inclusion in activity. The **social aspect** of their learning was also recognised as a strength supporting the feeling of inclusivity and developing a caring ethos and approach among other learners.

The literature review (appendix 1) notes that successful organisations were those that **focused on learners' needs** rather than on any impairment. It also found that those who expanded their provision for LLDD rather than simply meeting minimum legislation requirements provided the most effective service. This type of practice was certainly recognised and welcomed by learners in this study (appendix 9).

In most of the larger providers, **senior managers** are identified to provide strategic direction and a link to the senior management team (SMT) for those staff and departments supporting LLDD in addition to **operational managers** and heads of department responsible for discrete provision. This may encourage leadership across the provider and can enhance the status and support for such provision.

A number of providers also highlighted the benefits that arise when good **communications and relationships** exist between providers and/or other support channels, for example between schools and a college, or between a college and social services. This aids the transition process and raises awareness of issues faced by learners so that the progression impacts less on the learning experience.

This research also found that most providers arrange **open days**, offer a range of activities that support transition from one provider to another, and offer

**marketing material** to advertise the support available to learners. However, the range and quality of these activities varies. Equally, the level, range and quality of support available to learners also vary from one provider to another and so learners are often confused or remain ignorant of what help is available. A more common approach, including an agreement on a **minimum entitlement** that could be accepted and implemented across the sector, would support a more equitable service being made available to all.

## 6.8 Welsh language issues

A number of issues were identified by this research, focusing around a **lack of suitable bilingual or Welsh medium resources and Welsh speaking support workers**. In addition to a scarcity of sign language interpreters and other professionals to support LLDD generally, those who require Welsh medium provision are further hampered by a lack of Welsh-speaking psychologists, support assistants, LEA support agencies, speech and hearing support workers, readers and amanuensis and so on.

In addition, no Welsh medium **diagnostic tests** are available, there are few up-to-date **Welsh medium resources** suitable for LLDD and text readers are not available in Welsh.

Key to providing high quality, equitable provision for all, providers identified the lack of robust **guidance** to support those with learning difficulties learning through the medium of Welsh, for example guidance recommends the use of large font for such learners but when documents need to be produced bilingually how should the two languages be distinguished? Equally, there is no guidance on how to lay out or set out such bilingual materials. In reality there is guidance on how to support those with additional learning needs and there is guidance on how to support bilingual provision but no guidance that marries the two issues together. Providers would also welcome guidance on how to support **braille** in Welsh.

In addition to the lack of resources it is generally agreed that bilingual provision adds to the **cost** of the provision (because of translation costs or paying for services, resources or provision for which there is a shortage of staff). If it is accepted that additional learning support mechanisms increase the cost of learning and that Welsh medium provision adds to the cost of learning then it should be recognised that by marrying the two needs the costs of supporting a Welsh-speaking learner with additional learning needs rises significantly. These costs need to be considered and factored into any new funding strategy.

### 6.9 Gaps and shortages in provision

During the learner interviews it was reported that some learners would appreciate more support with **note taking** (appendix 9). This was particularly relevant to those learners who found writing or note taking difficult (for example, those with dyslexia) or those who needed to refer to classroom notes when completing assignments. The inability to record information from classroom debates and presentations effectively, within the time available and accurately placed them at a disadvantage when trying to use the information to address homework, coursework or assignment activities.

Learners in this study also requested more **interactive software**, more **room** and more **support time** from tutors. One learner highlighted the need for more provision to be available in **venues** that were easily accessed by the disabled.

Colleges reported the lack of **sign language interpreters** as an issue; they are difficult to find, expensive and hard to retain. Currently it is not possible to train to act as a sign language interpreter in Wales and providers felt ELWa should encourage a provider to develop and deliver this provision and provide funding to support it.

A range of providers highlighted the lack of **Welsh medium support, resources and provision** for this type of learner, which was a particular problem if the

learner's first language was Welsh and they had little or poor English-language skills.

The literature review (appendix 1) shows that previous research reinforces the belief that there are significant gaps in service provision (of *auxiliary aids*), particularly for those students with dyslexia and hearing impairments, but learners and providers in this research did not highlight this as a specific issue.

### 6.10 Other feedback

A range of other relevant information was identified during the case study interviews and the analysis of the research findings.

- Different providers provide different levels of detail for funding claims. The FE sector consider the individual learning plan (ILP) as a good document to substantiate funding claims as it is generic but provides personalised information. There is a desire for the professional judgement of providers to be accepted and the need for expensive, time-consuming reports by doctors or psychologists to be reduced. Of particular concern in this area of discussion was the issue of data protection and the need to substantiate claims while also maintaining confidentiality and self-declaration.
- Providers were generally keen to see some strategic planning entering the funding model, possibly by ensuring some minimum funding each year based on historical data, with further funding being provided if numbers of learners rose significantly. This would support those providers offering short courses and roll-on, roll-off provision and enable some funding to be available right from the start of a learner's engagement, thus reducing delays in accessing support or equipment and the potential for drop out.
- Providers were clear that funding should follow the student and where collaborative provision was made available funding should be split on a percentage basis (possibly via one provider acting as the 'home provider' for a

particular learner). However, there is concern over the current timing of payments. Advance payments in August do not cover the costs incurred in the autumn term; funding claims can take too long to be agreed (so that funding arrives in February for learners who started a course in September; by the time equipment is ordered and it arrives it can easily be Easter – seven months after the start of learning!). Having only one date for claims is not effective for roll-on, roll-off provision.

- Recognition needs to be paid to the time allocation required for meetings, case reviews and so on for this type of learner and the implication this has on costs and teaching time.
- There needs to be recognition for non-accredited learning for this type of student who often needs to follow an initial course in confidence building and basic skills, and to enable such learners to repeat learning or diversify rather than progress to a higher level of learning. Consideration should also be given to more flexible modes of attendance for learners who are dependent on carers for transport, need regular hospital or medical treatment or suffer mental health issues.

## **7. Conclusions**

The research project clearly demonstrated that providers are unable to ascertain the full cost of supporting LLDD from their current management information and funding systems, that there is confusion as to what can and cannot be funded and by whom, and that different providers have different interpretations of different disabilities and the types of learning difficulties.

There are disparities of funding and support available to learners across the different providers and between learners in integrated and discrete provision.

The current funding methodology is confusing for providers and burdensome resulting in, at best, delays in providing support and, at worst, preventing support from being accessed at all. This can and does affect retention and achievement. The need to gain access to and assess evidence can be expensive and takes time; it also raises significant issues around data protection and confidentiality. If a learner does not self-declare there can be significant repercussions for the learner and provider.

The annual cycle of funding does not support the development of a strategic approach to providing overall, effective provision but instead contributes to ad hoc, unrelated developments occurring, which fail to secure the most efficient or seamless provision.

Current funding does not provide support for the 'full learning' experience. Many learners require continued support beyond the classroom during breaks, non-teaching time, during self-supported study periods and in order to access the social side of school/college life.

In addition, the particular needs of LLDD are not always recognised by the current funding methodology, for example the need for short courses, non-accredited learning, development of self-confidence and self-esteem, and to reinforce or repeat learning; and the inability to progress upwards requires

diversification of learning. The need for flexible delivery patterns and providing support for those unable to attend regularly should also be taken into account.

A number of providers currently feel that they are unable to afford to purchase all the support needed while others believe that they subsidise this area of work from other budgets. Transport costs can also be significant and are not always appropriately funded from ELWAs or LEAs.

Diverse methods are used for assessing an individual's needs and the specialist equipment they require. Systems and procedures are often devised in-house, requiring considerable development time and resulting in a lack in consistency of approach across the sector. As a result, the level and type of support offered to learners can vary and there is less opportunity to provide equality of opportunity for all.

Most providers work with a range of partners to plan for progression and transition, and offer a range of marketing material to raise awareness of support available. However, this is inconsistent across providers and across Wales as a whole, and in some cases confuses learners.

Learners interviewed for this study were, however, generally happy with the level of support they access.

## **8. Recommendations**

### **8.1 Funding and data**

**R1** A single, clear and simple classification of types of learner needs and disabilities with examples is required. At present differing categorisations are used in different parts of the sector. This makes any comparison and analysis of data difficult. It is therefore not possible to assess accurately the extent to which education and training provision across the whole post-16 learning sector provides fully inclusive and equal access to learning for people with disabilities, and/or learning difficulties. A single classification system will also simplify the organisation required to provide support through the NPFS

**R2** Clear and simple guidance on funding is needed along with training focused at various levels of staff who require to deal with and understand funding within providers. This would include senior managers, staff from financial departments or teams, heads of learning support and trainers, teachers and lecturers who will need to know what resources are, or can be available, and how to access support for learners in their provision. This applies to mainstream funding through the NPFS (the research clearly indicates some lack of understanding of current arrangements) and other relevant mainstream funding sources. There needs to be more clearly defined awareness of exactly what funding is available and from where that funding can be obtained.

**R3** With the development of the NPFS, funding inconsistencies across the various sectors could be eradicated to ensure equality of opportunity for all, regardless of what is learnt or where the learner accesses provision. A more strategic approach to funding would support providers in anticipating need and providing a more strategic, whole centre approach to addressing these needs rather than the ad hoc measures which currently take place. To facilitate this, the funding methodology developed might seek to



provide an initial tranche of funding (ring fenced for support for LLDD) to each provider. Providers would be expected to provide an audit trail for the use of this money for identified learners. The value of the initial funding could be assessed as a proportion of support funding accessed by that provider in previous years. This could reduce administrative costs, also enabling providers to meet immediate and small scale needs as soon as possible following learner enrolment and identification of the need. This could reduce delays, identified within the research, in provision of support to some learners. Further and larger scale funding could continue to rely on the bidding process.

**R4** Any new funding system should be learner focused, ring fenced for LLDD provision but flexible enough to support the huge range of needs identified including:

- i. support for the development of softer skills through short and non-accredited courses, which the research shows are currently not easily available to LLDD within some parts of the sector
- ii. equality between learning undertaken in discrete (where there is a programme area addition to funding) and integrated provision
- iii. roll-on, roll-off provision and support for learners whose needs are identified late; for example, dyslexia is often not identified until a learner has submitted their first piece of assessed work – after the claim date.

**R5** A consistent approach to funding transport for learners is required. There is inconsistency regarding funding transport, with provision varying from the LEA fully funding transport costs for schools to there being no additional funding for transport by a college, or no special transport being made available and learners using public transport. One college stated that it had two college buses for their discrete provision and used taxis and buses for mains tream provision. The cost to the institution for bus hire was

£69,545, plus an extra £100 a month subsidising taxi costs. This college does not receive any support from the LEA for transport costs. Another college stated that its transport costs for LLDD amounted to £220,000. An ACL provider stated that its transport costs were between £40,000 and £50,000 annually. This comes from the provider's general budget and there is no additional budget for these costs. Without this transport being made available, learners cannot access the learning.

### 8.2 Staffing

**R6** A review of common relevant staff roles (including specialist staff such as learning support assistants and sign language interpreters, and main stream staff such as lecturers and assessors or verifiers), responsibilities and pay levels may support the implementation of a more equitable service for learners. Variation in role and remuneration was apparent within the different parts of the sector as well as across the sector as a whole. This presents problems in understanding costs associated with delivery of learning and support, making consideration of the levels of funding required difficult.

**R7** Consideration should be given as to how more sign language interpreters may be trained in Wales in order to meet the demand for this provision to support learners. There are a number of low level sign language courses offered, particularly through community learning; however, for interpreters to be recognised by the Associate of Sign Language Interpreters a university level course is required. We could locate no training at this level available within Wales.<sup>2</sup> Whether setting up provision in Wales or supporting the training of individuals to meet needs in Wales, funding should be identified to support this development. Particular consideration

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<sup>2</sup> Information from the Association of Sign Language Interpreters ([www.asli.org.uk/asli\\_membership\\_doc.htm](http://www.asli.org.uk/asli_membership_doc.htm)).

may need to be given to training interpreters able to work within Welsh medium provision.

- R8** Consideration should be given to the development of a central register of support personnel including sign language interpreters, psychologists, support assistants, speech and hearing support workers, readers and amanuensis.<sup>3</sup> This should include identification of an appropriate organisation or agency to undertake development and maintenance of such a register. The register could include those who were self-employed and those working for existing providers. It would enable providers to locate personnel and quantify resources, allowing them to identify gaps (in particular areas of expertise and geographically). It may be possible to work with other parts of the public sector in Wales to achieve this.

### **8.3 Sharing resources**

- R9** Consideration should be given to the establishment of a central purchasing scheme for specialist equipment for the post-16 learning sector (which could link to the wider education sector) in Wales. This sits favourably with the Making the Connections<sup>4</sup> proposals to 'seize value for money opportunities through smarter procurement, streamlining support functions and maximising value from capital investment'. Ideally, such a scheme would enable providers to access the necessary equipment at favourable costs, quickly and efficiently without additional bureaucracy.

- R10** A more consistent approach to initial assessment, screening or identifying need may help to provide a more equitable service to learners and support

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<sup>3</sup> Term used by guidelines for awarding bodies meaning 'one employed to write from dictation or to copy manuscript'.

<sup>4</sup> Making the Connections outlines the Assembly Government's vision for public services and the way they are designed and delivered in Wales

([www.wales.gov.uk/themesmakingconnection/content/action-plan-e.pdf](http://www.wales.gov.uk/themesmakingconnection/content/action-plan-e.pdf)).

those who move from one provider to another. A number of providers stated that they used in-house assessment and screening methods. Over 20 assessment tools are being used by providers to assess what support is needed. There is very little consistency; the research shows that, with the exception of initial assessments and basic skills screening, providers use different tools to identify need. The use of such a wide variety of methods, as well as being confusing, may add considerably to the costs for the provider. For example, one provider stated that its online assessment tool cost £7,000 initial fee plus £4,000 per year. Also, 11 different assessment tools were being used by the case study centres to identify what resources are needed to support the learner. A set of nationally recognised screening tests agreed by ELWa and adopted by all providers would enable meaningful comparisons to be made and could support the passing on of information from one provider to another.

### **8.4 Collaboration and forward planning**

**R11** A collaborative, multi-agency approach on provision of support for the 'whole learning experience' needs to be developed at all levels. This could include support required for personal and medical care and recognise the importance of peer group interaction by enabling peers to give support to LLDD during breaks and non-teaching time. This would enhance the social experience of learning enabling these peers to be directly involved in the learning provision. Currently it is normally learners, their families or individual tutors, trainers, or lecturers (over and above the requirements of their role) who put together what can be a complex package of support to meet their personal and medical needs while involved in learning activities. This would require:

- i. strategic collaboration between ELWa and relevant government departments and agencies dealing with health, social care and welfare, aimed at establishing a national framework to enable and promote provision of support; such a nationally coordinated

collaborative agreement could underpin local provision of support to meet the full range of a learner's needs and would greatly assist in promoting equality of access for LLDD

- ii. local collaboration within the strategic framework to ensure the necessary support for the learner is available and assist the efficient transfer of information between different services and agencies. An example of good practice in this field was seen at one college in the case study. The college has a well-developed multi-agency support mechanism for mental health. The mental health advocacies, the college disabilities service manager, tutors and occupational therapists work together to ensure potential learners get to the college and stay there. If they haven't seen a learner for three days they speak to one another to check what is happening and provide the necessary support.

**R12** There is a need to remove the barriers, real and perceived, to providers gaining access to information on learner needs, and in particular what has worked for that learner in previous provision. There are a number of ways that this could be assisted and consideration should include:

- i. clarifying providers' responsibilities under the data protection legislation in relation to sharing of information on LLDD at transition between providers
- ii. developing cross-provider groups to promote greater collaboration around support for LLDD building on existing local networks such as CCETS, 14–19 networks or youth partnerships
- iii. investigating the use of existing learner tracking and management information systems such as LLWR and PLASC to collect more information and promote sharing of information on LLDD.

Currently both this research and that documented in *Success for All* (Estyn 2005) have concluded that for learners staying on at school for their post-

16 education the teachers should have full access to previous information and assessments as well as the strategies that work well to engage learning. For learners who change provider at 16, barriers exist that limit access to this valuable information and this can adversely affect attempts to meet learning needs.

## **Appendix 1 Initial review of the most relevant literature**

### **1. Funding related research**

Research undertaken on funding issues relating to LLDD in England entitled 'Development of a common funding approach for additional learning support' (Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro 2004), clearly separated the four areas of school sixth forms (SSF), work-based learning (WBL), further education colleges (FE) and adult continuing education (ACL). Differences between the different provider types were found, both in funding methods for LLDD and perceptions of what is available.

ACL provision was identified as being unique because most of the learners are part-time. The research recognised that there was a lack of national data and actual learning provision within this strand of provision. Providers accessed funding from the LEAs and within the funding available, no specific amount was identified for additional learning support (ALS). Therefore, as there was no clear distinction between ALS and general provision for learners, identifying budgets was difficult. However, researchers were able to identify some ALS spending by LEAs through information gained from providers on the provision of advisory or support staff and other central resources to support LLDD. The report also identified that many ACL providers also received LSC funding for basic skills provision formerly funded by the FEFC. In addition, these providers also made use of additional funding streams such as European Social Fund (ESF).

In school sixth forms, Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2004) reported that those learners whose statements were maintained in post-16 education were mostly those with higher level but low incidence needs. All schools taking part in the research suggested that support for learners with additional needs post-16 were limited to that named in individual learners statements of educational needs (SEN). The majority also expressed concern about the overall lack of support available for post-16 pupils with additional support needs.

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Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) went on to indicate that post-16 support is not available in SSF because of the perceived lack of funding. This suggested that there may be pupils with additional support needs who stop receiving support if they remain in school after the age of 16. The report also identified concerns from some of the participating schools that some post-16 learners leave or face difficulties because of the lack of available support. There were also concerns that as schools start to offer a wider range of vocational courses to encourage learners to remain in school, unmet needs of learners with additional support requirements may increase.

In FE, Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) found that additional learning support was a well-established feature of FE institutions, following on from arrangements introduced by the Further Education Funding Council for England. Funding is currently allocated based on individually auditable claims calculated from locally determined costs. Claims are only allowed when spending exceeds a threshold of £500 for full-time learners and £170 for part-time, but where the claim exceeds this amount the whole sum can be reclaimed.

Funds in FE were found to be open-ended and ring-fenced. This meant that an institution facing added costs for ALS could draw down extra funding, but it was not permissible for this funding to be spent on unrelated activities or resources. The report also pointed out that concerns had been raised about the potential for abuse because of the open-ended nature of the funding. The research also identified a weakness in the current system in that funding was spent based on whether it would meet audit requirements rather than individual learner needs. This method of funding gave FE institutions a unique capacity within the post-16 sector of being able to ensure and control resources for staff working with learners with additional support needs. Staff within this part of the sector were reluctant to think about losing the system.

Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) made a recommendation for a two-tier approach to funding to be adopted across all four types of providers within the post-16 sector. It was felt that this could greatly assist in reducing the workload and thus may overcome some of the perceived barriers to accessing funding to



support LLDD. While there would have to be threshold levels for such support, it was felt that the level of these would require very careful consideration. An analysis of claims from the ILR/ISR data for 2001/02 showed that 85% of claims fell below £2,500 and 94% below £4,500. It was believed that a £2,500 threshold would remove the need for up to 85% of claims, leaving those claims for resources above this level for closer examination. The FE sector panel, when asked to consider the matter, supported a threshold figure of £4,500 (Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro 2004).

## **2. Implementation of legislation and meeting learners support needs in Wales**

Wales is reported to be one year behind England in fulfilling the legislation of the DDA part iv (DRC 2003), although in their research, the particular case studies carried out failed to identify any significant differences in perceptions between the two countries. This could be explained by the fact that the establishments visited in their research were selected on recommendation. The report recognises that among those establishments not visited in both countries, some may be ahead, and others behind, in their implementation of the legislation. The research was designed to identify areas for development rather than report on the overall position in both countries with regard to implementation.

The DRC survey (2003) found evidence of good practice in some institutions and discovered instances of a lack of understanding in others. They also found patchy implementation across England and Wales, casting doubt on whether disabled learners would have equally positive experiences across institutions.

Davies, Doyle and Robson (2004) subsequently produced a report to the DRC in Wales called *Taking away the strain?: Auxiliary aids and services for disabled students in Welsh post 16 education*. Within their report they classified 'aids' as equipment, including items such as text-phones and assistive technologies for computers. Thus auxiliary aids were judged to include items such as laptops and tape recorders available for learners to borrow. 'Services' referred mainly to

human support to meet individual needs such as British sign language interpreters, study skills tutors for learners with dyslexia and personal care support workers.

Davies, Doyle and Robson (2004) stated in their report that:

*The legal extent of auxiliary aids and services is still to be determined but future case law is likely to establish the boundaries more precisely.*

Their research re-enforced the belief that while there was notable evidence of good practice in Wales, there were also significant gaps in service provision, in particular for those learners with dyslexia and hearing impairments.

Davies, Doyle and Robson (2004) indicated in their report that a more robust national co-ordination of provision for disabled learners in post-16 education would:

- facilitate the sharing and dissemination of good practice
- assist individual institutions to develop their provision
- help the sector to take forward initiatives to remedy a shortfall in supply of certain key services.

They went on to state that the

*provision of high-quality auxiliary aids and services is a crucial means by which discrimination in education can be dismantled and barriers to learning for disabled students can be removed* (Davies, Doyle and Robson 2004).

### **3. Issues relating to assistive technologies (usage, funding and training)**

An issue for many providers is the purchase, provision and usage of assistive technologies for those needing such aids to enable them to use a computer. Costs for product site licences such as screen-reader technologies are high. There is therefore a tendency to buy individual licences which conflict with many providers' policy of permitting access to institutional networks from any machine providing the correct username and password is used.

This was re-enforced in the research undertaken by Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2004), which found that while funding for assistive technology is necessary, it may be insufficient to provide open access to all those needing it. A more sensible solution may be to buy generic products such as laptops, which can be assigned to individuals for use.

The issue of depreciation of technological items was also addressed, in particular where a particular product may, after a reasonably short lifespan, no longer be required, effectively making it redundant. While this was identified as an issue, however, such costs were not considered to be on a large enough scale within FE to disadvantage the institutions (Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro 2004).

The research (Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro 2004) recommended that cross-sector financial support should be sought to fund such items which could be more widely used. The feasibility of establishing pools of shared equipment was considered. This is where 'redundant items' (subject to licensing agreements) can be used by other post-16 providers, reducing spending and duplicate purchases and facilitating more effective division of funds. Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) made a strong case for funding bodies to actively broker such collaborative arrangements for providing post-16 learners with assistive technology.

Staff access to advice, training and support was found to be as important as the technology itself in ensuring successful use of assistive technologies. Central teams exist within some LEAs, further education colleges, charities and specialist independent organisations who could support such training, advice and support.

Demand for assistive technologies within work-based learning was found to be low (Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro 2004). However, where it existed, usage was not an issue because of support from bodies such as ENABLE, in the Midlands. ENABLE works with anyone who considers they have a disability, their aims being:

*to increase access to training for people with disabilities but much more than that to work out how people are representing themselves, others, their learning styles, their relationships and their world.*

It offers considerable support for adult learners providing a:

*thorough, full and unique exploration of an individual's learning style, showing them how they learn, as opposed to learning through using other peoples' styles and techniques ([www.bgfl.org/services/ae/orgs.htm](http://www.bgfl.org/services/ae/orgs.htm)).*

WBL providers were found to have an additional problem in relation to technological aids in that duplicate provision of support was required, one set in the training centres and another in the workplace.

Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) found that LEAs generally were only prepared to meet the assistive technology needs of those learners who were under 16, or when earmarked funding was made available. They also reported that larger authorities appeared to recognise the need to hold certain equipment centrally as a coordinated, shared resource for providers. They noted, however, that a level of dispersal in the location of such resources was required, such that they could be as widely available to providers as possible. There were concerns raised about the practicalities of managing such systems.

In the schools sector, Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) found that budgets for assistive technologies outside those named in pupil statements or related to unit resourced provision were very limited. Use of ICT was found to vary widely and appeared to relate more to school policies rather than strategies for addressing special educational needs. The LEA was found to fulfil a significant role in funding and maintaining equipment specified in pupils' SEN statements.

Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) suggested that there was a significant unmet need within SSF, and that few staff were fully aware of the contribution that assistive technology could make to meeting pupils' needs. They found limited use of ALS funds for buying assistive technology. This was similar within FE where outlay on technology formed a small proportion of total support budgets, and then related mainly to generic and reusable equipment such as laptops.

FE institutions raised concerns about being able to claim for depreciation rather than capital costs, but the research found little evidence of expenditure levels that would place them at a disadvantage. It was also suggested that recent funding

investments in technology generally may have unrealistically lowered the use of ALS as a source of funding for assistive technologies, and that this may not remain the case in the future.

In work-based learning, Fletcher, Farraday and Monteiro (2003) reported that while specific funding was available for additional learning support and additional social needs, it was felt that staff competencies to assess additional needs was less developed than in FE and the voluntary sector. Thus identification of how such needs should be met was slower and, therefore, access to funding sporadic, in part explaining the disparities of funding claims across work-based learning providers.

#### **4. Listening to learners**

Colleges that held regular meetings with learners about the support provided were seen by learners as taking their views seriously. One college held several meetings each term, documenting the proceedings, which were then signed by all those present. (Anderson *et al.* 2003).

Anderson *et al.* found evidence that many learners, in particular, those with learning difficulties, found feedback systems unclear. Learners in colleges with student councils and representatives in each tutor group felt dear about the structure for effecting change, and knew when action had been taken because these representatives fed information back to the groups.

Organisations considered successful in fulfilling the changes imposed by the DDA (DRC 2003) were those that focused on the learner's needs rather than their impairment. Such providers also tended to regard themselves as a community resource, drawing on that community to develop good practice, rather than simply meeting the needs of current learners within the organisation.

The DRC (2003) also found best practice in those providers who moved ahead of the legislation by expanding their services and provision for those with impairments, rather than simply meeting minimum legislation requirements.

Termly learner satisfaction questionnaires were recommended (DRC 2003) so that problems can be addressed regularly and not just at the end of academic years or courses. Such a practice could also assist in highlighting good practice so that it can be disseminated across the establishment, benefiting a greater number of learners, and/or staff.

#### **4.1 Learner support**

Learners viewed the quality of support as variable (Anderson *et al.* 2003) and found it appeared to work most effectively when planning took place well before course start dates, taking into account learner ambitions and views.

Where personal care was required, this was usually delivered discretely, but there were occasions when learners were made to feel uncomfortable through obtrusive support delivered within the classroom. Some learners also felt conflict between having their individual needs recognised and supported, and trying to be the same as their peers. A resistance to labelling by some learners also made them wary of admitting to requiring support, resulting in late assessments and provision arrangements.

Some learners also stated that they had faced embarrassing situations where their support assistants had been mistaken for their mother (Anderson *et al.* 2003). Many felt that having someone closer to their own age provided a greater chance that they would share common interests. Many expressed the feeling that they would like the opportunity to interview learning support assistants themselves. However concerns over this include recognition of the difficulties in undertaking this approach, potential issues in relation to limited career prospects for those entering the role should new learners not select them, and possible loss of considerable expertise in provision of support.

## **4.2 The social aspects of learning**

Extensive research into the needs, feelings and views of learners in FE (Anderson *et al.* 2003), found that while, in the main, additional support provision was acceptable, there were areas in which learners clearly felt there was room for improvement. This was particularly true for the social aspects of college life, an area not directly funded through additional learning support mechanisms.

Some learners, in particular those with learning difficulties in discrete provision, felt socially isolated within their institution, (Anderson *et al.* 2003). While efforts were made to hold family events to encourage socialisation within the institution, this only served to reinforce segregation between mainstream and discrete provision.

Learners in mainstream education also claimed feelings of isolation, and sometimes bullying, stemming from them being 'different', or because they received additional support with their learning, something resented by some non-disabled learners. The research suggested that often this situation improved as the academic year progressed.

## **4.3 Attitude and awareness**

A common theme emerging from the literature was a need for attitudes to change, in particular within integrated provision.

'Student Voices' (Skill 1996) and Swindells (1996) both found that although most disabled learners' experiences were positive, some expressed concern about the attitudes of other learners and staff and their lack of disability awareness. This was particularly obvious where learners entered post-16 education from special schools, many noting experiences of isolation and bullying.

Some years later, the DRC (2003) recommended that staff should be looking at what could be provided to aid disabled learners rather than seeing the disability



as an obstacle. Anderson *et al.* (2003) demonstrated that successful integration was more likely where there was use of learning mentors for staff and learners as this enabled all staff to take responsibility for inclusive learning, thus removing perceived and actual barriers through hands-on experience.

One learner re-enforced this perceived weakness in awareness and attitude, stating that:

*Most tutors are patient with me, but not all tutors have an awareness. I'm not a person who complains, I don't want to be a nuisance, it might annoy the tutors (Anderson et al. 2003).*

One disability co-ordinator commented (DRC 2003), 'they couldn't be all things to all men'. They indicated that, ultimately, good practice is less about listening to what the disability officer says or does, and more about practitioners taking ownership of implementation of inclusion practices, and being pro-active in resolving issues.

Although there is a seven-year gap between the reports, there are underlying similarities in the indication that there is a need for further change in the attitudes of staff.

## **5. Staff training**

The DRC (2003) found that many institutions provided staff training on the impacts of the DDA for both academic and administrative staff. While this gave them a better understanding of the requirements, there was evidence that, particularly in FE, many staff felt overawed by the enormity of the tasks needed to comply with the legislation. In addition, the providers themselves faced difficulties carrying out this training, particularly in multiple site institutions and those with many outreach centres. The DRC also found that many staff tended to forget the training, due to the lack of opportunity to embed changes into their everyday practices.

There was evidence that training was most effective when staff learnt 'in situ' (Anderson *et al.* 2003) – when an expert in the identified disability was brought in to work in harmony with the lecturer.

It emerged that, occasionally, learners approached institutions to study for a specific course or subject area (Anderson *et al.* 2003), but found themselves studying something different, with no, or minimal, explanation of why. Staff training to provide a better awareness of the support needs of learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties could help in breaking down this barrier and improve communication between learners and educators.

## **6. Transport to access provision**

Transport was found to cause difficulties for many learners (Anderson *et al.* 2003) and providers identified funding for transport as a problem. Where it was provided, concerns were expressed about reliability of the service, and the inflexibility of arrangements. Local authorities have a duty to provide learners with transport until the age of 19; the transport provided is chiefly designed around patterns of school attendance. However, this results in learners waiting around with nothing to do between lessons finishing and transport arriving, or missing opportunities for socialising with other learners.

For those learners over 19, the problems are even greater. While several agencies can provide transport, there is no legal obligation to do so, and therefore often no funding available to support it. Transportation costs were, at times, prohibitively expensive, and accessible transport is essential for some learners with special needs to promote inclusion in learning provision.

## **7. Assessing learner needs**

An issue that requires further exploration is the apparent disparity of how providers assess the needs of those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Many institutions appear to have individualised assessment strategies (DRC

2003) and this could impact on getting funding and therefore the level of support provided to learners.

An area of good practice was identified where links were formed between FE institutions and mainstream or specialist secondary schools (DRC 2003); these allowed for an extended period of assessment and induction for learners when they moved on to participate in learning in FE. College staff attended school career evenings and, where possible, transition reviews. These practices served to raise awareness and allowed smooth transition between providers, presenting minimal impact on the learner experience.

## Appendix 2 Initial review of data

### 1.1 Scope of the statistical data available

This statistical analysis was undertaken on that data made available and covers the post-16 learners and providers outlined below:

- **Deliverers**
  - FE institutions
  - work-based learning providers
- **Recipients**
  - individuals with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in post-16 education and training offered by the above types of provider.

The data used consists of the ELWa data sets supplied for the period 2001/02, and ELWa Customer Satisfaction Survey including learners involved in further education in the summer of 2003.

The two datasets classify learners differently. In the ELWa database, classification is by those with disabilities and those without. There is no indication of whether the disabilities grouping includes those with learning difficulties. In contrast, the survey categorises learners into four groups: those with and without disabilities; and those with and without learning difficulties. In addition, the survey currently available only covers FE learners, whereas the ELWa database incorporates those in work-based learning. These factors, when combined with the different academic periods covered in the dataset, suggest that interpretations of any comparisons should be treated cautiously.

## **1.2 Reliability of data**

When analysing the data provided it should be borne in mind that, except where statements have been preserved from pre-16 education, or where learners are already claiming incapacity benefits, learning difficulties or disabilities are recorded mainly through learner self-declaration. This raises concerns about the consistency of data for several reasons. A condition that one individual may consider a disability may not be viewed in the same way by another. Also, learning difficulties may remain undeclared by individuals suffering from mental illness who may be reluctant to disclose a problem because of a perception that it may in some way disadvantage them. There could also be instances where learners may have undiagnosed difficulties.

## **2. ELWa LLWR DATA**

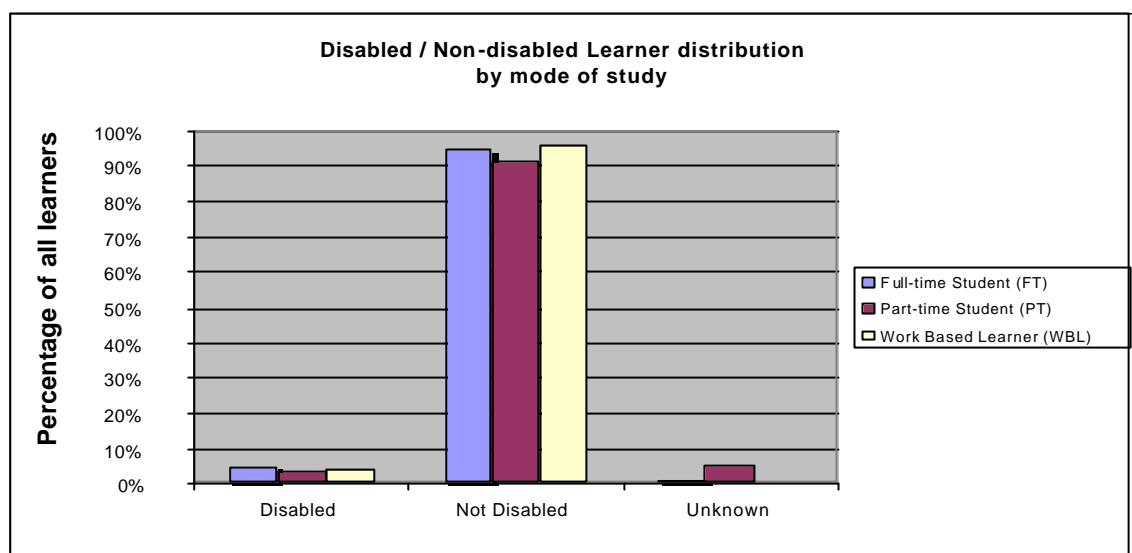
This data covers 291,000 full and part-time learners across FE and work-based learning. Of the 96.5% included on their statistical returns, 3.8% of learners across FE and work-based learning claimed to have some form of disability.

Unless the learner has a statement of needs, disabilities and learner difficulties are recorded by learner declaration. This percentage could be higher, however, as again some learners may be embarrassed or reluctant to declare that they have a difficulty, or a difficulty may be undiagnosed.

These statistics do not explicitly include learners with learning difficulties, and it is therefore assumed, for this work, that the disabled data encompasses both disabilities and learning difficulties.

The graph below, drawing solely on the ELWa data, clearly shows less than 5% of learners in each group have some form of disability. This is considerably lower than the indicated figure of 14% (one in seven of the population) (section 2.2 of this report) for the UK as a whole while Disability Wales suggest that one in six people in the principality can be considered to have some form of disability. The outcomes of the ELWa Customer Satisfaction Survey on disabled people's

perceptions of their educational experiences may offer added insight into this disparity.



## 2.1 Gender distribution

Overall, there were more male LLDD than female recorded as participating in full-time FE and all work-based learning. However, part-time FE provision showed this situation to be reversed, with more female LLDD than male. The disparity between male and female in work-based learning was particularly striking with males making up more than two-thirds of the total number of LLDD. This does, however, reflect the predominance of male learners overall within this sector. In addition there is a marked difference in the age make-up of learners between FE and work-based learning: 38% of the LLDD participating in WBL are under 18 while 46% of LLDD in FE are in this age group.

### 2.1.1 Distribution of disabled learners by gender and region

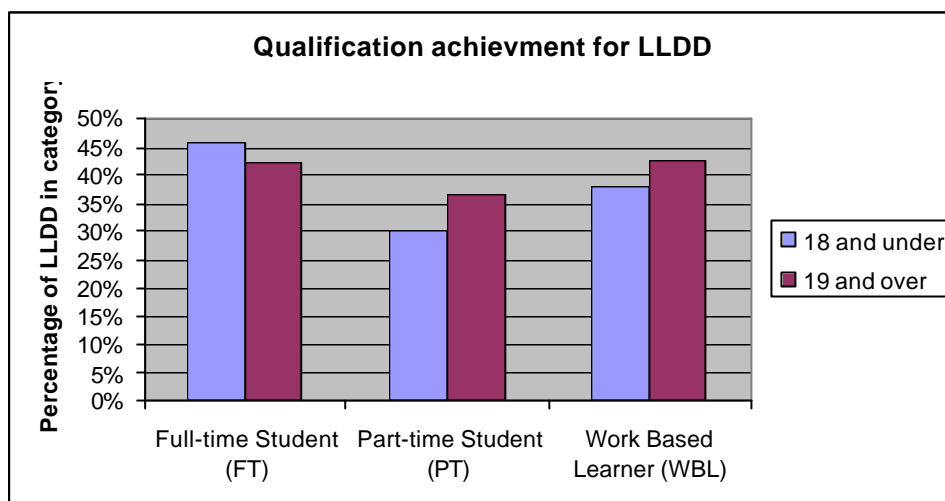
The table below shows that within the total numbers of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties, a higher proportion in full-time education and all work-based learning are male. With the exception of the North Wales region, the majority of part-time learners in FE are female.

Region	Gender	Full-time FE learners with disabilities*	Part-time FE learners with disabilities*	Work-based learners with disabilities
North Wales	Male	58.27%	53.43%	63.57%
	Female	41.73%	46.50%	36.43%
Mid-Wales	Male	52.17%	46.91%	60.00%
	Female	47.83%	53.09%	40.00%
South-West Wales	Male	52.49%	41.66%	68.66%
	Female	47.51%	58.34%	31.34%
South-East Wales	Male	53.24%	45.35%	74.05%
	Female	46.76%	54.65%	25.95%

\* Division of learners between full-time and part-time only available for FE

## 2.2 Qualification achievements of learners by age group

The graph below shows the qualification achievements by age of learners with disabilities. The figures show under achievement in both age ranges, with achievement under 50%. The achievement levels for part-time study in FE and generally in WBL are lower in those aged 18 years and under. However, it is difficult to draw significant conclusions from this data without considering achievements of learners without disabilities, the equivalent data for this group was not made available.



The data also allowed a breakdown of the types of disabled learners pursuing courses that culminate in a qualification and courses that do not. For those in full and part-time college-based further education, incidences of learners following courses without qualifications were zero for both age groups. In contrast, in work-based learning, 3.5% of those under 18, and 13% aged 19 and over, followed courses without qualifications. These may be learners who are following short courses from Job Centre Plus referrals. It is also possible that the variation in funding methodologies between FE and WBL, which impose differing requirements for the outcomes of learning, may have an effect.

The data provides an indication of achievements for LLDD learners. However, by itself, the data should be viewed cautiously as it has not been possible to analyse it in relation to other factors such as overall achievement and socio-economic groupings.

### 2.3 Academic levels of study

The ELWa LLWR data provided a breakdown by subject and level for learners with disabilities. However, reliable conclusions are difficult to draw from the subject breakdown because the number of learners studying in more than one subject area is unknown.



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Throughout Wales the number of LLDD studying at Level 4 is very low. In contrast, the number of learners recorded as studying at entry level accounted for 23% of all those on the dataset, with part-time learners accounting for 73% of this figure.

### **3. ELWa Customer Satisfaction Survey**

The data used here from the survey, which was undertaken by NOP World on behalf of ELWa, includes FE learners and leavers and was undertaken during July and August 2003.

Of the 4,707 learners interviewed, 7.2% had disabilities and 6% had learning difficulties. In comparison, only 3.8% of learners were identified from the ELWa LLWR dataset as having disabilities (2001/02). Data from this source for learners with learning difficulties was not available.

The data provides no indication of how many learners may have fallen into both the learning difficulties and disabilities categories. Therefore for this work, in order to be able to use the data it will be assumed that both categories are separate and there is no overlap between the groups.

The research found that attitudes towards how learners felt about education varied between the three identified groups, in particular in relation to respondents with no learning difficulties or disabilities:

- 44% of those without disabilities or learning difficulties claimed they felt generally positive about school.
- In the disabilities group this fell to 35%.
- And it fell to 27% for those with learning difficulties.

The survey took account of a comprehensive range of issues, including the reasons learners gave for attending college, through to their satisfaction with the teaching provision and the facilities available at the institution.

This data allows us to identify any major disparities between the satisfaction levels of learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and those without.

### **3.1 Attitudes towards school**

Respondents were asked how they felt about their previous experiences towards learning at school. Satisfaction levels were generally lower amongst LLDD than for learners overall.

In the survey, 44% of those without disabilities or learning difficulties claimed that they felt generally positive about school; this fell to 35% for those with disabilities, and to 27% for those with learning difficulties.

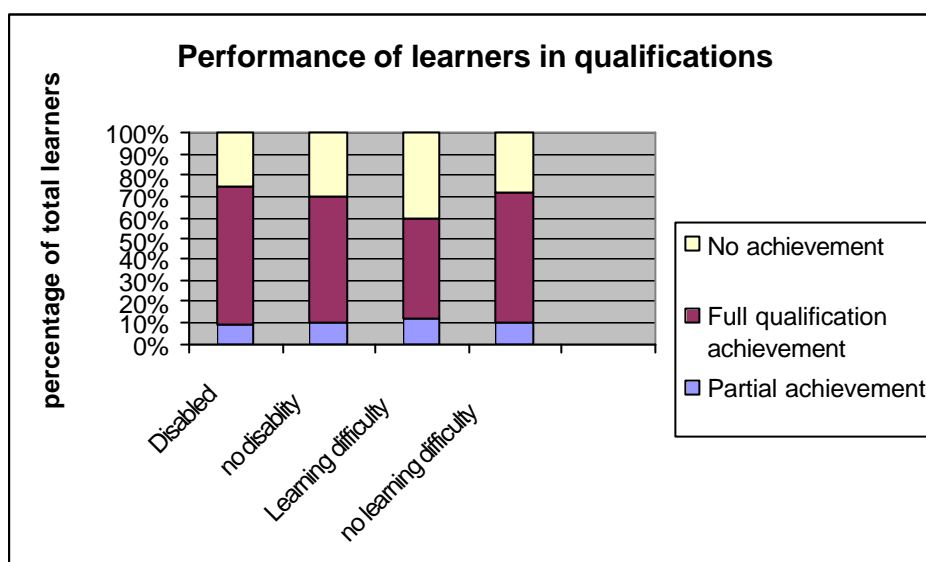
Some 33% of those in the learning difficulties category claimed to have generally negative feelings of school, as did 24% of those with disabilities. The same figure for the non-disabled, non-learning difficulties was 21%.

### **3.2 Academic levels of study**

Learners were asked which level of qualification their study led to. In common with the ELWa LLWR data, the figure for studying at Level 4 was around 1% for both those with disabilities and those with learning difficulties. 31% of those with learning difficulties were studying for NVQs in contrast to 19% of those with disabilities.

### 3.3 Academic achievement

Learners were asked how well they performed with their qualifications.



The above graph shows a similar figure in those learners with and without disabilities achieving their qualifications outright, with a large drop for those with learning difficulties. More interestingly however, the highest percentage of learners achieving their qualifications outright was only 55%. While it is difficult to confirm without further research, this, when combined with the ELWa data on learners with disabilities achievements, is an indication that learners are under achieving across the sector, irrespective of their disability/non-disability classification.

20% of those with disabilities and 26% of those with learning difficulties responded that they did not know the status of their qualification. This was in contrast to 11% of respondents without learning difficulties or disabilities.

### **3.4 Progress after leaving further education**

The survey explored where learners went after leaving further education. It found that while 46% of those with no disability were in full-time employment (over 31 hours a week), this fell to 18% for those respondents with learning difficulties and to 14% for those with disabilities. The differences reduced considerably for those leavers in part-time employment, with only a 4% difference between all learners irrespective of whether they had a disability or learning difficulty.

14% of leavers with disabilities said that they were unable to work, and therefore registered as long-term sick or disabled, and 18% retired on leaving education; a further 10% said they were at home and not actively seeking employment.

11% of those with disabilities and 20% of those with learning difficulties went on to further full-time education, compared with 7% of those without disabilities and learning difficulties.

### **3.5 Qualifications studied**

There were minimal differences across learners with disabilities, learning difficulties and those with neither, in terms of the qualifications studied, with the exception of A-levels. 9% of those without disabilities and learning difficulties were studying A-levels, while only 3% of those with learning difficulties and 2% of those with disabilities studied for them.

### **3.6 Age of leaving full-time education**

Respondents were asked at what age they first left full-time education. The figures in the table below provide no indication of how many respondents may have fallen into both the disability or learning difficulty category.

Age of first leaving full-time education	Without disability	With disability	With learning difficulty
Under 16	25%	11%	12%
16	41%	36%	44%
17	12%	14%	7%
18	6%	13%	6%
19	2%	3%	3%
20	1%	2%	> 1%
21	1%	3%	1%
Never left	5%	14%	17%

These figures indicate that LLDD are less likely to have left full-time education before age 16; however, those with learning difficulties show a slightly increased tendency to take the opportunity to leave at 16, while those with disabilities show a greater propensity to remain in full-time education post-16.

### **3.7 Respondents considering themselves to have a disability by socio-economic group**

There was a large disparity in the distribution of respondents by socio-economic group. In each group the numbers of those considering themselves disabled was recorded. The highest level of respondents overall were in groups in the middle of the socio-economic range while the lowest participation was seen from those with the lowest socio-economic status. It is interesting to note that this group also had the highest level of learners that considered themselves to have a disability.

## **Appendix 3 Project personnel and stakeholder engagement**

### **Research team**

Dr Sonia Reynolds	Project Manager
Edwyn Williams	Project Manager and Researcher
Lucie Burridge	Research Officer
Ann Lewis	Associate Researcher
Ceri Anwen Jones	Associate Researcher
Susan White	Associate Researcher
Sally Faraday	Expert Adviser
Mick Fletcher	Expert Adviser
Liz Maudsley	Expert Adviser
Lisa Doyle	Research methods support

### **Equality and Diversity Network**

This Network meets 4 times per year and provides information, support and general networking amongst practitioners and managers with a remit for widening participation and addressing issues of social inclusion, learners with special needs and those involved in promotion of inclusive learning practice within providers of post-16 learning. Further information and details about the activities of this network related to this research can be found at [http://www.dysg.org.uk/equality/eqpage\\_temp.asp](http://www.dysg.org.uk/equality/eqpage_temp.asp)

## Advisory Group

### Membership

Steve Brangwyn	Cardiff ITEC
Janine Burridge	NVQ Adviser Cardiff ITEC
Lyn Clement	WSSA
Sally Faraday	LSDA
Daniella Frost	Learner WBL
Mike Hughes	Community Learning Wales
Godfrey Hurley	Fforwm
Ceri Anwen Jones	Dysg Consultant
Ann Lewis	Dysg Consultant
Liz Maudsley	Skill
Sonia Reynolds	Dysg
Sue White	Dysg
Gail Williams	Disability Wales
Edwyn Williams	Dysg

## **Appendix 3 : Meeting Notes of the Dysg Research Project on Disability Issues for Post -16 Learning Provision**

**Advisory Group Meeting. 1<sup>st</sup> December, Dysg Offices, Cardiff**

### **Present**

Sonia Reynolds, Dysg; Edwyn Williams, Dysg; Mike Hughes, Community Learning Wales; Steven Brangwyn, Cardiff ITEC; Janine Burrige, NVQ Adviser; Sue White, Dysg; Ann Lewis, Dysg Consultant; Ceri Anwen Jones, Dysg Consultant; Daniella Frost, Learner.

### **Apologies**

Sally Faraday, LSDA; Liz Maudsley, Skill; Godfrey Hurley, Fforwm; Lyn Clement, WSSA.

### **Overview of the project**

Dr Sonia Reynolds, Director Dysg, gave an introduction to the project, outlining the rationale and aims and objectives. Members of the Advisory Committee were then given an opportunity to discuss the project plan and the methodology for conducting the research.

### **Literature review and data search**

Sue White updated members on the literature review and data search that has been conducted. The research utilised prior research carried out by the LSDA and Skill, existing case studies and data obtained from ELWa's research on Understanding Learner Needs, Motivation and Satisfaction Survey 2003.

A draft document outlining the amount and type of support offered by various support organisations to both students and education providers was tabled for



information. This was based on research carried out by Lucie Burridge, Research Officer, Dysg.

Members suggested other organisations that offer support that could be investigated further.

### **Interview scripts**

The interview schedule and script to be used with a range of appropriate staff within a range of selected providers were discussed and amendments made where appropriate.

The interview schedule to be used as a prompt during interviews with relevant learners within providers was discussed.

The experts supporting the project (Sally Faraday and Liz Maudsley had already been consulted and liaison with them was continuing). Daniella Frost's input was greatly welcomed by all, particularly during the review of the learner interview script.

### **Discussion on how to gather views of ways of working etc**

The list of potential centres to include in the research project was tabled.

There will be four pilot centres that will form the initial case studies. The suggested range of case studies was approved. This will include three Further Education Colleges, five Secondary Schools with associated LEA staff; six Work based learning providers, four LEA Adult and Community Learning providers and One voluntary sector provider.

Following discussion one amendment was made to the list.

**Future meetings**

It was agreed that full details of the meeting notes and tabled papers would be shared with those that could not attend. In addition members agreed to being consulted as appropriate by email throughout the project. The group would next meet when the majority of data had been collected on a date to be arranged.

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**Second meeting of the Advisory Group was held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2005** at the Dysg Offices in Morganstown. The outcomes of the meeting were to produce the full synthesis report on the case studies included as an appendix in the Report.

## Appendix 4a - Questionnaire for Support Organisations

- Do you provide advice and/or support for the post 16 education sector?

If the answer to this question is 'no', there is no need to proceed further.  
Thank you for clarifying your role.

- Do you target a specific group or part of the sector i.e. 14-19; HE; Adults?
- Do you offer your services for post 16 education providers?
- If so, do you provide a service in any of the following areas (can you indicate whether you provide advice on or funding for the following):
  - + Equipment or teaching materials
  - + Technical support
  - + Specialist staff (dyslexia experts; sign language interpreters etc).
  - + Funding
  - + Training
  - + General Advice
- Do you offer your services for post 16 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

- If so, do you provide a service in any of the following areas (can you indicate whether you provide advice on or funding for the following):
  - + Equipment or learning materials
  - + General Advice

**Appendix 4b - Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or  
Disabilities  
Support Organisations**

**[British Council of People with Disabilities](#)**

This is an umbrella organisation of organisations that represents those with disabilities. As such it does not offer funding, training or equipment. They offer accessible materials and a transcription service.

**[Cerebra](#)**

Cerebra works to ensure that up-to-date, evidence-based knowledge is available and applied for the prevention of brain damage and for proven treatments. They also organise a wide range of training seminars, workshops and projects for parents, professionals and children themselves. The Foundation's unique Information Unit provides specialist information to anyone concerned with brain injury; (medical, educational, legal, therapeutic, welfare rights, etc.).

**[Disability Rights Commission](#)**

The Disability Rights Commission works to stop discrimination and promote equality. While the DRC works with the disabled, employers and service providers to find solutions to issues, it does this on an individual basis. The DRC do not target any particular age groups and cannot provide funding or technical aids to providers or students. Students can seek advice through the DRC helpline on a specific problem.

However, their website contains a multitude of publications and guides that deal with the education sector specifically and may be of use to providers, particularly in helping with keeping in line with and understanding legislation.

### [Disability Wales](#)

Disability Wales is the national association of disability groups in Wales, working to promote the rights: inclusion equality, and support of all disabled people in Wales.

Disability Wales highlighted in their questionnaire response that they do not provide advice and/or support for the post-16 education sector.

Disability Wales produces advice for those with disabilities – leaflets on benefit payments to problems with building access. They also work to develop support groups across Wales. Although they provide information for disabled people and their organisations this does not seem to extend to schools.

### [Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities](#)

The Foundation develops projects and researches issues facing those with disabilities. They do not offer any training, funding or equipment to either the provider or the student. Their website, however, does offer their publications for download as well as fact sheets.

### **Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)**

Royal National Institute of the Blind Cymru (RNIB) works for the 120,000 people in Wales with serious sight loss.

The RNIB education services work to ensure children and adults with sight problems gain access to the best education opportunities at home, school, university and in the wider community.

The RNIB offers support to the post -16 education sector both for learners with disabilities and to the education providers. They offer learners general and specific advice on equipment and learning materials. While they cannot offer funding for providers, they do offer technical support, training and advice on equipment or teaching materials.

The website lists various projects in which they are involved:

- European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) – working to promote accessible syllabuses.
- E-Learning – they guide colleges on procurement and implementation.
- Information Service – this provides information for everyone, including teachers and support staff. There is also a specific advice initiative for professionals involved in the curriculum related needs of the blind and partially sighted.

### **Royal National Institute of the Deaf (RNID)**

The Royal National Institute of the Deaf (RNID) is the largest charity representing the 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. As a membership charity,

they aim to achieve a radically better quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing people.

The RNID Education Team specifically supports education providers. Their work has focused on 0-16 provision while the Employment Training and Skills Service works with deaf adults returning to education. However, more attention is being paid to the 14-19 and FE sector as a result of the Tomlinson report.

The RNID offers advice and sells technical aids (loops, soundfield systems etc.). They also produce priced educational guideline publications e.g. 'Deaf students in FE', as well as free fact sheets.

Technical support is offered through consultation and after sales service. They can offer specialist staff through the RNID Communication Services Unit, and may be able to offer training if time and resources are willing.

The RNID works with a range of groups including teachers to produce materials to support teaching. The website also offers advice on teaching styles.

### Scope

Scope is the disability organisation in England and Wales whose focus is people with cerebral palsy.

Scope hope to develop on the work of their schools and colleges, that is already underway, in providing support to children in mainstream settings.

Scope is concerned with removing barriers for disabled children in education and works with parents, children and education providers to do this.



Scope's National Lead Adviser for Education also offers a range of training materials and useful fact sheets that address frequently asked questions.

### Shaw Trust

The Shaw Trust is a national charity that provides training and work opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in the workplace due to disability, ill health or other social circumstances.

The Shaw Trust supports disabled and disadvantaged people across the UK to achieve their personal and employment aims. They provide government funded employment services to support people moving from benefits to work; pre-employment activities; work-related, accredited training and support for increased independence. The Shaw Trust also work in partnership with employers, local authorities and health trusts.

### SKILL

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities is an independent charity that promotes opportunities for people with any kind of disability in learning and employment. Thus their focus is post-16.

They offer training and advice on following the DDA and being accessible. They also carry out research projects.

Although SKILL provides information for students, this is not available in Wales at the moment. The Welsh arm of SKILL is developing, with the addition of a Welsh Development Officer.

### SNAP Cymru

SNAP Cymru seeks to empower families (parents, carers, children and young people) to have their voices heard within the area of special educational needs and to support them to influence policy and practice in the planning and delivery of services at both local and national levels.

SNAP do not target particular age groups, but are restricted by funding. The 0-19 age group receive all services, 19-25 is limited and there is no funding to supply the services for adults. But its support, advice and information services are open to those aged 0 –25. There is specific advice for those 14-19; there is also encouragement for the learner to be involved in planning and decision-making.

Education providers can use SNAP's training, advocacy and disagreement resolution/mediation (costs by arrangement) skills. As well as training on specialist provision, education legislation and DDA, they also offer advice on working in partnership, policy, procedure, practice and provision and roles and responsibilities.

The website describes how they offer Individual Action Plans that help to plan an inclusive education.

### SCOVO

SCOVO is an all-Wales umbrella organisation which provides a collective voice for voluntary groups and organisations in Wales. Their mission is to promote the right of people with learning disabilities to have valued lives.

As an umbrella organisation they oversee many other voluntary organisations as well as being involved with LEAs and some schools. There are a number of specialised projects which they encompass – including the Special Needs Advisory Project and the Welsh Medium Organisation. Some of the voluntary organisations carry out vocational training and are geared towards education. SCOVO seeks new ways of working with people with disabilities and works to promote inclusion and the rights of those with difficulties. SCOVO is also running a Life Options Scheme which helps young people make transitions – perhaps into employment or independent living. The scheme creates a person centred plan and helps the person achieve that transition. (This currently runs in Llanelli only).

They provide a wide range of information and advice and have various Good Practice Guides – although these are not specifically for the education sector. SCOVO works on behalf of other organisations; it is these other organisations that are the first point of contact.

### **Wales Council of the Deaf**

Wales Council of the Deaf have most contact with colleges of Higher Education. This is because at the school level support comes from the Local Education Authority (they have specialist teachers), in FE colleges there is a good level of existing support, with most colleges having support services that provide for students with disabilities and so there is no call for much support from WCD. Interestingly, new students choose their college based on word of mouth reports of others with difficulties/disabilities and attend where support is good.

If a post 16 provider was to approach the Council and seek advice or help it would be forthcoming, an example was given where the Council arranged for an

interpreter. They are happy to give advice on equipment and learning aids – where they can be bought etc.

The Council cannot provide any funding and doesn't cater explicitly for post-16 education providers.

## Appendix 5a - PROVIDER INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Dysg has been contracted by ELWVa to collect and analyse data and information relating to the expenditure on provision of high quality learning support, which facilitates fully inclusive and equal access to learning for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. **All statistical and financial information required should relate to the academic year 2003/04.**

This research will be used by ELWVa to support the development of the new planning and funding methodology for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) provision and it is stressed that this is not part of any audit or inspection process.

Any findings will be fed back to the provider and the funding body. All data will remain confidential within the project team with reporting of collated results, and examples will not be attributed to specific respondents without the express permission of the provider involved.

<b>Institution</b>	
<b>Contact Name &amp; Position(s)</b>	

### Contextual Questions

1. Identify the type of provider, considering items such as: (General Info)
  - Mission Statement
  - Disability Statement
  - Size - Total number of learners full time and part-time
  - Sector(s) (Voluntary, FE college, training provider, school, ACL etc)
  - Would you classify your institution as:
    - Urban
    - Semi-urban
    - Rural
  - How many locations does the provider have in the area?
  - Identify main sources of funding

- Who has overall responsibility for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities policy in your institution: Name and position?

**Number of students**

2. Please provide figures for the following:

How many learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend?

Integrated provision \_\_\_\_\_

Discrete provision \_\_\_\_\_

a) What is the breakdown of male / female learners receiving integrated and discrete provision?

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Nature of Students</b>		
<b>Full-time students</b>		
Integrated		
Discrete		
<b>Part-time students</b>		
Integrated		
Discrete		
Distance learning (if applicable)		
<b>TOTALS</b>		

b) What is the age distribution of disabled learners over discrete and integrated provision?

**Age ranges of learners receiving LLDD support by Provision Method**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Below 16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60+</b>
<b>Provision</b>							
Discrete Provision							
Integrated Provision							

Distance Learning (If applicable)							
TOTALS							



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c) Are the numbers of learners receiving funding for support for Learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

- i) increasing      ii) decreasing      iii) fluctuating      iv) stable.
- 

d) In relation to Further Education providers, how many of these learners are based in:

- i) General education \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) Community learning provision \_\_\_\_\_
- iii) Work based learning provision \_\_\_\_\_

**Types of disabilities**

3. Please identify the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that receive support for:

	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Number of learners completing their course</b>
a)	VI	Visual Impairment		
b)	HI	Hearing Impairment		
c)	MSI	Multi Sensory Impairment		
d)	SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulties		
e)	SLCD	Speech, Language & Communication Difficulties		
f)	ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder		
g)	EBD	Emotional Behavioural Difficulties		
h)	PD	Physical Difficulties		
i)	MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties		
j)	SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties		
k)	PMLD	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties		
l)	MED	Medical Difficulties		
m)	OTH	Other		
n)	DNA	Does not apply		
o)	ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder		
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>				

- a) What are the numbers of learners (whole college) that completed their course
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**Impact**

- 4. What impact do these disabilities or learning difficulties have on the learners learning or participation in their programme?

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**Funding Claims**

- 5. What evidence do you currently provide (is provided) to substantiate a claim for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities funding?

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- a) What do you think should be provided?

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**Funding**

6. How much funding is received for LLDD Provision? \_\_\_\_\_

How is LLDD funding distributed between? *(Please give percentages)*

a) Discrete provision \_\_\_\_\_

b) Integrated provision \_\_\_\_\_

7. What additional funding (if any) over and above that provided by LLDD and your main funding body does the provider receive? e.g. ESF \_\_\_\_\_

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**Funding**

8. How much (% or actual costs?) of the funding (additional learning resources) you receive for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do you spend on: (if possible please give actual costs)
- i) Equipment \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii) Technicians / technical support \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii) External specialist staff such as dyslexia experts, sign language interpreters and note takers? \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv) Extra or different use of existing staff to provide support, e.g. extra 1:1 support, basic skills, personal care, signers etc. \_\_\_\_\_
  - v) Additional contract staff bought in \_\_\_\_\_
  - vi) Other? \_\_\_\_\_

**Funding**

9. Can you estimate the amount of funding from general college funds that is used for supporting individual needs? e.g. some providers have a policy of no copying from blackboards or printing on coloured paper (to aid dyslexic learners) and the cost of supporting these needs are subsumed into whole centre activity and costs.

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**Transport**

10. Please identify methods of transport provided for learners from:

i) Discrete provision \_\_\_\_\_

ii) Mainstream Provision \_\_\_\_\_

iii) Any other transport arrangements in place for disabled students? (e.g.

taxi) \_\_\_\_\_

b) What are the costs of transport to the institution?

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**Provider Experience**

11. What is the provider's level of experience of dealing with LLDD learners?

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**Learner Support Needs**

12. What process do you use for identifying what support is needed? e.g. Do you carry out screening tests for all learners?

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a) What process do you use for identifying what resources you need to provide or buy?

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b) Do you use an external or internal assessment process to evaluate students?

i) If external did this process have to be bought? \_\_\_\_\_

ii) What was the cost? \_\_\_\_\_

iii) What was the cost implication of training staff to use the process? \_\_\_\_\_

iv) How much time and therefore cost does it take to implement this process? \_\_\_\_\_

v) If it's an internal process what costs were involved in developing it and how much does it cost to train staff to use it?

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c). What is the job role of the person with overall responsibility for assessments?

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**Learner Support Needs**

13. Have you ever been referred learners whose additional support needs you have been unable to meeting for any reason (financial or otherwise)?

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- i) If yes, how did you deal with the situation(s)? (Did they change course / provider etc)

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- ii) What specific needs did the learner(s) have?

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**Learner Support Needs**

14. What is the process (management and staff) for acquiring additional support for Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

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a) How is this communicated to staff?

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c) Are there any cost implications of implementing this process?

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**Staffing**

15. What categories of staff deliver support, and what are their hourly rates of pay? (If it is not possible to give hourly rates please state their annual salary and contracted hours)

Standard formulas of employing the person – salary related payments **ONLY**

Staff Role	Other provider equivalent	£5.01	£10.01	£15.01	£20.01	£25.01	£30.01	£35.01	£40.01	£45.01 +
		£10	£15	£20	£25	£30	£35	£40	£45	
Trainers										
Assessors										
Verifiers										
Key / Basic skills specialists										
Sign Language interpreters										
Personal care support staff										
FE Teachers / Lecturers										
Learning Support Assistants										
Technical Support										
<b>Other Staff:</b>										

		£5.01	£10.01	£15.01	£20.01	£25.01	£30.01	£35.01	£40.01	£45.01 +
Staff Role	Other provider	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	equivalent	£10	£15	£20	£25	£30	£35	£40	£45	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Does the use of this support vary in discrete settings compared to integrated? – Is someone working in a discrete group paid less than someone working on a one-to-one basis? \_\_\_\_\_ **Assessment**

16. What support for assessments/examinations is required, and what is available from you?

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a) Can you provide approximate costs for providing this assistance for disabled learners during the period August 2003 to July 2004?

	Aug 03 Oct 03	Nov 03 Jan 04	Feb 04 April 04	May 04 July 04
Assessment Support Costs	-	-	-	-



**Welsh Medium Providers / Learners**

17. Do you think there are any special issues facing Welsh medium learners / providers?

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If yes, please provide further information:

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**Forward Planning**

18. Do you have an arrangement with recognised feeder schools/other providers voluntary org/ social services/ Careers Wales, to allow forward planning for statemented / disabled students? If yes, how are these organised / dealt with?

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- a) If yes, what are the cost implications?

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- b) If yes, are they dealt with more efficiently than those approaching the organisation from other routes?

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**Specialist Equipment**

19. Do you need to obtain individualised equipment for particular learners? (e.g. laptops for dyslexic learners, specialist software such as screen-readers and other assistive technology) applies to LEA's

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If yes, what have did you purchase in 2003/04 and what were the costs?

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**Specialist Equipment**

20. How are learners' needs assessed for specialist equipment?

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- a) Do you use any specific assessment tools?
- ii) Are these internal, external (choice) or nationally recommended?
- 
- iii) If external, did you have to buy these? \_\_\_\_\_
- iv) If so what was the cost? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) How long does it take to carry out the assessment?
- i) What is the cost implication? \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) Is it a one off assessment or does it need repeating and if so how often? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Do you need specifically trained staff to use these tools?
- 
- d) Please provide costs in respect of time and finance
- 
- e) How do you find out what is the correct type of equipment to purchase?
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**Specialist Equipment**

21. How is the learning support equipment obtained?

a) What route do practitioners follow if they have specific requirements?

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b) Do you have a specific process in place?

If yes what is the cost of implementing and maintaining this process?

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c) Can obtaining the required support delay the learner starting / following their studies?

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**Specialist Equipment**

22. How do you find out how to use the specialist equipment?

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a) Who provides the training for centre staff, what is the cost of this and how is this funded?

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b) Who is responsible for the maintenance of specialist equipment?

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c) What is the cost and how is this funded?

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**Specialist Equipment**

23. What happens to specialised equipment when the learner using it finishes their studies?

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Can it be re-used?

- a) Are you aware of any regional 'sharing' arrangements for assistive technology and other specialist equipment?

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- b) Would you use one / contribute to it, if one was available?

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**Purchasing / Finance**

24. Do you receive the full cost for such equipment?

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If not, approximately what percentage does the provider have to find themselves?

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a) Where else might this required funding be obtained e.g. learner/charity?

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b) Approximately how much funding do you receive per year for equipment? (per student?)

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**Purchasing**

25. Are the FE Purchasing Consortium/LEA / other bodies involved in buying any of the organisations specialist equipment?

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If yes, please identify which one(s)

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- a) If yes, does this provide a financial saving and if so how much?

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- b) Does it delay the purchasing process?

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**Good Practice**

26. What do you consider to be good practice in meeting LLDD needs?  
Can you give any examples?

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**Other**

27. Are you confident that you are able to make all the reasonable adjustments required by the Disability Discrimination Act?

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If not, please specify?

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**Risk Assessments**

28. Have you carried out the required risk assessments?

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If no, could you please specify the reasons for this?

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If yes, did they reveal any shortfalls and how did you deal (plan to deal) with them?

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**Current Funding Systems**

29. How effective do you consider the current system of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meets the learners and institutional needs?

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Are there any particular concerns/issues/problems in the current funding system that need to be considered / overcome by any new methodology?

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**Changes**

30. What changes would you like to see in funding practices that would remove barriers to learning?

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- b) How do you think that this would impact on learner recruitment, retention and achievement? (*Please provide evidence to support answers*)

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Thank you for your help, we would like to remind you that the information obtained through this research will be used by ELWa to support the development of the new planning and funding methodology for LLDD provision. The details obtained during this activity are not part of any audit or inspection process.

Individuals or organisations will not be identified in any reports produced without obtaining permission.

## Appendix 5b - LEARNER INTERVIEW SCRIPT

The following questions will be used by the interviewer to gain information from the learner. They will not be presented to the learner but used as a prompt for the interviewer.

This research is being conducted on behalf of ELWa, the main post 16 education and training funding body in Wales.

Its purpose is to identify the types of support available to learners and establish whether individual's needs are being met. If they are, the research will seek to ascertain whether this places the learner on a 'level playing field' with their non-disabled counterparts. In the event of needs not being met, the research will provide feedback to that effect.

The researchers are not in a position to implement or influence changes, but findings will be fed back to the provider and the funding body. Individuals will not be identified in any reports produced without obtaining permission.

1. a) What types of support do you require? Is it all provided?  
  
b) Are there any particular elements of this support that you would like to discuss (strengths or weaknesses/ good or bad points)? Please identify any strengths or weaknesses in the support provision?
2. a) Does the support you receive make learning easier?  
b) Does it place you on an equal footing with learners who do not require support? (*Integrated provision*)?  
  
c) If not why not, what is missing?



*Could this be provided/overcome and if so how?*

3. a) Are you aware of any friends / learners that require support but do not receive it?  
Please give further details.
- b) Are you aware of any issues that they have about the support they do/don't receive?
4. a) How were your support needs identified?  
*e.g. was it from information provided by your previous school? Manual assessments by the provider's staff / consultants? Information supplied by you or from computerised / paper based assessments?*
- b) Were the assessment(s) carried out sympathetically?
- c) How long did they take? Was all the equipment required to complete the assessment available?
- d) Do any of these assessment(s) need to be repeated, and if yes, how often?
5. Do you receive additional support for assessments and/or examinations?  
If yes, how did this support come about?
6. a) Do you require additional support or tools for using the computer or other machinery / equipment?  
If yes, what?
- b) Do you encounter any problems accessing this additional support / tools when you use the computers / equipment in different classrooms?

7. a) Do you have any difficulties accessing areas such as the LRC/Library and the canteen?  
  
b) If yes, what changes has the provider made to make them more accessible?  
  
c) What additional changes, if any, could be made to improve access?
8. Is there any particular good practice by your provider (or previous providers) that you would like to talk about?
9. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the support you need and/or receive?

Thank you for your help, we would like to remind you that the researchers are not in a position to implement or influence changes, but findings will be fed back to the provider and the funding body. Individuals will not be identified in any reports produced without obtaining permission.

	Qu. 1			Qu. 2		Qu. 2a		Qu. 2c			
TYPE OF PROVIDER	Locale			Student Attendance		Provision		The numbers receiving support are...			
	URBAN	SEMI URBAN	RURAL	FULL TIME	PART TIME	DISCRETE	INTEGRATED	INCREASING	DECREASING	FLUCTUATING	STABLE
WBL			X	X		X			X		
WBL	X							X			
WBL	X	X	X	380	32		X	X			
WBL	X	X	X	456						X	
WBL			X						X		
FE	X			145	70	49	146	X			
FE		X				459	102	X			
FE		X		462	151	185	428	X			
ACL	X				1459	821	638	X			
ACL	X										
ACL		X				380		X			
ACL	X	X	X				442			X	
SCHOOL			X	13			13				X
SCHOOL			X			5	5	X			
SCHOOL		X	X			2	21	X			
SCHOOL		X					5	X			
SCHOOL		X					9	X			

Qu. 3				
Types of Disability				
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	HEARING IMPAIRMENT	MULTI SENSORY IMPAIRMENT	SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	SPEECH, LANG & COMM. DIFFICULTIES
				X
X	X			X
X	X		X	X
X	X		X	
	X		X	
X	X			
X	X		X	
			X	
X	X		X	
			X	
	X		X	

Qu. 3				
Types of Disability				
AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER	EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES	PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES	MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
	X	X	X	X
X		X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X
X		X	X	X
		X		
X	X	X	X	X
X			X	X
	X	X		X
	X			
	X	X	X	

Qu.3				
Types of Disability				
SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	PROFOUND & MULTIPLE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	MEDICAL DIFFICULTIES	ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER	OTHER
X	X	X		
X	X	X	X	X
X		X	X	X
X	X	X	X	
				X
X		X		X
X				
X				
				X
		X		



Qu 5						
Evidence for Funding Claims						
GP LETTER	ENROLMENT FORMS	INFO FROM FEEDER SCHOOLS	INITIAL ASS	REFERENCES	PYSCHOLOGIST REPORTS	NONE
					X	
X					X	
X						
						X
	X		X			
			X	X		
		X				



Qu. 5a							
Evidence the provider thinks <i>should</i> be used							
BASIC SKILLS SCREENING	REFERAL AGENCY STATEMENT	JUDGEMENT OF STAFF	CENTRAL INFO	NFER/CATS	PREVIOUS YR'S DATA	DRs NOTE	PROVIDER ASS.
x							
	x						
x						x	
		x					
			x				
	x						
					x		
					x		
				x			
							x

Qu 5a		Qu. 6		Qu. 7							
Evidence the provider thinks should be used		Distribution of funding between:		Additional funding sources							
SEN CODE OF PRACTICE	ILP	INTEGRATED PROVISION	DISCRETE PROVISION	ESF	LOTTERY GRANTS	HEFCW	LA	CURRICULUM GRANT	WJEC	BASIC SKILLS	NONE
				x							
					x						x
		95%	5%	x						x	
										x	
		35%	65%								x
	x					x					
		100%		x							
							x				
			99%								x
			100%				x				
		100%		x			x				
								x	x		
x		26%	74%								x
											x
		100%									x
		100%									x

Qu. 8					Qu. 10		
Breakdown of Spending					Methods of transport provided		
EQUIPMENT	TECH SUPPORT	EXTERNAL SPECIALISTS	DIFFERENT USE OF EXISTING STAFF	OTHER	BUS	TAXI	OTHER
							X
					X	X	X
					X	X	
						X	
					X	X	
6%		19%	56%	19%	X	X	
7%		3%	66%	24%	X	X	
39%	10%	51%				X	
					X	X	
74%	26%						
	30%		20%	50%		X	
2%		5%	£1,000 per week		X	X	
					X	X	
					X		
					X	X	

Qu. 12						
How do you identify what support is needed?						
BASIC & KEY SKILLS SCREENING	INITIAL ASS.	WALES READING TEST	SATS REULTS	TEACHER ASSESSMENT	BSA FAST-TRACK SCREENING	ISLA
X						
	X					
X	X					
	X				X	
X					X	
X					X	
X						
	X					X
	X					
X	X					
	X					
	X					
	X					
	X	X	X	X		

Qu. 12						
How do you identify what support is needed?						
INDIVIDUAL CARE/LEARNING PLANS	DISCOVERY PROJECT ON-LINE TESTING	INTERVIEW	SKILL BUILD	ESF SCREENING	CARE PLANS	SPELLING
	X			X		
		X				
			X			
						X
X					X	

Qu. 12					
How do you identify what support is needed?					
NFER SCREENING	CATS	PROFESSIONAL DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS	ALIS	STATEMENT	REFERAL REPORT
		X			
					X
X				X	
				X	
	X		X		

Qu. 12a										
How do you identify what resources to buy?										
STAFF ADVICE	PROF DIAGNOSTIC ASS.	DISCOVERY PROJECT	ISLA ASS	ILP	SCREENING TESTS	REFERAL REPORT	LIT & NUMERACY TESTS	MIDAS	STATEMENT	LEARNER EXRPERIENCE
X										
X		X								
	X									
X										
										X
	X									
			X							
				X	X					
						X				
X										X
X										
									X	
X										
									X	
							X	X		

Qu. 12b		Qu. 13		Qu. 13b							
Are your assessment tools external?		Have you ever been referred learners whose needs you cannot support?		What needs did the learner have?							
YES	NO	YES	NO	DYSL EXIA	BASIC SKILLS NEEDS	POOR UNDERSTANDING OF ENGLISH	EQUIPMENT	PROFOUND DIFFICULTIES	LIFESTYLE ISSUES	WELSH MEDIUM	ACCESS ISSUES
X			X	X	X	X					
			X								
X			X								
X			X								
X		X							X		
X		X					X				
X		X						X			
X			X								
	X	X					X				
	X		X								
	X		X								
	X		X								
X											
	X		X								
X		X									X
X		X								X	
			X								



Qu. 18									
With whom do you have forward planning relationships?									
LEA	SOCIAL SERVICES	CAREERS WALES	SCHOOLS	CHARITIES/VOL ORGS	COLLEGES	JCP	EMPLOYERS	INHOUSE REVIEW	NO ONE
		X							
									X
		X	X	X	X				
						X			
		X	X						
		X	X						
X	X	X	X				X		
		X	X						
				X					
	X		X						
	X		X						
	X								
					X			X	
	X		X	X					
	X	X	X				X		
	X	X	X	X					

Qu. 20										
How are learners specialist equipment needs assessed?										
INITIAL SCREENING	DISCUSSION	INITIAL ASS	JCP REFERAL	OWN ASSESSMENT	PREVIOUS SCHOOL	PYSCH REPORT	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST REPORT	REFERAL REPORTS	DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE	LASS
X	X									
		X				X				
			X	X						
	X									
X	X									
				X		X				
					X					
				X						
X										
		X								
								X		
X		X				X	X			
									X	
				X		X				X
						X				

Qu. 20													
How are learners specialist equipment needs assessed?													
BANGOR INITIAL DYSLEXIA SCREENING	CATS	BASIC SKILLS ASS.	LONDON READING	BRITISH SPELLING	ONLINE ASS.	INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS	DISCUSSION	INTERVIEW	SHAW TRUST	STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL NEED	NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ACCESS CENTRES	CASCADE CAREER MATCH	EXT EXPERTISE
		X											
					X								
							X	X	X			X	X
		X					X						
													X
											X		
						X							
X		X											X
	X		X	X									X
										X			
													X

Qu. 20c		Qu. 23				Qu. 23a		Qu. 23b		
Do you use specially trained staff to use assessment tools?		What happens to equipment when learner no longer needs it?				Are you aware of any sharing schemes?		Would you be interested in joining one?		
YES	NO	REUSED	GIVEN BACK TO PROVIDER	REMAINS ON SITE	GOES WITH LEARNER	YES	NO	YES	NO	POSSIBLY
X		X					X			X
X					X		X			X
	X			X			X	X		
X			X		X		X	X		
X		X					X			X
X					X		X		X	
X		X					X	X		
X		X			X		X	X		
	X			X			X	X		
							X			X
		X					X	X		
X		X	X				X	X		
			X							
X		X	X			X				X
			X				X	X		
X			X		X	X		X		

Qu. 24			Qu. 25				Qu. 27		Qu. 28	
Do you receive the full cost for the equipment?			Which Purchasing Consortium's are you involved in?				Are you confident you will be able to make the reasonable adjustments that the DDA requires?		Have you carried out risk assessments?	
YES	NO	SOMETI MES	FE PURCHASING CONSORTIUM	LEA CONSORTIUM	JOB CENTRE LOAN SCHEME	NONE	YES	NO	YES	NO
	X					X	X		X	
X						X	X		X	
	X				X		X		X	
X						X	X		X	
		X				X	X		X	
X			X				X		X	
X			X				X		X	
X			X				X		X	
	X					X		X	X	
	X					X	X		X	
	X					X		X		X
X						X	X		X	
				X			X		X	
						X	X		X	
				X			X		X	
	X			X				X	X	
X	X					X	X		X	

	Type of Provider Learner Attends				Course Level									
	WBL	FE	SCHOOL	ACL	ALEVEL	NVQ	CLAIT	BASIC SKILLS	CONNECT 2	BTEC	LEVEL 2	RETURN TO WORK	ENTRY LEVEL	NOT STATED
Learner 1	x											x		
Learner 2	x											x		
Learner 3	x					x								
Learner 4				x			x							
Learner 5				x			x							
Learner 6				x										x
Learner 7				x										x
Learner 8		x								x				
Learner 9		x					x							
Learner 10		x												x
Learner 11		x							x					
Learner 12		x					x							
Learner 13		x				x								
Learner 14		x											x	
Learner 15		x									x			
Learner 16			x		x									
Learner 17			x		x									

Type of Support Needed									
DYSLEXIA SUPPORT	DYSPRAXIA SUPPORT	LITERACY SUPPORT	NUMERACY SUPPORT	HELP GETTING TO CENTRE	FOOT REST	SMALL GRP TEACHING	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT	1 TO 1 SUPPORT/CARER
		X	X						
		X	X						
X									
				X	X	X			
				X					X
				X					X
								X	
				X					X
X									
									X
		X							
		X	X						
X			X						
									X
									X
	X								
							X		

Is the support provided?		Strengths of the support				Weaknesses of the support				
YES	NO	FLEXIBILITY	AVAILABLE IN WORKPLACE	STAFF/TUTORS	NONE	WOULD APPRECIATE NOTE TAKING SUPPORT	TUTOR INDIFFERENCE	MORE BASIC SKILLS SUPPORT	IGNORED IN GROUP ACTIVITIES	NONE
X								X		
X				X						
X		X	X	X						X
X				X						X
X				X						X
X				X						X
X				X						
				X						X
X						X				
X						X	X		X	
X										
X		X		X						
X				X						
X										
X										
X										
X				X						



Does the support make learning easier?		Do you know of any friends that do not receive adequate support?		How were your support needs identified?						
YES	NO	YES	NO	FROM STUDENT	INITIAL ASS	REFERAL	CAREERS ADVISER	DISCUSSION	TASK SETTING	SCHOOL HISTORY
X			X				X			
X			X				X			
X			X	X	X					
X			X			X			X	
X			X		X					
X			X							X
								X		
X										X
X			X		X					
			X	X	X					
X			X	X						X
X			X	X	X					
X			X	X						
X			X							X
X			X						X	X
X			X							X
X			X	X						

Were assessments carried out sympathetically?		Were all tools needed to complete the assessment available?		Do you receive additional support at exam/assessment time?		If so, what form does this support take?			
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	PHOTOS LIMIT NEED FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE	EXTRA TIME	A READER	A WRITER
X				X	X		X		
X					X				
X		X		X		X			
X		X			X				
X		X		X			X		
X					X				
X				X			X		
X		X		X			X		
X				n/x	n/x				
				X				X	
X		X			X				
							X	X	
X					X				
X					X				
X							X		X
					X				

What extra tools do you require to use a computer?				Do you encounter any problems accessing these tools in a different classroom?		Do you have difficulty accessing communal areas?		Are there any particular areas of good practice from your provider?				
FOOT REST	ABILITY TO DEPRESS SHIFT KEY AND ANOTHER	SPECIALISED PROGRAMME	NONE	YES	NO	YES	NO	MIX OF WORK & STUDY	SUPPORT OF TUTOR	FEELING OF INCLUSIVITY AND SOCIALISATION	CONFIDENCE & INDEPENDENCE BUILDING	EXCELLENT DISABLED TOILETS
			X				X		X		X	
			X				X		X			
			X					X	X		X	
X					X		X			X		
	X				X		X		X			
		X					X					
			X				X					
			X				X		X			
			X				X					
			X				X					X
			X				X			X		
			X				X		X	X	X	
			X				X		X			
			X				X			X	X	
			X				X			X		
			X				X		X		X	
			X				X		X			

## Appendix 8 - Dysg Research: LLDD/Disability Issues for post 16 learning provision.

### **Summary of provider questionnaire findings:**

#### **Background**

It was planned to pilot the provider and learner questionnaires in 5 centres across the post-16 education and training sector:

#### **Findings**

##### **1. Context**

The pilot centres were quite diverse in nature ranging from one of the largest FE colleges in Wales to a local authority discrete service for disabled adults to a non profit making training provider however their mission statements all reflected the desire to support lifelong learning for all.

The colleges and ACL providers both deliver learning across a number of sites.

ELWa is the main source of funding for all pilot centres with additional funding coming from commercial training, franchise, Mental Services team, HEFCW and retail outlets within the college, as well as European funding; JCP and European funding also for the training provider and the local council in respect of the ACL provision.

The college and ACL provider both have senior managers responsible for supporting the strategic direction of this area of work in addition to operational managers / heads of department responsible for discrete provision.

All providers felt they had at least a reasonable level of experience in this area of work.

## 2. Numbers of learners

Not all centres that took part in the pilot were able to give specific details of the numbers of learners supported. Of those that were able to contribute:

Total learners supported

<b>NATURE OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>TOTAL NO's 2003/04</b>
Full Time Total	1,960
Integrated	950
Discrete	554
Unspecified	456
Part Time Total	2,883
Integrated	1,276
Discrete	1,607
Unspecified	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,843</b>

In most cases, centres felt that the numbers of learners requiring support was increasing. The main reason for this was due to the nature of the initial assessments. The numbers of learners being screened has increased and with it, so too has the opportunity of identifying individual needs. Also, learners appear to be more aware of the support that is available to them.

Funding restrictions still pose a particular problem. There are not the required sources of funding available to deal with the increased numbers of learners requiring support.

Some work-based learners were reluctant to disclose details of their difficulties/disabilities in case it affected their promotion prospects with their new employer.

### **3. Types of disability**

Most providers were able to give details of the types of disabilities learners needed support for. The largest group of learners being supported in ACL were those with specific learning difficulties and mental health problems. The largest group of learners being supported in FE were those with severe learning difficulties. In many cases providers were not required to gather learner data in this way/detail.

	<b>Abbre-viation</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
a)	VI	Visual Impairment	91
b)	HI	Hearing Impairment	179
c)	MSI	Multi Sensory Impairment	0
d)	SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulties	974
e)	SLCD	Speech, Language & Communication Difficulties	11
f)	ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	15
g)	EBD	Emotional Behavioural Difficulties	57
h)	PD	Physical Difficulties	470
i)	MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties	601
j)	SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties	259
k)	PMLD	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	4
l)	MED	Medical Difficulties	158
m)	OTH	Other	353
n)	DNA	Does not apply	0
o)	ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder	8
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>			<b>3,180</b>

#### **4. What impact do these disabilities or learning difficulties have on the learners learning or participation in their programme?**

Generally, centres believed that disabilities or learning difficulties do not impact on learning unless there is the inability to source a particular requirement e.g. sign interpreter.

For many learners, classes have been tailored to meet individual needs, particularly due to the numbers of issues that were identified as having an impact on learning:

The following is a list of comments from providers:

- Learner's reliance on other people (access to get to class or on time)
- Limited choice of courses available (especially if carer is only available at certain times)
- Inappropriate mainstream support (learners get stuck in discrete provision because mainstream is not geared up to provide support)
- Limited skills can restrict capacity to learn
- Special equipment may not be available. If it is not available access to learning may be delayed or prevented
- Poor short term memory
- Reduced speed of processing information
- Effects of medication can affect ability to learn
- Reduced confidence
- Heightened anxiety levels
- Learners with mental health issues may have trouble concentrating consistently
- Irregular attendance due to reliance on others/confidence/medical treatment/mental health issues. This alone can obstruct progress and course negative effects on course funding, which often results in courses becoming financially unviable.
- Pressurised environment due to accreditation issues



- Need for small group/class sizes
- Class/teaching groups may be inappropriate
- 1:1 sessions are not always suitable
- IT can cause more problems for some of these learners rather than solve problems for them
- Often hindered by style of learning (e.g. note taking, use of whiteboards etc)
- Auditory and visual difficulties
- Students misinterpret what they have to do, clarification needed re instructions etc
- Staff ignorance of conditions and problems
- Demoralised, unmotivated and depressed students leads to counselling needs
- All notes, info from web etc need to be printed off so that learner (or support worker) can highlight key issues, proof read draft reports/work etc
- Accessibility
- The disabilities and learning difficulties can have quite an impact on the learner's participation in their programme. Unless disabilities/difficulties are identified straight away, there is a danger of the learner leaving the course early, prior to completion.
- The initial process of engaging learners with disabilities can take a long time and the learning progress is much slower.
- Confidence levels often require significant non-accredited approach and shorter sessions/courses prior to learners being able to commit to accredited provision.
- Significant time is spent building up trust to develop relationships that allow potential learners to express needs and desires honestly and openly.
- Tutor time per learner is increased if the class number is smaller and are often more successful than those with a minimum of 10 learners as standard.

- Not only is integration important but it must be dealt with in a way that enables learners to be treated equally and in the same manner as all other learners.
- It can also be the mainstream learners that are impacted on e.g. if break times are altered to support an individual in the class with learning needs the whole class will have amended break times which may not always be appreciated/accepted by all especially if they perceive they are getting a reduction in teaching time.
- There is a need for continued reinforcement. It is not a one time funding issue. This raised a problem for some providers since they cannot fund for the same course/qualification more than once. e.g. a course on how to handle money. Many of the learners would benefit if they could study the course again, since they have a very short memory span.
- The numbers are small, making the provision expensive.
- Carers and parents can create problems - sometimes learners are not in the correct programmes because of parental pressure. Unfortunately this does happen. A parent may decide which programme a learner should follow.
- Extra lessons can result in reduced timetables for integrated students
  - Extra provision at exam times requires additional staff time
  - Slower in completing tasks
  - Physical Assistance -. Getting wheelchair out of car, etc

**5. What evidence do you currently provide (is provided) to substantiate a claim for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities funding?**

**What do you think should be provided?**

Each provider varied in terms of the evidence they required for a funding claim.

For pre-16 provision, there seemed to be easier access to information about the learners, particularly those that had been statemented. This however became patchier at post-16 provision, and the information available to fund claims depended on the route that the learner had taken prior to enrolment.

Schools identified a structure for claims via the LEA. This still proved difficult as in some cases provision is sought outside of the school. Suggestions to improve this included the idea of a shared provision with the funding following the student. This could be with the funding paid directly to the individual provider on a percentage basis or through a lead provider. Also, individual learning plans developed for pre-16 learners should not stop at 16 but should be continued as a record of student history and all info should be passed on to any new/next learning provider for the individual learner.

There was no consensus on the information that should be required to substantiate a claim. For some centres, they felt that a Doctor's note was both costly and time-consuming. Learners with mental health problems can often wait up to three years for a Doctor's report.

Colleges also found it difficult to provide evidence for short-term, non-accredited courses. Timescales are short and thus there is limited time to claim for additional funding. An allocation of money for this was suggested, to ensure that the learner's needs are met during their studies.

Training Providers do not receive LLDD funding. They are also dependent on the data supplied by the referral agency; however, the Data Protection Act prevents such information being disclosed. There have been incidents of violence against staff because they have been unaware of underlying mental health conditions not disclosed because of legislation; therefore training provider is reliant on information from individual learners.

All post 16 providers complete an initial assessment with their learners and this was thought by many providers to be a good form of evidence, to reduce replication and time.

#### **6. How much funding is received for LLDD Provision?**

**What additional funding (if any) over and above that provided by LLDD and your main funding body does the provider receive? e.g. ESF**

Providers seemed to fall in two distinct camps. They either received funding to support learning or they were unable to access funding at all, and had to cover all costs themselves. This is particularly the case for some ACL's and training providers.

**7. How much (% or actual costs) of the funding (additional learning resources) you receive for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do you spend on:**

<u>Resource</u>	<b>Total Spent by providers</b>
Equipment	£31,636
Technicians	£3,660 plus whole college allocation
External specialist staff	£63,993
Extra/Different use of existing staff	£280,200
Additional contract staff	£78,000 (psychologists)
Other	£184,003.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>£638,492.17</b>

Most of the providers were able to give details of how they spent the additional learning support funding.

However, providers made the comment that some costs are subsumed into the whole centre provision e.g. technicians in the case of FE, additional pastoral support

for ACL learners, providing handouts on coloured rather than white paper and that these costs are not able to be identified.

In some centres, a number of staff act in a variety of roles e.g. tutor one session, support worker another, but are paid in accordance with the role they perform for each session.

A number of learners also access ILF (Individual Learning Funds) to secure one to one support and to have somebody attend the learning provision with them (approx £8 per hour but this is accessed by learner or their carer not the institution).

#### **8. Please identify methods of transport provided for learners.**

In schools, the cost of transport is predominately covered by the LEA.

ACL's tend to provide taxis for learners that would be unable to access the learning without this. It is particularly prevalent for providers in rural areas.

For other providers though, the extent of the transport offered is variable. For some, the transport costs are high but they have no support towards these costs.

#### **9. What process do you use for identifying what support is needed? e.g. Do you carry out screening tests for all learners?**

**Have you ever been referred learners whose additional support needs you have been unable to meeting for any reason (financial or otherwise)?**

**What is the process (management and staff) for acquiring additional support for Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?**

All providers are meeting ELWa requirements re basic skills screening and there is growing interest in using new technology for initial assessment purposes. Initial

assessments (self developed by ACL/Training provider) are often carried out in timetabled teaching time hence reducing teaching inputs but often result in the production of the ISLA. The training provider also buys in clinical psychologists (£100 per hr) at this stage, this increases the cost of the initial assessment process.

One college and ACL provider have both been unable to meet the needs of some potential learners; the college feels unable to meet the specific needs of students with profound and multiple difficulties and the ACL provider has been unable to meet the needs of some learners due to cost restraints but has endeavoured to provide alternative programmes of study. This provider also felt there were issues in meeting personal care needs if teaching sessions were beyond 2hrs since personal carers may not be available.

The colleges do have a specific problem with supporting those who need sign language interpreters (as these staff are difficult to find, are expensive and hard to keep). Suggestions included ELWa funding somebody in Wales to provide sign language training, as currently it is not possible to learn sign language in Wales.

All providers have a system in place to enable individual tutors to access additional learning support for students, which is, communicated to staff mainly via staff handbooks. Team meetings also enable issues/concerns/potential needs to be discussed.

Schools appear to receive some monetary support for this provision from the LEA. Although in the case of welsh medium learners, a number of students have asked to stay in the 6<sup>th</sup> form but the school cannot provide for their needs, especially the vocational areas. The Welsh medium schools are concerned about the lack of Welsh medium provision post -16. A major point here is that the learners wanted to continue their education through the medium of Welsh but this was not possible. The school does provide vocational subjects of Leisure, Business and Health and Care but these are still too academic for learners with acute difficulties. Schools tend to be

well informed of their learners needs, this is particularly due to good links with feeder schools and LEA's.

All centres want and try to cater for all the needs of the learners, but in specific circumstances they would contact the appropriate specialists/organisations for advice and support if required.

**10. What categories of staff deliver support, and what are their hourly rates of pay? (If it is not possible to give hourly rates please state their annual salary and contracted hours)**

A range of staff are used to provide additional support across the sector. The biggest spend is on learning support assistants generally paid at £5.01 - £10 an hour.

In some organisations, lecturing staff are involved in learning support if they have teaching gaps in their timetable.

Although work role titles may differ across the sector, the following table is an overview of the hourly costs incurred by centres:

Learning Support Assistants, NNEB, Drivers, Trainers and Admin Support	£5.01 - £10
Lecturers	£9.70 - £22.50
Assessors/Verifiers	£9.59 - £30
Sign Language Interpreter/Dyslexia Tutor	£15 - £20
Dyslexia Manager	£20 - £25

**11. What support for assessments/examinations is required, and what is available from you?**

All providers offer learners additional support with assessment. In terms of support with continuous assessment and practice for assessment the costs incurred tend to be subsumed into the general provider costs.

The only organisation to indicate costs for Amanuensis was a school and this was provided on a 1-1 basis at £6.36 per hour.

Additional support offered by centres includes:

- Extra time
- Readers
- Writers
- Enlarged print papers
- Translation

**12. Do you think there are any special issues facing Welsh medium learners / providers?**

The availability of welsh medium resources and screening tools is limited.

All centres have outlined similar issues, including:

- Bi-lingual provision is double the cost, if additional learning support mechanisms increase the cost, by marrying the 2 needs together the costs of supporting a welsh speaking learner with additional needs escalates enormously – these costs need to be considered/met by ELWa
- A number of learners may prefer to talk and have instructions provided in a bi-lingual format but prefer to write in English – few support staff are bi-lingual or Welsh speaking.



- No Welsh medium diagnostic tests are available – although the University of Bangor is developing something for dyslexia, but will the provider have to buy it or will ELWa fund this?
- There are insufficient support workers available and willing to work in a bi-lingual/welsh medium format
- There is insufficient robust guidance to support those with learning difficulties learning through the medium of Welsh.
- How do you support Braille in welsh?
- Text readers are not available in Welsh
- For assessment purposes some learners may need a reader or somebody to write for them – these people are often not available re welsh medium provision
- The support agencies in the LEA and external are all non-Welsh speaking. Every external agency is non-welsh speaking.
- There is a lack of Welsh medium resources.
- Many resources need to be translated and when they do become available they are not usually the updated version.
- There is a vast need for speech and hearing support through the medium of Welsh.
- Not all awarding bodies produce Welsh NVQ standards or assessment materials

One training provider in particular felt that there was an enormous amount of pressure to produce Welsh documents in ‘BBC Welsh’ as there seems to be more criticism about Welsh documents and how grammatically correct they are, than with any other language.

**13. Do you have an arrangement with recognised feeder schools/other providers voluntary org/ social services/ Careers Wales, to allow forward planning for statemented / disabled students? If yes, how are these organised / dealt with?**

All providers work collaboratively internally and externally with other agencies including:

- Feeder schools
- Employers
- LEA
- Careers Wales
- Voluntary Sector
- Social Services
- Health Trusts
- Mental Health Groups

The forward planning does help the learner and provider, but for post 16 provision ELWa funding is not available so any equipment needed etc may not be available until Easter (2 terms into the learning) which is considered too late to support the learner effectively.

It has been reported that there is excessive literacy and numeracy screening at this stage.

**14. Do you need to obtain individualised equipment for particular learners?**

**How are learners' needs assessed for specialist equipment?**

**Do you use any specific assessment tools?**

**Do you need specifically trained staff to use these tools?**

**How do you find out what is the correct type of equipment to purchase?**

**How is the learning support equipment obtained?**

**How do you find out how to use the specialist equipment?**

**Who provides the training for centre staff, what is the cost of this and how is this funded?**

**Who is responsible for the maintenance of specialist equipment?**

**What is the cost and how is this funded?**

**What happens to specialised equipment when the learner using it finishes their studies?**

Are you aware of any regional 'sharing' arrangements for assistive technology and other specialist equipment?

**Would you use one / contribute to it, if one was available?**

All providers had purchased specialist equipment in 2003/04 although some commented that this did not reflect the need (which was much greater) but rather what they could afford. Some providers including work based learning and ACL had to cover the total costs for specialist equipment themselves.

All pilot centres have an identified process for obtaining any specialist equipment required but reported that the delay in processing any requests can delay learning taking place.

In many instances training in the use of the specialist equipment is provided/delivered by the supplier of the equipment but where this is not the case the learning providers budget has to cover this. Support for maintaining such equipment is generally via the providers systems support team funded through the core funding/department budget.

All providers commented on the limited shelf life of most specialist equipment but will try to reuse equipment wherever possible. The ACL and training provider generally allow the learner to keep any equipment purchased to support continued learning.

Schools again in this area seemed better placed for financial support to buy equipment, as the LEA covered this.

The costs incurred by providers was significant, with the greatest spend being £26,626.

**15. Do you receive the full cost for such equipment?**

**If not, approximately what percentage does the provider have to find themselves?**

Are the FE Purchasing Consortium/LEA / other bodies involved in buying any of the organisations specialist equipment?

Some colleges and one training provider receive the full cost for any equipment purchased for LLDD students, whereas the ACL and training providers have to fund any required equipment themselves.

Two colleges involved in the pilot use the FE Purchasing consortium, which offers a minimum 10% saving on average, however they are not always able to source the equipment needed.

An ACL and a colleges provider both commented that the need to access 3 quotes for expensive equipment, further delays the process of accessing the required tools for the learners.

All providers felt an All Wales consortium for LLDD equipment and supplies would be beneficial so long as it did not become too bureaucratic.

**16. What do you consider to be good practice in meeting LLDD needs?**

Providers identified a range of activities, which they felt were good practice when dealing with this type of learner:

- Consultation throughout with students
- Consultation in planning (student and relevant organisations)

- Specialist trained staff
- Assessment of needs and reviews
- Appropriate learning support and ongoing support
- Available resources to enable provision of reasonable adjustments
- Supportive learning environment
- Small class sizes
- Celebration of achievement
- Marketing/awareness raising
- Individual learning plans
- Transport
- Choice of courses
- Liaison between and close working of specialist agencies
- Student focused approach
- Having an open office/being approachable (office and tutors/office and learners)
- Accessible, high quality adapted/specialist learning materials
- Accessible publicity
- Alternative assessment methods and qualification aims
- Non accredited learning (first steps approach)
- Equal recognition of achievement of softer skills to boost confidence/self esteem
- Provision of supportive and safe environment
- Good communication between teaching and support staff
- Effective school/college links
- Use of more experienced learners as learning support assistants
- Partnership approach so future provider is prepared and is aware of individual learner needs
- Using qualified tutors who understand learning difficulties and mental health issues
- Using staff who are willing to learn from one another
- Communication amongst all partners

- Relevant training
- In an ideal world fractional contracts would be used so that staff can be used for additional activities e.g. course development, attendance at learner referral meetings etc and to help keep staff – currently many leave after a short while because they need a permanent job with regular income not a few hrs for 10 weeks then nothing the next term etc
- Early screening, intervention & support
- Equipment and technology support
- Empathetic, motivated support staff
- Enable users to access support at their nearest campus – don't expect them to travel
- Screen as many learners as possible then follow up
- Write formal reports to enable progression
- Supportive, knowledgeable and understanding senior management
- Early notification of issues e.g. access problems so that adaptations can be planned
- Individual risk assessments
- Maximising resourcing & ensuring that colleagues have experience to meet the level of need
- Links with special schools, Careers Wales etc so that any reports/statements can be passed on in a transparent way to speed up the process
- Raising staff awareness of the importance of disclosure and asking for or accessing additional support

**18. Are you confident that you are able to make all the reasonable adjustments required by the Disability Discrimination Act?**

**Have you carried out the required risk assessments?**

The information from all providers highlights the following:

- DDA is high on the agenda
- Current funding is insufficient to meet the needs of DDA
- All providers have carried out risk assessments.

**19. How effective do you consider the current system of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meets the learners and institutional needs?**

**What changes would you like to see in funding practices that would remove barriers to learning?**

ACL and FE felt the current funding system works quite well however there is a concern over the timescales involved and the fact that advance payments in August do not cover the costs incurred in the autumn term.

FE has a concern re discrete provision in that ELWAs appear to have moved it from the funding guidelines and it appears not to have been included as a learning area. Many of the students requiring discrete provision would not succeed in integrated provision and there is a danger of students not having access to the support they require.

One ACL provider considers the current funding system to be ineffective in that current provision requires a subsidy from the council (£140,000) which causes great anxiety because if the council cannot afford to subsidise, then provision has to be cut or staff have to be lost. If you cut staff you cannot provide the provision, if you cut the provision you cut your funding.

On the whole, all providers agree that the funding system didn't work as well as it should, and it needs to be flexible to ensure that the support the learner receives is effective.

## **20. Changes**

All providers felt any changes to the funding system should make it simple and quick to operate and that it should be learner focused not provider driven so that learners are supported and feel more willing and able to participate in learning which in turn aids retention and achievement.

### **Issues Raised**

- Not all providers have systems in place to readily provide details of numbers of learners supported or to be able to break this down by gender.
- Different providers categorise learners using different age groups so an overview could not be produced.
- Not all providers were able to provide a breakdown of how many learners with each type of disability completed their course although an FE college was able to provide details of overall retention rates.
- LLWR may not tally with Dysg data on types of disability e.g. a learner with a visual impairment may not actually access support, they may need glasses rather than specialist learning support.
- Some costs of supporting this type of learner are absorbed into whole institution costs and cannot be identified. E.g. the use of technicians or providing handouts for all learners on coloured paper which is more expensive than white paper but which reduces the need to identify some learners as having additional needs and treating them differently.
- Equal value needs to be placed on non-accredited learning.
- Recognition of achievement of softer skills e.g. building confidence/self-esteem is required.
- Progression is an issue. Many of these learners do not have the ability to progress and for others progression is not available/accessible therefore



diversification rather than progression is often the route taken. This needs to be allowed for in any new funding regime.

- Current funding methodology only allows for part-time/hourly staff to be purchased which means that providers are not always able to appoint the most appropriate person.
- Students with learning difficulties/disabilities often have a basic skills need but current funding does not cater for this. Any new methodology must address this.
- Providers request ELWa take a more holistic approach to learners needs – in one instance ELWa would not fund a hoist as it was not required for learning but without this equipment the learner could not access the classroom and their learning programme.
- Supplementary funding mechanism needs to be amended so that evidence is not required for minor spends
- A central pot of funding should be available for major spending requirements
- There should be equal accessible funding for all providers
- ACL providers need support in what supplementary funding can be used for – there is a lack of knowledge/understanding currently
- Effective training in new funding methodology will be required.
- Need change in funding methodology for learners with mental health problems – due to the nature of their difficulties it is difficult to attain regular attendance, which impacts on retention/attainment funding.
- Need to fund those with learning difficulties to move on – this may not always be progression but may be diversification or more learning in same field so that the person is able to continue to use the skill learnt etc.
- Needs to be equality between discrete and integrated provision in terms of funding for specialist equipment - current system is not equitable and does not enable additional equip to be purchased for those in discrete provision.
- Should fund provision that develops softer skills, confidence etc and that which supports learning for fun – we should not have to accredit everything and there is a danger of running out of accreditation for very weak learners.

- 
- Definitions of learning difficulty, (moderate/severe difficulties) needs clarifying.
  - Funding should be ring-fenced for LLDD but not for individual learners so that efficient use of money could be made
  - Applying for funding every yr means the provider cannot anticipate needs and plan ahead – there should be an indicative 3 yr budget with claims for special cases e.g. a requirement for a hoist or nurse
  - Funding should be front loaded based on previous yrs needs
  - There should be less emphasis on who/how and more flexibility for centres to spend money as required then explain how they have used it and why
  - Additional payments should be available for whole centre support for learning difficulties not for an individual learners
  - Lack of transparency and clarity for parents, schools and learners
    - The same testing methodology needs to be applied across all LEA's and all providers
    - Typically 18% of the cohort suffers from learning challenges if this was factored into the funding formula quality of learning for all may be improved.
    - It would be more useful if basic skills could be delivered in the workplace.
    - There is a need to pilot any new funding methodology carefully
    - If the funding methodology follows a banding system must ensure that the middle bands are adequately financed. The system should be based on an average of 6/8 learners.
    - We need a rigorous provider inspection scheme that could ensure there is value for money. There should be a small-dedicated inspectorate team from ELWa. This team could and should carry out spot checks for the provision of the education for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities.
    - More county awareness and faster responses
    - Systems and records computerisation
    - Global funding for Learning Support Assistants.

- Fixed sums payments rather than an ad hoc amount per child would save time
- Funding for dyslexia teachers
- Concern is that there is no additional funding for any person with learning difficulties and or disabilities or any other barrier to employment
- Any weighting that could be awarded where a need is proved for additional support would be very welcome
- Needs earlier intervention – learner is the one penalised
- Quicker responses and up front funding
- Processes bureaucratic and slow
- Questions needed for medical evidence
- Waiting for appraisal
- If information / funding is refused then it is a waste of everyone's time
- There is a need to be able to fund small groups to ensure the Welsh medium provision

### **Conclusions**

DDA is high on everyone's agenda and there is a real commitment to supporting learners. Any new funding system needs to be learner focused, simple to operate and fair to all providers. Any changes that reduce the time taken to access funding/equipment would be welcomed as this would enable learners to be supported more quickly and reduce the opportunity for learners to become disheartened and withdraw from the provision.

## **Appendix 9 - Learner Interviews**

Seventeen learners were interviewed, which included six studying at FE Colleges, four in ACL provision, five in work based learning provision and two in School sixth forms.

The original intention was to interview two students at each case study centre. This was not possible for a number of reasons. The students may not be available on the day of the visit; the students' timetables were not conducive to holding an interview at that time, they may not be on-site at that time. Also due to the nature of the learner's disability and/or learning difficulty it was not always possible to gain information regarding the common questions asked by all members of the research team.

The purpose of the research was briefly outlined to the learner and a list of common questions were prepared and used by the interviewer to gain information from the learner. These were not presented to the learner but used as a prompt for the interviewer.

The learners came from all types of categories and were studying a wide range of courses. Table 1 shows the type of provider and course studied.

Type of Provider Learner Attends				e Level									
WBL	FE	SCHOOL	ACL	A LEVEL	NVQ	CLAIT	BASIC SKILLS	CONNE CT 2	BTEC	LEVEL 2	RETURN TO WORK	ENTRY LEVEL	NOT STATED
X											X		
X											X		
X					X								
X						X							
X					X								
			X			X							
			X				X						
			X										X
			X										X
	X								X				
	X						X						
	X												X
	X									X			
		X		X									
		X		X									

The following is a synopsis of the answers given. A table of the results is appended (appendix 2).

**1. a) What types of support do you require? Is it all provided?**

Three learners interviewed required a wide variety of support ranging from one to one support by a carer to the need for a footrest. The range of support needs may be seen in the table below.

Type of support needed	Number needing support
Dyslexia support	3
Dyspraxia support	1
Literacy support	4
Numeracy support	4
Small teaching group	1
One to one support	6
Specialist equipment	1
Foot rest	1
Emotional support	1
Help getting to the centre	4

The total does not add up to eleven since a number of the learners needed more than one type of support.

All learners said that their support needs were provided for. Only one learner felt that not all his needs were supported. This learner felt that most of his needs were supported with exception of writing support.

**b) Are there any particular elements of this support that you would like to discuss (strengths or weaknesses/ good or bad points)? Please identify any strengths or weaknesses in the support provision?**

The majority of the learners (82%) did not mention any weaknesses at all in the support they received. Most learners mentioned elements of the support that they saw as strengths. The main strength being the staff and tutor, with ten out of the seventeen mentioning this. As well as this, learners mentioned the flexibility of support and the fact that it was available in the workplace as strengths.

Three learners mentioned weaknesses in the support they received. Two would appreciate more note taking support. One would like more basic skills tutors so that he could access more support, but was aware that this was not possible due to staffing constraints.

2. a) Does the support you receive make learning easier?  
b) Does it place you on an equal footing with learners who do not require support? (Integrated provision)?  
c) If not why not, what is missing?  
Could this be provided/overcome and if so how?

Fifteen of the learners interviewed (88%) felt that the support they received made their learning easier.

None of the learners interviewed felt that there were any real support needs missing. Only one learner mentioned any support needs that was not met. He felt that he would like more support with his writing.

5. a) Are you aware of any friends / learners that require support but do not receive it?

**Please give further details.**

**b) Are you aware of any issues that they have about the support they do/don't receive?**

None of the learners were aware of any friends or colleagues that required support but did not receive it.

**6. a) How were your support needs identified?**

b) Were the assessment(s) carried out sympathetically?

c) How long did they take? Was all the equipment required to complete the assessment available?

d) Do any of these assessment(s) need to be repeated, and if yes, how often?

**A range of information was used to assess learners support needs. The table below shows the means of identification mentioned by the learners during the interviews.**

<b>How were your support needs identified</b>	<b>Number of students which mentioned the assessment</b>
<b>From student</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Initial Assessments</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Referral</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Careers Advisers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Task setting</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>School Record</b>	<b>6</b>

**All learners felt that the assessments were carried out sympathetically.**

**The assessments seemed to take a variety of time ranging from 20 minutes to 2 hours, the most common mentioned being 20 minutes. One mentioned that the assessment took as long as he needed.**



**The learners felt that the necessary tools were available for their assessments.**

**One learner from a school sixth form stated that he was reassessed every two years with the educational psychologist. All the other learners said there was no reassessment.**

**5. Do you receive additional support for assessments and/or examinations?**

**If yes, how did this support come about?**

Nine learners stated that they receive additional support for their assessments and/or examinations. The most common type of support is extra time to finish their assessments; six learners stated that they received this support.

Two learners stated that they had a reader during examinations. One had a writer and another said that his co-ordinator took photographs as evidence of his work.

**6. a) Do you require additional support or tools for using the computer or other machinery / equipment?**

**If yes, what?**

**b) Do you encounter any problems accessing this additional support / tools when you use the computers / equipment in different classrooms?**

Most learners did not require additional support or tools to use the computer or other machinery.

One required a special desk, another a facility to help depress the keyboard keys and another used a specialised programme.

None of the learners interviewed stated that they encountered any problems accessing additional support or tools when in different classrooms.

- 8. a) Do you have any difficulties accessing areas such as the LRC/Library and the canteen?**
- b) If yes, what changes has the provider made to make them more accessible? c) What additional changes, if any, could be made to improve access?**

No learners stated that they had any difficulty accessing communal areas. A number of learners stated that support workers were available to provide help where needed and provide supervision. Another stated that he had mobility problems and the carer or volunteers helped him to move around. He also stated that the staff were very good in helping him to move from one place to another.

The learners in work based learning provision stated that there was no canteen or learning resource centre.

No learner mentioned any changes they would like to see the provider make in order to improve access.

- 10. Is there any particular good practice by your provider (or previous providers) that you would like to talk about?**

Fifteen of the learners interviewed (88%) mentioned good practice by their provider. Of the two that did not mention good practice the learners involved

were in the discrete provision and are very weak. Although they had not mentioned good practice under this question they had mentioned that all staff were very helpful and one mentioned that the support of his carer was a strength of the provision he received.

The most common good practice feature mentioned was the support by their tutors. Nine learners mentioned this as good practice by their provider. This was in addition to numerous references to the work of the tutors and support workers in other answers.

Five learners mentioned that the support they received had been particularly helpful in building their confidence and helping them become independent.

Also learners felt that the social aspect of their learning was a strong point and the feeling of inclusivity. A number of learners mentioned that the learning is provided in a manner by which it also becomes a social activity, where everyone cares about one another and is sensitive to each other's needs. As one learner stated

'Tutors treat you as a person not as a disabled person'.

#### **11. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the support you need and/or receive?**

A number of comments were made by learners. Most of these comments were positive.

A number of learners made suggestions on how to improve the provision. This ranged from more room, to funding becoming available for interactive software, for learners that were not able to access the main college site (interactive whiteboards, projectors, floppy disks etc), as well as funding more support time from tutors.

One learner felt that the perception of other students limited his involvement; he felt that they don't seem to have an awareness of disability issues. Another would appreciate if more courses could be provided in venues that disabled people can access.

All other comments supported the learners answers to the previous questions especially question eight on good practice, especially the social aspect of their *learning*.

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