Enhancement of Learning Support
London regional project

Working with Learning Support Assistants:
an organisational audit tool

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Carrying out an audit of current practice

The indicators that follow set out a range of effective practices in managing and supporting Learning Support Assistants and are cross referenced with the Common Inspection Framework detailed in Annex 1 and the Care Standards set by the Care Quality Commission as detailed in Annex 2. These indicators state what would be expected where such practices are followed.

Each indicator is followed by the question "to what extent?" and is designed for testing whether the indicator applies in practice. The indicators and questions are intended for the purposes of review and development. The audit tool offers a framework to help the organisation consider their current practice and identify appropriate starting points for development. .

Although the questions can be answered in each case by a simple yes or no, it is recommended that they are treated as 'to what extent?' questions. This implies a range of possible responses that can then be discussed and moderated by testing responses out by observation, sampling or interviews by the coordinating teams. The lists of statements are not exhaustive or untouchable; users should feel free to amend or extend them to suit the needs of their particular organisation. The evidence generated will support organisations in completing their self-assessment reviews.

In each case all the indicators and questions should be considered in relation to your own context. Possible sources of evidence are suggested at the end of each indicator as a way of showing how the information can be triangulated to moderate any judgements made.

Guidance on conducting the self-assessment audit tool is provided as a separate document. There are also separate resources in the Annexes which include models used in the pilots.

The term Learning Support Assistant (LSA) is used in this document as it is the term used throughout the Enhancement of Learning Support Project. It includes learning support which is provided outside the classroom such as supporting work experience, readers/scribes for exams, and providing invigilation. The term Teacher refers to teachers, tutors, lecturers and trainers.

The Indicators

Indicator 1: The organisation has clear policies outlining the roles and responsibilities of Learning Support Assistants

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
1.	Does the organisation provide fit for purpose job descriptions for LSAs?	C1. C7	14A
2.	As part of performance review does the organisation involve LSAs in updating their job descriptions?	C5,C7	14A 14D
3.	Do the job descriptions reflect a balance of LSAs' responsibilities: support to teachers, the curriculum, learners and the organisation?	B1,C7	14A
4.	Are LSAs given adequate time within their contracts for preparation, meetings, other administrative tasks and training?	C1,C7	14D
5.	Is the organisation's staff development plan inclusive of LSAs' staff development needs?	C1,C7	14C
6.	Is the training done by LSAs reflected in their responsibilities and pay?	B1,C7	14E
7.	Does the organisation target staff development for teachers and managers to ensure they understand their role in co-ordinating the contributions of LSAs?	B1,C1	14C
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with LSAs and LSA Manager/ Managers of discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities (LLDD), Human Resources (HR) managers including those with responsibility for staff development**		

Indicator 2.1: Managers' and teachers' management strategies provide clear guidance as to how LSAs should work in their sessions

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
8	Is the structure of LSA management and support clear to all staff?	C1,C7	14C
9	Is the structure of LSA management and support effective?		16A
10	Does the organisation make clear the responsibilities that teachers have for the contribution of LSAs to learning?	B1,C1,C7	12B
11	Do teachers follow clear guidance about the roles and responsibilities of LSAs?	B1,C7	12B
12	Do teachers' approaches and planning take account of the participation of LSAs?	B1,C7,B4	14C
13	Is the LSA's contribution included in session plans and individual learning plans?	B1,B4	14C
14	Do the contributions of LSAs encourage learners' independence in sessions and outside of them e.g. where they support work experience?	B1,C7,B4	13A
15	Do teachers' management strategies ensure that the presence of LSAs foster learner-learner interactions?	B1,C7,B4	16A
16	During whole-group teaching do teachers ensure that LSAs work in ways that encourage learners to remain engaged throughout the session?	B1,C7,B4	4A 7G
17	Do teachers manage their teaching so that all learners receive direct teacher attention, when they are working individually or in small groups, as well as input from LSAs?	B1,C7,B4	4A
18	Where LSAs are expected to work away from the teacher, is their contribution managed by the teacher?	B1,C7,B4	7G 14C 14D
19	Are LSAs aware of the procedures for disclosure, confidentiality and safeguarding in relation to information about individual	A3,B1,C3, B4	7A 7E

	learners?		
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with learners, teachers, managers, director and observations**		

Indicator 2.2: The expertise, skills and knowledge of LSAs is used flexibly to foster the learning of learners

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
20	Are LSAs' previous experience, knowledge, understanding and skills used to make a suitable match in curriculum areas and with the learners they support?	B1,C7,B4	13A 14A
21	Are LSAs encouraged to offer feedback to the teacher on teaching and learning?	B1,C7,B4	16E
22	Are LSAs encouraged to develop particular areas of specialism and are they recognised and used?	B1,C7,B4	13A 14A 14D 1all
23	Do LSAs, where appropriate, contribute to initial assessment processes?	B1,C7,B4	1C 4A 4B 7E
24	Do learners Individual Learning Plans specify how support will be provided and where appropriate the role of LSAs in providing that support?	B1,C7,B4	4A 1I 1C
25	Do LSAs contribute to record keeping and collecting evidence of learners' progress and achievement?	B1,C7,B4	12B 14D 21A
26	Are LSAs encouraged to use their knowledge of learners' views about their need for support?	B1,C7,B4	7D 4A 1all
27	Do LSAs use Information Communication Technology (ICT) appropriately to support learners?	B1,C7,B4	14 A C D 16D
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with learners, LSAs and teachers and observations**		

Indicator 3.1: LSAs work cooperatively with teachers to support the learning and participation of learners

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
28	Do LSAs understand the learning process and the purpose of learning activities?	B1,C7,B4	14 A C D
29	Are both teachers and LSAs aware of their respective roles in planning sessions where they are working together in the same classroom?	B1,C7,B4	14C D
30	Are teachers and LSAs involved in flexible decision-making about plans during lessons?	B1,C7,B4	14C D
31	Do LSAs and teachers have arrangements that encourage them to offer one another constructive feedback?	B1,C7,B4	14C
32	Are there plans for LSAs to respond to individual learners' needs which are agreed by the teacher, learner and LSA?	B1,C7,B4	4A 1F 1G
33	Are LSAs trained to observe, assess learning and record learners' progress and achievements, under the direction of the teacher?	B1,B4,C1, C7	16D 21A
34	Are LSAs briefed and trained about learners' emotional and/or learning support needs?	B1,C7,B4, A3	7G 4D
35	Do LSAs offer support tactfully so that learners are not embarrassed in front of others?	B1,B4	1G 1A 7A
36	Do LSAs support learners in ways that foster their participation in learning activities and promote inclusion and independence?	B1,C7,B4	4C 4D 4E 1G
37	Do LSAs prepare differentiated resources, e.g. text supported by symbols, tactile resources, tapes of information text?	B1,C7,B4	1B 4E
Evidence	**Observation, triangulated focus interviews with LSAs , tutors and managers**		

Indicator 3.2: Teachers and LSAs learn together to improve the quality of their work

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
38	Are teachers and LSAs committed to the idea of working together to improve the quality of their joint practice?	B1,C7,B4, C6,C4	12B 14A 14C 14D
39	Do teachers and LSAs reflect and talk together on a regular basis about their own learning?	B1,C7,B4, C6	12B 14A 14C
40	Do teachers share long- and medium-term planning and target setting with LSAs?	B1,C7,B4	12B 14A 14C
41	Do teachers plan so that they and LSAs take a consistent approach with learners?	B1,C7,B4	12B 14A 7E 4A
42	Do teachers' behaviour management approaches take account of the contributions of LSAs?	B1,C7,B4	4A 4C 7A 14C
43	Do the partnerships between LSAs and teachers foster mutual trust, confidence and respect?	B1,C7,B4, C6	14A 14C 14D 16B
44	Do teachers use LSA perspectives to better understand how their joint work can be strengthened?	B1,C7,B4, C6	14A 14C 14D
45	Do all teachers and LSAs meet together regularly in order to improve the quality of their partnerships (e.g., in course teams, and departmental teams,	B1,C7,B4, C6	14A 14C 14D
Evidence	**Observations , triangulated focus interviews with LSAs , tutors and managers**		

Indicator 4: LSAs develop effective working partnerships with people involved in education

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
46	Do LSAs liaise with the person responsible for learning support coordination on a regular basis?	B1,C7,B4,C6	14A B C
47	Do LSAs have good working relationships with professionals from outside the organisation, such as employers, Connexions/personal advisers, educational psychologists, social workers, therapists and other personnel? (where appropriate?)	B1,C7,B4,C6, B2,C5	4C 7A
48	How does the management of the organisation ensure that the governors understand the LSAs' role?	C6,C7,B4	16A 16C 16E
49	How does the management of the organisation ensure that the parents of learners receiving support understand the LSAs' role?	B4,C5,C6,C7	16C 1I 1J 1E
50	Does the work of bi-lingual LSAs enhance communication with ethnic minority communities?	B4,C4,C5,C6, C7	1G 1F 1E
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with LSAs and LSA manager/discrete LLDD Manager**		

Indicator 5: LSAs are supported in relation to their induction, mentoring and professional development needs

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
51	Are LSAs provided with an organisation induction programme?	C7,B4,C1	14E
52	Are LSAs given the space to reflect on and discuss their own professional development and career progression aspirations and complete a CPD log?	C1,C5, C6,C7	14E
53	Are LSAs appraised as a means of developing their contributions and accountabilities in the organisation?	C7,B4,C1	14C
54	Is the LSA contribution to learning observed in its own right, both as part of quality assurance and their personal development?	C6,C1, B1,C7	14C 14D 14E
55	Are LSAs given staff development opportunities that support their career progression?	C7,B4,C1	14C 12B 14E
56	Are LSAs provided with opportunities to develop appropriate levels of ICT, English & Maths?	B1,B4,C1	14E 14D
57	Are LSAs' own learning needs and access requirements (where appropriate) taken into account during formal and informal training and in their day to day work?	C1,C7	14D 12C
58	Does the organisation have a clear career progression structure for LSAs that reflects their qualifications, experience and training?	C7,B4,C1	14D 16E
59	Do LSAs act as mentors for new LSAs?	C7,B4,C1	14D
60	Are there clear means of identifying and informing LSAs of appropriate and relevant internal and external training courses and with information relating to developments in the role of the LSA?	C7,B4,C1	14D 16E
61	Do LSAs have clear, appropriate support structures which provide	B4	14D

	advice on good practice? E.g. Do they know where to go to for specialist support?		
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with LSAs and LSA manager/ discrete LLDD Manager, HR including staff development needs**		

Indicator 6: LSAs meet with other LSAs for purposes of planning, problem solving and staff development

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
62	Where LSAs have specific curriculum responsibilities, such as literacy support, do they liaise with literacy specialists on a regular basis for updating and sharing of practice?	C7,B4,C1,C6	14D 16B
63	Do LSAs meet with other LSAs in the organisation to share good practice and concerns and for mutual support?	C7,B4,C5	14D 16B
64	Do LSAs assist in the induction procedures for newly appointed LSAs?	B4,C7,C5	14D 14E
65	Does the organisation ensure that LSAs have suitable meeting facilities?	B4,C5	14D
66	Are LSAs informed about any external support networks for LSAs and other professionals?	B4,C5	14D 16B
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with LSAs and LSA manager/discrete LLDD Manager**		

Indicator 7: The organisation has clear quality assurance processes for measuring the impact of learning support

Please evaluate the extent to which:		CIF	Care standards
67	Does the organisation measure the impact of LSAs on retention, achievement and success rates of learners who have received LSA support?	A1,B1,B4 C1,C4, C5,C6,	14C 16B 7E
68	Are outcomes from data analysis used to inform Quality Improvement Planning (QIP)/Self Assessment and Review (SAR) planning and action?	A1,C6,C7	16A 16B 16C
69	Do learner feedback mechanisms include questions on learning support provided by LSAs?	C5,C6,C7	16A 16E 1J
70	Do staff satisfaction surveys include LSAs and are their responses analysed?	C6,C7	16A 16E 14C
71	Do you measure impact for example by the degree to which support is appropriately reduced during learners' programmes?	B1,B4,C1,C4, C6,C7	21A 4D 1J
72	Do you have robust procedures including target settings and review, for measuring the impact of LSA support?	C4,C6,C7	16B 16C
73	Does the SAR process specifically incorporate the contribution of LSAs to learning?	B1,B4,C1,C6	16A 16B 16C
Evidence	**Triangulated focus interviews with Quality Manager/ LSA manager/discrete LLDD Manager/ Programme Managers who use LSAs / staff and learner satisfaction surveys**		

Annex 1: Mapping to the Common Inspection Framework

The Common Inspection Framework sets out the principles that apply to the inspections of Further Education and skills under Part 8 of the Act. The Common Inspection Framework comprises:

- Ofsted's principles of inspection; and

- the common evaluation schedule.

Responses to indicator questions can then be used to support SAR judgements by providing **evidence of the impact of learning support** made in the following question areas of the Common Inspection Framework:

Outcomes for learners	
A1	How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?
A3	How safe do learners feel?
Quality of Provision	
B1	How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?
B4	How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to attain their learning goals?
Leadership and management	
C1	How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?
C3	How effectively does the college promote the safeguarding of learners?
C4	How effectively does the college actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?
C5	How effectively does the college engage with users to support and promote improvement?
C6	How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the college's provision and outcomes for learners?
C7	How efficiently and effectively does the college use its available resources to secure value for money?

Annex 2: Mapping to the Care Quality Commission outcomes and guidance:

The majority of Specialist Colleges are registered with the CQC under the following category

SPC Specialist college services

These services provide education, care and training in independence for young people with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The colleges are first and foremost educational establishments and are regulated by Ofsted. The personal care and accommodation provided by a college is regulated by the Care Quality Commission where 10% or more of the students require personal care.

The following is extracted and complied from the document listed below, there are other outcomes that are not relevant to this audit. The number is set against compliance outcomes and the letter against prompts in the guidance document.

Care Quality Commission: Guidance about compliance

Essential standards of quality and safety March 2010

Involvement and information

Outcome 1: Respecting and involving people who use services

A   People who use services are involved in and receive care, treatment and support that respects their right to make or influence decisions

B   People who use services have their care, treatment and support needs met

C   People who use services receive care, treatment and support where clear procedures are followed in practice, monitored and reviewed

E   People who use services, or others acting on their behalf, are supported to make informed choices about their care, treatment and support

F   People who use services receive care, treatment and support that is provided in a way that ensures their independence is promoted

G   People who use services receive care, treatment and support that is
provided in a way that ensures their human rights and diversity are
respected

H   People who use services are provided with information about the service and what to expect

I   People who use services, or others acting on their behalf, are given encouragement, support and opportunities to discuss their support and raise concerns

J   People who use services can influence how the service is run as they are given opportunities to take part in decisions

Personalised care, treatment and support

Outcome 4: Care and welfare of people who use services

A   People who use services have safe and appropriate care, treatment and support because their individual needs are established from when they are referred or begin to use the service. The assessment, planning and delivery of their care, treatment and support is person centred

B   People who use services benefit from a service that manages risks effectively and acts and learns from experience

C   People who use services can be confident that they will know the names of those who support them and that plans will be in place for when they leave.

D   People who use services can be confident that staff will support them as their needs change

E   People who use services are involved in their support options with and involved in decision making using informed choices

Safeguarding and safety

Outcome 7: Safeguarding people who use services from abuse

A   People receive a service from a provider who takes steps to prevent abuse and does not tolerate any abusive practice should it occur.

B   People who use services benefit from a service that has clear policies in place and works well with others as needed

C   People who use services are protected as staff and others involved in carrying on the regulated activity are not involved in managing the money or property of service users

D   People who use services receive care, treatment and support from all Staff who are committed to upholding the service users and recognise their own responsibility for safeguarding

E   People who use services receive care, treatment and support from staff who, in relation to safeguarding are fully trained and aware of all aspects of safeguarding

F   People who use services receive care, treatment and support from all staff who, in relation to restraint understand the differing forms that restraint can take and understand that is should be used only as a last resort.

G   People who use services receive care, treatment and support from staff who, in relation to responding to behaviour that presents a risk to themselves or others understand how to support people to avoid this behaviour occurring and work with others to reduce it occurring

H   People who use services benefit from practice where the use of restraint and management of behaviour that presents a risk is managed according to agreed policies

Suitability of staffing

Outcome 12: Requirements relating to workers

A   All staff recruitment is made using safe and fair recruitment practises.

B   All staff are trained or being trained and supervised, have necessary experience and know and understand their roles and responsibilities.

C   All staff are suitable for their roles by use of effective recruitment, supervision and other checks, no matter what their employment status. Staff are held responsible for their actions.

D   Staff only commence work after all checks have been made and work supervised until satisfactory response is given.

Outcome 13: Staffing

A   People who use services benefit from sufficient staff to meet their needs because the provider plans deployment effectively and manages and responds to assessed risk

Outcome 14: Supporting workers

A   People who use services receive care, treatment and support from staff who are competent to carry out their roles

C   People receive a service from a provider that supervises its staff

D   People receive a service from a provider that supports its staff

E   People who use services receive care treatment and support from staff who have undertaken Skills for care Induction Standards or similar

Quality and management

Outcome 16: Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision

A   Monitor the quality of service that people receive

B   Identify, monitor and manage risks to people who use, work in or visit the service.

C   Report on quality, risk, and improvement plans to ensure compliance with the regulations

D   Ensure all decisions affecting people are properly recorded.

E   Have a continuous quality improvement system

Outcome 17: Complaints

A   People who use services and those acting on their behalf can be confident that their comments and complaints are listened to and dealt with effectively

Outcome 21: Records

A   People who use services can be confident that their personal records for their care, treatment and support are properly