



Intervention Strategies

Additional learning support (ALS)

ALS is any activity that provides direct support for learning to individual learners, over and above that which is normally provided in a standard learning programme that leads to their learning goal. ALS is only available for learners on funded programmes. ALS is required to help learners gain access to, progress towards and successfully achieve their learning goals. The need for ALS may arise from a learning difficulty and/or disability, or from support required to access a progression opportunity or employment, or from literacy, numeracy or language support requirements.

The deployment of in-class ALS support is dependent upon meeting the YPLA (Young Persons Learning Agency) and SFA (Skills Funding Agency) funding criteria. The first step, however, is to make a referral using the process described below. Once this has been done, and provided that we have been furnished with the information requested, a judgement will be made and curriculum staff will be informed of the outcome.

Referral/Information gathering process

Learners are referred for support via the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Team Leaders (Appendix 1) in consultation with curriculum staff and will use the following information to ascertain need:

- Information gathered from Parents at Welcome Events
- BKSB results
- Previous information held for continuing/progressing learners
- Educational Statements provided by Parents/Schools
- Connexions Section 139a
- Liaison with curriculum staff
- Short 1 to 1 profile/assessment with learners within the first few weeks of term (not required if SEN/Section 139a is available).
- Regular meetings with the ALS staff teams who provide the in-class support.

All this information in its entirety helps to give us a complete picture of the learner's (potential) needs.

To ascertain Basic & Key Skills Builder (BKSB) results the ALS Team Leaders will undertake the following process for ALL learners:

- Liaise with Curriculum Staff to book sessions for their learners in Induction Week

- Monitor and supervise the online assessment and upon completion by the learner, print and distribute copies of the results to Curriculum staff and for file
- Monitor and mark the short handwriting test and distribute findings
- Administer the vocational specific test as required.

Once the information is gathered an *Additional Learning Support Plan* is created for each learner in receipt of learning support (Appendix 2)

Learning Support Plans

The support plan has been devised to incorporate all the elements of the learners' journey through their learning support 'life'. It allows the ALS team to assess the individual needs of the learner and to focus support to promote the learners' achievements and work towards greater independence and ultimately enhancing their employability.

The document contains the following:

Pre-entry –

- Background information on learner and details of identified need from SEN statement, Section 139a, School Report or referral

At Entry –

- BKSB initial assessment results
- Short interview conducted by ALS Team Leader
- Referral for Additional Learning Support

On Programme –

- Learning Agreement (to be signed by Learner)
- Projection of support hours (to be reviewed termly)
- Learning Support Targets (termly)
- Learner Questionnaire

End of Year –

- Review of the year (with curriculum)
- Progression (either new course, year 2 or work)
- Evaluation

This is a collaborative document that will allow the curriculum staff to participate in the process and be beneficial in developing relationships with the ALS team.

What type of support is provided?

The Additional Learning Support department provides:

- In-class/Focused Support (on a ratio basis)

- Study Skills Centre Support (on a small group basis)
- Communication Support

In-class/Focused Support

The ALS works with a small number of referred learners within a class.

ALS staff that are working with a small number of learners with support needs within a larger class, in some cases the ALS may wish to sit within close proximity in order to be able to support all learners at the same time (this may not always be the case if the student has specific proximity issues). Care will be taken by the ALS member of staff not to create a subgroup within class.

In other cases, it may be more appropriate to allow the learners to sit where they want to. This will require the ALS to do more leg work but will create a more integrated classroom environment and is a much better option for learners who do not have such acute support needs.

The ALS staff are sufficiently trained and in most cases specifically vocationally experienced to distinguish the style of support and will adapt to the nature of the class.

Communication Support

We have a team of dedicated and professional trained in sign language to assist our learners with hearing impairment difficulties. Please contact Josie Finch if you wish to discuss this facility further.

Assistive Technologies

Within the department we have a comprehensive stock of assistive equipment, please see Christine Davies for more information.

Support for Curriculum Staff from the Additional Learning Support Department

We are able to offer support for curriculum staff in making the most of the ALS staff. We regularly conduct training sessions within the INSET day programmes and are on hand to provide guidance at any time by contacting Sharon Hinchley on Ext 4148.

Exam access arrangements

When all the evidence has been collated by the Learning Support Workers the learner is referred to a Specialist Teacher for diagnostic testing to ascertain their current levels of achievement in literacy skills. The basic assessments show the standardised scores for single word reading, spelling, comprehension and writing speed but further testing for dyslexia screening, phonological processing and working memory can be given depending on the learner's difficulty.

The results of the diagnostic interview and test results are presented in a departmental spread sheet and a Form 8 document. Feed back is given to the Learner, ALS Team Leader, Tutor and Exams Officer.

If the learner has complex undiagnosed difficulties and is progressing into higher education they are referred to an Educational Psychologist for further testing.

What do ALS staff do?

ALS staff can be used in a variety of different ways. They can be extremely helpful when used effectively and can impact upon retention, attendance and achievement in a dramatic way. Curriculum staff who work well with LS staff are often free to concentrate on the quality of their group-level teaching and differentiation, whilst ALS staff absorb much of the individual support that can be time consuming.

ALS staff are deployed to work with a number of identified learners within a class. Their main role is to assist the curriculum staff in ensuring that identified learners can fully access the curriculum. In a sense, they can be seen as an additional resource with which to help the tutor to differentiate effectively.

ALS support targets

ALS staff are required to set a number of targets (which are located in the support plan) for supported learners to compliment academic targets. This is to be done in conjunction with the curriculum staff and complement the ILP targets and with the aim of creating S.M.A.R.T objectives. This is a 'working' document and can be flexible to meet the specific needs of the learners. Please speak to your Additional Learning Support for further information.

Student Support Questionnaire

ALS staff will complete a satisfaction survey with supported named learners at the mid way point of the academic year and a summery at the end of the year. This can be found in the Support Plan documentation and will help us monitor the quality of our provision.

Ongoing liaison and collaboration

ALS staff are most effective when they have prior knowledge of the kind of activities in which their learners will be engaged during your lesson.

Giving your ALS staff lesson plans in advance and spending some time before the lesson going over this will help the ALS to anticipate any potential barriers their learners might face.

As a curriculum staff member you can also benefit from communication with the ALS as they often have the benefit of a great deal of exposure to their learners. They can

often develop an intuitive understanding of the way their learners learn. In addition, they may be able to offer advice about strategies/approaches that may benefit their student.

In addition, please note that it is the curriculum staff's responsibility to inform support staff of changes to the programme, including room changes, staff changes, trips and excursions, modifications to the existing lesson plan, cancelled classes and any other issues that may affect ALS staff.

It is good practice for curriculum staff to introduce your ALS to your class and explain the nature of their role if they are new to your class.

The difference between teaching and reinforcing learning

ALS do not teach, but can be used to reinforce learning. So only once the material has already been introduced and covered by the curriculum staff should ALS be asked to reinforce it with a learner. ALS staff should not be asked to introduce fresh lesson material to a class or individual learner. Similarly, ALS is a discrete provision and staff will therefore not interrupt or disrupt the natural flow of the lesson unless absolutely necessary. If an ALS member of staff needs to communicate with the curriculum staff it will be at an appropriate point or moment in the delivery of the lesson.

What ALS can and can't do

Some examples of the most common ways in which the ALS staff can be used are detailed below:

Learners with social support needs (ie. Aspergers Syndrome)

The ALS could sit next to or near the learner and may monitor their behaviour. A system of signals could help the learner to understand when their behaviour is inappropriate.

Learners with poor comprehension skills

The ALS can periodically check the understanding of the learner and reinforce curriculum staff's verbal instructions, help decipher written instructions etc.

Learners with physical disabilities

The ALS can help the learner to manipulate tools or objects if they have a tremor, impaired motor skills or a dyspraxia-type condition.

Learners with visual impairments

The ALS can sit next to the learner and give a verbal commentary on any visual aspects of the lesson.

ALS are not employed to teach. Some ALS are qualified teachers but it is important to protect the integrity of the role as well as for insurance reasons, that they are not asked to do so.

ALS must never be asked to cover classes or look after a class whilst the teacher leaves the classroom for any significant time (i.e. over 5 minutes) and this MUST be agreed with the ALS staff beforehand.

ALS are deployed to work for the benefit of learners and whilst their activities are directed by the curriculum staff, they should not be seen as a personal assistant. ALS staff are not expected to help with tasks such as marking, photocopying or preparing lesson materials which are part of the lesson preparation.

ALS staff will not issue warnings to learners, but can support curriculum staff with discipline issues where necessary by completion of incident report forms. Behaviour management is the responsibility of curriculum staff.

Strategies to help learners become independent

The danger of providing an intensive and consistent level of support is that the learners may become *support dependent* and never learn the skills required to become independent learners. There are many strategies that can be employed to avoid this:

- Adjusting planned support to decrease the level or intensity of support as appropriate.
- Improvement of the learner's literacy and numeracy skills through Functional Skills sessions.
- Avoiding the creation of dichotomous classrooms and subgroups
- Being firm!

Inspection and the observation of supported classes

OFSTED inspectors do not observe and grade ALS in the same way as they do curriculum staff. In-class supporters are seen as a resources whose usefulness is, in the same way as other resources, dependant upon how the class tutor uses them. If an ALS is considered less than effective in an observed session the inspector will comment upon the inappropriate or poor use of resources. It is vital therefore that the tutor and ALS are seen to be working together for the benefit of the learners. Inspectors will typically enter classes with the following questions in mind:

- Is there evidence of teamwork between the tutor and the ALS?
- Does the ALS appear to know what they are doing?
- Do the learners value the support they are receiving?
- Is support helping the learners to become independent?

Other support such as help with differentiation of class room materials is available from members of the ALS team upon request. We also have an extensive library of helpful information and strategies on how best to support learners with varying degrees of learning, physical and impairment difficulties for use at any time by staff.

Contact information

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