The Enhancement of Learning Support: A suite of materials to support practice

These resources were developed as part of the LSIS sponsored programme to enhance the important work of learning support staff. Each of the resources can be used individually but taken together provide a suite of resources to support individual and/or organisational development. The resources are categorised into three areas;

Resources

What resources are available? The table below briefly describes the resources and provides hyperlinks to them.

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| **Developing and progressing** | **Developing the organisation** | **Resources** |
| [Standards and Qualifications](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/eg6228)  Information about National Occupational Standards (NOS) and associated qualifications for Learning Support Staff (LSAs)  Profiling Tool  This online self-evaluation system is mapped against the NOS for LSAs and provides individual and whole organisation reports.  [Outline of The Profiling Tool](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2098) (Note the tool is available from Pearson Publishing at a cost of £365+VAT)  [Sample Individual Report](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2099)  [Sample Group Report](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2100)  Alternative Approaches to CPD  "How to" guidance on shadowing, mentoring and buddying along with amendable resources and exemplars  [Case study 1](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/eg1566)  [Case study 2](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/eg1569)  [Case study 3](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/eg1579)  [Case study 4](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/eg1576)  [Career Pathway](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf17410)  A report which explores the experiences of LSAs and suggests possible career structures and progression pathways taking account of different routes and ambitions. | [Organisational Audit Tool](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf17451)  A tool designed to enable providers to evaluate provision against key indicators mapped to the NOS and the Common Inspection Framework  [Change Management](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf17470)  A report which considers effective approaches to involving LSAs in change and uses case studies to exemplify these | Case studies and practical examples of effective practice A review of resources and strategies employed by providers to involve learners in their own support with guidance for use including;  [Accessible Risk Assessment](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf17457)  A British Sign language glossary:-   * [Part a](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf17460) * [Part b](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-powerpoint17422)   [Working Styles analysis](http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search/career-assessment/whats-your-work-style/article.aspx)  [Edu Apps](http://eduapps.org)  [Promoting Independence](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf17425):  Using technology to promote learning and independence  A report which explores how simple technology well applied can increase learners' capacity to learn independently. |

How the resources can be used?

Each of the materials in the ELS suite can stand alone, but taken together, they provide a structure for organisational development which allows providers to identify where they are, both as an organisation and at an individual level, supports them to plan priorities and offers practical support with taking action for improvement. Here is one illustration of how the materials could be applied:

Where are we now?

In order to plan and deliver appropriate and relevant training and development activities providers first need to understand current performance of both individuals and the organisation, i.e. "where are we now?” This is about getting real knowledge of how things are working currently and involving staff at all levels in evaluating the quality of provision.

Taken together the Audit Tool and the Online Profiling Tool can provide detailed assessment of this current performance. The audit tool provides a series of indicators that allows an organisation to focus in on those activities and behaviours that represent effective practice. The Profiling Tool enables LSAs to assess their skills and development needs in relation to the NOS and provides not only an individual report, but also a summative analysis of responses which will enable the provider to identify common areas of development across the staff team.

Priorities for Improvement

Having established an effective baseline, the information provided by the audit and profile tools allows organisations to accurately plan priorities for development. The ELS suite also contains detailed information about the Standards and Qualifications and providers can use these to interpret the results, and where appropriate, identify relevant qualifications. In addition the Career Pathway resources include an example of a career pathway framework that encompasses different entry points, progression routes and eventual career aspirations. This resource is derived from the evidence provided by LSAs and includes some illustrative case studies which allow individuals to plot progress on their career pathways and review and plan future options. Improvement activities which are effective require a Collaborative Approach to Organisational Development and the resources in the ELS suite describe a whole organisational approach to continuous professional development for learning support staff using a combination of learner shadowing and staff development questionnaires. What the initial research showed was that even where training was available it sometimes lacked relevance because it was not planned on a detailed understanding of what LSAs said they need to do their job better. Using a combination of these resources will enable organisations to identify and target relevant training more effectively.

Delivering Improvement

Having established a baseline and prioritised areas for development the ELS suite can also support organisations to implement change and improvement. The aim of learning support ultimately is to promote the learners independence and very often technology can provide an effective mechanism to achieve this. The technology report provides information about a wide range of technology resources which are readily available, whose use can be life enhancing and empowering and can significantly aid independence. Effective support that is person centred and personalised actively encourages the learner to contribute to managing and defining their own support. The ELS materials aimed at involving learners in shaping their own support identify key approaches and resources to support LSAs and organisations in enabling learners to take more control over the support they receive. Providers will offer LSAs a range of CPD activities, the alternative approaches resources are designed to support providers to make effective use of the expertise within their organisations through the use of context based development activities like shadowing, mentoring and buddying. These resources provide simple implementation guidance which explain what the process is and how it can be implemented, as well as information sheets, proformas and PowerPoint presentations that may be downloaded and amended to meet providers own requirements. The quality of management is key to any development process and the effective management of learning support resources identifies the key factors which support this both in the classroom and across the organisation and exemplifies this through relevant case studies.

The ELS materials and tools provide a suite of solutions which can be used effectively to support the development of learning support staff and more broadly the organisations in which they work, in order to improve the outcomes and experiences of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.