



Leading learning and skills

e-learning Benchmarking Survey for the Voluntary and Community Sector

Prepared by The MRS Consultancy Ltd for the
LSC Yorkshire and Humber

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Executive Summary of the findings

The purpose of this benchmarking survey is to establish how the voluntary and community (Vol/Com) sector are using e-learning in their provision of training courses and the appropriateness of the LSC Provider of the Future criteria for the sector.

Recommendations and examples of good practice have subsequently been drawn-up. These are available to the sector together with an on-line benchmarking tool that can be used by centres to assess their own position regarding their effective use of e-learning.

Two disappointing factors came out from the survey. First, many of the centres interviewed did not fully understand the meaning of e-learning. Second, the majority of respondents provided for little or no e-learning. However, on a positive note, many of the centres had processes in place that could support e-learning. The research also indicates that they are willing to develop e-learning provision.

Access to external e-resources

The survey supports the fact that the Vol/Com sector is very responsive to the needs of the communities it serves and that there is an effective structure in place that evaluates and consults with its learners.

In order to meet the needs of its learners, it is prepared to use external resources as well as those developed in-house

Curriculum development

Many of the centres surveyed stated that their curriculum had been developed to not only meet the needs of individuals in their local community, but also to meet current funding criteria. This presents opportunities for e-learning. It provides the potential to produce accessible cost-effective quality e-resources for the sector. It also allows the curriculum to expand into new areas that meet the needs of the local community and their businesses.

Many centres were found to have developed links with local employers and that they were using local labour market intelligence. This evidence suggests that there are additional opportunities for e-learning that meet specialist support at a higher level of training.

Using the Internet and other communication channels

Currently very few Vol/Com centres use the Internet to its full potential. However, the research shows that equal numbers of learners communicate with their tutors via e-mail as those doing so using traditional voice

communication. This suggests that many clients are both able and willing to communicate electronically. This presents providers with the opportunity to develop websites that can be used for on-line enrolment, on-line skills assessment, tutor access and access to other learners and to use other electronic means such as mobile phones and PDAs.

e-learning development plans

Many providers have formal annual staff performance reviews. Disappointingly the research indicates that only a few have e-learning development plans and most have no programme to raise staff awareness of planned e-learning. This shows that the sector is unaware of the potential of using e-learning with their clients and that it is reluctant, or lacks the confidence, to adopt electronic means of communication. There is a clear message here to raise the awareness of the potential of using e-learning within the sector. Also to increase the confidence levels amongst people working in the sector to help them use e-learning resources and support systems.

e-learning standards

Another major concern is the discovery that few Vol/Com centres are using e-learning standards or case studies of good practice to help them with their decision-making. There is a need to raise the awareness of standards and of good practice within the sector. This will help providers make more informed decisions. For example, few organisations were able to confirm that they had tested the software for literacy levels and only 44% were able to confirm that software conformed to accessibility standards.

On a positive note, the research showed that there are areas where e-learning was being used with great effectiveness. These examples have been drawn up into case studies of good practice and are available for use by the sector.

Technical

Many organisations are now comparatively well equipped with a range of hardware.

Major issues that need addressing were found to be security of data and the lack of provision of qualified technical support.

Provider for the future criteria

It was possible to map provision against the main criteria but a revised set of indicators were devised and these have been incorporated into the electronic benchmarking tool available on <http://matrix.becta.org.uk> (from September 2006.)

Introduction

This benchmarking exercise was funded by the Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) in Yorkshire and the Humber. Data was collected in support of the Voluntary and Community Sector within this Region.

Three initiatives influenced the decision by the LSC to undertake this exercise:-

1. "Working Together" – a strategy produced by the LSC in 2004 for working within this sector
2. ChangeUp – a cross-governmental capacity and infrastructure building initiative
3. The current review of the LSC commissioning and procurement arrangements.

In terms of the latter, any voluntary and community sector organisation, will need to be able to benchmark itself against the Provider of the Future report and the elearning continuum papers produced by the LSC. This exercise was to establish whether or not these were appropriate and what sort of modifications might be necessary for voluntary and community sector providers.

The Learning and Skills Council is committed to broadening its e-learning focus from Further Education (FE) and Work-based Learning providers to those from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Methodology

The “Working Together” Strategy suggests that the Voluntary and Community Sector represents a large, diverse and complex range of organisations. These include large national businesses, charitable trusts, Social Enterprises, also small, informal community-level organisations

As used in the Skills and Education network document¹, e-learning can be defined as:-

'learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology (ICT)'.

This benchmarking process according to the original specification and derived from the “Provider of the Future” specified that the survey was to focus on:-

- Learner offer
- Workforce / sector offer
- Leadership
- Infrastructure
- Technical capability
- Scope of delivery
- Strategic planning

These were consolidated into **four key areas**:

- Learner offer and scope of delivery
- VOL/COM provider workforce support
- Strategic planning and leadership
- Technical

¹ Skills and Education Network – Your Guide 2 ... e-learning: Policy and Strategy May 2005

The methodology for this benchmarking survey followed these stages:

1. Planning
2. Collection of initial data
3. Analysis of initial data
4. Further collection of in-depth data
5. Final analyses and report writing, together with an e-focus group² and other consultation activity on draft report and recommendations

² An e-focus group is set up using email communications with responses received by all participants. Normal rules of confidentiality etc apply as with face-to-face focus groups. Various discussion threads (in this case from the draft report) are set-up and time scales given for responses. At the end, a range of statements from all the threads are put together in a questionnaire where participants can indicate degrees of agreement / disagreement. From this the consensus document is produced.

1. Planning

An initial project steering group meeting was held at the start of the project. Representatives of sub-regional consortia, local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) attended. Sub-regional consortia and the LSCs jointly produced a contact list from a sample of their Voluntary and Community (Vol/Com) providers. Additional organisations were also identified by The MRS Consultancy to help achieve the outputs and to include known examples of good practice with regard to e-learning.

A questionnaire was produced for the initial telephone interviews and technical research. This telephone interview questionnaire was modified and extended for the face-to-face interviews.

The questionnaire was linked to a database for collation and analysis. Questionnaires are attached as Annex 1.

2. Collection of data

The samples used cover the diversity found within Yorkshire and Humber's Vol/Com sector. They also represent the different sub-regions and size of provider.

60 telephone interviews took place. Interviewees were chosen for their ability to give reliable information with regard to the criteria and indicators relating to *learner centred delivery* and *workforce support*.

In the case of smaller organisations these personnel had a senior management role. They were therefore also able to provide responses relating to *strategic planning* and *leadership*.

From these telephone interviews 25 were selected for more in depth face-to-face interviews. These interviews were recorded, reviewed by the researcher and then inputted into the research software.

From these face-to-face interviews, 10 case studies and other examples of good practice were produced.

- Sub-regional breakdown of telephone interviews :
 - Humber 15
 - South Yorkshire 15
 - North Yorkshire 16
 - West Yorkshire 14

- Sub-regional breakdown of face-to-face interviews :
 - Humber 08
 - South Yorkshire 05
 - North Yorkshire 06
 - West Yorkshire 06

Regardless of MRS's past experience with this sector, the telephone appointment making procedure took twice as long as anticipated. In many instances more than five calls were made before the appropriate person was available.

Previous national surveys with Work-based learning providers had significant "don't know" responses to technical questions. Therefore an electronic survey was carried out with appropriate technical experts within the provider organisations, once again to ensure reliability in collected data.

3. Analysis of data

The initial analysis of data based on a limited number of telephone interviews took place in March and an Interim Report presented to the Regional Steering Group.

4. Further collection of in-depth data

Further analysis took place on completion of all 60 telephone interviews and the 25 face-to-face interviews. A further Interim Report was presented to the Steering Group in May.

5. Final analyses, report writing and recommendations

Final analyses were completed in June. These included all the regional and sub-regional findings.

An initial presentation was made to the sector on 26th at a regional event organised by the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum in Leeds.

Further consultation on the recommendations and benchmarking tool took place electronically by email and e-focus group³ consultation)

³ An e-focus group is set up using email communications with responses received by all participants. Normal rules of confidentiality etc apply as with face-to-face focus groups. Various discussion threads (in this case from the draft report) are set-up and time scales given for responses. At the end, a range of statements from all the threads are put together in a questionnaire where participants can indicate degrees of agreement / disagreement. From this the consensus document is produced.

Findings

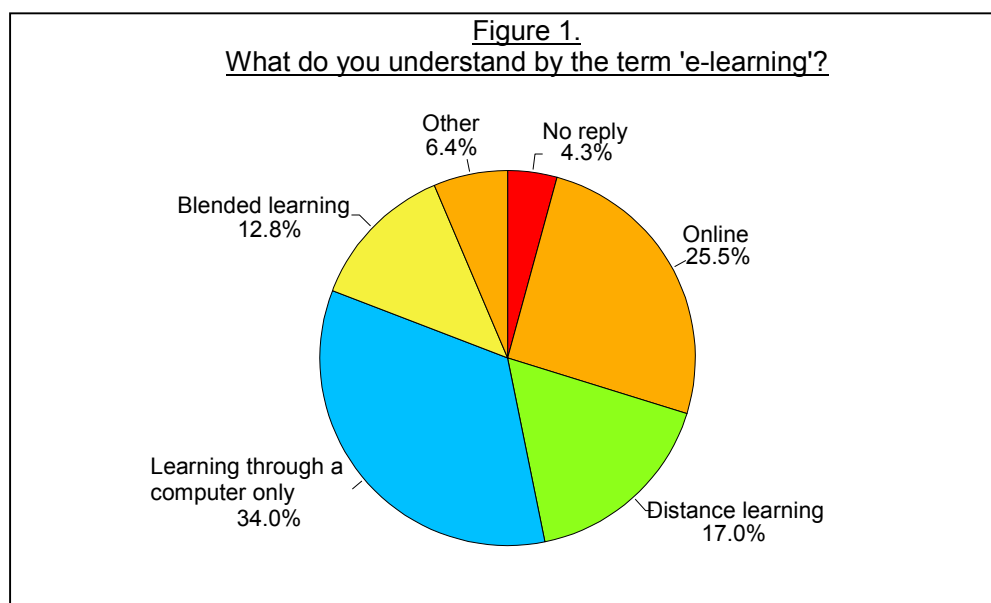
1. Overview/General

Results from the research show that there are pockets of excellent and innovative practice within the Vol/Com sector. However, the findings also suggest that the sector has not exploited the potential of e-learning for its clients.

1.1 The meaning of e-learning

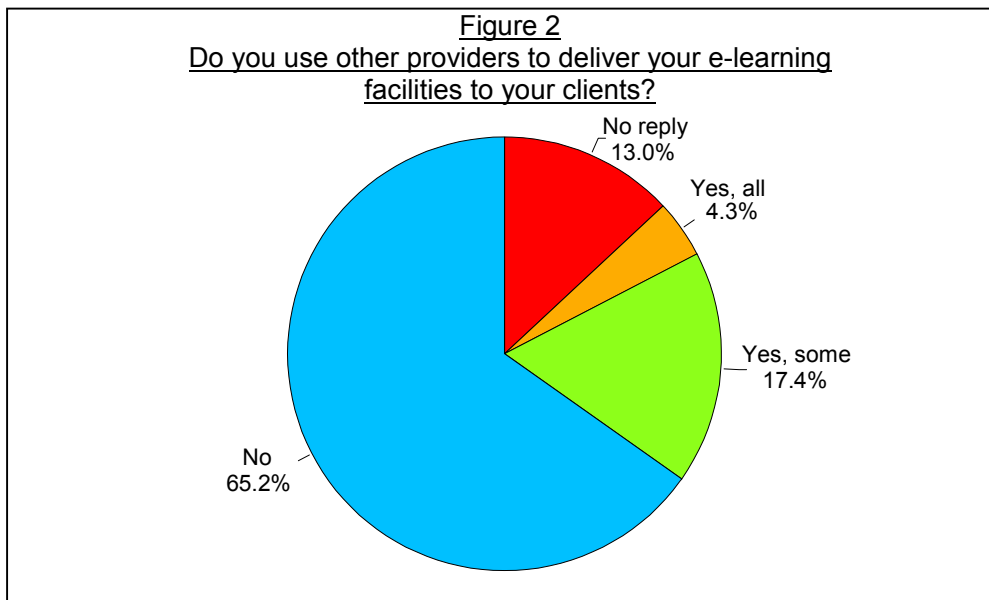
The telephone survey found that providers did not fully understand the meaning of e-learning. For example, many thought that a learner learning to use computer software represented e-learning. Therefore the rate of 65.5% using e-learning resources is probably a distorted figure.

As a result of this, the researchers used face-to-face interviews to find out what providers thought e-learning meant. The following figures were produced.



It was also felt that there was a need to find out whether the sector relied on other providers, from outside the sector, to deliver e-learning.

Figure 2 below illustrates that most e-learning is delivered by the sector itself. Much this has been provided by voluntary and community organisations that are *learnirect* centres.



The rest of the findings focus on the four key benchmarking areas:

1. Learner offer and scope of delivery
2. VOL/COM provider workforce support
3. Strategic planning and leadership
4. Technical

2. Learner offer and scope of delivery

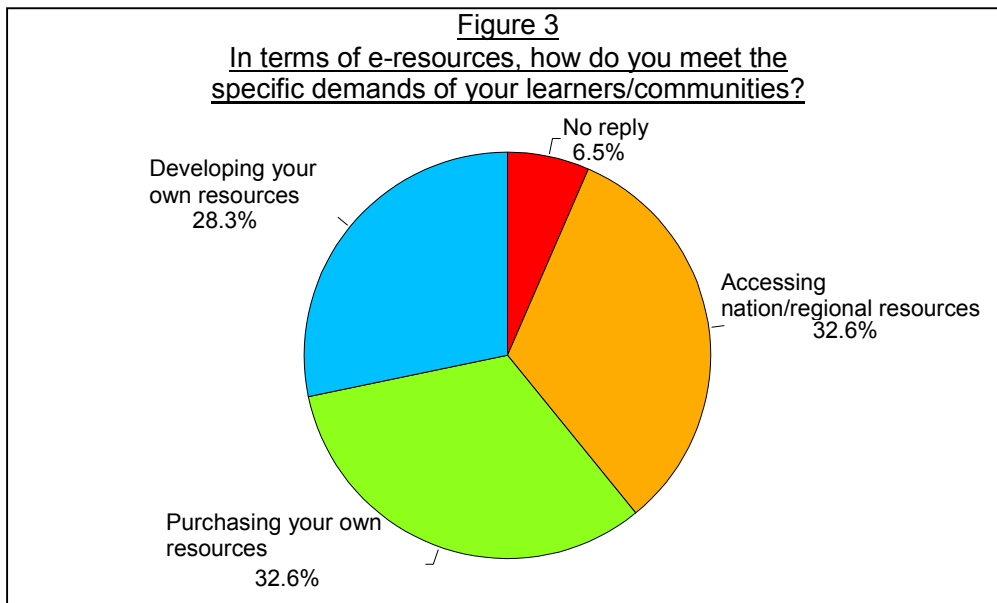
2.1 Responsiveness

Traditionally, the Vol/Com sector believed it was very responsive to the needs of the communities it serves. The survey results support this. 80% of providers state that they consult with their learners on a regular basis. 70% said that they consult with other local organisations.

The method of consultation varies from using evaluation sheets and simple informal meetings to focus groups and participation in local community groups.

Where these consultations show a need for e-resources, respondents⁴ to the survey gave a three-way split in terms of how those e-resources were obtained. These are shown in Figure 3 below.

⁴ Interviewed face to face



This data indicates that providers are willing to access resources not developed in-house. At the same time, it shows that they are also able to develop their own resources.

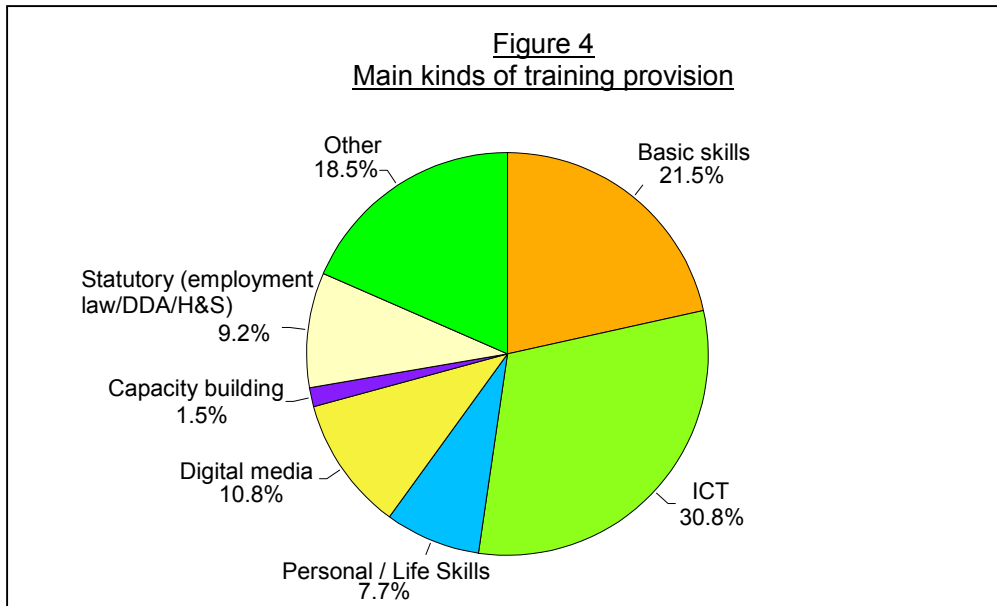
The recommendations following this report must take this into account when considering future region actions.

2.2 Scope of delivery

Providers were asked what issues influence the content of their curriculum. Over half suggested that their curriculum had been developed to:

- a. meet the needs of individuals in the local community
- b. meet current funding criteria.

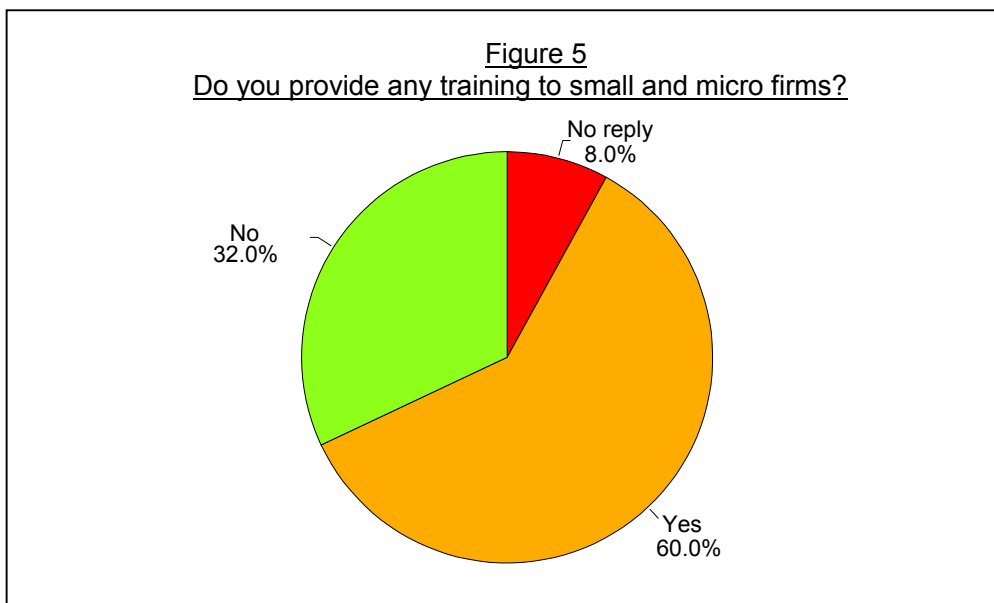
ICT skills training and Skills for Life (Basic Skills) contributed 52.3% of delivery. Both of these have been subjected to specific national and regional targets over the past few years.



This situation does present opportunities for e-learning.

- 1. It provides the potential to produce accessible quality e-resources for the sector that are within budget.**
- 2. It will enable the curriculum to expand into new areas that meet the needs of the local community and their businesses.**

As regards the latter, it is interesting to note that 60% of those interviewed face-to-face provide training to small and micro firms and that just over half of these were social enterprises.



The research indicates that some centres have developed links with local employers and are using local labour market intelligence. This enables them to provide training that addresses local skill shortages. However, it was found that in some cases issues have been raised with regard to the level of training they are providing. Provision at level 3 and above is lacking in most centres.

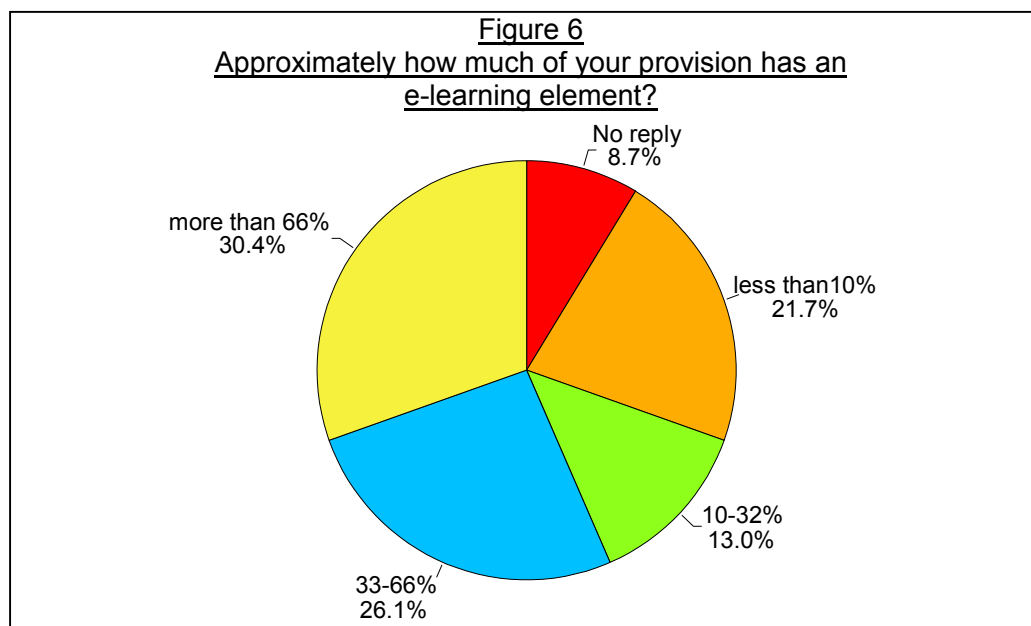
This opens up opportunities for e-learning in terms of specialist remote support.

2.3 e-learning provision

The telephone survey shows that 60% of respondents provide for little or no e-learning. Those that do tend to be *learndirect* centres.

(It is important to note that some of these learndirect centres will not be operating in the same role post-July 2006.)

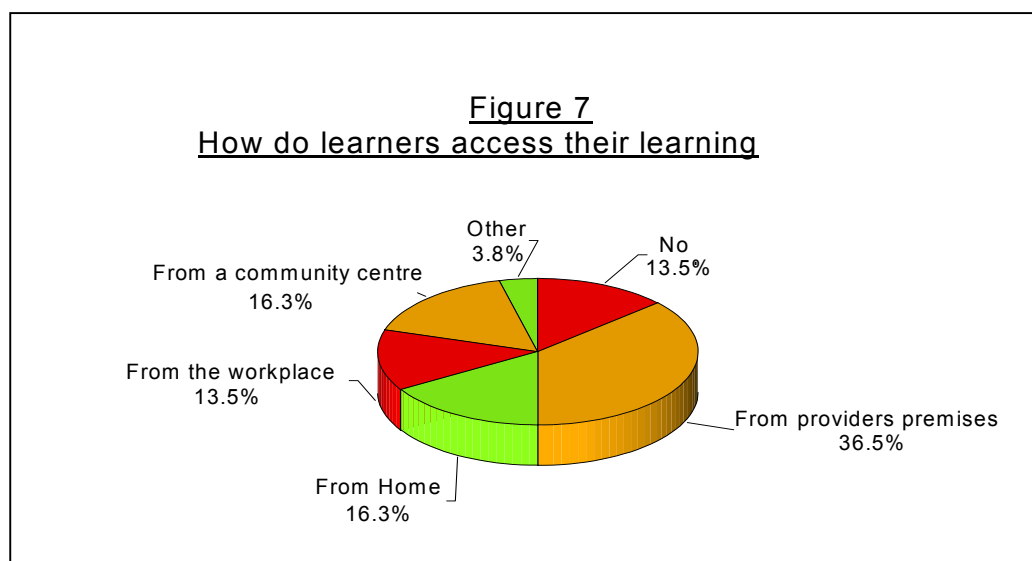
Taking into account the early adopters, who make up the majority of those interviewed face-to-face, the use of e-learning resources or e-support does not amount to a high percentage of the provision.



69.6% of this group did state however, that they were planning to expand the use of e-learning resources to other areas of their curriculum.

The research shows that learners predominately access their learning at the providers' premises or nearby community centres. There were however, some

examples where providers took laptops into people's homes but the only examples of on-line learning at this moment in time were through learndirect.



2.4 Use of the Internet for learner support

The research shows that only 78% of providers have a website. This was surprising when taking into account the number of people now using the Internet.

In view of this figure, it was not unexpected to find that very few on-line facilities are available to learners from the premises of sector providers and other voluntary centres.

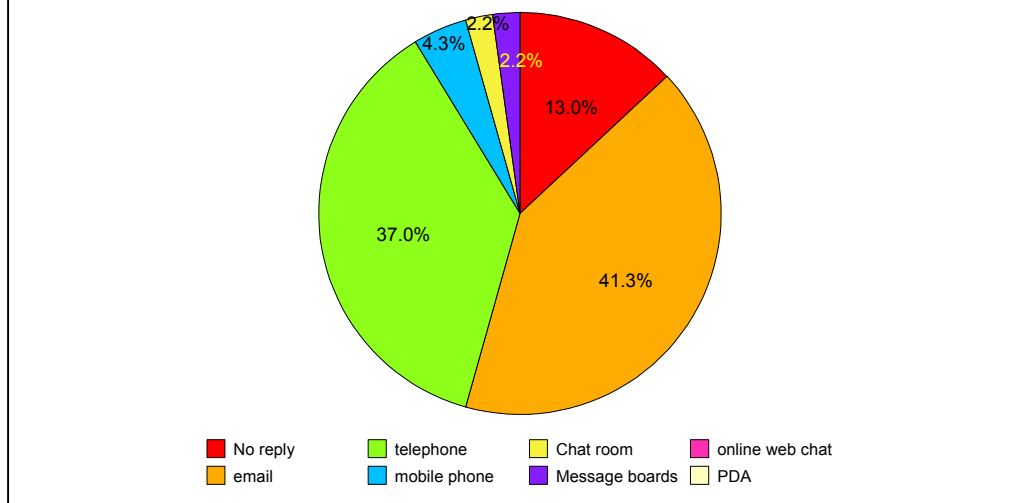
In many cases, respondents stated that either clients prefer face-to-face contact or did not have sufficient literacy skills to use the Internet.

This area needs to be explored further. Case Studies can be used to demonstrate how the Internet can be used to provide support from tutors and other learners. This is important to those people isolated within both urban and rural communities.

None of the interviewees were able to provide an instance where a learner could enrol on-line. In addition, only a small percentage of providers were able to offer the opportunity for learners to have their skills assessed on-line before enrolment. This facility only exists where it was linked into national schemes, such as *learndirect*.

The face-to-face interviews explored the ways in which learners are able to access their tutors using electronic media. Figure 8 shows the results:

Figure 8
How are learners able to access their tutors:



The chart shows that nearly the same number of learners access their tutors using e-mail (written contact), as they do using traditional voice communication. This implies that a significant number of voluntary and community sector clients are both able and willing to communicate electronically.

In terms of more sophisticated methods of communication and the opportunity for group communication, it is encouraging to see that 5% of learners access their tutors using chat rooms and message boards.

Developing these more sophisticated methods of communication would help strengthen 'real' communities. Opportunities would arise to create virtual communities. These in turn would help learners contact each other more and share information.

3. Workforce development

The research suggests that many providers have annual performance reviews that reflect the strategic and business plans of their organisation. On the whole the procedures are formal and use well-documented processes and procedures. However, some organisations still only have adhoc discussions from which some staff development emerges.

There has been much investment to develop the ICT skills of staff and volunteers. The face-to-face interviews indicated that over 86% of organisations had staff / volunteer development programmes to raise ICT operating skills.

The telephone interviews showed only marginal differences in terms of access to development depending on whether or not a person was working full-time, part-time or as a volunteer.

However the face-to-face interviews with the early adopters showed only 36% of providers having an annual e-learning development plan and 72.7% having no programme to raise staff awareness of planned e-learning.

Further investigation of specific e-learning areas showed that only 27% of those interviewed⁵ had staff development plans to support the use of e-resources and only 9.1% support the use of e-support structures.

The latter is an extremely worrying figure. It could indicate that the sector

- 1. is not aware of the potential of e-learning for its clients**
- 2. does not understand that e-learning is able to provide 24/7 virtual support**
- 3. is reluctant or lacks the confidence to adopt electronic means of communication**

Although 80% of staff involved in e-learning delivery can access support for themselves, the data indicates that only 28% of this support utilises electronic means and that only 16% of staff were able to access e-mentors offering advice about e-learning implementation.

One of the case studies⁶ illustrates how one organisation addresses workforce development. The centre, a *learndirect* centre, encourages staff to use the centre's own resources. Staff are able to experience for themselves e-learning and in particular the benefits and ease of on-line support.

⁵ Face-to-face

⁶ Karmand Centre, Bradford

There is clearly much work to be done.

- 1. To raise the awareness of the potential of using e-learning within this sector.**
- 2. To increase confidence levels amongst people working in the sector to use e-learning resources and support systems.**

4. Strategic planning, leadership and management

4.1 Strategic Planning

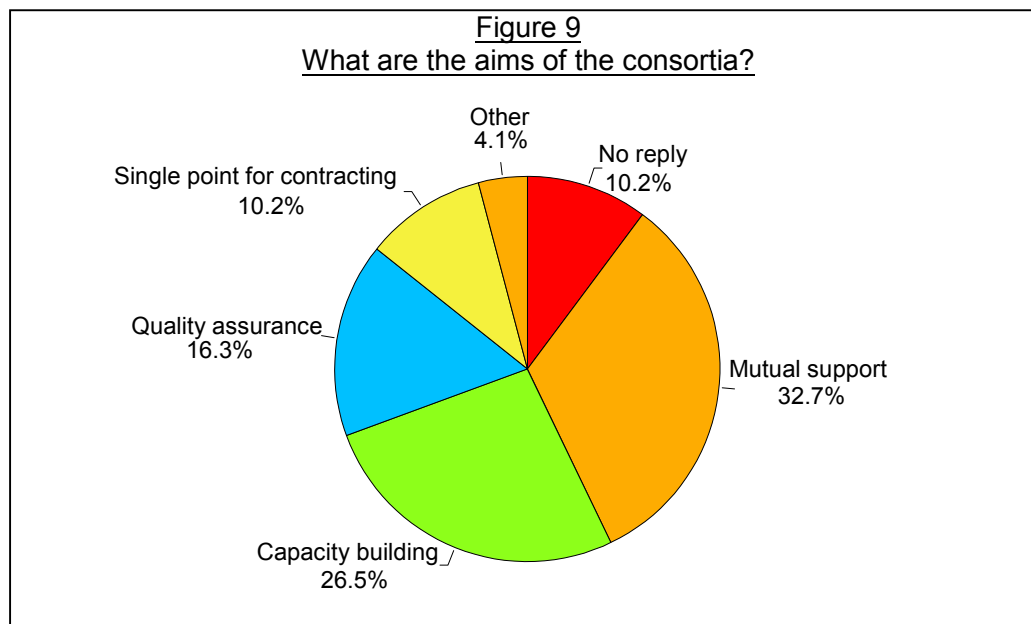
When asked about strategic planning, interviewees did not initially understand its meaning. Probing and rephrasing the question during interviews showed that over 80% of provider's in the sector have some sort of plan even though it is not often classified as a strategic plan. However, only 35%⁷ had incorporated e-learning.

This may be due to the fact that only 28% of respondents⁸ were able to confirm that their managers had undertaken continual professional development to help them understand the role of e-learning in voluntary and community sector provision.

4.2 Consortia working

76% of providers were able to identify consortia arrangements.

Researchers explored the aims and reasons for participating in consortia during face-to-face interviews. The results are given below.



The answers to this question varied from one sub-region to the next. This shows that the maturity of a sub-regional consortium reflects its ability to win contracts. Only 7.7% of respondents in West Yorkshire saw this as a reason to be in a e-learning consortium, in contrast to 20% in South Yorkshire. This

⁷ Of telephone interviewees

⁸ Of face-to-face interviewees

clearly has an impact on the capacity to win tenders and will feature even more under the new proposed LSC commissioning and procurement arrangements.

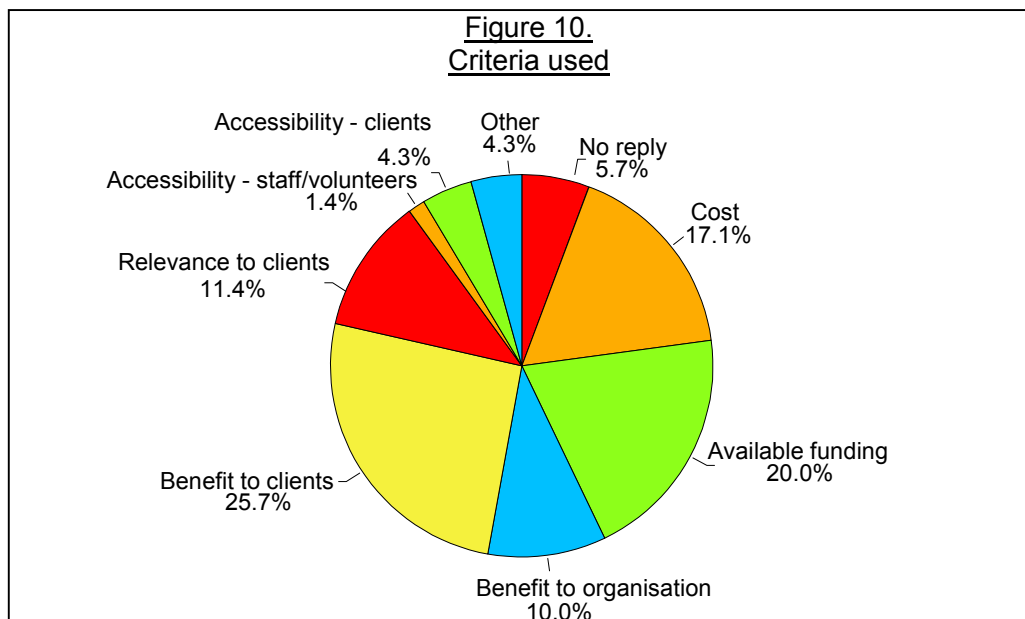
Sub-regional consortia are already sharing best practice across the region so this issue is being addressed at consortia level.

4.3. Decision-making processes

4.3.1 Cost/benefit Analyses

Many interviewees⁹ did not understand the concept of using cost/benefit analyses by managers to make decisions about the use of e-learning in their organisation's provision. However, after gentle probing 60% were able to identify that they did undertake such analyses.

The research also explored what criteria were used to assess the relevance of e-learning to current and future provision. The results are shown below.



Although funding issues account for 37% of the stated criteria, all the other issues were client focused. It is interesting to note that accessibility issues did not appear to be significant.

⁹ Face-to-face interviews

4.3.2 e-Learning Standards

It is a major concern that very few respondents are using e-learning standards or case studies of good practice to help them with their decision-making.

In the telephone survey only 13.3% of respondents were aware of any standards relating to e-learning. The face-to-face interviews, including many early adopters, indicated only a small rise to 24%.

Similarly, decisions about relevance and benefit to clients were not based on any case studies of good practice. Only 16.7% of the respondents from the telephone survey and 20% of the face-to-face interviewees indicated any awareness of such material.

It can be concluded that there is a need to raise the awareness of standards of good practice within the sector. This will help providers make more informed decisions.

5. Technical

5.1 *Fit for purpose hardware*

The research indicates that 96% of respondents use IT or e-learning equipment. Some organisations deliver learning through the use of interactive whiteboards, digital projectors and mobile phones. Most centres have a mixture of PCs and laptops.

In 25% of the organisations the computer to learner ratio is more than 1 to 5 and in 55% less than 1 to 5. The analysis also suggests that in the majority of centres there are never more than 2 learners to any one computer at a time and more commonly there is only one.

Although most of the off-site delivery is through laptop computers, some providers use PDAs and Tablet PCs.

The research suggests that providers have a wide range of other hardware which can be used for recording evidence of learning. However, this is only rarely used or even recognised as an opportunity for assessment / accreditation purposes and the creation of e-portfolios.

This hardware includes:

- Digital cameras – 74%
- Audio/digital voice recorders – 44%
- Digital video recorders – 52%
- MP3 Players – 22%
- Other equipment – 13%

It is recommended that when providers encourage staff / volunteers to use e-learning, the centre is able to provide with the necessary equipment to take home so that they can prepare resources and communicate with learners.

The research suggests that 56% of staff / volunteers have access to equipment that can be used for these purposes. There are examples of good management practices where centres operate a booking system for staff borrowing equipment.

See Vol/Com, Hull's Case Study and the common treasury approach.

5.2 *Fit for purpose software*

Respondents were asked to reflect on how they select the software they use.

The results are shown below.

Does the software you use reflect the needs of your clients in terms of:	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	No reply %
its content	61	9	17	13
availability in range of languages required	26	26	22	26
level of language used and its appropriateness	35	13	26	26

A few organisations were able to confirm that they had tested the software for literacy levels however, over 50% were unable to confirm whether the software had been tested or not and 13% responded negatively.

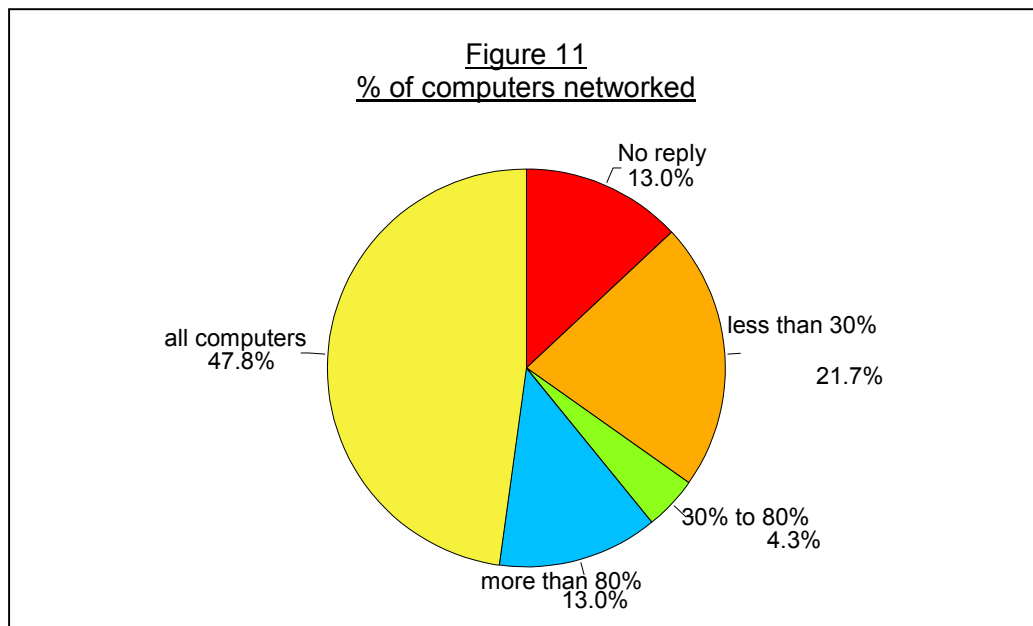
In addition, only 44% were able to confirm that software conformed to accessibility standards.

These are clearly areas that need revisiting and a Regional Community Grid for e-learning would provide more support in this area, alongside national support through NIACE.

5.3 Communication channels

It was surprising that 22% of organisations still don't have internet access for all learners.

However, the majority of centres now operate with networked computers aiding the saving of learners' work, access to common VLEs and software.



However, few organisations provided remote access for either "staff" or learners.

Organisation's remote access facilities				
	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	No reply %
For "staff"	22	57	9	13
For learners	9	65	4	22

There were some respondents to this technical survey who did not know what this meant. Others knew they had the capacity but had yet to implement the facility. Issues of security were also raised.

The recommendations at the end of this document attempt to suggest ways in which both awareness – raising of the potential for remote access and also technical implementation support might be addressed.

Bandwidth in organisation's premises was not a problem but very little information was forthcoming about off-site bandwidth. However, some respondents clearly indicated that broadband was not available at all venues.

For example, in Hull, there are varying facilities between hostels and learners who move between them. Thus continuity of e-learning can be disrupted for those who have already suffered disruption in their lives.

5.4 Security of data

The majority of organisations (83%) protect data by the use of firewalls, anti-virus software etc and also through the use of user names and passwords (74%). There was a mixture of use of commercial and freeware.

Only 48% of organisations backed up data on a daily basis, stored backups off-site and tested the backup media to ensure that it would work on other hardware in case of theft or other damage within a centre.

This is a major cause for concern. Where learners' work and company resources are being stored electronically, this issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

5.5 Technical Support

Some form of support was available in 61% of provider premises, leaving a significant percentage without. There was even less support available where delivery took place in other premises (48%).

Even where this support existed in less than half of the organisations was it provided by staff with appropriate technical qualifications.

If e-learning is to be implemented by voluntary and community sector providers then this issue needs to be addressed and the recommendations included in this report seek to address this issue.

6. Recommendations for action.

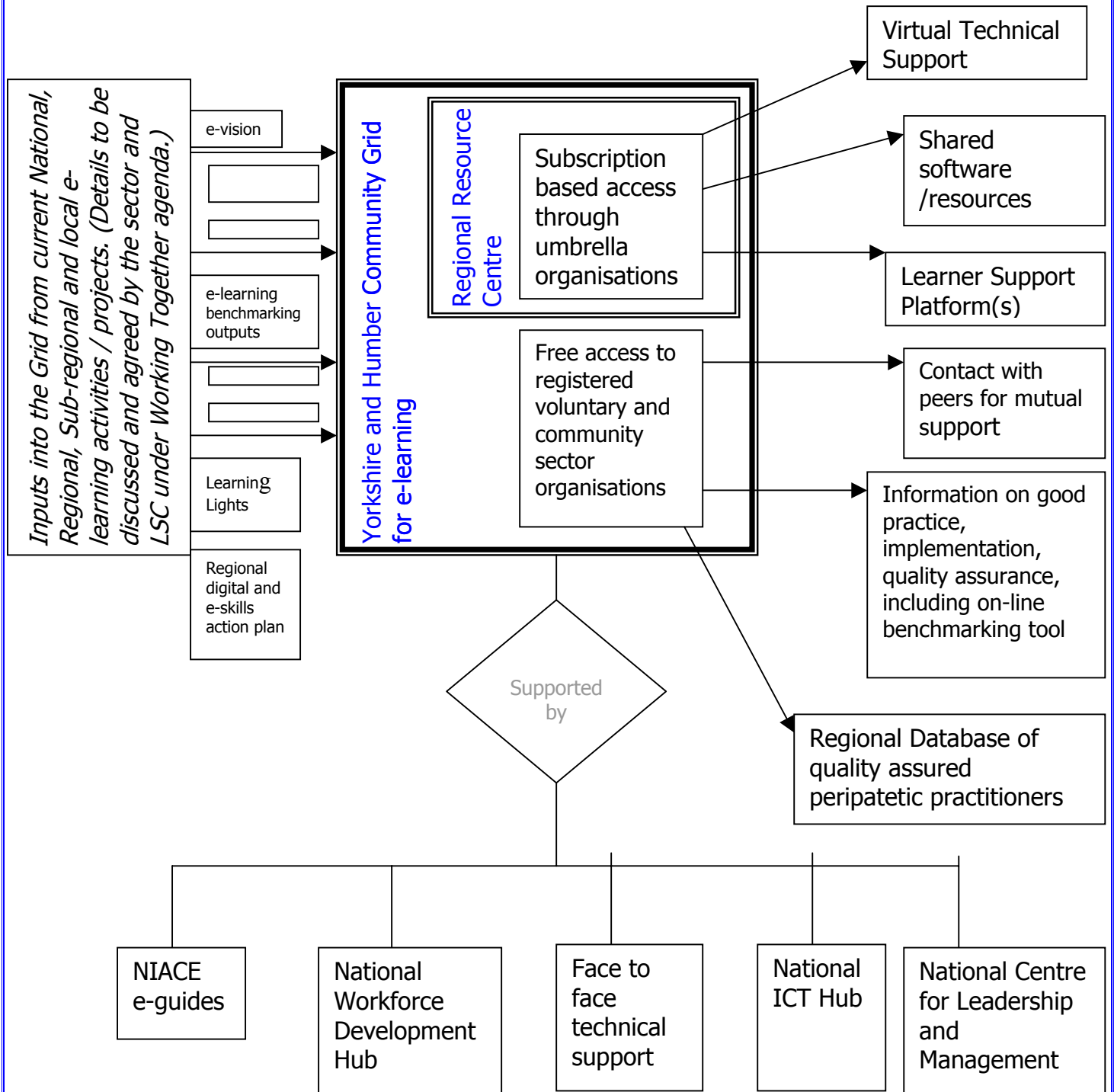
Area	Issue	Recommendation
Strategic and management	Lack of clarity regarding the definition of what e-learning consists of	1. Identify a definition for e-learning within the VCS that all may agree on
Strategic and management	Lack of awareness of potential of e-learning to the sector.	2. Case Study Production with examples from outside the region as well as those from within it. 3. Awareness raising with trustees within region. 4. Contact the Centre for Excellence in Leadership regarding sponsored programmes for Managers of centres
Strategic and management	Lack of awareness of e-learning quality assurance issues.	1. Awareness raising with centre managers within region 2. Contact the Centre for Excellence in Leadership regarding sponsored programmes for Managers of centres
Strategic and management	Financial – <i>some general issues here but obvious impact on any developments or indeed survival</i> 1. Lack of consistency and long-term funding for the sector 2. Few organisations had access to mainstream funding 3. Perception of inequalities in franchising arrangements 4. Removal of learndirect contracts from some community providers due to size and ability to win tender.	Financial 1. Widespread awareness raising of new commissioning and procurement arrangements from 2007/08 and implications for sector in terms of e-learning 2. Preparation for sector to be able to maximise response across the region, including very specific skill enhancement in terms of preparation of bid/ tender documentation 3. Enhancement (or establishment) of working relationship between Regional AOC and YHRF and individual sub-regional consortia. Potential use of independent, impartial auditors to review franchising arrangements. 4. a) Establishment of impact of new learndirect contracting relationship on voluntary and community deliverers across the region and possible remedial action. YHRF + Ufl/learndirect regional office b) Centres work with new contract holders once information goes public in July 2006 to build outreach linkages. Co-ordination by sub-regional consortia? 5. Seek to create more self-sustainability culture within

	<p>5. Future likelihood of decline in availability of ESF funding across region</p> <p>6. Consortia stronger in some sub-regions than others.</p>	<p>providers, using examples of good practice of social enterprises within the region and the provision of support.</p> <p>6. Peer group support between sub-regional consortia to share best elearning practice to continue and address potential future issues where regional bids could be the norm.</p>
Strategic and Management	Disruption of learning cycle of learners due to non-availability / lack of continuity of equipment.	1. Awareness-raising of successful organisational methodologies for maximising effective use of shared equipment.
Provision of e-learning opportunities	Lack of appropriate and readily accessible Technical support	<p>1. Establishment of Regional Resource centre to include a focus on technical support, including high level support for sophisticated on-line support required by some centres and more basic networking required by others. (Could this be funded under Change-Up?)</p> <p>2. Opportunity for income generation here (see sustainability below.)</p>
Provision of e-learning opportunities	Perception of few resources available appropriate to current sectoral requirements – SfL and possibly ECDL being the exceptions.	<p>1. Awareness-raising of resources currently available.</p> <p>2. Regional Resource Centre to support current common curriculum areas through the acquisition / development of quality software with the appropriate literacy levels and with the appropriate language support.</p> <p>3. Regional Resource Centre to acquire / develop software to enable centres to expand their current delivery into new areas and / or to higher levels.</p> <p>4. Potential source of revenue for sector depending on funding source for 1&2</p> <p>5. Develop a common platform to deliver e-learning which could become a shared resource for those organisations who lack them.</p>
Provision of e-learning opportunities	Very little use of “e” facilities for support of learners.	<p>1. Awareness raising of potential of mobile and other technologies in virtually supporting learners</p> <p>2. Yorkshire and the Humber Community Grid for e-learning¹⁰ to be established incorporating information, support and resources</p>

¹⁰ See Page for Schematic of proposed Grid

		<p>indicated above</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Regional VLE – consult with WEA and other organisations (e-vision eWYSE, northyorkslearning) for example) in order to obtain options. 4. Use of NIACE e guides to support individual eligible organisations within the region. 5. Develop project that supports organisations in modifying existing learning into e-learning
Provision of e-learning opportunities	Personnel with skills in e-learning are difficult to retain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the feasibility of building on the sustainability of learning communities project in North Yorkshire by the setting up a Regional Database to facilitate the supply and secondment of Quality–assured practitioners to support e-learning delivery in the sector. The database to be accessible through the Y&H Community Grid for e-learning.
Sustainability	Lack of “business” culture in order to sustain essential community learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of support for conversion of more community providers into social enterprises 2. Support for creation of organisation business plans including a sustainability dimension 3. Marketing support for promotion of commercial e-learning provision

Overview of proposed Yorkshire and Humber Community Grid for e-Learning.



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A1 Community learning centre
Acorn Centre
Bradford Community Broadcasting
Bridlington Comm. Centre
CERT
Cosby Community Centre
CRIC
Disabled People's Electronic Village
Dyslexia Institute
Grassington Learning Centre
Halifax Opportunities Trust
Harrogate CVS
Hull Hostel Forum
Karmand Community Centre Bradford
Keighley and District Ass. For the blind
Matrec
RATS
Riccall Regen 2000
SPATC
United Village Partnership
VOLCOM
WAM project
WEA
Westwood Training
YORWORK

Annex 1. Telephone Interview

Q2.1 How can learners access their learning?

2

- From providers premises.....
- From Home
- From the workplace
- From a community centre
- Other Go to Q2.13

Q2.1 Please give further details

3

Q2.1 Do you offer online testing for learners?

4

- Yes
- No

Q2.1 Do you offer e-portfolios to your learners?

5

- Yes
- No

Q2.1 Further details

6

Q2.1 Do you have links with other voluntary organisations?

7

- Yes
- No

Q2.1 Further details

8

Q2.1 Do you develop your own learning resources?

9

- Yes
- No

Q2.2 Do you purchase your own learning resources?

0

- Yes
- No

Q2.2 Do you share your resources with other organisations?

1

- Yes
- No

Q2.2 Further details

2

Q2.2 Do you use regional or national resources to meet learners needs?

3

- Yes
- No

Q2.2 Further details

4

Q2.2 Have you resources changed recently?

5

- Yes Go to Q2.26
- No Go to Q2.27

Q2.2 Why was this so?

6

Q2.2 Do you have a website?

7

- Yes
- No

Q2.2 Is there anyway of learners taking an assessment to ensure they are enrolling on the right course?

8

- Yes
- No

Q2.2 Can learners enrol online?

9

- Yes
- No

Q2.3 How can learners contact their tutor?

0

Q2.3 Can they contact other learners?

1

- Yes
- No

**Q2.3 Can they partake in tutor led discussions
2 online with other learners?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.3 Can learners monitor their progress online?
3**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.3 Do learners get regular feedback online?
4**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.3 Can learners give feedback to tutors online?
5**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.3 What happens at the end of the learning
6 programme?**

**Q2.3 Is there any online IAG?
7**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.3 Are weblogs used in the learning process?
8**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.3 Further details
9**

**Q2.4 Do staff receive training in ICT to develop
0 their skills?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.4 Further Details
1**

**Q2.4 Do you make staff aware of ways e-learning
2 can be used to learning within your
organisation?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.4 Further Details
3**

**Q2.4 Do you have a plan to develop e-learning
4 within the organisation?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.4 Further Details
5**

**Q2.4 Do you staff do any CPD with e-learning
6 elements?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.4 Further Details
7**

**Q2.4 Is CPD with e-learning elements available to
8 fulltime staff?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.4 Is CPD with e-learning elements available to
9 part time staff?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.5 Is CPD with e-learning elements available to
0 volunteers?**

Yes.....
No.....

**Q2.5 How do staff share their best practice?
1**

Face to face meetings.....
Email.....
Intranet.....
Other.....

**Q2.5 Further Details
2**

Q2.5 Can all levels of staff involved in training delivery access support?

- 3 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.5 Do you change the way you do things when you see others doing it better in relation to training and provision?

- 4 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.5 Further Details

5

Q2.5 Do you have any members of staff who are able to offer assistance to staff regarding the implementation of e-learning?

- 6 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.5 Further Details

7

Q2.5 Do you collaborate with and support other VCS providers in relation to learning?

- 8 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.5 Further Details

9

Q2.6 Are you aware of any regional or sub-regional information/support organisations

- 0 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.6 Further Details

1

Q2.6 Do you use any of these organisations?

- 2 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.6 Further Details

3

Q2.6 Have you ever used learndirect in your organisation?

- 4 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.6 Further details

5

Q2.6 Does your organisation have a strategic plan?

- 6 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.6 Does this incorporate e-learning?

- 7 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.6 Do you have any written agreements to work with other VCS providers

- 8 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.6 Further Details

9

Q2.7 Do you participate in any joint strategic groups?

- 0 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.7 Further Details

1

Q2.7 Are you aware of any local or sub-regional consortia?

- 2 Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.7 Are you an active member?

3

Yes.....

No.....

Q2.7 Further Details

4

Q2.7 Do senior management undertake any CPD to help how e-learning could be used in your organisation?

5

yes.....

No.....

Q2.7 Further Details

6

Q2.7 Do senior management share best practice

7

Yes.....

No.....

Q2.7 How do they do this?

8

Q2.7 How do you decide whether e-learning provision should be undertaken in the organisation?

9

Q2.8 Do you know of any case studies that highlight good practice in relation to e-learning?

0

Yes.....

No.....

Q2.8 Further Details

1

Q2.8 Are you aware of any regional, national or international standards with regards to e-learning?

2

yes..... Go to Q2.83

no.....

Q2.8 How did you hear about this information?

3

.....

Q2.8 Further details

4

Annex 2. Face to Face Interview

Voluntary and Community Benchmarking Questionnaire

1. General Information

Q1.1 Organisation ID number

Organisation ID number _____

Q1.8 Are any of these social enterprises?

Yes

No

Q1.2 Subregion

Humberside

North Yorkshire

South Yorkshire

West Yorkshire

Q1.3 What type of organisation are you?

Voluntary

Community

Registered Charity

Co-operative

Private limited company

Public limited company

Q1.4 How many people do you employ?

Full time _____

Part time _____

Volunteers _____

Q1.5 What are your main kinds of training provision?

Basic skills

ICT

Personal and Skill development

Digital media

Capacity building

Fundraising

Statutory (employment law/DDA/H&S)

Other

Q1.6 If other, please specify

Q1.7 Do you provide any training to small and micro firms?

Yes Go to Q1.8

No Go to Q2.1

3. Flexibility of delivery

Q3.1 Do you offer a range of delivery options including e-learning or blended learning in line with learner requests?

- Yes Go to Q3.2a
No Go to Q3.3

Q3.2 Please provide details

Q3.3 Can learners access e-resources from;

- the workplace?*
vol/com providers premises
Home or other community centres?

Q3.4 Are a range of e-assessment opportunities available to learners?

- Yes Go to Q3.5a
No Go to Q3.6

Q3.5 Please provide detail

Q3.6 Are the use of electronic portfolios or their equivalent available to learners?

- Yes
No

Q3.7 Please provide details

Demand-led

Q4.1 Do you consult with learners using community venues on a regular basis?

- Yes Go to Q4.2
No Go to Q4.3

Q4.2 Please provide details

Q4.3 Do you consult regularly with other organisations?

- Yes Go to Q4.4
No Go to Q4.5

Q4.4 Please provide details

Q4.5 Do you have any arrangements to share e-learning resources to meet learners needs?

- Yes Go to Q4.6
No Go to Q4.7

Q4.6 Please provide details

Q4.7 In terms of e-resources, how do you meet the specific demands of your learners/communities?

- Accessing nation/regional resources* Go to Q4.8
Purchasing your own resources Go to Q4.8
Developing your own resources Go to 4.8

Q4.8 Please provide details

Q4.9 Can you show that your provision of e-learning resources change in reponse to demand?

- Yes Go to Q4.10a
No Go to Q5.1

Q4.1 Please provide details

0

Adequate support pre, during and post-learning

Q5.1 Do you have a website providing information for prospective learners?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q5.6 Are learners able to monitor their progress online?

- Yes..... Go to Q5.7a
- No..... Go to Q5.8

Q5.2 Are initial electronic assessments available to learners to make sure programmes fit with their own and their employers' needs?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q5.7 Please provide details

Q5.3 Can learners enrol online?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q5.8 Is regular online feedback available from tutors for each learner?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q5.4 Are learners able to access their tutors by

- email*.....
- telephone*.....
- mobile phone*.....
- Chat room*.....
- Message boards*.....
- online web chat*.....
- PDA*.....

Q5.9 Is regular online feedback for tutors received from learners?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q5.5 Is face to face support also available and accessible to learners using e-learning?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q5.1 Does electronic IAG take place after programme completion?

- 0
- Yes..... Go to Q5.11a
 - No..... Go to Q5.12

Q5.1 Please provide details

1

6. Progression

Q6.1 Are you aware of progression opportunities using elearning and blended learning solutions?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q6.3 Please provide details

Q6.2 Are clear e-learning progression pathways indicated to your learners?

- Yes..... Go to Q6.3
- No..... Go to Q6.4

Q6.4 Are you aware of the potential use of personal learning spaces or electronic portfolios for community learners?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Workforce support in voluntary and community sector

7. Access to quality training

Q7.1 Are annual performance reviews used that reflect the strategic and business plans of the organisation?

- Yes..... Go to Q7.2a
- No..... Go to Q8.1

Q7.2 Please provide details

Q7.3 Do you have an annual e-learning development programme for the organisation?

- Yes..... Go to Q7.4a
- No..... Go to Q7.1

Q7.4 Please provide details

Q7.5 Do you have any staff development programmes to raise ICT operating skills?

- Yes..... Go to Q7.6
- No..... Go to Q7.7

Q7.6 Please provide details

Q7.7 Is there a programme to raise staff awareness of the potential of e-learning?

- Yes..... Go to Q7.8a
- No..... Go to Q7.9

Q7.8 Please provide details

Q7.9 Is there a programme to raise staff awareness of planned e-learning

- Yes..... Go to Q7.10a
- No..... Go to Q7.11

Q7.1 Please provide details

0

Q7.1 Is there a staff development programme to support the use of e-resources?

- Yes..... Go to Q7.12
- No..... Go to Q7.13

Q7.1 Please provide details

2

Q7.1 Are there any staff development programmes to support the use of e-support structures?

- Yes..... Go to Q7.14a
- No..... Go to Q7.3

Q7.1 Please provide details

4

8. Access to Continuing Professional Development

Q8.1 Is CPD with e-learning elements made available to all full-time members of staff in the organisation?

- Yes..... Go to Q8.2a
- No..... Go to Q8.3

Q8.2 Please provide details

Q8.3 Is CPD with e-learning elements made available to all part-time members of staff in the organisation?

- Yes..... Go to Q8.4a
- No..... Go to Q8.5

Q8.4 Please provide details

Q8.5 Is CPD with e-learning elements made available to all volunteers in the organisation?

- Yes..... Go to Q8.6a
- No..... Go to Q8.7

Q8.6 Please provide details

9. On going-support

Q9.1 Can all staff involved in e-learning delivery access support for themselves?

Yes..... Go to Q9.2
No..... Go to Q9.3

Q9.2 Please provide details

Q9.3 Does this support use different electronic communication methods to share best practice and modify own work practice?

Yes..... Go to Q9.4a
No..... Go to Q9.5

Q9.4 Please provide details

Q9.5 Are peer group e-mentors used to offer advice about e-learning implementation?

Yes.....
No.....

Q9.6 Are collaborative e-learning support networks in place with other VCS providers and other relevant organisations?

Yes..... Go to Q9.7a
No..... Go to Q10.1

Q9.7 Please provide details

10. Access to appropriate resources

Q10. Are you aware of the Regional Support 1 Centre for Yorkshire and The Humber?

Yes.....
No.....

Q10. Are you aware of national e-resources that 2 are available? [National Learning Network,....]

Yes.....
No.....

Q10. Are you aware of sub-regional e-learning 3 support centres in consortia that are available?

Yes.....
No.....

Q10. Have you ever accessed any sub-regional e- 4 resources? [SWYSE, eSY-Info]?

Yes.....
No.....

Q10. Has your organisation ever used learndirect 5 with your clients?

Yes.....
No.....

Strategic planning and leadership

Q11. Have you created strategic plans for the 1 organisation?

Yes.....
No.....
Don't know.....

Q11. Have senior management incorporated e- 2 learning or blended learning into strategic plans?

Yes.....
No.....
Don't know.....

Q11. Please provide details

3

Collaborative working

Q12. Do you have any written commitments to work with other VCS organisations to provide e-learning?

1

- Yes.....
- No.....

- Single point for contracting.....
- Other..... Go to Q12.5

Q12. Please provide details

5

Q12. Does your organisation participate in joint strategic groups that discuss e-learning?

2

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q12. Does your organisation participate in consortia for e-learning?

3

- Yes.....
- No..... Go to Q12.6

Q12. Are you aware of local and sub-regional e-learning consortia?

6

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q12. What are the aims of the consortia

4

- Mutual support
- Capacity building...
- Quality assurance .

Q12. Is the organisation an active participant in local or sub-regional consortia?

7

- Yes.....
- No.....

Continuing professional development

Q13. Have any [senior] managers undertaken CPD to understand the role of e-learning in VCS provision?

1

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q13. How do [senior] management share best practice in terms of e-learning?

2

- Face to face meetings.....
- Email.....
- Intranet.....

Use of business tools in e-learning decision-making

Q14. Are quantitative and qualitative cost/benefit analyses undertaken regarding the use of e-learning in VCS provision?

1

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q14. Please provide further details

3

Q14. What criteria do you use to assess the relevance of e-learning to current and future provision?

2

- Cost.....
- Available funding...
- Benefit to organisation.....
- Benefit to clients....
- Relevance to clients.....
- Accessibility - staff/volunteers.....
- Accessibility - clients.....
- Other..... Go to Q14.3

Awareness of quality standards associated with e-learning

Q15. Are you aware of international, national and regional standards in regard to e-learning?

- 1
Yes..... Go to Q15.3
No..... Go to Q15.2

Q15. How did you get this information?

3

Q15. Are you aware of any case studies of good practice in relation to e-learning?

- 2
Yes..... Go to Q15.4
No.....

Q15. Please provide further details

4

Annex 3. Technical Interview

Vol/com Technical Survey

1. Fit for purpose hardware

Q1.1 Do you use any IT or other e-learning equipment?
[Personal computers, laptops, PDAs, video mobiles etc]

- Yes.....
- No.....
- Don't know.....

Q1.2 Further information

Q1.3 What is your computer to learner ratio?

- >1:5.....
- About 1:5.....
- <1:5.....
- Don't know.....

Q1.4 Further information

Q1.5 Do you have any of the following available for use in community venues?

- Laptop computers?.....
- Personal digital assistants [PDAs]?.....
- Tablet PCs available for remote use?.....

Q1.6 Further information

Q1.7 Is there any other hardware available for recording the evidence of learning?

- Digital video cameras.....
- Audio/digital voice recorders.....
- MP3 players or equivalent.....
- Digital cameras.....
- Any other equipment.....

Q1.8 Further information

Q1.9 Any computer or computer-related equipment that staff may use:
[Personal computers, laptops, PDAs, digital recorders, digital cameras, digital video etc - at home, for example, to prepare resources or support learners]

- on the premises?.....
- away from the premises?.....
- Any other equipment.....

Q1.1 Further Information

0

2. Fit for Purpose Software

Q2.1 Are you aware that there are quality issues surrounding e-learning software?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q2.2 Further Information

Q2.3 Does the software you access reflect your customer base in terms of:

	Yes	No	Don't know
the software's content?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
different languages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
different language levels and its appropriateness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2.4 Further Information

Q2.5 Does any appropriate software used conform to accessibility standards?

Yes.....

No.....

Don't know.....

Q2.6 Further information

3 Adequate communication channels operational for individual learning and support

Q3.1 Do you have internet access for all learners?

Yes.....

No.....

Q3.2 Further information

Q3.3 About your computers on Voluntary and Community premises, how many are networked:

less than 30% of your computers?.....

30% to 80% of your computers?.....

more than 80% of your computers?.....

all computers?.....

Q3.4 Any other equipment?

Q3.5 Is there a remote access facility available:

	Yes	No	Don't know
for staff into Voluntary and Community premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
for learners into Voluntary and Community premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3.6 Further Information

Q3.7 Is there a range of 0.5 MB minimum bandwidth available:

	Yes	No	Don't know
At your premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
at other training locations off the premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3.8 Further Information

4. Security of data

Q4.1 Is the data in your organisation protected - by the use of firewalls, anti-virus software etc?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q4.2 Further information

Q4.3 Are there different levels of access to your [networked] system through the use of passwords and other protective devices?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q4.4 Further Information

Q4.5 Does data backup happen every day?

- Yes
 No

Don't know

Q4.6 Further Information

Q4.7 Are the backup tapes for most recent data backups stored offsite?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q4.8 Further information

Q4.9 Are the data backups tested for viability at appropriate intervals?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

5. Technical Support

Q5.1 Is there technical support:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Available and accessible at Voluntary and Community provider premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Available and accessible away from Voluntary and Community provider premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
That is shared between different Voluntary and Community providers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5.2 Further Information

Q5.3 Is the technical support, that is available and accessible, given by staff that hold appropriate technical qualifications?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q5.4 Further Information
