



A Review of E-learning Support Services for Post-16 Learning Providers in England

Final Report

Summary

This report reviews the work of various bodies that are responsible for providing support services for e-learning and ICT-assisted teaching and training to post-16 learning providers. It is based on consultations with and surveys of post-16 learning providers. It calls for a more integrated, co-ordinated approach that will require consolidation and reductions in existing sources of initiatives and advice. It also finds that regional and local services are particularly valuable to providers.

The report, and the research upon which it is based, was undertaken by Chris Bell, Anita Gulati and Carolyn Hooker on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council and Department for Education and Skills

May 2006

Acknowledgements

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The recommendations contained in this report are the opinions of the authors, derived from our consultations, desk research and survey. They do not necessarily represent the views of the LSC or DfES.

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1: Introduction, Headline Messages and Recommendations

Introduction

- 1 This review was commissioned jointly by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in autumn 2005. Its aims were to:
 - map post-16 e-learning support services used by post-16 learning providers (excluding schools)
 - determine the appropriateness of existing support services, as perceived by providers and other stakeholders
 - identify what e-learning support services are wanted and needed by the post-16 sector
 - recommend how e-learning support services can be better integrated to deliver a cost-effective service to the wide range of post-16 learning providers
 - examine likely developments and changes resulting from the establishment of the Quality Improvement Agency and Lifelong Learning UK from March 2006 and their implications on e-learning support services.
- 2 This report addresses these aims. It combines the results of consultations with learning providers, support agencies and other stakeholders, and the results of a web-based survey. Points made are illustrated with a sample of representative quotations.

Headline messages

- 3 Priority requirements identified by the sector were:
 - development for staff and management; organisational development; availability of mentors and champions to work both within and across organisations
 - focus on learning and pedagogy; curriculum development; access to materials; identification of good practice and expertise; embedding e-learning in the curriculum
 - mechanisms to share and transfer good practice and network with other people and organisations
 - technical support and advice that is fit for purpose, accessible and timely
 - a single port of call for advice and intelligence, including a single portal to information, support, materials and good practice
 - bank of accessible, adaptable, high-quality learning materials
 - development of strategy (national, regional, local, organisational)
 - appropriate leadership and management that is facilitative, forward-thinking and responsive to change.

- 4 There is an emphasis on the need for access to local and regional provision for many of the above services.
- 5 The current plethora of overlapping support services is confusing and unlikely to be cost-effective. There needs to be an integrated, co-ordinated approach, that will require consolidation and reduction in existing sources of initiatives and advice. Publicly funded services should be provided by a limited number of organisations, each with a clear remit, with effective co-ordination between organisations.
- 6 Awareness among providers of support bodies is low, with some 50 per cent of respondents indicating a lack of awareness.
- 7 Embedding a culture of e-learning in learning and teaching (that is, e-maturity) is a complex process, which needs appropriate strategy, leadership and “joined-up-ness” in addition to skill development and capacity-building. The wide range of agencies contributing to this may have made progress more complex than necessary.
- 8 There is huge technological change on the horizon. What will be the effects of the more recent new technologies (for example, open-source technology) and what learning opportunities will be afforded by these? All stakeholders need to be kept abreast of changes, implications, opportunities and development needs, and support services need to be geared up for this.
- 9 Most of the services available provide valued support to those who access them. Regional support centres (RSCs) provide a particularly valued portfolio of services, with their regional flavour being favoured by many.
- 10 There is a need for parity of services across the learning and skills sectors. This will mean increasing the remit (and likely the funding) of current support bodies to enable them to be fully inclusive.

Recommendations

- 11 Create coherence of support services within a strategic framework. In other words, look at the delivery of support services within the four elements of strategy, content, implementation and infrastructure, and agree which body or organisation is best placed to lead and co-ordinate in each area and which are best placed to contribute. These ideas are further explored in Section 5.
- 12 Focus on developing the roles and remits of support services for which ICT and e-learning are a core business. In particular, consider the role of RSCs as key providers of regional support (see Section 5 and Annex E). Foster leadership, coherence and communication; minimise unnecessary overlaps in remit; consider how to reduce future mission drift; consider how the remit of each service contributes to the core themes of personalised content, knowledge architecture and strategic technologies, and therefore contributes to e-maturity.
- 13 Consider how closer strategic and operational alliance across organisations providing support services can be achieved.
- 14 Address the support gap for work-based learning (WBL) providers, for example by expanding the role of RSCs along the lines of that developed for adult and community learning (ACL) and personal and community development learning (PCDL).
- 15 Focus on the further development of a single portal (currently called Learning and Skills Web, at www.aclearn.net/display.cfm?resID=14054) to direct providers to support services.
- 16 Ensure an early decision is made regarding the future funding of RSCs to increase stability within the network and secure clarity for the learning and skills sector.

2: Research Methods and Responses

- 17 The findings in this report are based on a combination of:
- desk research for information about key issues in providing support for the development and embedding of e-learning, and about agencies and their roles
 - in-depth interviews with a sample of providers across sectors and locations
 - a comprehensive, national web-based survey for providers to which we received just under 1,000 responses.
- 18 A more detailed outline of the research methods is provided at Annex A. The questions used in the web-based survey are at Annex B.
- 19 It was notable that responses to our enquiry were both constructive and enthusiastic, reflecting both passion and concern for the issue of support services for the development of e-learning among providers. A breakdown of the survey response profile is at Annex C.
- 20 It is not possible to ascertain the overall response rate to the survey because the total sample of providers invited to participate was not known. The reason for this is that the survey was distributed with the help of a number of agencies using their own databases, thus ensuring confidentiality was maintained. We estimate that the link to the survey was emailed to some 5,000 contacts in provider organisations. (There are approximately 400 FE, 180 ACL or PCDL and 800 WBL providers in England).
- 21 Although a response of just under 1,000 ensured a healthy sample from which to analyse data, not all respondents completed the questionnaire fully and responses to some questions were low. The survey included a number of open-ended questions. These have been coded to facilitate the analyses of responses.

3: Map of Current Provision

22 Table 1 provides a list of agencies funded primarily by the public sector, along with a summary of key services provided as specified via their websites, target client group and website address. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, and there are no doubt support services for e-learning that do not appear here. It does, however, highlight the number of agencies involved in the development or direct delivery of support services for learning providers. Most of these agencies are operating primarily at national level. Some services integrate support for e-learning within a particular area of expertise, such as leadership. Others are predominately focused on supporting the development of e-learning and target a particular provider sector, such as ACL or PCDL. Specific support for WBL providers is notably lacking. More comprehensive details of agencies, adapted from their current websites, are provided in Annex D.

Table 1: Public sector agencies and key services provided.

Agency	Remit	Main clients	Website
Association of Learning Technology (ALT)	Membership association focusing on use of learning technology	Open	www.alt.ac.uk
British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta)	Strategic development and communication of DfES e-strategy	Schools Learning and skills sector	www.becta.org.uk
Centre of Excellence in Leadership (CEL)	Foster and support leadership and transformation	Learning and skills sector	www.centreforexcellence.org.uk
Council for Learning Resources in Colleges (CoLRiC)	Membership association for college resource centres	Further education providers (mainly learning resource centres)	www.colric.org.uk
Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)	Support further and higher education providers by offering strategic guidance, advice, opportunities and services to use ICT to support teaching, learning, research and administration	Higher education (HE) and further education (FE) providers	www.jisc.ac.uk
learndirect/Ufi	Provides post-16 learning opportunities through new technologies and operates a network of delivery centres	Post-16 learners	www.learndirect.co.uk

Agency	Remit	Main clients	Website
Learning and Skills Network (LSN)	The LSN succeeded the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) in April 2006, inheriting LSDA's research, training and consultancy programmes	Learning and skills sector	www.lsneducation.org.uk
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)	Non-governmental organisation promoting the study and advancement of adult continuing education	Adult continuing education	www.niace.org.uk
AoC Nilta	Membership organisation that aims to facilitate participation of staff in lifelong learning in the use of ILT	Staff working in lifelong learning sector	www.aoc.co.uk/aoc/aocnilta
National Learning Network (NLN)	National partnership supported by Becta, DfES, JISC, LSC, LSN, NIACE, AoC Nilta, UKERNA) to increase uptake of ILT (work now completed and resources transferred to Becta)	Learning and skills sector	www.nln.ac.uk
Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA)	Came into operation in April 2006 to create a strategic focus on quality improvement	Learning and skills sector	www.qia.org.uk
UK Education and Research Networking Association (UKERNA)	Government-funded to manage operation and development of JANET on behalf of JISC	HE, FE and ACL or PCDL Research community	www.ja.net/about/ukerna/ukerna.html
Regional support centres (RSCs)	Advise providers in use of ICT and development of e-learning capacity; work in partnership with regional organisations	FE and ACL providers	www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=rsc
DfES Standards Unit	Accelerate the transformation of teaching, learning and workforce development and leadership to improve quality	Learning and skills sector	www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/

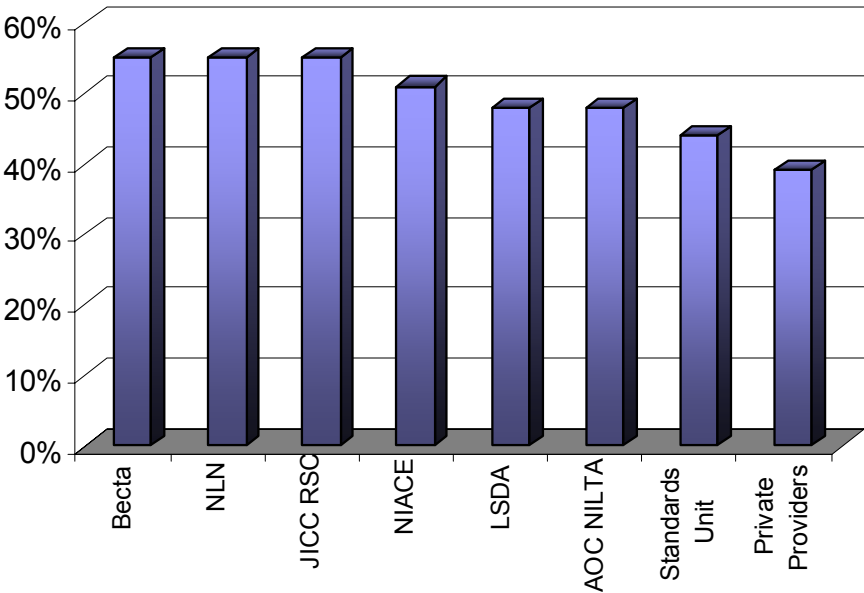
4: Findings from Survey and Consultations

- 23 The majority of respondents to the survey came from further education (FE) (67 per cent), just over a quarter came from adult and community learning (ACL) (26 per cent) and 6 per cent came from work-based learning (WBL).
- 24 Just over half (55 per cent) of those who responded to the question on the size of their provision had between 1,000 and 5,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) learners. A small number (6 per cent) were large providers with more than 10,000 FTEs, while 14 per cent were mid-range to large (with between 5,000 and 10,000 FTEs). However, the number of non-respondents to this question was high and this profile should therefore be treated with caution.
- 25 A detailed breakdown of the response profile is provided in Annex C.

Awareness of support agencies

- 26 Awareness among providers of the different agencies varied, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1: Awareness of agencies in surveyed respondents.



- 27 Note that the survey asked respondents about JISC RSC services rather than other areas of JISC services. We found in our qualitative work that providers did not tend to distinguish across JISC services, but rather tended to put everything under the umbrella of RSC as their primary point of contact and support.
- 28 Of those who responded, just over half were aware of Becta, FERL, NLN, RSCs, JISC and NIACE. Awareness levels were slightly lower at just under half for the LSDA, AoC Nilta, and the DfES Standards Unit (see Annex D for descriptions of these various bodies), and lower still for private providers. It is perhaps cause for concern that conversely, just under half of all respondents were not aware of these agencies.
- 29 There were few significant differences in awareness of agencies on the basis of sector, role (for example, manager versus non-manager) or geographical location of the responding organisation (see Annex C for further details). It should be borne in mind that responses from WBL providers in the survey were low, despite a follow-up request from the Association of Learning Providers. Findings from our consultations showed that smaller WBL providers were generally less aware of support services than their larger counterparts, and overall WBL providers were aware of a smaller number of agencies than providers in other sectors.
- 30 In discussions with providers, and from written responses to the survey, many commented on the plethora of agencies, describing the current situation as confusing, time-consuming and not cost-effective in working out where to go for help. The comments below highlight provider views on this.

There are too many agencies, it's confusing about who does what.

There are so many agencies and crossover of roles, eg Nilta works with FE and then ACL gets tacked on and then WBL.

There's so many agencies and overlapping roles, resources are often similar, not coherent and lack clarity.

*[We need] only **one** source of all useful information, materials, tools etc - we cannot possibly make use of the existing plethora.*

- 31 Some felt that some agencies are let down by their presentation as well as undermined by the sheer number of agencies.

LSDA have excellent services but marketing could be better! Have one site - one main resource centre. Pay for the best designers. Use professional marketing people. Stop the competition between agencies by merging them all.

Levels of use

- 32 Most of those who responded to the question of levels of use within the survey said they were occasional users of each of the agencies, except for JISC RSC services, where this pattern was reversed. Over half (57 per cent) said they were frequent users of JISC RSC services rather than occasional (37 per cent).

- 33 This finding confirms the results of consultations, in which JISC RSC services were frequently (but not exclusively) cited, unprompted, as the most useful service available. Most of those interviewed commented on the value of having a personal contact with their local RSC, and the value of having a service tailored to provider need at regional level. This was supported by the written comments received.

- 34 RSCs were seen as giving practical help across a range of key areas, including staff development, and supporting the development of organisational strategy and independent technical advice. The comments below illustrate these points.

We'd go to JISC RSC as first port of call.

You get to know the RSC team well – they are the people I call for staff development or technical help – they are an external buddy. The RSC provides the glue in the region.

We use RSC for support, which is very good.

JISC and RSCs are able to support most of our ILT aspirations including collaboration, most often locally. They are particularly effective in bringing together practitioners to share experience.

RSC provides lots of support, they come in regularly for staff development. It's a two-way process with the RSC. They ask us what we want. They provide bespoke services as well as a timetabled offer. The e-fair in the summer was

very good. We have a close relationship with the RSC. The team are very flexible and responsive.

We take advantage of the RSC – attended a lot of events and use materials, and take advice. The central mailing list of ILT champions is also very useful and we work with the LSDA. The local RSC is very good and very approachable. We need a central RSC as well as local ... there are too many organisations, it's confusing.

- 35 Not everyone saw RSCs in a positive light. Some providers, for example, felt that FERL and NIACE offered essential services and that RSC support was too basic. Not all providers perceived the same value in the services they received, suggesting variation in the quality of provision, as well as variations in terms of providers' needs.

There's something that put Becta on top about 12 months ago, but these agencies have got to add value. The RSC needs to talk more strategically with us.

NIACE, NLN (apart from the materials production) and AoC Nilta are effectively a complete waste of time and space, serving no function for the average FE user. FERL were fantastic but have fallen by the wayside a lot recently. Becta are too school focused.

AoC Nilta - provides an important independent voice in the sector - represents its members. Important role in supporting managers and strategic-level thinking with useful feedback to members through its contacts at senior and government level.

NIACE E-guide programme – superb!

NIACE and LSDA are by far the most useful as they link to the rest of the learning agenda for ACL and FE. Most of the others are too specialised and end up hassling you for more info and reports etc.

- 36 Those that were most critical emphasised that they wanted services that are relevant and tailored to their own particular needs. Some in ACL and PCDL felt that services were biased towards FE.

- 37 Many providers commented on the plethora of services available and the confusion that this creates, while others felt that quality of provision varies and is not always good:

Greater co-ordination and reduction in sources for initiatives and advice [needed], as there are too many overlapping projects, which in many cases do not match our local needs closely.

A single portal.

Cut the number of organisations involved. JISC RSC, Becta and FERL are the three from whom I get the most.

All under one umbrella then I could remember where to find it and who to contact. I am so bogged down with it all.

The quality of what I use is usually very good, but I feel there are too many groups offering the same thing, too much going over the same ground and little in-depth, specialist training about specific resources and services.

There are clearly far too many organisations all doing the same thing and the direct impact of them is minimal. The number of organisations and initiatives is confusing and counter-productive.

The sheer plethora of information, advice and initiatives is intimidating. A rainforest of newsletters arrives across the desk. It would be interesting to make a cost comparison against actual provision.

There are too many quangos fighting for a share of the same turf.

Usefulness of services

- 38 The survey explored in detail the perceived usefulness of different aspects of service provision. Asked about the usefulness of services in providing “information about the availability and review of e-learning products”, 66 per cent of respondents said RSC JISC services were “very useful”, the highest proportion for this rating being among all the agencies. This response was further underlined by responses to an open-ended question on the quality of support services (see paragraphs 48-60 below). The highest number of responses related to positive comments about JISC RSC services (23 respondents). In contrast, three respondents mentioned NIACE, three FERL and three NLN. Over 25 per cent of those who responded in the survey felt that private organisations were not useful.
- 39 Ratings for other agencies ranged between 45 per cent and 60 per cent saying that services were “fairly useful”. FERL was the only exception

in this pattern with a fairly even split between those stating that FERL services were both “very useful” and “fairly useful” (45 per cent and 47 per cent respectively).

40 A similar pattern of ratings for usefulness was found for the following services:

- information about good practice
- information about latest developments
- information about research
- advice or brokerage about strategy and planning
- support or facilitation for strategy and planning
- advice or brokerage about teaching and learning
- support or facilitation for teaching and learning
- advice or brokerage about learning materials and content
- support or facilitation for learning materials and content
- advice or brokerage about technical networking issues
- support or facilitation for technical networking issues
- advice or brokerage about other technical issues, for example, virtual learning environments (VLEs)
- support or facilitation about other technical issues, for example, VLEs
- support with accessing independent experts or bespoke support
- contacting other e-learning practitioners
- training and development for other management staff
- training and development for other staff through events, workshops or exhibitions (local, regional or national).

41 This pattern of responses may reflect the predominantly FE-based profile of respondents (that is, they are more likely to use JISC RSC services than those of other agencies). However, there are some notable points within this broad pattern, as follows.

Advice or brokerage about learning materials and content

42 For this questionnaire item, the highest percentage for those rating the service “very useful” was 56 per cent for NLN, followed by 55 per cent for FERL and 51 per cent for JISC RSC.

Advice or brokerage about technical networking issues and support or facilitation for technical networking issues

43 For these items, JISC RSC, followed by private organisations, were rated by those that responded as “very useful”, with 52 per cent and 40 per cent respectively for advice or brokerage and 46 per cent each for support or facilitation. For all other agencies, the proportion stating that

services in this respect were “very useful” is small. This perhaps reflects the distinctive roles of JISC RSC and the private sector.

- 44 In discussions with providers, those consulted commented on the value and importance of having fast and effective technical support on tap, whether provided internally or externally. Indeed, this issue was raised as the second most important priority for providers for services in an ideal world.
- 45 “Support with accessing independent experts or bespoke support” from JISC and private providers was also highlighted as “very useful”.
- 46 Perhaps unsurprisingly, JISC RSC featured in ratings for help with contacting other e-learning practitioners, training and development for staff, events, workshops and exhibitions at local, regional and national levels, and other support services. A wide range of technical and specific types of support were named.

Use of service by each sector

- 47 Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents who said they frequently used each service given. Table 2 indicates which type of services is most frequently used and conversely those that are not. ACL in particular shows a high use of services. WBL shows a high use of some services but not others. Overall, WBL use of services is lower than for other sectors. However, the low response rate from WBL should be borne in mind.

Table 2: Percentage of respondents frequently using each service stated.

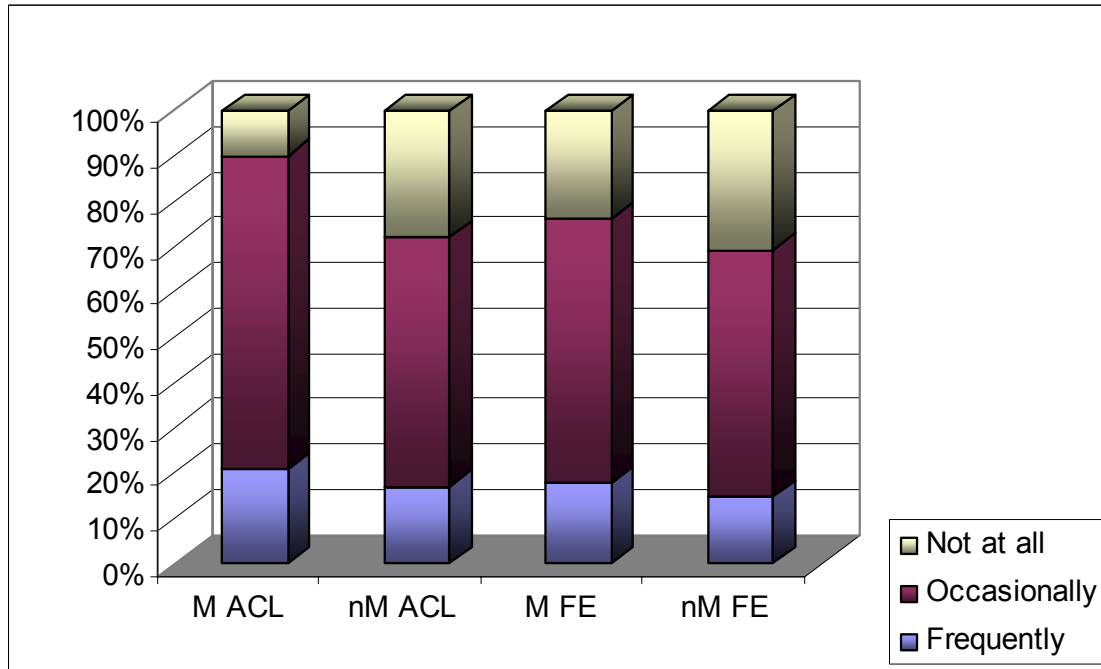
	ACL %	FE %	WBL %
Information about availability or review of e-learning products	44	39	31
Information about good practice	39	39	41
Information about latest developments	51	49	43
Information about research	22	17	11
Advice or brokerage about strategy and planning	18	17	4
Support or facilitation for strategy and planning	18	16	17
Advice or brokerage about teaching and learning	38	30	17
Support or facilitation for teaching and learning	31	27	21
Advice or brokerage about learning materials and content	44	37	29
Support or facilitation for learning materials and content	37	25	26
Advice or brokerage about technical networking issues	13	16	18
Support or facilitation for technical networking issues	13	18	16
Advice or brokerage about other technical issues, for example VLEs	17	20	11
Support or facilitation about other technical issues, for example VLEs	19	22	11
Support with accessing independent experts or bespoke support	7	6	6
Contacting other e-learning practitioners	34	29	20
Training and development for other management staff	13	12	5
Training and development for other staff	24	27	11
Events, workshops and exhibitions (local)	26	26	21
Events, workshops and exhibitions (regional or national)	24	21	21

Notes: highlighted green = more than one standard deviation above average
highlighted pink = more than one standard deviation below average

Use of services by sector and respondent role

- 48 Responses to these items were also analysed on the basis of sector and role (managerial versus non-managerial). WBL providers are excluded from this analysis because the numbers were small and therefore unreliable. Overall, most responses across role were similar in ACL and FE. However, there were a number of service areas where different responses were apparent (a difference of 10 per cent or more). These are highlighted in the Figures 2-14.
- 49 Non-managerial staff within ACL were less likely than managerial staff to access support or facilitation for strategy and planning. This pattern was not seen among FE respondents (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Support or facilitation for strategy and planning by role and sector.



Notes: M = management, nM = non-management

50 Non-managerial respondents within ACL were less frequent users of advice or brokerage about teaching and learning than their counterparts in management. Managers in FE were less likely to use these services than managers in ACL (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Advice or brokerage about teaching and learning by role and sector.

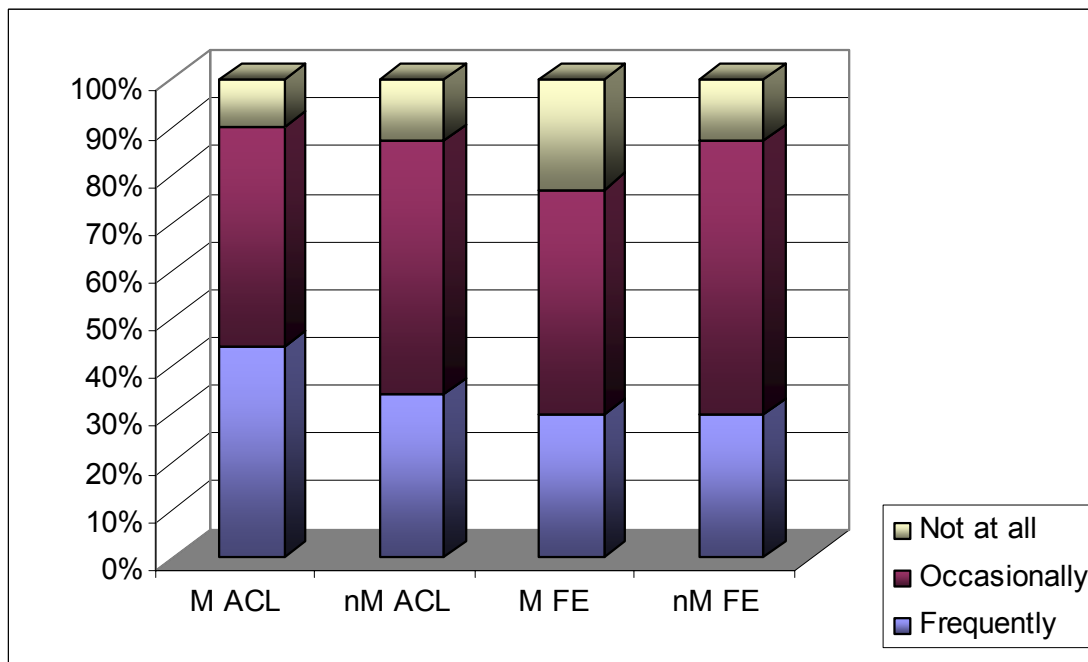
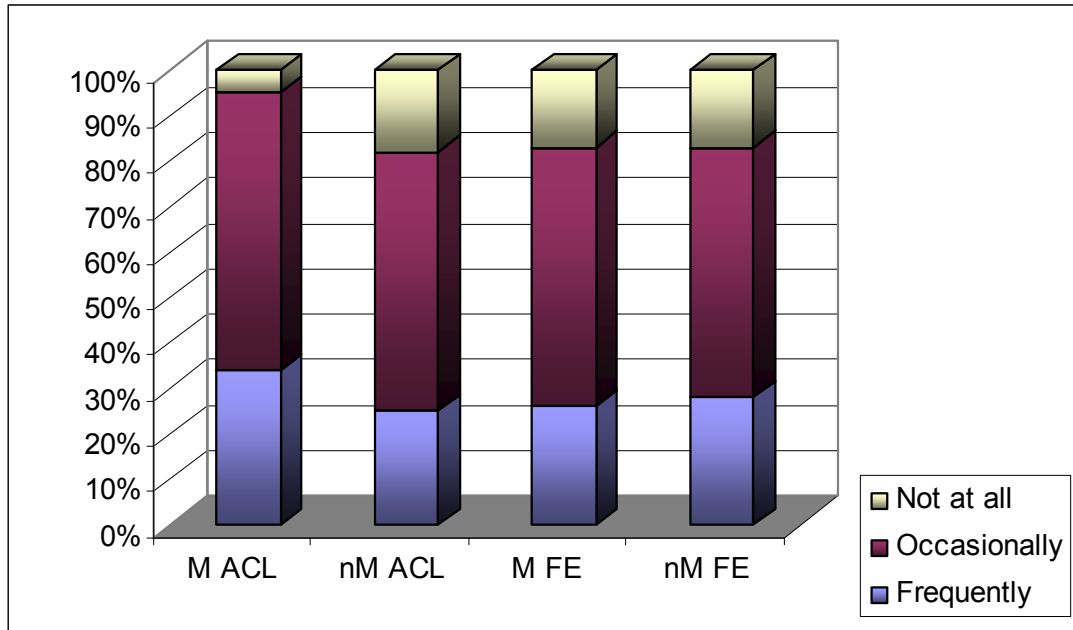
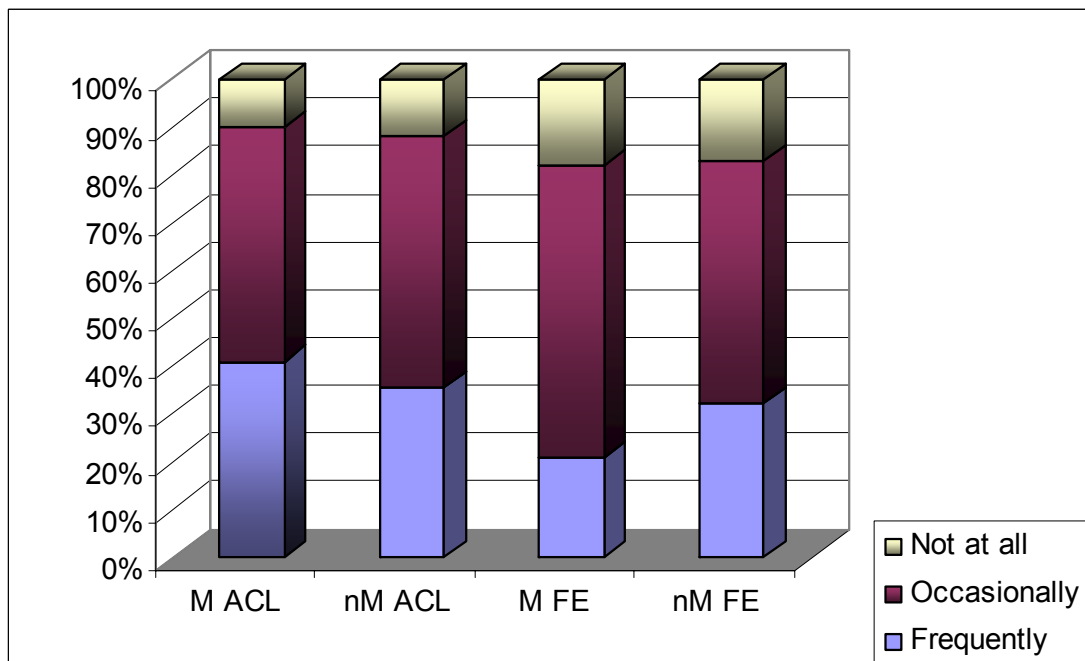


Figure 4: Support or facilitation for teaching and learning by role and sector.



51 Managers in FE were least likely to use support or facilitation services for learning materials and content compared to non-managers and with ACL (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Support or facilitation for learning materials by role and sector.



52 Figures 6-9 relate to use of technical advice and support and show a similar pattern in which managers make greater use of technical support compared to non-managers. It is notable that the use of support for areas such as VLEs is particularly low among non-managers within ACL.

Figure 6: Advice or brokerage about technical networking issues by role and sector.

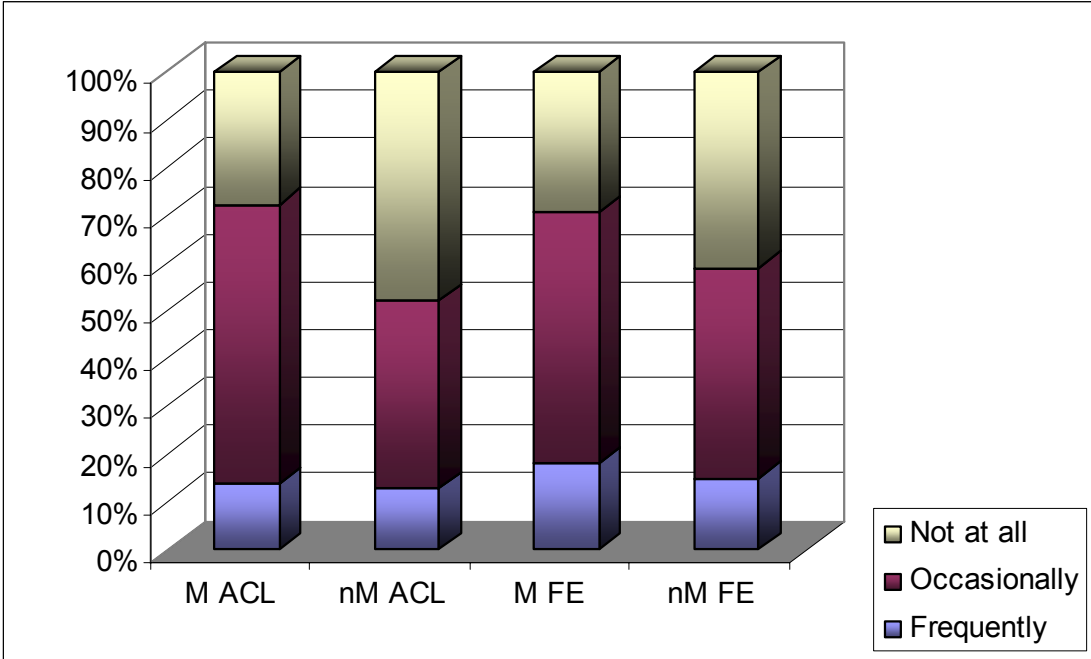


Figure 7: Support or facilitation for technical networking issues by role and sector.

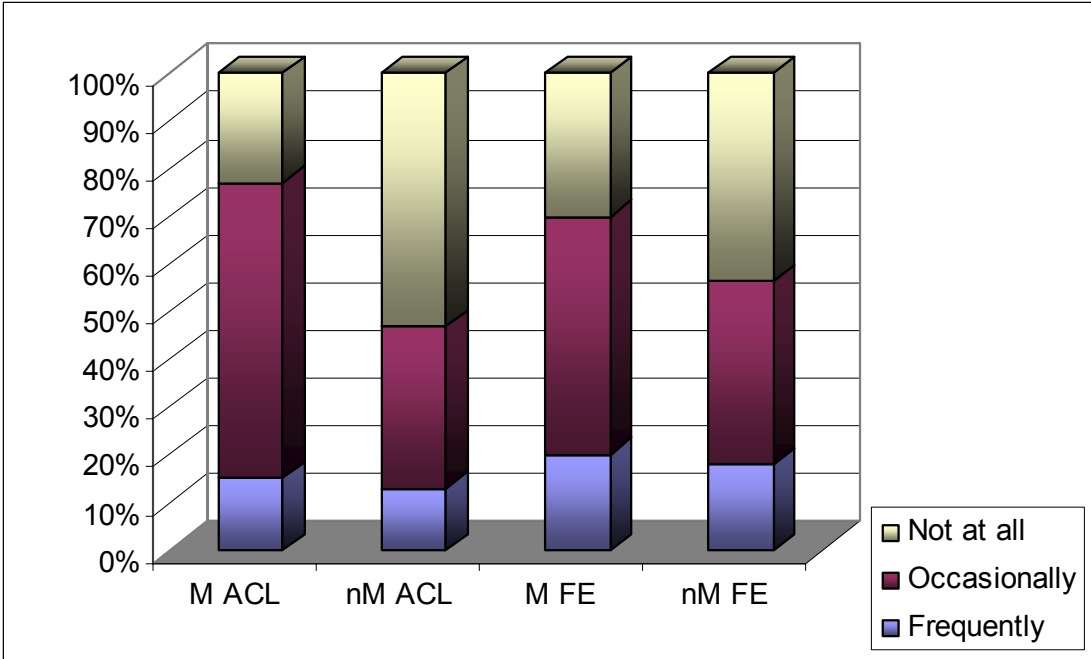


Figure 8: Advice or brokerage about other technical issues by role and sector.

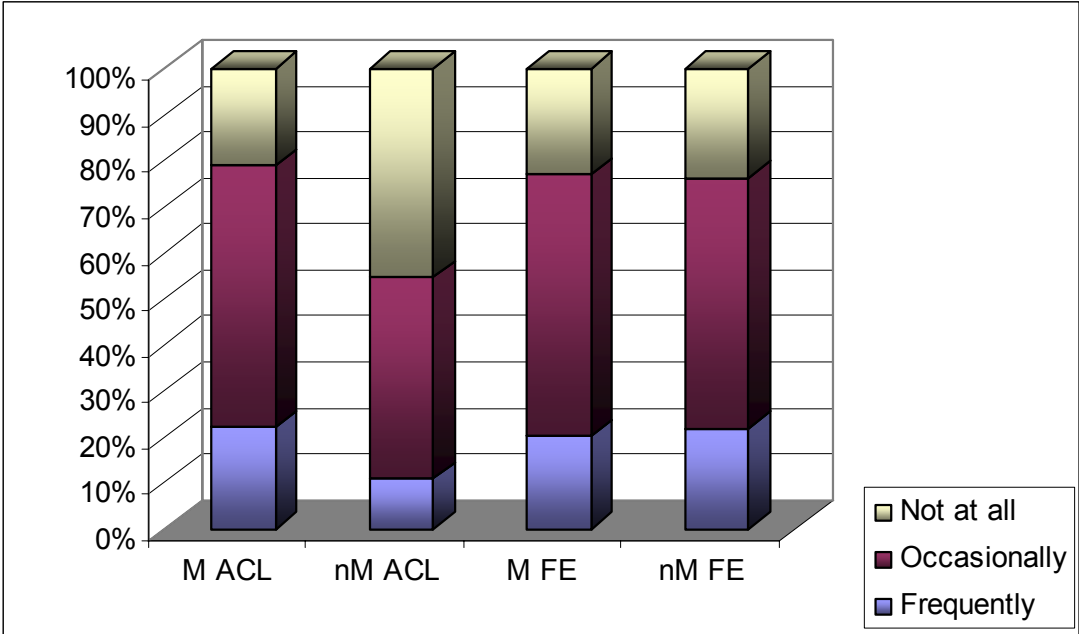
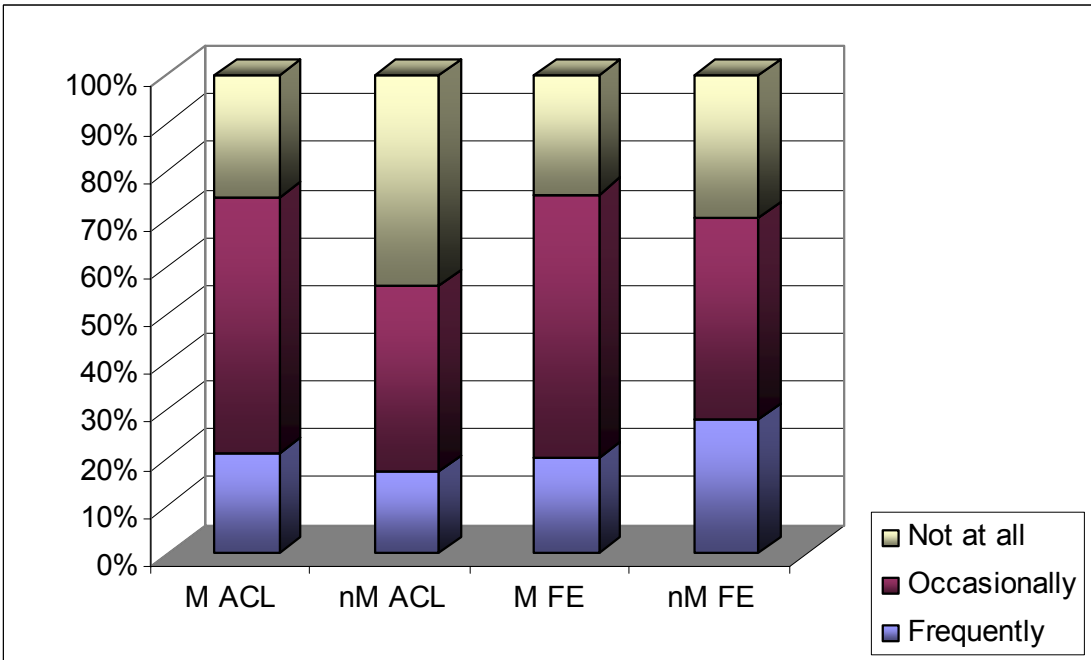
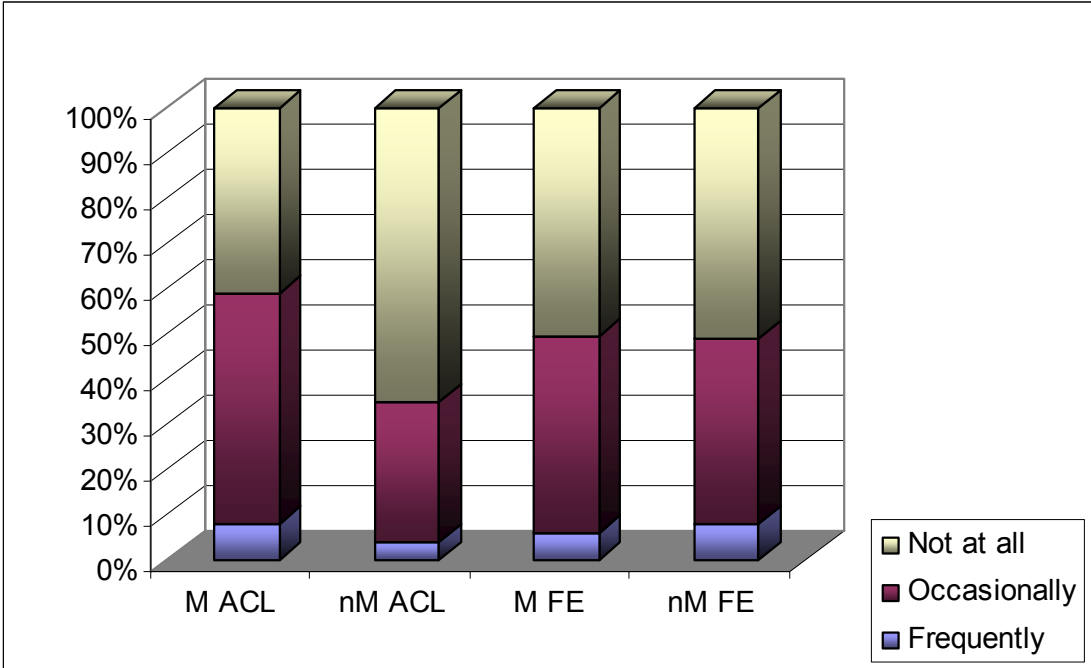


Figure 9: Support or facilitation about technical networking issues by role and sector.



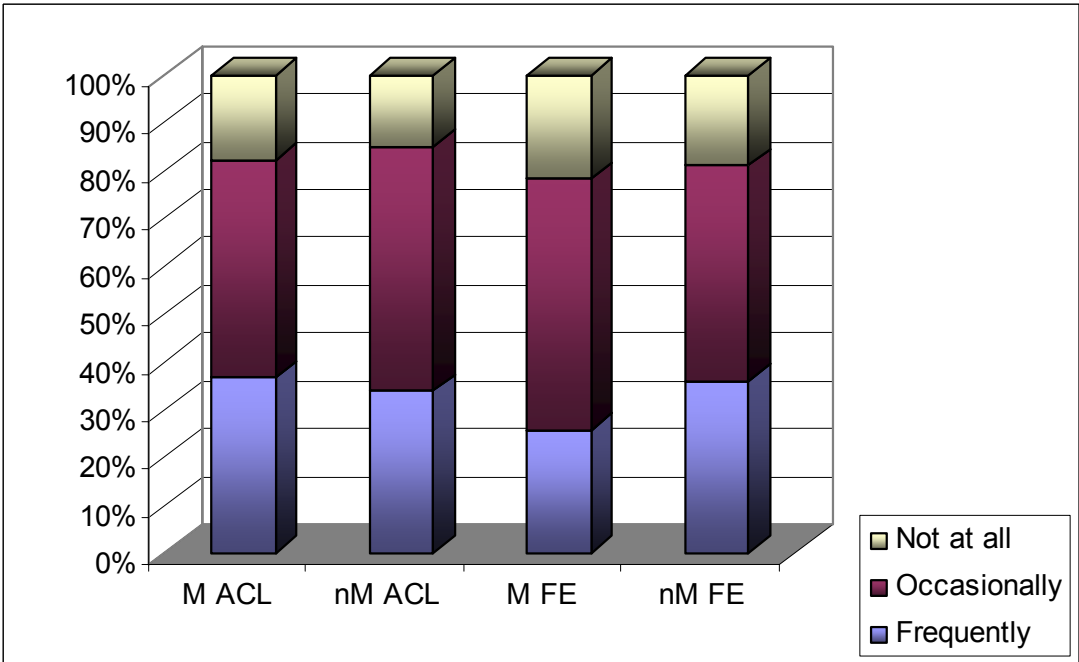
53 It is notable that support for accessing independent experts or bespoke support is low overall across ACL and FE sectors and across managerial and non-managerial roles, and it is (perhaps not surprisingly) particularly low among non-managerial respondents within ACL (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Support with accessing independent experts or bespoke support by role and sector.



54 Non-managerial respondents within ACL make the most of services to contact other e-learning practitioners compared with other respondents (Figure 11).

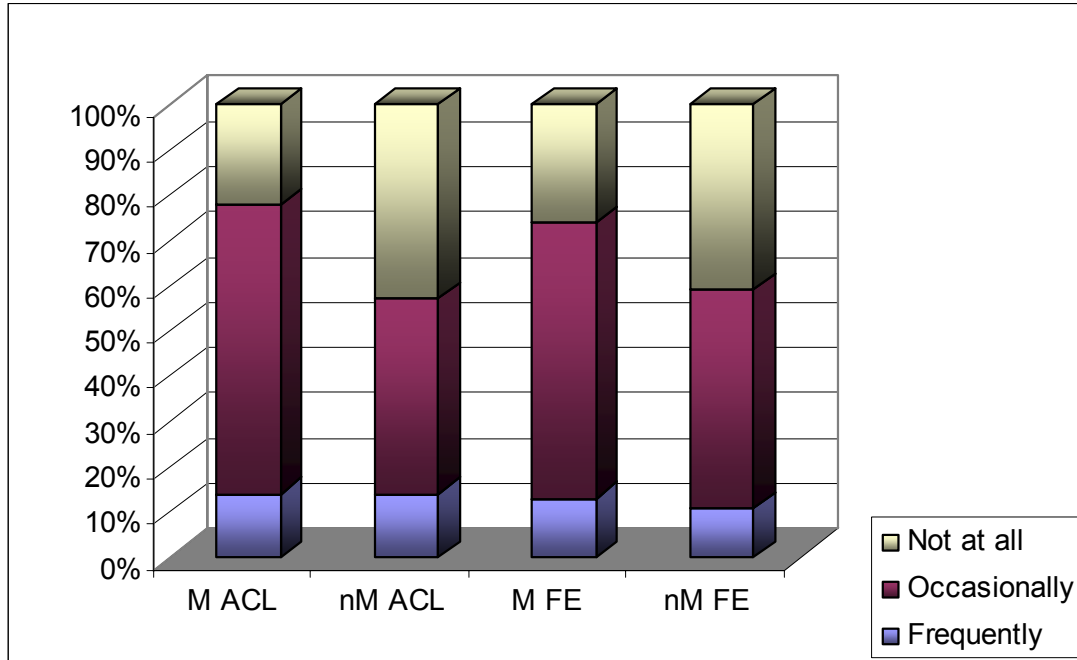
Figure 11: Support with contacting other e-learning practitioners by role and sector.



55 Managers within ACL and FE are more likely than their non-managerial counterparts to access information on training and development for

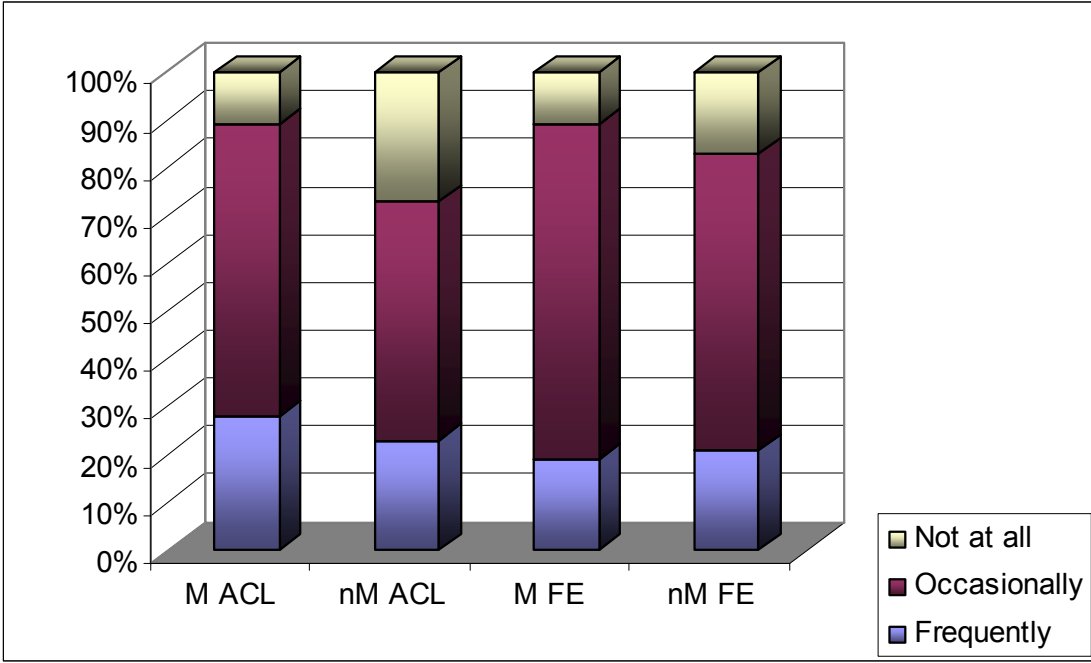
management staff – unsurprising given their managerial roles (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Training and development for management staff by role and sector.



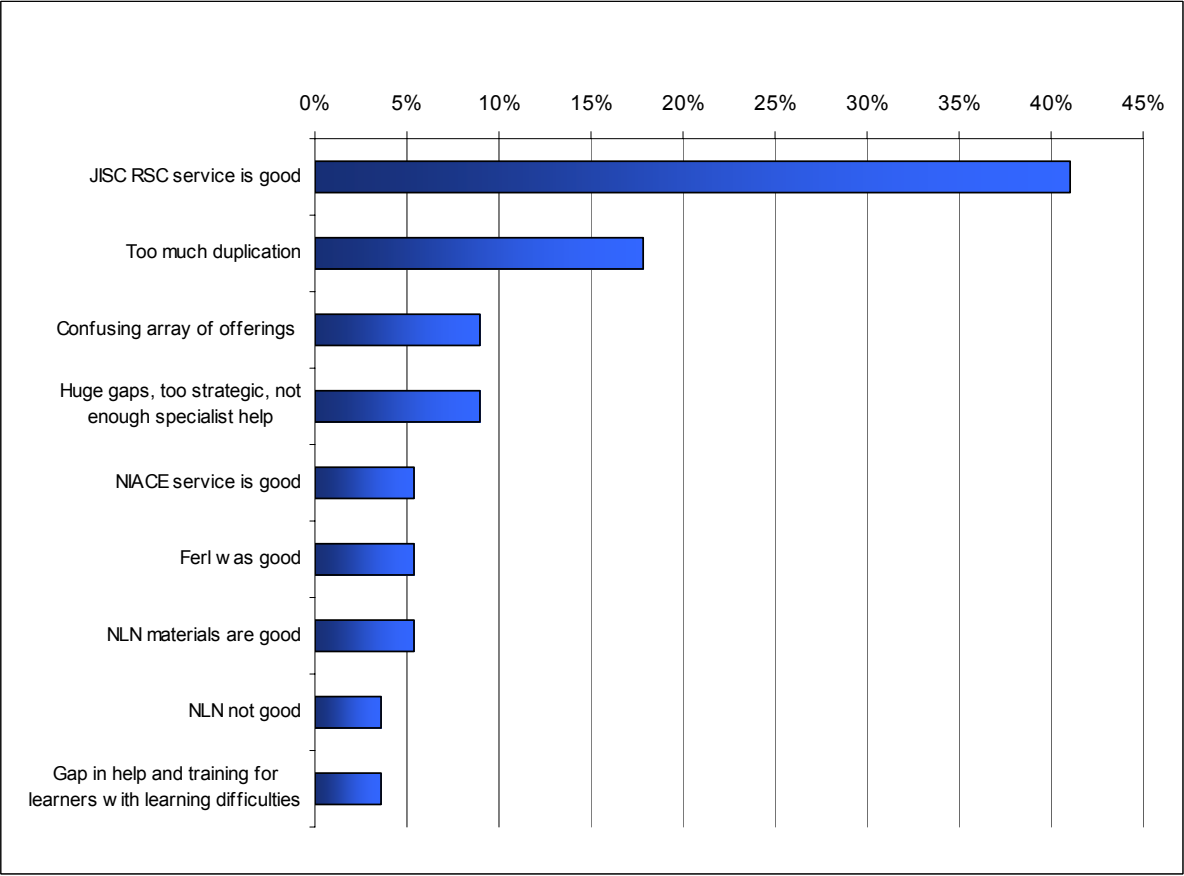
56 Non-managerial respondents, particularly within ACL but also in FE, are less likely to access information about events, workshops and exhibitions at regional or national levels than their managerial counterparts. This difference is not apparent for events at a local level (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Events, workshops and exhibitions at regional or national level by role and sector.



57 Written comments were received from over 100 survey respondents. These are summarised in Figure 14.

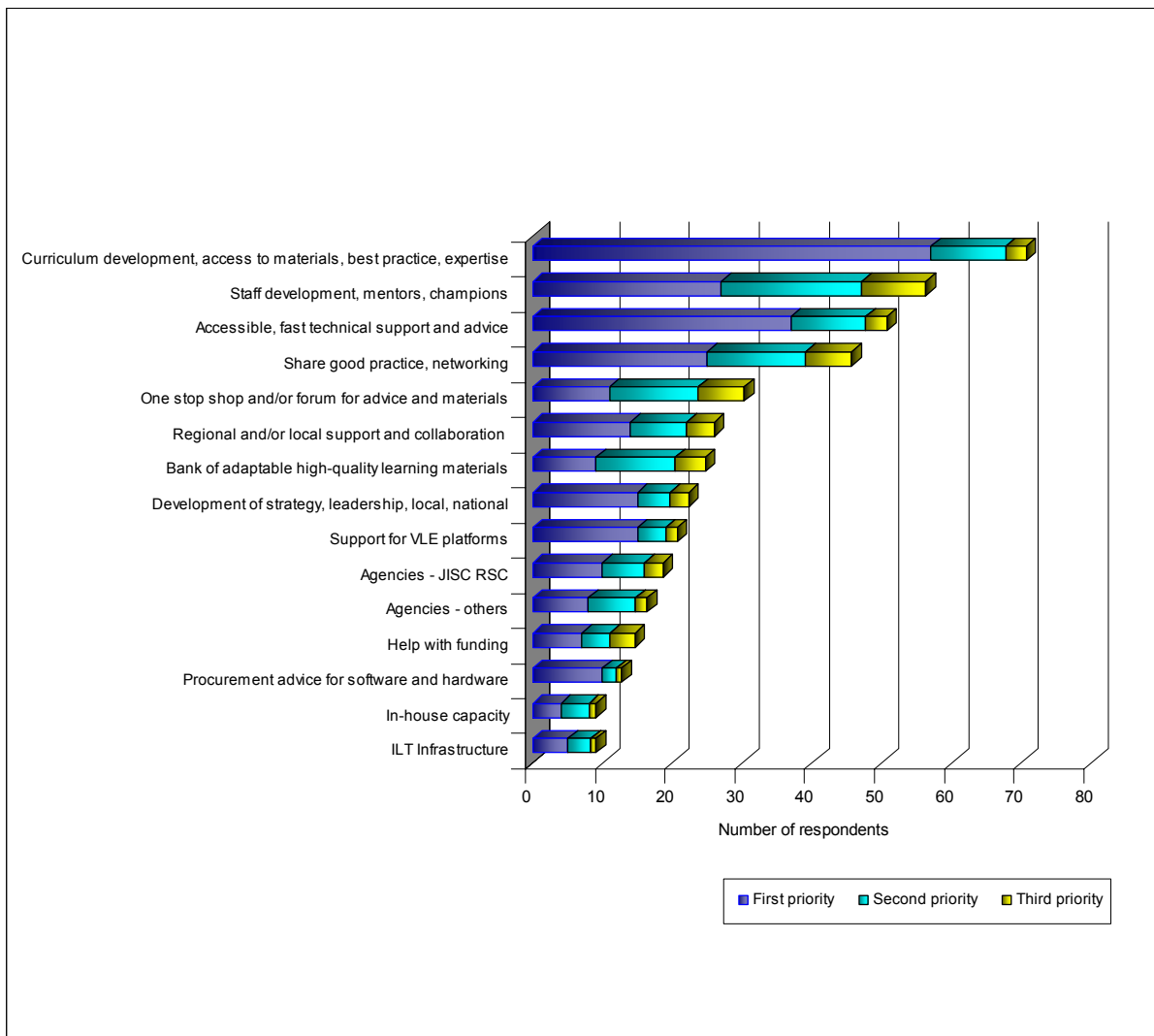
Figure 14: Summary of comments on support services.



Support services in an ideal world

- 58 Just under 25 per cent of respondents cited support with curriculum development, access to materials, best practice and expertise as the most important areas of service they would like in an ideal world in response to this open question. Help with technical support, staff development and sharing good practice were the next most frequently cited responses.
- 59 As a second priority, respondents mentioned staff development (16 per cent), followed by sharing good practice (16 per cent), and a one-stop shop (10 per cent) followed by a bank of adaptable, high-quality learning resources (9 per cent). Third-priority support services included staff development, sharing good practice and a one-stop shop. It is perhaps interesting that issues of funding came low on the list.
- 60 Figure 15 summarises the 270 first, second and third priority responses (see Annex E for full summaries):

Figure 15: Priority services described by respondents.

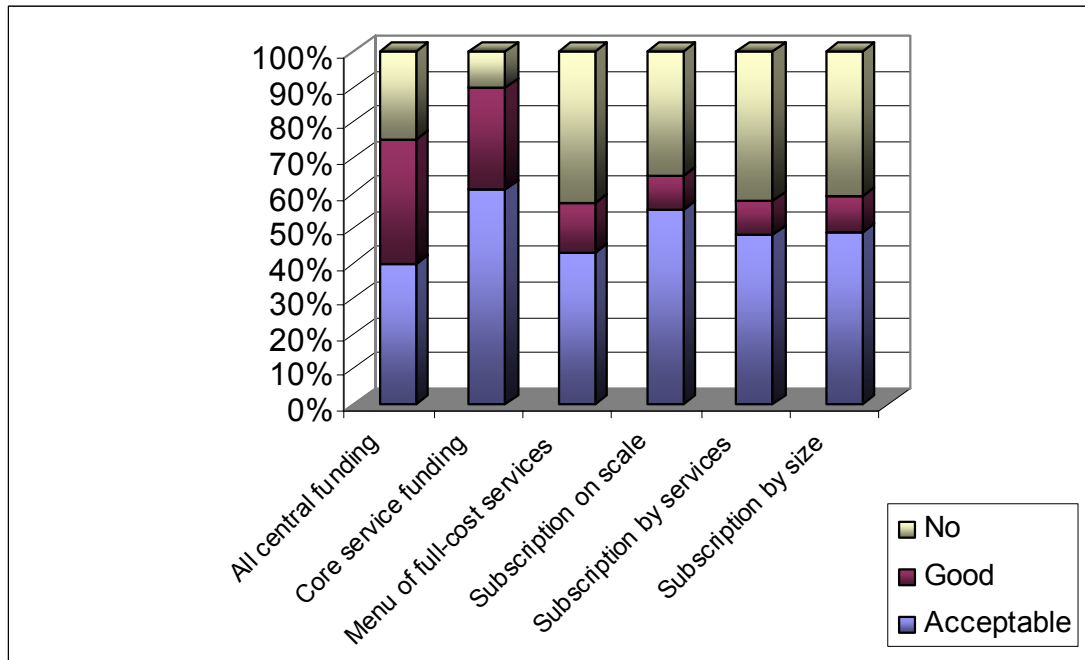


Notes: Numbers are weighted.

Payment for services

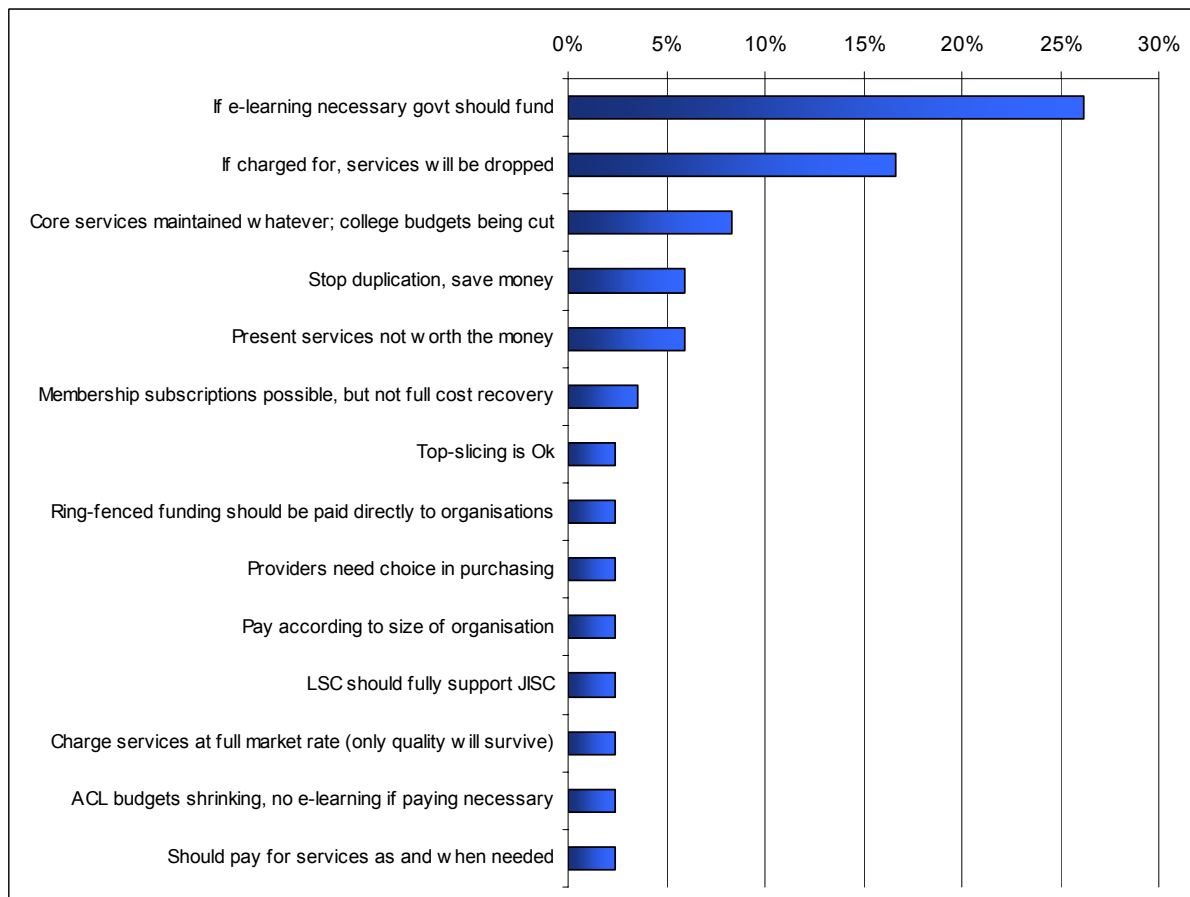
61 Providers were asked about options for payment for support services. Perhaps unsurprisingly there was strong support for the role of central funding, with 60 per cent indicating that services should be centrally funded (combining responses of “good” and “acceptable”), and 79 per cent that central funding should pay for core services with extras being purchased by education providers (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Views of payment for services.



62 The question of payment provoked over 100 comments within the survey and these are summarised in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Summary of comments on payment for service.



63 The three most frequent comments related to:

- ensuring core services are maintained because of college budgets at risk
- LSC should support e-learning support services if the development of e-learning is seen as crucial
- if providers have to start paying, services will be dropped.

64 A range of comments is shown below.

If the Government is serious about implementing e-learning then they must accept the cost. There is not enough money coming into most colleges that allows choice and many senior management teams do not appreciate what e-learning can do.

Given the nature of ILT and the national agenda to embed it in the teaching process there is an ongoing need to support its development - yes even the basics. To introduce a charging regime may well bring about a stalling of the good but meagre progress.

I think the LSC should support the JISC fully instead of piecemeal.

Services should be chargeable at a full market rate - this ensures that the providers have to maintain quality and relevance to stay in business.

E-learning support should not be left totally to the discretion of the institution as within the FE funding methodology this is often the area that will not be supported or cut when the funding decreases.

If the services provided were actually useful, I'd have put central funding. However, at present I'd rather spend the money on something that would be useful to us.

In war, truth is the first casualty. In education, it's often what you spend on developing and supporting staff. In those circumstances, if you have to pay you don't do it.

Until the sector takes up e-learning and technology, there will be a need to centralise support - when institutions have succeeded in implementing that, then and only then will it be possible to cut the purse strings - this is called leadership!

Top-slicing means we have to pay for services we don't want. But an optional payment scheme means take-up will be poor and thus provision will be limited. So provide a good, small, cheap service people will want to use, before getting too ambitious.

The best support and advice has come from free events, published resources and on-site support by well-experienced individuals. The worst has been preaching from on high at significant cost. Make it really easy for colleges to release staff to collaborate.

I think the post-16 funding situation is too precarious to trust to institutions having full discretion over which service they will pay for - many colleges are in "survival" mode and training and development is already taking a "hit".

- 65 Consultations with providers also pointed to additional systemic factors affecting attitudes towards use of services and development of e-learning, particularly within non-FE providers:

There's no effective reward mechanism for development of e-learning, ie where is the funding for distance learning? The LSC model doesn't support online learning – it's a systemic barrier with the promulgation of a traditional view of learning. (Workers' Educational Association)

Difficult to talk about payment when we're being top-sliced. If we're going to be asked to pay for services, then they should allocate money to us. (ACL provider)

We are tied by procurement of the local authority. If the RSC took on this role, then we could buy more cheaply. There is scope to look at leveraging purchasing power. (ACL provider)

It annoys me that the college gets £150k worth of special kit for Motor Vehicle delivery: we get nothing and there's no sharing of resources. It's an uneven playing field. Everything we do is on our own. Competition within the sector is a factor. (WBL provider)

Responses on the basis of sector, size and role

- 66 There was no notable variation in the pattern of responses to the issue of funding on the basis of sector (ACL, FE, WBL), size or region.
- 67 However, on the basis of role, responses show that managers both within FE and ACL were more likely to say that funding should **not** all be centrally provided for e-learning (34 per cent of ACL managers compared with 20 per cent of non-managers, and 27 per cent of FE managers compared with 17 per cent of non-managers). This was highlighted in discussions with providers, as the following comments from senior managers show.

Colleges need to be given the freedom; there's been more of this in the last few years. Outside bodies need to trust colleges.

Would prefer to have the money to spend.

Principle of paying for services is a good thing, but fees can get out of hand, ie £200 is too much, paying a contribution for good-quality service would be fine.

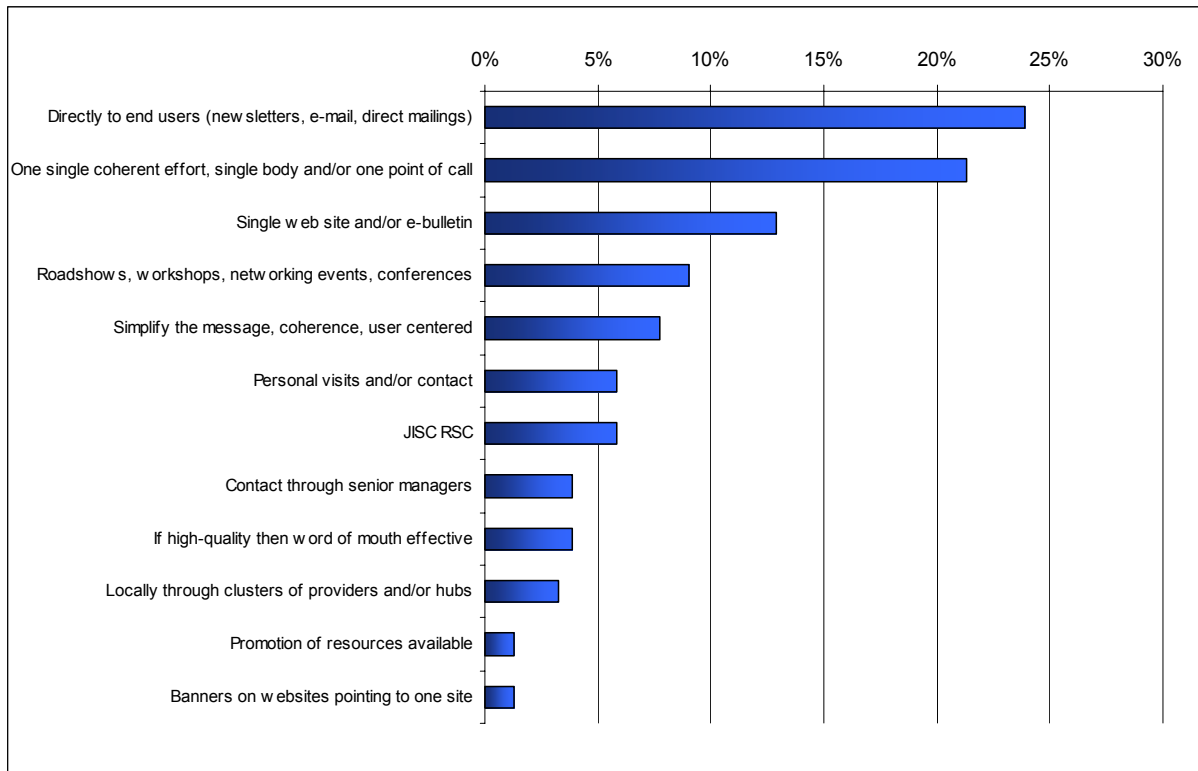
We'll choose the RSC over any other providers.

We would opt out of it all if it doesn't suit our needs!

Promotion of services

68 An open question sought comments on how best to promote services. Some 150 responses were made, and these are summarised in Figure 18.

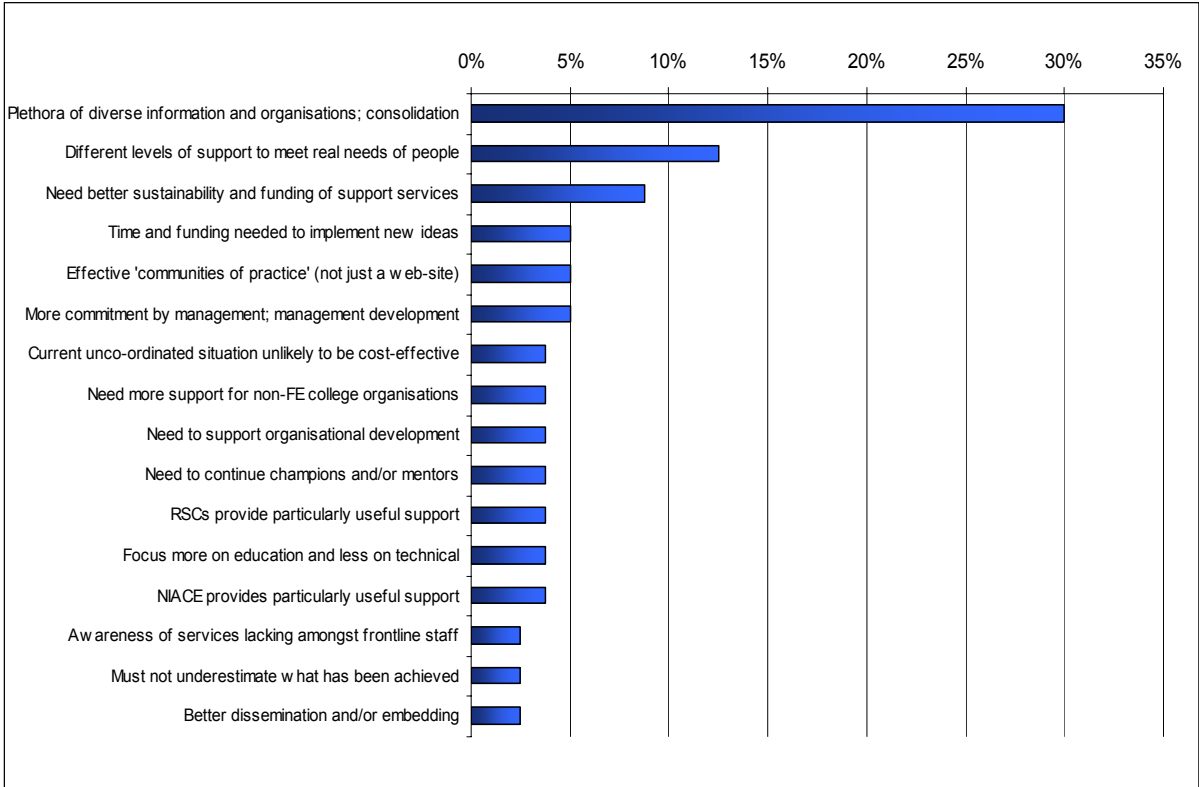
Figure 18: Summary of comments on promotion of services.



Other comments

69 A final open question sought any further comments about support services. Some 100 responses were made, and these are summarised in Figure 19.

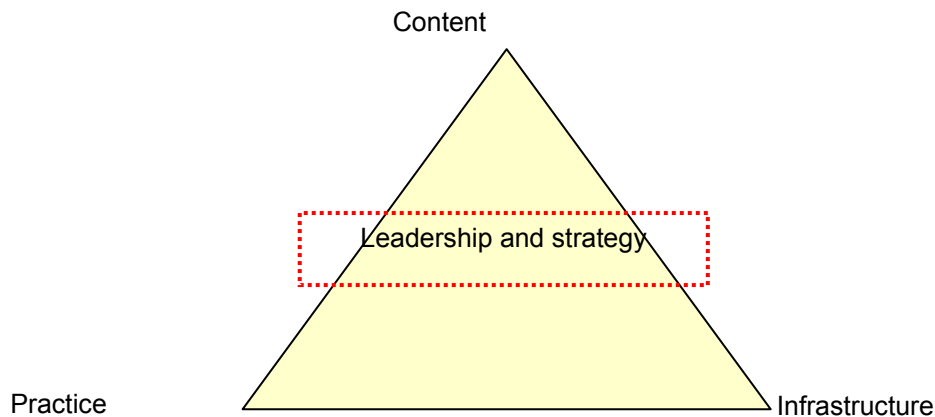
Figure 19: Summary of comments on other aspects of support services.



Additional considerations

- 70 A number of providers and other stakeholders raised a range of additional issues for consideration, both operational and strategic. These are summarised below.
- 71 A useful model for providing a framework for the development of e-learning support services, building on a model derived from Becta, was noted by several of those consulted. This highlights three key facets of necessary support - practice, content and infrastructure (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Framework for the development of e-learning.



72 We have added to this the idea of leadership and policy and strategy as a core thread running through the centre of the triangle.

73 The framework provides a useful way of thinking about the various facets of e-learning support services, and providers' comments on their needs. Most can be considered under these four headings and (in parallel with the DfES's e-strategy themes of personalised content, knowledge architecture, strategic technologies and e-maturity) could be a useful way of thinking about future developments of e-learning support services.

74 Many providers and other stakeholders commented on the significance of clear **leadership and strategy** at different levels: national, regional, local and organisational. Several commented on uncertainty about current government, DfES and LSC strategy and in particular the perceived unclear role of the local and regional LSCs in this respect. The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) will have a significant impact in this area (see Annex D).

Strategy and joined up thinking – JISC InfoNet events are good for this.

Planning for the 21st century!

Expert rather than Jack-of-all-trades support for strategy, planning and implementation.

75 Others commented on the potential for the LSC and DfES to use the inspection process to influence developments and priorities at a strategic level:

It might be influential to present needs analysis more strongly in terms of inspection expectations or foci. This would help the college to see its priorities more closely.

- 76 Under the heading of **infrastructure**, some talked about the challenges of working under local authority restrictions and purchasing requirements. Others talked about the likely impact of the pace of technological change and the need for a strategic framework that enables rapid adaptation and response, and the need to avoid prescriptive solutions. For example, the development of open-source software was described by several providers as a highly significant change that is already having a major effect on the development of infrastructure, materials and practice. The developments in this respect within the Open University were noted, alongside the increasing imperative for information systems to be able to share data, and for the development of partnership working, for example between providers, local authorities and other public and community-based bodies.

I've just been on a very exciting management development programme with BT to Harvard ... all about the ubiquity of information which is driving organisational change. Open-source technology is a key driver. The problem for colleges is they could be seriously criticised for not participating in the old paradigm because they take a strategic decision to go for open source. There's a danger that government policy is lagging behind. (FE provider)

Open-source technology is fantastic – education should make more use of it. (WBL provider)

- 77 Several providers commented on the cost of keeping abreast of infrastructure requirements with an eye to the rapidly changing future. Many providers cited the need for fast and effective technical expertise as central to their needs.

A free VLE delivery platform would have a big impact (nb, Moodle is starting to have impact).

Advice and help in identifying best-value hardware and software would help. Sector procurement deals could make big savings.

We need clear recommendations about which technologies are useful for different learners and learning situations – less neutrality and more opinion from service providers please.

78 Many providers commented on the significance of **practice**, in particular mentioning the difficulties of embedding new practice within their provision, the value of staff development and (especially) enabling space and time for staff to practise and foster confidence in using technology.

79 Exchange of good practice at **local and regional levels** was seen as critical in this respect. Several providers commented on the value of having support at regional level with the capacity to engage with providers and facilitate collaboration and exchange, as the following comments illustrate.

Regional teams seem to work best - impressed with support from the JISC RSC in promoting regional co-operation and getting information out.

Local services are most important (and more efficient in terms of time and cost), eg sharing between all the seven Leeds colleges or Yorkshire and the Humber works very well.

80 A desire for help with implementing practice was underlined by responses to the question in the survey on support in an ideal world.

I just wonder if, until tutors start being creative in the classroom per se, then no amount of promotion will help them embrace e-learning. It needs to be seen as just another (great) tool to give the learners a better learning experience.

Peer support across the country via the ILT champions mail list is exceptional.

Regional training opportunities make a big difference.

Online, self-paced staff development courses would be great.

There are issues related to teaching staff not having skills to use ICT or manage e-learning. Lack of adequate funding for FE colleges has meant that generally colleges never employ enough skilled support staff to effectively manage network or provide adequate support.

More specific support services targeted at technical staff, teachers and learners are needed to embed standards and good practice within the FE sector.

81 **Content** and the importance of supporting and sharing the development of good-quality resources, but particularly specialist resources for different subject areas, were cited by many providers, as

demonstrated by responses to the survey question on support services in an ideal world. Support with curriculum development was cited as the number one priority. Some examples of comments are shown below.

Provision of quality tailored curriculum materials.

Provision of quality e-learning resources relevant for FE colleges.

Someone with clout and proper funding who can go out and find the best of materials and then pass them on to us, teaching us how to use them.

A central bank of shared e learning and ICT materials.

5: Conclusions

Moving towards: “the support the sector wants is the support the sector gets”

- 82 Overall, the survey data shows a fairly even awareness of support agencies ranging between just over a third to just over half of all respondents. This raises the converse issue of why awareness levels of all agencies are at best only at the halfway point and whether they provide real value for money. Low levels of awareness may be related to the recurring theme of the negative impact of the plethora of agencies involved in supporting e-learning, which appears to create confusion for many and a debilitating effect for some.
- 83 It is clear that the JISC RSC plays a prominent role in the provision of services, particularly at local and regional levels, and that the quality of its provision is valued for the most part. As RSCs feature prominently in both the survey and consultations, their potential role is explored further in Annex E. They are also the subject of a recent review undertaken on behalf of JISC (Duke and Jordan, 2006).
- 84 Although many commented on the plethora of agencies and resulting confusion, some felt that their needs were well-served by the wide choice of support on offer. However, most felt that they would rather have one port of call providing non-partisan information, advice and guidance, and brokerage and signposting. This was particularly the case for smaller providers. However, there were also plenty of positive comments about the impact of services and recognition of progress:
- There may be too many organisations playing in this area but be grateful for what they have achieved to date - don't underestimate it, don't think that it is all over and whatever you do don't think that a bunch of private providers with a profit motive will solve it.*
- 85 Most felt that some form of personal engagement at local and regional levels was key to supporting the development and embedding of e-learning - working towards e-maturity. This kind of support was often gained through networking with other providers, sometimes with the brokering help of an agency (for example the RSC).

- 86 The issue of parity of services across sectors is highlighted by the low response to the survey from the WBL sector. Our consultations here highlight the need for strategic development in this area. We found from discussions that there were excellent examples of WBL provision in which there was an embedded approach to e-learning and e-learning was seen as enabling a competitive advantage. These providers felt that they suffered discrimination in accessing public funding despite offering significant levels of public sector provision in some cases.
- 87 From the survey and consultations, a number of services stand out as those being most needed by providers. As we have also noted, there is some confusion resulting from the overabundance of public-sector agencies offering support services and also a lack of awareness of “who does what” by some 50 per cent of respondents. We believe that there is a real opportunity in the current climate of change to create a more coherent portfolio of support services within a strategic framework, with a particular agency taking responsibility for leading, and/or co-ordinating, a particular service, supported by other agencies as appropriate. We believe that such a strategic approach could:
- provide even better services to providers across all parts of the sector and improve value for money
 - help ensure providers know about, and are able to access, services they want when they want them
 - help providers access the services
 - help reduce mission-drift and resulting confusion when agencies don’t appear to have a clear and understood mission.
- 88 The matrix in Figure 21 is a preliminary attempt by the authors at delineating potential roles. It is not intended to be definitive, nor to present ‘the answer’ but rather to inform debate and provide a starting point for possible consolidation.
- 89 The left-hand column presents key areas of support. These have been derived from consultations and survey results, but in some cases have been modified as a result of subsequent discussion. We have also grouped some needs under one heading. Those in bold are the services most sought by providers we surveyed or consulted.

90 In Figure 21, the top row lists the key support agencies. Cells of the matrix indicate the following:

- **N** = potential agency to take a national lead or co-ordinating role
- **R** = potential agency to take a regional lead or co-ordinating role
- \surd = potential agency to take a supportive role.

Figure 21: Matrix of potential roles.

Potential support organisation Area of support		Becta	CEL	DfES	Inspectorate	JISC services	LSC	LSN	Providers	LLUK	NIACE	QIA	RSCs	Ufi	UKERNA	Membership organisations		Private organisations
																ALT	AoC Nilta	
Policy and strategy development; strategic funding decisions	FE	√		N			√	√		√		√		√	√			
	ACL	√		N			√	√		√		√		√	√			
	WBL	√		N			√	√		√		√		√	√			
Funding distribution and contract management	FE							N				√						
	ACL							N				√						
	WBL							N				√						
Communicating policy, strategy and strategic information	FE	N					√	√				√	√			√	√	
	ACL	N					√	√			√	√	√			√		
	WBL	N					√	√				√	√			√		
Ensuring quality of curriculum delivery - strategy and framework	FE	√	√	√		√	√	√				N					√	
	ACL	√	√	√		√	√	√				N						
	WBL	√	√	√		√	√	√				N						
Ensuring quality of curriculum delivery - inspection	FE				N		√		√			√						

																		Membership organisations
	A C L				N	√		√				√						
	W B L				N	√		√				√						
Single online portal for advice, intelligence, signposting	F E	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	N	R	√	√	√	√	√
	A C L	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	N	R	√	√	√		√
	W B L	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	N	R	√	√	√		√
Accessible, timely general technical advice and support	F E							√					√			N		√
	A C L							√					√			N		
	W B L							√					√			N		
Staff development, organisational capacity-building - strategy	F E	√	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	N	√			√	√	√
	A C L	√	√	√		√		√	√	√		N	√			√		
	W B L	√	√	√		√		√	√	√		N	√			√		
Staff development, organisational capacity-building - delivery	F E		√			√		N	√				R	√		√	√	√
	A C L		√			√		N	√		√		R	√		√		√
	W B L		√			√		N	√		√		R	√		√		√

																Membership organisations		
Leadership and management development - delivery and consultancy	FE		N		√	√		√	√							√	√	√
	ACL		N		√	√		√	√		√					√		√
	WBL		N		√	√		√	√							√		√
																ALT	AoC Nilta	
Organisation, provision of e-learning mentors, coaches and champions	FE		√					√	√				R			√	√	
	ACL		√					√	√		R		√			√		
	WBL		√					√	√				R			√		
Regional and local support, information, advice, guidance; collaboration; networking	FE					√	√	√	√				R	√		√	√	
	ACL					√	√	√	√		√		R	√		√		
	WBL					√	√	√	√				R	√		√		
Sharing good practice, networking; learning from each other	FE					√		√	√			N	R	√		√	√	
	ACL					√		√	√		√	N	R	√		√		
	WBL					√		√	√			N	R	√		√		
Research (including 'futures')	FE	N	√			√	√	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√
	ACL	N	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√
	WBL	N	√			√	√	√	√	√		√	√			√		√
Appropriate uses; embedding; pedagogy and androgogy; research to action	FE	√						N	√				√			√	√	
	ACL							N	√		√					√		
	WBL							N	√				√			√		
Curriculum development; access to materials; best practice; embedding	FE							√	√				√	√		√	√	√
	ACL							√	√		√		√	√		√		√

																Membership organisations	
	WB L						√	√				√	√		√		√
Learning and support material development	FE		√				N	√					√		√	√	√
	AC L						N	√		√			√		√		√
	WB L		√				N	√					√		√		√
Bank of accessible, adaptable, high-quality learning materials	FE	√	√				N	√					√				
	AC L	√					N	√		√			√				
	WB L	√	√				N	√					√				
ICT infrastructure provision and development	FE							√						N			√
	AC L							√						N			√
	WB L							√						N			√
Support for learning platforms and specific applications	FE				√		N					R	√				√
	AC L				√		N					R	√				√
	WB L				√		N					R	√				√
Procurement advice for software and hardware	FE				√			√				R		√	√	√	√
	AC L				√			√				R		√	√		√
	WB L				√			√				R		√	√		√

Annex A: Outline of Research Methods

Research process

- 1 The research process involved the following steps:
 - discussion with limited number of key players (scoping, link with other ongoing work, exploring overall background)
 - review of appropriate existing research, reports and papers
 - identification of a limited number of first-round provider consultations
 - develop database of individuals in LSC providers for wider consultation
 - face-to-face discussions with 33 first-round consultees across a range of providers in different sectors across the UK
 - development of survey questions, informed by initial discussions and agreed by key players
 - interim report of findings from first-round consultations
 - web-based survey distributed widely to LSC providers (FE, WBL and ACL and PCDL)
 - additional face-to-face, telephone and email consultations
 - final consultations with key players
 - data analysis and reporting
 - stakeholder task and finish workshop to consider recommendations.

Methodological issues

- 2 It is not possible to ascertain the overall response rate to the survey since the total sample of providers invited to participate was not known. This is because the survey was distributed with the help of a number of agencies using their own databases, thus ensuring that confidentiality was maintained. We can estimate however, that the survey was emailed to some 5,000 providers.
- 3 Although a response of just under 1,000 ensured a healthy sample from which to analyse data, responses to some questions were low, most notably in response to the size of organisation (570 or just over half of respondents did not complete the information), and on the question of location, where just over a third (329) did not answer. This meant that breakdowns of the data on the basis of these criteria were not reliable and were therefore excluded from the findings. However, it does not appear that answers to questions varied significantly depending upon either organisational size or geographical location.

- 4 The survey included a number of open-ended questions. These were coded and graphed to enable patterns in responses to be reported. There was no limit on the number of responses and therefore the total numbers responding varies for each question.
- 5 Not all respondents completed the questionnaire fully. The total number of respondents therefore varies by each question. Poor response rates are highlighted where appropriate within the report.
- 6 Much analysis has been undertaken on the raw data seeking trends and differences (in particular between different sectors, levels or roles of staff, geographical locations and size of organisations). In most cases, differences were insignificant and therefore the presentation of analysis only concentrates on those areas where there are significant differences and other data is not broken down by category. Detailed quantitative and qualitative data from the survey is available separately.
- 7 The text of the consultation is reproduced below.

Initial consultation

Introduction from the LSC

E-learning support services for post-16 learning providers

The future role of public organisations providing e-learning and ICT support to post-16 learning providers is changing. At the moment, these organisations include Becta, the DfES Standards Unit, JISC regional support centres, NIACE and the LSDA. It is important that the LSC and DfES strategically develop the types of e-learning and ICT support services most needed and valued by providers, and this is our intention.

We have therefore commissioned research involving consultation with partners and providers to gather information which will help us determine the use of existing support services and what may be required in the future.

The research is being undertaken by CBEED Ltd on behalf of the LSC and DfES. Further details of this project are provided below.

I do hope that you will be able to support the research as it is important that we use resources in the best way possible to develop and embed e-learning in LSC-funded provision.

The project dovetails with other work currently taking place, in particular consultations that will lead to proposals for the future of the Regional Support Centre UK Network as it approaches its third round of funding. Funded by JISC, this work is being undertaken by Jon Duke and Andy Jordan [Duke and Jordan, 2006]. Together, the two projects will provide a comprehensive picture of support services and will help us develop the services needed.

Introduction from the consultants

E-learning support services for post-16 learning providers

We are working with the LSC and DfES to:

- map post-16 e-learning/ICT support services used by further education colleges, work-based learning providers, and adult and community learning providers
- determine the appropriateness of existing support services
- identify what e-learning support services are needed in the future.
- The project will help the LSC and DfES to strategically develop the types of e-learning/ICT support services needed by providers.

The first stage of this project is to talk with a small number of colleges, work-based learning providers, adult and community learning providers and other key players to discuss:

- what support services you currently use
- your thoughts about these services
- what support you would like to be available in an 'ideal world'
- how support services might be paid for
- any other issues pertinent to e-learning/ICT support services.

After we have completed our initial consultations, we will use the information gained to undertake a wider survey of post-16 providers.

We are currently identifying the first group of organisations to meet with, and wonder if you would help us by being involved in this research. We are particularly seeking organisations who have a broad overview of the key issues regarding support for e-learning delivered by post-16 providers.

I will telephone you within the next few days to discuss the possibility of us meeting (either face-to-face or by telephone). In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything, do please contact me, or any other member of our team (details below).

Survey 'trigger' email

E-learning/ICT support services for post-16 learning providers

The future role of public organisations providing e-learning and ICT support to post-16 learning providers is changing. At the moment, these organisations include Becta, Ferl/acLearn, JISC regional support centres, LSDA, NIACE, AoC Nilta, the DfES Standards Unit and a range of commercial organisations. It is important that the LSC and DfES strategically develop the types of e-learning and ICT support services most needed and valued by providers, and this is our intention.

We have therefore commissioned independent research involving consultation with partners and providers to gather information that will help us determine the use of existing support services and what may be required in the future.

Part of the research involves surveying post-16 providers funded by the LSC and we would be very grateful if you could access and complete the survey at the following website:

www.client-feedback.co.uk/e-learning/

We hope you will contribute to the survey as it is important that we use resources in the best way possible to support learning providers in the ways that they want.

This research dovetails with other work currently taking place, in particular consultations which will lead to proposals for the future of the Regional Support Centre UK Network; you may also recently have received a survey from this work - the two are complementary and do not duplicate one another. Together, the two projects will provide a comprehensive picture of support services and will help us to develop the services needed.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Bell, one of the researchers undertaking this work (chris@cbebd.co.uk).

Many thanks for your help.

Tony Burgess

Senior e-learning Policy Manager - Adult Learning

Learning and Skills Council

Jim Bennett

Standards Unit Strategy and Services – Post-16 E-learning Policy

Department for Education and Skills

Annex B: Survey Questions

NB The actual survey generally comprised a number of option boxes

1. Which category(ies) best describes your role? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Adult and community learning provider (ACL):

Senior manager

Manager

Curriculum leader

Tutor / learning mentor

Other

FE / specialist college:

Senior manager

Manager / team leader

ILT champion

Lecturer / tutor / subject specialist

NLN mentor

Person with responsibility for ICT / e-learning

Other

Work-based learning provider:

Senior manager

Manager / team leader

Person with responsibility for ICT / e-learning

Tutor / trainer / learning mentor

Other

Other role or other organisation – please specify

2. Size of your organisation - approximate number of FTE learners

<100

100-1,000

1,000-5,000

5,000-10,000

>10000

3. Where are you located?

East Midlands

East of England

London

North East

North West

South East

South West

West Midlands

Yorkshire and the Humber

Other UK

4. There are a number of organisations providing e-learning/ICT support services, which of these (a) are you aware of; and (b) which do you use?

Becta

Ferl / acLearn

LSDA

NIACE

AoC Nilta

NLN

Private providers (eg, commercial companies)

RSC / JISC

Standards Unit

5. What e-learning/ICT support services (a) do you currently use; (b) who provides it and (c) how useful do you find each of these?

NB in the questions below, by "advice or brokerage" we mean help provided through advice about a particular activity or development, or through putting people/organisations in contact.

By "support or facilitation" we mean actual involvement in undertaking a particular activity or development such as training provision or a conference.

Information about availability / review of e-learning products

Information about good practice

Information about latest developments

Information about research

Advice / brokerage about strategy / planning

Support / facilitation for strategy / planning

Advice / brokerage about teaching / learning

Support / facilitation for teaching / learning

Advice / brokerage about learning materials / content

Support / facilitation for learning materials / content

Advice / brokerage about technical networking issues

Support / facilitation for technical networking issues

Advice / brokerage about other technical issues (eg VLEs)

Support / facilitation about other technical issues (eg VLEs)

Support with accessing independent experts / bespoke support

Making contact with other people

Training and development for management staff

Training and development for other staff

Events / workshops / exhibitions - local

Events / workshops / exhibitions - regional or national

Do you use any other support services provided by any of the organisations listed, but not mentioned above? (please specify)

Do you use any providers of support services not listed above?(please specify)

If you use any private organisations, could you please specify who these are.

Any other comments about support services, for example their quality, anything that works particularly well, any gaps in availability of support.

6. What are the three most important e-learning/ICT support services that would you welcome in an 'ideal world' to assist you in planning and delivery of learning?

7. How do you think support services might be paid for?

All from 'central' funding (ie top-slicing the total provider funding allocation)

Core services paid for centrally, extras purchased by organisation

As a menu of full-cost services, allowing choice of what to purchase

By subscription with a sliding scale depending on what services are needed

By subscription with a sliding scale depending on size of organisation

No direct charge when service first established but then willing to pay

Any comments about payment for support services?

8. How do you think support services should be promoted?

9. Are there any other things you want to tell us about support services for e-learning/ICT?

10. If you are happy for us to contact you to discuss your responses, could you please provide your name and contact details.

Annex C: Survey Response Profile

- 1 A total of 954 responses were received to our electronic survey, mailed out just prior to Christmas 2005. Such a healthy response suggests a high level of interest and willingness to engage in issues concerning support for e-learning. This is perhaps underlined further by the high number of qualitative responses also provided within the survey (some 300 pages in all).

- 2 The majority of respondents came from further education (FE) (67 per cent), just over a quarter came from adult and community learning (ACL) (26 per cent) and only 6 per cent came from work-based learning providers (WBL). The particularly low response from WBL may reflect staffing pressures and lack of dedicated staff to address e-learning as highlighted by our qualitative discussions.

- 3 Details of respondents by sector and role are shown in Table C1.

Table C1: Respondents by sector and role.

Sector and role	Number	%
Adult and community learning (ACL)		
Senior manager	55	
Curriculum leader	47	
Manager	74	
Tutor	42	
Other	34	
Total	252	26%
Further education (FE)		
Senior manager	114	
Manager team leader	210	
ILT champion	82	
Lecturer tutor	55	
NLN mentor	5	
ICT/e-learning person	117	
Other	52	
Total	635	67%
Work-based learning (WBL)		
Senior manager	10	
Manager / team leader	16	
ICT/e-learning person	14	
Tutor / mentor	6	
Other	14	
Total	60	6%
Other	7	
Grand total	954	

- 4 Just over half (55 per cent) of those who responded to the question on the size of their provision had between 1,000 and 5,000 FTEs. The survey indicated that 6 per cent were large providers (more than 10,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) learners), and 14 per cent were mid-range to large with between 5,000 and 10,000 FTEs. A quarter (25 per cent) were from small providers (1,000 FTEs or fewer). However, the number of nil responses on the question was high at 60 per cent, suggesting that perhaps the majority of respondents were unable to provide information easily on the size of their organisation's provision. Responses are not therefore analysed on the basis of size due to the high non-response rate on this question.

Table C2: Number of responses by size of organisation in FTEs.

FTEs	Responses
<1,000	93
1,000-5000	205
5,000-10,000	54
>10,000	22

- 5 The number of responses from individual regions suggest (more or less) a normal breakdown for the country as a whole, although London, the South East and the West Midlands were somewhat under-represented. Surprisingly, responses to this question were low, with some 35 per cent not answering.

Table C3: Number of responses by region.

Region	Numbers responding	% responding
East Midlands	46	7.5
East of England	68	11.1
London	72	11.7
North East	46	7.5
North West	82	13.4
South East	109	17.8
South West	72	11.7
West Midlands	57	9.3
Yorks and Humber	62	10.1
Total	614	100.0
Other UK	11	1.2
No response	329	34.5
Total	340	35.6

Annex D: Functions of Key Support Agencies

1 The overview of functions of key support agencies that follows is derived from information from each of the agency websites.

ALT

2 The Association of Learning Technology (ALT) is a professional and scholarly membership association that seeks to bring together all those with an interest in the use of learning technology. ALT aims to:

- promote good practice in the use of learning technology in education and industry
- represent its members in areas of policy
- facilitate collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers

3 ALT organises:

- ALT-C, which is the UK's main academic conference for learning technologists
- occasional conferences on topics of interest to learning technology practitioners
- visits and exchanges
- regular workshops
- an annual policy board

4 ALT produces:

- regular and influential responses to consultations relating to learning technology and e-learning
- a fortnightly members' email digest
- ALT-J, an international, peer-reviewed journal devoted to research and good practice in the use of learning technologies
- a quarterly newsletter, published in print and on the web
- publications aimed at practitioners, sometimes produced in conjunction with other organisations.

AoC Nilta

5 AoC Nilta is an independent membership organisation that aims to facilitate the active participation of all staff throughout the lifelong learning sector in the development, use and exploitation of ILT through the exchange of ideas and expertise, sharing of best practice, facilitation of partnership and access to information, advice and support.

6 AoC Nilta:

- promotes the use of information and learning technologies (ILT) to influence the developing pedagogy that will underpin lifelong learning
- supports and actively promotes Government's goals for an ILT development plan that is learner focused, delivers high-quality learning and teaching and increases the skills and capacity of the workforce who themselves manage and deliver learning
- offers services to its members, particularly aimed at senior managers and governors, that allow them to be learning organisations with a continuous quality improvement cycle
- encourages and guides staff at all levels to give them confidence in the use of ILT; to engage ILT as an agent for change, and to unlock their creativity in exploiting ILT to improve the quality of learning and teaching and their management
- highlights exemplars of innovation, celebrates achievement, and ensures that good practice is cascaded throughout the sector
- works with commercial partners, bringing good practice to its members both through the dissemination of latest technological advances, and through the example it sets in the running of successful organisations
- works with its members and with those reviewing the quality of learning to ensure that the developing role of ILT within the curriculum and management process is clearly visible and understood by inspectors, funding bodies and local authorities, and the impact that ILT has on learning is meaningful and measurable
- works in partnership with Government, its agencies and sector bodies at national, regional and local levels to ensure that publicly funded programmes are best focused to achieve maximum results for practitioners and managers
- seeks out best practice from around the world and engages in study tours to and from the UK that allow practitioners, managers and policy-makers to share and benefit from ideas and innovation
- is committed to ensuring that there is equity of provision for all learners, whatever their circumstances, and promotes full awareness and understanding of equal opportunities for those delivering and managing learning.

Becta

7 The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) is the Government's key partner in the strategic development and delivery of its information and communications technology (ICT) and e-learning strategy for the schools and learning and skills sectors. Becta is a UK agency that supports all four UK education departments in their strategic ICT developments.

8 Becta's purpose is to apply the power of ICT to support learning. Becta provides strategic leadership on ICT and learning, helping to develop a

world-class education system. Becta guides and co-ordinates the necessary changes in policy and practice and brokers effective partnerships to establish and exploit reliable and sustainable educational technology.

9 In order to achieve this vision, Becta works to deliver the following strategic aims:

- influence the strategic direction of Government to take best advantage of technology
- work with the DfES to lead the delivery and development of the e-strategy on behalf of Government
- increase the number of educational organisations making strategic and effective use of ICT in order to improve educational outcomes
- develop a national digital infrastructure and resources strategy, leading to greater national coherence, improved reliability and affordability that is sustainable in the longer term
- inform and influence educational decisions by developing and disseminating high-quality evidence of the progress and impact of technology in education, technology innovation and effective practice.

CEL

10 The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) has a remit to foster and support leadership improvement, reform and transformation throughout the sector. It serves the existing and future leaders of all providers through programmes, events, support services and bespoke consulting assignments.

11 Its vision is:

- world-class educational leadership for every learner
- outstanding leaders, providers and partnerships
- inspired learning, learners, employers and skills development.

12 Its mission is to:

- improve the standard of leadership and the diversity and talent pool of leaders in the learning and skills sector.

13 Its values are:

- Learner driven: Learners and their improved learning are the focus and purpose of everything CEL does
- Promoting equality and diversity: CEL encourages, supports and celebrates all aspects of diversity
- Outstanding professionalism and performance: CEL strives for high standards with maximum impact and added value

- Innovation in action: CEL works in partnership to develop innovative and exciting learning solutions
- Inspiring staff: CEL encourages all staff to develop, stretch and learn to their maximum potential.

14 CEL's strategic aims are to improve:

- the overall standard of leadership in the sector
- leadership of provider performance for learner and employer success
- the diversity profile of sector leaders
- the supply of leaders to ease the succession crisis
- the quality and impact of research on leadership within the sector.

CoLRiC

15 The Council for Learning Resources in Colleges (CoLRiC) is a membership organisation (primarily for college resource centres). Its work includes:

- contacting and influencing people and organisations that are influential to the future of college learning resources services, such as further education inspectorates, funding councils, Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees, the Association of Colleges, and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
- accreditation and certification of college learning resources services and libraries
- giving Beacon awards to encourage innovation and excellence
- publishing guidelines and policies to help raise the profile and quality of learning resources service provision
- initiating research and development into areas related to the aims of CoLRiC, and taking forward plans from the research
- electing an executive committee from the membership of CoLRiC, which plans and implements future developments and initiatives
- providing internet pages and publishing a newsletter four times a year to keep members in touch with developments
- holding an annual meeting of Council each year, where all members can contribute directly to the future of CoLRiC.

Ferl

16 Launched in 1998, Ferl was originally an acronym for Further Education Resources for Learning, but in meeting the needs of its audience it has expanded its scope to include management, technology and teaching approaches as well as the use of online resources.

17 Ferl is now a web-based information service managed by Becta. It aims to support individuals and organisations within the post-compulsory education sector to make effective use of ICT and e-learning. Ferl does this via Becta

by providing online information services, but also conferences, publications and other events, often in collaboration with partners in the post-16 e-learning strategy programme.

18 Ferl's three main services are

- Ferl Update: a month-by-month summary of fresh developments on the Ferl site. It highlights important changes to the content and structure of the site, including a selection of newly added resources
- Ferl website: contains a wealth of information and materials for lecturers, teachers, facilitators, trainers, managers, ILT champions and support staff; in fact anyone involved in post-compulsory education. It aims to offer advice, guidance and examples on the use of ILT in all aspects of the post-compulsory education sector. This includes FE colleges, sixth forms, adult and community, workforce development, work-based learning and recently addressing 14-19 issues. The site also provides resources for use in teaching and learning, with guidance on how these could be, and have been, implemented
- Ferl publications.

JISC

19 The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) supports further and higher education by providing strategic guidance, advice and opportunities to use ICT to support teaching, learning, research and administration. JISC is funded by the UK post-16 and higher education funding councils.

20 The JISC vision is for "ubiquitous and reliable access to an information and communication environment, so that users are able to enjoy world-class technologies in support of their work and study."

21 JISC operates through a committee system, whose membership comprises senior managers, academics and technology experts working in UK further and higher education. JISC committees are supported by an executive, facilitating policy determination and the management of high-quality, JISC-funded services and strategic development programmes.

22 JISC provides:

- new environments for learning, teaching and research
- access to electronic resources
- a world-class network (JANET)
- guidance on institutional change
- advisory and consultancy services

- regional support for FE colleges through regional support centres (RSCs).

learndirect/Ufi

23 learndirect was developed by Ufi with a remit from Government to provide high-quality post-16 learning that:

- reaches those with few or no skills and qualifications and who are unlikely to participate in traditional forms of learning
- equips people with the skills they need for employability, thereby strengthening the skills of the workforce and increasing productivity
- is delivered innovatively through the use of new technologies.

24 To achieve this, Ufi aims to inspire existing learners to develop their skills further, win over new and excluded learners and transform the accessibility of learning in everyday life and work.

25 learndirect operates a network of more than 2,000 online learning centres across the UK, providing access to a range of e-learning opportunities. learndirect's flexible learning is available to individual adults wanting to improve existing skills or to learn new ones, and to employers looking for an innovative way to develop the skills of their workforce. learndirect offers more than 550 different courses covering a range of subjects, including management, IT, Skills for Life and languages at all levels. More than three-quarters of the courses are available online, allowing people to learn wherever they have access to the internet.

LSDA

26 The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) recently evolved into two separate organisations from April 2006. Its policy and strategic work have moved to the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) (see paragraph 37 below). LSDA programmes, research, training and consultancy projects are being delivered by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) (see paragraph 25 below).

LSN

27 The Learning and Skills Network (LSN) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation committed to making a difference to education and training. It aims to do this by delivering quality improvement and staff development

programmes that support specific government initiatives, through research, training and consultancy, and by supplying services directly to schools, colleges and training organisations.

- 28 LSN has evolved from the LSDA and continues to deliver its programmes from April 2006. LSN programmes support learning providers, their leaders, managers, teachers and trainers, to meet the challenges they face as the sector grows and develops. Funded by the DfES and LSC amongst others, each programme is designed to support a particular priority.
- 29 Partnership is a key way of working for LSN. LSN aims to work in partnership with funders to deliver the best outcomes for the sector, learners and the economy. Programmes and research are often delivered in partnership with other organisations that share these goals.
- 30 The Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) will be a key customer and stakeholder for LSN. Some of LSDA's existing contracts will transfer from other funders to the QIA, which will make the QIA an important LSN client. As the QIA issues contracts for its new programmes of work, LSN will compete with other organisations for these.

NIACE

- 31 The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) operates across England and Wales and is a non-governmental organisation working for more and different adult learners. Its aim is to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education.
- 32 NIACE is committed to:
- supporting an increase in the total numbers of adults engaged in formal and informal learning in England and Wales
 - taking positive action to improve opportunities and widen access to learning opportunities for those communities under-represented in current provision.
- 33 NIACE undertakes this work through:
- advocacy to national and local government, funding bodies, industry and providers of education and training
 - collaboration with providers across all sectors of post-compulsory education and training

- fostering progression routes for adults seeking to develop pathways as learners
- supporting evaluation and monitoring and high-quality service
- securing informed debate through research, enquiry, publication and seminars and conferences
- effective networking to ensure that lessons learned in one part of the system can be drawn on elsewhere
- ensuring that the best of international practice is available to its members and users
- a commitment to being itself a well-managed learning organisation.

34 NIACE fulfils its explicit commitment to more and different learners

according to the following core values:

- the celebration and promotion of active learning as a necessary condition for personal growth, social change and economic development
- equality of opportunity for all learners and those working on their behalf
- professional reliability based on integrity and respect, quality and accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- political independence within the voluntary sector
- democratic practice reflecting social justice and opposition to discrimination and oppression
- international solidarity with those who share our commitment to adult learning in the wider world
- consideration for the environment and for sustainable development in policies and practice.

NLN

35 The National Learning Network (NLN) was a national partnership programme designed to increase the uptake of ILT across the learning and skills sector in England.

36 The NLN has now concluded and information related to the post-16 e-learning strategy can be found at the Becta post-16 learning strategy website (www.becta.org.uk).

QIA

37 The Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) came into operation in April 2006 as a catalyst for excellence in learning and skills. It has been set up by the Government as part of the Success for All programme, created to speed up quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement.

38 QIA's role is to create a strong strategic focus on raising quality in the sector. It will be a critical friend and an honest broker to the learning and skills sector, aiming to raise the quality of education and training by inspiring a culture of self-improvement and by supporting the move to self-regulation. QIA will lead the development of a quality improvement strategy for the sector that will articulate a vision of excellence in the learning and skills system, indicate the priorities for improvement and strategic change that need to be addressed to achieve that vision, and set out how the national agencies will work with providers to deliver these priorities.

39 Probable contributions of core organisations to quality improvement are as follows.

- Providers have the primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision.
- DfES will develop the policy framework for post-16 quality improvement and establish programme and performance management and accountability arrangements for the QIA, the LSC, the inspectorates and other partner agencies. The aim is to create a coherent quality improvement system capable of effective delivery with clear accountabilities.
- LSC has the primary role for planning and funding of post-16 provision and will only invest in provision that is satisfactory or better. The LSC will monitor and review the quality of the provision it funds through discussions with providers on their development plans, which will be underpinned by self-assessment.
- Jobcentre Plus has a similar, but not identical, approach to quality review to that of the LSC. The rigour of the provider self-assessment report and the action plan will be used to inform the frequency of the monitoring and review process undertaken by Jobcentre Plus and the provider's own continuous improvement strategy.
- The inspectorates will decide on the scope and scale of inspection based on their analysis of provider performance. Inspection will be risk-proportionate, identifying provision that needs improvement and also making judgements about the effectiveness of providers' self assessment.
- QIA will lead on developing a single, co-ordinated quality improvement strategy for the sector, working with the funding bodies, the inspectorates and other core partners. Having identified the quality improvement priorities for the sector, QIA will commission improvement services and materials to enable the sector to develop and improve its capacity to deliver high-quality learning provision. QIA will quality assure these services and materials, giving providers confidence in what they purchase from suppliers in the marketplace. It will advise and support providers through tailored programmes of quality improvement where a need is identified, by providers themselves, or the inspectorates or funding bodies. It will help

providers to improve their own performance and respond effectively to national priorities, in particular 14-19 and skills strategies. QIA will provide a national focus to enable providers to learn from others in the sector. It will have an important role in promoting and supporting good practice in equality and diversity, working in partnership with the funding, planning and representative bodies to fulfil the collective responsibility of the sector for bringing about real improvements in diversity.

- Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) will provide a standards-based qualifications infrastructure that enables both initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) to be tailored to the needs of individual staff members and allow for easy progression to higher levels of award or to new areas of skills application, thus easing the route to achievement of an appropriately skilled workforce to provide a high-quality service to learners. It will also provide workforce intelligence data that allows institutions to benchmark their progress towards employing appropriately qualified staff to reflect the diversity of their learners.
- The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) will lead on providing research-informed leadership development and tailored leadership support to all provider organisations. It is also initiating sector-wide strategies and partnerships for succession planning, leadership and management capacity-building. A major CEL focus is providing positive action programmes to improve the diversity profile of sector leaders. CEL is working in partnership with all national agencies and in particular with LLUK to improve intelligence data on leadership and to revise and develop sector-wide leadership and management standards.

JISC RSC

40 The JISC Regional Support Centres (JISC RSC) exist to advise the learning providers of designated sectors to realise their ambitions in deployment of ICT in order to achieve their organisational mission. The network of JISC RSCs operates as a national service responsive to local needs through a strong sense of local ownership.

41 Specifically, RSCs:

- support designated learning providers in the development of e-learning capacity in the region
- act as a two-way, prime communication link between JISC and providers
- work in partnership with regional and national agencies to gain maximum value from support activity.

42 The current core remit for RSCs is:

- a Support learning providers, as identified by their respective funding bodies, in the development of e-learning capacity in the region by:

- providing guidance on provider infrastructure and systems development
 - identifying ICT staff development needs and then facilitating the delivery of activities to meet these needs
 - enabling curriculum staff to exploit the potential of ICT in the learning process through the identification, provision and access to appropriate resources and approaches
 - directing providers to appropriate sources of strategic, managerial, technical and other specialist advice
 - promoting the development of support networks among providers.
- b Act as a two-way, prime communication link between JISC and learning providers as identified by their respective funding bodies by:
- operating as the first point of contact on behalf of JISC within a region, except in the case of JANET connection faults
 - supporting the implementation of the JISC strategy
 - disseminating information about appropriate JISC services and resources and supporting their use
 - providing feedback to JISC on institutional needs with respect to ICT, in particular the suitability of existing services and resources and the need for additional ones.
- c Work in partnership with regional and national agencies to gain maximum value from support activity by:
- acting within a co-ordinated framework of support to providers
 - establishing and maintaining appropriate partnerships to further the RSC remit
 - enabling institutions to exploit opportunities available through regional and national initiatives.
- d operate within a defined financial and performance framework through:
- adherence to financial arrangements agreed with JISC
 - provision of reports to RSC UK office
 - striving to improve continually the quality of service.

UKERNA

- 43 The UK Education and Research Networking Association (UKERNA) manages the operation and development of JANET on behalf of JISC.
- 44 UKERNA is funded by the Government. It has a primary aim of providing a network infrastructure that meets the needs of the education and research communities. The concept of a community underpins everything UKERNA does, and the network is based on the need for organisations to communicate, collaborate and co-operate in the shared interests of education and research.
- 45 UKERNA's corporate plan for 2006-2009 (UKERNA, 2005) notes that it will:
- take responsibility for the networking programme of the education, learning and research communities in the United Kingdom

- research, develop and provide advanced electronic communication facilities for use within these communities
- facilitate the electronic connectivity of these communities to external third parties.

Annex E: The Three Most Important E-learning or ICT Support Services

1 Tables E1-E5, summarises responses to the open-ended survey question: “What are the three most important e-learning/ICT support services that would you welcome ‘in an ideal world’ to assist you in planning and delivery of learning?”.

Table E1: Responses describing first priority in most important e-learning or ICT support services.

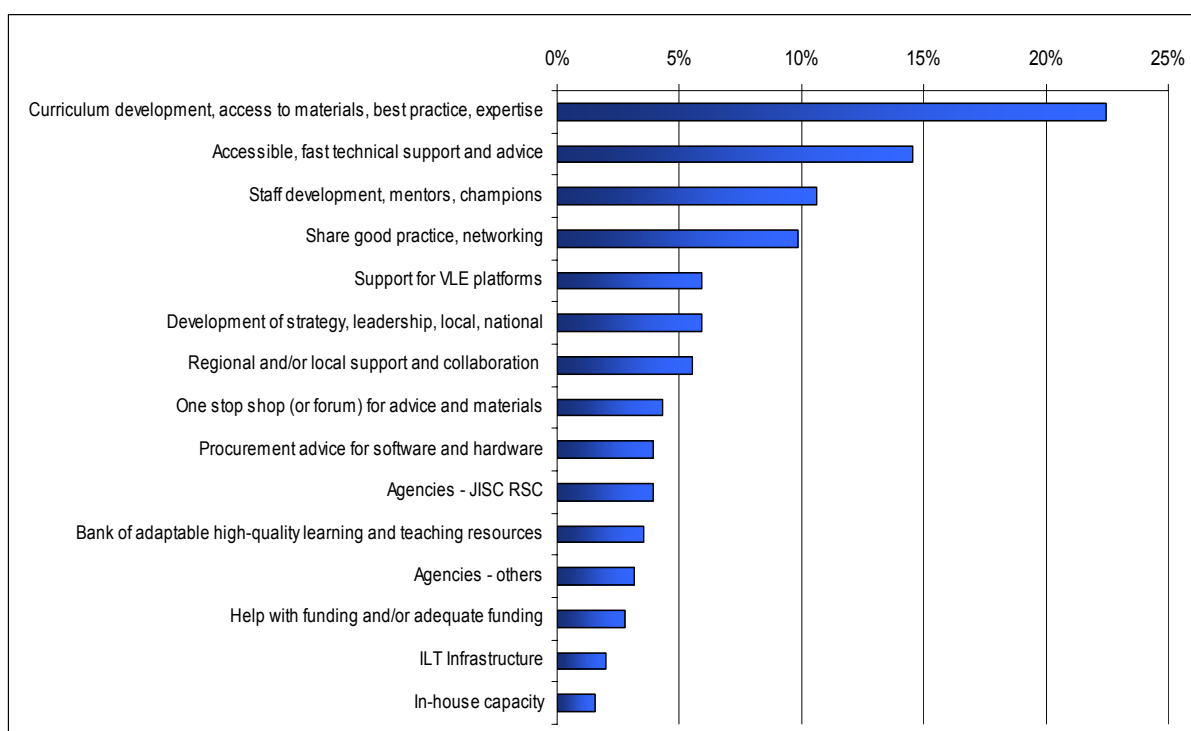


Table E2: Responses describing second priority in most important e-learning or ICT support services.

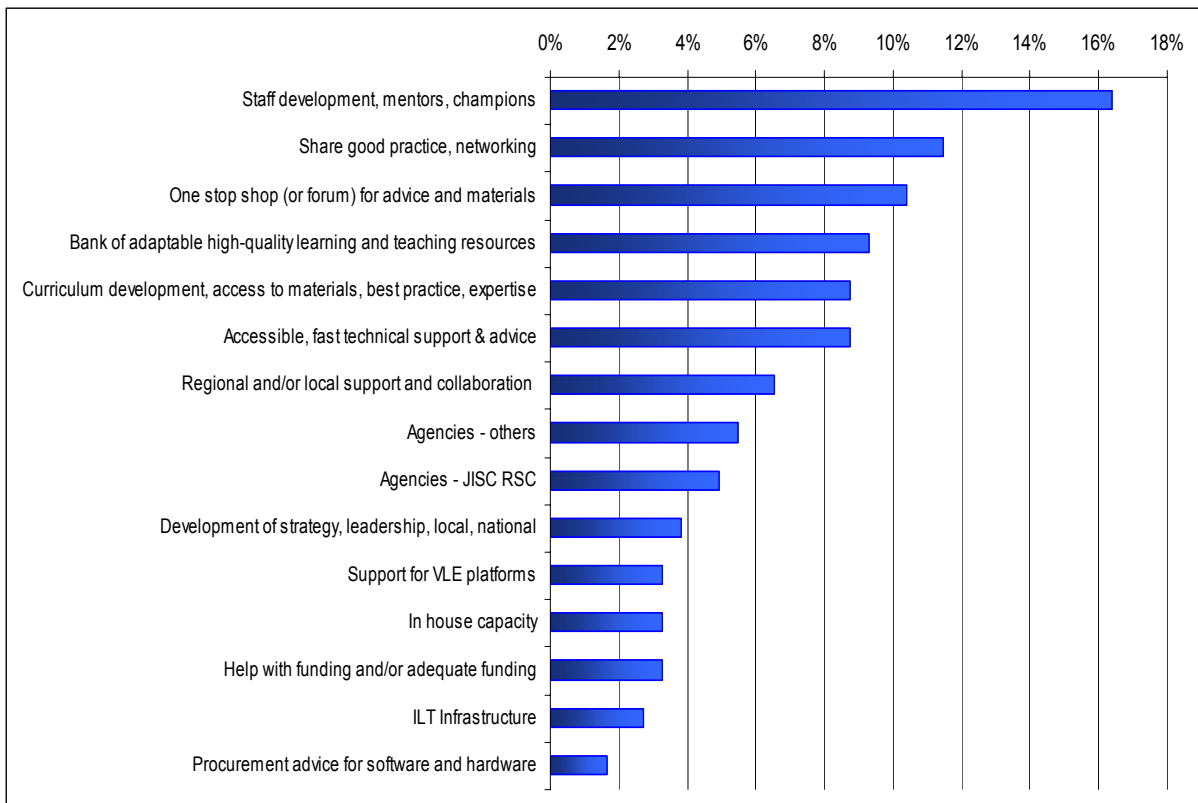


Table E3: Responses describing third priority in most important e-learning or ICT support services.

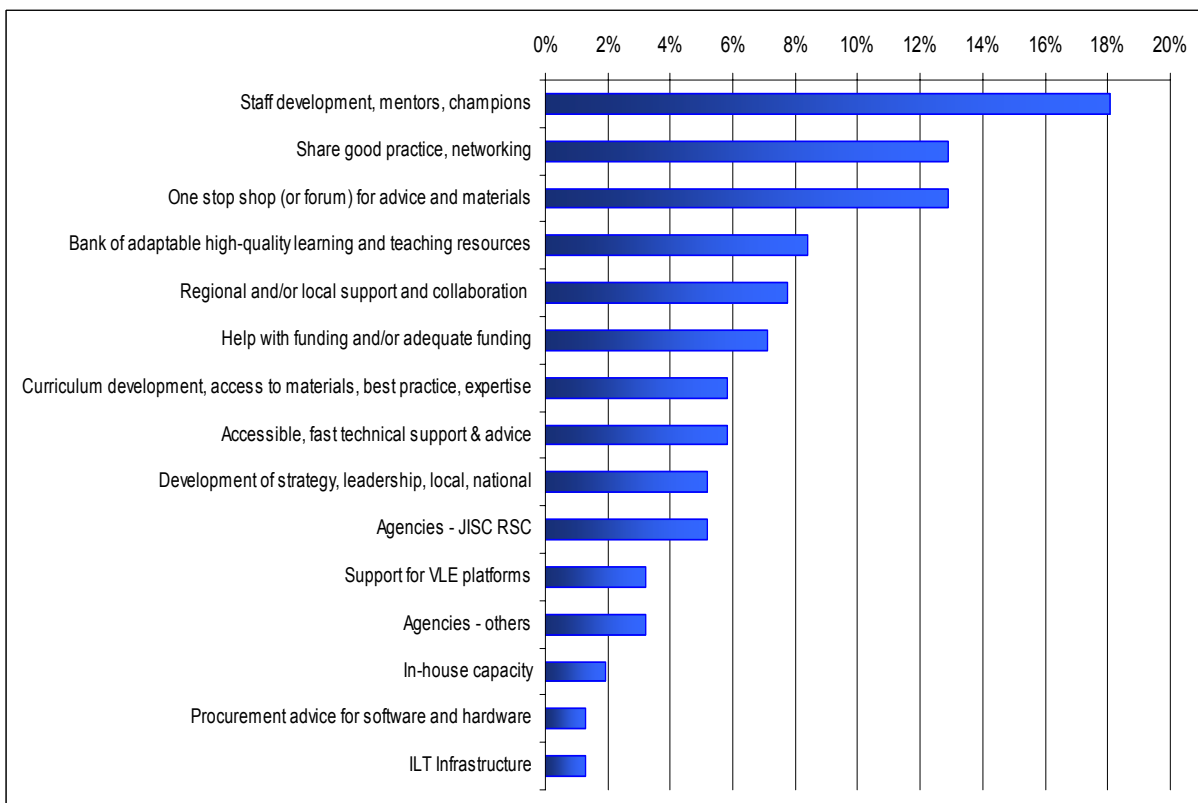


Table E4: Combined results of Tables E1-E3 weighted: first priority = 100 per cent; second priority = 67 per cent; third priority = 33 per cent.

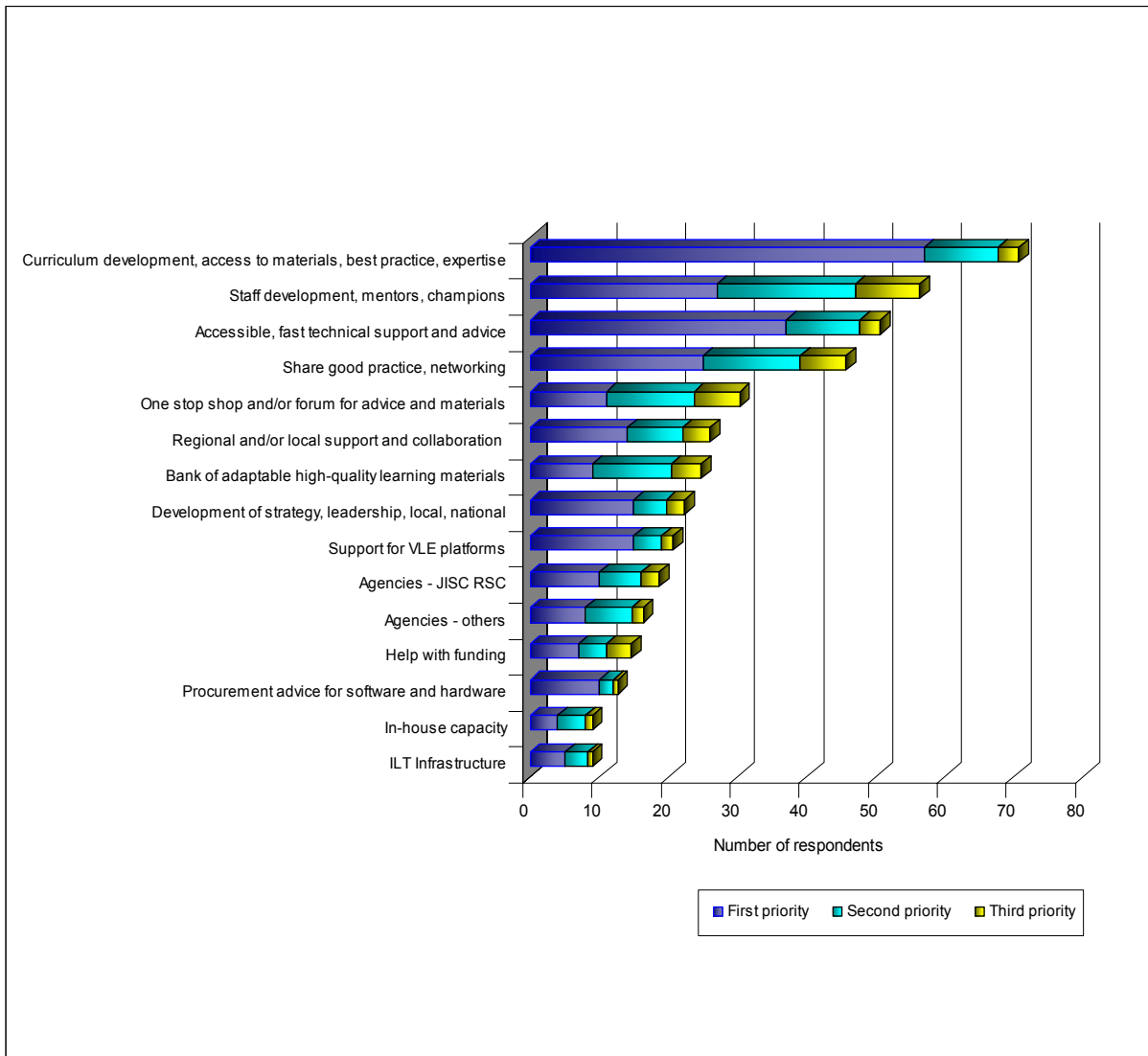
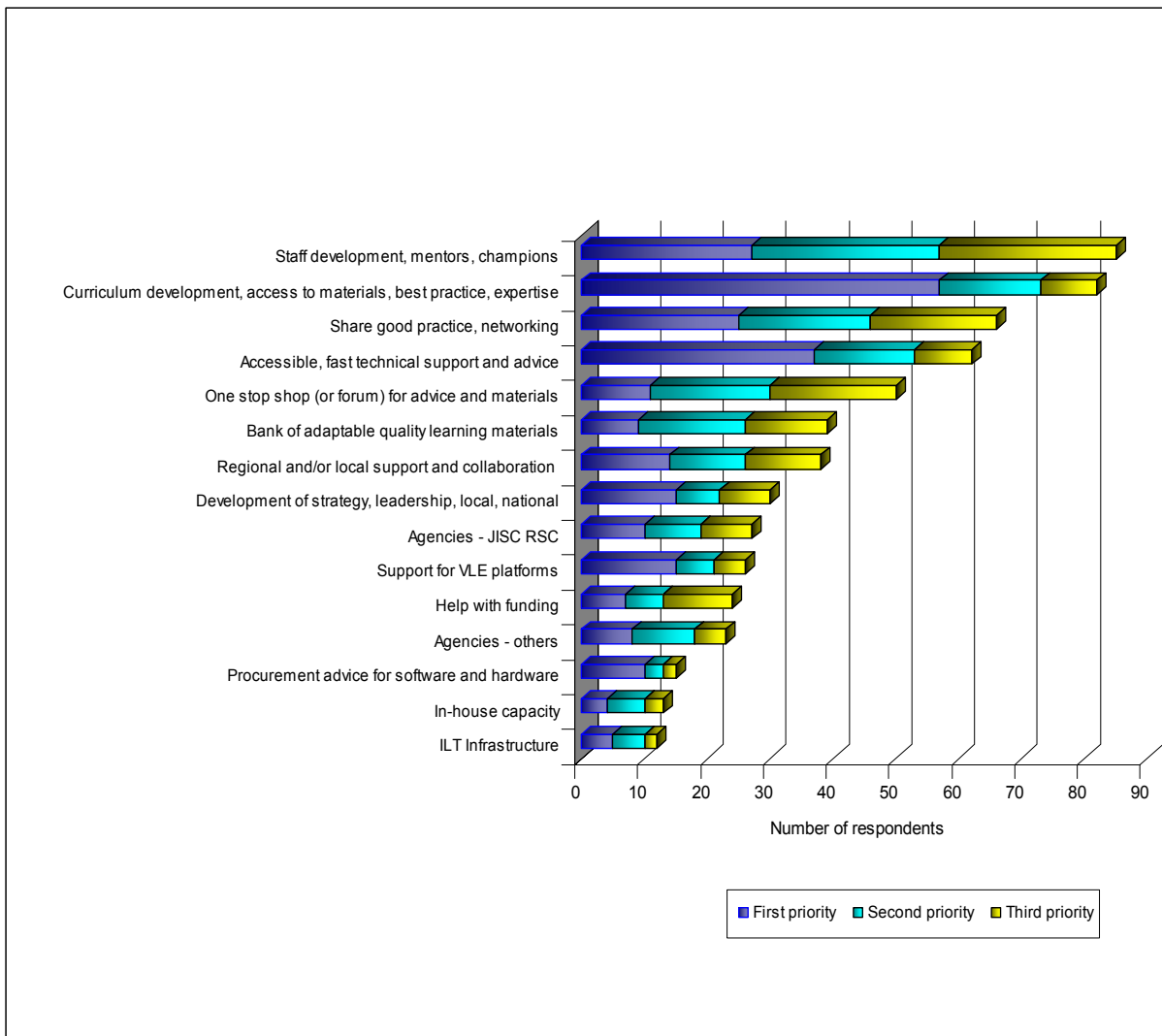


Table E5: Combined results of Tables E1-E3 - unweighted.



Annex F: Regional Support Centres - Further Considerations

Potential development

- 1 All three elements of this research (consultation, quantitative data from survey, qualitative data from survey) have highlighted the perceived value of RSCs in supporting the development and embedding of e-learning within the FE and personal and community development learning (PCDL) sectors. This finding is supported by the recent *Review of JISC Regional Support Centres* (Duke and Jordan, 2006). To date, very little support has been provided to the WBL sector although there are good opportunities to do so. We believe that there are good opportunities to consolidate and further develop services provided by RSCs, and therefore present potential scenarios for their structure and remit. However, we believe in practice this must be done not in isolation but within the overall context of developing coherent e-learning support services within a strategic framework (see Section 5).
- 2 Although not universal, RSCs have been highlighted particularly positively in terms of:
 - providers' knowledge of their existence
 - levels of use
 - quality of services.
- 3 Key factors in these areas include:
 - local accessibility, understanding of local issues, support tailored to provider needs
 - fit-for-purpose and wide-ranging support (including staff development, information, advice and guidance, person-networking, regional and local events, support with development of strategy and independent technical advice)
 - independence.
- 4 In addition, RSCs have received substantial investment and have ongoing worth, in particular:
 - their staff - both knowledge and credibility among most of those who use their services
 - well-developed regional networks
 - well-developed operational bases (generally within an HE institution).

- 5 However, and inevitably, there are opportunities for improvement and development. These include:
- a clear and widely understood remit regarding what services are provided, where the boundaries lie and relationships with other support bodies, in particular in respect of the four elements of strategy, content, practice and infrastructure
 - improvement of overall strategy, co-ordination and direction, aligned closely to national policy agendas and drivers, whilst not losing the benefits of a regional or local approach
 - improved collaboration with other support bodies (at strategic and operational levels, and nationally and regionally)
 - a wider reach to providers (for example in the survey, some 24 per cent of FE and 34 per cent of ACL and PCDL respondents indicated they did not know of their existence)
 - extending services to WBL providers
 - providing an equal standard of services across regions
 - clarity of, and sustainability in, funding which allows longer term planning, underpins future development and is linked to service delivery.
- 6 There is also the need to consider the role, funding and degree of coherence of the RSCs in each nation; however, this is beyond the focus of this work which was restricted to England, and this is a limitation in the development scenarios that follow.

Potential development scenarios

Possible action	Discussion
Do nothing	Possible, but likely to miss opportunities - both strategically and operationally - to further develop services to meet changing needs, to co-ordinate and rationalise services in order to help overcome some of the confusion perceived amongst providers, and to take account of the changing context in which RSCs are operating. If nothing is done, then mission drift and the development of other agencies (for example QIA and LSN) will possibly cause RSCs to become less effective.
Remove funding or close	Not a viable option if Government wishes to improve the quality of learning provision through continuing to provide support for the appropriate development and curriculum embedding of e-learning. If RSCs didn't exist, they would probably have to be re-invented.
Address structure, funding and remit of RSCs to provide services within a new, coherent framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree range of services to be provided by public sector support agencies and organisations (see paragraphs 38-47, 48- 57 and Annex E for needs identified in this study). 2. Agree arrangements for leading and managing support organisations and their broad remits (see Section 5 for a possible model). 3. Agree services led and contributed to by RSCs. 4. Agree location of RSCs. 5. Agree funding for RSCs. 6. Agree RSC internal structure. <p>See the sub-entries below for items 3-6.</p>
(3) RSC services	<p>The following include potential services to be led regionally by RSCs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> providing regional and local support and IAG; collaboration; networking on all learning and teaching aspects of e-learning, including availability and use of resources and moving organisations towards e-maturity <input type="checkbox"/> facilitating the sharing of good practice; networking; learning from each other' <input type="checkbox"/> supporting the provision and organisation of e-learning mentors, coaches and champions for FE and WBL providers <input type="checkbox"/> brokering and signposting staff development, organisational development and organisational capacity-building (and delivery of this if appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/> facilitating access to a single online portal for advice, intelligence and signposting <input type="checkbox"/> support for appropriate uses and embedding of specific applications (for example, learning platforms). <p>It is envisaged that RSCs would also lead other services; see Section 5 for details.</p>

Location of RSCs	<p>Currently this is agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding with JISC. Potential locations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> remain under the umbrella of JISC <input type="checkbox"/> become part of another body or organisation, for example LSN <input type="checkbox"/> establish an independent organisation (for example, company; non-profit-making body). <p>Whatever the structural location, the physical base needs to be considered. The current base of most RSCs within HE institutions appears to work well. However, if there were to be alignment with (for example) LSN, this could continue. Location in one of the organisations served by RSCs (for example a FE college) may not be appropriate. There are advantages in retaining a regional steering group.</p>
Agree funding for RSCs	<p>Issues to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> funding on a more sustainable basis <input type="checkbox"/> attuning funding to services and outcomes (perhaps using a service-level agreement <input type="checkbox"/> funding core services and allowing RSCs to secure additional funds either through sale of services or seeking additional funds (checks may be needed to reduce potential mission drift) <input type="checkbox"/> parity of provision across regions
Agree RSC internal structure	<p>Will need to be agreed by RSC and host as most appropriate to provide range of agreed services.</p>

Annex G: References

Duke, J and Jordan, A (2006), *Review for the JISC of the UK-wide Regional Support Centre (RSC) Initiative* at <http://dukeandjordan.co.uk/index.htm>

UKERNA, 2005, *Corporate Plan 2006-2009*, at www.ja.net/services/publications/corporate-plan/mission.html

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