

# Effective partnership working within the FLT

Foundation Learning Tier Support Programme

**LSIS** LEARNING  
AND SKILLS  
IMPROVEMENT  
SERVICE



# Effective partnership working within the FLT

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# Introduction

## Who will be interested in this guide?

This guide will be of interest to post-16 providers who are delivering entry and level 1 provision. Entry and level 1 provision are currently delivered through a range of programmes including Entry to Employment (E2E) by work-based learning providers, and foundation programmes by colleges of further education (FE).

The Learning and Skills Council's *Providers requirements for Progression Pathways*<sup>1</sup> identifies partnership working as essential to the successful implementation of FLT. Requirement 6 states:

**Providers must show how they work in partnership with support agencies, employers and other providers to implement the FLT and provide progression opportunities for learners.**

1  
*Providers requirements for Progression Pathways*, LSC, August 2008, <http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk/flt/support>

## What is the Foundation Learning Tier?

The Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) is the range of provision and learning at entry and level 1. Specifically, the term refers to units and qualifications at entry and level 1 of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

The overarching aims of the Foundation Learning Tier are to:

- support improved engagement, participation, achievement and progression through entry level and level 1 towards level 2
- bring coherence to programmes of study at entry level and level 1 and support progression to clearly defined destinations
- provide a sound foundation for employment and progression
- ensure learners gain a minimum level and range of skills
- support the delivery of quality learning programmes that are personalised and appropriate to the learner's needs.

FLT programmes support individual progression through the achievement of an appropriate combination of qualifications from entry and level 1 of the QCF. Qualifications from the QCF that are confirmed as eligible and appropriate for inclusion within FLT are identified in the *FLT Progression Pathways qualifications catalogue*.<sup>2</sup>

Foundation learning programmes encompass three distinct components:

- vocational knowledge, skills and understanding
- personal and social development learning
- functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT.

2  
*FLT Progression Pathways qualifications catalogue*, LSC/QCA, 2009, [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_20389.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_20389.aspx)

3

*Providers requirements for Progression Pathways*, LSC, August 2008, <http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk/flt/support>

4

*Promoting achievement, valuing success: a strategy for 14–19 qualifications*, DCFS, 2008, <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=CM%25207354&>

These components will be supported by a ‘wrap-around’ of support, information, advice and guidance (IAG), effective initial assessment, comprehensive ongoing review and provider collaboration. The expectations of this ‘wrap-around’ are detailed in the LSC providers requirements.<sup>3</sup>

FLT programmes represent one of the four national suites of provision within the government’s qualifications strategy for learners aged 14–19.<sup>4</sup> FLT programmes are designed to support progression to one of the three other national suites of provision: Apprenticeships, Diplomas or GCSE/A-levels. For some learners, however, other destinations may be more appropriate, including employment with training, supported employment or independent living. For adults aged 19+, FLT programmes are designed to support progression to destinations including full level 2, Apprenticeships, Train to Gain, supported employment or independent living.

## How can FLT providers use this guide?

This guide can be used to review your existing arrangements for partnership working as you prepare to implement FLT programmes. It will be helpful in considering:

- what constitutes effective partnership working
- types of partners, whether:
  - strategic partners
  - external partners including schools, employers, referral agencies, other providers and support agencies
  - internal partners including level 2 programme, employer engagement, IAG, finance and MIS (management information system) teams
- protocols and partnership agreements.

The final section of the guide provides a series of prompts. These will assist in reflecting on your current arrangements and in considering actions for an FLT implementation plan.

# Section 1 Partnership working

## Partnership definition and purpose

A partnership can be formed between a number of organisations, agencies or individuals with a shared interest. Most partnerships have a common reason for working together and a selection of specific objectives. Partnerships are often formed to target specific issues and may be short or long term.

## Principles of partnership working

The key principles of partnership working are openness, honesty and agreed shared objectives. When partners cooperate to coordinate their activities and communicate regularly, partnerships tend to have a greater impact on end users. Partnerships can work in a variety of ways and different models will suit different settings.

Partnership working can be:

- a statutory requirement, for example local authority and 14–19 partnerships
- voluntary
- a contractual requirement, such as a local delivery consortia
- more informal or collaborative arrangements such as relationships with a local community group.

## Characteristics of effective partnership working

Effective partnerships:

- involve agencies working together for mutual benefit
- have an aim that is agreed and understood by all the partners
- put the learner at the centre of partnership working
- focus on a high-quality learning experience leading to sustainable progression
- have clear, effective leadership
- identify the role of each partner, which is understood by others in the partnership
- share ownership of the partnership and partners feel they benefit from the collaboration
- have dedicated time and resources for administration and operation
- recognise different organisational cultures within the partnership
- have a supportive atmosphere, where suggestions, ideas and tensions are addressed.

## The benefits of partnership working

Partnership working offers benefits to both FLT providers and learners. Partnership working can support **participation** by:

- ensuring that schools understand your FLT offer and how it can help learners working at entry and level 1 in Year 11 to progress to post-16 learning opportunities
- helping providers of IAG to understand FLT programmes and the types of learners they are likely to benefit
- helping voluntary sector organisations who are working to promote community cohesion or to engage young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and direct learners to FLT programmes
- increasing the number of access points to FLT programmes throughout the year.

Partnership working can support **achievement** through:

- working with employers to offer appropriate work placement opportunities
- providing opportunities for learners to undertake project-based learning in the community
- providing opportunities for learners to achieve QCF qualifications that your organisation would not usually offer
- offering vocational tasters in areas that it would be uneconomic to develop staff skills or resources
- drawing on the specialist skills of other providers to support achievement.

Partnership working can support **progression** by:

- allowing learners to complete qualifications that will count towards future Apprenticeship or 14–19 Diploma learning while on their FLT programme
- providing opportunities for supported employment agencies to help learners with learning difficulties or disabilities to progress
- providing opportunities for employers and Apprenticeship providers to undertake work trials that lead to employment
- clarifying entry criteria for level 2 programmes with providers of level 2 learning, both internal and external to your organisation, so that FLT programmes that support progression can be designed.

## Section 2 Strategic partners

### What is a 14–19 partnership? How does partnership working fit in with the 14–19 reforms and FLT?

5  
*Delivering 14–19  
reform: next steps,*  
DCFS, 2008

The FLT is part of the government’s 14–19 reforms.<sup>5</sup> Effective partnership working or collaboration is vital for ensuring the success of these reforms. Local authorities are acquiring significant 14–19 responsibilities including Connexions, commissioning 16–19 education provision, the Diploma and Apprenticeship entitlement, and raising the participation age.

6  
*14–19 Education  
and Skills  
Implementation  
Plan,* DfES, 2005

In response to the 14–19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan,<sup>6</sup> a commitment was made to set up 14–19 partnerships led by local authorities and the Learning and Skills Council. In most areas, these partnerships extended further, to other senior leaders, representing the major stakeholders within the local area, including:

- schools
- work-based providers
- colleges
- Connexions.

The purpose of a 14–19 partnership is to agree and develop a long-term strategy to implement the government’s 14–19 education reforms and related initiatives. In particular, it should develop the capacity for provision, including access to the full range of curriculum choices, such as the FLT, general qualifications, Diplomas and Apprenticeships. The 14–19 partnership is important in ensuring there is a coherent, locally owned strategy that meets local needs and that will deliver the 14–19 entitlement for all young people.

In addition to 14–19 partnerships, in many areas consortia have been established. Consortia are usually smaller groups of schools and providers that are working together operationally to deliver a curriculum offer such as the 14–19 Diplomas or FLT. Most consortia were originally established to bring together the facilities and expertise required to deliver the 14–19 Diploma. Most consortia are working to align timetables, develop delivery models and develop shared procedures. You may already be part of a local consortium. Consortia will increasingly be considering the role of FLT in the 14–19 phase. In some areas there are few differences between the 14–19 partnership and consortia. The 14–19 partnership is the delivery consortia. In most areas there are differences and a single 14–19 partnership may have many different delivery consortia.

## Why is the FLT important?

The aim of the FLT is to raise participation and achievement among learners aged 14 and over who are working at entry and level 1. It will help to secure the engagement of those people who have missed out on learning or need to overcome difficult challenges, and help them develop skills for employment, further study or independent living. FLT programmes draw from a combination of qualifications within the QCF and functional skills qualifications, and make it possible to design and deliver personalised learning programmes appropriate to the learner.

As an FLT provider you will be one of the partners working towards the implementation of an entitlement for all young people, which will offer:

- **high-quality IAG about learning opportunities and career pathways** at a time and in a format that enables learners to make key decisions; IAG will link to the local online prospectus and seek to raise achievement, increase participation and retain learners
- **clear recruitment and admission processes** post-16 that highlight and promote clear progression routes from school to college, training and work
- **flexible provision which combines academic and work-related learning** with choices that challenge, motivate and stimulate learning at all levels from pre-entry to level 3
- **an entitlement for all learners to a Diploma or Apprenticeship** place by 2013
- **high-quality teaching and learning** which raises aspirations, and challenges individuals to achieve their best and progress to further learning or employment
- **flexible accreditation for a wide range of skills**, including vocational skills, functional skills, personal and social skills and enterprise skills
- **the opportunity for learners to participate in the review, evaluation and shaping of their own learning** in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and learn at a pace which is suited to their needs and is inclusive
- **a commitment to promote equality of opportunity** and respond to the voice of the learner.

## The role of an FLT provider

As an FLT provider you may have a specific role within your local 14–19 partnership or consortia. This could include:

- **developing learners' functional skills** in alternative settings; evidence from the phased implementation of FLT shows that some learners develop literacy skills more readily in a vocational setting
- **providing vocational taster opportunities** for learners who are undecided about which vocational area is for them; some of the new QCF qualifications allow work tasters to be accredited with QCF units
- **providing bridging programmes during July and August** – for some learners at risk of disengagement, the summer break at the end of Year 11 can be replaced by an accredited programme running from July
- **providing multiple entry points to learning** – the flexibility of FLT programmes based on QCF accreditation means that it is much easier to offer multiple entry points to learning throughout the year
- **supporting the development of personal and social skills**, to enable learners to succeed in higher level learning or employment
- **working with Apprenticeship providers**, to ensure they understand FLT programmes and can influence the choice of FLT accreditation to ensure learners are prepared for Apprenticeship
- **working with level 2 learning and 14–19 Diploma providers**, to ensure they understand FLT programmes and can advise on developing personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and project-based work to ensure learners are prepared for the 14–19 Diploma or level 2 programmes
- **targeting specific groups of learners such as** those at risk of disengagement or young parents by developing FLT programmes that will engage and motivate learners to progress.

## PROVIDER EXAMPLE

### Rathbone

Rathbone is a key provider in the delivery of 14–19 provision in Halton and part of various groups within the 14–19 strategic partnership. Key to this is the Work Based Learning Group, which meets once a month and includes representatives from the local authority, work-based learning community, further education, voluntary and community sector, local schools and Connexions. During these meetings Rathbone:

- provides feedback to the group about their involvement in the phased implementation of the FLT
- shares updates with the group on progress they have made in the design and implementation of learners' FLT programmes
- outlines the impact of any issues on Rathbone, including staffing, delivery and funding
- provides feedback on the delivery of the three curriculum components and associated qualifications.

Rathbone staff also meet regularly with the 14–19 team within the local authority, to provide feedback regarding FLT. In order to create a more coherent offer for young people and avoid duplication of provision and the knock-on effects to funding, as part of these discussions Rathbone has recommended that a borough-wide FLT group should be established, and this is now being implemented. It is intended that the group will be representative of the borough and constitute a strong mix of 14–19 providers including schools and the third sector.

Rathbone feels that it has played a key role in helping to raise the knowledge and understanding of many of the members of the strategic partnership in relation to FLT.

The benefits to you as an FLT provider of working as part of a strategic partnership are to have:

- a common vision of local needs, shared objectives and how to respond to them, which can be developed in an area
- opportunities to access additional funding and resources
- opportunities to plan programmes that join up and work across the 14–19 phase
- opportunities to pool resources, effort and managerial time
- opportunities to develop new and innovative provision.

## Section 3 External partners

### Working with schools (14–16)

7  
*Delivering 14–19  
reform: next steps,*  
DCSF, 2008, p7

As post-16 FLT providers, local schools are likely to be important partners. Many schools will have pupils, in Key Stage 4, who are learning at entry level and level 1. For some of these pupils GCSE learning may not be appropriate and the foundation level 14–19 Diploma may not yet be available, or may be unsuited to their needs. You may be involved in delivering part of a Key Stage 4 FLT programme through your existing partnerships with schools. You may be involved in developing FLT programmes which ensure that the core curriculum for learners at Key Stage 4 to study mathematics, English and science is met, and you may provide access to qualifications other than GCSEs as the 14–19 Implementation Plan states.<sup>7</sup>

As we move to a coherent 14–19 phase the boundaries between Year 11 and Year 12 will become less marked and you may be involved in planning and delivering FLT programmes, for some learners, which span across Years 11 and 12.

As an FLT provider you will be involved in helping learners to raise their aspirations and challenge vocational stereotypes. Your partnerships with schools will help potential FLT learners to know what is on offer within FLT, post-16, what would best suit them and how they could use the area prospectus and apply using the Common Application Process. You will be involved in ensuring that the September Guarantee, the offer of a place in learning, is met for some learners. Increasingly, you will be involved in planning the role FLT will have in preparing for the raising of the participation age.

#### Providing skills and opportunities to schools in the Wirral

Michael John Training is a member of a local authority's FLT steering group. Michael John provides hair, beauty, functional skills and personal and social development learning opportunities to schools in the Wirral. Membership of the group has helped Michael John to develop FLT programmes based on the needs of schools and their pupils.

In response to requests from schools, Michael John has piloted, with great success, the delivery of functional skills in their training salons. The steering group has helped schools and the local authority to consider the implications for planning FLT programmes across the 14–19 phase. One example is the use of common QCF qualifications by members of the group. This helps to ensure that learners can add to any QCF units they gain pre-16, to work towards larger or higher level qualifications as they move in to post-16 learning.

The benefits to you as an FLT provider and FLT learners of effective partnerships with schools are that:

- learners in schools will have a greater understanding of FLT programmes and how these can support their progression
- as an FLT provider you might identify learners who are suitable and eligible to participate in your FLT or Apprenticeship programmes thereby supporting your recruitment activities
- you have an opportunity to ensure learners undertaking FLT programmes at Key Stage 4 are prepared to move on to Apprenticeships or post-16 FLT with qualifications that they can build on
- you have an opportunity to provide learning opportunities to a wider range of learners working at entry and level 1.

## Working with referral agencies

8  
*Funding guidance  
2008/09 –  
learner eligibility  
guidance,*  
LSC, 2008,  
[www.lsc.gov.  
uk/providers/  
funding-policy/  
strategic-overview](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/strategic-overview)

FLT learners will be recruited onto your FLT programmes in a number of different ways including through referral agencies. For young learners (aged 16–18) this is most likely to be through Connexions Services; for adults this will be through adult IAG providers. Youth offending teams and social services teams might also refer prospective learners. It will be important for referral agencies to have a clear understanding of the types of people who are suitable and eligible for FLT programmes. Referral agencies are also likely to play a key role in ensuring that prospective learners are ready to participate effectively in a learning programme.

FLT programmes are suitable for the following groups:

- 14–19 year olds who are working at entry and level 1 who want to progress on to one of the three other national suites of provision which form part of the government’s strategy for learners aged 14–19: Apprenticeships, Diplomas or GCSE/A-levels. They will also be suitable for young learners who want to progress to skilled employment, supported employment or independent living. Young people will want to engage in and sustain their learning opportunity.
- Adults aged 19+ who want to progress to full level 2, Apprenticeships, Train to Gain, skilled employment, supported employment or independent living. The target group for adults is likely to include adults with no or few low-level qualifications; those who have been out of formal learning and/or employment for some years; adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and, potentially, some adults in low-skilled jobs.

Information regarding funding eligibility for learners can be found in the LSC’s funding guidance.<sup>8</sup>

As an FLT provider you can support referral agencies in the recruitment process by:

- providing information about your FLT programmes, including what you offer in relation to each of the three curriculum areas and the range of qualifications and units available
- providing information on possible destinations for FLT learners and how FLT programmes can support them in achieving chosen destinations
- describing the types of environments in which learning takes place, for example in the workplace, community, workshop or classroom settings
- producing information leaflets for prospective learners about FLT programmes
- providing open days for prospective FLT learners
- offering short tasters to prospective FLT learners
- providing familiarisation sessions for staff from referral organisations.

Increasing the knowledge and understanding of staff from referral agencies will help them in providing appropriate IAG to prospective FLT learners.

#### **PROVIDER EXAMPLE** **Knowsley College**

Knowsley College is involved in the phased implementation of FLT programmes. To assist the referral and recruitment process college staff provided briefings for local Connexions staff to help them understand who might benefit from these learning opportunities. The briefings provided information on:

- the background to vocational reform including the development of a more focused and strategic approach to entry and level 1 provision for learners aged 14 and over, and the aim to raise participation and achievement levels
- the types of learners who might benefit from FLT learning programmes
- the three curriculum components (vocational learning, personal and social development and functional skills) and how learning would be accredited through QCF qualifications.

As a provider you might want to put in place formal partnership arrangements with referral organisations to support the referral and recruitment process (see section 4), which identify who will do what and when, and how information regarding prospective FLT learners can be shared.

The benefits to you as an FLT provider and FLT learners of effective partnerships with referral agencies are as follows:

- As a provider you will have an ongoing flow of suitable applicants for your FLT programme saving you time and costs in your own recruitment process.
- FLT applicants will have a better understanding of your FLT programme when they are referred to your organisation, which will help them make more informed choices.
- Your learner and induction processes will be supported by the information provided to prospective FLT learners and the information that referral agencies share with you.

## Working with employers

For learners to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding that will make them employable and allow them to progress further, spending time as part of their FLT programme in a 'real' working environment will be important. There is a wide range of QCF units now available at entry and level 1, which enable the workplace experiences of FLT learners to be formally accredited. Developing effective partnerships with employers therefore will be a key success factor in providers' FLT programmes.

Identifying suitable employers to support entry and level 1 learners can sometimes pose a challenge for providers because of the behaviour that learners sometimes present. A group of providers in the Gloucestershire LSC area, which was trying to improve how they worked with employers, at the same time as preparing for the implementation of the FLT, prepared a checklist to help identify the types of employers who can best support learners working at entry and level 1 (see below).

### PROVIDER EXAMPLE

## A checklist to identify employers suitable to support entry and level 1 learners developed by post-16 providers within the Gloucestershire LSC area

Employer suitability criteria	✓ ✗
1. The employer is able to offer work experience opportunities to 16–18 year olds to meets its company objectives	<input type="radio"/>
2. The employer meets the standards required by the provider in relation to health and safety and equality and diversity	<input type="radio"/>
3. The employer displays empathy regarding the needs of entry and level 1 learners	<input type="radio"/>
4. The employer is clear about the type of work experience opportunities they can provide and what they offer the learner in terms of skill development	<input type="radio"/>
5. The employer is able to offer a wide range of different learning opportunities within the workplace	<input type="radio"/>
6. The employer is willing to offer regular feedback on the progress the learner is making and the skills being developed	<input type="radio"/>
7. The employer is willing to keep in close contact with the provider regarding any issues that the learner is facing	<input type="radio"/>
8. The employer is willing to give you regular access to the learner while on placement	<input type="radio"/>
9. The employer is able to offer the learner a permanent job if their placement experience is successful	<input type="radio"/>
10. The employer is prepared to offer a reference for the learner at the end of their placement	<input type="radio"/>

Helping employers understand both the features of FLT programmes and the benefits to them of getting involved will be important. A list of them might be included within promotional literature or in face-to-face presentations. Benefits for employers include:

- helping the company meet its organisational objectives and any community targets
- saving the company time and money in staff recruitment
- the opportunity to gain a future loyal and valuable member of staff
- the opportunity to trial a potential employee before they commit
- development opportunities for staff through training and supporting FLT learners in the workplace
- flexibilities for employers through negotiation on attendance days and hours
- for public sector employers, to help meet Apprenticeship recruitment targets.

#### **PROVIDER EXAMPLE**

##### **Total People**

Total People has developed a promotional leaflet for employers to provide them with information on their FLT programmes. This provides information on:

- why employers should get involved and the benefits for them
- the vocational areas where workplace learning opportunities are required
- the age group of learners and how they are funded through Education Maintenance Allowances
- how the learner's programme is structured including the time spent in the workplace and the time spent at Total People's training centre
- information on the qualifications that learners will undertake.

#### PROVIDER EXAMPLE

### Selby College work placement opportunities and building links with employers

Selby College is implementing the FLT with a group of 16–18-year-old learners. Work placements form a fundamental part of learners' programmes and they are involved in identifying local employers where they would like to undertake a placement. The QCF National Open College Network (NOCN)-owned unit: 'Understanding a work experience placement', E3 (Y/500/5367), provides a vehicle for accrediting learners' work placement experiences (to identify all the qualifications that this unit features see [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk)).

The College has developed a workbook to help learners record their work placement experiences. This includes:

- the employer's details
- workplace health and safety arrangements
- a description of the learner's work placement activities
- a self-evaluation of the learner's experience including what skills they have learned and what have they liked/disliked
- an employer evaluation of the learner's experience.

To support employers the College produces a handbook for employers, which provides information on:

- the types of support they can expect from the College
- how they can support the learner
- who to contact at the College.

One strategy E2E staff have used to build relationships with employers successfully has been the hosting of a twice-yearly dinner with the support of the local chairman of commerce. E2E learners plan the event, prepare and issue invitations and host the dinner for up to 25 employers at any one time. During the dinner learners share their experiences and achievements during E2E. This has resulted in the offer of an Apprenticeship for some learners and increased the number of available work placement opportunities. The College intends to continue to use this successful strategy as part of its FLT provision.

The benefits to providers and FLT learners of effective partnership arrangements with employers are that they:

- provide FLT learners with ‘real life’ experiences and the opportunity to try out new experiences and different vocations
- help FLT learners develop vocational and employability skills
- can help FLT learners gain a permanent job
- give FLT learners the opportunity to work with people of all ages and develop their personal and social skills
- can help FLT learners develop skills and knowledge which they can use to develop their CV
- allow workplace employees to offer role models for FLT learners to follow
- can help FLT learners develop their overall levels of confidence because they offer a range of different experiences.

## Working with other providers

The FLT presents opportunities for FLT providers to work with other providers in a number of different ways. These might include:

- developing suitable delivery models
- working together to develop and share FLT plans
- sharing emerging and good practice.

## FLT provider delivery models

FLT providers need to determine what is the most appropriate model for delivering their FLT programme and to what extent they might choose to work with other providers in delivering the learner’s journey. This is likely to depend on such factors as:

- provider size in terms of the number of FLT learners with whom they work
- available staff resource
- areas of established expertise in relation to the three FLT curriculum components
- geographical location
- established provider working arrangements
- funding body delivery preferences.

These are some emerging examples of FLT delivery models.

### **Model 1 Holistic model**

In this model the FLT provider delivers all stages of the learner's FLT journey themselves including the three curriculum components. This model works most effectively in larger providers where there are many FLT learners and staff resource is high.

### **Model 2 Lead provider model**

In this model the FLT provider chooses to subcontract stages of the learner's journey and/or curriculum components to one or more subcontractors. The lead provider retains overall 'ownership' of the FLT learner. This model is likely to be more effective for small providers where resources are more limited.

### **Model 3 Consortia model**

In this model a group of providers work together to offer complementary programmes. Each individual provider might be an example 1 provider but each provider agrees to specialise in particular vocational sectors so that across the consortia a wide range of vocational sectors are offered. Providers offer similar personal and social development and functional skills components and use the same QCF units to enable learners to move around providers if they decide to choose a different vocational area. The advantage of this model is that it allows FLT providers to specialise in what they are good at.

### **Model 4 Partnership model**

In this model a provider acts as the lead partner undertaking key stages of the learner's journey – such as recruitment, induction, initial assessment and progress review – on behalf of the partnership. FLT learners are referred to the partner provider that can most effectively meet their needs in the three curriculum components. Overall responsibility for the learner rests with the lead provider. The advantage of this model is that a third party ensures that the learner is appropriately referred, acts as an anchor of support and is able to monitor the learner's progress during their programme, and refer them to another provider if necessary.

## Working together developing and sharing FLT plans

Providers choosing to deliver FLT programmes will want to develop a clear FLT implementation plan. This is likely to include actions in relation to:

- proposed delivery model
- selecting suitable QCF qualifications and units to offer FLT learners
- arrangements for delivering each stage of the learner's journey and how these differ from current arrangements for entry and level 1 learners
- the development of arrangements with external partners
- the development of arrangements with internal partners (see section 4).

FLT providers might find it useful to share their plans with other local FLT providers as they develop them to gather feedback and discuss ideas.

## Sharing emerging and good practice

As FLT programmes develop, sharing emerging and good practice across the provider base will be important in raising the overall quality of FLT provision. This might be achieved through:

- holding local network meetings where practice is shared
- local provider network websites
- the development of FLT provider and learner case studies
- sharing resources developed or used with FLT learners.

The benefits to providers and FLT learners of having effective partnership arrangements with other providers are:

- the use of shared expertise and resource
- economies of scale
- improvements in the quality of provision.

## Working with support agencies

The nature of some entry and level 1 FLT learners means that as a provider you may need to source additional support and help from external agencies to overcome any barriers to learner success. You may want to develop effective working arrangements with support agencies and organisations which can offer:

- specialist counselling services
- equipment to support learners with physical disabilities
- specialist assessment and support with any learning difficulties
- support with housing and accommodation needs

- advice on benefits and financial issues
- support with childcare arrangements
- support with sex education
- support with travel arrangements, particularly where learners have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Learners' support needs may have been identified by referral agencies before entry but a provider's initial assessment process should seek to confirm or identify these, in order that they can plan and implement appropriate support arrangements during the learner's FLT programme.

#### **PROVIDER EXAMPLE**

#### **Middlesbrough College**

The personal and social development aspect of Middlesbrough's FLT course is running particularly well, as the College has been able to link with others to support it. For example, the local NHS contraception and reproductive health team has helped to develop schemes of work and lessons plans, and will also assist in their delivery.

Some support agencies can also help learners in progressing positively at the end of their FLT programme. Supported employment services for example specialise in working with disabled people to help them find and keep work. They are provided by:

- voluntary sector organisations such as Mencap Pathways services
- social services departments in some areas
- organisations such as Remploy, which delivers a number of government-funded employment programmes for disabled people.

#### **PROVIDER EXAMPLE**

### **East Durham College**

East Durham College already has links with other partners, but the provision of work experience places rarely extends to level 1 learners. So to help deliver the FLT course, the College has developed links with several supported employment agencies, organisations that work to enable people with disabilities to achieve sustainable, long-term employment.

These organisations have been involved in the training of College staff and will be setting up the students' work placements in the third term of the course. The College's work placement officer has attended a training event held by the British Association for Supported Employment.

The benefits to providers and FLT learners of having effective partnership arrangements with support agencies are:

- FLT learners can receive the necessary help and support they need to help them complete their FLT programmes successfully
- high retention rates for FLT providers
- learners can progress to appropriate destinations such as supported employment, and receive the support that they need.

## Section 4 Internal partners

Staff responsible for the management and delivery of FLT programmes need the support of colleagues from across their organisation to ensure successful delivery. These include staff in the following teams:

- level 2 programmes
- Employer Engagement
- IAG
- finance
- MIS.

### Level 2 programme teams

9  
A full level 2 qualification is defined as having a minimum of 13 credits.

FLT programmes aim to support learners in progressing to level 2 opportunities. For young people this includes Apprenticeships, Diplomas and GCSEs. For adults this also includes a full level 2<sup>9</sup> qualification. In order to enable this it will be important that there are effective working relationships in place with those teams that are responsible for delivering level 2 programmes. They might:

- establish clear entry requirements for level 2 programmes – this ensures that level 2 course teams are aware of the qualifications learner can gain on FLT programmes and that FLT course teams can develop programmes to equip learner to meet these entry requirements
- offer level 2 ‘taster’ sessions
- help FLT learners gain a clear understanding of level 2 programmes during the induction and initial assessment stages of their journey
- arrange for level 2 learners to share their learning experiences with FLT learners
- support transition arrangements at the point where an FLT learner progresses from an entry and level 1 programme to a level 2 programme.

### **PROVIDER EXAMPLE**

#### **Total People**

Total People is involved in delivering an FLT programme to a group of learners who want to progress on to an Apprenticeship in Business Administration. In deciding which qualifications to offer FLT learners, FLT staff worked closely with their colleagues in the Apprenticeship team to identify which qualifications would be the most beneficial to assist progression to an Apprenticeship. Staff in the Apprenticeship team who work closely with employers were also able to advise on the types of qualifications that employers find most desirable when recruiting new staff.

### **Employer engagement team**

In section 3 we outlined the important role that employers play in the delivery of FLT programmes, supporting learners in developing the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding that will make them employable and allow them to progress further. Providers may have specialist teams or staff who are responsible for engaging employers and supporting them while the learner is with them. In order to engage effectively with employers, employer engagement teams need to have a good understanding of:

- the features and benefits of FLT programmes
- how QCF qualifications work and the concept of credit
- the characteristics of those employers who might best support FLT learners (see section 3)
- learner's individual needs including their vocational aspirations.

### **IAG team**

IAG staff are usually responsible for providing appropriate IAG to FLT learners, initially before entry and throughout the learner's journey. FLT staff need to ensure that their IAG colleagues have a clear understanding of:

- the features and benefits of FLT programmes
- how QCF qualifications work and the concept of credit
- learners' prior learning and achievements, including the prior achievement of any functional skills or QCF units
- what unique learning numbers are and how the learner can use them to gain access to their electronic learner record.

10  
*2008/9 funding  
guidance,*  
LSC, 2008

11  
*FLT funding  
catalogue,*  
LSC, 2009

## Finance team

FLT teams will want to work closely with their finance colleagues to:

- ensure that they have a clear understanding of the LSC's funding model<sup>10</sup> for FLT programmes and what qualifications are eligible for funding<sup>11</sup>
- develop funding models for the different combinations of the QCF qualifications they choose to deliver
- consider how qualification success rates might impact on the provider factor.

## MIS team

FLT teams will need to work closely with their MIS colleagues to ensure that:

- each FLT learner is assigned a unique learner number to enable them to access their electronic online learning record, which records their achievements
- staff responsible for completing individual learner records receive the correct information regarding:
  - the learner's chosen QCF qualifications expressed as learning aims on the individual learner record
  - the learner's planned credit value of the combined qualifications that the learner is undertaking and the actual credit achieved once the learner leaves
  - the extent to which each qualification is achieved (fully, partially or none) once the learner leaves
  - the learner's destination route;

recording incorrect information on the learners' individual learner record can have an impact on funding and the provider's overall success measure.

- they are clear about what management reports they will require, and the frequency of them, to support them in managing their FLT programme and to inform decision making.

The benefits of FLT teams working closely with their internal colleagues are that:

- FLT learners can receive the necessary assistance and support they need to help them complete their FLT programmes successfully
- this might result in high retention rates for FLT providers
- learners can progress to appropriate destinations and receive the support that they need.

## Section 5 Protocols and partnership agreements

When partnerships are more than informal relationships they should be supported by agreed protocols – formal agreements. Clear protocols that are managed and monitored can provide a source of evidence for all parties.

Partnership protocols or agreements will vary depending on the size of the partnership, its purpose, and the role of member organisations. Strategic partnerships are likely to require more formal agreements covering areas such as:

- a statement of purpose and supporting documentation
- an overview of the range of collaborative activities
- a description of roles and responsibilities
- how resources will be allocated
- how different operational procedures will be reconciled
- communication protocols
- agreed staff development policies
- formal agreements setting out working arrangements
- how the partnership will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated
- the use and ownership of mutually developed resources.

Partnership agreements with external partner organisations, for example another FLT provider, are likely to be documented and cover areas such as:

- the parts of the learning process that the partner is responsible for
- targets for qualification success and progression
- qualifications and skills the partner's staff are expected to have
- records the partner is required to have (for example, progress reviews, IAG records)
- responsibilities for providing learners with additional support
- health and safety requirements
- responsibilities for promoting equality and diversity
- quality assurance
- how often the partners will meet to discuss operational issues
- arrangements for servicing or acting as a secretariat to the partnership
- financial arrangements.

Internal partnerships can often benefit from a shared understanding about their purpose and role; this might be covered by a simple partnership agreement covering areas such as:

- who will do what and when
- accommodation
- timetables and session timings
- staffing
- negotiation and use of individual learning plans and arrangements for progress reviews
- target setting and action planning
- entry requirements for higher level programmes
- data collection and information management
- assessment and recording procedures.

The benefits of protocols and partnership agreements for FLT providers are that:

- partners have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities
- they provide a source of guidance for staff involved in the delivery of learning and those involved in reviewing arrangements
- they can be developed to ensure the quality of provision yet retain sufficiently flexible to allow for the needs of different types of partners.

## Section 6 Action planning

To help you in planning or reviewing your arrangements for partnership working within the FLT, read through the following checklist and for each point tick the box for the statement that is most accurate in relation to your organisation:

A – Not sure about this

B – We have made some progress in this

C – We have made considerable progress in this.

<b>A</b> Not sure	<b>B</b> Some progress	<b>C</b> Considerable progress
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We have identified a purpose for our partnership and the characteristics of effective partnership working	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have identified the benefits of effective partnership working	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are a member of our local 14–19 partnership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are clear about our role within the local 14–19 partnership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have established good working relationships with other members of the 14–19 partnership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have identified who our external partners will be in the delivery of our FLT programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have good working relationships in place with each of our external partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our external partners understand their role in the delivery of our FLT programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have identified who our internal partners will be in the delivery of our FLT programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have good working relationships in place with each of our internal partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our internal partners understand their role in the delivery of our FLT programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have put in place protocols/partnership agreements with our key partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Now use the results of your self-assessment to produce an action plan for your organisation to develop effective partnerships in the delivery of the FLT.

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