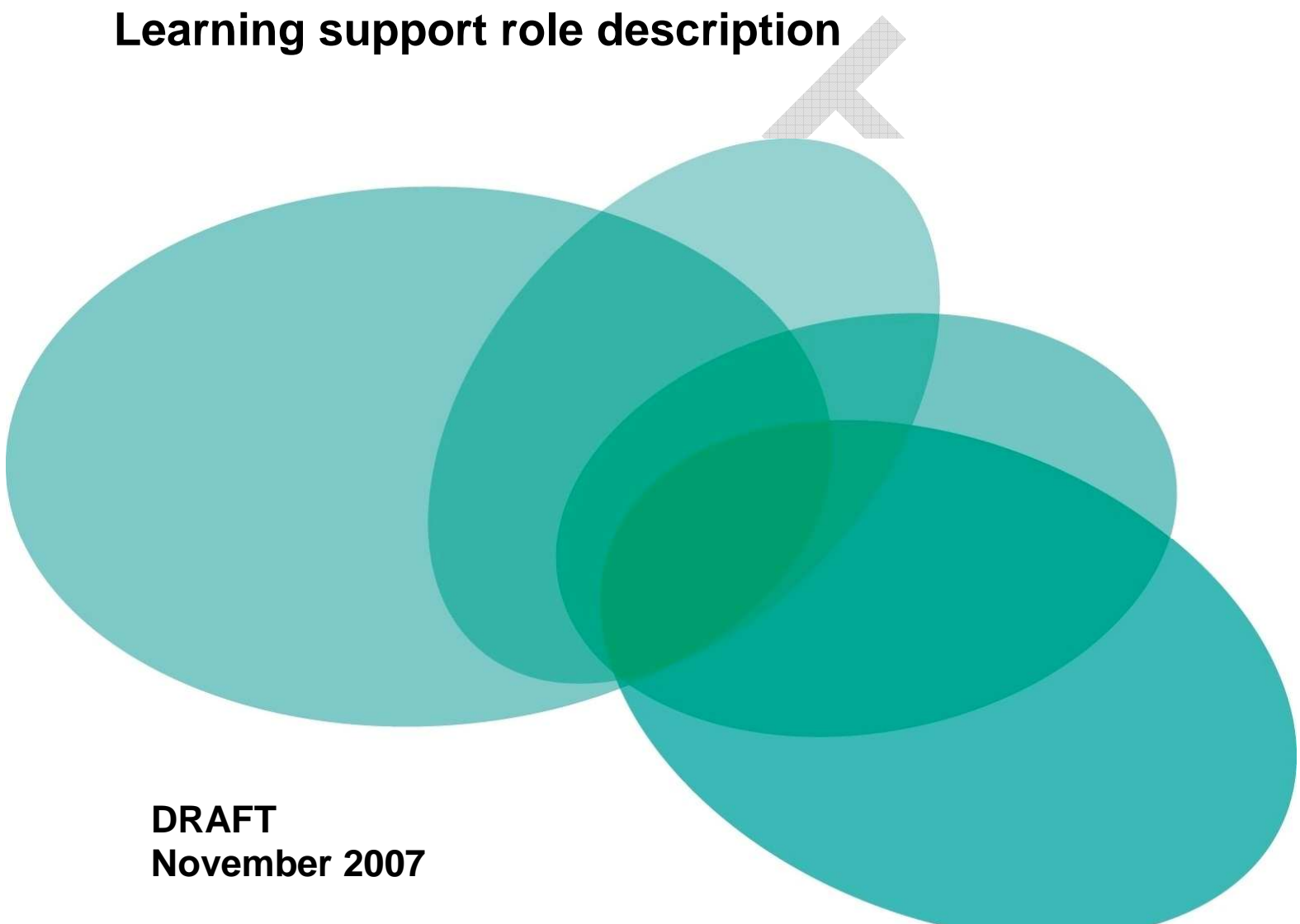




Skills for Learning Professionals

National Occupational Standards for learning support practitioners

Learning support role description



DRAFT
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The role of the learning support practitioner

Purpose

Research has shown that employers wish to define the learning support role more clearly and to identify how the role can vary from one context to another. Practitioners also wish for clarity and opportunities to progress in their roles. The aim of this document is to produce a clear description of the role.

This document will also inform more detailed descriptions of the role, which will determine the requirements for learning support practitioners who work in specialist roles.

Employers may find these statements useful in defining job roles. Individuals may refer to the document in order to clarify with their employer the nature of their job role.

The role descriptions form the basis of a qualification framework for learning support in the lifelong learning sector.

Background

This work builds on work carried out by FENTO in 2004 and on a wide range of work carried out across the lifelong learning sector in the UK. Further research has been carried out for LLUK building on a number of recent reports on learning support. There have been two phases of consultation with practitioners, managers and stakeholders across the UK.

Role description

The statements on pages 4 to 10 are **overarching** therefore not all will apply to all roles. For example, a learning support practitioner who is working in a generic way with learners, with a high level of direction, might not be expected to take responsibility for “specialist support”.

The statements are **content free** and do not relate to specific constituencies, contexts or job roles. However, they should be relevant and applicable to all these.

The statements refer only to the **learning support role** in an individual’s sphere of activity. If, for example, an individual is also required to carry out care roles, these should be defined by the standards for Care.

- The **role** statements refer to the overall function of the learning support practitioner.
- The **responsibilities** statements refer to what the learning support practitioner might be accountable for, that is, their particular sphere of responsibility. The statements are not seen as exhaustive, but indicative.
- The **tasks** provide examples of the practice that might be expected of the learning support practitioner.

Roles

The role of the learning support practitioner is to:

- provide learning support for individuals and/or groups
- work with others to provide learning support
- promote learner independence and self-determination
- promote inclusion and participation
- improve own practice and that of the organisation
- provide specialist learning support.

Role: provide learning support for individuals and/or groups

(under the direction and/or supervision of those leading the learning)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Plan learning support that meets the needs and learning preferences of learners
- Support learner achievement as defined by overall curriculum objectives and the objectives identified for each learner
- Use a range of learning support strategies, together with own knowledge of each learner's needs and preferences, to select and adapt tasks, resources and learning activities so as to engage and motivate learners
- Communicate effectively with learners in order to enable them to understand and participate in learning activities
- Use appropriate support strategies for working with groups and/or with a single learner to maximise learning opportunities
- Contribute to the creation and maintenance of a purposeful learning environment, whether in a formal, work-based, or informal setting, or through use of distance and e-learning media
- Support the development of learners' language literacy and numeracy skills
- Support learners to make best use of provision by encouraging them to meet course and/or organisational requirements in terms of, for example, punctuality, attendance, behaviour
- Support learners in managing change and transition, for example at the start and end of a programme of learning
- Support learners in selecting how assessment may be carried out

Examples of tasks:

- Assist in identifying the skills needs of learners, including language literacy and numeracy
- Assist in identifying the learning preferences of learners
- Adapt learning resources to meet the needs of learners
- Explain tasks and ideas clearly to a learner
- Scribe, read, translate or interpret learning materials
- Use question and answer to check and develop learning
- Provide encouragement, constructive feedback and appropriate praise for learners
- Complete records of work undertaken with learners

Role: work with others to provide learning support

(under the direction and/or supervision of those leading the learning)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Know and liaise with relevant professional colleagues, for example, teachers, tutors, lecturers, care managers, curriculum coordinator
- Know and use appropriate lines of communication to colleagues
- Work as an effective member of the team
- Communicate information to colleagues about own practice where appropriate, for example, to support funding claims
- Support learner progression by contributing to assessment of learner needs
- Support learner progression by giving feedback to colleagues about the needs, preferences, progress and achievement of learners
- Contribute to the planning, preparation, delivery, assessment and evaluation of the learning process
- Contribute to tutorial and pastoral processes
- Contribute to advice and guidance for learners at entry to a programme of learning and at other times of transition
- Contribute to effective liaison between colleagues and outside agencies including carers/guardians/parents

Examples of tasks:

- Keep accurate record of own practice
- Take part in planning and review meetings
- Contribute to learner reviews
- Assist in preparing and adapting resources

Role: promote learner independence and self-determination

(under the direction and/or supervision of those leading the learning)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Negotiate with learner to agree learning objectives and approaches to learning support
- Support learners to develop a range of strategies for effective learning, and for organising and managing their own learning
- Encourage and support learners to develop transferable skills
- Encourage learners' self-advocacy regarding the nature of their learning support
- Support learner achievement through activities that have clear targets
- Contribute to learners' self-esteem and confidence by giving frequent and valid feedback on achievement
- Maintain a professional relationship with learners
- Follow ethical codes of practice and organisational and legal requirements that support the independence and the rights of learners
- Make use of new and emerging technologies and assistive technology to ensure and enhance learner access to learning opportunities
- Maintain confidentiality, observing requirements of Data Protection Act
- Disclose information when appropriate in relation to learners' needs and legal requirements
- Contribute to maintenance of a safe environment

Examples of tasks:

- Carry out "orientation" activities with learners at induction
- Provide encouragement, constructive feedback and appropriate praise to promote learners' engagement
- Assist learners in gaining access to resources that maximise their independence
- Assist learners to carry out evaluation activities

Role: promote inclusion and participation

(under the direction and/or supervision of those leading the learning)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Demonstrate support for the values and principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Know the learning needs and preferences of individual learners
- Understand and help to identify the barriers that learners experience in relation to inclusion and participation
- Work with colleagues to address specific barriers experienced by learners
- Use new and emerging technologies and assistive technology to facilitate independence and motivation of learners
- Enable learners to work constructively and effectively with others
- Work with colleagues to ensure that objectives, tasks, resources and assessment methods are inclusive
- Provide support that enables learner to engage in assessment processes and activities
- Contribute to providing and maintaining a learning environment where learners feel safe, secure and valued
- Recognise when a learner may be vulnerable or at risk and alert relevant member of staff
- Adhere to legal requirements and codes of practice that seek to ensure promotion and protection of the rights and needs of individuals
- Encourage learners to assert their rights and needs in an appropriate and effective manner
- where appropriate, advocate and/or refer on learner's behalf to support learner to access inclusive provision
- Know own responsibilities with regard to Disability Discrimination legislation

Examples of tasks:

- Manage a discussion so that all learners can contribute
- Check that learning resources are suitable for each learner's needs
- Take part in risk assessments

Role: improve own practice and that of the organisation

(under the direction and/or supervision of those leading the learning)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Demonstrate an active commitment to continuing professional development
- Ensure that own personal skills effectively support competence in role
- Evaluate own practice
- Respond positively to feedback on own performance and that of colleagues and the organisation
- Participate in and contribute to the professional development of others in the organisation
- Know own responsibilities in relation to quality review processes
- Contribute to the continual monitoring and improvement of quality, in own practice, among colleagues, and in the organisation
- Keep up-to-date with innovations and new approaches to learning support
- Share good practice with colleagues and/or through practitioner networks
- Know what colleagues and the organisation require in relation to reviewing the quality of learning and teaching
- Actively support colleagues and the organisation in improving the quality of learning and teaching

Examples of tasks:

- Take part in review and planning meetings
- Support learners in evaluation activities

Role: provide specialist learning support

(under the direction and/or supervision of those leading the learning)

Responsibilities include the following:

- Use specialist knowledge to contribute to identifying learner needs
- Use specialist knowledge and skills to support learners
- Communicate information about learners in relation to specialist area of expertise
- Use specialist knowledge and skills to contribute to curriculum development
- Use specialist knowledge and skills to contribute to design and implementation of learning activities, resources and assessment methods
- Undertake professional development to develop and maintain specialist knowledge and skills
- Support the professional development of others in relation to specialist support area

Examples of tasks:

- Provide support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs of learners
- Use communication methods particular to needs of learner (for example, Makaton, BSL)
- Provide supervision for a practical activity in specialist area
- Advise colleagues on adaptation of resources for learners with particular disabilities, for example, dyslexia