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## Enhancing Support Through Structural Change: Strengthening Additional Learning Provision

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## Enhancing support through structural change: Strengthening additional learning provision

**(FE) Peer Reviews**

### Introduction

This case study highlights the role of the peer review.

City College Norwich College undertook a comprehensive peer review of another provider – Shrewsbury College. The peer review is a fully subsidised, confidential and non-judgemental review for colleges. The review is a supportive tool to determine areas of strength in supporting young learners with SEND and suggested areas for improvement, with a summary, recommendations and support in the follow-up provided after the peer review.

The impact of the peer review can take time to be seen as in some cases; the provider is looking at large changes across its setting which can be across different geographical locations and with different leadership teams in place. This case study shows how the changes undertaken by a provider can take time to come into full fruition.

Shrewsbury College approached City College Norwich following an Additional Learning Support (ALS) webinar, who followed up with a peer review in November 2022. The aim was to assess the ALS approach and to make recommendations for a new structure.

Shrewsbury Colleges Group is a designated sixth-form college providing tertiary education and covering a large, mostly rural geographical area across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and the Welsh borders. There are currently around 3,800 young people aged 16 to 19 on academic or vocational education programmes. This includes around 200 students with high needs.

There are around 1,300 adults studying a range of courses, including a small number on distance learning courses. Approximately 600 apprentices study courses from level 2 to level 4. A large proportion of apprentices follow engineering, construction or business-related apprenticeships.

A small number of students aged between 19 and 24 have complex needs and study with a subcontractor based on site. This has been a challenge for the additional learning support team, who are not able to effectively quality assure as the majority of ALS support is sub-contracted. In addition, the coverage of support is small, and the college recognised the need to increase its support offer in line with student need.

The aim was to create a structure of support that recognised the skills and qualifications of the current team and provided a framework of support when recruiting new staff. This allowed the sub-contracting approach to cease.

## Implementation

The peer review recommended that teachers needed to be inclusive and adjust their practice prior to requesting for additional learning support, resulting in:

- Leaders to set clear expectations and direction for all staff to provide clarity and consistency to ensure that skill sets are utilised effectively and efficiently.
    1. Quality First Teaching
    2. universal support
    3. all staff additional needs toolkit,
    4. student information for staff ownerships to implement
  - ALS structure review / approach to roles and responsibility.
  - Deployment of Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and timetables and contracts to ensure equity across sites
  - National Standards performance criteria embedded to quality assure and improve LSAs effective and consistency of support.
  - Timely and revised initial assessment for mainstream student to inform support allocation, including exam access arrangement, support strategies for tutors, (following the existing good practice of the EHCP coordinator)
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## Outcomes

- College leaders ensured there is a consistent approach on all sites to ensure effectiveness of roles to build on excellence
  - CPD with SEND focus implemented gave teachers confidence with adjusting lessons
  - Recruitment of 5 ALS staff in first year and an increase of 5 ALS over the following years
  - Funding increase in line with students needs
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## Impact and Next Steps

- Leaders effectively implemented a new ALS structure benefiting staff and students.
  - Students gained support they need and impacted positively on results
  - Retained ALS staff who felt valued
  - Increase of ALS income
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## Key Learning

- Leaders had a clear vision for Inclusion
- Leaders at all levels placed SEND at the heart of strategic planning, recognising this approach benefited all and led to organisational excellence

