



An aspect report on provision in Scotland's colleges by  
HM Inspectors on behalf of the  
Scottish Funding Council

Learners with profound  
and complex needs in  
Scotland's colleges  
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Promoting further and higher education

**HMIe**  
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## Introduction

The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council's (SFC) Corporate Plan (2009-12) makes clear its commitment to learners with profound and complex needs. Under *Outcome 2 Access, Inclusion and Progression* it states: 'we will work with the Scottish Government, colleges and other stakeholders to ensure that appropriate programmes of study are provided to students with severe and complex needs.'

Colleges, universities, NHS Boards and local authorities (education and social work departments) all have responsibilities in making provision for and supporting individuals with profound and complex needs. Circular FE 13/95<sup>1</sup> published by the then Scottish Office outlined the legislative responsibilities and provided guidance on the responsibilities of colleges, NHS Boards and local authorities in relation to supporting learners.

A significant volume of subsequent legislation has impacted on the provision for learners with profound and complex needs:

- *Further and Higher Education Act (1992 and 2005);*
- *Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001;*
- *Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009;*
- *Disability Discrimination Act Part IV 2005; and*
- *Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) 2007.*

In addition to the legislation, a number of HMIE publications have provided guidance and information relevant to the educational experience of learners:

- *Moving On from School to College - ASN (2002);*
- *Partnership Matters (2005);*
- *Evaluating Inclusiveness – A Guide for Scotland's Colleges (2006); and*
- *Improving Scottish Education 2 - (2009).*

Other relevant reports include:

- *Beattie Report: Realising Potential (1999);*
- *BRITE Survey of Provision in Scotland's College for Learners with Profound and Complex Needs (2008)<sup>2</sup>; and*
- *Partnership Matters updated version (2007 & 2009).*

People and their skills are Scotland's most valuable resource. This principle extends across all individuals, including those with profound and complex needs.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/272118/0081086.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> BRITE (Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology and Education)

Almost all of Scotland's colleges provide programmes for, or are open to, learners with profound and complex needs. This is part of their core mission to provide appropriate programmes for learners from the communities which they serve.

Smaller colleges will only have a few such learners each year whilst larger colleges may have over 200 learners, with varying levels of complex needs attending their programmes. Two colleges, Elmwood College and Motherwell College, provide residential provision for learners with profound and complex needs.

The definition of profound and complex needs used in this report is the same as that used in the *BRITE Survey of Provision in Scotland's College for Learners with Profound and Complex Needs (2008)*.

The *Analysis of HMIE reviews of Quality and Standards in Scotland's Colleges Academic Years 2004/04 to 2007/08* identifies learners with profound and complex needs as part of the dominant programme group (DPG) 18, also known as Special programmes. Under HMIE's previous review model, DPG 18 programmes received a greater proportion of *very good* and *good* evaluation grades for *learning and teaching process* and *learner progress and outcomes* than any other subject areas offered in Scotland's colleges. However, this area includes a wide range of programmes, including those for *More Choices, More Chances* learners, and learners with mild and moderate learning needs, as well as those with profound and complex needs.

Learners with profound and complex needs are not a homogenous group. Some may have slightly higher-level cognitive abilities. However, many learners may also experience significant barriers, especially if they have a communication disorder, a profound sensory impairment, and complex health/physical disabilities, or if they function within the autistic spectrum and have associated behavioural issues.

A profound learning difficulty covers:

- profound sensory loss, physical disability and/or disruptive behaviour;
- significant health care needs;
- use of alternative or augmentative method of communication;
- a need to use adaptive technology/specialised software;
- a need for a high level of specialised multi-agency support;
- a need for significant adaption to the curriculum, requiring regular contact with outside agencies;
- a need for modification to the physical environment; and
- a need for high level of specialised resources.

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The most commonly noted forms of accreditation were:

- SQA Access 1 accreditation;
- college accreditation equivalent to the above level or below; and
- other accredited programmes at SQA level 1 or below including ASDAN<sup>3</sup> Foundation Learning Tier.

### **1.1 Aims**

This report identifies the key features of appropriate and effective practice within Scotland's colleges for learners with profound and complex needs. It also makes a number of recommendations for improvement.

The report addresses these aims through:

- evaluating the quality of provision through observations of learning and teaching;
- identifying good practice and providing appropriate illustrations;
- providing part of the basis for advice to colleges on provision for this group of learners; and
- providing a toolkit for colleges to use when evaluating their existing practices.

### **Methodology**

HM Inspectors visited nine colleges with expertise of working with learners with profound and complex needs. These colleges completed a questionnaire sent to them in advance which sought information about current practice in:

- rationale of the curriculum;
- curriculum content;
- entry criteria used for learners onto programmes;
- learner progress; and
- needs assessment process and aims and goals for learners

After analysing these responses, HM Inspectors visited the nine colleges and met with groups of learners with profound and complex needs, senior and middle managers with responsibility for these programmes, and staff who taught and supported learners with profound and complex needs. During these visits, inspectors observed 30 learning and teaching activities at the various colleges, including a number of sessions held at outreach and community venues. Account was also taken of the issues raised in the 2008 survey report

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<sup>3</sup> Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

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produced by the BRITE initiative. Further insights were obtained through the analysis of HMIE reviews of Scotland's colleges 2004-2008, information gained by inspectors through field research tasks and from wider discussions and reviews of national documentation and policies.

## 2 | Summary of findings

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- The quality of programmes sampled for learners with profound and complex needs was generally of a high standard. All colleges had an inclusive ethos and a strong commitment to improving learners lives and their lifelong prospects.
- Few of the programmes sampled were being delivered exclusively to learners with profound and complex needs. Most of the learners observed were capable of attaining beyond Access level 1 and had some potential to move into employment. In smaller colleges, learners with greater needs were often taught alongside more capable learners in the same group.
- A wide range of school-link programmes were offered to learners at local schools. Practice was effective where these allowed learners to benefit from one or two years of transition prior to transferring to a more substantive college-based programme. For learners, this extended transition opportunity over at least one year allowed them to settle into the college and enabled them to become more familiar with their surroundings and their new teachers. Colleges were able to make assessments of the strengths and support needs of individual learners.
- Few colleges had developed effective communication arrangements with parents or carers through parents' evenings and other fora.
- Few colleges had entry criteria which made clear to all, the skills required of learners. All colleges had an individual learning plan (ILP) or a personal learning support plan (PLSP) which identified what learners could do and what their targets were for the coming year. Few colleges subsequently developed this over a period of time to ensure that it was informed by learner practice during the first few weeks of their programme. Targets were often set over an academic year and did not relate to learners' short-term needs and aims. In many cases, the nature of the targets set made it difficult to measure progress against them.
- Where teaching staff worked primarily with learners with additional support needs, they were more confident in their approaches and had a more detailed understanding of the needs of individual learners. In some lessons delivered by servicing<sup>4</sup> or part-time staff, the teaching approach was pitched at too high a level and did not engage all of the learners. Few colleges had robust arrangements to inform managers about the quality of learning and teaching in programmes for learners with profound and complex needs.

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<sup>4</sup> A teacher who is not part of a departmental teaching team but teaches specialist subjects from another department.

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- Most colleges had concerns over the support arrangements provided by external agencies including transport, personal care and individual learner support needs. These concerns related to the quality and consistency of the support staff provided, the number of agencies they have to liaise with, particularly where the college was dealing with more than one local authority, the continuity of staffing and the availability of these staff for college-devised training activities relevant to their role.
  - There were some highly committed and skilled teaching staff delivering programmes to learners. However, in a number of colleges this was often due to the enthusiasm and expertise of one or two individuals. When such staff leave their expertise is often very difficult to replace. Most colleges had insufficient staff capacity and expertise to ensure consistency of programme delivery.
  - Almost all colleges had developed appropriate accommodation which supported high quality learning experiences. For most learners, adjustments have been made to college estates and additional equipment has been acquired which overall meets the needs of learners.
  - Some colleges were not clear how their programmes should be structured to develop learners' educational needs as opposed to their social needs.
  - Learners did not have sufficient supported employment opportunities. As a consequence, many learners were dependent upon the services provided for them and were restricted in the opportunities available for them to make a meaningful contribution to their local community.

A common philosophy in each college underpinned all programmes. College staff designed programmes to develop the skills of each individual to enable them to become confident individuals and successful learners, and to participate in and contribute to society. The programmes were not just about attaining a qualification. For many learners this would not always be appropriate or achievable. Staff acknowledged the need to have a transparent process of identifying the skills which learners already have when they arrive at college. Clear targets and appropriate monitoring are required to determine how far they have progressed.

For many colleges, the preferred mode of delivery for this learner group was through outreach. This addressed effectively and efficiently issues of transport, support staff availability and health and personal care needs. Some colleges delivered programmes for learners either solely at their main campus or also in community venues. This was often dependent upon the existing college estate being suitable and whether adjustments were required to meet the needs of these learners. All programmes were designed to focus on a range of specific aims, this included them:

- being centred around individual learner needs;
- being structured to develop individuals' communication skills, self-confidence and the capacities as identified in *Curriculum for Excellence*;
- enabling learners to take steps towards developing independence;
- enabling learners to integrate more effectively into society;
- allowing individuals to have a more inclusive lifestyle; and
- achieving individually agreed accreditation.

Generally, colleges offered learners an appropriate range of curriculum subjects. For many learners, the subject being studied (for example, art or sport) was partly a vehicle of choice through which other skills could be developed. Through their lessons and with skilful support from teaching staff, learners developed and improved their communication skills, self-confidence, skills for learning, life and work to enable them to become more confident individuals. The topics covered as part of the curriculum offered included:

- art;
- drama;
- cooking;
- project work (flexible topics to meet learner interest); and
- sport.

The best practice in curriculum design was where the content and accreditation offered was developed from analysing the needs of each individual learner. Where several learners in a group had similar cognitive abilities, college staff constructed a common programme which met their interests and needs well. All college staff were committed to ensuring that their learners had a rewarding

and fulfilling experience. Staff recognised that for many of these learners this would probably be an important opportunity to participate in a significant educational programme.

One of the more challenging aspects of curriculum design was the distinction between the educational benefits of the programmes being offered and the social benefits which many learners would gain from improved skills and confidence. The primary role of colleges was to provide educational programmes which meet the needs of individuals and allows them to make good progress. Other providers, such as day care centres, have a different role and often they are seen by parents/carers and other stakeholders as a suitable alternative to a college-devised programme for these learners. Some colleges were not clear how their programmes should be structured to develop learners' educational needs as well as their social needs.

Accreditation was offered to learners across all colleges. Several awarding bodies were used, including Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and ASDAN. College certification was also offered where it was more appropriate and would meet the needs of the learners better. However, in some colleges, accreditation was offered to all learners irrespective of their own skills and abilities. In smaller colleges where there were greater variations in the ability levels of the individual learners within the same class group, the accreditation routes provided did not always match the ability levels of all the learners in the group. Some learners either repeated work which did not develop their existing skills or were insufficiently challenged by the demands of the programmes which they were following.

SQA certification was used by most colleges. Several units such as *Handling Money*<sup>5</sup> and *Basic Communication in a Familiar Setting*<sup>6</sup> were recognised by staff as being purposeful and well-constructed. However, some colleges found that they had a limited range of units to offer as a number of their learners had already completed them at school. Most colleges also used ASDAN qualifications for these learners. Staff liked the more creative approach of the ASDAN qualifications through the use of portfolios of evidence which involved learner input and which learners valued. Staff also felt that the ASDAN framework allowed them to plan imaginative and ambitious activities for their learners.

Most colleges timetabled their provision over three or four days. Where a learner chose to stay on at school through S5 and S6 and not to attend a college-devised programme, then they were timetabled over a full week. This change from full-time provision to part-time represented a difficult choice for parents/carers of these learners. Their support needs are considerable and suitable high quality educational provision and support arrangements need to be put in place for the remainder of the working week if they chose to attend college.

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<sup>5</sup> Handling Money (Access level 1) unit no. D9ET 07

<sup>6</sup> Basic Communication in a Familiar Setting (Access level 1) unit no. D9EW 07

Most colleges had effective transition arrangements with their local schools for learners with additional needs, including some with more profound needs. Some colleges worked with only a few schools while others worked with up to 40 schools both within and outside their local authority area. Many learners benefited from school link programmes where they experienced a taster programme in a college environment. Learners were accompanied by a member of the school team to ensure that they received appropriate support throughout the day. Most colleges commenced these programmes at either S3 or S4. Some colleges also offered trial programmes but these were not readily available to part-time adult learners who were not transferring from a school environment. The information provided on individual learner needs was generally more accurate and helpful when the learner was progressing from a special school rather than from a mainstream school. These taster programmes identified whether a learner was suitable for a particular programme at their local college. Almost all of these learners attended taster provision at the main college campus.

Learners experience a number of changes during the transition from schools to college. The support provided by speech and language therapists and occupational therapists was no longer provided as part of their educational provision once the learner commenced a programme in a college. College staff felt that their learners would benefit from the expertise provided by these specialist services. New transition worker posts funded by the local authority were starting to improve the transition process for learners. Often, colleges held information events where parents and stakeholders discussed learner suitability for designated programmes. In some colleges, parents and carers failed to fully disclose information about the young person in case it prevented them from being offered a place on the college programme. This caused difficulties for the college when the learner began their programme. Where a college was dealing with several local authorities the transition process represented a significant challenge. Often, college staff had to communicate and negotiate with a wide range of parties as all authorities had their own educational psychologists and learning disabilities teams. Some colleges benefited from the services provided by their local authority *in-college support services*. This worked well for the local schools. However, where learners were transferring out of the local authority area, there were a number of issues for colleges relating to transport arrangements, communication with key stakeholders and receiving full information on the learner's needs and prior attainment levels. A key issue for all colleges was the package of support which an individual with profound and complex needs required, and the funding for that package. A number of colleges stated that they had experienced difficulties in receiving confirmation that the funding packages were approved in time for the school leaver starting their college programme.

Entry criteria for learners onto programmes for learners with profound and complex needs is a key issue. Some colleges identified specific learner-focused skills which they used well to determine learner suitability.

Group sizes were limited by some colleges with significant numbers of disruptive or high-dependency learners. A few colleges did not exclude any potential learners from their programmes and had an open-door approach to recruitment. Some colleges reported a growth in applications from learners with emotional and behavioural needs (EBN). These learners were seen by college staff to be challenging to engage with and required significant resourcing to benefit from an appropriate college experience.

**Entry criteria****Stevenson College, Edinburgh**

Through the experiences gained from running a number of programmes over the last few years, the college has developed transparent entry criteria for their suite of programmes. For some programmes, in relation to potential learners, the prospectus states: 'that they should be capable of staying in a room, sitting at a table, have a focus and participate in learning activities, have an awareness of others in the group, be capable of enjoying their class and only cause minimal disruption through their behaviour'. For other programmes the criteria include: 'should be working at Access levels 1 or 2, can follow instructions, contribute to a group, have the potential to be safe without adult supervision and be willing to learn at a busy college'. Through the publicising and sharing of these stated criteria, it is clear to all concerned which particular programmes are best suited to the individual needs of prospective learners.

**Working with local schools****Motherwell College**

The college has an extensive school-links programme and transition arrangements with almost 40 schools. College staff attend transition meetings where learner needs are communicated and learner progress is discussed. Essential information is shared and a simple, meaningful framework has been developed with a minimum of bureaucracy. Both parties agree an appropriate programme and schools indicate significant behavioural and medical needs and suggested strategies. The college reports learner progress to schools in terms of strengths, progress being made and any additional developmental needs. Flexible attendance and gradual taster visits can be arranged if required to suit the needs of the learner.

Colleges required accurate information about each learner to ensure that the programmes which they offered were the most suitable for each individual's needs. Through taster sessions and school link programmes, colleges were able to see at first hand individual learner's skills, abilities and aptitudes. Overall, this worked well with taster sessions being offered and taken up by learners from local schools and day care centres. External agency staff, such as social workers and learner escorts, provided helpful information on learner behaviour patterns. New *transition passports* were being introduced by some local authorities. These passports contained information relating to the learner's behaviour patterns with information such as, '*these are things which cause me anxiety*' and '*this is how I cope.*' However, a few advocates<sup>7</sup> for learners presented a disproportionately positive view of the learner to ensure that they secured a place at their local college.

One of the challenges which colleges faced was the lack of clear baseline criteria identifying what each individual learner could do before they started on their college programme. Only by having such information can effective target setting for improvement take place. Where there was a lack of such information, it was difficult to set up meaningful PLSPs to track learner progress effectively. Often learner PLSPs were stored in a paper format rather than electronically, which made sharing information a challenge for staff. The target setting often only contained long-term goals such as, '*attend classes*' or '*achieve the qualification.*' There was a lack of SMART<sup>8</sup> short-term targets which could be achieved over a meaningful timescale for these learners.

Appropriate arrangements for the assessment of needs were in place at all colleges. For learners progressing onto programmes from local schools, college staff used individual pupil records and discussions with their teachers about the learner's aptitude, ability and behaviour. Staff also discussed medical needs and appropriate arrangements were put in place. For example, where a learner required medication to be administered, agreement was reached where the learners' support worker would supervise this procedure. Where a learner had behavioural issues, the support worker had a key role in defusing issues as they occurred. When learners displayed signs of stress or anxiety, the support worker would sensitively take them away from the activity, sometimes to a dedicated quiet room where they could calm down before re-joining the class. However, not all colleges had ready access to such facilities and some learners had to use communal facilities. These arrangements were not satisfactory. Staff were aware of the approaches which worked well for most of their learners. Where learners had specific behavioural needs these were met effectively by all colleges.

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<sup>7</sup> A representative for the learner.

<sup>8</sup> Specific, measurable, realistic and time constrained.

**Lesson planning and target setting****Clydebank College**

Good use of target setting was seen during a drama class at a community venue delivered by teaching staff from Clydebank College. Through effective planning, the teacher had developed clear goals for the group to achieve over the session. These goals related to a range of improvements, including learners' concentration levels, listening skills, improvisation, memory and processing skills. Individualised targets were set for each learner which covered these specific goals. These targets were also shared with staff who were supporting the learners during their lessons. Through this approach, all learners had their own learning targets against which their individual improvements could be clearly measured.

Teaching staff and support workers had very positive and productive relationships with learners. They understood the vulnerabilities of their learners and they took good account of their needs through friendly and supportive approaches.

Most staff used a good range of innovative and creative approaches which engaged learners in their learning activities. They took account of the needs of each learner and through an encouraging and enthusiastic approach ensured that all learners benefited from activities planned throughout the lesson. Learners worked cooperatively with their teachers and they valued their relationships with all staff, including their support workers. In the better lessons, teachers were ambitious for their learners, who valued and enjoyed the challenges set for them. In the weaker lessons, judgements on success often simply rested on what enjoyment the learner got from the lesson.

Support workers assisted their learners in making good progress. In most lessons, they worked cooperatively with the class teacher and provided skilful and sensitive support to their learner. They helped the learner to engage with the lesson and encouraged them to take part in the range of classroom activities. Without this support many of the learners would remain passive and would not engage with their programmes.

Teaching staff who were allocated a significant proportion of their timetable to programmes for learners with profound and complex needs planned their learning activities well. They felt that they were part of a team and they benefited from formal and informal networking opportunities with fellow teachers on the same programmes. They were well informed about the behaviour of their learners, many of whom had significant behavioural and emotional needs. Servicing teachers who taught the learners for only one session each week did not have the same opportunities to contribute to the team and to benefit from regular contact with their teaching colleagues.

Where staff had a significant teaching commitment they also developed subject expertise and effective links with a number of external organisations. Through these links, a range of additional extra-curricular activities were often devised by staff for their learners which enabled them to make improvements in their communication skills and levels of self-confidence.

Teaching staff had a range of levels of awareness on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) with learners. A few staff demonstrated high levels of confidence in the use of interactive whiteboards, data projectors and other technologies, and these activities engaged learners successfully in their lessons. However, more than a few teachers were not fully aware of the range

of software and technologies available. Staff made insufficient use of teaching aids such as talking mats and *Boardmaker* symbols<sup>9</sup> to engage with learners.

Most colleges used informal feedback from learners and completion of questionnaires to determine the quality of the learning experience. Generally, colleges had insufficiently comprehensive arrangements to inform evaluations about the quality of learning and teaching.

### **Music and movement class**

### **Stevenson College, Edinburgh**

Learners with profound and complex needs, accompanied by their support workers, took part in an exciting and motivating music and movement class in a purpose-built dance studio. Contemporary background music was played for learners to move around the room holding and waving elongated scarves as part of the movement process. Support workers helped learners, including a wheelchair user who had communication and learning difficulties, to take part in the session by accompanying them around the room. The teacher led the class skilfully through effective demonstrations of leg, arm and body movements in time to the music. Learners copied these moves and took it in turns to perform other individual movements. Towards the end of the class, a group of second year HND musicians entered the studio and played a number of Spanish themed tunes. Each musician then demonstrated and shared their musical instruments with individual learners. The learners found the session to be both rewarding and stimulating as it allowed them to fully explore their own movement skills in a supportive, creative and skilfully structured way.

### **Home care skills development**

### **South Lanarkshire College**

As part of the recent new build at the college, an independent living skills flat had been incorporated into the teaching space used by learners with profound and complex needs. A class group contained several learners with autism spectrum disorders who had specific issues in relating to others. Learners were paired up together and asked to identify hazards which had been planned for them to identify within the flat. They were asked to identify the appropriate equipment and cleaning materials they would use in order to return the flat to a high standard of safety and cleanliness. Through this approach, learners developed the skills and knowledge required to enable them to take the first steps towards being responsible adults and being capable of living on their own. They also incorporated and further developed the interpersonal skills required when sharing a task with a fellow learner.

<sup>9</sup> Communication tools which support learners with communication difficulties to express their opinions.

**Daily guidance sessions****Elmwood College**

Teaching staff held daily guidance sessions where learners spent the first 30 minutes of each day discussing their programme. Learners placed velcro stickers onto an hourly planner which represented the activities they would be doing that day. Teachers discussed with learners the roles and tasks in which they would take part. Learners completed records of the work they concluded successfully the previous day. Home-college diaries were used by both parties to inform parents/carers of the progress being made and for parents to inform the tutor of any domestic issues which may impact on the learner's learning experience. Speech therapists also used these guidance sessions to explain to the learners how best to communicate with two hearing-impaired learners in their group. Activities also included other topics such as alphabet recognition strategies, healthy living and sexual health.

**Cooking class****Edinburgh's Telford College**

Teaching staff used technology effectively in a cookery class at Edinburgh's Telford College. Learners were shown an image through a data projector of the chocolate cake they would be cooking. They weighed the ingredients required for the cake under the supervision of the teacher using talking scales. Teaching staff ensured learners complied with food handling regulations through regular hand washing. The tutor sensitively staged the activities required to cook the cake ensuring all learners successfully engaged with the activity. As part of the learner's individual development, teaching staff planned for them to repeat the recipe but to receive reduced levels of support from teaching staff next time.

**Learner development through sporting activities****Elmwood College**

Some learners at Elmwood College have shown significant progress in their individual development through sporting activities. One learner, who at school was not allowed to take part in sporting activities due to a visual impairment, was keen to develop his running skills. He was allocated a support worker who had an interest in running. Following risk assessments, he used a protective skull cap and started a running programme in tandem with this teacher. Over time, his running skills developed and improved. He has now won medals in external competitions and his personal confidence and self-respect have been greatly enhanced through this experience. Another learner was not allowed to swim at school due to a medical condition. The college carried out an appropriate risk assessment and she now is a proficient swimmer. She swims extensively, regularly enters swimming competitions and has won several medals. Some learners from Elmwood College took part in sporting competitions at the Special Olympics held earlier this year in Leicester.

Support staff enabled learners with profound and complex needs to participate in their selected educational programme. In many colleges, this support was provided by external agency staff. The support identified related to a variety of needs including, accompanied transport, supervision and administration of medication, toileting, emotional support or other diagnosed support needs. Historically, most of these care needs had been provided by staff from the social services department of the local authority. However, in recent years there have been changes to this practice and a range of agencies now offer support to learners including:

- social services support workers;
- support workers from privately contracted firms (outsourced from social services);
- support workers arranged by the family or carers for the individual through *Direct Payments*<sup>10</sup> or *Independent Living Funds*<sup>11</sup>; or
- support workers provided by college staff on a fully funded model via social services.

For almost all colleges, the use of external agency support workers presented a challenge for them to manage effectively. Appropriate training was offered by a number of colleges to external agency support workers but many were unable to attend due to other contractual arrangements with their existing employers. The management of agency support workers provided some colleges with significant issues. For example, communication with external providers could not always readily occur through a face-to-face meeting and was often conducted by phone or e-mail. Agency support workers with an established relationship with learners could supply the college with helpful information relating to their personal needs, including emotional support and learning preferences. However, such information was not always available, particularly when learners experienced a change of support worker during their programme. Some vulnerable learners also experienced increased levels of anxiety when their personal support worker changed at short notice.

During lessons, most support workers played an active role ensuring that learners took part in the session and made a positive contribution. However, this was not the case with all support workers. Some played a more passive role during classroom activities and were not clear about how they could best ensure that learners participated effectively in lessons. They viewed their own role in a reactive capacity where the learner becomes distracted or disengaged. For some teaching staff, this also presented difficulties in classroom management as they were not the line managers of the support workers. All colleges emphasised the importance of this support to sustain the learning process and not just support for the learners' identified needs.

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<sup>10</sup> Money paid by a local authority to individuals for them to pay for their own support needs.

<sup>11</sup> Part of the DWP which provides financial support for learners with disabilities.

One college had a very positive view about arrangements with social services where the college was block-funded to enable it to provide support for their learners through the services of its own staff. This approach had the advantage of ensuring that all support workers benefited from college-devised training to make sure that they were clear about their roles and their responsibilities.

Colleges emphasised the need for these support workers to be part of the culture and ethos of a team delivering a programme to a number of learners. Where this worked well, all learners and staff benefitted from this experience. In a number of outreach centres, the support provided by agency staff worked well.

#### **Managing agency staff**

#### **Motherwell College**

The college has developed an effective system for managing agency staff who provide support to its learners. Places are offered to learners where funding for personal support needs has been agreed with local agencies. The college has developed comprehensive contractual arrangements with care providers. All agency staff are required to attend an agreed induction programme and receive appropriate training or qualifications for their roles. Support workers adhere strictly to an agreed code of conduct. All support workers have an appropriate job description. There is a secure signing-in and personal identification system which is applied to all agency staff. The college has developed a clear and comprehensive agency support staff handbook. A designated post of Personal Support Coordinator ensures that there is effective supervision of all agency staff and compliance with the agreed support arrangements.

#### **Support worker arrangements**

#### **Elmwood College**

At Elmwood College, the social work department of the local authority block funds the college to recruit and employ staff who provide for the personal support needs of the learners. There is no guarantee of funding as it is dependent upon new learners being recruited to the college each year. However, this has not been a significant issue for these staff or the college. These support workers become associate members of the departmental team and form very effective relations with teaching staff delivering programmes to learners with profound and complex needs. They also benefit from internal college-devised training. The support workers work closely with their allocated learners, to whom they are well matched in terms of personality and interests. These close relations are evident in classroom practice where they provide effective support for their allocated learners as well as the teacher, resulting in high quality learning. Following such involvement, one support worker has now succeeded in obtaining a teaching post at the college.

Most college teachers who teach on programmes for learners with profound and complex needs have attained a teaching qualification. They have either achieved a Professional Development Award (PDA) or Teaching Qualification Further Education (TQFE). However, few staff have developed their skills by working towards a recognised qualification which confirms their expertise to teach learners with profound and complex needs. In smaller colleges, programmes for learners with profound and complex needs are often delivered by two or three enthusiastic and committed teachers. When one of them leaves the college, their expertise is often very difficult to replace and some programmes have been known to close when this occurs.

Accredited training offered by the BRITE Initiative seeks to build the capacity and confidence of staff to teach inclusively and to inform staff on the effective use of enabling and assistive technologies. All colleges have nominated at least one member of staff to undertake this SCQF level 9 PDA and most colleges have several staff who have completed this training. Staff often shared local expertise across the college, identified either within the staff team or through external agencies. All staff benefited from this process. In some colleges, staff shared practices with colleagues at local special schools or adjacent colleges. At one college, a teacher spent several days at a specialist residential autism school in England and she found this experience to be very helpful. *Scotland's Colleges* has recently established a subject network group where staff can meet and discuss their approaches to learning and teaching. However, this group was at an early stage of development.

Some teaching staff used ICT effectively with learners. Where it was used confidently it had a significantly empowering effect on the learners. However, some teaching staff often missed opportunities to reinforce learning effectively through the use of ICT.

<p><b>Staff development and learner accreditation</b></p>	<p><b>Oatridge College</b></p>
<p>Learning programmes were offered to learners at Oatridge College using its <i>Suntrap Garden</i> learning centre. One of the teachers had undertaken a diploma in social and therapeutic horticulture as part of his continuous professional development. This training had supported him in the design of a programme of study, using therapeutic techniques, to meet the needs and interests of learners with profound and complex needs. These learners also benefited from the college partnership with the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, which provided unique certificates for the groups to celebrate their success.</p>	

**Assistive technology support****Cardonald College**

The college introduced the post of Lecturer in Assistive Technology to provide appropriate support for staff in the use of assistive aids. All outreach teachers were supplied with a laptop computer and digital camera. Digital voice recorders were being introduced to enable both staff and learners to record activities undertaken on their programmes. Digital projectors were used in a drama class to provide backdrops for theatre productions. Staff found the support and mentoring from the Lecturer in Assistive Technology to be invaluable in their teaching roles. This support has enabled them to use technology much more confidently during lessons.

Almost all colleges had appropriate classrooms on their main campus which were suitable for the needs of learners. Most of the classrooms were bright and well furnished with good ICT facilities for learners to use. Provision for learners in the community was mostly based in older community buildings. These buildings were well equipped to allow them to meet the personal care needs of learners but tended to be less well resourced for learners and for staff in relation to ICT equipment for learning and teaching.

Some colleges have developed personal care rooms which contain adapted showers and appropriate hoists to meet the needs of non-ambulant learners. Where this specialist equipment was not available, staff could not readily offer places to learners. Appropriate staff training was provided to ensure that either college-based or agency support staff have the appropriate moving and handling skills to support the needs of these learners.

Learners with profound and complex needs can display signs of stress or anxiety. On such occasions, it is often best practice initially to aim to deal with this in the classroom, however it may be necessary to remove them to a quiet room where they can calm down before rejoining the class activity. Few colleges provided a suitable quiet room for teachers to use with their learners. Instead, staff often have to use a nearby empty classroom or adjacent corridor.

**Residential accommodation**

**Elmwood College**

The college has three houses, each with three bedrooms, on its campus and other accommodation nearby in Cupar. One of the houses has been adapted for use by wheelchair users. Currently, 18 learners are accommodated. Learners who benefit from this service come from significant distances across Scotland including places as far as Argyll and Bute and the Western Isles. Some local learners use this service because they have other reasons for not living at home. Residential support staff work shifts from 4 pm till 11 pm and from 11 pm till the learners leave in the morning to go to college. The learners plan their own meals, shop for their own food, and wash and clean their house according to a rota. Through this experience, learners develop an appropriate range of independent living skills.

### **Learner representation**

College staff found collecting the views of learners with profound and complex needs a significant challenge due to the nature of their disabilities. All colleges had made some appropriate arrangements to get direct feedback from learners, often using visual and IT-based approaches. Most of these approaches worked well with effective use of talking mats and *Boardmaker* symbols. However, this was not the case across all colleges and some college staff were unaware of the symbol communication systems which learners had used throughout their school experiences. Support staff often played a helpful role in assisting teaching staff to collect the views of learners as they were often well attuned to the learners' communication style and acted as advocates where speech was a problem. Where this was the case, learner views were often effectively collected and represented. Few colleges used assistive technology effectively to collect the views of learners.

### **Liaison with stakeholders**

For learners with profound and complex needs, the active involvement of stakeholders was essential to ensure that any progress made was supported and further reinforced when they were away from the college. Often, learners have very short-term memories and have difficulty retaining and transferring learning. Further practise and consolidation was needed to ensure that any acquired skills and knowledge were fully secured. One college used home-college diaries to receive feedback from the parent or carer about the previous evening's events which may influence the learner's behaviour the next day. The college provided information about the progress and skills acquired by the learner so that these could be further reinforced and developed away from the college. The presentation of individual learning aims at the front of these diaries was a useful reminder to both parties of the targets to measure improvement against. Some colleges found difficulty in getting all parties together to discuss the progress being made by learners. Colleges did not communicate effectively using electronic media. Few colleges had an integrated approach where speech and language staff and occupational therapy staff worked in partnership with the college.

**Support from external agencies****North Highland College**

Over the past ten years, the college has developed effective support arrangements with NHS staff that have enhanced the ability of learners to engage with their learning. The college has a number of learners who attend wheelchair clinics organised through a local hospital. Arrangements have been made where clinical staff come to the college to offer advice and to service the wheelchairs. The college has a number of learners who required weekly or daily physiotherapy to maintain functional mobility, be that walking, weight bearing or transferring ability. The local hospital has arranged for treatment to take place either in the college or at the hospital. This was especially useful where daily physiotherapy was needed, for example, for students with weakened respiratory function. The college has ongoing input from the speech and language therapists which has a positive benefit on learners' educational attainment. The therapists carried out a range of roles with staff and learners such as administering communication tests with individual learners; *Boardmaker* timetables for students with autism; advice on written to-do lists for students with aspergers syndrome; *Makaton* and communication training; and updating of information into learners' *Lightwriter*.

**External links with other colleges****Elmwood College**

Departmental managers met on a regular basis with colleagues from two local colleges with provision for learners with profound and complex needs. Through these regular meetings, they discussed common issues and shared approaches relating to the learning needs and support arrangements of their learners. All three colleges took part in a joint residential experience at an outdoor pursuit centre. Staff used this opportunity to both network and to share practices and approaches. The provision of this shared residential experience was made more affordable due to economies of scale arising from the collaboration of all three colleges.

**Quality assurance arrangements**

All college programmes met the standards of internal college quality procedures. Programmes had received appropriate internal college and external awarding body approval where appropriate. All colleges using SQA accreditation had effective internal moderation arrangements where college staff provided feedback to assessors to inform their assessment decisions and

teaching practice. Significant numbers of learners follow college-devised provision as externally accredited programmes would not be appropriate (self-evaluation occurred at programme and departmental level). However, almost all colleges were over-reliant on learner feedback to inform them about the quality of their learning and teaching processes. Generally, colleges had insufficiently comprehensive arrangements to inform judgements about the quality of learning and teaching.

### **Geographical and transport issues**

The coordination of transport arrangements for learners was a significant issue for colleges. Staff roles have developed and emerged over time in order to cope with the complexity of coordinating transport arrangements. Some local authorities provided additional support through the services of one of their own members of staff. Most learners had the cost of their transport provided by their local authority social services department. A few colleges paid for the cost of transport themselves through college bursary funds.

Where a learner required an escort service to college, this role was often provided by the individual's support worker. Difficulties emerged over transport issues for a variety of reasons. At one college, many learners were regularly late for lessons when it rained as the college stated that a number of taxi drivers would collect additional cash fares before picking up their learner. At another college, taxis were seen as unreliable and learners would occasionally be kept waiting for some time in reception for their taxi to arrive to take them home. Another college reported that its local authority social services department closed on Friday afternoon so there was no one to contact if a taxi had not arrived. Occasionally, learners would attend a weekly course of respite care so changes in transport arrangements had to be made and communicated effectively. Colleges which provided programmes for learners from two or more authorities reported that communication arrangements posed a significant challenge for them. Practice differed across local authorities relating to funded escorted travel. The colleges visited did not have service level agreements in place (as illustrated in *Partnership Matters*) which identified the standards of service which they could expect as part of their contractual arrangements with transport providers.

### **Funding**

Programmes for learners with profound and complex needs were often the most expensive for colleges to deliver. This is acknowledged by the SFC and additional SUMs<sup>12</sup> weighting was provided for these programmes. Classes were generally kept small where learner groups had significant levels of need and associated arrangements for personal care or support. Teachers were more able to ensure that all learners were fully engaged in their lessons. These

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<sup>12</sup> Unit of student activity

small groups could be compensated for by ensuring that other larger groups did not contain learners with significant behavioural or personal support needs. However, this flexibility was not available to all colleges, particularly the smaller ones. Additionally, there was the need for extensive levels of planning and communication with other stakeholders in order to ensure that programme arrangements and the provision of contracted services were of the appropriate standard.

Colleges found it difficult to expand into this area of provision at a time when there were competing demands on their funding allocations. Community-based outreach provision was more cost effective and potentially less disruptive to other college provision, because the accommodation requirements of learners with profound and complex needs can be significant and challenging. Agreed funding of individual learner support needs from the social work department of the local authority was a prerequisite for the learners to benefit from this provision. All colleges had arrangements to ensure that provision of support staff was secured before offering learners a place on the programme.

One college managed to provide a five-day programme for learners and other colleges devised a three-day or four-day programme. For many learners, college provision was very much part-time. There was a range of practice relating to the number of years a learner was eligible to remain on these programmes. This ranged from two to four years depending on the individual college. The criteria used to determine this process were not always clear but learner progression was the main reason cited. However, the judgement process relating to progression for a number of these learners was often not clear. This was because the initial assessment process did not always establish an accurate record of each individual's abilities, including what they know and can do. In a number of colleges, learner progress and improvement was not recorded and monitored effectively. As a consequence, for a significant number of learners it was unclear what their individual improvements were over the length of their learning programme.

### **Assistive technology issues**

There was some good practice in the use of technology. At one college, staff benefitted from on-going support from the *Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)* as they were co-located on the same premises. Teaching staff made good use of the ready access to expertise in technology to support their approaches to teaching. Almost half of Scotland's colleges have enrolled as members of the *BRITE Equipment Loan Bank Scheme*, which entitles them to borrow assistive technology, especially the more expensive and complex/bespoke items. A few learners benefitted from the provision of AAC which enabled them to fully participate in their learning programmes. However, there were only a few examples of more general communication aids such as voice operated communication aids (VOCAs). Teaching staff had differing levels of knowledge and expertise relating to most aspects of assistive

technology. In some cases, the effective use of such devices was dependent on the expertise of the individual support worker. Where these aids were being used, they assisted the removal of communication barriers and enabled learners to provide effective feedback and input onto their programmes.

### **Work placements and supported employment opportunities**

Several colleges used internal work placements which enabled many learners to experience for the first time what it was like to be an employee. Options for work experience included working in the college canteen, stores and grounds. During these placements, learners benefitted from the assistance provided by their allocated support workers. Few colleges had managed to develop external work placements for learners. Additionally, colleges were unable to offer many supported employment opportunities for learners once they had completed their programmes at college. Some went onto, or continued to attend, day care centres but this was not uniformly available as an option for all learners. Some local authorities were rationalising their day care centres whilst others were full and had waiting lists. Colleges tend to see many of these learners returning to their programmes for several years as part-time learners.

#### **Sheltered employment preparation**

#### **North Highland College**

Through support from *Equal*, a European Social Fund initiative, the college has developed its own recycling project which also provides employment opportunities for learners with profound and complex needs. Waste office paper and empty drink cans are collected across the college by the learners, with support from their teachers. The waste is transported to a dedicated recycling building located close to the college. Learners sort the waste and shred the paper using industrial shredders. It is then bagged and transported to a local equestrian centre where it is used as bedding for horses and small animals. The cans are transferred for recycling to raise funds for the *Thurso in Bloom* project. These sheltered employment opportunities enable learners to develop team-working skills, develop and improve their communication skills and allow them to interact with a wider network outwith the college environment. The project also increase learners' awareness of environmental issues and of their responsibilities in relation to society and the environment.

**Colleges should:**

- ensure they have effective partnerships with external agencies and develop service level agreements where appropriate;
- ensure that programmes have a defined purpose and exit point for learners which are effectively communicated to stakeholders before the learner commences the programme;
- ensure all programmes have clearly stated entry criteria to inform learner placement and recruitment;
- ensure effective initial assessments which lead to short term targets for progression, and these should be monitored and adjusted as appropriate;
- ensure that programmes provide sufficient challenge to meet the needs of individuals and there should be effective communication on learner progress with key stakeholders;
- continue to build on existing programmes to enable learners to become confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners;
- ensure that they have appropriate accommodation for staff to use with learners when they show signs of distress;
- develop appropriate arrangements to ensure that learners progressing from schools continue to benefit from the services provided by speech, language and occupational therapy services;
- raise staff awareness and confidence in the use of AAC and ICT;
- have comprehensive arrangements to inform the evaluation of learning and teaching;
- work with other partners to develop appropriate sheltered employment opportunities for learners; and
- arrange effective liaison with local special schools, mainstream schools who may have special units and other colleges to share good practice.

**SFC should:**

- review and update guidance on provision for learners with profound and complex needs;
- provide clearer guidance to colleges on how their programmes should be structured to address learners' educational needs as well as their social needs; and
- seek to facilitate dialogue among all key stakeholders to improve communication, sharing of best practice, and to foster more effective and appropriate collaborative arrangements to support learners with profound and complex needs.

**SQA should:**

- further develop the range of formal accreditation available to learners to use when they progress from school to college; and
- work with partners to explore the development of an appropriate award for teaching staff working with learners with profound and complex needs.

***Scotland's Colleges* should:**

- further develop networking arrangements for staff in colleges with programmes for learners with profound and complex needs.

### Glossary of terms

<b>AAC</b>	Augmentative and Alternative Communication Aids
<b>ASDAN</b>	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
<b>ASN</b>	Additional Support Needs
<b>BRITE</b>	Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology and Education
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing professional development
<b>DDA</b>	Disability Discrimination Act
<b>DWP</b>	Department for Work and Pensions
<b>DLA</b>	Disabled Living Allowance
<b>EBN</b>	Emotional and Behavioural Need
<b>HND</b>	Higher National Diploma
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>ILP</b>	Individual Learning Plan
<b>JISC</b>	Joint Information Systems Committee
<b>PDA</b>	Personal Development Award
<b>PLSP</b>	Personal Learning Support Plan
<b>SCQF</b>	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
<b>SFC</b>	Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council
<b>SQA</b>	Scottish Qualifications Authority
<b>TQFE</b>	Teaching Qualification Further Education
<b>VOCA</b>	Voice Operated Communication Aids

### **Colleges involved in fieldwork for this report**

Cardonald College  
Clydebank College  
Edinburgh's Telford College  
Elmwood College  
Motherwell College  
North Highland College  
Oatridge College  
South Lanarkshire College  
Stevenson College Edinburgh

## Toolkit to support planning and delivery

### Background

All colleges which took part in this aspect report had developed their own provision to reflect the needs of their learners and the communities which they serve. However, variable approaches emerged in relation to the key processes of planning for and the management of educational provision and external agency support for learners with profound and complex needs. These variations can have a significant impact on the experiences for these learners. In order to identify the issues which colleges need to consider when planning for these programmes, key questions and good practice examples have been drawn together in the form of a toolkit. This toolkit should be used by college staff in order to plan for and reflect on their own provision in order to determine any potential areas for improvement.

This toolkit has been developed from the evidence seen and discussions held with staff and learners from the colleges visited during this aspect task. It is laid out under three separate sections which reflect the key processes required to ensure high quality provision of programmes for learners with profound and complex needs.

The first column covers the planning processes which need to be in place to ensure that the college has considered all relevant aspects which impact on the learner's experience. The middle column poses challenge questions which identify key features of well structured provision. These are a mixture of both strategic and operational management issues. The final column presents some illustrations of good practice. The content of this column will vary across colleges as they will all have different ways of achieving effective provision. It also can be used as an evaluative section where individual colleges can reflect on the quality of their programmes. It would be helpful if these findings were shared with other providers of services to the college through a regular meeting forum to enable all parties to be aware of and to be involved in planning for further improvements.

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<b>Curriculum design</b> 2.1 Accessibility, flexibility and inclusiveness  2.2 Relevance of programmes and services to learner needs  5.1 Equality and diversity	Programme design  Location  Curriculum content  Staff awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have we designed programmes around the needs of individuals, based upon sound initial assessment to identify existing skills, strengths and interests?</li> <li>• Does the location support effective delivery of the programme?</li> <li>• Does the curriculum enable skill development through a range of creative subjects?</li> <li>• Are all staff aware of each learner's programme and the aims and skills which are to be prioritised for learner development?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmes offered take into account prior attainment, learner interests and softer skills required for improvement. Venues are accessible for learners and their support workers. They can be used for a range of learning activities and learners work can be displayed and celebrated. The curriculum and associated extra-curricular activities ensure that all learners can meaningfully engage and make good progress on their programmes. Staff are given relevant information on each learner's prior attainment and the individuals aims, skills and preferences which should be developed through teaching in any particular subject. Staff are aware of the full programme undertaken by individual learners and share individual targets.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

<b>Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts</b> <b>What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges</b> <b>Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration</b> <b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Transitions into college</b> 8.1 Partnership working with communities, other learning providers, employers and other agencies	School-link programmes  Taster programmes  Learner background  Information events  Transition planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we offer school-link programmes over at least one year to enable learners to gain experience of college?</li> <li>• Do we offer taster programmes where it would best suit the learner including those attending local day-care centres?</li> <li>• Do we receive essential information from schools and other providers relating to learner attainment, support needs and behavioural preferences?</li> <li>• Do we hold information events for learners, parents/carers and stakeholders with the sharing of relevant information given high priority?</li> <li>• Are we involved in the school led Additional Support for Learning Act (ASL) transition discussions timeously and with other agencies?</li> </ul>	<p><i>All potential learners are offered a taster experience at a time and date which is convenient for them. Learners progressing from local schools are made aware of their options and these allow them to gain experiences of a college based programme over an extended period of time. Information meetings are offered to parents/carers of prospective learners, and external agencies to determine the best match of programme to meet individual educational goals. A package of relevant information is provided by the school and other stakeholders of the college to inform programme match. This includes a detailed transition profile with clearly identified strengths, areas of need and personal interests.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

<b>Quality Indicator from HIMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts</b> <b>What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges</b> <b>Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration</b> <b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Entry criteria and application process</b> 2.2 Relevance of programmes and services to learner needs	Entry criteria and educational goals  Learner aspirations  Support arrangements  Programme details and progression options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does each programme have clear and transparent entry criteria including expected behaviour and pre-requisite skills where appropriate to inform prospective applicants and stakeholders?</li> <li>• Do applications include reference to the educational aspirations of prospective learners?</li> <li>• Is it made clear on the offer of a place that support arrangements, including funding for non educational needs, must be agreed and in place?</li> <li>• Prior to entry do the learners and parents/carers know of the programme duration, progression routes and transition plans once the programme has been completed?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Educational goals are clearly stated on the application form/programme leaflets. Learner behaviour and prerequisite skills are made clear, and include reference to a wide range of skills to be developed. The application process effectively captures learner aspirations and preferences to inform programme offer. Progression options are clearly stated. Learner support arrangements are agreed and are in place at the start of the programme. These are recorded on each learner's personal learning support plan.</i></p>
5.1 Equality and diversity			

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HIMIE's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<b>Learner needs / ILPs/PLSPs</b>  5.3 Teaching for effective learning  5.4 Context and planning for learning and teaching  5.6 Information, guidance and support	Initial assessments  Individual learning plan or personal learning support plan  Target setting  Progress reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do initial assessments take place over time to establish a secure baseline?</li> <li>• Do PLSPs clearly state what the learner currently knows and can do and are they readily accessible by all staff?</li> <li>• Are learners involved in setting targets and are these meaningful and sufficiently challenging and motivating?</li> <li>• Are targets and goals regularly reviewed to identify progress being made and to establish new targets where appropriate?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Initial assessment takes place timeously and establishes a baseline of skills and strengths. Staff meet regularly to discuss each learner's skills and support needs and agree with each learner the targets to be included in their PLSPs. Documents are stored electronically and are available for all staff to view. Regular meetings are held where progress being made and new targets to be set are discussed.</i></p>

**Appendix 3 continued**

<b>Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts</b> <b>What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges</b> <b>Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration</b> <b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Arrangements to support personal needs</b>  5.4 Context and planning for learning and teaching	<p>Medication arrangements</p> <p>Quiet room</p> <p>Personal care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there appropriate arrangements for the supervision and administration of medication?</li> <li>• Is a quiet room available where tutors or support workers can take learners showing signs of distress?</li> <li>• Are support workers appropriately trained in their roles and are they familiar with the specialist rooms and college-supplied equipment for personal care?</li> </ul>	<p><i>A medication room is provided with secure storage of relevant medicines and is only accessible by trained staff. A suitable quiet room equipped with soft seating, furnishings and drinking water is available for staff to use with learners where appropriate. All support staff have been trained to meet their allocated learners' personal care needs and are aware of the resources available for them to use with their learners in the college estate.</i></p>

**Appendix 3 continued**

<b>Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration Evaluation</b>
<p><b>Pedagogy</b></p> <p>5.2 The learning process</p>	<p>Staffing arrangements</p> <p>Monitoring of learning and teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do programme team members have a significant teaching commitment to the programme to enable them to develop appropriate expertise?</li> <li>• Do we monitor the quality of the learning and teaching process regularly and systematically?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staff have a professional commitment to this area of work. They meet regularly, discuss learner progress and share their approaches to learning and teaching. CPD development needs are shared across the team. Feedback on the quality of learning and teaching is derived from college quality procedures and informs the appropriate CPD needs of all staff.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HME's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<b>Agency staffing</b> 7.1 Qualifications and experience of staff 7.2 Working relationships with colleagues, learners and external stakeholders 7.5 Continuing professional development and review	Job descriptions  Training  Meetings  Funding for support arrangements  Disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do all support workers have current job descriptions which set out their roles and responsibilities during lessons?</li> <li>• Do all support staff benefit from both induction and ongoing training to enable them to perform effectively in their roles?</li> <li>• Do we meet regularly with agency managers to discuss the performance of their staff or the quality of their services?</li> <li>• Have we clear and effective arrangements with the local authority regarding block funding allocation arrangements?</li> <li>• Have all external agency support workers received an enhanced disclosure check including those appointed by the learner through the Direct Payments scheme?</li> </ul>	<p><i>An up to date handbook outlining the responsibilities of the support workers including detailed role descriptions are effectively communicated. Induction training events for support workers are well attended and a range of ongoing training opportunities are provided throughout the year, these are also well attended by staff and their effectiveness is evaluated. During meetings held with agency managers, issues of concern are discussed and actions to resolve them are agreed. Progress being made on issues is effectively communicated to all staff. Disclosure arrangements are comprehensive.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<p><b>Accreditation</b></p> <p>2.3 Progress, attainment and wider achievement</p>	<p>Accreditation</p> <p>College devised Programmes</p> <p>Staff awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there appropriate accreditation, including SQA or other routes to accreditation which meets the needs of each individual learner?</li> <li>• Do college-devised programmes contain activities that support progress towards the desired outcomes?</li> <li>• Are programme teams aware of the range of accreditation available for them to use with their learners?</li> <li>• Do programmes support the development of all learners as confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors?</li> </ul>	<p><i>All staff are aware of the range of accreditation options available for their learners. Programmes include accreditation outcomes for each learner where appropriate and these effectively build upon prior attainment. Different accreditation levels are offered within teaching groups where appropriate to meet individual learner need. College devised provision is appropriate for the needs of individual learners.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<p><b>Staff training and qualifications</b></p> <p>7.2 Qualifications and experience of staff</p> <p>7.5 Continuing professional development and review</p>	<p>Staff training</p> <p>External networking</p> <p>Use of ICT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do all staff benefit from regular update training relating to learners with profound and complex needs?</li> <li>• Do staff benefit from effective links with local schools for young people with additional support needs and other colleges where good practice and approaches for these learners can be shared?</li> <li>• Do all staff receive appropriate training on the use of ICT in their roles?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staff avail themselves of appropriate training provided internally and through training providers such as Scotland's Colleges and BRITE. Regular meetings are held with managers and staff from local special schools and colleges where approaches and good practice are shared. All staff are confident in the use of ICT including specialist software and adaptive technology. CPD for improved use of ICT is identified, delivered and evaluated for all members of the programme team.</i></p>

**Appendix 3 continued**

<b>Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration Evaluation</b>
<p><b>Estates</b></p> <p>8.2 Management and use of resources and learning environments</p>	<p>ICT equipment</p> <p>DDA requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are appropriate ICT applications and hardware readily available to all tutors and learners including those based in community venues?</li> <li>• Are there comprehensive arrangements at all venues to meet the needs of all learners?</li> </ul>	<p><i>All classrooms are equipped with a range of ICT equipment as appropriate. This includes both teaching technology and PCs for learners to use including specialist software when working on individual projects. Learners are well served through the provision of a range of technology including accessibility arrangements to the college estate. Specialist care rooms with adapted showers and appropriate hoists are regularly used by well trained staff.</i></p>

**Appendix 3 continued**

<b>Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts</b> <b>What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges</b> <b>Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration</b> <b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Learner representation</b>  5.7 Enhancement through self-evaluation and internal review	Learner representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do learners and teaching staff have access to appropriate tools including assistive technology to capture the views of learners?</li> <li>• Are there comprehensive arrangements in place to effectively capture learner views?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Learner views are captured through a range of procedures including, discussions, and adapted questionnaires using packages such as Bonnington or Boardmaker symbols and through feedback gained from stakeholders through both questionnaires and regular meeting fora. Responses to issues raised are effectively communicated back to learners timeously.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<p><b>Liaison with stakeholders</b></p> <p>8.1 Partnership working with communities, other learning providers, employers and other agencies</p>	<p>Service agreements</p> <p>Progress feedback</p> <p>Feedback arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have service level agreements where appropriate?</li> <li>• Do we provide appropriate feedback to parents/carers and stakeholders on the progress being made by learners?</li> <li>• Where learners' views cannot be gained directly, is feedback sought from support staff/parents/carers?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Service level agreements have been established with partner organisations outlining provision and funding of support services. Feedback to and from stakeholders occurs through the use of weekly diary logs, e-mail updates and progress monitoring reports sent out on a regular basis. Meetings are held with a range of stakeholders throughout the year. Support staff and parents/carers are involved in planning progression to other day activities including community learning classes.</i></p>

**Appendix 3 continued**

<b>Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework</b>	<b>Key prompts</b> <b>What do we need to do?</b>	<b>Challenge questions for colleges</b> <b>Management: strategic/operational</b>	<b>Examples for illustration</b> <b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Transport issues</b> 8.2 Management and use of resources and learning environments	Progress meetings  Escorted learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do our learners have appropriate transport arrangements which we monitor closely with the other partners involved?</li> <li>• Is there agreed funding for learners' escorts?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Improvements have been made resulting in effective learner transport arrangements through the service level agreement and the transport meeting forum where issues are raised and discussed and actions agreed by all parties. Agreements have been reached on the funding for escorted learners.</i></p>
<b>Assistive technology for Communication</b> 8.2 Management and use of resources and learning environments	Staff awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all staff aware of the range of augmentative and alternative communication available for learners to use?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staff have benefitted from both internal and external training expertise relating to augmentative and alternative communication. Awareness is also raised through visits to local special schools other colleges and local speech and language therapy services.</i></p>

## Appendix 3 continued

Quality Indicator from HMIE's quality framework	Key prompts What do we need to do?	Challenge questions for colleges Management: strategic/operational	Examples for illustration Evaluation
<p><b>Work placement, sheltered employment and progression</b></p> <p>2.3 Progress, attainment and wider achievement</p> <p>8.1 Partnership working with communities, other learning providers and other agencies</p>	<p>Work experience opportunities</p> <p>Preparation for progression from college.</p> <p>Liaising with employers and agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an appropriate range of work experience opportunities provided for learners?</li> <li>• Are there sufficient sheltered employment progression opportunities provided for learners?</li> <li>• Do we liaise effectively with other agencies involved in the planning of such placements or the planning for post college transitions?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Sheltered work experience placements are undertaken by most learners. Placement suitability is discussed with the provider and other external agencies. Learner progress is closely monitored. A range of progression opportunities are available for learners through arrangements with employers and through other college devised programmes where appropriate.</i></p>