E-maturity in personal and community development learning: Review report

April 2008

Conducted on behalf of Becta by SERO Consulting

Contents

Chapter 1 - Executive summary

1.1 Scope

Sero Consulting was commissioned by Becta to undertake an assessment of e-maturity in the English personal and community development learning (PCDL) sector of post-16 education and training from August 2007 to January 2008. Parallel assessments of e-maturity in English further education (FE) colleges, work-based learning and offender learning were commissioned at the same time from other contractors. For the purposes of this study, Becta has defined e-maturity as "the capacity and capability of individuals and organisations to exploit the power of technology to improve educational outcomes, measured across a number of dimensions including provision, practice, leadership, management and local strategy".

This follows a sustained period of national investment in infrastructure, learning resources and assessment instruments, delivered in the context of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) priorities (from 2001 onwards) and the Harnessing Technology strategy (2005).

The purpose is to measure e-maturity at both institutional and workforce levels. The findings will be used to help assess the effectiveness of current FE and skills e-learning policy in the light of recent developments in government strategy.

The approach was designed to consider a range of measures and therefore to provide a baseline against which subsequent progress in the sector can be gauged:

- ICT infrastructure provision for learners
- Use and development of e-learning resources
- Skills of teaching staff in relation to ICT and e-learning
- Their level of access to technology
- Deployment of ICT for teaching, learning, assessment and administration
- Extent and nature of use of e-learning by practitioners
- Practitioner views on the impact of e-learning
- Factors associated with the impact of e-learning
- Barriers and enablers to e-learning use
- Organisational vision and strategy for e-learning development.

In developing this baseline assessment, six specific issues were identified for consideration:

- How have provider and practitioner e-maturity developed over the past 12 months and what are the predictions for the next year?

- Have providers developed effective plans to develop e-maturity over the short, medium and long term?
- What are the key barriers to developing e-maturity (and why) and what needs to be done to address these barriers?
- What are the key factors in promoting technology provision and utilisation and how can they be further enhanced?
- How have providers and practitioners used technology to develop personalised learning resources and practices?
- What has been the impact of government reforms?

1.2 Methodology and approach

The methodology developed for this study involved three complementary survey instruments together with interviews and focus groups.

- A provider self-assessment
- A provider questionnaire
- A practitioner questionnaire.

The sample of 37 providers includes 26 local authority (LA) direct delivery services (70 per cent of the total), nine LA 'contracting out' (24 per cent) and two specialist designated institution (SDI) or voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. It was structured to include an appropriate mix of size and location (urban / populous / rural) and at least one from each LSC region.

The methodology involved 32 providers (18 per cent of the national total, representing 30 per cent of the total LSC funding for PCDL in 2006/07) in a process of self-assessment based on Becta's 'E-maturity Framework for Further Education' adapted for use in the PCDL sector. This methodology was identified to be of particular relevance as provider and practitioner engagement with e-learning and online services matures from the implementation and enthusiasm of early adopters to mainstreaming and the engagement of the wider organisation and learner community.

The self-assessment was linked to a separate provider questionnaire, which consisted of six sections containing 68 statements requiring a simple tick box response and a final section of four questions inviting free text responses. The areas explored were:

- management and staff capacity and capability
- infrastructure capacity and technical support
- learner experience and outcomes
- support for different groups of learners
- wider benefits from the general impact of e-learning and ICT policies

- specific impact of policies, external agencies and resources
- open responses covering hopes, good practice, challenges & change.

A total of 88 practitioners linked with those providers completed a separate questionnaire involving 60 statements including a practitioner profile. The areas explored were:

- ICT skills
- access to technology
- views on the impact of ICT and e-learning
- views on support for ICT and e-learning within their organisation
- use of ILT in their teaching
- impact of ICT on working patterns
- open responses covering hopes, good practice, barriers and recommendations.

The survey data was supplemented and validated through 49 interviews and focus group engagements with managers and practitioners from the provider sample.

It was agreed that the data and the analysis reported to Becta should be anonymous, with no reference to providers or individual practitioners.

The resulting report consists of four major chapters covering the PCDL landscape, survey findings and conclusions and the development of e-maturity models for PCDL. The highlights are introduced in the executive summary.

1.3 The PCDL landscape in England

1.3.1 PCDL coverage

PCDL activity is delivered as part of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) programmes by a complex web of providers, ranging from large local authorities and large FE sector colleges through specialist designated institutions to small voluntary and community sector organisations. This spread covers both urban and rural communities, across the full spectrum of economic well-being and social and economic deprivation.

Whilst the former ACL sector represents a useful starting point, PCDL has a perceptibly narrower footprint than ACL. Currently, the identity and characteristics of the PCDL sector remain somewhat opaque, with the impact of the Leitch review and resulting policy emerging from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the LSC not yet fully formulated.

There are currently just over 200 LSC funded providers of PCDL in England, of which a large majority are local authorities.

- 75 per cent of the local authorities are involved in direct delivery; several of these also support provision offered through community organisations which they fund, while some may also sub-contract some of their work to FE sector colleges. For these providers, the focus of the study is the e-maturity of the local authority service.
- The remaining 25 per cent of local authorities sub-contract most or all of their PCDL work to other providers, whilst retaining a management capacity; in these instances the focus of the study is on the local authority management unit and its direct and sub-contracted provision.
- Additionally, a number of FE sector colleges are funded directly for PCDL work by LSC. The overall analysis of colleges has been undertaken through the parallel FE sector survey; this study has examined some college provision which is delivered through local authority contracting out arrangements and also one FE sector college (a specialist designated institution providing exclusively ACL programmes).
- PCDL is also delivered by a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and one has been included in this study.

1.3.2 PCDL characteristics

As the impact of funding reforms work through the post-16 system, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has articulated key concerns:

- Over-19 learners will only be funded after meeting needs of priority groups (especially 16-18)
- Concentration on the 'Level 2 Entitlement' and Skills for Life will narrow opportunities, notably in First Steps Learning
- Historical diversity of providers and provision, a strength in terms of local context, is a weakness in terms of economies of scale, consistency, parity of learner experience and effective communication.

A number of significant differences between PCDL providers, FE sector colleges and work-based learning (WBL) providers should be noted:

- They are generally not 'self-determining'
- PCDL is an extremely 'part-time' environment for both learners and tutors, even managers
- PCDL programmes are very varied, in some cases (eg community development, regeneration projects) not even an overt learning programme, more a set of structured activities
- There is a long tradition of negotiation with the learner over what learning takes place.

- PCDL has little in the way of formal "additional learning support" or "drop-in workshops" and very little by way of learning resource centres
- Provision is highly dispersed (some providers use over 100 venues), usually in premises not owned or controlled by the provider and often with strictures/limitations on their use
- Learning is rarely accredited
- Historically the workforce has been recruited for its subject expertise and thereafter been given in-service training
- There is a recent downward trend in public funding after a number of years of growth.

1.3.3 PCDL and e-learning policy

Whilst it is necessary to be cautious about creating artificial continuities and discontinuities, it is useful to break e-learning policy over the recent past into three identifiable phases.

The period prior to the ACL National Learning Network (NLN) Strategic Working Group report (2003) saw an emphasis on supporting skills for the 'information age'. New technologies were seen to have the potential to increase 'citizen' engagement with commerce, with local and national government and with enhanced community cohesion.

In parallel there were clear ambitions that new technologies would increase the reach of providers and the breadth and quality of their offer. The ability to provide learning opportunities at a "pace, place and time" to suit the learner was seen as central to widening participation. Government backed the policy ambitions for access and education with four key planks of policy - Wired up Communities (WuCs), Ufi Learndirect, UK online centres and Computers Within Reach (CWR). Whilst the priorities of access and education were largely complementary, they also created some tension and confusion within the sector during this period.

The ACL NLN Strategic Working Group report signalled growing maturity and confidence, at least in terms of strategic leadership. This report articulated the need for ACL provision to be appropriate to the needs of the sector. Consequently, additional funds were secured in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to bring parity with and also to exploit the investment in the FE NLN sector. The central tenets of this strategy were:

- comprehensive connectivity through SuperJANET
- an ACL specific NLN materials development programme
- a national continuing professional development (CPD) programme for ACL staff

- an investigation into the relevance of managed learning environments (MLEs) and virtual learning environments (learning platforms) to the ACL sector.

Much of the current PCDL e-learning provision can be attributed to this second phase.

The third phase commenced in 2005 with the publication of Harnessing Technology, which seeks to present an adaptable framework universally applicable to all education sectors, including PCDL. However, Harnessing Technology adopts something of a blanket approach to the varied post-16 sub-sectors, which has meant that some of the distinctive features of PCDL have not been differentially addressed.

The PCDL sector has therefore seen significant development in its e-learning capacity in recent years, although progress is patchy, varies between regions and subject areas, and is more evident in local authority maintained providers than in organisations within the voluntary and community sectors. However, the PCDL sector is facing a unique combination of systemic and organisational challenges in progressing towards e-maturity:

- Multi-site working, often in non-managed venues and outdated building stock
- Fragmentation of provision, alongside a vast and unstable curriculum offer with low critical mass in some subject areas
- High numbers of part-time tutors and high turnover, with consequent difficulties in CPD
- A generalist management structure, further challenged under outsourcing arrangements
- Problems in nurturing e-learning partnerships across a very diverse topography, especially in rural areas
- The added complication of commissioning and its weakening of control and strategic direction
- Capital investment issues particular to smaller providers dependent on non-recurrent external funding.

1.4 Findings

1.4.1 EMF43

The E-maturity Framework for Further Education based self-assessment ('EMF43' on account of the number of criteria) was undertaken by 32 PCDL providers, ranged across all nine LSC regions and including numbers of LA direct delivery, LA contracted out and non-LA providers proportional to the make-up of the sector.

The overall outputs from the self-assessment indicated that these providers could be classified in four groups, broadly corresponding with the levels of e-maturity in EMF43:

1   3 providers (9%) where ICT and e-learning are largely embedded
2   11 providers (34%) where e-enablement is largely established
3   12 providers (38%) who are developing aspects of e-maturity
4   6 providers (19%) at the early stages of developing ICT and e-learning

The EMF43 instrument examined the five E-maturity Framework for Further Education environmental and process areas – Contexts, Resources, Learning Support, Learning and Teaching and Management. The high level observations are of significance in understanding the core strengths and weaknesses of e-enabled learning in the PCDL sector.

- The average scores for Contexts, Resources, Learning Support and Learning and Teaching are uniformly at the 'developing' stage in the sector overall.
- Only in Management has the sector yet progressed towards 'established' use of technology.

This pattern of provider response is evident when data is aggregated under the five E-maturity Framework for Further Education process areas. The following visualisation (known as a 'carpet' in e-maturity circles – see figure 1 below) ranks the 32 institutions on the basis of their overall self-assessment, clearly illustrating the four bands of provider e-maturity and the divide between management and the other process areas, as described above.

Management is widely self-assessed as the strongest theme. Two sets of averages are given in the right hand column which include and exclude the Management theme. In terms of e-maturity on the ground, this second column is likely to give a truer reflection of the current state of the sector. The average scores for Contexts, Resources, Learning Support and Learning and Teaching are uniformly at the 'developing' stage in the sector overall - only in Management has the sector yet progressed towards established use of technology.

The underlying 'weave' of the carpet identifies areas of relative strength and weakness regardless of size, location or management model, notably in the Resource and Support areas:

- Strengths
  - R4 - 'There is an effective technical infrastructure with adequate connectivity'
  - R5 - 'Data is kept securely and risk minimised'

- Weaknesses
  - o R9 - 'Learning tools are used to personalise learning'
  - o R10 - 'ILT is used to facilitate self-managed learning'
  - o S6 - 'There is appropriate use of e-portfolios'
  - o S7 - 'Learners make use of social and learning networking opportunities'

The 'carpet' represents e-maturity scores based on a traffic light 'RAG' model:

Colour	Assessment
(green)	Very good / very strong
(yellow)	Good – largely established
(orange)	Developing – largely adequate
(red)	Weak – not yet started / early stages
	Not answered / don't know

Rank order	Management	Contexts	Resources	Support	Learning		Average	Excluding Mgmt
1							3.1	3.1
2							3.0	3.0
3							2.9	3.0
4							2.9	2.8
5							2.7	2.8
6							2.8	2.8
7							2.7	2.7
8							2.6	2.7
9							2.6	2.6
10							2.6	2.5
11							2.5	2.5
12							2.5	2.5
13							2.5	2.4
14							2.5	2.4
15							2.4	2.3
16							2.5	2.3
17							2.4	2.3
18							2.2	2.2
19							2.3	2.2
20							2.2	2.2
21							2.2	2.2
22							2.2	2.2
23							1.7	2.1
24							2.2	2.1
25							2.4	2.0
26							2.1	1.9
27							1.8	1.8
28							1.7	1.7
29							1.6	1.6
30							1.7	1.5
31							1.5	1.5
32							1.4	1.3
Ave	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.3			

Figure 1: High level 'carpet' or provider self-assessments of e-maturity

1.4.2 Provider questionnaire

The complementary provider questionnaire was completed by 36 providers. The key findings for each section were:

- Management and staff capacity and capability: there are wide disparities between providers. Most feel confident in strategic leadership, awareness and management of e-learning/ICT, but find difficulty putting these into practice. Specifically, there is lack of confidence in skill e-enabled teaching skills (content creation and sharing, online teaching and the use of diverse media).

- Infrastructure capacity and technical support: again, wide provider disparities exist. On-site provision and support is strongest - particularly for staff (but not learners) and in local authorities making direct provision. Off-site provision is weak across the vast majority of the sector.

- Learner experience and learner outcomes: similar provider disparities exist. The highest levels of confidence were in support for learners' experiences and outcomes. However, there are generally low levels of e-maturity throughout this section, with low assessments and specific non-returns illustrating that personalised learning spaces have not yet penetrated the PCDL sector.

- Support for different groups of learners: a significant number of providers are unsure about the effectiveness of their service. The strongest areas are those related to groups with which they already have experience.

- Wider benefits of ICT and e-learning: the majority of providers lack confidence, with two key planks of policy (supporting e-democracy and encouraging community cohesion) scoring noticeably low levels of confidence. Providers also lack confidence that technology has reduced paperwork and the administrative burden, but there is more solid evidence of progress in the fields of family cohesion and e-safety.

- The impact of specific policies, external agencies and resources: providers report low levels of confidence in use of cultural sector resources. However, national learning programmes (eg NLN) appear to have had more significant impact and there are encouraging signs of engagement with the Extended School and Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programmes, though this is inconsistent.

1.4.3 Practitioner questionnaire

Practitioners from 24 providers supplied 88 responses. These generally echoed the provider questionnaire responses, further reinforced by practitioner voices in interviews or focus groups. Analysis should however recognise that this may not be wholly representative as e-guides and other enthusiasts were more likely to respond.

As illustrated, the six areas examined were all assessed by practitioners as being on average between 'OK' (Score 2) and 'Good' (Score 3), leaving considerable room for enhancement. Distinguishing between responses from e-guides and from others would further emphasise relatively low assessment.
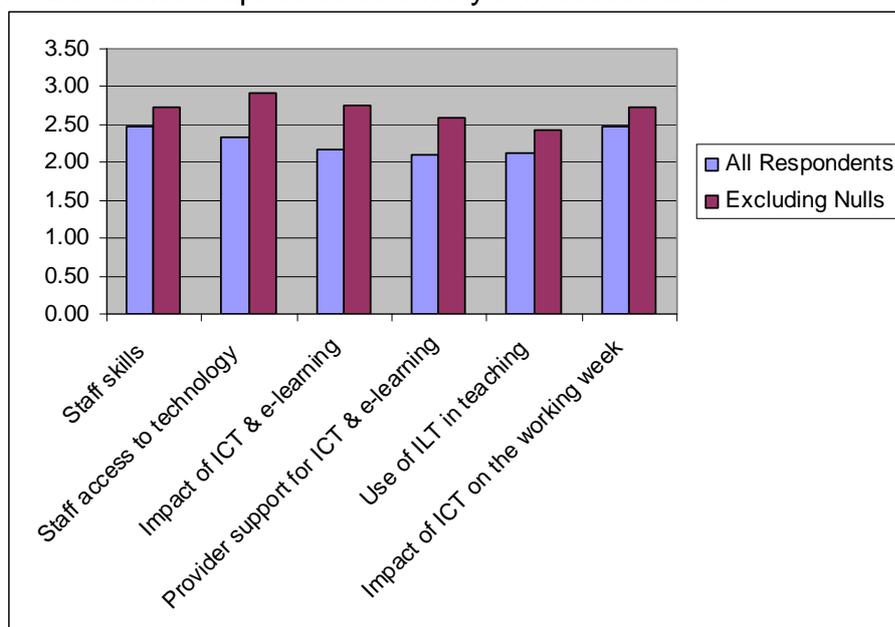
Figure 2: Practitioner assessments

Key indicators, including notable variations in spread and between questions, are summarised as follows:

Staff skills	80 per cent of respondents assessed their general use of ICT skills either as good or very good. However, over 60 per cent responded 'Poor' or 'Don't know' for their capability to upload content to a learning platform and also for ability to teach and facilitate online.
Staff access to technology	Responses indicated wide variations in access and facilities. 67 per cent reported very good access to a work-based computer, to the internet at work and to a computer away from work. However, smaller numbers reported positively on access to online resources whilst at work (58 per cent)**,** access to a learning platform (43 per cent) and wireless enabled access to their organisation's network (31 per cent).
Impact of ICT and e-learning	There were overall positive ratings for 12 of the 14 questions. 87 per cent believed that ICT and e-learning had allowed learners greater choice in learning opportunities - the second most positive score of the whole questionnaire. However 43 per cent reported negatively on effective learner use of a learning platform with 47 per cent non-responses.

Provider support for ICT and e-learning	Only in technical support for e-learners did more than 20 per cent of respondents rate their organisation as poor. Provision of technical support for e-learners and the take-up of e-learning beyond the enthusiasts were rated as poor by over 60 per cent of respondents. Therefore, whilst PCDL has historically been characterised by high levels of support to individual learners, this does not appear to have extended into the areas of technical support with e-learning and ICT.
Use of ILT in teaching	The good level of basic ICT skills amongst the sample is reflected in the 96 per cent who claim to be creating and using paper-based learning materials often, or all the time – the most positive response in the questionnaire. However, when the focus is changed to the creation of e-learning materials, this drops dramatically to 44 per cent. The extent to which practitioners use technology to develop personalised learning resources and practices appears even further limited.
Impact of ICT on the working week	Over 60 per cent of respondents identified time savings through the impact of ICT. This was strongest in lesson planning (72 per cent), record keeping (64 per cent) and lesson delivery (62 per cent). There were smaller gains reported in the assessment of learners' work, with 47 per cent reporting that ICT made no time difference to this. Interviews confirmed that whilst ICT may initially lengthen lesson preparation time, the prospect of re-usable resources offers real benefits in time saved and in the quality of learning materials used.

The main areas contrasting with, or strongly reinforcing, provider views were:

- reinforcement for the view that advanced e-learning skills (eg use of diverse media in teaching; content creation and uploading to a learning platform) are still thinly spread across the sector - at least partly a reflection of the absence of rich e-learning technology in many locations
- strong endorsement that e-learning and ICT had created greater choice in learning opportunities, contributing to improved retention and outcomes
- confirmation that most organisations have incorporated e-learning and ICT into self-evaluation processes - given added impetus by the access to funding which e-Learning Positioning Statements (eLPS) has generated
- confirmation that negligible progress has been made in personalisation linked to e-learning, a consequence of the typical PCDL learner mode of study as well as of technology challenges

- practitioners were more negative than providers about the levels of ICT and e-learning support within their organisations, in particular technical support for learners
- in contrast to the provider view, practitioners are generally positive about time-saving achieved by using ICT in teaching, record keeping and assessment.

The main barriers to progress and the most effective enablers identified through these instruments echoed those characterised in the PCDL landscape.

Although the increased availability of training was appreciated, notwithstanding problems of access and enthusiasm for unpaid training from many part-timers, there was an overwhelming view expressed that the priority target for future investment should be the provision of training ahead of infrastructure and software.

1.4.4 Interviews and focus groups

In the study, 49 practitioners and managers from 24 providers were interviewed by telephone or participated in focus groups. As might be expected, e-guides were relatively strongly represented, with over 50 per cent of respondents in this category. Key opinions which were well evidenced in discussion are summarised as follows:

Capacity and capability	The use of digital resources was reported to be patchy. There were examples of both management reluctance and tutor resistance to adoption, especially in rural areas with connectivity issues. It was recognised that taking e-learning beyond the enthusiasts typically involves a long journey.
Technology infrastructure	Unlike in the FE college sector, last mile connectivity is still a significant barrier to adoption, especially in the large number of smaller venues, such as church and community premises. To some extent related, the lack of an accessible learning platform inhibited the circulation of resources. With learning platform provision patchy and most learners attending one or two classes per week at most, it is unsurprising that personalised learning spaces are still virtually unknown in PCDL.
Technology support	Earlier NIACE surveys have highlighted the low level of technical support in many providers and interview and focus group comments confirmed that there is substantial room for improvement.
Technology policies	From the entire sample, only the one large specialist college had a full and detailed policy on e-safety, which

	formed part of its overall IT Systems policy. In a minority of LAs there had been active measures to modify blanket council policies in the interests of learners.
Learners and outcomes	Inevitably, PCDL learners were described as bringing a full spectrum of existing IT skills to the table, some equating IT skills simply with the hardware. There was almost universal appreciation of the added value for learning through imaginative use of technology. Teachers gave evidence of an imaginative range of strategies for tackling reluctance, whilst emphasising that the context must be appropriate. The use of technology to improve communication with learners was reported as patchy, but some significant potential was illustrated.
Efficiency, effectiveness, value for money	Many staff appreciated that the adoption of ICT would enrich learning and teaching and save time in the long run, but not necessarily in its early stages. Technology adoption was reported to have made a positive impact on staff communications. Not all gains will apply to this sector – for example, given that pure PCDL courses are by definition non-accredited, e-assessment has generally only impacted where NVQs are delivered as part of a programme.

Enablers and barriers	Five key enablers were emphasised in progressing towards e-maturity:
	    o Staff time
	    o Staff training
	    o Technical support resources
	    o Collaboration between providers
	    o Sustained funding.

1.5 System wide perspective

1.5.1 The Harnessing Technology Balanced Scorecard

The outputs from the EMF43 self-assessment and the provider questionnaire responses have been combined and mapped against the current Becta Balanced Scorecard for Harnessing Technology.

The Balanced Scorecard table aggregates e-maturity scores in the range 1 (low) to 4 (high), coded as follows:

- green - 'embedded' areas
- yellow - 'established' areas
- orange - 'developing' areas
- red - areas demonstrating no progress or in the early stages of adoption

It must be noted that the 19 Balanced Scorecard cells are not all mapped to each data source and, conversely, that some data map to more than one Balanced Scorecard cell. Nevertheless the mapping provides a valuable high level representation, indicating that the PCDL sector is generally at the 'developing' stage with respect to the adoption of technology and e-learning, with over half the individual indicators falling into this category.

Within this overall assessment, three individual indicators stand out:

- Learner focused assessment is relatively highly rated, to the extent that good practice is generally embedded across the PCDL sector.
- Little progress has been made in personalisation, at least with respect to the use of technology. The concept of a personalised learning space is foreign to most PCDL learners; for example, a personalised learning space within a learning platform it is likely to be low priority for a learner attending a single recreational class for two and a half hours per week.
- The relatively low level of learner capability in using technology reflects the continuing high demand for entry and low level courses, not least in ICT.

1 Capability and capacity of the workforce, providers and learners	2.25	3 Outcomes and benefits for learners	2.32
1.1 Leaders have the knowledge and skills to ensure technology for learning can be harnessed for the benefit of learners	2.43	3.1 There is a greater choice in learning opportunities and modes for all learners	2.25
1.2 Institutions and providers plan and manage technology for learning effectively and sustainably	2.39	3.2 Learners have increased motivation for engagement in learning	2.53
1.3 Practitioners exploit technology consistently to offer engaging and effective learning experiences	1.99	3.3 Fewer learners under-perform or fail to succeed in education	2.64
1.4 Practitioners, parents and learners can share and use information and data effectively	2.58	3.4 An improvement in the quality of learning provision is accelerated	1.94

for the benefit of learners			
1.5 Improved learner capability in using technology to support their learning	**1.84**	3.5 There is improved child safety and child protection	**2.23**
2 Fit for purpose technology and systems	**1.95**	**4 Efficiency, effectiveness and VFM across the system**	**2.23**
2.1 All learners and practitioners have access to the appropriate technology and digital resources they need for learning	**2.10**	4.1 Learning providers collaborate and share information and resources	**2.16**
2.2 Every learner has a personalised learning space to enable them to learn when and where they choose	**1.24**	4.2 The management and administration of learning and institutions is more efficient	**2.00**
2.3 Technology-enabled learning environments are secure, supported and interoperable	**1.94**	4.3 There is a greater level of effective, learner- focused assessment for learning	**2.95**
2.4 There is a dynamic, vibrant and responsive technology market that can meet the needs of the system	**2.53**	4.4 Practitioners collaborate and share good practice and learning resources	**2.14**
		4.5 There is good use of information to support learner transitions between institutions and sectors	**1.88**

Figure 3: Provider assessments of e-maturity mapped against Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard aggregation demonstrates that 'Fit for purpose technology and systems' is noticeably the weakest quadrant. Although it is depressed by the particularly low score for indicator 2.2 ('personalised learning space'), it scores low overall. This is likely, at least in part, to reflect scattered delivery locations and particularly issues of older buildings and 'last mile' connectivity. It is likely that this also reflects a lower level of investment in infrastructure and hardware than has been the case in mainstream FE. It may be significant that there is a particularly low score in local authorities that contract out all or most of their provision.

1.5.2 Situational differences

The data can be aggregated to give high level views of key provider subsets. Of great interest is the relative self-assessment of providers using different contracting models, in contrasting geographies and of differing sizes, as illustrated:

Provider Types	1 Capability and capacity of workforce, providers and learners	2 Fit for purpose technology and systems	3 Outcomes and benefits for learners	4 Efficiency, effectiveness, value for money across the system
All	2.25	1.95	2.32	2.23
Contracted out	2.18	1.75	2.29	2.20
Local Authority direct	2.20	1.97	2.35	2.24
Urban	2.33	2.08	2.49	2.38
Populous	2.20	1.88	2.24	2.14
Rural	2.01	1.88	2.10	2.02
Very large	2.41	2.20	2.51	2.26
Large	2.15	1.91	2.26	2.20
Medium	2.22	1.80	2.29	2.16
Small	2.15	2.05	2.33	2.34
Very small	2.23	2.01	2.48	2.29

Figure 4: e-maturity carpet by provider type and location

There is clear indication that rural and small PCDL providers have found it more difficult to reap the benefits of technology adoption, which are reported strongest in very large urban areas. Meanwhile, the sample suggests stronger developments under local authority direct delivery than in contracted-out settings. Whilst larger samples would be required to substantiate these indications, it is notable that the questionnaire and interview evidence supports these broad differentiations.

1.6 Signposts

1.6.1 Provider challenges

The PCDL study has identified potential areas of improvement for providers, some with systemic implications.

Area 1 - Management and staff capacity and capability

- Skills in teaching and facilitating online are still very limited in the sector. This is at the root of several other practices self-assessed as weak. If the staff development issue can be addressed, then the impact will be felt throughout the learner experience.

Area 2 - Infrastructure capacity and technical support

- Off-site provision for learners is extremely variable, including technical support.

Area 3 - Learner experience and learner outcomes

- Tracking learner progress should make more beneficial use of ICT.
- The value and availability of personalised learning spaces should be understood in the context of PCDL.

Area 4 - Support for different groups of learners

- Differentiation is poor beyond established local learner specialisms.
- E-enabled learning in the PCDL setting could specifically benefit carers, travellers, ex-offenders and adults isolated by geography, health or physical mobility.

Area 5 - Wider benefits of ICT adoption

- There remains real opportunity for ICT to reduce administrative burdens.
- PCDL can make a greater contribution to opening up e-government, e-democracy and other public e-services.

Area 6 - Impact of specific policies, external agencies and resource

- Much more use could be made of funded cultural sector resources - in particular the National Archive (eg Moving Here, CASBAH), Culture Online resources (eg City Heritage, Headline History), regional Museum, Libraries and Archive Council (MLA) resources (eg through Renaissance, Sense of Place South East (SoPSE)) and the British Library.

1.6.2 Systemic issues

Equally, there are a number of systemic issues which are limiting progress:

Issue 1 - Staff development

- This is self-assessed as the most fundamental problem despite the investments and policy interventions of the past decade. At the roots of this are high numbers of part-time staff, high turnover, uncertain funding and the nature of employment contracts.

Issue 2 – Infrastructure

- On-site infrastructure is regarded relatively favourably, but other elements of infrastructure lag behind - notably off-site provision, learning platforms, technical support and the ability of learners to continue their learning away from the classroom.

Issue 3 - Disparities

- Not unique to ICT/ILT or e-learning, but nevertheless detrimental, disparities between providers remain of significant concern in the PCDL sector. Parity of experience and opportunity are central to the ethos of the sector and to government policy.
- There is disparity between strategic awareness and the reality of operational delivery. Self-assessment of management strategic awareness and ability were much stronger than those of the actual learner experience or staff skills in using the technologies. Management has increasingly understood the vision but not necessarily the means of making it a reality.

1.7 Priorities for action

1.7.1 Short and medium term

General

1. Further work should be undertaken to identify the drivers, policies and practices which have resulted in embedded e-maturity and e-adequate self-assessments in this survey.

2. Peer review is now being encouraged across the FE sector. Formal programmes of peer review and peer support for providers should make e-maturity explicit within this process and provide guidance on how to measure this.

Staff development

By 2010 Skills for Life teachers will be qualified or working towards a specialist Skills for Life teaching qualification at Level 5. By 2010 FE teachers will be qualified or working towards a qualification. By 2010, 100 per cent of staff registered with Institute for Learning (IfL) should have recorded a minimum of 30 hours continuing professional development (CPD) (less for part-time).

3. The response of the PCDL sector to teacher qualification requirements should be closely monitored to ensure that adequate and appropriate levels of e-learning/tutoring and ICT skills development are integral.

4. In conjunction with this, the relevant agencies should develop innovative approaches to CPD drawing on other successful non-schools programmes (eg in City Learning Centres or the cultural sector).

Infrastructure

The Extended Schools programme has the potential to have very significant impacts on PCDL IT provision. By 2008 the Extended School offering will form a component of the inspection regime and therefore there will be mutual benefits.

5. The involvement of PCDL providers in opening up schools facilities should be monitored, accelerated and expanded. Local authorities should be encouraged to ensure that PCDL providers are formally represented within the Extended Schools strategy development. This should be made explicit within the local authority inspection regime.

6. An assessment of the appropriate levels of human resources to exploit these facilities on behalf of PCDL learners and the associated CPD requirements should be driven from a national level in order to support local commissioning.

7. Strong guidance should be given to local authorities on the place of PCDL within the Building Schools for the Future programme. Not only should community access to the physical schools building be a key consideration from the tendering phase onwards (as it already is) but the possibility of technical support for PCDL through any procured managed service should also be investigated, working with Partnerships for Schools.

8. Regional Broadband Consortia should be encouraged to include PCDL representation within their management and governance structure.

Learner support

9.   Improvements in off-site support of learners and practitioners could be derived from the inclusion of PCDL considerations in the Building Schools for the Future programme.

10.   A targeted programme of personalised online space should be seeded in areas where need is clear (such as travellers or those with transient or chaotic lifestyles).

11.   The one provider that self-assessed very strongly across this category merits further investigation to draw out any transferable practices.

Cultural sector resources

12.   Contrary to the vision of the e-Learning Strategy, few providers are exploiting the investment in these cultural sector resources. A new strategy drawn up by PCDL providers and the cultural sector institutions should be a priority since little new money is required to make an impact. Development of this strategy must be focused on middle levels of management and key practitioners to ensure that the strategy translates to practice on the ground. This strategy should give consideration to nurturing and supporting local models of collaboration over e-learning resources.

1.7.2 Longer term

It is difficult to be prescriptive without studied consideration of the impact of long-term policy trends and shifts, which are outside the scope of this study. It is, however, important to emphasise that e-learning will not stand on its own, immune to outside pressures and changes in the external environment. The following long-term shifts should be considered:

13.   Consideration should be given to the establishment (identified through consensus within the sector) of a single voice to speak on behalf of the PCDL sector with regards to ICT and e-learning. This should take its place in the strategic decision making processes for ICT across FE and adult learning, children's services and schools and, ideally, higher education.

14.   All future e-learning research and policy development within the wider FE sector should be explicit in its assessment and potential outcomes for PCDL.

15.   Consideration should be given to revisiting the government approach of 'proofing' policy. This was previously employed to a) assess the positive impact a policy may have on other sectors and b) ensure that a policy did not have an unintended negative impact. Those developing wider and mainstream e-learning

policy should be required to make an assessment of the tangential impact on the PCDL sector.

16. Staff development should be formalised and regularly independently monitored and updated to ensure its quality, relevance and currency.

17. Whilst not all PCDL courses are appropriate for intensive use of technologies, nearly all PCDL learners would benefit from enhanced services, such as pastoral support, which technology can offer through inexpensive and efficient communication channels. This should be a focus of a stand-alone CPD enhancement for all PCDL tutors.

1.8 Provider change focus and payback

Finally, we highlight the areas of greatest weakness where resolution potentially offers the greatest impact.

Seven of the statements in the EMF43 self-assessment produced noticeably negative scores, with more than a third of providers scoring themselves 'red' – 'not yet started / undeveloped'. The statements relate to new learner opportunities in an e-confident learning setting.

These seven statements, together with the percentage of 'red' responses, are as follows:

Category		Element	Red%
Resources	R3	Staff are comfortable working with learners in the co-creation of resources	39
	R9	Learning tools are used to personalise learning	38
	R10	ILT is used to facilitate self-managed learning	55
Learning Support	S2	Digital literacy is a key part of learning programmes	35
	S6	There is appropriate use of e-portfolios	55
	S7	Learners can make use of an appropriate range of social and learning networking opportunities	42
Learning & Teaching	L7	Self-managed learning is supported	35

Figure 5: Most negative areas of self-assessments

These low self-assessments point to three significant themes:

- Personalisation and learner management of own learning (R9; R10; S6; L7)
- Developing the learner role in enriching the learning experience (R3; S7)
- Supporting learners in making the most of learning opportunities (S2; S7).

These are consistent with comments made by providers and practitioners in questionnaires and interviews about the need to invest in extensive staff training, the difficulties of training part-time staff, (especially if they are not paid to attend training) and the early stage challenges of learning platform implementation facing most providers.

If all the 'red' scores in the six weak areas were to be improved to 'yellow' - ie move from 'not yet started/undeveloped' to 'established', the high level provider carpet changes substantially, both in overall levels of e-maturity and in rank ordering:

Original									New							
M	C	R	S	L	Av	Ex M	Original Rank	New rank	M	C	R	S	L	Av	Ex.M
							1	1							
							2	2							
							3	3							
							5	4							
							4	5							
							6	6							
							16	7							
							7	8							
							8	9							
							9	10							
							14	11							
							12	12							
							10	13							
							11	14							
							18	15							
							17	16							
							15	17							
							21	18							
							23	19							
							13	20							
							24	21							
							20	22							
							19	23							
							26	24							
							22	25							
							27	26							
							25	27							
							29	28							
							28	29							
							30	30							
							31	31							
							32	32							
							Average								

Figure 6: High level provider e-maturity carpets before and after adjustment

Key:

- The left hand carpet reproduces the original scores, without any adjustment

- In the right hand carpet the red scores for the six questions become yellow

- The middle columns show the original and the revised rank order

- M = Management; C = Contexts; R = Resources; S = Learning Support; L = Learning and Teaching

- Av = Average score, including all five themes

- Ex.M = Average score, excluding Management theme.

Visual inspection of the two tables shows the potential impact of concentrating investment in the six most negative areas. The overall impact before and after the adjustment, in terms of e-maturity, is shown on figure 7.

Carpet Colour		Before	After	Before%	After%	% Move
Green	Embedded	3	4	10%	12%	+ 2%
Yellow	Established	11	16	34%	50%	+ 16%
Amber	Developing	12	10	37%	30%	-7%
Red	Weak	6	2	19%	6%	-13%

Figure 7: overall impact of adjustment

This projects an increase in the number of providers able to self-assess as established or embedded (yellow or green) of over 30 per cent, raising the national achievements significantly.

The impact of successful investment in these areas alone would be to increase the providers demonstrating established or embedded levels of e-maturity by around 18 per cent and to reduce the percentage of providers self-assessing as weak by 13 per cent. Furthermore, investment in these areas (with the possible exception of S6 – e-portfolios) is likely to have beneficial effects on how providers self-assess in respect of other categories, not least because such investment will require providers to examine closely a range of complementary aspects of their e-learning practices.

The adjustment causes a number of changes in the ranking of the provider sample. Five providers in varied situations improved their rank order by three or more places. A large urban specialist college moved up most significantly. Other providers moved three or four places up the rank order:

- A large populous LA, employing mostly direct delivery
- A large populous LA, which contracts most of its provision out
- A small urban LA employing largely direct delivery
- A very rural LA which contracts most of its provision out.

It would be dangerous to draw firm conclusions from a relatively small sample, but it is interesting to note that potential improvement is not concentrated in one region, one type of provider, or necessarily related to size.

1.9 Developing the e-maturity model

E-maturity is very important for PCDL. The diverse, dispersed and often 'hard to reach' nature of the constituency means the potential impact of new and emerging technologies is as great as, or greater than, other sectors. The relative disparities of investment dictate that the PCDL sector must run in order to stand-still in relation to schools, large scale FE and HE. To do this it must exploit technology to the full.

As Government seeks the efficiency gains across education, it is essential that the sector demonstrates that it can deliver further progress through deployment of new and emerging technologies. This is particularly acute for the PCDL sector in response to the following policy imperatives:

- Widening participation
- Personalisation of learner support
- Learner progression
- Business efficiencies
- Leveraging wider education sector developments and resources.

The further development of an e-maturity self-assessment model for PCDL therefore needs to account for the landscape and characteristics, limitations and challenges which differentiate PCDL from other sectors of post-16 education and training. Particular issues are:

- The small size of PCDL means that any scheme will be expensive that does not leverage on schemes that apply to wider sectors; however, any scheme will need some rewriting to apply to PCDL.
- There is inadequate alignment between EMFFE and Balanced Scorecard even if it is better than for some other schemes.
- The e-maturity scheme should be developed top-down from the Balanced Scorecard in order to support accurate reporting at that level.
- Writing the text mapping indicators to capability levels is a demanding task and it can take several iterations before stabilising into a useful form.
- There is considerable value in three-dimensional schemes like developmental self-audit (DSA) and the e-maturity model (eMM) but this can be a burden on institutions unless carefully implemented.
- An international drift from compliance and audit to self-review is also evident. Our experience is that perhaps the best current approach is moderated self-review.

Furthermore, based on experience in this and other further education reviews, it is clear that critical factors to ensuring provider and practitioner buy-in to the self-assessment process are:

- adjusting the vocabulary to match the sub-sector environment
- inclusion of institution-level indicators critical to success in e-learning, encompassing strategic and pedagogic considerations
- incorporation of management information processes appropriate to the sector, such as better use of learner data between tutors, between learner and provider, and between provider and funders
- enabling each sub-sector to introduce a small number of supplementary descriptors

The EMF43 methodology employs a number of assessments to gauge a provider's ability to exploit technology in these fields. To fully appreciate the benefits of e-maturity to a PCDL provider, it may be useful for the assessment framework to take the viewpoint of a potential learner and their journey:

- Marketing and promotion - through such as accessible websites
- Attraction and engagement - involving initial assessment tools, a diverse curriculum offer, locally provided through a variety of models, and addressing accessibility
- Enrolment - with a variety of channels, online enrolment if desired
- Retention - drawing on pastoral support through appropriate communication tools, information, advice and guidance, peer support networks, engaging content, e-confident tutors, and opportunity for learner created content
- Assessment - involving regular formative assessment with timely responses through appropriate communication tools
- Progression - requiring information, advice and guidance, portable personal online spaces and e-portfolios, and confident ICT skills.

1.10 Thanks

This report would not have been possible without the participation of managers and practitioners from the following providers:

Local authorities – Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bury, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, East Sussex, Essex, Gloucestershire, Halton, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Kirklees, Lancashire, Leicester, London Borough of Brent, London Borough of Bromley, London Borough of Camden, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Lambeth, London Borough of Newham, London Borough of Sutton, Milton Keynes, Newcastle, Oldham, Oxfordshire, Peterborough, Portsmouth, Rotherham, Royal Borough of Kingston-on-Thames, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Somerset, Stockton-on-Tees, Wakefield, West Sussex, Wolverhampton.

Other providers – Bolton Community College, City Lit and Open Door

Chapter 2 - Introduction to the e-maturity study

2.1 Scope

Sero Consulting was commissioned by Becta to undertake an assessment of e-maturity in the English PCDL sector of post-16 education and training from August 2007 to January 2008. Parallel assessments of e-maturity in English FE, work-based learning and offender learning were commissioned at the same time from other contractors.

These assessments followed a sustained period of national investment in infrastructure, learning resources and assessment instruments, delivered in the strategic context of the Learning and Skills Council's priorities from 2001 onwards and the 2005 'Harnessing Technology' strategy.

The purpose of the assessments is to measure e-maturity at both institution and workforce levels. The findings will be used to help assess the effectiveness of current FE and skills e-learning policy in the light of recent developments in government strategy. For the purposes of this study, Becta has defined e-maturity as "the capacity and capability of individuals and organisations to exploit the power of technology to improve educational outcomes, measured across a number of dimensions including provision, practice, leadership, management and local strategy".

This analysis of e-maturity amongst PCDL providers and the workforce was designed by Becta to consider a range of measures to provide a baseline against which subsequent progress in the sector can be gauged:

- ICT infrastructure provision for learners
- Use and development of e-learning resources
- Skills of teaching staff in relation to ICT and e-learning, along with their level of access to technology
- Deployment of ICT for teaching, learning, assessment and management/administration
- Extent and nature of use of e-learning by practitioners
- Practitioner views on the impact of e-learning
- Factors associated with the impact of e-learning
- Barriers and enablers to e-learning use
- Organisational vision and strategy for e-learning development

and to research six specific issues:

- How have provider and practitioner e-maturity developed over the past 12 months and what are the predictions for the next year?

- Have providers developed effective plans to develop e-maturity over the short, medium and long term?
- What are the key barriers to developing e-maturity (and why) and what needs to be done to address these barriers?
- What are the key factors in promoting technology provision and utilisation and how can they be further enhanced?
- How have providers and practitioners used technology to develop personalised learning resources and practices?
- What has been the impact of government reforms?

2.2 Methodology and approach

The methodology developed for this study involved three complementary survey instruments (described in sections 2.2.1.1., 2.2.1.2. and 2.2.1.3.), together with interviews and focus groups (described in section 2.2.1.4). The development, trialling and validation of outputs are described in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

2.2.1 Survey instruments

The study utilised three main survey instruments:

- A provider self-assessment (described in section 2.2.1.1)
- A provider questionnaire (described in section 2.2.1.2)
- A practitioner questionnaire (described in section 2.2.1.3).

2.2.1.1 Provider self-assessment

The methodology involved a sample of PCDL providers in a process of self-assessment based on the E-maturity Framework for Further Education (EMFFE) developed by Becta since 2005 for use in FE. This methodology was identified to be of particular relevance as provider and practitioner engagement with e-learning and online services matures from the implementation of infrastructure and the enthusiasm of early adopters to the mainstreaming of process and the engagement of the wider organisation and learner community.

The self-assessment tool that we used (EMF43) is a simplified version of the current EMFFE version 3.1, adapted for use in the PCDL sector. The adaptation is discussed in section 4.2 below and explained in detail in appendix B1. All providers in the sample were issued with an introductory handbook; this is given in appendix B2 and includes an explanation of the output and the rationale, together with directions for completing the self-assessment.

2.2.1.2 Provider questionnaires

The EMF43 self-assessment was linked to a separate provider questionnaire, which consisted of a taxonomic section for capturing provider background, six sections containing a total of 68 statements requiring a simple tick box response and a final section of four questions inviting free text responses.

The areas explored were:

- management and staff capacity and capability (15 statements)
- infrastructure capacity and technical support (15 statements)
- learner experience and outcomes (13 statements)
- support for different groups of learners (10 statements)
- wider benefits - exploring the impact of general central government e-learning and ICT policies (7 statements)
- impact of specific policies, external agencies and resources (8 statements).

Each statement required a single tick box response, on a four-point scale along a positive/negative spectrum, with an additional option for 'don't know/not applicable'. The choice of four points was made, rather than the more usual five-point scale, to be consistent with the EMF43 scales.

The final section invited free text responses to four statements:

- Hopes for the organisation's e-enabled learning over the next two years
- Best example(s) of good practice in e-enabled learning within the organisation
- The biggest challenge(s) to progressing e-enabled learning within the organisation
- The most significant policy change required to support e-learning and e-assessment.

2.2.1.3 Practitioner questionnaire

Practitioners from within the sample of providers were also invited to complete a separate questionnaire. This followed a similar pattern, with a taxonomic section to establish a practitioner profile (and whether the respondent was an e-guide), six sections containing 56 statements requiring a tick box response and a final section of four statements inviting free text responses.

The areas explored were:

- the practitioner's own ICT skills (8 statements)

- the practitioner's access to technology (13 statements)
- the practitioner's views on the impact of ICT and e-learning (14 statements)
- the practitioner's views on support for ICT and e-learning within his/her organisation (10 statements)
- how the practitioner makes use of ILT in his/her teaching (7 statements)
- the impact of ICT on the practitioner's working week (4 statements).

Each statement required a single tick box response, on a four-point scale along a positive/negative spectrum, with an additional option for 'don't know/not applicable'.

The final section invited free text responses to four statements:

- The practitioner's hopes for e-learning in PCDL over the next two years
- Best example(s) of good practice in e-learning within the organisation
- The biggest barrier to progressing e-learning and ICT in PCDL
- How progression towards e-maturity in PCDL might best be supported.

2.2.1.4 Interviews and focus groups

The survey data was supplemented and validated through a series of interviews with managers and practitioners from the provider sample. The majority of these were carried out as telephone interviews, but in three local authorities focus groups of managers and practitioners were held.

The same broad range of topics was addressed in both telephone interviews and focus groups:

- Staff skills
- Technology and infrastructure
- The impact of ICT and e-learning on learners and learning outcomes
- Views on changes in efficiency and effectiveness resulting from adoption of ICT
- Enablers and barriers to progress towards e-maturity in PCDL and views on the direction of future investment.

The interviews and focus groups also explored the area of e-safety, which we were asked to comment on after the original questionnaires had been compiled and implemented.

2.2.2 Sample selection

PCDL activity is delivered by a fairly complex web of providers, ranging from large local authorities (LA) and large FE sector colleges through specialist designated

institutions (SDIs) to small voluntary and community sector organisations. This spread covers both urban and rural communities, across the full spectrum of economic well-being and social and economic deprivation.

PCDL is delivered as part of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) programmes. There are a number of significant differences between PCDL providers, FE sector colleges and work-based learning (WBL) providers, notably:

- they are generally not 'self-determining'
- PCDL is an extremely 'part-time' environment for both learners and tutors, even managers
- PCDL programmes are very varied in cases (eg community development, regeneration projects) not even an overt learning programme, more a set of structured activities
- there is a long tradition of negotiation with the learner, over what learning takes place
- PCDL has little in the way of formal "additional learning support" or "drop-in workshops" and very little by way of learning resource centres
- provision is highly dispersed (some providers use over 300 venues), usually in premises not owned or controlled by the provider and often with strictures/limitations on their use
- learning is rarely accredited
- historically the workforce has in the first place been recruited for its subject expertise and usually then given in-service training
- no formal governance arrangements, other than where permissive legislation has been used
- a recent downward trend in resourcing (after a number of years of growth).

There are currently just over 200 LSC funded providers of PCDL in England, of which a large majority are local authorities.

- 75% of the local authorities are involved in direct delivery; several of these also support provision offered through community organisations which they fund, while some may also sub-contract some of their work to FE sector colleges. We assumed that, for these providers, the focus of the study will be the e-maturity of the local authority service.
- The remaining 25 per cent of local authorities sub-contract most, or all of their PCDL work to other providers, whilst retaining a management capacity; in these instances we made the focus of the study on the local authority management unit and both any direct provision, together with sub-contracted provision.
- Additionally, a number of FE sector colleges are funded directly for PCDL work by LSC. The overall analysis of colleges has been undertaken

through the parallel FE sector survey; within this study we have examined some college provision which is delivered through local authority contracting out arrangements and have also examined one FE sector college which is a Specialist designated institution providing exclusively ACL programmes.

- PCDL is also delivered by a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and one has been included in this study.

The sample of 37 providers includes 26 local authorities direct delivery services (70 per cent of the total), nine local authorities 'contracting out' (24 per cent), one SDI and one voluntary and community sector organisation and was structured to include an appropriate mix of large, medium and small providers, as well as a mix of urban, populous and rural providers, and more than one from each LSC region.

This PCDL 'landscape' is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

2.3 Development and trials

The survey instruments were developed in consultation with Becta, especially the EMF43 self-assessment, which was derived from a cut-down and reworded version of a full version of EMFFE 3.1 following discussions with its authors. Details of the adaptation are given in Appendix B1. The provider and practitioner questionnaires were adapted from those used in previous (and current) surveys of e-maturity in work-based learning, to ensure comparability of approach with the assessments in other sectors.

The EMF43 approach and the provider and practitioner questionnaires were discussed in detail at two introductory workshops: the first, involving a representative sample of managers and e-learning experts from a range of providers and the second involving e-learning managers from London and the south-east. The survey instruments were refined in the light of comments and suggestions made at these workshops.

The 37 participating providers were then given access to a dedicated website for completing the survey instruments electronically. Providers were also asked to encourage practitioners to complete the online practitioners' questionnaire.

2.4 Validation

Following the completion of self-assessments and questionnaires, a selection of managers and practitioners from participating providers were contacted for telephone interviews, to clarify, validate and expand the survey data. In addition, focus groups of practitioners were held in three contrasting local authorities.

2.5 The data

It was agreed with Becta that the data and the analysis reported to them from the EMF43 process, the accompanying questionnaires, interviews and focus groups should be anonymous, with no reference to providers or individual practitioners by name (other than where explicitly agreed in the cases of examples of good practice).

Data for this report was obtained from:

- 37 PCDL providers, who completed the self-assessment (EMF43) and the provider questionnaire. A small minority completed only the provider questionnaire and one completed the self-assessment only, but the large majority completed both survey instruments.
- 88 PCDL practitioners, who completed the practitioner questionnaire. All these practitioners were drawn from the sample of provider organisations.
- 28 interviews with managers and practitioners, together with data from an additional 21 managers and practitioners in three focus groups - 49 interviews in all.

With the exception of the self-assessment dataset and carpet and aggregated provider questionnaires where the rows in diagrams in chapter 5 rank the participating provider organisations according to levels of e-maturity, the data reported here is aggregated to illustrate trends across the national landscape. In chapter 6, in addition to fully aggregated data, there is some disaggregation of providers to indicate variations related to the way in which provision is made, and the impact of size and geography on technology adoption.

The distribution of the provider sample is shown in the table below:

LSC Region	Total	LA direct delivery service	LA contracted out service	Other (non-LA) providers	Practitioner questionnaires
Eastern	4	3	1		8
East Midlands	2	2			1
London	9	5	3	1	14
North East	2	2			4
North West	5	4	1		37
South	7	5	2		13
South West	2	2			3
West Midlands	2	1	1		3
Yorkshire & The Humber	4	2	1	1	5
Totals	37	26	9	2	88

Figure 8: Survey samples

2.6 This report

The survey approach is discussed further in chapter 4 of this report. The report is based on the self-assessment findings and the associated questionnaire and interview responses.

It consists of four major sections:

- Chapter 3 - Landscape
- Chapter 4 - Survey findings
- Chapter 5 - Discussion of the applicability of e-maturity models to PCDL
- Chapter 6 - Conclusions - Signposts

The sections are supported by appendices detailing:

- Credits to the contributors
- Adaptation of EMFFE v3.1 to EMF 43
- EMF43 introductory handbook
- Provider questionnaire analysis

- Practitioner questionnaire analysis
- Possible self-assessment models for e-maturity in PCDL
- References

In addition Sero has supplied Becta with a collection of supporting materials:

- EMF43 workbook (blank)
- EMF workbook example (anonymous)
- EMF spreadsheet (anonymous)
- Provider questionnaire (blank)
- Provider questionnaire Statistics (anonymous)
- Practitioner questionnaire (blank)
- Practitioner questionnaire statistics (anonymous)
- Interview topic guide and template
- Literature review.

The completed EMF workbooks, provider and practitioner questionnaires and interview and focus group reports have been archived by Sero Consulting for statistical purposes.

Chapter 3 - Background: the PCDL landscape in England

3.1 History and underlying factors

3.1.1 The shifting landscape

The identity and characteristics of the personal and community development learning (PCDL) 'sector' are still somewhat opaque as the reforms (eg Leitch and Skills for Life) and restructuring (eg the evolution of the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and DIUS) of 2006 and 2007 are allowed to settle and the picture clears. To equate the PCDL sector with the former adult and community learning (ACL) sector is a useful starting point but the two are not an exact match. Any assessment of provision must take account of the discernible differences which will have significant impact in the near to medium term and, equally, the legacy of policies and policy shifts.

The LSC describes PCDL as:

"…learning for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and enjoyment. It is also learning developed with local residents and other learners to build the skills, knowledge and understanding for social and community action. There is no requirement that learners must necessarily progress to other learning or achieve accreditation….This approach also recognises the wider benefits of learning in the community, including its contribution to broader government policies such as health (mental and physical well-being) and community cohesion ."

As such, this would be consistent with the former ACL sector. However, PCDL has a perceptibly narrower footprint than ACL. In its October 2007 guidance the LSC clarifies the more limited scope by stating that PCDL is adult/post-16 learning that:

"…falls outside the priorities of the Skills Strategy, reiterated in the Leitch review"

The foremost priorities which would previously have fallen wholly or partly under the umbrella term ACL but are not necessarily part of PCDL are:

- Foundation learning tier (FLT)
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN)
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD)
- Offender learning.

DIUS has at times been more explicit saying, "(PCDL) is usually non-vocational, informal learning and tends not to lead to qualifications - it covers a wide range, including engaging people who are reluctant to learn, and encouraging them to progress and achieve."

However, the boundaries between the parallel strands which comprise the post-16, non-compulsory learning sector are currently somewhat blurred. This may indicate valuable flexibility in recognition of the personalisation agenda and the complex individual demands/circumstances of learners across the wider sector. An illustration of this overlap is apparent in a recent NIACE report commissioned by DIUS. Amongst the most common subject areas for learners with learning difficulties funded solely through the PCDL stream are ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) and CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology), both of which can be seen as leading to a qualification and can also be considered to be vocatianal . Similarly it is easy to imagine that ESOL programmes and PCDL will frequently coincide to some degree. Any study must take an inclusive interpretation of PCDL in order to acknowledge its actual reach.

The impact of the reforms on funding is still working its way through the system but there appear to be two key areas of concern as articulated by NIACE:

- That funding for 16- to-18 year old learners will take precedence to the degree that over-19 year old learners will be funded only after the needs of the priority groups have been satisfied
- That the concentration on 'full fat' Level 2 qualifications and Skills for Life will continue to have "…a devastating impact on adult learning and skills, in effect narrowing opportunities, including in the realm of first steps learning"

3.1.2 PCDL providers

As the impact of the reforms and restructuring works through and the areas of demarcation and collaboration become clear, it is expected that former ACL providers will be joined by new providers and, indeed, new partnerships and models will develop. The PCDL landscape is expected to comprise:

- PCDL planning partnerships (currently being developed these may be new bodies or based on pre-existing learning or strategic partnerships/adult and community learning forums)
- FE colleges
- Local authorities (in direct or commissioned delivery)
- Voluntary and community sector organisations
- Social/private enterprise-based/independent training providers or consortia

- PCDL partners from other public services, such as sports, culture and youth services, and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)
- Other parties interested in PCDL, including community groups and local residents.

Historically, the diversity of providers and provision has represented a strength in acknowledging local context but also a potential weakness in terms of economies of scale, parity of experience, communication and consistency. Success for the sector will depend to an extent upon the degree to which the strengths can be retained whilst the weaknesses are addressed.

3.2 Development of e-learning in the sector

3.2.1 National e-learning policy developments

Whilst it is necessary to be cautious about creating artificial continuities and discontinuities it is useful to break e-learning policy over the recent past into three notional (but identifiable) phases. In reality each of these phases 'bled' into the next since policies may develop over a considerable period of time.

3.2.1.1 Phase one – supporting skills for the 'information age'

The earliest large-scale central government policies to promote the use of information and communications technology in ACL were given initial impetus by the Fryer Group report in 1997 and began to appear significantly from 1999. The scope of these polices extended beyond simply applying technology to the existing provision of learning. With the new and emerging technologies came new policy priorities. Key amongst these was the concern with bridging the 'digital divide' (which was then seen primarily as an issue of physical access to computers and the internet). PAT 15, one of the cross-departmental Policy Action Teams (PATs) established by the Cabinet Office to look at issues of poverty and deprivation, was mandated to investigate and make recommendations about information technology. Specifically PAT 15's remit was to report on:

- "best practice in providing access to IT, and IT skills, for people living in poor neighbourhoods"
- "lessons learnt about the effectiveness of shared access points, such as kiosks in community centres, libraries and Post Offices, and greater access to the internet, etc"
- "the best models for improving access to communications networks as a means of strengthening community ties."

New technologies were seen to have the potential to increase 'citizens' engagement with:

- commerce (through e-commerce)
- local and national government (through e-government)
- other citizens, to increase community cohesion (through community websites etc).

In parallel with this were clear ambitions that new technologies would increase the reach of providers and the breadth and quality of their offer. The ability to provide learning opportunities at a "pace, place and time" to suit the learner was seen as central to widening participation. Government backed the policy ambitions for access and education with significant funding for four key planks of policy:

- Wired up Communities (WuCs)
- Ufi/Learndirect
- UK online centres
- Computers Within Reach (CWR)

It is then, important to note that whilst these priorities (access and education) were largely complementary they also created some tension and confusion within the sector during this period.

3.2.1.2 Phase two - A place at the table

The publication of the report of the ACL National Learning Network (NLN) Strategic Working Group in 2003 signalled growing maturity and confidence at least in terms of strategic leadership. ACL had been part of the National Learning Network (NLN) since the network's inception but had not yet been perceived to benefit from the systematic investment in the way FE colleges had. This report not only reinforced the notion of extending the NLN but also articulated the need for ACL provision to be appropriate to the needs of the sector and acknowledge the specific circumstances. Amongst the recommendations was the following:

"The NLN provides a valuable wealth of experience from which the ACL sector can benefit. It would be too easy to assume that every successful approach, method and strategy will directly transfer to ACL. However, equally, there is no point in doubling up on effort. We need to develop NLN to meet the needs of ACL. We recommend that: the NLN should include the needs of adult and community learners, volunteers and staff, to make sure everyone aged 16 and above has access to learning." (p6).

There had already been significant progress integrating ACL within/alongside the NLN prior to 2003. The Strategic Working Group consulted widely over two years before reporting. In the interim, the Wireless Outreach Network scheme (WON -

which provided an injection of £8m to the sector) and an improved settlement from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) signposted the changes to come. In addition to this, the Distributed Electronic Learning Group (DELG) set the course when publishing its own report in 2002. However, the ACL NLN report marked a formal acknowledgement by both DfES and LSC that ACL was deserving of additional investment because:

- there was a need to address disparities across post-16 education
- it was capable of exploiting the technologies.

ACL was to benefit from securing its place at the table with mainstream FE and could speak with increased authority. Additional funds secured in the CSR would seek to bring parity with, and also exploit the investment in, the FE NLN sector. The central tenets of this strategy were:

- comprehensive connectivity through SuperJANET
- an ACL specific NLN materials development programme
- a national CPD programme for ACL staff
- an investigation into the relevance of MLEs and learning platforms to the ACL sector.

Much of the current PCDL e-learning provision can be attributed to this phase.

3.2.1.3 Phase three - Harnessing Technology

To a greater or lesser degree the key e-learning strategies proposed by central government and its agencies in recent years have not specifically addressed what is now identified as the PCDL sector. Widening participation, social and educational inclusion and, more recently, personalisation are central planks of policy and strong cases are made for the role of new and emerging technologies to support these goals. All of these are clearly at the core of meaningful PCDL provision. However, the various e-learning strategies from DfES and its agencies, especially Becta, have tended to concentrate firstly on schools and after this on more easily defined aspects of FE provision i.e. colleges. It is clearly an intention that PCDL is implicit in the policies but this does not recognise the vast spectrum of provision which makes up the landscape beyond 'mainstream' education. This spectrum has its own inherent challenges (eg non-managed premises) and also potential (not being qualification driven) for e-learning.

Harnessing Technology, for example, seeks to present an adaptable framework that is universally applicable, but in so doing it may be over-general, insufficiently attuning elements of activity to teaching in different contexts, or learning by distinct groups.

A significant feature is the intention to create a universal infrastructure around e-learning that will encompass learners of all ages and ranges …with adults involved whether as parents, as teaching professionals, or in their more general role as 'citizens'. A ripple effect is envisaged: the idea is advanced that even in logging on to access other online services, we are all engaging in e-learning to some extent. Within this vision, parents are treated as part of the learning community in their capacity to support their children.

Being perhaps inadvertently more focused on children's services, the strategy paper unfortunately adopts something of a blanket approach in its references to FE, 'hard to reach learners', 'learners of all ages' or 'lifelong learning'. In essence, an interpretation and re-alignment of the e-strategy is required, for the FE system as a whole, and for each component of it, including the PCDL sector.

3.2.2 The current spectrum of e-learning provision

Section 3.1 explains the newness of the PCDL sector. As such, there is little worthwhile, large-scale research to determine the baseline of e-learning provision. However, it is reasonable to use the extensive collected studies of the former ACL sector as a proxy through which an informed and accurate picture of the e-learning infrastructure, content, skills and ethos can be constructed.

The sector has seen significant development in its e-learning capacity in recent years, although progress is patchy, varies between regions and subject areas, and is more evident in local authority maintained providers than in organisations within the voluntary and community sectors. The PCDL sector is alone in facing the entire range of challenges listed below:

- Multi-site working
- Non-managed venues (hired from external bodies)
- Out-dated building stock
- Fragmentation of provision (and of models of provision)
- High numbers of part-time tutors (and consequent difficulties in planning CPD offerings)
- High tutor turnover
- A vast and unstable 'curriculum' offer

In addition to these tangible barriers there are more general issues such as:

- a reliance on external funding drivers
- a generalist management structure
- smallness overall
- low critical mass in some subject areas

Local funding has helped development of e-maturity; but many adult learning providers report that a relative lack recurrent funding means that investment in capital and equipment may be less effective than hoped for.

3.2.2.1 Summary of the research

Between 2003 and 2005 there was a significant increase in the use of virtually all technologies across all local authorities; the most striking increase was in the deployment of digital projectors.

There has been a "considerable increase" in the use of e-learning content in ACL, since 2003.

Staff development programmes have been welcomed by the PCDL sector and appear to have had a positive impact both in terms of the creation of contextualised content and the cascading of skills required to develop such content.

There are wide variations by (and within) regions and subject areas. Several areas of the country have invested local funds (often secured through the EU for regeneration) in enhancing e-learning provision for adults. These regional variations illustrate the importance of 'risk capital' in the development of e-learning in the adult education sector.

There are noticeable differences between local authority (LA) and non-LA (ie VCS, independent external institution) providers. Local authority PCDL provision tends to be more comprehensive than that in the wider PCDL sector. Trends in the non-LA sub-sector are however broadly in line with those in local authorities. The picture in both sub-sectors is generally positive, with improvements in most areas.

However, the increase in e-learning activity amongst VCS/independent providers has been lower than that in the local authority sub-sector.

3.2.2.2 Tomorrow's landscape

Central government wants to see the investment in the compulsory education sector used more comprehensively, effectively and equitably. The impact of this could potentially outweigh all of the policies described above. Progress has already been made and adult learners are using high quality facilities in some of the 7,000 extended schools. The target is for all schools to be extended schools by 2010. Many City Learning Centres also offer a technology rich (and non-school) environment for their communities. However, as yet, this does not appear to have had the desired scope of impact. With the Building Schools for the Future programme now gathering pace the PCDL sector should expect to see a closing of the gap between its facilities and those in 'mainstream' education.

Physical distance (travelling time) and flexible times of learning are amongst the biggest barriers to marginalised learners. Technology has the potential to bridge some of these once intractable barriers. Schools are often ideally located within their communities. However, when this does happen it will still be necessary to recognise the multiplicity of factors which may serve to marginalise and disenfranchise each of these individuals. Technology alone cannot provide the solution.

Chapter 4 - Survey findings

The survey data covered the three elements described in sections 2.2.1.1, 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.1.3 of Chapter 2 and was supplemented and validated by the interviews and focus groups described in section 2.2.1.4.

In order to identify findings, this data is reviewed from three perspectives:

- Section 4.2: The self-assessment carpet, in which the sample of providers is ranked from top to bottom in terms of their EMF43 assessments
- Section 4.3: The provider questionnaire
- Section 4.4: The practitioner questionnaire
- Section 4.5: Management and practitioner interviews and focus groups

4.1 The self-assessment dataset

The 'EMF43', introduced in Chapter 2.2, provided self-assessment data from 32 LSC-funded PCDL providers (18 per cent of the national total), representing 30 per cent of the total LSC funding for PCDL in 2006/07. It can, therefore, be considered a significant sample and includes providers from all nine LSC regions.

The self-assessment covered 42 'elements' across the five themes of Management, Contexts, Resources, Learning Support and Learning & Teaching. Each of the elements was self-assessed against four levels of e-maturity - 'not yet started/early stages'; 'developing'; 'established'; 'embedded'. These four levels cover the range of responses from the e-Learning Positioning Statements (eLPS) framework, with which the PCDL providers are familiar. This provided a national dataset of 1,344 responses from the 32 providers.

4.2 The self-assessment carpet

The diagram below shows the 'carpet' of 32 providers who completed the EMF43 self-assessment. In the diagram the individual elements are colour coded as follows:

Colour	Assessment
	Very good / very strong
	Good – largely established
	Developing – largely adequate
	Weak – not yet started / early stages
	Not answered / don't know
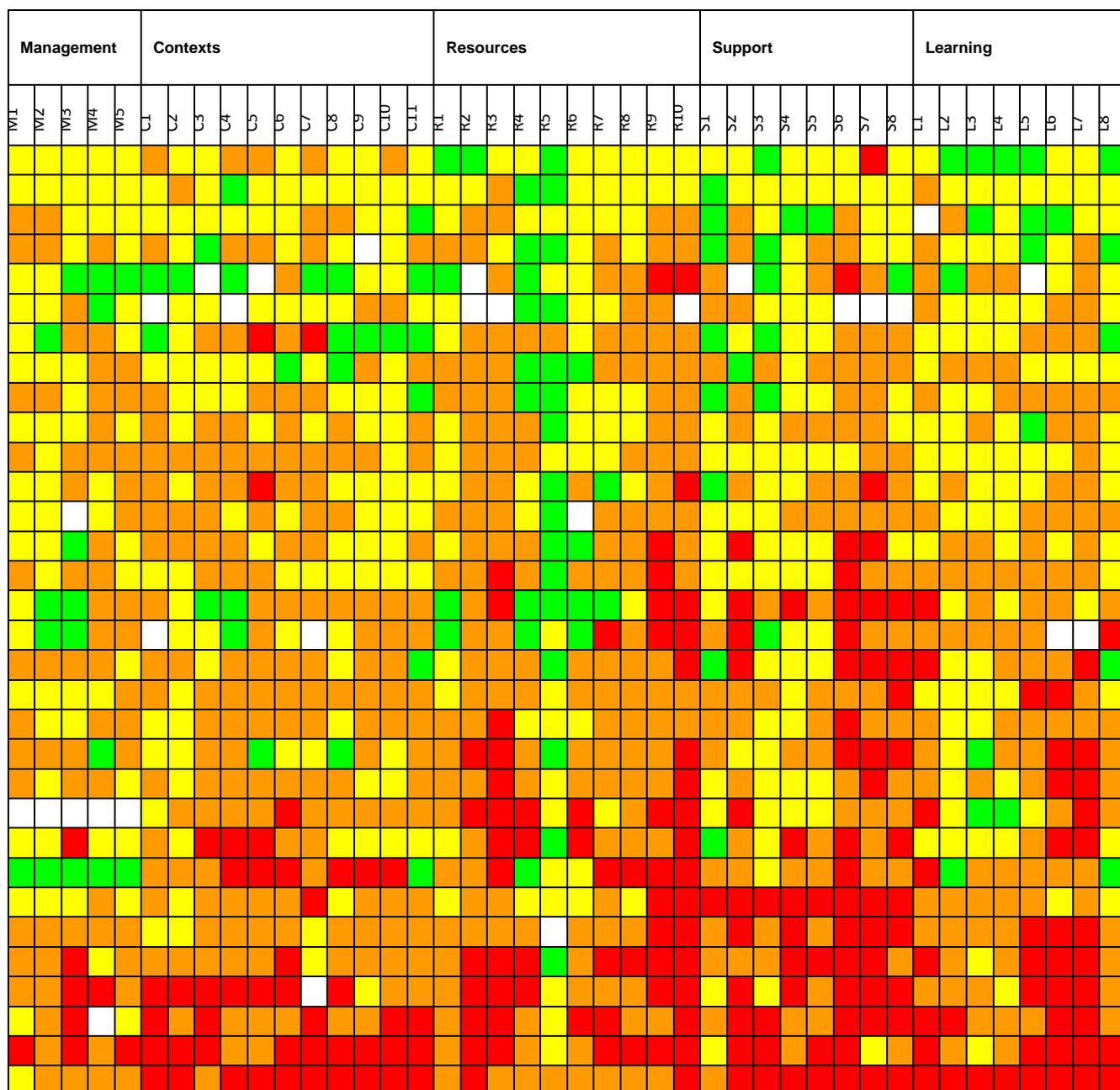
Figure 9: Carpet showing self-assessments across all elements – providers ranked from highest to lowest average score

The 'weave' of the carpet identifies a number of areas of relative strength and weakness:

- R4 ('There is an effective technical infrastructure with adequate connectivity') and R5 ('Data is kept securely and risk minimised') are relatively strong

- R9 ('Learning tools are used to personalise learning') and R10 ('ILT is used to facilitate self-managed learning') are relatively weak, even in most of the providers near the top of the table
- Several areas in Support for learning are similarly weak, notably S6 ('There is appropriate use of e-portfolios') and S7 ('Learners can make use of an appropriate range of social and learning networking opportunities')

The elements can be combined to give overall values for each theme, and average scores both across providers and across themes to give a higher level view:

Rank order	Management	Contexts	Resources	Support	Learning		Average	Excluding Mgmt
1							3.1	3.1
2							3.0	3.0
3							2.9	3.0
4							2.9	2.8
5							2.7	2.8
6							2.8	2.8
7							2.7	2.7
8							2.6	2.7
9							2.6	2.6
10							2.6	2.5
11							2.5	2.5
12							2.5	2.5
13							2.5	2.4
14							2.5	2.4
15							2.4	2.3
16							2.5	2.3
17							2.4	2.3
18							2.2	2.2
19							2.3	2.2
20							2.2	2.2
21							2.2	2.2
22							2.2	2.2
23							1.7	2.1
24							2.2	2.1
25							2.4	2.0
26							2.1	1.9
27							1.8	1.8
28							1.7	1.7
29							1.6	1.6
30							1.7	1.5
31							1.5	1.5
32							1.4	1.3
Ave	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.3			

Figure 10: High level 'carpet' or provider self-assessments of e-maturity

Management is self-assessed as the strongest theme. Two sets of averages are given in the right hand columns: the first including the Management theme, and the second excluding it and aggregating the scores on the other four themes only. In terms of e-maturity on the ground, this second column is likely to give a truer reflection of the current state of the sector.

The provider sample has been separated into four groups, broadly corresponding with the four levels of e-maturity used for the responses. At the top are three providers (9 per cent) where ICT and e-learning are largely embedded. The second group of 11 providers (34 per cent) have e-enablement largely established; the third group of 12 providers (37.5 per cent) are developing aspects of e-maturity; and the final group of six providers (19 per cent) are only at the early stages of developing ICT and e-learning - in only one of these providers has any of the themes currently progressed beyond the 'developing' phase.

The average scores for Contexts, Resources, Learning Support and Learning and Teaching are uniformly at the 'developing' stage in the sector overall - only in Management has the sector yet progressed towards established use of technology.

4.3 The provider questionnaire

4.3.1 Management and staff capacity and capability

This is the most comprehensively completed part of the survey. Providers responded 'don't know/not applicable' or did not respond to fewer questions in this section than any other.

As with the survey responses in their entirety, there are some clear vertical (a single provider's responses to all practices/questions) and horizontal (all provider's responses to any single practice/question) trends. There is a group of providers who have scored themselves as consistently low (predominantly e-beginners) against most of the practices which go to make up this category. Equally, there is a group of providers whose self-assessment is consistently high (e-mature or e-adequate) against most of the practices within the category.

One provider responded only to section A (its responses were polarised between ten self-assessments of e-mature and three of e-beginners).

<u>Vertical analysis</u>

Low scoring providers

There is little to identify this as a homogenous group beyond their self-assessment. None of the seven are VCS or SDI providers and none is categorised as 'very large'.

However, they are comprised of 'LA contracted out' and 'LA direct provision', 'Urban', 'Populous' and 'Rural'. The seven are well distributed geographically and are from the North, Midlands and South-East.

High scoring providers

The only obvious shared feature of the three highest scoring providers is that none is 'rural'. Two are 'LA direct provision' and the third is a 'VCS' body. They range from 'very large' to 'small' and 'very small'.

<u>**Horizontal analysis**</u>

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

Three practices in particular score noticeably more e-beginner self-assessments than the others. These could be classified as practical skills developed by individuals ie (most low assessments first).

1. Adoption of new and emerging technologies (eg blogs, wikis, mobile phone coverage, social networking)

2. Management and staff skill in teaching and facilitating online

3. Sharing and re-use of digital/electronic content.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

Not only were these practices identified as those where most providers also judged themselves e-beginners (see above) but not a single provider rated themselves as e-mature against any of these practices. This suggests a good deal of robustness to the assessments and these are areas which should be investigated further.

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

There were fewer practices rated more e-mature than there were e-beginners. In contrast with the lower scoring practices these could all be classified as concerning strategic leadership and vision. The four practices for which the highest number of providers rated themselves e-mature were (most high assessments first):

1. use of ICT for data collection/collation and analysis

2. strategic commitment to the integration of technology within every aspect of the organisation

= 3. regular management reviews and refresh of ICT strategy

= 3. the organisation's ICT and e-learning strategy.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

The fewest e-beginners assessments occurred in the practices which concern strategic awareness. Again these practices closely mirrored those which the highest number of providers considered themselves as e-mature or e-adequate (see above). Once more this suggests that the self-assessments are consistent and these are areas in which providers are generally most confident. Only two providers consider themselves e-beginners in the '… organisation's ICT and e-learning strategy'. These were the two providers which assessed themselves as e-beginners throughout the vast majority of the survey. Interestingly only two providers consider themselves as e-beginners in the area of Management and staff skills in general ICT (eg word processing, spreadsheets). This suggests it is e-learning skills rather than ICT skills which are assessed as deficient (something which mirrors the situation in the FE sector during the early stages of the NLN).

Key findings from the management and staff capacity/capabilities section

1.   Disparities

2.   The areas where the most providers felt confident about were strategic leadership, awareness and management of e-learning/ICT.

3.   It was putting this into practice which proved difficult. There was a lack of confidence in e-teaching skills (content creation and sharing, online teaching etc).

4.3.2 Infrastructure capacity and technical support

The providers' responses are broadly in line with those in 4.3.1. However, there are many more practices to which providers responded 'don't know/not applicable' or did not respond in this section. The three where these responses (or lack of) were most common may be linked since they all appear to point to a lack of off-site provision for learners.

1.   A computer network accessible remotely by learners.

2.   Technical support for learners when off site.

Vertical analysis

Low scoring providers

The low scoring providers comprise the same seven from section A, plus two more. Again, neither is 'very large'. One is 'LA contracted provision' and the other 'LA direct provision'.

High scoring providers

Only one provider's self-assessment indicates in all practices it meets e-mature or e-adequate. This is a 'small' 'urban' provider with the provision being 'LA direct contracted'. The next best performing (on self-assessment) are both 'urban'. Neither is a local authority, with one a VCS and the other SDI. One is 'very large' and the other 'very small'.

<u>**Horizontal analysis**</u>

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

Two practices in particular score noticeably more self-assessments of e-beginner than the others. These also feature very highly amongst the 'not assessed' group of responses. Again they concern off-site provision.

1. Technical support for staff and managers when off site

2. Technical support for learners when off site.

Approximately half of all providers self-assessed their provision as e-beginners for these practices and over 70 per cent of all providers were e-beginners or 'not assessed'.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

Only two providers judged themselves as e-mature for the following practices. Again these are concerned with off-site provision for learners.

1. A computer network accessible remotely by learners

2. Technical support for learners when off site.

Only seven providers judged themselves as e-mature or e-adequate in their provision of an off-site computer network and just two providers judged themselves as e-mature or e-adequate in their provision of technical support for learners.

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

For no single practice in this section did more than 20 per cent of providers consider themselves e-mature. The highest occurrence of e-maturity self-assessments were in the following practices:

1. Sufficient connectivity for all ICT applications

2. Technical support for staff and managers when on site

3.   Computers/laptops for staff use with fast internet access

4.   The existence of effective suppliers for infrastructure, hardware and software.

Of the seven providers who judged that they were e-mature in the area of having sufficient connectivity for all ICT applications six were local authority direct provision. The seventh is a unique SDI and, therefore, does not weaken the uniformity of this finding. All five which judged they had sufficient 'Computers / laptops for staff use with fast internet access' were all local authority direct provision.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

Only one provider made a self-assessment of e-beginner (and just two were not assessed) in its provision of:

1.   other ICT equipment (eg digital cameras).

Almost two-thirds of providers considered themselves as e-adequate or e-mature in their provision of peripherals.

The next two practices in terms of fewest e-beginner assessments were:

2.   technical support for staff and managers when on site

3.   staff access to relevant digital/electronic content.

However, in these areas only one-third of providers considered themselves as e-adequate or e-mature.

Key findings from the infrastructure capacity and technical support section

1.   Disparities

2.   On site provision and support is the strongest element - particularly for staff

3.   This is most noticeable in the local authority direct provision model

4.   Off-site provision is extremely weak across the vast majority of the sector.

4.3.3 Learner experience and learner outcomes

Once more the returns for this section are skewed by the two providers who considered their entire provision to be at the beginner end of the self-assessment scale. However, one more provider which had previously been at, or above average, rating its performance overwhelmingly as e-beginner (11 out of 13 practices) and only adequate in one practice.

Vertical analysis

Low scoring providers

The low scoring providers comprise the similar core group of five providers which have featured in both preceding sections. However, there are five providers who had not identified themselves as predominantly e-beginners in the preceding sections. Again neither of the non-LA providers feature but the geographical spread is far less even. There are no Northern providers who rate themselves at the e-beginner end of the scale for learner experience. All eleven are located in the South or south of the Midlands. They range through the sizes. The single 'very large' provider in this cohort rated its performance for this entire section as 'e-developing'. There is a disproportionate number of medium sized providers in this cohort (10 were amongst the 34[1] surveyed and five are in this cohort of the 11 lowest performers).

High scoring providers

Two providers stand out as having noticeably higher self assessments than the others. One is a 'very large' and 'LA direct provider' and the other is 'very small' and a 'VCS provider'. Both have returned amongst the highest e-maturity self-assessments for the preceding sections. Two other providers which have previously scored at or below average have self-assessed much higher for this category with several judgements of e-maturity and very few below adequate.

Horizontal analysis

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

One practice is conspicuous with 15 providers assessing themselves as 'e-beginners' with regards:

1. availability of personalised learning space.

A further 11 providers did not return an assessment.

The next highest occurrence of e-beginner assessments were in the practices regarding:

2. tracking learner progress

3. learner access to relevant digital/electronic content.

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[1] 32 if discounting the provider who only completed Section A, and a second provider who returned no assessments after the third question in this category.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

Reinforcing the finding above, no provider assessed themselves as e-mature with regards the 'personalised learning space'. Just two providers assessed themselves as e-adequate in this area. There were a number of other practices in which three or less providers considered themselves e-mature. Just one provider (the small VCS organisation which assessed itself highly throughout the survey and has an emphasis on ILT and e-learning) returned an assessment of e-maturity with regards:

1.   tracking learner progress

2.   improvement in quality of learning through use of ILT.

This is particularly noteworthy since these practices also scored very weakly in terms of providers being e-adequate with less than a quarter of all providers judging themselves as e-adequate or better.

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

The practice with the highest number of providers returning an assessment of e-maturity was:

1.   learner engagement and enjoyment.

This was supported by the high number of providers judging themselves as e-adequate. A total of 29 providers were e-adequate or better. Linked with this a total of 28 providers were e-adequate or better with regards 'learner attainment'.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

The two providers who self-assessed as e-beginners for virtually the whole of this section were the only ones who considered themselves e-beginners in the following practices:

1.   Learner attainment

2.   Learner retention (pastoral support)

3.   Learner progression (where applicable)

These three and 'learner engagement and enjoyment' comprised the practices for which fewest providers were below e-adequate.

Key findings from the learner experience and outcomes section

1.   Disparities

2.   Low assessments and non-returns illustrate that personalised learning spaces have not yet penetrated the PCDL sector

3.   The highest levels of confidence were in support for learner's experiences and outcomes

4.   There were generally low levels of e-maturity throughout this section.

4.3.4 Support for different groups of learners

This section sees some deviation from the trends of the preceding section although one of the two highest scoring providers continues to return very positive assessments. However, other providers also score highly within this section. A feature of this section is that each individual provider's assessments are more consistent throughout (there are less instances of a provider scoring e-mature and e-beginner throughout their return).

Vertical analysis

Low scoring providers

There are three providers who have returned overwhelmingly e-beginner assessments. Two of these have returned low scores in each preceding section and the third also scored very weakly in 4.3.3. There is no consistency in terms of provider size.

High scoring providers

The five providers who have returned the highest number of e-maturity assessments in this section have not featured amongst the highest scoring in the preceding sections. They are a mix of 'urban', 'populous' and 'rural' and span the provider size categories. One rural provider is particularly visible in assessing its provision as e-mature in all but one category.

Horizontal analysis

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

Judgements of e-beginner are reasonably evenly distributed throughout this section. However, when taking into account 'not assessed' there are four practices which stand out:

1.   Carers

2.   Adults isolated by geography/health/physical mobility

3.   Travellers

4.   Ex-offenders.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

The four practices with the lowest incidence of e-maturity are entirely consistent with the high occurrence of e-beginner above with the addition of:

1.   potential and reluctant learners

Three or fewer providers judged themselves e-mature for these five practices. The four practices identified as having the highest occurrence of e-beginner also score weakly in terms of being e-adequate. In these practices between 62 per cent and 84 per cent of providers rate themselves as below e-adequate.

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

The three practices for which the highest number of providers returned assessments of e-mature were:

1.   older learners

2.   those with low basic skills and low levels of confidence

3.   ethnic minority groups.

These were also the practices with the strongest returns in terms of being e-adequate or better with over 60 per cent of providers rating themselves in these categories.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

The above findings are closely reflected in the lowest occurrence of e-beginner assessments. Two of the categories again scored strongly. The two providers that scored e-beginner against the majority of categories were the only ones who self-assessed as e-beginners with regards to:

1.   families

The three providers identified in the introduction to this section were the only providers who self-assessed as e-beginners for:

2.   ethnic minority groups

3.   older learners.

Key findings for support for different groups of learners

1.   There are fewer disparities

2.   There are a significant number of 'not assessed'

3.   The stronger areas are those in which PCDL providers already have the most experience

4.   The single provider which self-assessed so highly is worthy of further research since support for many of these groups can be problematic.

4.3.5 Wider benefits

In common with 4.3.6 this section has a reduced level of return from providers. Two further providers failed to return a single assessment in this section. This may be from survey fatigue but is equally likely to be a consequence of these sections dealing with more recent and marginal policy drivers.

Vertical analysis

Low scoring providers

The three providers with most e-beginner self-assessments have all featured as the lowest scoring providers in several preceding sections. One of these providers returns an e-beginner assessment in six of the seven practices and the others five of the seven practices. These providers do not represent any significant trend with regards size, constituency, and type of delivery.

High scoring providers

This lack of confidence in these policy practices is illustrated by just one provider ('very small', 'local authority contracted out') self-assessing a majority of practices as e-mature. This provider has self-assessed at around the average for the preceding sections but has not until this section featured e-maturity strongly. No other provider has returned an e-maturity assessment for more than one practice in this section.

Horizontal analysis

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

One practice stands out with the highest incidence of e-beginner assessments with 13 providers judging themselves at the lowest level.

1.   Reduction of paperwork/administration burden.

This practice received the lowest number of not assessed of any in this section. It appears that this practice is easily understood by the sector and, in particular, the role technology could/should play. This may have led to the (informed) low assessment.

Three other practices had a high occurrence of e-beginner assessments with nine providers returning the judgement with regards:

2.   support for e-government/e-democracy (learners' contact with eg housing departments, councillors, DirectGov)

3.   community cohesion (eg community websites)

4.   building new relationships (eg with employers, higher education institutes)

These three practices also had the highest incidence of not assessed. The first two of these are of particular relevance since these have been explicit strands within government adult learning/ICT policy for several years.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

This section saw extremely low levels of e-maturity assessments returned by providers. There were just seven across the entire range of practices and providers and four of these were returned by a single provider.

Three of the practices identified above (1, 2 and 4) had no judgement of e-maturity returned by providers. This supports the soundness of the assessment above. These practices also scored the lowest number of providers judging themselves as e-adequate or better with just four meeting this assessment for the 'e-government/e-democracy…' practice.

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

It is questionable whether the frequency of e-maturity assessments is significant since there were so few. However, one practice elicited three of the seven judgements of e-maturity.

1.   Family cohesion (eg use of e-mail for contact).

In support of this there were 16 providers who judged themselves as e-adequate or better for this practice suggesting that it is one of the stronger areas within this section. The only other practice with such a significant positive self - assessment was:

2.   e-safety (learners' confidence in their home use of technology).

Nearly half (15) of all providers judged their provision as e-adequate or better.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

The two practices above were judged as e-beginner level of provision by the fewest number of providers. This supported the view that these are generally the stronger areas within this section.

 1.   E-safety (learners' confidence in their home use of technology)

2.   Family cohesion (eg use of e-mail for contact).

Key findings for wider benefits

1.   The overwhelming majority of providers lack confidence in much of their provision in these practices.

2.   The impact of technology in reducing paperwork and administrative burden has not been achieved.

3.   Two key planks of government policy (supporting e-govt/e-democracy and encouraging community cohesion) score noticeably low levels of confidence.

4.   The more solid base for family cohesion and e-safety will have positive implications for emerging policies.

4.3.6 The impact of specific policies, external agencies and resource

There were fewer assessments of e-maturity and more of e-beginner in this section than any other.

Continuing the trend noted in 4.3.5, this section sees another increase in the number of providers returning 'not assessed' against practices. This may represent survey fatigue but equally (given that nearly all providers have returned some assessments) may represent the apparent diverse and eclectic nature of the practices. There are, however, some clear and valuable identifiable trends.

Vertical analysis

Low scoring providers

The diverse (and sometimes unrelated) nature of these practices makes extracting provider trends difficult. However, the two providers which have returned the highest incidence of e-beginner assessments have featured throughout preceding sections. The third has provided assessments at around the level of average performance until this section. Even though this provider has returned e-beginner for five practices it judges its provision for the other two practices as e-mature and e-adequate.

High scoring providers

There are no significantly (constantly) higher scoring providers in this section.

Horizontal analysis

Practices with highest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

Providers returned significantly higher incidences of e-beginner assessments for four very closely related practices. These all concern free resources provided through the cultural sector as follows:

1. The National Archive (eg Moving Here, www.CASBAH.ac.uk)

2. Culture Online resources (eg City Heritage, Headline History)

3. Regional MLA Resources (eg through Renaissance, Sense of Place South East)

4. The British Library

These four also elicited the highest proportion of not assessed returns.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

Providers assessment of their e-maturity reinforced the findings above since 1, 2 and 3 received no assessments of e-maturity. One provider rated its provision with regards to the British Library as e-mature. However, it should be noted that this provider is located within easy physical reach of the British Library.

No provider rated provision with regards to 'The National Archive' as e-adequate or better. Only one or two providers rated provision with regards the other three practices above as e-adequate or better.

Practices with the highest occurrence of 'e-maturity'

Three practices stand out as having the highest incidence of e-maturity self-assessment. First amongst these is:

1. the National Learning Network programme (including aclearn).

Six providers judged their provision with regards the NLN as e-mature. In total 17 providers judged their provision as e-adequate or better.

This was followed by positive assessments for two more national programmes in:

2. the LSC Quality Improvement Strategy

3. extended schools/Building Schools for the Future.

Whilst these only elicited four assessments of e-maturity these were supported by high numbers of providers assessing their provision as e-adequate or better.

Practices with the lowest occurrence of 'e-beginner'

Two practices have received significantly fewer assessments of e-beginner from providers:

1. The National Learning Network programme (including aclearn)

2. The LSC Quality Improvement Strategy

Only 2 providers judged their provision as e-beginner for these practices. These were followed by:

3. the Government's Skills Strategy (The Leitch Report).

Only five providers considered their provision with regards the Skills Strategy at the lowest level.

<u>Key findings from the specific policies, external agencies and resource section</u>

1.   There are extremely low levels of confidence in providers' use of all cultural sector local, regional and national resources.

2.   National programmes (NLN, Leitch, QIS) appear to have had much more significant impact.

3.   There are encouraging signs of engagement with the extended schools/BSF programmes (although this is inconsistent).

4.3.7 Free text comments

Key themes emerging:

4.3.7.1 'My hopes for my organisation's e-enabled learning over the next 2 years'

- All staff and learners to have access to high quality ICT
- Embedding technology throughout provision
- Reliable and effective deployment of a learning platform
- Improved tutor:learner communications
- More effective business and management administration systems
- Much improved staff confidence using a wide variety of technologies (including Learning Platforms – Moodle features strongly, learning platforms, whiteboards, interactive voting kits, Microsoft Messenger etc)
- Access to engaging content
- Improved sharing of good e-learning practice
- Better venues and facilities
- Improved 'learner-voice' and pastoral care
- Recognition of the particular demands of PCDL and its learners from Corporate IT services
- Less e-mails!

4.3.7.2 'The best example of good practice in e-enabled learning within my organisation'

- The training of e-champions through a variety of subjects
- Building electronic portfolios of achievements with DLD students
- Resources/links/quizzes/assignments etc on Moodle to support learning - accessible 24/7
- The use of cameras to record progress
- The use of PCs with driving test theory for use on Traveller sites
- Learning champions course via the learning platform has reached many isolated learners
- A staffroom on the learning platform
- Learner created DVDs to promote the PCDL service
- The learning platform offers the ability to build a resource base where SfL and FL materials can be shared
- Sharing a learning platform across four local authorities
- Use of websites for carers and creative and language courses giving opportunities for self-directed learning at home
- Open events with tutors - a Saturday workshop delivering ILT CPD

- Using the learning platform to provide syllabus, scheme of work, weekly exercise sheets with results and samples of past exam papers for tutors
- An interactive voting system used within family learning context for a range of purposes, but specifically to support initial assessment
- The production of learner scrapbooks by older learners with no prior experience of digital technology
- Online testing for basic skills in remote locations via wireless access points
- The use of digital photo frames to contribute to portfolio building for learners with learning disabilities.

4.3.7.3 'The biggest challenge to progressing e-enabled learning for my organisation'

- Overcoming resistance to change and the advent of new technologies
- CPD - high numbers of part-time staff and high staff turnover make CPD programmes problematic and expensive
- The capacity of small services to lead and manage
- The lack of secure funding with which to plan
- Over emphasis on skills over informal, first step engagement
- Working across networks of different providers and establishing protocols for access
- The expense of upgrading existing hard and software to facilitate e-enabled learning across such a large rural community
- Large number and diverse type of delivery sites
- To get vocational tutors to recognise the impact that ILT could have on their learners, not only in their specialist subject but also everyday life
- Commissioning provision removes the control that direct delivery benefits from - open and competitive tendering may result in a changing profile of providers
- Access to internet
- Identifying and funding the additional capacity required to run a much expended learning platform
- Staff capacity, time and resources - in relatively small full-time establishments, e-learning is an additional responsibility to existing job roles at all levels
- Providing comprehensive technical support between (eg between 8:30am and 9:30pm) across all community provision.

4.3.7.4 'The most significant policy change required to fully support e-learning and e assessment'

- Better funding for adult safeguarded learning (PCDL, Family Learning, FLLN and First Steps)
- Include PCDL in the planning and strategy
- None
- All the Government departments that have IT/e-learning brief to actually join with PCDL in a coherent way
- Enhancing the e-govt agenda to facilitate on line access to courses across providers
- The introduction of national minimum requirements for e-learning
- A continuation of NIACE project funding such as the connectivity funds which may enable county wide teaching and learning network for the benefit of learners and staff
- A national performance indicator with targets?
- A continuation and extension of the extended schools agenda to support adult and community learning in school community venues with good ICT infrastructure – ways to overcome the barriers to schools becoming a hub for lifelong learning
- Employment policy particularly in relation to tutors
- A coherent development programme which is designed to meet the needs of small VCS organisations and partnerships
- Some practical recognition of the wider social, community development , economic and health benefits of the skills and confidence developed the through e-learning - to support this work as fundamental aspect of building safer, stronger communities
- The full recognition of ICT as a Skill for Life (with consequences in respect of funding)
- Closing funding gap with FE colleges (also parity of support with libraries and schools)
- All tutors to be given laptops
- Enforce paper-less assessment across all areas
- An overall acceptance of e-evidence for audit purposes in all areas, by all external bodies
- Recognition of the role of ACL in engaging learners (the public) and developing skills to participate in the digital developments.

4.4 The practitioner questionnaire

Overall, 88 practitioners from 24 providers responded to the questionnaire. A small number indicated that they worked for two or more separate providers and contrasts between their experiences were explored in subsequent interviews and focus groups.

Many responses to the first section of the questionnaire (My own ICT skills) identified a high level a personal skills (see section 4.4.1 below) and there are indications that 'e-enthusiasts' were more likely to contribute to the study. Whilst this is not surprising, it suggests that the views expressed need to be treated with a degree of caution - the provider returns (both EMF43 and the questionnaires) indicate that the levels of ICT skills and e-engagement evidenced in the practitioner sample may, if taken on their own, rather over-estimate the degree of e-maturity in the sector.

However, for 19 of the 56 questions, 20 per cent or more of the respondents answered 'don't know/not applicable' or gave no response at all. These 'non-responses' were concentrated in section B (My access to technology), section C (My views on the impact of ICT and e-learning) and section D (Support for ICT and e-learning in my organisation) and only one of the questions in the final two sections produced a low level of response. This suggests that failure to respond was not a function of 'questionnaire fatigue' but related to other factors in the working environment and reasons for these non-responses are considered in the relevant sub-sections below.

Responses to each question were scored from 4 (very positive) to 1 (negative), with 'don't know/not applicable' or not answered scored as 0. In the discussion below, aggregated ratings for each section are presented, with one figure aggregating all potential responses, and a second figure excluding the 'non-responses'. An aggregated rating of 4 would indicate a completely positive response across the entire section and a rating of 1 would indicate an entirely negative response. The term 'non-response' is used throughout this section to describe individual scores coded 0 and discussed in each appropriate context.

The detailed results from the questionnaire are presented in Appendix D; sub-sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.7 below summarise the main findings.

4.4.1 Staff skills

Overall rating	2.47
Rating, excluding 0s	2.72

80 per cent of respondents assessed their general use of ICT skills positively - either as good, or very good. Only two questions in the entire questionnaire produced a

more positive response and this was the only question answered by all respondents. The following three questions (ICT use with learners in the classroom; knowledge of specialist software packages; use of ICT to manage learning and workload) all generated positive response levels of 60 per cent or more.

Respondents' ability to develop online electronic learning produced a more even spread of responses, with an overall rating of 'OK' and a similar but rather more positive pattern showed in knowledge of online learning resources, with two thirds of respondents assessing themselves as 'good' or 'OK'.

Two questions, however, generated strikingly different and more negative responses: capability to upload content to a learning platform and the ability to teach and facilitate online, with more than a third of respondents assessing their own skills as poor. There was also a 25 per cent 'non-response' rate to the second of these questions. Apart from (justifiably) depressing the overall ratings for this section, this suggests that whilst many PCDL practitioners have good general ICT skills and have extended these within their own specialist subject areas, they have relatively little experience or knowledge of more advanced e-learning applications. In many instances this is likely to be due to lack of access to facilities and training - see 4.4.2, 4.4.7.1 and 4.4.7.2 below.

4.4.2 Staff access to technology

Overall rating	2.33
Rating, excluding 0s	2.91

Responses in this section indicated wide variations in access and facilities.

Around two thirds of respondents reported very good access to a work-based computer or laptop (67%); access to the internet at work (66%); access to a laptop or computer away from work (67%) and access to online resources whilst at work (58 per cent). Access to digital cameras (75% rating this as good or very good); access to interactive whiteboards (61% positive); and access to portable data projectors (68 per cent positive) are also good for many respondents.

More than a third of respondents reported good suitability of spaces used for online teaching and learning (37 per cent); good access to a learning platform (43 per cent); and good access to wider resources from a learning platform (74 per cent good or OK). However, around 30 per cent gave 'non-responses' to the two questions on learning platforms, confirming that whilst many local authorities have either introduced these for PCDL learning, or are in the process of developing them, access (especially in outreach locations) is still a significant issue.

There were two very negative areas in this section. Although 31 per cent reported very good access through wireless enabled laptops to their organisation's network, 42% reported that this was poor and these percentages exclude the 41 per cent who produced non-responses. The final question (access to video-conferencing facilities) produced both the largest percentage of non-responses in the entire questionnaire (68%) and the highest negative score (71 per cent of those responding). Whilst this is not entirely surprising, given the dispersed and weakly resourced nature of much PCDL provision, the power of video conferencing to enhance learning is clearly not being exploited.

4.4.3 Staff views on the impact of ICT and e-learning

Overall rating	2.17
Rating, excluding 0s	2.76

This was one of the two sections with a high percentage of non-responses, which accounts for the relatively large difference between the two ratings in the table above.

The preponderance of e-enthusiasts in the practitioner sample may have positively influenced the level of responses: there were overall positive ratings for twelve of the 14 questions, but six of these were not answered by 20 per cent or more of the sample.

87 per cent believed that ICT and e-learning had allowed learners greater choice in learning opportunities - the second most positive score throughout the whole questionnaire. 80 per cent believe that it has improved opportunities for innovation in learning and teaching and 76 per cent that it has improved administration.

Respondents expressed positive views on the ability of ICT and e-learning to attract more learners (70 per cent); to improve learner retention (59 per cent), learner outcomes (71 per cent), and learner assessment (67 per cent); and to help learners to manage their own learning (67 per cent). In addition to improvements in administration, ICT was also perceived to improve staff satisfaction (56 per cent positive) and the development of new courses (56 per cent) and 70 per cent reported positively that ICT and e-learning had been incorporated into the organisational self-evaluation process.

The one area with a strongly negative rating was effective learner use of a learning platform (eg a learning platform), with 47 per cent non-responses and 43 per cent reporting that this had had little or no impact – this is probably linked to access and early stages of development - see 4.4.2 above.

As well as almost half the practitioners recording non-responses to the question on learner use of a learning platform, more than 20 per cent non-responses were recorded to the questions on learner retention, learner outcomes, learner satisfaction, improved staff CPD, improved staff satisfaction and incorporation within organisational self-evaluation, suggesting that a significant number of practitioners remain unconvinced that improvements in these areas have taken place.

4.4.4 Staff views on their provider's support for ICT and e-learning

Overall rating	2.10
Rating, excluding 0s	2.60

This was the second section where high numbers of non-responses were recorded - around 25 per cent or more to half the questions. This accounts for the relatively large difference between the two ratings in the table above.

Over 50 per cent of responses rated organisational support positively on eight of the ten questions. Only in one area (technical support for e-learners) did more than 20 per cent of respondents rate their organisation as poor. However, there were relatively low percentages of respondents who assessed their organisation's support levels as very good. Taken alongside the high numbers of non-responses to a number of questions, this paints a picture with a considerable amount of shade which echoes the provider responses described in section 4.3.

Encouragingly, there were positive views of the availability of operational support from IT support staff (62 per cent); the effectiveness of this support (64 per cent); the availability of library and resource centre support when required (52 per cent); staff access to training and other professional development needs (70 per cent); support for the development of online learning resources (54 per cent); the value of internal advice and support in helping staff to adopt e-learning (61 per cent); the value of external advice and support (66 per cent); and the promotion of formal qualifications in e-learning and ICT (51 per cent). However, free text comments, (section 4.4.7), interviews and focus groups (section 4.5) revealed a continued voracious and incompletely satisfied appetite for further training and the interviews revealed that some practitioners had taken a broad view of access to training, rather than focusing on the e-component, and had included the promotion of formal qualifications for learners in their response to question D9, so there is a need to sound a small cautionary note here.

Two areas stand out as notably negative, with 60 per cent or more of respondents rating these as poor, or no better than adequate: the provision of technical support for e-learners and the take-up of e-learning beyond the enthusiasts. PCDL has historically been characterised as a sector which offers high levels of support to

individual learners, but this does not appear to have extended far into the areas of technical support with e-learning and ICT.

There is clearly a strong feeling that the take-up of e-learning has not extended far beyond the e-enthusiasts. This parallels views expressed by practitioners in a recent study by Sero of e-activity in Scotland's colleges and represents a significant challenge for the PCDL sector in England, with its large numbers of part-time staff, dispersed provision and very variable facilities for learning.

Linked with this, it also appears that there is a relative lack of awareness amongst practitioners of organisational support for some areas of e-learning and ICT: more than 20 per cent of the sample either recorded don't know/not applicable or failed to enter any response to the availability of library and resource centre support; the provision of technical support for e-learners; the value of external advice and support in helping staff adopt e-learning; the promotion of formal qualifications in e-learning and ICT; and the take-up of e-learning beyond the enthusiasts.

4.4.5 Staff use of ILT in their teaching

Overall rating	2.13
Rating, excluding 0s	2.43

The difference between the two ratings is largely accounted for by the level of non-responses to questions on the use of diverse media for learning content and assistance to learners in the development of e-portfolios.

The good level of basic IT skills amongst the sample is reflected in the 96 per cent who claim to be creating and using paper-based learning materials often, or all the time - this was the most strongly positive response to any single question in the entire questionnaire. Whilst some of these materials may not involve the use of ICT software, evidence from interviews, focus groups and free text comments indicated that most of this activity relied on at least some use of technology.

However, when the focus of the question is changed to specify the creation of e-learning materials, the percentage of positive responses drops to 44 per cent and lower in the use of diverse media (eg game-based learning, podcasts, IPTV services) where only 21 per cent positive responses were recorded, and in the use of online collaborative tools (eg email lists, discussion forums, blogs and wikis) where a 34 per cent positive response rate was recorded. Follow-up discussions in interviews and focus groups revealed that activity in this area was very largely limited to email lists and the occasional use of blogs.

The extent to which practitioners used technology to develop personalised learning resources and practices appears very limited. There was little evidence from the questionnaire of significant developments in this area and no responses from the free text questions. PCDL provision has historically been associated with careful listening to learners' expressed needs and personalised learning experiences, but the impact of technology in extending this to personalised learning resources and learning spaces is very limited. Except where adult and community learning has involved the delivery of NVQs, experience with e-portfolios is minimal – and, indeed, of little perceived value. Although there has been relatively rapid development of learning platforms in the PCDL sector over the past four years, there is little evidence from this survey of any use of these to provide personalised learning spaces.

4.4.6 The impact of ICT on the practitioner's working week

Overall rating	2.48
Rating, excluding 0s	2.72

Over 60 per cent of respondents identified time savings in their working week through the impact of ICT. This was at its strongest in lesson planning (72 per cent identifying time saving) and also strong in record keeping (64 per cent) and lesson delivery (62 per cent). There were smaller gains reported in the assessment of learners' work, with almost half the respondents (47 per cent) reporting that ICT made no time difference to this. Interviews and focus groups confirmed that whilst ICT may initially lengthen lesson preparation time, the prospect of re-usable resources offers real benefits in time saved and in the quality of learning materials used.

4.4.7 Main issues from free text practitioner questionnaire response

4.4.7.1 Hopes for e-learning in PCDL over the coming two years and enablers to progress towards e-maturity

There were 56 usable responses related to these areas from the practitioner survey. The most common themes were:

(a)   training and support provided for tutors, including formal qualifications in e-learning (15 responses, 27 per cent).

For example:

"More e-learning training available and free to staff (as cost is a major issue)"

"Train more staff/students in various ways so that they make more progress in the use of e-learning"

"Provision of qualifications in e-learning."

(b)   further development of the learning platform (14 responses, 25 per cent)

For example:

"Moodle used to a much greater extent for resource-sharing, communications between students and/or tutors, full capabilities used"

"The learning platform as an integral part of teaching and learning and perhaps distance learning courses where learners have access to resources."

(c)   better access to e-learning from rooms that are not dedicated to ILT (8 responses, 14 per cent).

For example:

"More access in non-ILT rooms to reliable equipment and ILT resources"

"Access to equipment in the classroom to make e-learning a reality."

(d)   integrating e-learning into existing teaching and learning, including blended learning (7 responses, 13 per cent)

For example:

"E-learning becoming more accessible to all learners so that it becomes 'normalised' into teaching"

"Integrating e-learning into my course materials".

(e)   developing e-learning resources for all parts of the curriculum (5 responses, 9 per cent)

For example:

"Blended learning available for all courses and learning sessions"

"E-learning forms some part of the teaching in every subject."

Other minor themes included hopes that PCDL organisations would provide better support and promotion for the use of e-learning, that they would invest more in ICT equipment, and that the respondents would themselves improve their understanding and use of e-learning.

It is of note that there is no significant demand for improved expenditure on equipment (only mentioned five times), in contrast to the demand for training and

support for staff in implementing e-learning (mentioned three times as much). Nor is there much interest in e-assessment (one mention).

4.4.7.2 The key factors in promoting technology provision and utilisation

This issue is closely linked to the hopes for progress and enablers highlighted in the previous section. Of the 54 usable responses to this question from the practitioner survey there was a single dominant theme - that of training and support for staff. The most common themes were:

(a)   providing training opportunities for staff and supporting their development of e-learning (27 responses, 50 per cent).

For example:

"Continue to support tutors with ICT and allow them to update their skills through regular training"

"More training for tutors in this specific area"

"More tutor training sessions on the benefits of e-learning"

"Coaching tutors to use the technology by sharing real examples of best practice"

"Regular face to face workshops together with online information/support."

(b)   funding for ICT equipment to increase level of access (16 responses, 30 per cent)

For example:

"Having resources and making access to them easier"

"Funding for establishment of local learning platform"

"Funding for ICT equipment to increase level of access."

(c)   funding part-time tutors to have time for participation in training and the development of e-learning resources (10 responses, 19 per cent)

For example:

"Provide funding and incentives for part-timers to take on the extra training and the extra work preparing e-materials"

"Staff paid to attend (training) in cases where they are not at the moment."

(d)   support mechanisms to mentor staff using e-learning and increase their confidence (6 responses, 11%)

For example:

"Staff need to become confident and see e-learning working in different scenarios"

"Roll out ILT champions mentorship project to more staff."

(e)   other minor themes included suggestions such as: increase learner awareness and overcome their reluctance for e-learning; fund for improved technical support for ICT infrastructure and learning platforms. Only a few responses placed responsibility on senior managers to show commitment to e-learning and the provision of resources in their organization.

4.4.7.3 The biggest barriers to progressing e-learning in PCDL

There were 59 usable practitioner responses in this area and the most common themes were:

(a)   sufficient access to the right level of ICT equipment, especially in community settings (15 responses, 25 per cent)

For example:

"Limited by the hardware and software available to learners i.e. laptops without internet connections"

"We hold courses in a variety of venues within different communities that would not be able to provide us with access to equipment and internet connections"

"Difficulty of accessing ICT in community locations – we work in schools and some schools will give us access to ICT suites but this is not consistent."

(b)   shortage of time for tutors to develop new teaching approaches or acquire e-learning skills (14 responses, 24 per cent)

For example:

"Time constraints in developing own materials – centre cannot afford to pay for dedicated development time"

"The time it will take tutors initially to research e-learning materials and learn how to use them with learners eg on learning platform"

"Time to liaise with people with ICT expertise and tutors wishing to incorporate the use of ICT."

(c)   support (including funding) for staff to acquire skills through training or develop resources (9 responses, 15 per cent)

For example:

"Lack of suitable resources, including trained and confident staff"

"Tutors already give up a lot of extra time to improve their teaching. They would be more willing to do so if they were paid to attend training sessions."

"Tutors need to be encouraged to acquire (e-learning) skills themselves and to have an ILT mentor to turn to for support."

(d)   resistance by tutors to e-learning, or reluctance to adopt new approaches (9 responses, 15 per cent)

For example:

"The resistance to change of tutors, particularly the older ones who have been teaching for a long time and who are set in their ways"

"There is still a reluctance amongst many tutors to use e-learning."

(e)   deficiencies in staff skills in using e-learning (6 responses, 10 per cent)

For example:

"Gaining and maintaining the skills required for a range of scenarios."

(f)   There were a number of minor themes in the responses, including the lack of effective technical support, shortage of funding, and lack of learner confidence or skills in using ICT. One interesting minor theme (five responses) related to a perception that their organisation was not committed to progressing e-learning or was not sufficiently organised to do so effectively.

4.4.7.4 Examples of good practice in e-learning in PCDL

Of the 54 usable responses to this question from the practitioner survey the most common themes were quite different from those in a similar recent study in FE colleges. They were also much less specific than the examples given in the FE survey. A surprising eight respondents (15% of the responses) did not feel competent enough, or were unable to identify good practice in e-learning.

The themes were:

(a)   Use of the organisation's learning platform to deliver e-learning and provide resources for learners (19 responses, 36 per cent)

For example:

"Resources on our Moodle (learning platform) learning platform being used as a tutor resource, and starting to be used with learners. One course is wholly available on the learning platform as an alternative to classroom provision"

"Using the learning platform to open up opportunities to access additional resources for learners attending a line dancing class."

(b)   Use of ICT for record-keeping, including digital images for recording students' work (5 responses, 9 per cent)

For example:

"Using a digital camera … to provide proof positive to all of (student) progress"

"Using e-learning to support assessment and record-keeping in woodturning class."

(c)   Organisation support for staff development (such as ILT champions) (4 responses, 7 per cent)

For example:

"ILT champions to help develop non-ILT users … through mentoring and training."

(d)   Other themes were mentioned by only a few respondents, but included: fostering creativity through use of digital media, staff sharing resources through websites, and the use of instructional video. One interesting minor theme related to the enthusiasm of the few tutors using e-learning in their organisation.

4.5 Interviews and focus groups

In total, 49 practitioners and managers from 24 providers were interviewed by telephone or participated in focus group discussions. As might be expected, e-guides were relatively strongly represented in this sample, with over 50 per cent of respondents in this category. In general, the comments reinforced the views and information given in the provider and practitioner questionnaires. However, the issue of e-safety had not been explored in the questionnaires and is addressed in section 4.5.3 below.

The overall themes were aptly summarised by a manager from a small southern local authority which contracts out the majority of its provision:

"I'm secure in the fact that 90 per cent of our staff are engaged in training and beginning to see that reflected in lesson planning. We are in the process of getting

portable tutor kits because we have a significant problem with a lack of internet and facilities in many of our locations. The last 10 per cent is a question of time and support. We do have learning platforms emerging and some areas are doing everything they can to get tutors to sign up to it and put resources up. It is just a question of time. Some tutors don't have internet or computer facilities, there are gaps in ICT and peer support is needed to overcome this mini-digital divide."

4.5.1 Capacity and capability

The use of digital resources was reported to be patchy and, especially in rural areas with connectivity issues there were examples of both management reluctance and tutor resistance to their adoption:

"Not seen as a priority; tutors see as a problem." (Manager from a rural local authority)

Even one large organisation with new buildings recognised that there was still much to do:

"New building highly equipped but many (especially specialist part time) staff are completely unused to this. Not yet done much to train staff in content development."

Taking e-learning beyond the enthusiasts typically involves a long journey. One local authority which self-assessed its e-maturity level as low commented:

"Everyone being on board is a long way in the future. We do an annual audit with tutors in the area and last year's results showed that overall 36 per cent of tutors were using e-learning the classroom. 25 per cent were using platforms to support learners outside the classroom but it does vary drastically across the board from subject - subject. In some areas e-learning has surpassed the enthusiasts but in other areas it is still down. I feel that we are making headway in making it the norm."

However, this is not necessarily a function of the reluctance of older teaching staff:

"(E-learning is) not yet embedded into PGCE courses - some young teachers have never used a whiteboard!"

4.5.2 Technology and infrastructure

Unlike in the FE college sector, last mile connectivity is still a significant barrier to the adoption of e-learning, especially in the large number of smaller venues which most local authorities use, such as church and community premises and this is equally valid for direct delivery local authorities and those which contract out:

eg "Council venues OK, others not." (Contracted out local authority)

"Yes it is definitely. With our nine venues that we own it is not problem but we have 197 other venues where we can't use the internet, either because it is not there at all or because we are not allowed to use it – this happens a lot in schools" (Direct delivery local authority).

Sometimes connectivity issues can inhibit the spread of e-learning and ICT beyond IT courses:

"It isn't [an inhibitor] in our own centres, but in outreach venues such as church halls the connectivity varies greatly. Because of this we have to try and match facilities to the course, so we put IT courses in our centres and art and craft in the village hall."

Where learning platforms were reported to be in use, or under development, these were almost invariably Moodle based - several practitioners used the words 'learning platform' and 'Moodle' without realising that the second is an exemplar of the first. In some local authorities the cost of investing in learning platform development is still perceived as prohibitive:

"No [learning platform]. That is one of the biggest challenges because our funding doesn't allow us to have an infrastructure strong enough to support a learning platform. Firewalls also make it hard to pull together and load up the resources onto a learning platform and run it when so many organisations contribute to the learning set-up. Because of these problems we tend to go for lower level technology for e-learning that is often overlooked and it is easier to teach tutors how to use them."

The lack of a learning platform inhibited the circulation of resources: at one focus group meeting, two tutors in the same subject area from different locations only found out about common resources through dialogue at the meeting.

With learning platform provision patchy, and most learners attending one or two classes per week at most, it is unsurprising that personalised learning spaces are still virtually unknown in PCDL. This was emphasised even in one relatively developed local authority:

"Personal learning spaces didn't exist - group/class sections on the blackboard, but no personal spaces."

In the longer term extended schools and BSF programmes may have a positive impact on community learning, but at present the attitudes of many schools are, at best, frustrating for PCDL practitioners, or at worst, significant barriers to access to advanced technology. These comments on the impact of BSF from direct delivery local authorities were typical:

"Not for us, there has been no impact whatsoever. One of the biggest frustrations we face is being able to teach in a venue, like a school, and not use their resources. To

have all that great equipment available but not be allowed to use it is very annoying and holds us back."

"BSF (has) not yet woken up to what is needed to engage (the) community."

Another local authority was more hopeful, but echoed the need for changed attitudes:

"BSF - hopeful, but schools resistant about letting adults in."

Costs also inhibited access to available appropriate technology:

"City Learning Centres charge high prices."

However, in a minority of local authorities there were signs of at least the basis for change:

"Extended schools - better ICT and learning environment."

But even here there were reservations:

"Extended schools - yes. Encouraged to work with schools, but clashes with professionalising the workforce, as schools often want to employ unqualified specialist tutors."

Earlier NIACE surveys have highlighted the low level of technical support in many providers and interview and focus group comments confirmed that there is still room for substantial improvement:

"Limited (technical support) because of contracting out - but this is changing."

"We have an outsource company whom we can phone if we have problems but it is not a great situation."

"Under-resourced across the service. Unclear how central ICT (services) will be able to provide the specialist technical ICT/ILT support the service needs." (local authority which assessed itself as low on e-maturity).

Practitioners in one large rural local authority claimed that there was a single technician to provide support across the county and that support in small centres was virtually unobtainable. A contrasting but minority view was expressed by another LA:

"In our smaller centres it is better than in the large buildings like schools. It is hard to improve because about 60 per cent of the funding we receive is for specific projects so we can't use it to pay for improvements to the infrastructure etc."

The technology market was viewed largely positively, with lack of resources being the main brake on exploitation:

"There is pretty much everything we could need on the market, the only thing is that we often have to wait a long time to get it due to cost holding us back."

"It is very hard to say. It is not so much about what is available and more about making well informed choices. It is often hard to know whether x is better than y and it can be quite confusing. There should be more information available as we have sometimes made bad choices as we don't have enough time to research it."

Most PCDL providers would envy the comment from a large specialist college:

"The nature of (our) organisation means that it can exploit the supplier market. There are, however, three qualifications:

(a) lack of sufficiently flexible DVD/Combi recorders;

(b) need to buy 'domestic' equipment because of funding constraints - this can be restrictive;

(c) interoperability is a big issue: some difficulties with major new Microsoft products (eg Vista, Office 2007) in matching these with rolling programmes of upgrades."

4.5.3 E-safety

From the entire sample, only the one large specialist college had a full and detailed policy on e-safety, which formed part of its overall IT systems policy. Where other providers discerned a policy at all, it was generally and to some extent properly related to the constraints of local authority firewalls and corporate concerns:

"Learners sign up to council policy - very inflexible."

"Clause on e-safety in learner agreement."

However there was overall a significant lack of clarity with some concerns about consistency:

"Think there is one - but haven't seen it." (Part-time tutor in a direct delivery local authority.)

"It varies between centres because have their own policy which are all very clear, sometimes our staff advise them on what sort of sites should be filtered etc. We often find firewalls are a barrier to learning as well because it limits the websites we can use and prevents us using all the resources we would like."

In a minority of local authorities there had been active measures to modify blanket council policies in the interests of learners:

"We don't use the term e-safety and haven't got an e-safety policy written down but we do have a general policy about internet use. We do need to look at issues connected to safety, security and disaster recovery. We incorporate certain related discussions into our courses but not in detail."

"We do because we are part if the council. Every machine has firewall and virus checkers and is regularly updated. We do have a policy on what can be viewed but people are still able to go on social networking sites like Facebook so that people can upload photos they have taken on the course and write blogs about what they are doing."

"We follow the corporate guidelines on firewalls and anti-virus software. We recently installed a Deep Freeze programme onto all the learner computers so that the learners can download things in class and have full access to the internet but then whenever a computer is shut down the computer will return to default. We let the learners look at any websites, we don't have any blocks." (Local authority which assessed itself as relatively e-mature.)

Where e-safety issues were addressed with the learners, these were typically in family learning and citizenship programmes:

"Courses on e-citizenship; security on IT courses only."

"In family learning - yes. Firewall screens out inappropriate websites. Block MySpace / Facebook. No training on e-safety."

"We also warn learners of the dangers and encourage them to make their home computers safe and offer to help them if they have any trouble with their home computers. We also cover internet copyright issues with them."

4.5.4 Learners and learning outcomes

Inevitably, PCDL learners were described as bringing a full spectrum of existing IT skills to the table, some simply equating IT skills with 'computers'. Teachers gave evidence of an imaginative range of strategies for tackling reluctance:

"Because of the nature of the course I teach (aromatherapy healing) a lot of my students are professionals doing it as a sideline or looking for a change of life and all of these people have good ICT skills. We also get new mothers and a lot of eastern Europeans who have never worked here before so the levels can be varied. Often students don't make the link between using ICT and how it can help them. For example if we take photos or videos of them during the course they don't consider it ICT, nor when we use Hot Potatoes for mini quizzes."

"When we used the cameras most of them were OK. Some of them had never used a digital camera and were reluctant and a little bit scared about doing so but once they used it and got over the initial hurdle they became a lot keener. I then referred them to our digital media courses so that they could continue learning."

"It is very wide ranging - we have some with very basic skills and others who have high levels. We can certainly help those who have no experience. I think you can develop skills for life through the use of technology on our courses, we see a real growth of improvement."

There was almost universal appreciation of the added value for learning through imaginative use of technology - but many emphasised that the context needed to be appropriate:

"It can help some people; we have had positive feedback from those who have used the platform. You can have too much though, I teach French and languages are all about communication so there needs to be personal contact and you don't need e-learning for this."

"Enables more interactivity - useful for supporting learners between sessions. Made some courses viable by aggregating numbers at a distance. Learners still want face to face."

"It definitely helps motivate people by celebrating their work and making clear all that is on offer to them. We use digital cameras a lot so that learners can have photographic evidence of their work and then we use the photos for displays to help sell the courses. We also use email and websites to share links and make recommendations and things like that."

"Sometimes ICT can almost put them off a course choice because people will call up asking if they will need to use a computer or type their work etc but we normally talk them round to trying it anyway."

The use of technology to improve communication with learners was patchy, but some highly positive illustrations were given, although this is in its early stages:

"All of our learners have a set of contact log in details so they can get into the system and correspond with tutors. All the tutors have a corporate email address so that people can contact them without them having to give out a personal email."

"Just started on this journey. Bought PAYG (Pay As You Go) mobile phones for learners to use" (manager from LA contracting out).

"Email is used a little and we have no blogs. It is mainly using and sharing materials on Moodle that has had the biggest impact in communications. We are in the process of developing forums."

"It definitely helps. They email one another lots and there are blogs and chat rooms in the learning platform so that they can get support. These sorts of things help break barriers and make everyone far more sociable. It also helps them communicate with one another outside of the course which motivates the learners more."

Examples of good practice and success through technology were widespread. Some of the more interesting ones are illustrated here in the words of the practitioners:

"In my last session I used the French railways website as a resource because it uses abbreviations a lot and it fitted with the travel theme. It is excellent to have something real to use rather than mocked up sheets. For modern foreign languages (MFL) the internet is great as it makes the world seem smaller."

"I had one student who had dyslexia and when he joined the course he was extremely shy and would insist on sitting in a corner by himself and he always had to sit at the same desk. Using the ICT equipment like the cameras helped him improve his social skills and made him a lot more confident. He now volunteers in all of my classes and sometimes in the other tutors' lessons too and he has been nominated for an IT Skills Spark award."

"E-village engaged over 100 older learners then funding ran out."

"I have lots of them. Often it is where e-learning is used in areas you wouldn't expect. For example one of our guitar tutors puts a lot of fingering handouts onto the intranet as well as recordings of the music so that the learners can listen to them and copy. He also lent them MP3 players so that they could record themselves and add it to the e-portfolio that they all share."

"There is a rich mix of resources which are accessed by the smart board for lots of departments. In MFL they use intranet often to share resources and the jewellery tutors use cameras and projectors so that they can broadcast demos of fiddly work and zoom in on it."

"Mental health - improving confidence - learners make virtual gallery of art. Recording of achievement works well. Training college staff in percentages."

"We had a group of elderly learners who used the internet and video to create World War II scrapbooks and they really got into the project. Because it was a topic that had affected their lives they worked really hard. The skills they picked up are very useful now because they can use email to keep in touch with grandchildren and shop from home and things like that."

"Supporting learners with disabilities with adaptive hardware."

"Deaf Department – British Sign Language courses."

"95 year old ex-graphic artist - now rheumatic - but graphics packages on computers have helped him recreate."

4.5.5 Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money

Many staff appreciated that the adoption of ICT would enrich learning and teaching and save time in the long run, but not necessarily in its early stages:

"Sharing resources and re-use."

"Team leader: upskilling and integrating part time staff - helps with isolation."

"Doing the lesson plans does save time as you can re-use them although it does take a lot of time to set up and embed e-learning into it. A two hour lesson can take up to six hours to plan because you end up spending a long time searching for things, testing links etc."

"At the moment it is costing time rather than saving it because creating resources takes up a lot of time. It will reap benefits in the future when work can be re-used but at the moment it is slowing us down at the moment."

Although Recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) was widely appreciated in improving learning, one comment indicated that the paperless version did not save time.

Given that pure PCDL courses are by definition non-accredited, e-assessment has generally only spilled over into provision where NVQs are delivered as part of an ACL/PCDL programme. There is however some use of e-assessment in diagnostic tests:

"We are just starting to use the Learning Style Quick Scan diagnostic package which identifies dyslexia. This is the only test / assessment style IT we use."

"Yes. Assessing learners' ability to use technology. Skills for Life."

Technology adoption has made a positive impact on staff communications:

"Yes - it has in the fact that some people have better skills so they can be shared, tutors have helped each other on materials. Speed of email has allowed this more as well. The collaboration depends on the department a lot."

However, the overall situation was summed up by one tutor:

"There are two camps: people who love it and collaborate lots and those who are scared or hesitant to try it."

4.5.6 Enablers and barriers

Time, training, resources, collaboration between providers and sustained funding initiatives were mentioned as five key enablers in progressing towards e-maturity:

"Time needs to be made to train tutors to make them more able and confident on the equipment."

"More training for staff and also increase resources. For e-learning to really spread it needs to be widely adopted in non-IT courses. If equipment like interactive whiteboards could be brought into these lessons it would definitely encourage progression."

"Greater collaboration between different providers/different areas would be beneficial as well because then we can learn from other organisations."

"Need to educate LAs in what ICT facilities are needed for learning & how this differs from public access. Stopped using libraries because of restrictions" (an echo of the barriers to technology access described in 4.5.2 above).

"There needs to be more sustained funding of initiatives that recognise diversity in the adult learning sector. Rather than creating one size fits all schemes it needs to be tailored specifically to fit different area needs. The funding and support also needs to be over a longer time period rather than us having to be constantly bidding for little bits and bobs; it's nonsensical, we don't have time to be doing that."

"Now that it is included in inspection criteria it has to be taken seriously."

Issues of resources and of training a sometimes reluctant workforce were identified as the major barriers to progress:

"Money and understanding - teaching is more stressful when you can't rely on technologies."

"The reluctance of a certain cohort of tutors to learn and improve; the inability to look at the full scope of the sector and tailor funding appropriately rather than having such a narrow definition of adult education."

Sometimes the rush to adopt expensive technology was also an inhibitor:

"People won't consider lower levels of technologies before going for a learning platform which can be a waste of money."

The same themes were echoed in sector comments about their preferred directions for future investment, with a particular emphasis on the need for continuity, rather than short-term funding:

"Wireless connectivity."

"Staff development. ICT technicians. Team of e-guides on fixed contracts."

"Courses to engage reluctant adopters. More technical support."

"The e-guide programme was fantastic, there needs to be more like this and more sustained for the tutors. Also any training helps but especially if it is paid for as that acts as an incentive. It needs to be tutors rather than managers who are sent on the courses because it is the tutors who really need to use the equipment but who often struggle most."

"Need to pay tutors to attend training. Money spent on learndirect - wasted - not appropriate. Don't think online learning works for majority - need face-to-face. More money for face to face learning is what is really needed, reverse the cutbacks in adult learning."

"Maybe on in-house training to ensure that it is relevant and people can be trained in a way that suits them. The problem is that all of the tutors in my department are sessional and are reluctant to give up their free time to come to meetings etc so they would have to be paid to attend but it would be worth it because they would be more likely to take up e-learning and it would be beneficial for learners."

"Continuity of investment with ring-fenced funding plus continuous up-skilling and training."

Chapter 5 - Discussion

5.1 Mapping data against the Becta Balanced Scorecard

5.1.1 Introduction

This section uses data from EMF43 and the provider questionnaire. Each of the factors covered in each data source has been mapped back to the Balanced Scorecard. The mapping from EMF43 was generated by Sero based on earlier work by Becta but cross-checked and modified to remove inconsistencies and ensure that it was fully consistent with the E-maturity Framework for Further Education version 3.1, the version of EMFFE from which EMF43 was derived. The mapping from the provider questionnaire is the work of Sero.

Scorecards were then generated for the following 10 subsets of the sample:

- Local authority contracted out vs local authority direct delivery: these categories are becoming blurred. The LSC priorities of concentrating funding on 16-19 programmes and adults working towards full Level 2 qualifications has made FE colleges (historically the most significant providers to whom local authorities have contracted delivery) increasingly reluctant to tender for non-accredited adult provision.
- Urban vs populous vs rural: providers were categorised according to geography and distribution of population.
- Very large vs large vs medium vs small vs very small: providers were categorised according to the total amount of LSC funding for PCDL, NLDC, First Steps, FLLN and WFL in their 2006/07 allocations. Although this is broader than PCDL alone, all providers reported that they used the same systems for managing their collective adult budgets.
- There were too few providers in the special designated institution and voluntary and community sectors to make it worth creating scorecards from this data.

Boundaries between colours have been set as:

- Score >= 2.85 green - describes 'embedded' areas
- Score from 2.84 to >= 2.35 yellow - describes 'established' areas
- Score from 2.34 to >= 1.85 orange - describes 'developing' areas
- Score < 1.85 red - describes areas where providers have not yet started to progress, or are in the early stages of adoption.

5.1.2 Caveats and issues

In some cases, data was not available for one or more providers in a category from one or other of the data sources.

The mapping of factors to the Balanced Scorecard has been done on the basis of judgment rather than science.

Not all factors in the Balanced Scorecard are mapped to by each data source and some factors in one or other data source map to more than one factor in the Balanced Scorecard. Where both data sources map to a factor in the Balanced Scorecard, these are weighted equally. Where one data source maps to a factor, the score derives wholly from the single data source. (There is no strong justification for equal weighting but the effort to make a case for differential weighting was not in our view justifiable. We are aware that some other studies are now using differential weightings).

5.1.3 Provider sample mapped against the Becta Balanced Scorecard

The table below (Figure 7) maps PCDL provider e-maturity against each of the 24 indicators in the current Becta Balanced Scorecard, using the method, weightings and colour coding described in 6.1.1 above:

1 Capability and capacity of the workforce, providers and learners	2.25	3 Outcomes and benefits for learners	2.32
1.1 Leaders have the knowledge and skills to ensure technology for learning can be harnessed for the benefit of learners	2.43	3.1 There is a greater choice in learning opportunities and modes for all learners	2.25
1.2 Institutions and providers plan and manage technology for learning effectively and sustainably	2.39	3.2 Learners have increased motivation for engagement in learning	2.53
1.3 Practitioners exploit technology consistently to offer engaging and effective learning experiences	1.99	3.3 Fewer learners under-perform or fail to succeed in education	2.64
1.4 Practitioners, parents and learners can share and use information and data effectively for the benefit of learners	2.58	3.4 An improvement in the quality of learning provision is accelerated	1.94
1.5 Improved learner capability in using technology to support their learning	1.84	3.5 There is improved child safety and child protection	2.23
2 Fit for purpose technology and systems	1.95	4 Efficiency, effectiveness and VFM across the system	2.23
2.1 All learners and practitioners have access to the appropriate	2.10	4.1 Learning providers collaborate and share information and	2.16

technology and digital resources they need for learning		resources	
2.2 Every learner has a personalised learning space to enable them to learn when and where they choose	**1.24**	4.2 The management and administration of learning and institutions is more efficient	**2.00**
2.3 Technology-enabled learning environments are secure, supported and interoperable	**1.94**	4.3 There is a greater level of effective, learner- focused assessment for learning	**2.95**
2.4 There is a dynamic, vibrant and responsive technology market that can meet the needs of the system	**2.53**	4.4 Practitioners collaborate and share good practice and learning resources	**2.14**
ALL - 50/50 Self-assessment / Provider questionnaire		4.5 There is good use of information to support learner transitions between institutions and sectors	**1.88**

Figure 11: High level 'carpet' or provider self-assessments of e-maturity

Whilst the robustness of this mapping must be treated with caution, the colour coding highlights several areas of interest:

- Learner-focused assessment is relatively highly rated, to the extent that good practice is generally embedded across the PCDL sector.
- The two weakest indicators reflect important aspects of the PCDL sector:
  - Little progress has been made in the area of personalisation, at least with respect to the impact of technology. The concept of a personalised learning space is generally foreign to most PCDL learners; if they are attending a single recreational class for a maximum of two and a half hours per week, then a personalised learning space on a learning platform is low on their list of priorities.
  - The relatively low level of learner capability in using technology reflects the continuing high demand for entry- and low level courses in the sector, both in ICT and other subjects.
- The PCDL sector is generally at the 'developing' stage with respect to the adoption of technology and e-learning - more than half the indicators fall into this category.

The data can be further aggregated to give a set of higher level views. The table below (Figure 12) maps the full provider sample against the four quadrants of the Balanced Scorecard and also indicates some variations when the full sample is disaggregated into sub-sets:

Provider Details	1 Capability and capacity of the workforce, providers and learners	2 Fit for purpose technology and systems	3 Outcomes and benefits for learners	4 Efficiency, effectiveness and VFM across the system
All	2.25	1.95	2.32	2.23
Contracted out	2.18	1.75	2.29	2.20
Local Authority direct delivery	2.20	1.97	2.35	2.24
Urban	2.33	2.08	2.49	2.38
Populous	2.20	1.88	2.24	2.14
Rural	2.01	1.88	2.10	2.02
Very large	2.41	2.20	2.51	2.26
Large	2.15	1.91	2.26	2.20
Medium	2.22	1.80	2.29	2.16
Small	2.15	2.05	2.33	2.34
Very small	2.23	2.01	2.48	2.29

Figure 12: e-maturity carpet by provider type and location

A number of observations can be made:

- Quadrant 2 (Fit for purpose technology and systems) is noticeably the weakest of the four high level indicators. Although it will have been pulled down by the particularly low score for indicator 2.2 (personalised learning space), it scores poorly both overall, and amongst all the subsets. This is likely to be, at least in part, a reflection of the scattered nature of delivery locations – particularly those in smaller, older buildings, where 'last mile' connectivity remains an issue. It is likely that the low score also reflects a lower level of investment in infrastructure and hardware than has been the case in mainstream FE. There is a particularly low score in local authorities that contract out all, or most of their provision.
- There is an indication that PCDL providers in rural areas have found it more difficult to reap the benefits of technology adoption.
- The benefits of technology adoption are strongest in urban areas.

The contrasts between local authority direct delivery and contracted out provision can be demonstrated more clearly when the overall outputs are shown in graphical form, as in Figure 13 below:
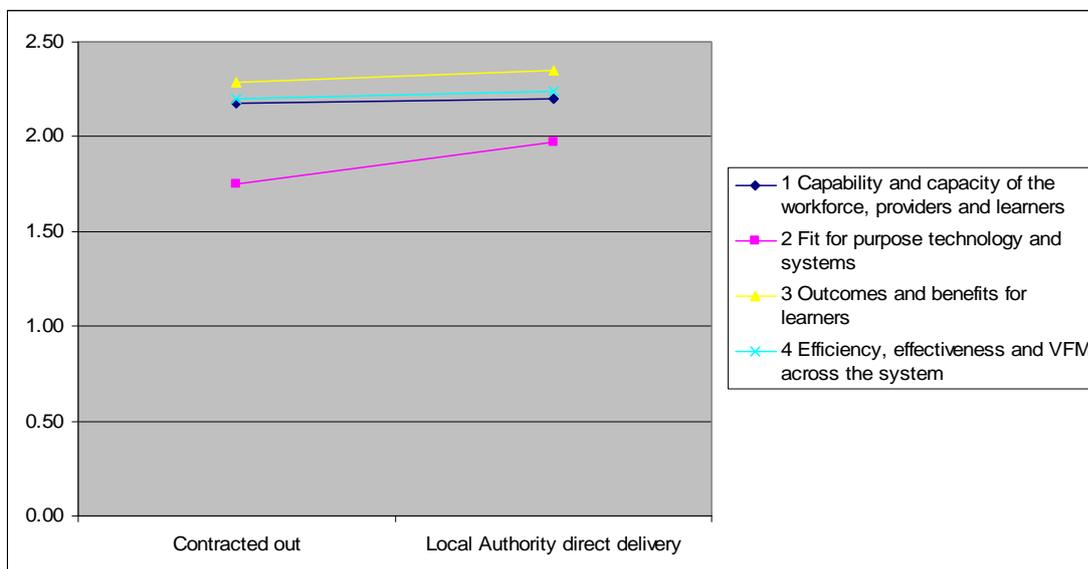
Figure 13: LA direct delivery vs LA contracted out

The same form of graphical presentation indicates the relative strength of technology adoption in urban areas, and the relative weakness in rural locations:
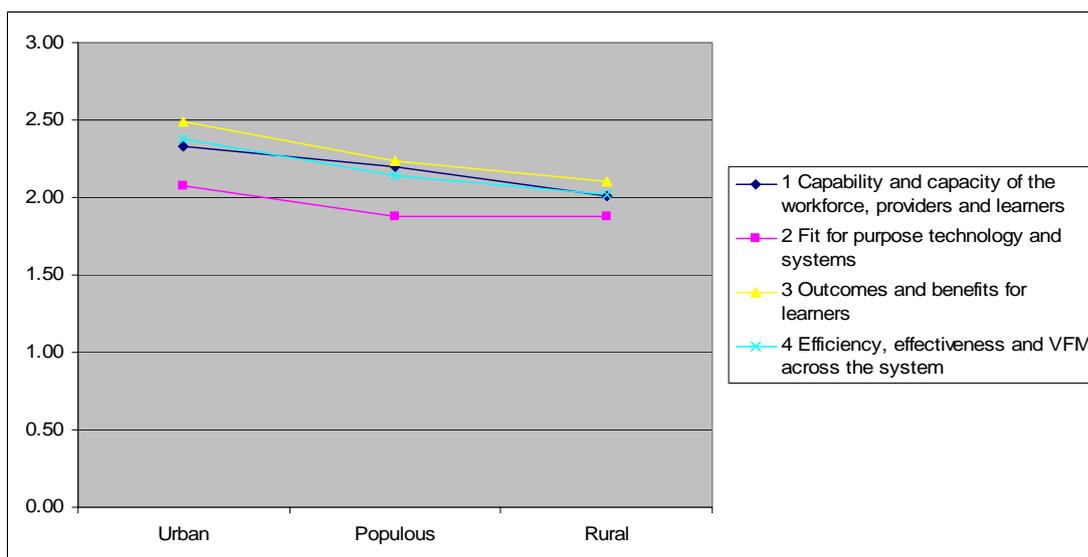
Figure14: Technology adoption by provider location

None of the other sub-sets of the provider data indicated any strong levels of variability.

5.2 Issues to consider in developing a self-assessment model of e-maturity in PCDL

Apart from work in the HE sector, projects in England to develop self-assessment models of e-maturity in post-16 have concentrated on the FE sector - which is the dominant sector in terms of LSC funding, learners and providers. In considering the development of an e-maturity model for PCDL, there are at least ten general characteristics of PCDL providers which distinguish them from FE colleges which need to be born in mind:

- PCDL providers are not 'self-determining', but either part of a local authority (and what that means for following corporate lines/policies, accepting corporate services such as technical support etc), or a voluntary agency, where education and training will just be one aspect of their overall activity to support and promote the welfare of their chosen client group.

- This is an almost universal part-time environment for learners and tutors, even managers: therefore learners and tutors may be encouraged to access ICT-based support elsewhere and may not be dependent on the provider for the supply of resources or equipment - hence the importance of partnership working.

- There is a very varied programme, in some cases (eg community development, regeneration projects) not even an overt learning programme, more a set of structured activities through which the "lessons" emerge as a result of "doing" … so ICT may be used as a support tool for an activity, rather than as a mechanism through which learning takes place (eg Isle of Wight Adult Education focuses on helping community groups participate in the carnival - ICT is used in terms of digital photographic records of what they did).

- There is a tradition of negotiation with the learner, over what learning takes place (the "negotiated curriculum") and how learning is delivered (also a RARPA expectation) … opens doors for use of ILT, but also depends to some extent on existing familiarity of learners with ICT and its potential.

- There is little in the way of formal "additional learning support" or "drop-in workshops", very little by way of learning resource centres … in part a result of relatively low historic investment, in part a result of the part-time nature of the learner: they come for their class, then go away again - unlike full time 16- to 19-year-olds on A-levels, they don't have 'free periods' in which to access study resources etc.

- Provision is widely dispersed (eg several local authorities use over 300 venues) provision, usually in premises not owned or controlled by the service, often with strictures/limitations on what on-site resources (owned by the "host" agency) can be used as part of what is to all intents and

purposes a room rental arrangement – lays emphasis on portability of equipment, also problems with network connectivity.

- PCDL learning is rarely accredited, need not be focused on progression onto another, higher-level course or indeed into employment: the LSC guidance on PCDL, which is "learning for its own sake" – renders irrelevant some of the mainstream rationale for ILT (eg better success rates, improved progression).

- The PCDL workforce is, in the first place, recruited for its subject expertise and usually then given in-service training (NB: will come within scope of new arrangements for initial teacher training and CPD, albeit via LSC funding agreement rather than as a result of regulation) … and so plenty of opportunity to introduce/develop e-learning techniques, but see above re limited resources, part-time nature of staffing.

- There are no formal governance arrangements, other than where permissive legislation has been used, so in many cases there is a manager-led service, with no formal expectations on governors to set direction/general educational character, and an aged leadership/senior management team, so there may be an inherent avoidance of/aversion to "new-fangled things and new ideas".

- A recent downward trend in resourcing (after a number of years of growth, especially in the field of widening participation) has led to relatively low staff morale which, when coupled with a sector-wide tendency towards a feeling of "being marginalised", can easily be used as a reason for not venturing to undertake development work/innovation.

These ten characteristics complicate the development of an appropriate model for PCDL, particularly if development starts from an FE standpoint. In this context, a number of observations can be made:

- The small size of PCDL means that any scheme will be expensive to develop if it does not leverage on schemes that apply to wider sectors in particular FE.

- Having said that, PCDL has somewhat different concepts and vocabulary from FE and so any scheme will need some rewriting to apply to PCDL (as Sero found for this study).

- There is very poor alignment between EMFFE and Balanced Scorecard even if it is better than for some other schemes.

- EMFFE is under review - this is public knowledge (but we have not yet seen the PA Consulting report so cannot comment on this further with respect to the current study, except to note that EMFFE contains a number of indicators in obscure language and others of debatable relevance to the sector).

- Recently we have heard that Balanced Scorecard is also under review, maybe just for small modifications, but we currently have no further details and we note that the current Balanced Scorecard scheme is still being used in Becta tenders.
- A new e-maturity scheme should be developed top-down from the Balanced Scorecard (or any successor) in order to support accurate reporting at that level, but in part due to the lack until recently of national indicators in most countries as well as the lack of e-maturity schemes in most countries, there is almost no experience in doing this (what little exists is mostly available to Sero). See Appendix E for some ideas.
- Tradecraft makes it clear that e-maturity schemes should take care with the number of indicators but the pressure is always to increase indicators beyond reasonable limits (around 35).
- Writing the text for mapping indicators to capability levels is a skill available to very few people and for which there is almost no documentation. It normally takes several iterations before descriptor text stabilises into a really useful form.
- There is considerable value in three-dimensional schemes like DSA and eMM but this tends to cause further complexity and burden on institutions unless very carefully handled.

A slow drift from compliance/audit to self-review is also evident. Our experience is that perhaps the best current approach is moderated self-review.

5.3 Importance of e-maturity to the PCDL sector

The diverse and often 'hard to reach' nature of the PCDL constituency means that the potential impact of new and emerging technologies is as great as, or greater than, in any other sector of education. Flexibility, the ability to reach into communities and good communication with learners are three of the keys to successful PCDL provision. Readily available, everyday technologies are already beginning to be used to significantly improve these.

The relative disparities of investment and consequent resources dictate that the PCDL sector must run in order to stand-still in relation to schools, FE and HE. To do this it must exploit technology (as it must all its resources) to the full.

It is essential that, as Government seeks the efficiency gains to justify its investments across education, those within the sector demonstrate that they can deliver further progress through their deployment of new and emerging technologies and their responsiveness to the inevitable changes. This is particularly acute in the following policy imperatives:

- Widening participation

- Personalisation of learner support
- Learner progression
- Business efficiencies
- Ability to plug into wider education sector developments.

The EMF43 methodology employs a number of assessments to gauge a provider's ability to exploit technology in these fields. To fully appreciate the benefits of e-maturity to a provider it is useful to take the viewpoint of a (potential but perhaps hesitant) learner through their learning journey:

- Marketing and promotion eg accessible websites, rich in information
- Engagement, attraction eg initial assessment tools, a diverse curriculum offer, locally provided through a variety of models, addressing accessibility issues
- Enrolment eg a variety of enrolment opportunities, online enrolment if desired
- Retention eg pastoral care and support through a variety of appropriate communication tools, information, advice and guidance, tools for peer support networks, engaging and exciting content and use of technologies by e-confident tutors, learner created content such as video etc
- Assessment eg regular formative assessment with timely responses through appropriate communication tools
- Progression eg information, advice and guidance, personal online spaces/e-portfolios, ICT skills.

In parallel with these the organisational, local, regional and national contexts can be better exploited by the e-mature provider and these, in turn, will provide a better learner experience, for example:

- management information eg better use of learner data between tutors, between learner and provider (eg with regards to funding).

5.4 Focussing investment on the most negative areas

Seven of the statements in the EMF43 self-assessment produced noticeably negative scores with more than a third of providers scoring themselves 'red' - ie Not yet started / undeveloped. These seven statements, together with the percentage of 'red' responses are shown in the table below:

Category	No	Element	Red%
Resources	R3	Staff are comfortable working with learners in the co-creation of resources	39
	R9	Learning tools are used to personalise learning	38
	R10	ILT is used to facilitate self-managed learning	55
Learning Support	S2	Digital literacy is a key part of learning programmes	35
	S6	There is appropriate use of e-portfolios	55
	S7	Learners can make use of an appropriate range of social and learning networking opportunities	42
Learning & Teaching	L7	Self-managed learning is supported	35

Figure 15: Most negative areas of self-assessments

These low self-assessments broadly exemplify three significant themes:

- Personalisation and learner management of their own learning (R9; R10; S6; L7)
- Using learners as a resource to enrich the learning experience (R3; S7)
- Supporting PCDL learners (who are typically part-time, often isolated, either geographically or socially and frequently aged 45+) in making the most of learning opportunities (S2; S7).

These are consistent with comments made by providers and practitioners in questionnaires and interviews about the need to invest in extensive staff training, the difficulties of training part-time staff (especially if they are not paid to attend training), and the early stage challenges of learning platform implementation facing most providers.

If all the 'red' scores in the seven weak areas were to be improved to 'yellow' - ie move from 'not yet started / undeveloped' to 'established', the high level provider carpet changes substantially, both in overall levels of e-maturity and in rank ordering:

Key to table below:

- Colour coding follows the same pattern as described in Chapter 4
- The left hand carpet reproduces the original scores, without any adjustment
- The right hand carpet shows the impact of moving red scores for the six questions up to yellow
- The middle columns show the original and the revised rank order
- M = Management; C = Contexts; R = Resources; S = Learning Support; L = Learning & Teaching
- Av = average score, including all 5 themes
- Ex.M = average score, excluding Management theme

Original								Original Rank	New rank	New							
M	C	R	S	L		Av	Ex. M			M	C	R	S	L		Av	Ex.M
								1	1								
								2	2								
								3	3								
								5	4								
								4	5								
								6	6								
								16	7								
								7	8								
								8	9								
								9	10								
								14	11								
								12	12								
								10	13								
								11	14								
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								19	23								
								26	24								
								22	25								
								27	26								
								25	27								
								29	28								
								28	29								
								30	30								
								31	31								
								32	32								
								Average									

Figure 16: High level provider e-maturity carpets before and after adjustment

Visual inspection of the two tables shows the potential impact of concentrating investment in the six most negative areas. The overall impact before and after the adjustment, in terms of e-maturity, is shown in the table below.

Carpet Colour		Before	After	Before%	After%	% Move
Green	Embedded	3	4	10%	12%	+2%
Yellow	Established	11	16	34%	50%	+16%
Amber	Developing	12	10	37%	30%	-7%
Red	Weak	6	2	19%	6%	-13%

Figure 17: Overall impact of adjustment

This projects an increase in the number of providers able to self-assess as established or embedded (yellow or green) of over 30 per cent, raising the national achievements significantly.

The impact of successful investment in these areas alone would be to increase the providers demonstrating established or embedded levels of e-maturity by around 18 per cent and to reduce the percentage of providers self-assessing as weak by 13 per cent. Furthermore, investment in these areas (with the possible exception of S6 - e-portfolios) is likely to have beneficial effects on how providers self-assess in respect of other categories, not least because such investment will require providers to examine closely a range of complementary aspects of their e-learning practices.

The effect of the adjustment is to make a number of changes in the rank ordering of the provider sample. Five providers in varied situations improved their rank order by three or more places.

A large urban specialist college moved up most significantly. The provider in question has recently moved into new, well-equipped buildings, is currently re-developing its e-learning strategy, using EMFFE as a basis and has already identified a major training need for its many part time staff.

Four other providers moved three or four places up the rank order:

- A large populous local authority, employing mostly direct delivery
- A large populous local authority, which contracts most of its provision out
- A small urban local authority employing largely direct delivery
- A very rural local authority which contracts most of its provision out.

It would be dangerous to draw firm conclusions from a relatively small sample, but it is interesting to note that potential improvement was not concentrated in one region, one type of provider, or necessarily related to size.

Chapter 6 - Signposts

6.1 Provider considerations - Key areas for improvement

The evidence gathered from these surveys shows strong continuities from that pertaining to the former ACL sector as referred to in the literature review. The diversity of provision which brought strengths in responsiveness to local contexts was also seen as an obstacle to establishing comprehensive, high-quality e-learning provision. In 2005 there was clear indication that whilst the base for e-learning was being steadily constructed it was marked by inconsistency. In 2007 it appears as uneven as ever. The systemic challenges noted in 2005 for the ACL sector remain pertinent to the PCDL sector in 2007. These are:

- The difficulties in providing strategic e-learning guidance for such a hugely diverse group of providers, sites of provision, learners and offers to those learners
- Problems nurturing e-learning partnerships across this diverse topography, which are exacerbated in many rural areas
- The added complication of commissioning and its weakening of 'control/direction'
- The capacity issues (in terms of human resources) for smaller providers whether they be voluntary and community sector, direct or contracted out
- The difficulty small providers find in making the case for significant investment in ICT - exacerbated by the reliance on what is perceived to be short-term, insecure funding.

A detailed analysis of the findings flags up specific challenges to e-maturity for PCDL provision going forward.

6.1.1 Management and staff capacity and capability

1. Management and staff skills in teaching and facilitating online

This is at the root of several other practices self-assessed as weak. If the perennial staff development issue can be addressed the impact will be felt throughout the learner experience.

6.1.2 Infrastructure capacity and technical support

1. Off-site provision for learners

2. Technical support for learners when off-site.

Whilst the majority of on-site infrastructure appears to be viewed relatively favourably now there are striking inadequacies in provision away from the classroom or centre.

Off-site provision, learning platforms, technical support and the ability of a learner to continue their learning from home or elsewhere are all seen as very weak.

6.1.3 Learner experience and learner outcomes

1. Tracking learner progress

2. Availability of a personalised learning space.

The potential of ICT to track a learner's progress is only just being realised even in better resourced education sectors. The case for 'e-portfolios' or the like has clearly not been persuasive enough thus far. However, projects already exist which are beginning to demonstrate the benefits of 'e-portfolios' etc to marginalised learners in the PCDL sector.

6.1.4 Support for different groups of learners

1. Carers

2. Adults isolated by geography/health/physical mobility

3. Travellers

4. Ex-offenders.

It is possible that some providers self-assessed at a low level because they simply did not work with some of the groups of learners. However, the weaknesses identified above in the areas of off-site provision and availability of a personalised learning space provide some explanation for the 'e-beginner' or 'not assessed' level of support for these particular groups. Whilst there are shared requirements, each cohort (and often each individual within those cohorts) has specific needs which ICT can help to address. Given that two of the groups, 'carers' and 'ex-offenders,' are amongst government priorities for support (and likely national or local PSA type targets) this should be a particular concern for providers.

6.1.5 Wider benefits

1. Reduction of paperwork/administration burden.

The failure of new technologies to reduce the administrative burden and specifically paperwork is a feature of e-beginner organisations whether they are in the public or commercial sectors.

2. Support for e-government/e-democracy.

It is disappointing that this was self-assessed at such a low level given that this was one of the two key aspirations for central government ACL ILT policy from 1998

onwards. Today, it is possible that a proportion of PCDL learners do engage in some form of e-government activity without the need for support from their providers. However, it is still likely that the majority lack the skills and confidence to do so even where they have the appropriate equipment.

6.1.6 The impact of specific policies, external agencies and resource

The use of centrally funded cultural sector resources, particularly:

1. The National Archive (eg Moving Here, CASBAH)

2. Culture Online resources (eg City Heritage, Headline History)

3. Regional MLA Resources (eg through Renaissance, SoPSE)

4. The British Library.

Given the substantial investment in high-quality digital resources, a series of initiatives to raise awareness and the growing interest in 'heritage' (be that cultural heritage, family or local history) it is of concern to uncover such low levels of confidence in this area.

6.2 Systemic issues

There are three disparities which underpin the barriers to achieving e-maturity in the PCDL sector.

6.2.1 Disparities between (perhaps within) providers

These remain of significant concern in the PCDL sector. Parity of experience and opportunity are central to the ethos of the sector and government policy.

"All learners in the further education system are equally able to access high quality education and training that equip them with the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need for work and personal fulfilment[2]."

However, it is clear from the evidence that this is not yet being fulfilled. This is not an issue unique to ICT/ILT and e-learning and, as such, there is no quick fix.

6.2.2 The disparity between the PCDL sector and the 'wider FE sector'

Analysis and consequent policy development for FE sector, and specifically its e-learning provision, are not sufficiently nuanced to take account of the realities of the PCDL sector. Consequently, the needs of PCDL providers and learners are often

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[2] From The Improvement Strategy. (QIA) (http://www.qia.org.uk/pursuingexcellence/need/vision.html)

obscured under the blanket view of FE such as the Quality and Improvement Agency (QIA)'s assertion that

"…most colleges and providers have a mission that is demand led and driven by the needs of learners and employers; they have effective leaders who are enterprising and make good use of resources, including ICT, to enable effective teaching, learning, support and management[3]."

Vigilance is required to ensure that improvements in e-learning provision in the wider FE sector do not result in complacency with regards to provision away from the mainstream. Just as there is constant pressure to move FE (college) e-learning provision forward at a faster pace in order to match schools, the same should be true of the comparative position.

6.2.3 The gap between strategy and reality

The third disparity appears to be that between strategy and the reality at an operational level. Self-assessments on management's strategic awareness and ability were much stronger than those of the actual learner experience or staff skills in using the technologies. Management have the vision but not yet, in many cases, the means of making it a reality.

Under "… the roles and responsibilities for effective leaders and managers at all levels in their organisations" the QIA Improvement Strategy states that they must:

"…understand how the appropriate and effective procurement, deployment and use of technology offer major benefits to drive organisational change, personalise learning and provide tools for self improvement[4]."

There is evidence from the survey that where this is happening, it is not always being translated into tangible improvements to the learner experience.

Perhaps, more importantly the Improvement Strategy also maintains that colleges and providers should:

"…use technology appropriately to increase outcomes for learners, increase efficiency, effectiveness and value for money[5]."

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[3] From The Improvement Strategy. (QIA)
(http://www.qia.org.uk/pursuingexcellence/need/strengths.html)
[4] From The Improvement Strategy. (QIA)
(http://www.qia.org.uk/pursuingexcellence/roles/system.html)
[5] Ibid.

6.3 Priorities for action

6.3.1 Short and medium term

6.3.1.1 General

1. Further work should be undertaken to identify the drivers and policies which have resulted in e-maturity and e-adequate self-assessments in this survey.

2. Peer review is now being encouraged across the FE sector. Formal programmes of peer review and peer support for providers (peer review partnerships to be based on identified areas of need) should include recommendations that e-maturity is explicit within this process and guidance on how to measure this.

6.3.1.2 Staff development

By 2010, all teachers of Skills for Life (SfL) will be qualified or working towards a specialist SfL teaching qualification at Level 5. By 2010, all FE teachers will be qualified or working towards a qualification. By 2010, 100 per cent of staff registered with Institute for Learning (IfL) should have recorded a minimum of 30 hours CPD (less for part-time).

3. This should be closely monitored to ensure that adequate and appropriate levels of e-learning/tutoring and ICT skills development are integral.

4. In conjunction with this, the relevant bodies (beginning with QIA and Becta) should look to developing partnerships with non-school CPD programmes offered elsewhere (eg by City Learning Centres or through the cultural sector) for innovative approaches.

6.3.1.3 Infrastructure

The Extended Schools programme has the potential to have one of the most significant impacts on PCDL ICT provision ever witnessed. By 2008 schools' extended offering will form a component of the inspection regime. Mutual benefits are clear to both parties.

5. The involvement of PCDL providers in opening up schools facilities should be accelerated and expanded. Local authorities should be encouraged to ensure that PCDL providers are formally represented within the Extended Schools strategy development. This should be made explicit within the LA inspection regime.

6. An informed assessment of the appropriate levels of human resources required to exploit these facilities on behalf of PCDL learners and the short-term CPD requirements of these staff should be commissioned at local level.

7. Strong guidance should be given to local authorities with regards to the place of PCDL within the Building Schools for the Future programme. Not only should community access to the physical schools building be a key consideration from the tendering phase onwards (as it already is) but the possibility of technical support for PCDL through any procured Managed Service should also be investigated by all local authorities. Partnerships for Schools (PfS) should be consulted.

8. All Regional Broadband Consortia should be encouraged to include PCDL representation within their management and governance structure.

6.3.1.4 Learner/technical support

9. Off-site learner support is currently weak and support could come from the inclusion of PCDL considerations in the BSF programme - see the comments in paragraph 7 above. Consideration should be given to negotiating support through the Local Education Partnership and PfS should be consulted.

10. Targeted programme of personalised online space to be seeded in areas where the 'need' is clear (such as travellers or those with transient or chaotic lifestyles). Consideration should be given to a formal collaboration with the Offender Learning and Skills Service with regards to e-portfolios or online learning spaces for offenders and ex-offenders.

11. One provider self-assessed very strongly across this category and merits further investigation to draw out any transferable practices.

6.3.1.5 Cultural sector resources

12. This seems to have drifted somewhat from the vision of the e-Learning Strategy and virtually no providers are exploiting the investment in these resources. A new strategy drawn up by PCDL providers and the cultural sector institutions should be a priority since little new money is required to make an impact. Development of this strategy must be focused on, and by middle levels of management and key practitioners to ensure that the strategy bridges the apparent disjuncture between senior leadership and practice on the ground. This strategy should give consideration to nurturing and supporting local models of e-learning collaboration.

6.3.2 Longer term

It is difficult to be prescriptive without studied consideration of the impact of possible long-term policy trends and shifts, which are outwith the scope of this study. It is, however, important to emphasise that e-learning will not stand on its own, immune to outside pressures and changes in the external environment. The following long-term shifts should be considered:

13. Consideration should be given to the establishment (identified through consensus within the sector) of a single voice whose remit would be to speak on behalf of the PCDL sector with regards to ICT and e-learning. This should take its place in the strategic decision making processes for ICT across FE and adult learning, children's services and schools and, ideally, higher education.

14. All future e-learning research and policy development within the wider FE sector should be explicit in its assessment and potential outcomes for PCDL.

15. Consideration should be given to revisiting the government approach of 'proofing[6]' policy. This was previously employed to a) assess the positive impact a policy may have on other sectors and b) ensure that a policy did not have an unintended negative impact. Those developing wider/mainstream e-learning policy should be required to make an assessment of the tangential impact (positive and negative) on the PCDL sector.

16. With regards to staff development (paragraph 3), in the longer-term this requirement must be formalised and regularly independently monitored and updated to ensure its quality, relevance and currency.

17. Whilst not all PCDL courses are appropriate for intensive use of technologies, nearly all PCDL learners would benefit from the enhanced pastoral support which technology can offer through inexpensive and efficient communication channels. This should be a focus of a stand-alone CPD offer/requirement for all PCDL tutors.

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[6] eg Central government departments were previously expected to 'rural proof' all relevant policies including education

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Appendix A - Contributors

This report would not have been possible without the participation of managers and practitioners from the following providers:

Local authorities

Birmingham	London Borough of Camden
Blackburn with Darwen	London Borough of Croydon
Blackpool	London Borough of Lambeth
Bury	London Borough of Newham
Cambridgeshire	London Borough of Sutton
Derbyshire	Milton Keynes
Dorset	Newcastle
East Sussex	Oldham
Essex	Oxfordshire
Gloucestershire	Peterborough
Halton	Portsmouth
Herefordshire	Rotherham
Hertfordshire	Royal Borough of Kingston-on-Thames
Kent	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Kirklees	Somerset
Lancashire	Stockton-on-Tees
Leicester	Wakefield
London Borough of Brent	West Sussex
London Borough of Bromley	Wolverhampton

Other providers

Bolton Community College
City Lit
Open Door

Sero is extremely grateful to the many staff from PCDL who gave freely of their time to complete self-assessments, questionnaires, telephone interviews and attend focus groups.

Appendix B1 – Adaptation of EMFFE 3.1 to create EMF43

As a starting point for devising a self-assessment instrument for the PCDL sector, Sero was asked to use a version of the E-maturity Framework for Further Education v.3.1. This breaks down e-maturity into five elements:

1. Leadership and vision
2. Contexts (national, regional, local)
3. Resources
4. Learner support
5. Learning and teaching

These elements are subdivided into 61 categories:

1. Leadership and vision – 11 descriptors
2. Contexts – 16 descriptors
3. Resources - 13 descriptors
4. Learner support - 10 descriptors
5. Learning and teaching - 11 descriptors

Each descriptor has a set of five practice statements, one for each predicated level of e-maturity:

1 - localised; 2 - co-ordinated; 3 - transformative; 4 - embedded; 5 - innovative.

Following discussions with Becta, Sero was invited to reduce the number of categories to a manageable level for an online self assessment. Sero re-mapped the categories against the Balanced Scorecard and reduced the number of categories to 42 - at the time the self assessment workbook was given a title there were 43 categories (hence the title EMF43) but one was subsequently removed.

The original version of EMFFE is given below - for simplicity of illustration, only the full text of the transformative (level 3) descriptors is included:

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
1 Leadership and Vision	1a Mission and Vision	1a-1 Developing the organisational mission	Stakeholders are consulted in the development and review of the organisation's mission as part of a continuing review of mission and values

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
1 Leadership and Vision	1a Mission and Vision	1a-2 Enabling organisational governance	ICT is used to provide more individualised services to governors and advisory committee members and more active two-way communication is encouraged to provide governors with a more detailed view of the college and key activities
1 Leadership and Vision	1a Mission and Vision	1a-3 Realising the ICT Vision	The college sees the need to develop teaching and learning through the use of new technology and strategies and the need for effective data management. There is recognition that developments in learning technology such as learning platforms and improvements in communication can contribute to college development and reduce the administrative/data gathering burden on staff and release resources for improved services.
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-1 Providing Strategic Leadership	The use of ICT and e-learning is seen as an all college issue that involves the continuing development of strategy to respond to the growing sophistication of learner and staff needs as well as the demands of the external environment. Managers are starting to use ICT to explore options and reach decisions and

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
			communicate strategic priorities more effectively
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-2 Maintaining operational leadership	Use and exchange of data facilitates sharing of information and ideas, and continuous evaluation of key activities. Managers are given extensive access to data to support their decision-making and to encourage collaboration Some development of new communication techniques.
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-3 Improving technical leadership	Technical leadership seen as key to transformation by some managers. The potential of ICT to meet key priorities for the college is recognised, but college systems integration is incomplete. User needs and expertise among staff is recognised good practice is encouraged.
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-3 Improving technical leadership	Technical leadership seen as key to transformation by some managers. The potential of ICT to meet key priorities for the college is recognised, but college systems integration is incomplete. User needs and expertise among staff is

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
			recognised good practice is encouraged.
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-4 Developing planning participation	Senior managers have responsibility for planning against specific needs. Working parties and consultative groups inform the process and initiate cross-college working. Staff and learners input to consultations, but activity is cyclical
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-5 Updating communications strategy	Communications policy is developed to market the college or specify required responses to top-down communication. The potential for networking to improve the quality of contacts is being explored through informal groupings.
1 Leadership and Vision	1b Enabling the Vision	1b-6 Supporting systems for renewing the vision	Review mechanisms provide an appropriate focus on renewal of the college vision engaging stakeholders with decision makers and governors.
1 Leadership and Vision	1c Improving self-assessment	1c-1 Mapping to external requirements	Senior managers seek to develop whole college approaches to critical external requirements using the views of learners and staff. Self-assessment processes becoming more consultative.

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
1 Leadership and Vision	1c Improving self-assessment	1c-2 Integrating data and information	The college is starting the integration of key data gathering and information systems to increase staff use of the data and information arising from analysis and provide learners with improved services.
1 Leadership and Vision	1c Improving self-assessment	1c-3 Developing the quality improvement strategy	Quality improvement strategy is shared with all stakeholders and participation in delivering the strategy is encouraged. ICT is used to conduct surveys and research and compile results.
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2a Funding and Sustainability	2a-1 Implementing Policy Initiatives	Policy reviews and stakeholder views are valued equally and both inform development of Strategic Plan
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2a Funding and Sustainability	2a-2 Identifying Constituents Needs	Constituents views affect the development of the learning offer
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2a Funding and Sustainability	2a-3 Planning Organisational Sustainability	Organisational planning integrates all financial information
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2b Managing Location	2b-1 Developing Estates Strategies	Estates, IT Curriculum & Planning collaborate in provision of learning spaces
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2b Managing Location	2b-2 Supporting Multiple Locations	Location use discussed with Partners, Community, Libraries and Homes

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2b Managing Location	2b-3 Responding to Constituent Views	Constituent Views collected for Business Planning
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2b Managing Location	2b-4 Planning Environmental Sustainability;	Environmental Sustainability managed through compliance with eco-management accreditation
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2c Developing Collaboration and Partnership	2c-1 Promoting Engagement Strategies	A strategic Engagement Strategy developed informed by networks and policy
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2c Developing Collaboration and Partnership	2c-2 Organising and Developing Networks	Use of Networks key to delivering a range of College Strategies
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2c Developing Collaboration and Partnership	2c-3 Developing Marketing & Promotion Strategies	Marketing Strategy links Business Purpose and learning delivery
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2c Developing Collaboration and Partnership	2c-4 Supporting Partnership Working	Strategic approach to partnerships informs Business Planning
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2d Promoting Social Inclusion and Widening Participation	2d-1 Developing the Diversity Strategy	Inclusive Learning the basis of the Diversity Strategy
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2d Promoting Social Inclusion and Widening Participation	2d-2 Improving Learner Recruitment & IAG	Co-ordinated IAG available year round and developed with partners. Some learning offered on learner demand

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2d Promoting Social Inclusion and Widening Participation	2d-3 Promoting Services	Advice and Support Services key factor in Learners choice
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2d Promoting Social Inclusion and Widening Participation	2d-4 Extending Opportunities	Wide Range of Potential Client Groups identified. Some innovative learning opportunities developed
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2e Supporting Continuity of Learning	2e-1 Supporting Learner Progression	Learner progression seen as a key element of learning. Learners can access advice throughout Learning
2 Contexts (National, Regional, Local)	2e Supporting Continuity of Learning	2e-2 Developing Destination Planning	Destination planning worked out jointly to develop flexibility of criteria and some guarantee of progression
3 Resources	3a Staffing & Human Resource Development	3a-1 Supporting Staff Development	Line Managers develop CPD opportunities around cohorts to meet professional needs identified with staff
3 Resources	3a Staffing & Human Resource Development	3a-2 Developing Communities of Practice	Communities of practice are recognised and encouraged by the institution
3 Resources	3a Staffing & Human Resource Development	3a-3 Improving Reward & Recognition	Appraisal Systems are used positively to drive CPD
3 Resources	3a Staffing & Human Resource Development	3a-4 Transforming Staff Capabilities	Staff understand a range of Teaching & Learning Strategies and use them to meet a range of learner needs

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	**no.**	**no.**	**3**
3 Resources	3b Technology (Learner Voice)	3b-1 Improving Responsiveness	The MIS, ICT, and e-learning strategies are developed and co-ordinated strategically
3 Resources	3b Technology (Learner Voice)	3b-2 Developing the Technical Infrastructure	Integrated LAN, MIS & learning platform allowing for linking of Learning and Teaching and Student Records
3 Resources	3b Technology (Learner Voice)	3b-3 Securing Data & Minimising Risk	All projects are managed using PM. Risk Logs are kept and acted upon. Risk is managed in real-time and new risks communicated to users.
3 Resources	3b Technology (Learner Voice)	3b-4 Sustaining Technical Support	Wide-spread use of ICT, staff consulted on upgrades. Technical support staff work in an integrated manner with staff and other users
3 Resources	3b Technology (Learner Voice)	3b-5 Planning ICT Sustainability	ICT Strategy plans for all technology use, some replacement budget for development & upgrades
3 Resources	3c Content & Learning Resources (Learner Voice)	3c-1 Identifying Learning Content	Resources found on Intranets and in the Open Learning Centre Materials evaluated by learners
3 Resources	3c Content & Learning Resources (Learner Voice)	3c-2 Improving Learning Resources	The institution has a strategy for identifying and using LR that are managed centrally
3 Resources	3c Content & Learning Resources (Learner	3c-3 Implementing Learning Tools	Course development is integrated with Resource development

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
	Voice)		
3 Resources	3c Content & Learning Resources (Learner Voice)	3c-4 Increasing Resource Interactivity	The Learner-centred capacity is sufficient to support collaborative learning
4 Learner Support	4a Supporting Learners	4a-1 Providing Information Advice & Guidance	Co-ordinated IAG available year round. Some learning offered on learner demand
4 Learner Support	4a Supporting Learners	4a-2 Providing Learner Services	Learning Services pro-active in supporting Learners
4 Learner Support	4a Supporting Learners	4a-3 Connecting to External Services	External Services consulted in Learning Services planning
4 Learner Support	4a Supporting Learners	4a-4 Delivering Digital Literacy	Key Skills, Core Skills and ICT Skills integrated into all Learning Planning
4 Learner Support	4b Personalising Learning	4b-1 Identifying Learner Needs	Learners are shown how to take charge of their Needs during IAG and Induction
4 Learner Support	4b Personalising Learning	4b-2 Supporting Learner Tracking	Learner numbers are provided at IAG stage and Learning tracked throughout learning
4 Learner Support	4b Personalising Learning	4b-3 Developing & Recording Learning Pathways	Wider range of learning is recognised and validated to support achievement of learning goals learner profile is customised to target audience

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
4 Learner Support	4b Personalising Learning	4b-4 Developing e-portfolios; Student learning space	e-portfolios used by learners to record learning continuously
4 Learner Support	4c Building Learning Communities	4c-1 Creating Social Networking Opportunities	Learners shown how to build Learning Communities
4 Learner Support	4c Building Learning Communities	4c-2 Supporting Collaborative Working	Collaborative working the key to all aspects of the formal Learning Offer
5 Learning and Teaching	5a Curriculum	5a-1 Building the Learning Offer	The college is developing a more integrated approach to the development of the learning offer using marketing information to explore the needs of learners, communities and local employers.
5 Learning and Teaching	5a Curriculum	5a-2 Extending relevance and responsiveness	A more comprehensive view of learner needs has been developed which is used to review existing provision and is focussed on the views and responses of learners, staff and other stakeholders with greater use of local labour market and other statistics.
5 Learning and Teaching	5a Curriculum	5a-3 Improving the flexibility of the Learning Offer	Flexibility of the Learning Offer is a key driver of departmental organisation
5 Learning and Teaching	5b Assessment and accreditation	5b-1 Improving assessment strategies	The emphasis in assessment has moved from quality assurance to quality improvement with transfer of information within the college along

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
			progression routes becoming routine.
5 Learning and Teaching	5b Assessment and accreditation	5b-2 Developing formative and summative assessment	Reviewing formative and summative assessment is used as the basis of improving the assessment strategy & the Learning Offer
5 Learning and Teaching	5b Assessment and accreditation	5b-3 Recording Achievement	Recording achievement is quality assured and is used to review institutional effectiveness overall
5 Learning and Teaching	5b Assessment and accreditation	5b-4 Recording client satisfaction	Client satisfaction is seen as a critical factor in the self-assessment process. Regular cross-college & in-programme surveys conducted
5 Learning and Teaching	5c Learning and teaching strategies	5c-1 Developing learning and teaching strategies	Observations of teaching combined with analysis of client satisfaction and other data enable the college to identify share and acknowledge best practice.
5 Learning and Teaching	5c Learning and teaching strategies	5c-2 Creating new learning environments	Learning platforms and e-communications used to develop a richer experience for learners, enabling 24/7 access to the college intranet or learning platform.
5 Learning and Teaching	5c Learning and teaching strategies	5c-3 Supporting self-managed learning	Communication between learners, tutors and college services. Access to tutors and the college is extended during estate opening hours

Element	Category	Descriptor	Transformative
no.	no.	no.	3
5 Learning and Teaching	5c Learning and teaching strategies	5c-4 Recognising learning styles and sequences	Analysis of learning styles are used to help tutors involved with specific groups map and plan appropriate learning sequences and support

The transformative descriptors are typical of the language and length of the full set. It was realised that whilst the language had been designed for FE, it was not necessarily appropriate or recognisable in PCDL - eg references to 'college' and 'governors', which were replaced by 'provider' and 'trustees' respectively.

The PCDL sector is not familiar with EMFFE, but PCDL providers are very familiar with e-Learning Positioning Statements (eLPS) which they have to complete when bidding to NIACE for funding. eLPS also uses five levels of descriptors:

1: not yet started; 2: early stages; 3: developing; 4: established; 5: embedded.

Given the familiarity of PCDL providers with this classification, it was decided to adopt this for the EMF43 descriptors, but for clearer analysis, the two lowest level practice statements (not yet started / early stages) were combined into a single level, giving four levels of e-maturity against which providers were asked to self-assess.

The 42 categories of EMF43 were then trialled at a workshop with a representative range of e-learning experts from PCDL providers. They made lengthy and extremely helpful comments on the trial version - in particular, even though the descriptors had been simplified from the earlier EMFFE versions, and the language adapted to reflect context, the detail was still felt to be over long and occasionally contradictory and confusing. Following the workshop, it was decided to remove the detailed level descriptors completely and use the statements (corresponding to EMFFE categories) as the sole prompt. Following consultation with the trial group of PCDL practitioners, five EMFFE elements were re-named themes and the remaining 42 categories were described as elements: these were terms which the group felt would be recognised contextually in the sector.

The final working version of EMF43 is shown below. The right hand column (EMFFE) cross-references each element back to its origins within EMFFE:

M (5)	Management of ILT in PCDL				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**EMFFE ref**
No. (effectively 'good practice' statements)	Not yet started/ early stages	Developing	Established	Embedded	Not applicable / don't know
M1 There is a vision for ILT which is developed throughout the organisation					1a-3
M2 There is effective strategic leadership and management of ILT					1b-1
M3 There is effective technical management of ILT					1b-3
M4 Information and data are effectively integrated					1c-2
M5 ILT is integrated into quality improvement					1c-3
C (11)	The contexts (national, regional and local) in which the PCDL provider works				
	1	2	3	4	5
C1 The needs of partners and stakeholders are identified and addressed					2a-2
C2 Planning includes appropriate attention to sustainability of ILT					2a-3

C3 Delivery locations, curriculum offer and ILT are integrated					2b-1
C4 There is effective ILT provision in all delivery locations					2b-2
C5 Learner, partner and stakeholder feedback makes effective use of ILT					2b-3
C6 Engagement strategies for reaching potential learners make effective use of ILT					2c-1
C7 Partnership working makes effective use of ILT					2c-4
C8 Diversity issues are effectively addressed					2d-1
C9 There are effective strategies for learner recruitment and IAG					2d-2
C10 A broad range of learner recruitment strategies is in place					2d-4
C11 Learner progression is supported					2e 1
R (10)	Resources to support learning				
	1	2	3	4	5
R1 Effective staff development in ILT is in place					3a-1
R2 Staff know how to build communities of practice and use them appropriately in local contexts					3a-2

	1	2	3	4	5
R3 Staff are comfortable working with learners in the co-creation of resources					3a-4
R4 There is an effective technical infrastructure with adequate connectivity					3b-2
R5 Data is kept securely and risk minimised					3b-3
R6 Technical ICT support is effective					3b-4
R7 ILT is effectively used in the management of learning resources					3c-1
R8 Learning resources are widely shared					3c-2
R9 Learning tools are used to personalise learning					3c-3
R10 ILT is used to facilitate self-managed learning					3c-4
S (8)	Learner support				
	1	2	3	4	5
S1 Appropriate IAG is provided for learners					4a-1
S2 Digital literacy is a key part of learning programmes					4a-4
S3 Learners can identify and discuss their learning needs throughout their courses					4b-1

S4 Effective learner tracking is in place					4b-2
S5 Learning journeys are effectively developed and recorded					4b-3
S6 There is appropriate use of e-portfolios					4b-4
S7 Learners can make use of an appropriate range of social and learning networking opportunities					4c-1
S8 There is support for collaborative learning					4c-2
L (8)	Learning and teaching				
	1	2	3	4	5
L1 Marketing data is effectively used to extend relevance and responsiveness					5a-1
L2 Effective assessment strategies are in place					5a-2
L3 RARPA is effectively used					5b-3
L4 Effective use is made of learner satisfaction information					5b-4
L5 ILT is used throughout the development of learning and teaching strategies					5c-1
L6 ILT is effectively used in developing flexible provision to meet the needs of					5c-2

physically or culturally isolated learners					
L7 Self-managed learning is supported					5c-3
L8 Individual learning styles and patterns are recognised and addressed					5c-4

The full document was developed as an Excel workbook, with a self-populating grid as the first tab. An example of this is shown in the copy of the Introductory Handbook in Appendix B2 below. This handbook was issued to all participating providers and could be downloaded from the project website.

Appendix B2 - EMF43 Introductory handbook

Survey of e-maturity in Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)

Study on behalf of Becta

August - December 2007

EMF Self-Audit (EMF43)

Foreword

This is one of four parallel studies commissioned by Becta to assess levels of e-maturity in the post-16 learning and skills sectors, in preparation for the Government's forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and Becta's strategic planning in delivering 'Harnessing Technology', aka 'The e-strategy'. The other three studies cover FE, work-based learning and offender learning. The italicised paragraphs below are extracts from Becta's invitation to tender:

Becta invites tenders for a research project to establish current levels of e-Maturity (by e-maturity we mean the capacity and capability of individuals and organisations to exploit the power of technology to improve educational outcomes, measured across a number of dimensions including provision, practice, leadership, management and local strategy) within the Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) sector. The research will focus on both organisations providing PCDL (following similar surveys by NIACE in 2005) and the workforce (ie practitioners delivering and supporting PCDL), using a nationally representative sample of both PCDL providers and practitioners.

The project will measure e-maturity at both institution and workforce levels. The findings will be used to help assess the effectiveness of current FE and Skills e-learning policy in the light of recent developments in government strategy.

The analysis of e-maturity amongst PCDL providers and the workforce will consider the following measures to provide a baseline against which subsequent progress in the sector can be gauged:

- *ICT infrastructure provision for learners*
- *Use and development of e-learning resources*
- *Skills of teaching staff in relation to ICT and e-learning, along with their level of access to technology*
- *Deployment of ICT for teaching, learning, assessment and management/administration*
- *Extent and nature of use of e-learning by practitioners*
- *Practitioner views on the impact of e-learning*
- *Factors associated with the impact of e-learning*
- *Barriers and enablers to e-learning use*
- *Organisational vision and strategy for e-learning development*

The following research questions will be addressed as part of the project:

1. How have provider and practitioner e-maturity developed over the past 12 months and what are the predictions for the next year?

2. Have providers developed effective plans to develop e-maturity over the short, medium and long term?

3. What are the key barriers to developing e-maturity (and why) and what needs to be done to address these barriers?

4. What are the key factors in promoting technology provision and utilisation and how can they be further enhanced?

5. How have providers and practitioners used technology to develop personalised learning resources and practices?

6. What has been the impact of government reforms? (eg the focus on collaboration between providers, shift to demand-led provision, increasing 16-18 participation in learning, the Leitch report on skills)

Sero will be providing aggregated data to Becta in its report, but this will be anonymised - no individuals or providers will be identified by name, or identifiable by the information they provide.

The approach we are taking

The study will be delivered in six phases:

- understanding the self-audit instrument, provider and practitioner questionnaires
- implementation of self-audit; and completion of provider and practitioner questionnaires
- literature review (not involving providers)
- review of audit and questionnaire data, with interviews to follow up key issues
- plenary seminar to review outcomes
- final report to Becta.

The implementation phase will be conducted by individual providers and practitioners with distance support from Sero.

The fourth phase will involve interviews with a selection of managers and practitioners from the sample of providers and all providers in the sample will be invited to a plenary seminar to outline and discuss the findings.

Understanding and planning phase

The components in this phase are:

- This handbook (which should be read before completing any of the survey instruments) and gives an overview of the method.
- Telephone and email support from the consultancy team.

The output

EMF43 produces a grid (*the EMF43 Output Grid*) giving a management level view of the e-maturity in the provider organisation and an example is given below.

Theme M (5)	Management of ILT in PCDL				
	Not yet started / early stages	Developing	Established	Embedded	Not applicable / don't know
M1 There is a vision for ILT which is developed throughout the organisation				🟩	
M2 There is effective strategic leadership and management of ILT			🟧		
M3 There is effective technical management of ILT		🟨			
M4 Information and data are effectively integrated	🟥				
M5 ILT is integrated into quality improvement					⬛

In this grid:

- the rows are the elements in each theme area;
- the columns are the capability assessments; and

- the cells are generated through self-assessment of elements on a four-point scale from 'not started / early stages' through 'developing' and 'established' to 'embedded' .

The above terms (themes, elements and capability assessments) are explained in more detail in the next section.

Understanding EMF43

In understanding EMF43, the following areas are covered below:

- The rationale of the method
- The element definitions used (the rows of the EMF43 output grid)
- The capability assessments (the columns of the EMF43 output grid)

Rationale

This is three fold:

- **Practice not theory** – EMF43 is informed by the practical activities and research which Becta has undertaken and commissioned into e-maturity in the learning and skills sector, based on observations of practice and practitioner input. This model may also be extended to meet local needs.
- **Produce useful output** - The assessment of capability in a complex area such as e-learning and associated e-activity is difficult. Large amounts of detail need to be reduced into a summary overview that supports management, decision making and strategic planning. EMF43 aims to provide providers with a single view (the EMF43 output grid) that is designed to be of practical value to managers. Specifically it will help managers develop and implement an improvement strategy relating to the provider's use of e-learning.
- **Measure distance travelled** - Capability assessments refer to the ability of an organisation to ensure that e-learning design, development and deployment is meeting the needs of the learners, staff and the provider. Capability assessments are captured within the cells of the EMF43 output grid as distance travelled towards provider e-maturity.

Whilst the PCDL sector is familiar with the eLPS assessment method, this cannot be mapped accurately against the Balanced Scorecard in 'Harnessing Technology' – hence the need for a different method of self-audit. The capability assessments, however, reproduce those used in eLPS, with the lowest two categories combined into one, and a column added for those areas which are not applicable to the individual provider, or where a self-assessment is impracticable.

Elements

The rows of the EMF43 output grid are the elements, which are divided in to five groups.

The individual elements describe a key and specific aspect of the ability of providers to perform effectively in the given theme area, and thus in e-learning overall. The advantage of this approach is that it breaks down a complex area of work into related sections that can be assessed independently and presented in a comparatively simple overview without losing the underlying detail.

The elements are grouped into five theme areas:

- **Management of ILT in PCDL (M):** elements that directly impact on the provider's overall ability to move towards e-maturity
- **Contexts (C):** elements that surround the provider's internal and external environments
- **Resources (R):** elements that contribute to staff development, content creation and sharing, learning tools, technical infrastructure and data management
- **Learner Support (S):** elements surrounding all aspects of support for learners, including learner records and IAG
- **Learning & Teaching (L):** processes associated with pedagogy and the planning of provision

Capability assessments

The columns of the EMF43 output grid are four levels of capability which assess the distance travelled by a provider in implementing an element.

These are ordered according to the levels used in eLPS assessments and include an additional column where the element is not applicable or not readily assessable for an individual provider.

EMF43 output grid cells

The cells of the EMF43 output grid are generated through self-evaluation of each element in each theme area, using a four-point scale derived from eLPS.

For ease of self-assessment, providers will be given a link to an online Excel workbook with all of the elements defined and the calculation of the EMF43 output grid automated.

It is important to know that distance travelled is recorded by teachers and managers as knowledgeable practitioners. Scoring is not based on amassing research and

using an abstract system - this practical study is based on using the existing awareness of competent professionals.

In making judgments of the distance travelled, providers are encouraged to trust their intuition and experience. The aggregation of the results, and the analysis by patterns of strength and weakness, means that finely considered decisions are not necessary. However, decisions about distance travelled should be based on actual delivery and activities, not on good intentions or plans.

Summary

The EMF43 Output Grid represents a management level overview of the e-maturity of a provider against forty three elements within five theme areas. Each cell of the output grid is generated by critical self-review of the practices, procedures, systems and activities associated with each element and self-assessment of the distance travelled.

The provider's input is recorded in the EMF43 Workbook (using Excel) by responding to the element statements and recording distance travelled in the cells. The evaluation is automated, generating the EMF43 output grid from the Excel workbook.

Completing the EMF43 Self-audit workbook

Please download a copy of the EMF43 workbook from the website - http://www.sero.co.uk/becta-pcdl.html Both the EMF43 worksheets and the Provider Questionnaire are contained in this workbook. In completing the workbook, please enter '1' in the box which best represents your response to each element.

Provider questionnaire

In order to gather feedback on specific issues, providers are also asked to complete a Provider Questionnaire. This does not contribute to the EMF43 Output Grid but is included in the provider Excel workbook for ease of response. A Word version is also available on the website and the introductory section (which is not reproduced in the Excel workbook) contains more detailed background to this part of the survey.

In completing the questionnaire, please enter '1' in the box which best represents your response to each statement / question, except where asked to specify, or in the four open-ended questions in the final section, where you are asked to type in appropriate text.

Practitioner questionnaire

The final area of the survey involves the views of practitioners, which will be captured in a separate Practitioner Questionnaire. This does not contribute to the EMF43 Output Grid but is included in the provider Excel workbook for ease of

response. A Word version is also available on the website and the introductory section (which is not reproduced in the Excel workbook) contains more detailed background to this part of the survey.

In completing the questionnaire, please enter '1' in the box which best represents your response to each statement / question, except where asked to specify, or in the four open-ended questions in the final section, where you are asked to type in appropriate text.

Extensibility

The EMF43 method is extensible to meet the specific needs of a provider. All materials are provided in electronic form for re-use and adaptation by providers.

Intellectual property statement

EMF43 and its associated documentation are based on EMFFE version 3.1, produced by Becta, but it draws on original work by Stephen Marshall (Marshall, S. (2006) eMM Version Two eMM Process Assessment Workbook. Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Available from http://www.utdc.vuw.ac.nz/research/emm/Publications.shtml). This handbook is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.5 License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/). Please cite this document as: Bacsich, P., Donovan, K., Kay, D., McGonigle, R., Pepler, G., Schmoller, S., Patterson, W., (2007) EMF Self-Audit Introductory Handbook and Workbook. Sero Consulting Ltd. Available from www.sero.co.uk/becta-pcdl.html

Appendix C - Provider questionnaire analysis

31 providers completed the questionnaire fully, with a further two completing some sections. Not all providers responded to every single question.

Because of the relatively small sample size, numbers of respondents are given in each box and these have not been converted into percentages.

A. Management and staff capacity and capability

	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Don't know / not applicable
A1. The organisation's ICT and e-learning strategy	2	14	10	7	0
A2. Managers' knowledge about how to harness technology for the management and delivery of learning	2	13	15	3	0
A3. Strategic commitment to the integration of technology within every aspect of the organisation	4	8	13	7	1
A4. Management and staff skills in general ICT (eg word processing, spreadsheets)	2	13	15	2	1
A5. Management and staff skills in using ICT with learners	4	15	11	2	1
A6. Management and staff skills in using ICT to develop learning materials	5	16	9	2	1
A7. Management and staff skills in teaching and facilitating online	14	9	4	2	4
A8. Management and staff knowledge of online learning resources	4	18	7	2	2
A9. Use of ICT for data collection/collation and analysis	5	9	13	6	0
A10. Regular management reviews and refresh of ICT strategy	3	11	11	7	1
A11. Staff involvement in strategy review and refresh	3	16	9	4	1

A12. Adoption of new and emerging technologies (eg blogs, wikis, mobile phone coverage, social networking)	12	11	6	3	1
A13. Sharing and reuse of digital/electronic content	10	14	6	2	1
A14. Collaboration with other educational organisations/networks and/or employers	6	12	8	2	5
A15. Market intelligence eg local and regional skills deficits	5	10	12	3	3

B. Infrastructure capacity and technical support

	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Don't know / not applicable
B1. Sufficient connectivity for all ICT applications	8	10	9	5	1
B2. Computers / laptops for staff use with fast internet access	7	11	8	5	2
B3. Computers / laptops for learner use with fast internet access	9	12	5	5	2
B4. A Virtual Learning Environment (learning platform)	6	7	9	4	7
B5. A computer network accessible remotely by learners	8	6	3	5	11
B6. A computer network accessible remotely by staff	8	7	8	4	6
B7. Technical support for learners when on site	9	12	6	3	3
B8. Technical support for learners when off site	12	7	0	5	9
B9. Technical support for staff and managers when on site	4	12	6	7	4
B10. Technical support for staff and managers when off site	13	7	2	6	5
B11. Other ICT equipment (eg digital	2	14	12	3	2

cameras)					
B12. Staff access to relevant digital/electronic content	5	15	11	1	1
B13. Use of ICT in booking and scheduling of work and teaching spaces	9	6	6	3	9
B14. Appropriately equipped teaching spaces for full exploitation of ILT	9	11	8	4	1
B15. Security of learning environment	4	10	14	2	3
B16. The existence of effective suppliers for infrastructure, hardware and software	5	10	15	2	1

C. Learner experience and learner outcomes within your organisation

	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Don't know / not applicable
C1. Flexibility of delivery	6	9	14	3	1
C2. Creative teaching and learning	4	13	13	2	1
C3. Variety of subjects offered	7	12	10	3	1
C4. Learner access to relevant digital/electronic content	8	15	6	2	2
C5. Quality of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)	5	15	7	4	2
C6. Availability of personalised learning space	13	2	4	2	12
C7. Learner engagement and enjoyment	8	5	14	3	3
C8. Assessment of learning	6	12	12	1	2
C9. Learner attainment	5	11	13	2	2
C10. Learner retention (pastoral support)	5	13	11	2	2
C11. Learner progression (where applicable)	3	17	10	1	2

C12. Tracking learner progress	8	11	9	1	4
C13. Improvement in quality of learning through use of ILT	4	15	8	1	5

D. Support for different groups of learners

	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Don't know / not applicable
D1. Carers	8	2	11	4	8
D2. Families	4	8	13	5	3
D3. Adults isolated by geography/health/physical mobility	9	4	13	3	4
D4. Potential and reluctant learners	5	10	12	3	3
D5. Those with low basic skills and low levels of confidence	7	6	13	5	2
D6. Travellers	5	3	8	3	14
D7. Ex-offenders	4	0	10	4	15
D8. Ethnic Minority Groups	5	12	9	5	2
D9. Older learners	5	6	13	7	2
D10. Migrants and their families	5	15	4	3	6

E. Wider benefits

To what extent have central government e-learning and ICT policies had a positive impact on your organisation in the following areas?	Very much	To some extent	In isolated instances	Little or no impact	Don't know / NA
E1. Support for e-government/e-democracy (learners contact with eg Housing Depts, councillors, DirectGov)	7	7	6	1	12
E2. Support for e-commerce	4	8	11	3	7

(learners' confidence to purchase online etc)					
E3. e-Safety (learners' confidence in their home use of technology)	0	10	13	3	7
E4. Family cohesion (eg use of e-mail for contact)	5	10	8	2	8
E5. Community cohesion (eg community websites)	6	4	11	1	11
E6. Reduction of paperwork/administration burden	9	6	9	3	6
E7. Building new relationships (eg with employers, Higher Education Institutes)	7	11	4	0	11

F. The impact of specific policies, external agencies and resources

To what extent have the following policies / external organisations supported your own organisation's ability to use ICT/e-learning to provide improved choice and quality for learners?	Very much	To some extent	In isolated instances	Little or no impact	Don't know / NA
F1.The National Learning Network programme (including **aclearn**)	3	9	13	4	4
F2. The National Archive (eg Moving Here, CASBAH)	9	2	3	2	17
F3. The British Library	8	3	3	2	17
F4. Culture Online resources (eg City Heritage, Headline History)	9	2	4	2	16
F5. Regional MLA Resources (eg through Renaissance, SoPSE)	9	2	2	3	17
F6. The Government's Skills Strategy (The Leitch Report)	5	13	9	1	5

F7. The LSC Quality Improvement Strategy	3	10	11	4	5
F8. Extended Schools/Building Schools for the Future	8	5	10	3	7

Appendix D - Practitioner questionnaire analysis

KEY:

- The figure in the first box at the head of each table is the aggregated average score for this section of the questionnaire, where 4 = very positive, through to 1 = negative and 0 = don't know/not applicable or not answered (described as non-responses in the text).
- The figure in the second box is the aggregated average for the section, but excluding non-responses.
- The figures in each box represent the percentage choosing this response.
- The summary boxes at the head of each table are colour coded as described in section 5.1.1 of the main report.

	Overall	**Excluding don't knows**
A. My own ICT skills	2.47	2.72

	Very good	**Good**	**OK**	**Poor**	**Don't know / not applicable**
A1. My general use of ICT – eg word processing, spreadsheets and e-mail	53	27	18	1	0
A2. My skills in terms of ICT use with learners in the classroom	48	23	20	8	6
A3. My knowledge of specialist software packages in my subject area(s)	30	29	17	21	7
A4. My use of ICT to manage learning and workload	40	30	22	6	2
A5. My ability to develop online electronic learning materials	23	24	23	29	11
A6. My capability to upload content to a learning platform (eg learning platform or repository)	19	21	21	37	17

A7. My ability to teach and facilitate online	20	23	21	35	25
A8. My knowledge of online learning resources	13	34	33	19	6

B. My access to technology		2.33	2.91

	Very good	**Good**	**OK**	**Poor**	**Don't know / not applicable**
B1. Sole use of a work-based computer or laptop	67	15	10	9	8
B2. Access to the internet at work	66	21	9	3	2
B3. A laptop or computer when away from work	67	18	7	7	8
B4. Access to online resources whilst at work	58	19	14	9	3
B5. Wireless laptop access to your organisation's network	31	2	23	42	41
B6. Onsite facilities for personal e-learning (eg in a Learning Resource Centre, drop in centres)	32	25	21	22	17
B7. Access to digital cameras	36	39	18	7	5
B8. Access to interactive whiteboards	33	28	19	20	6
B9. Access to portable data projectors	37	31	17	14	20
B10. Suitability of spaces / environments used for online teaching and learning	19	37	25	19	17
B11. Access to a learning platform (such as a learning platform – eg Moodle)	22	43	25	10	28
B12. Access to wider resources from a learning platform (eg NLN-ACL resources)	16	40	34	10	34
B13. Access to video conferencing facilities for distance meetings or classes	7	0	21	71	68

| **C. My views on the impact of ICT and e-learning** | 2.17 | 2.76 |

	Very much	**To some extent**	**In isolated instances**	**Little or no impact**	**Don't know / not applicable**
C1. It has allowed learners greater choice in learning opportunities	47	40	9	5	8
C2. It has helped attract more learners	24	46	13	18	18
C3. It has improved learner retention	16	43	12	28	24
C4. It has improved learner outcomes	22	52	9	16	24
C5. It has improved learner satisfaction	25	46	15	12	23
C6. It has improved learner assessment	16	51	8	24	16
C7. It has helped learners to manage their own learning	16	51	16	16	16
C8. There is effective learner use of a learning platform (such as a learning platform – eg Moodle)	13	13	30	43	47
C9. It has improved staff CPD	17	23	16	14	22
C10. It has improved staff satisfaction	13	43	19	22	24
C11. It has improved opportunities for innovation in learning	35	45	11	8	9

and teaching					
C12. It has improved the development of new courses	21	35	24	18	19
C13. It has improved administration	38	38	11	14	18
C14. It has been incorporated within organisational self-evaluation processes	24	56	8	11	30

D. My organisation – support for ICT and e-learning	2.10	2.60

	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Don't know / not applicable
D1. Availability of operational support for ICT when required through IT support staff	24	33	32	11	5
D2. Effectiveness of operational IT support	24	40	26	10	7
D3. Availability of library & resource centre support when required	20	32	31	17	26
D4. Provision of technical support for e-learners (eg online / help desk / local technician)	20	13	38	22	27
D5. Access to training and other professional development needs	26	44	23	5	7
D6. Support for development of online learning resources	16	38	32	14	16
D7. Value of internal advice and support in helping staff adopt e-learning	22	39	29	9	14
D8. Value of external advice and support in helping staff adopt e-	15	51	25	10	31

learning (eg RSCs, NIACE, aclearn)					
D9. Promotion of formal qualifications in e-learning and ICT	13	38	38	10	23
D10. Take up of e-learning beyond the enthusiasts	10	16	31	44	30

E. Teaching and learning - how I make use of ILT in my teaching	2.13	2.43

	All the time	**Often**	**Sometimes**	**Never**	**Don't know / not applicable**
E1. Creating and using paper-based learning materials	70	26	3	0	1
E2. Creating and using e-learning materials	15	29	35	21	9
E3. Assessing learners' work	16	29	41	14	10
E4. Managing and tracking individual targets for learners	23	23	29	24	7
E5. Using diverse media for learning content and activity (eg Game based learning, podcasting, IPTV services)	10	11	44	35	19
E6. Using online collaborative tools (eg email lists, discussion forums, blogs, wikis)	15	19	36	31	15
E7. Assisting learners in the development of e-Portfolios	8	3	32	57	26

F The impact of ICT on my working week	2.48	2.72

In an average week ICT…	Saves more than 2 hours	Some time saving but less than 2 hours	Does not make any difference	Costs time	Don't know / unsure
F1. Lesson planning and preparation	21	51	19	9	3
F2. Lesson delivery	18	44	35	4	9
F3. Assessing learners' work	11	35	47	8	15
F4. Record keeping	20	44	31	5	8

Appendix E - Possible self-assessment models for e-maturity in PCDL

Overall the approach used demonstrates a method to provide a high level view of the situation within the PCDL sector. That method could be refined: particularly if the data-collection instruments are designed "from the ground up" with the Balanced Scorecard (or any successor) as a cornerstone.

The following approach could be used for a new e-maturity scheme. (This approach is based on current thinking being applied in Wales now that the Welsh HE funding council has adopted national Indicators of Success. A similar approach has been applied in part to the HEFCE Measures of Success.)

- Rewrite each indicator from the Balanced Scorecard to remove political and age-dependent language (3.4 and 3.5 are particularly in need of this).
- Decompose each indicator into one or more "atomic" indicators. For example 2.3 "Technology-enabled learning environments are secure, supported and interoperable" decomposes into three atomic indicators.
- This produces around 50 indicators.
- Add in a number of institution-level indicators which experience shows are critical to success in e-learning: these include strategy and pedagogic considerations. There are many sources from these including the Seven Principles of Chickering and Gamson as well as more modern formulations, including EMFFE, Pick&Mix, eMM and the ACODE schemes.
- This is likely to produce around 70 indicators.
- Then create for each indicator a set of level statements. It is suggested that a four-level approach (rather than the five from the DfES/Becta era of dependence on MIT90s analytic tools) is more consistent with modern thinking in benchmarking and quality, and easier for presentation purposes.
- Then for each subsector of the whole space (eg FE, PCDL, HE, etc) adjust the vocabulary and in some cases the nuancing of the text to match the subsector expectations. (There is much experience in this area including from the JISC Round Table projects as well as from Sero.)
- It is also likely that each subsector (or the agency/ies overseeing it) will wish to introduce a small number of supplementary descriptors.
- The aim should be to keep the total number well under 100.
- A deeper study would have to be done to determine the benefits of dimensionalising each indicator in the way done for DSA in Scotland, using concepts from the e-Maturity Model of Marshall and Mitchell.

Appendix F - References and Bibliography

Our Single Statement of Requirements, LSC, December 2006, p.21-22.

'Guidance for using the Impacts Framework' Issued by LSC National Office, October 2007

Adult Learning and Skills: Investing in the first steps (Ref 284656, © Crown copyright 2007) p8

How PCDL funding can best serve learners with learning difficulties (http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/HDE/Documents/PCDL-2007.pdf) p5. The authors do add the caveat that the majority of courses were offered at pre-entry level and very few actually led to Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications.

Skills Strategy: Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). A NIACE response to the DfES consultation (NIACE April 2007) http://www.niace.org.uk/Organisation/Advocacy/DfES/Skills-Strategy-EQIA.htm

It should be noted that the sector adopted the description prominent in the formal FE sector of Information Learning Technologies (ILT) which was useful in making distinctions between the educational and non-educational aspirations of government policy discussed below (namely e-government and e-commerce).

Notwithstanding the earliest reports such as Higginson:

The Use of Technology to Support Learning in Colleges (May 1998 Further Education Funding Council) http://www.hero.ac.uk/resources/use%20of%20technology%20to%20support%20learning.pdf

and Kennedy:

Learning Works (see http://www.niace.org.uk/Organisation/Advocacy/Archive/Kennedybriefing.htm)

Closing the Digital Divide: information and communication technologies in deprived areas. An Executive Summary of the PAT 15 Report. (DTI March 2000) http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications_1997_to_2006/pat_report_15.pdf

There were two key strands to e-government involving a) access to online services and b) participation in e-democracy.

The National Learning Network Adult and Community Learning Information and Learning Technology Strategy (LSC, June 2003)

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/Pre2005/quality/performanceachievement/nln-adult-and-community-it-strategy.pdf

See http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/ICT/WON.htm. An indication of longer term policy continuities is that the inspiration for WON came from a 1999 scheme to fund 1,500 laptops for ACL learners.

Report of the Distributed and Electronic Learning Group (LSC, September 2002) http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/DistElectronicGroup3.pdf

Harnessing Technology: Transforming Learning and Children's Services, (DfES, March 2005). The Harnessing Technology Delivery Plan (Becta, 2007), The Provider for the Future – the LSC vision for the implementation of e-learning (draft version, dated April 2006),

In spite of the lack of research to suggest that hard to reach learners want to learn through podcasts and dTV a recent policy document stated "Traditional college-based courses aren't always suitable for all learners. So our offer will increasingly include learning at home, eg through digital TV, podcasts and the internet, offering greater flexibility and personalisation. This type of learning can benefit people hugely, even if it does not lead to progression." Adult Learning and Skills: Investing in the first steps (Ref 284656, © Crown copyright 2007) p8

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Delivering Skills for Life: The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank/Family%20Learning%20Policy%20Guide.pdf

How PCDL funding can best serve learners with learning difficulties http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/HDE/Documents/PCDL-2007.pdf

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The Use Of And Attitudes Towards Information And Communication Technologies (ICT) By People From Black And Minority Ethnic Groups Living In Deprived Areas
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Connecting Communities to the Internet: Evaluation of the Wired Up Communities Programme
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR389.pdf

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http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/uploads/documents/World%20Class%20Skills%20FINAL.pdf