

**South Eastern Regional College Response to Committee Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Education, Employment and Training for those with Learning Disabilities**

## 1. Summary

South Eastern Regional College (SERC) supports students who have learning difficulties and disabilities across further education (FE), higher education (HE), Training for Success (TfS), the Entitlement Framework and European Social Fund (ESF) programmes. The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provides funding for the College via the Additional Support Fund (AFS) for FE students, enrolled in FE college provision, who have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. It is intended to help colleges to meet the necessary additional cost of provision for these students. Within TfS SERC supports trainees using the income earned under the programme. The quality of SERC's support is very good and makes a real difference to students with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, going forward, issues such as transport and care assistance support, which are not part of SERC's funded support, need to be carefully considered. Any transfer of these responsibilities to colleges should be avoided given the difficult financial challenges ahead.

### 1.1 Background on South Eastern Regional College

South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is the third largest Further Education College in Northern Ireland providing educational opportunity for over 36,800 enrolments from a wide catchment area across four Local Government Districts of Ards, Down, Lisburn and North Down. The College has four main campuses located at Bangor, Downpatrick, Lisburn, and Newtownards, and a further four campuses in Holywood, Ballyboley, Ballynahinch and Newcastle with an additional 80 satellite centres within this catchment area.

The campuses in Ballynahinch, Newcastle, Downpatrick and Lisburn are all new buildings completed within the last 4 years, and the Newtownards campus was renovated significantly in 2011, this represented an investment of around £80 million by DEL that significantly enhanced the quality of the College's accommodation, education and training facilities, and learning resources.

#### Key Facts:

- › 1,100 employees
- › 37,000+ enrolments. 20,836 qualifications by 10,133 students were obtained in last academic year 2012/13
- › On completion 96% of FE progress to higher levels of education or employment. 4% to unemployment. Presently 18% of 18-24 year olds and 10% graduates are unemployed
- › 5,200+ business clients
- › Engages with 40 schools under the Entitlement Framework
- › £50 m turnover
- › £81 m capital investment in last 4 years

- › In the last full year of 2012/2013 there were 1519 students who declared a learning difficulty or disability of which 420 received support and a further 320 individual TfS trainees also received support.

## 2 Response to Terms of Reference

### 2.1 The current range of choice and opportunities available in SERC.

SERC offers provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities across its FE, Training for Success, the Entitlement Framework and European Social Fund provision.

Within SERC ASF funding is targeted at all FE students, enrolled in college provision, who have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. It is intended to help the College meet the necessary additional cost of provision for these students.

This funding applies to all FE SLDD students, who have enrolled in FE mainstream provision and those in discrete provision, for whom an additional support need has been identified.

The Discrete provision is offered as part of the College's Job Club, Life Skills and Learning Enhancement programmes which are for students with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Each programme consists of a suite of courses with the aim of improving the social, personal and employability skills of the individual.

Job Club is a one or two year full-time programme aimed at those students who have the potential to progress onto employment. The main qualifications on this programme are City and Guilds (C&G) qualification in Employability and Personal Development.

The Life Skills programmes are aimed at those students with more severe learning difficulties. Full-time Life Skills can last for one or two years with the emphasis on improving personal and social skills. SERC also offers part-time (PT) Life Skills courses.

The Learning Enhancement courses are all part-time courses for those with severe learning needs. Students on these courses will normally complete one or two units of a qualification in a vocational area. The vast majority are delivered in out centres.

Under the TfS programme SERC offers both the Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work strands. The Skills for your Life strand is designed to address the personal and development needs of young people who have disengaged from learning and/or have significant barriers to education, training or employment including Essential Skills needs. It is designed to address the need for more focused provision for the significant minority of young people for whom Skills for Work is not suitable. SERC has 19 young people currently on the programme.

The Skills for Work Level 1 strand is designed to help young people gain skills and qualifications at Level 1, to be able to gain employment, to progress to Skills for Work Level 2 or *ApprenticeshipsNI*. SERC has 146 young people currently on the programme.

SERC Learning Support Unit provides additional support to the TfS trainees who have a disability, learning difficulty and or medical condition that could be deemed as a barrier to their learning, i.e. SLDD.

SERC's Steps for All project is funded by ESF and is focused on helping people with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment, access education and sustain employment and in so doing improve their sense of purpose, health, income and equal rights. The programme runs for 22-26 weeks for four mornings a week. The target group for the project includes people with disabilities who may have little or no qualifications and may believe that they have little to contribute to the labour market and limited prospects of entering it. The programme offers accredited qualifications to participants such as Level 2 Food Hygiene, Barrista coffee making and NOCN Introduction to IT. Depending on participant feedback, entry qualifications and job goals alternative qualifications can be introduced, all of which will be linked to potential progressive employment for participants. Participants also undertake employability skills including interview techniques, CV writing, job search, application forms and communication skills. Confidence and motivational skills are addressed throughout the duration of the programme.

### 3 The views of users.

An Internal College Quality Review of the College's learning support in TfS was carried out in June 2013. This involved:

- Observation of 10 learning support staff (General Study Support Worker GSSW) in 18 sessions
- Discussions with 34 trainees
- Discussions with 12 tutors
- Scrutiny of the learning support records of 9 GSSWs
- Scrutiny of the process for allocating additional learning support to TfS trainees.

Among the key strengths identified by the ICQR incorporating user views were the following:

- Good rapport which GSSWs had with all trainees with GSSWs keeping the trainees on track, providing focused support and more general support to the class as required;
- GSSWs provided appropriate levels of unobtrusive support while still ensuring that the trainee was responsible for the work;

- All trainees were very accepting of support and the all trainees were happy or very happy with the learning support provided;
- In nearly all cases GSSWs demonstrated an in depth understanding of the additional learning needs of the trainees.

Some of the user feedback was:

- “If I'm stuck he will help me understand. He is really good with spelling. He comes over when tutor is not available. He is easy to talk to and very helpful. Very Happy”.
- “Helps with spelling, IT and understanding tasks. Brilliant support, can talk to him easily even about outside issues. Very happy with support”.
- The trainees were highly complementary about the support given. “She helps out big time - couldn't do it without her” said one Trainee who is aware of his slowness in class and battles with a number of disabilities. The class felt they could 'confide' in GSSW about their personal problems as well as academic
- Trainees feel that the support they receive from the GSSW is beneficial and helps them focus and complete allocated tasks. They compared this to school where the assistant was to support the teacher but in SERC they the students are getting individual support which gives them confidence and increases their attendance.
- “GSSW helps explain anything that I don't understand. Feel that they have benefitted from having M in class”.
- “She explains things well and goes over them. She helps with our spelling and layout out our work. She is very good at helping us bring our work up to the right standard. Advises us to put in more detail and take things out. We have benefitted loads from having her”.
- “Explains, helps, makes sure I do it in time, helps with spelling and grammar, very happy with support”.
- “Helps mainly with spelling/reading and ensures portfolio is in proper order. Very happy with support”.
- Trainees were at times very difficult but all acknowledged staff member’s quiet and tolerant approach which enabled them to work at their own pace.
- S very happy with support from J. He helps with spelling, reading and writing sentences. Has benefitted from having J supporting him. Especially in completion and passing tests. D happy with support.
- “Easy to understand, patient, approachable- would have fallen behind without this support”.
- Trainee feels he would regress if support wasn't available
- “She reads me the question, spells things out, gets it done in time, if I need help I get it. Very happy with support”.
- “Without this support it is unlikely we would get all work completed. He doesn't do it for us but helps us. It is the best support we have ever had”.

#### 4 Best practice in post school provision for those with learning disabilities.

Among the relevant external validating agencies the following Quality Marks have been awarded to the College:

- Buttle UK Quality Mark – Care Experienced Learners
- Matrix Quality Award for Careers

In addition SERC offers an “**On Track Facility**” at the Downpatrick Campus. This involves a room for staff to meet with their students in a quiet area for one-one tuition. The students are given a choice of meeting place but most chose to meet in the room on Level 5 because it is less distracting and they are not seen by their peers to be receiving help. A number of the students stay on after their timetables classes for support time to work on their assignments or came in at different times to work on their own. Some of the students also use it to discuss personal issues affecting their learning.

The students have stated that they have benefited from the room because they felt better able to study as there were no distractions (this was especially true of the autistic students) and because they knew where to find the staff if they wanted to ask for support and advice outside their allotted learning support slot.

Students make very good use of the room, especially nearer to exam time and completion dates for assignments. Some students have come in to 'study' and then said they had something they wanted to discuss. Being in the room gave them the time and space to 'pluck up the courage' to broach issues other than coursework.

SERC is also hoping to attain a **Charter Mark Award from Guide Dogs for the Blind**. The standards are intended to be a guide to implementing best practice and ensure that the relevant legislation is complied with. The achievement of the Charter Mark is the outcome of a journey demonstrating that there is sufficient evidence in place to meet the standards. The framework sets out the standards to be met and complied with in order to achieve the Charter Mark from Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. It explains what blind and partially sighted people can expect when they are part of, or use the services of, SERC as a Guide Dog Charter Mark holder, helping them enjoy the same freedom of movement as everyone else, informing them of the services available to them, and what they can do if they feel standards are not being met. It will also create a working relationship between SERC, visually impaired students and Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

#### 4.1 Cedar Foundation

Each year over 50 people with disabilities aged 18-65 take part in the Cedar Foundation Summer School, which has now been successfully up and running for 17 years.

The programme of activities is jointly organised by the Cedar Foundation, Well 2 and SERC. Classes including cookery, arts & crafts, and light decorative metalwork are delivered across the four campuses during July and the first week in August.

Speaking after last year's graduation at SERC's Lisburn campus, Lady Hermon MP said: "It's always a real joy to present certificates of achievement to everyone taking part in the Summer School. The enthusiasm and talent amongst these particular students make for a very happy occasion, where their graduation is a source of great pride to them, their families and not least for their tutors."

The Summer School provides, therefore, a real opportunity for people with some form of disability to try something completely new while, at the same time, enabling them to experience College life in the hope that they will avail of even more courses in the future."

## **4.2 Transitions Work within SERC SE Trust and SEELB**

SERC has developed a transition plan pro-forma which is making a helpful contribution to providing a comprehensive framework for gathering the right kind of information, minimising duplication and creating a more seamless approach to intervention and planning to meet the education needs of young people. The College through SERC Extra picks up on any student that is struggling. This is a dedicated team established to support retention and engagement, address and resolve obstacles and barriers and put in place solutions to promote the retention of students. This allows for 6 weekly reviews, provision of support, monitoring and engagement of key players to address obstacles and find solutions to support the student. This service appears unique to SERC.

## **5 SERC quantum and quality of post school provision for those with Learning Disabilities**

As indicated above SERC offers FE discrete courses, mainstream learning support, TfS programmes and ESF funded provision.

The Job Club, Life Skills and Learning Enhancement programmes are for students with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Each programme consists of a suite of courses with the aim of improving the social, personal and employability skills of the individual.

Job Club is a one or two year fulltime programme aimed at those students who have the potential to progress onto employment. The main qualifications on this programme are C&G qualification in Employability and Personal Development.

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As part of the annual self-evaluation and quality improvement plan process SERC has identified the following strengths of its discrete provision:

1. Pastoral Care is provided on a daily basis through links with tutors, social workers,

Mencap and disability teams;

2. Quality Links and Partnerships have been established with schools, Mencap, Promote Action, Autism Initiative, Cedar Foundation and the DEL Careers Service;
3. High Achievement Rates;
4. Responsiveness to community needs;
5. Appropriate programmes for students with regard to their varying abilities and Needs; and
6. Well qualified and experienced staff.

These programmes are for students with disabilities ranging from moderate to severe learning difficulties. Students range in age from 16 – 60 with the majority of full-time student in the 16 – 25 age range. On entry all students are assessed to determine their level and the most suitable qualification for them. All courses have very high achievement rates and good use is made of well-established quality links and partnerships. In addition to Employability and Personal development students gain qualifications in some of the following areas such as catering, retail, ICT, literacy and numeracy. A supplementary Learning Agreement is included an individual learning plan is completed for each student and reviewed regularly. Formal reviews with parents and social services for all full-time students are carried out three times a year. To ensure consistency and awareness of good practice, three cross-marking sessions and cross-campus team meetings also take place.

A wide range of units have been delivered at different levels from Entry 2 – NQF Level 1. The Awarding Body External Verifier (EV) has stated in her comments that this has afforded the learner with more opportunity to vary and enhance their skills. There is strong use of ILT in teaching such as IWB, Quizdom, Connect 4 and Xtranormal which has been shared with other members of the course team. New units that were introduced included Citizenship and Digital Photography. Student feedback has been very positive, and this was noted in the student reviews and EV reports. Learning enhancement programme received a very positive EV report June 2013.

Link and partnerships on this programme are very good and include speakers from the Health Board re personal hygiene, sex education, and healthy eating. This is evidenced by the successful completion of their personal skills unit within the City and Guilds qualification. PSNI visits include talks on internet/mobile phone & personal safety. Students benefit greatly from sessions given by the YMCA and Autism NI. With YMCA students complete an active outdoor pursuit's teamwork programme and an art based community project. With Autism NI the students take part in a ten-week personal safety programme. This resulted in improved teamwork

and communication skills and helped students complete their community project unit within City and Guilds qualification. The wide variety of guest speakers evidence for Employability Units and encourage transferable skills. All students are working towards placement – there are strong links with local employers through Mencap, such as Tesco and Asda. SERC has excellent support provided by Mencap in relation to providing work placements, travel and training the new students during the summer, delivering weekly personal development sessions and helping students during the transitional period from school to college. The lecturers have developed a very positive and strong working relationship with the Mencap team, with contact on a daily basis. There are strong links with local feeder schools regarding the new intake of students. Staff have visited all schools to deliver course information sessions. Students have attended link classes ranging from single sessions to 32 week link classes provided by Learning Enhancement and Job Club Downpatrick.

An appropriate range of innovative teaching and learning methods are used in order to meet the objectives of the course and challenge and inspire the learners. This includes role-play, observation and simulated work situations which is reflected in all lesson planning and learning outcomes. Tailored materials are provided to suit the individual needs of the student and help motivate them to learn, for example SERC Pathfinders and Odyssey programme for the Career Planning unit for the C&G qualification. The enterprise unit of the employability award provides an opportunity for students to develop skills such as team work, communication, planning and social and customer service skills. ILT is used to support learning through the use of internet sites such as the BBC learning zone, Moodle, Widget, Quizdom, Xtranormal, Zondle and Wordle. Feedback from an External Verifier included “Innovative use of ILT which is appropriate for learning needs as well as help engage and stimulate the learning experience”

The curriculum offers a coherent, broadly balanced programme of learning which provide learners with clear progression opportunities from EL2 to NQF L2 with all courses on the QCF structure. This curriculum reaches out to the broader community and meets the individual needs of the student. Courses are also enriched by the addition of structured educational visits and guest speakers. For example part-time students visited B&Q to participate in a costing exercises at the store. Job Club students have has a visit from the Dogs Trust to learn about responsible dog ownership, visited W5, Ulster Museum, Coca Coal, Stormont and the Lisburn Linen Centre.

Learning experiences are used to enhance the academic, social and personal skills of the students. These include educational visits planned by the students, guest speakers and work placements. There are a variety of guest speakers such as police, armed forces, health care professionals, dietary advisors, careers officers and a bank official who talked to students about money management. Enterprise activities gives the students the opportunity to make and sell a product and record expenditure, income and profit thus creating independence, improving self-esteem and confidence. In addition the emotional and welfare needs of the students are well attended to by tutors and support staff. The EV for the Learning Enhancement

courses commented that the team work hard to ensure that the “learners’ journey is worthwhile and demonstrates a range of skills that will help them to progress”.

In relation to CEIAG on this programme FT students:

- Create their own CVs;
- Visit the local job markets;
- Receive visits from the careers officers, both in-house and external;
- Receive mentoring from Mencap;
- Attend career open days; and
- Take part in mock interviews.

## **5.1 Learning Support Unit**

In addition to the Discrete provision, SERC’s Learning Support Unit’s distinct purpose is to make education and training accessible to everyone, including those who have a recognised learning difficulty or disability. In providing a range of support options, the Learning Support team enables students/trainees to take full advantage of their time at the College. Information, resources and support are also provided for all staff.

The number of students enrolled on FE Courses with the College in 2012/2013 who declared a learning difficulty or disability was 1519 of which 420 received support. A further 320 individual trainees received support along with many more being supported through classroom assistance being provided to many of the taught sessions of TfS & the Steps to Work programmes. The diversity of disabilities and conditions that students present with continues to grow which presents greater challenges to the Learning Support Team.

The General Study Support Workers (GSSW) of which there are currently 104 GSSWs on the College register, provide classroom support for students within mainstream and discrete provision.

The strategic focus of the Learning Support Unit is to:

- Ensure access for all in an inclusive and accessible learning environment;
- Ensure that SERC operates within current legislation;
- Devise and implement reasonable adjustments for students/trainees with support needs;
- Provide advice, guidance and training for SERC Staff and students on both Disability legislation & Disability etiquette;
- Remain within the funding budget allocated by DEL through the ASF and make timely requests to DEL where additional funding is needed;
- Arrange for additional support to be implemented following assessment, for any student presenting with an evidenced learning difficulty or disability, and/or medical condition;

- Comply with the current DEL guidelines as set out in the Additional Support Funds (ASF) circular, which identifies and governs the use and scope of this funding formula; and
- Ensure that the service is also available to trainees participating on programmes with the Training Organisation.

Referrals to the learning support unit are generally made by the student at enrolment or via the College E-Individual Learning Plan, however it can also be done so via self-referral, internal referrals from teaching teams, referral from case conferences and external referrals from agencies such as the Education Board transition teams, social services team and stakeholder organisations.

The learning support officers interview the students in order to identify their specific needs. The result of the interview is that the student receives the appropriate support whilst at college. In order to implement the support, evidence is gathered as to the specific needs and a Supplementary Agreement and Support Needs Recommendation Form is completed. For the purpose of compliance and audit all initial interviews/assessments and support are documented on the Learning support Information System (**LSIS**) which in turn communicates with the college MIS system which is linked to DEL for monitoring

The Learning Support Services Team consists of:

- Learning Support Manager;
- Access & Support Officers;
- Part-time Lecturers and Subject Specific Support Specialists; and
- General Study Support Workers.

Last year 2012/13 the number of F.E student enrolments who declared a learning difficulty or disability but were designated not requiring/wanting assistance (SLDD 01) was **1467**. Student enrolments requiring support (SLDD 02) for the 12/13 period was **1197**.

In 12/13 Learning Support in SERC continued to provide a comprehensive service to the Training Organisation for both Steps to Work and Training for Success programmes. The number of trainees identified as 02 was 626. The team also conducted 50 Disabled Student Allowance assessments on behalf of the Education and Library Boards.

Last year the Learning Support team attended the two day SLDD conference organised by the FE Sector Working group. The focus on work experience for supported students and post college activity was very pertinent as was the presentation on Autistic Spectrum Communication. Staff benefited from the discussions on professional practice and the demonstration of assistive technologies including the Sign Video system. The Learning Support Manager participated on a EU funded study trip to Santander in Spain to conduct an evaluation of the AMPROS project. The outcomes of this evaluation were presented at the SLDD Conference.

SERC became the first college in Northern Ireland to implement the Sign Video system for providing sign language interpretation to students in the classroom.

The scope of support delivered through the Learning Support Team encompassed, but was not limited, to the following;

- Classroom assistance;
- 1:1 additional learning support;
- Additional learning support sessions;
- Equipment loans;
- Specialist furniture;
- Examination access arrangements; and
- Assistive Technologies.

The learning support unit operates in all of the College campuses with a team based in each of the main sites, Each of the offices is located in an easy to access part of the buildings and is equipped with interview room/s and a small stock of equipment.

The learning support Unit currently is charged with the purchase and loaning out of the following assistive equipment and technology from the additional support funds;

- Laptop computers;
- Live scribe Smart Pen;
- Audio note takers;
- Orthopaedic Chairs;
- Height adjustable desks;
- Visual impairment & Dyslexia assistance software;
- Assistive peripherals, i.e. ergonomic mice, keyboards, RSI gel pads, audio dictionaries and large type keyboards.

The Learning Support team site was redesigned to provide a better user interface and easier access to information. The site was structured to have three main areas that provide easy access to Staff Moodle providing information on a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities; Student Moodle with information on study skills and on the effects of a range of conditions; and Staff Resources including policies, assisted technologies guides, strategies for supporting students and advisory documents.

Three members of staff participated on the BRITE online course on Facilitating Individual Learning as part of their continuous professional development which was

intended to provide them with the skills to develop and supervise support packages for students and trainees to the recognised national standard.

The Learning Support Unit also maintain contact with a range of external stakeholders and gather information and resources to promote best practice with both teaching and support teams. Contact was maintained with the following organisations:

- Middletown Centre for Autism;
- Dyslexia Centre;
- Cedar Foundation;
- Disability Action;
- Action on Hearing Loss;
- Autism NI Well2 project;
- Local Health and Social Care Trusts;
- Education and Library Board Transitions team;
- Social Services with respect to potential and currently supported SLDD students;
- School Special Educational Needs Coordinators;
- BAAT;
- Social Service Gateway Teams;
- Equality Commission; and
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young people.

## [6 The barriers to co-ordination across departments – regionally and locally – and make recommendations for improvement.](#)

The roles of DE, DEL and DHPSS should be clearly stated and understood. For example, a key issue is the differing roles of the health services in relation to day care and further education. Colleges are funded to provide education and training and associated support for students with a diagnosed learning difficulty, disability or medical condition. The local health trust's role in relation to day care and associated transport should not be confused with that of FE. FE and DEL should not be responsible for day care nor home to college transport costs.

## [7 SERC's range of provision it provides across all FE provision, vocational provision and employment support.](#)

Figure 1 shows SERC's discrete provision funded by recurrent FE funding and the DEL Additional Support Fund (Discrete).

**FE PROVISION OFFER TO YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITIES IN 2013/14**

<b>SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE</b>						
<b>Campus</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Accredited</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Full-time or Part-time</b>	<b>Hrs per week</b>	<b>No of Weeks</b>
Downpatrick	C&G Employability And Personal Development (includes catering units)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	15	35
Downpatrick	C&G Employability And Personal Development (includes catering units)	Yes	Level 2	F/T	15	35
Downpatrick	C&G Employability And Personal Development (includes catering units)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	16	35
Downpatrick	C&G Employability And Personal Development (includes catering units)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	16	35
Lisburn	C&G Employability And Personal Development (includes catering units)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	15.25	35
Lisburn	C&G Employability And Personal Development (includes catering units)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	15.25	35
Lisburn	C&G Career Planning and making Applications	Yes	Entry Level	P/T	9	35
Newtownards	C&G Personal Development (includes catering and retail)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	16	35
Newtownards	C&G Personal Development (includes catering and retail)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	16	35
Newtownards	C&G Personal Development (includes catering and retail)	Yes	Entry Level	F/T	16	35
Newtownards	C&G Personal Development (includes catering and retail)	Yes	Level 1	P/T	1.5	35
Bangor	C&G Entry Level 2 Healthy Living	Yes	Entry Level	P/T	1	34
Bangor	C&G Entry Level 3 Candidate Project	Yes	Entry Level	P/T	1	34
Bangor	C&G Entry Level 2 Healthy Living	Yes	Entry Level	P/T	2	34
Downpatrick	C&G Introduction to ICT + Presenting Accurate Documents	Yes	Entry Level	P/T	3	30
Downpatrick	C&G Employability ( Retail + Teamwork)	Yes	Entry Level	P/T	5	35
Lisburn	Entry Level 2 Introduction to Health	Yes	Entry	P/T	10	34

	and Safety at Work		Level			
Lisburn	Level 1 Presentation software	Yes	Level 1	P/T	4	32

Figure 1 SERC's discrete provision funded by recurrent FE funding and the DEL Additional Support Fund.

## 8 Assess the quality of current provision by looking at evaluations carried out.

The ICQR indicated above is the most recent evaluation of the quality of SERC's SEN provision.

## 9 Assess whether DEL is living up to its commitments under the Bamford Report.

The College values the earmarked funding it receives from DEL. This funding makes a difference to the quality and extent of provision available to students. This should continue to be earmarked.

There is one area in relation to TfS where the support available to young people could be improved. Under the 'Old Contract' the funding for students with a disability consisted of a weekly training fee of £110. Under the new TfS contract the weekly training fee for students with a disability is £90 with an additional £3 per week to go towards a person who on their Personal Training Plan specifies that they require additional learning support. Under point 23 of the Mental Health Action within the Bamford Report it states "continue to provide specialist support, as appropriate, for young people considering participating in Training for Success". As such the new funding allocation should be reviewed.

## 10 Approaches are working and what the barriers are.

SERC, along with the other colleges has very good quality provision as indicated above that helps to meet the needs of our students and their families. However one of the key barriers consist of the reliance on transport for SLDD students to get to the College. Cost, information on bus routes and feelings of isolation can make getting to college quite challenging. There is no easy solution to their but any additional funding should not be taken from the education budget.

## 11 Examine the provision by FE colleges for those that are below level 2 and who have safety, supervision and holistic care needs and the options available to such individuals from Health and Social Care Trusts or new District Councils.

There is a role for day care provided by the Trusts and post compulsory education funded by DEL. As figure 1 above shows SERC does offer provision at level 2 and below. This is education provision. Day care provision suggests there is a recreational and therapeutic purpose. This should not be confused with education and skills provision which is focused on employability and skills as delivered by colleges.

## 12 Assess whether the definition of further education for this student population needs to be broadened: for example: to include physical activity, social and communication skills.

This should be part of the review of FE that DEL is carrying out. A broader role may mitigate against the sector's primary objective to support economic development. Employability skills is a key element of SERC's offer through the Get the Edge initiative and goes alongside SERC's course provision. It is not clear what the case is for broadening FE's role and how this site with supporting economic development.