

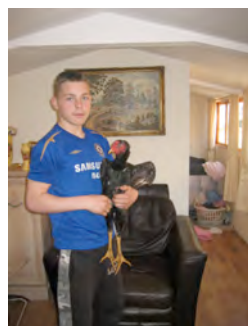
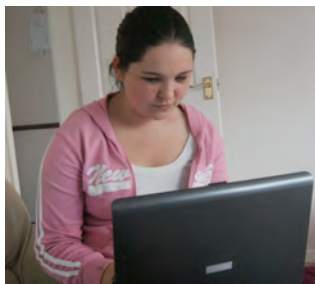


**National Association of Teachers of Travellers  
+Other Professionals**



## **BUILDING BRIDGES FOR TRAVELLER CHILDREN: USING ICT TO CREATE LINKS BACK INTO EDUCATION**

**A progress report on the progress of the Wider Key  
Skills Bridging Project, *Strand 'B' of E-LAMP***



**January, 2009**



department for  
**children, schools and families**

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## **Executive summary**

*One of the major challenges in work with Traveller families is to encourage and support take-up and achievement within secondary education, and a key challenge is retention as by Key Stage 4 (14+) all too many young Travellers have become disengaged from school. This project has been supported by the DCSF and coordinated via NATT+ to explore the use of an ICT-based learning approach which has the potential to build new bridges. The intention has been to counter cultural dissonance by picking up on the vocational and personal interests of disengaged Traveller youngsters. These are used as a springboard for developing a range of skills which can, in turn, help the young participants to pursue work-related opportunities, especially within the further education sector.*

*This report is based on the efforts of support tutors from 14 Traveller Education Support Service (TESS), with approximately 60 youngsters involved in the programme at any one time. The learning framework has been designed to allow the young participants to achieve one or more of the 'Wider Key Skills' qualifications. The first wave of youngsters started early in 2007 and 75% of these have gained at least one qualification and some all three. The second wave started early in 2008. Of these 17 of the 32 new participants had gained a qualification by January, 2009 and most of the others will submit their work in July, 2009*

*Last year's report included a detailed description of the virtual learning environment (VLE) which is a central feature of the approach. It then discussed early progress and identified key issues to be explored. This year's report picks up on further project experience. It draws from the perspective of both tutors and learners and includes the outcomes of three in-depth interviews with young participants.*

*It is encouraging to note the progress made by most of the young learners.<sup>1</sup> As well as gaining qualifications there is clear evidence of improvements in literacy and ICT skills, and in skills relating to planning, reflection and handling advice. Just as important there are reported improvements in self-esteem and self-confidence as youngsters re-engage with learning which they find both enjoyable and relevant. The project has also clearly enabled them to firm up their vocational thinking. For these young Travellers, being out of school has not reflected a lack of desire to learn and the project has provided a new and positive focus.*

*From the tutoring perspective it has become increasingly clear that the ELAMP approach is at its best as 'blended learning'; a mixture of regular face-to-face activity and independent student work using the laptop as well as the internet access provided by the project. It is also clear that the approach works best when the face-to-face element draws the young participants together into a group setting (not always possible with some of the dispersed learners supported by the project). This report also draws together some of the 'lessons learned' by tutors which they feel are important for future (new) colleagues. These include*

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<sup>1</sup> The retention rate is of the order of 80%.

*the importance of creating structure for young learners who may have been out of school for a considerable period of time, of encouraging independent learning but balancing this with the need for support, and of having agreed objectives and targets which include active vocational plans.*

*Although this evaluation report is mainly aimed at the teaching-learning process, it also makes a brief exploration of the management and support structure of the project, including the contribution made by Nisai in providing the VLE and by 'Ormiston Education' in designing learning materials and handling the moderation process with ASDAN (the awarding body)<sup>2</sup>. It then concludes with a discussion of broader considerations which are important if this approach is to be consolidated into longer-term provision aimed at disengaged Traveller pupils. These focus on pressures affecting tutors, responding to internet connectivity problems and the need to further strengthen the vocational dimension of the project. This final section ends with a brief discussion of consolidation options.*

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<sup>2</sup> Chrysalis Club 2000, the original project partner with these responsibilities was absorbed into 'Ormiston Education', an educational trust during 2008.

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## Introducing the project

This 'Wider Key Skills' bridging initiative is part of a series of 'e-learning and mobility projects' (E-LAMP) aimed at reinforcing the education of Traveller children. These began with research supported by the Nuffield Foundation in 2003, followed by phased practical initiatives mainly funded by the DfES (now DCSF). The projects have been coordinated by the 'National Association of Teachers of Travellers and Other Professionals' (NATT+)<sup>3</sup> and reports from earlier phases of the project are available on the associated website ; [www.natt.org.uk](http://www.natt.org.uk). A report of the earlier Nuffield findings, entitled 'Traveller Education: changing times, changing technologies', is available from Trentham Books [ISBN 1 85856 351 8]

The prime focus of this particular part of the ELAMP initiative has been the challenge of Traveller pupils who become disengaged from schooling. As noted in last year's report, such disengagement has been a major challenge over the years as large numbers of families from the Gypsy, Irish and Scottish Traveller communities have remained defensive about the impact of schools and schooling on their children. Considerable progress has been made in the primary sector, often related to supportive work by local Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) staff. However, disengagement is still a major issue in the secondary sector, especially as youngsters approach Key Stage 4. Reasons include the parental fear of bullying, sometimes racist, and of negative influences which challenge traditional community values. There are also concerns that the secondary school curriculum is not relevant to community needs, and to lifestyles which include a strong informal apprenticeship model within extended families.<sup>4</sup>

The project has a re-engagement rationale and the original remit was to work with youngsters who had been out of school for a significant period of time. However, experiences to date are beginning to show that this ELAMP approach can also work well for those who are still on the fringes of schooling; with, for example, poor attendance or under threat of exclusion. The number of these additional participants rose significantly during the second year of the project.

For youngsters with little prospect of a return to school the objective of the project is to focus on vocational pathways and to encourage links with further education and with agencies like Connexions which have a focus on jobs and career options. For those still tenuously linked to school the aim is to combine the vocational focus with efforts to strengthen home-school relationships.

In order to meet these challenges the project has developed some key features

- Its starting point is the need to build on the real interests of youngsters and families, especially their vocational interests.

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<sup>3</sup> Formerly NATT

<sup>4</sup> See in particular the study written by Derrington and Kendall (2004) 'Gypsy Traveller Students in Secondary Schools: culture, identity and achievement', available from Trentham Books

- It acknowledges the importance of using tutors who are drawn from local TESS staff, known and trusted by the young learners and their families.
- It offers a learning programme which is based on the wider key skills qualifications, as these are felt to be an essential underpinning for personal development and for further study
- It offers two levels of participation (corresponding to the wider key skills levels), with Level 1 materials designed for a reading age of 8 years to encourage access for those Traveller youngsters who are amongst the most educationally disadvantaged.
- It is centred on the use of a web-based virtual learning environment (VLE), but with a blended emphasis; i.e. a mixture of face-to-face sessions and independent learning via the VLE.
- The young learners are referred to as 'members' within the project and the VLE. Similarly tutors are called 'advisors'. This is to recognize the young adult status accorded to the 14+ age-group within Traveller communities as well as avoiding terminology associated with schooling.

The rationale for much of this approach built on successful face-to-face work which had already been developed by some TESS in partnership with the then Chrysalis Club 2000 (CC2000).<sup>5</sup> The new dimension was to utilize ICT to encourage, motivate and support the learning process, and each Traveller youngster is supplied with a laptop and internet access. The use of a VLE also has the advantage of allowing the young learners to continue their tasks when their families are away from base; i.e. travelling. However, it is important to emphasize that the project is mainly aimed at families who are fairly static. Experience to date has confirmed that it would not be realistic to encourage fully-fledged distance learning for most of this young constituency; at least not in their first year of involvement with the project.

The VLE itself is a Nisai product and its features are fully described in last year's report. However it is probably helpful to give some feel for the member's area which is shown below, and also for the way in which the learning materials are structured.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A charitable educational trust which has been active in exploring and providing approaches for youngsters who have been educationally disadvantaged. [CC2000 is now part of another trust 'Ormiston Education']

<sup>6</sup> Tutors have a completely separate area where they can assign and mark work as well as giving feedback

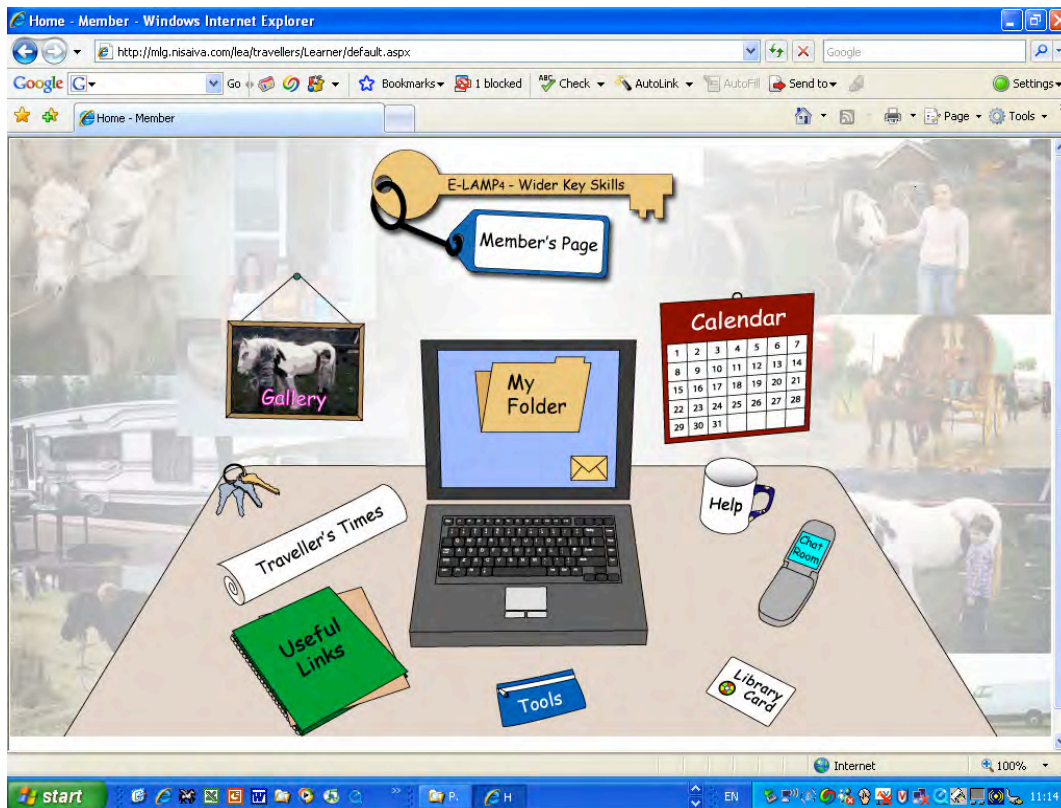


Figure 1: The member's working area

Figure 1 shows the confidential (password protected) area for each individual member and facilities include:-

- A picture gallery for photos which members and advisors want to share
- News items for members (accessed via the Traveller's Times icon)
- 'Tools' and 'Useful Links' areas which contain hyperlinks to resources like Encarta, Wikipedia and the Google search engine
- A user 'Help' area
- A calendar which reminds learners about work deadlines
- A library area which contains some key project documents
- A closed and moderated chat room (for members only)
- An area containing work folders as assigned to each individual member
- Internal email facilities (accessed via the envelope icon on the laptop screen)

These functionalities allow for a flow of information, and for communication between project participants. The main member working area is then accessed via the 'My Folder' icon, and this is where the member finds the work which their tutor (advisor) has currently assigned to them. It also contains copies of their completed task sheets with appropriate tutor feedback. In line with wider key skills requirements, the materials designed by CC2000 are intended to help the member plan, carry out and review a series of 'challenges' and the VLE also allows the member to upload various forms of 'evidence' to show how they carried through on challenge tasks.

The spread of challenge topics have been designed to meet the criteria for all three current wider key skills:- 'Improving Own Learning and Performance', 'Problem Solving' and 'Working with Others'.

Crucially, they are also designed to capture the personal and vocational interests of young Travellers. Challenge topics include, for example, 'Learning How to care for an animal', 'Discovering my family history', 'Pricing a Job', 'Hair and Beauty Makeover' and 'Landscaping a garden'. There are also units focused on 'Becoming an ICT expert', 'What will I do when I am 16+' and 'College Application and Interview'. These are all titles designed for Level 1 (equivalent to GCSE D-G). Youngsters working at Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE A\*-C) are expected to choose their own challenge topics and are expected to follow a self-directed learning approach, with only background support from their advisor.

In order to gain a qualification for one key skill area the young members have to complete two appropriate challenges. Their portfolio of work is then moderated by the awarding body ASDAN, and this qualification has equivalence with two thirds of a GCSE. If they complete all three wider key skills areas they therefore gain the equivalent of 2 GCSEs within the grade range corresponding to their level.

During the first year of the project 20 young learners were actively involved, supported by four TESS.<sup>7</sup> For the second year, the focus of this report, some sixty youngsters have been actively involved at any one time, supported by fourteen TESS (See Appendix 1 for details).

In the spirit of a pilot, each team has set out to support a small number of youngsters and the whole enterprise has been coordinated on a day-to-day basis by Paul France<sup>8</sup> with assistance from Dean Cope who is chair of the NATT+ ICT working group.

## **A résumé of findings from the previous year**

This section is a brief summary from developments during the previous (first) year of the pilot. It has been included to give context to this year's report. The focus here is on information and feedback from tutors and learners as drawn from last year's report, dated August, 2007.<sup>9</sup> Broader policy and management issues identified in this earlier report will be further explored in Sections '2' and '3'.

The first year of the project was partly taken up with choosing and tailoring a VLE, as well as preparing the learning materials and making them available on the web-based environment, and carrying out some basic testing of the system. It was possible to recruit the five TESS partners quite early in the year, but the pilot nature of the first year did, of course, impact on their preparation and training.

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<sup>7</sup> One of the original partners, St Helens, faced considerable delays and, in the end, effectively started from September, 2007 with the second round of participants.

<sup>8</sup> Contact details are given at the beginning of this report.

<sup>9</sup> This report is available on the NATT+ website ([www.natt.org.uk](http://www.natt.org.uk))

Staff training within the project has two dimensions. Tutors need to have an appreciation of the wider key skills framework, of how the materials developed (by CC2000) act as a vehicle for assessment and of the mechanics of moderation. They also need to become proficient in using the VLE as 'advisors'. Both aspects of training were clearly dependent on developmental and testing activity.

In the event the progress made by partners during the first year was also affected by two other main factors. Some faced significant delays in purchasing equipment through their LAs, and the other main variable was the level of ICT confidence/competence which partners already had. These various factors meant that most partners only really began to consolidate their work in the summer term, eight months into the project year. In the case of one, St Helens, it only proved possible to continue some preliminary work with youngsters at this stage, whilst the start date for using the VLE itself was further delayed until the autumn term.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless some good progress was made and two distinct approaches emerged. Three partners adopted a group-based approach, with the young members coming together on a weekly basis as well as working on tasks at home, and two adopted a one-to-one support model. The initial pilot year was also valuable in identifying some key issues and a flavour of both progress and issues came through in the evaluation feedback. As noted above, the subsections which follow are intended to summarize key information and findings.

### ***The young 'members' and their feedback on experiences***

By the summer 26<sup>11</sup> youngsters were involved with the project, 14 girls and 12 boys. Three of the original members identified by partners had dropped out when family circumstances changed and had been replaced by new learners. All but one of these youngsters had become disengaged from school during KS2 or KS3. The exception was one participant who was on the fringes of schooling, with intermittent attendance and in immanent danger of exclusion. Six of these participants were felt by their tutors to have secure literacy levels, the rest likely to need to reinforce writing and spelling skills. All but four had had some experience of using ICT, but this was often reported as fairly minimal.

Feedback from the twenty youngsters who were being supported by TESS and had made a solid start was generally positive. They had enjoyed tackling the challenges, and were pleased to be able to develop their ICT skills. Some also commented on the opportunity which the project had given them to start learning again, with support and within a clear structure. In addition the majority were showing a renewed interest in further education or employment options. Most who were attending group sessions clearly valued these as well.

The main frustrations expressed by the young learners were concerned with internet connectivity. They were using datacards and wireless connections via GPRS mobile telephone networks. Some were affected by communication 'blackspots' where they couldn't connect at all, and others by slow and variable transfer speeds

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<sup>10</sup> This was mainly due to protracted delays in the LA purchasing process

<sup>11</sup> This included one Birmingham-based young Traveller who was directly supported by CC2000 rather than a TESS partner.

which caused delays in their interaction with the VLE. Tutors proved imaginative in finding ways to alleviate problems but they sometimes remained intractable, affecting the type of work youngsters could do in their own homes. The other main issue to begin to emerge for some learners was the language of the work sheets within the learning materials. Most youngsters found them hard going 'first time through', but the general consensus in this pilot year seemed to be that 'you soon got used to it' (i.e. the jargon).

### ***The 'advisors': views and experiences***

The ten tutors most actively involved with the project during its first year were generally pleased with the progress made by their members. There were felt to be clear gains in ICT skills and several reported on improvements in literacy with the incentive to search for information and a 'purpose to write'. Just as encouraging was the range of comments made about student gains in 'confidence', 'self-image' and 'self-esteem', with a renewed enthusiasm to learn. Advisors also confirmed the reinforcement of what had often been vague ideas and plans which the young learners had about pursuing vocational options. By August, 2007 five youngsters were successfully entered for qualifications (all from Gloucestershire), and most of the other fifteen from Cambridgeshire, Leeds and the West Midlands were expected to submit work for December, 2007.

In terms of their own experiences, tutor feedback suggested steep learning curves in terms of getting to grips with the VLE and also with the process of assessment and moderation, especially in judging required standards. The main recommendation here was for more time to practice as tutors found themselves having to get used to the new approach at the same time as preparing, and starting work with, their young learners (partly a characteristic of the pilot year). Some also recommended that one option should be to complete the first challenge with students 'on paper' rather than using the VLE. The work could then be translated across onto the VLE as part of the familiarization process.

Some important observations were also made about encouraging teamwork. The ideal would be to have two members of staff undertaking the necessary project training, even if only one was to act as a tutor/advisor within the system. As well as providing backup, one could usefully focus on developing expertise with the VLE, whilst the other could focus on the moderation process.

Some key concerns were also identified. The first of these was that the project had underestimated the need to prepare members for a whole new way of interacting and working; very different from school, and now focused on ideas like planning and review as well as topic content. This also needed to be appreciated in the context of getting youngsters back into the discipline of learning. In practice students needed more face-to-face support than had been anticipated in order to begin to cope with considering options, seeking information and advice, and handling formative feedback; all skills which are vital for the wider key skills framework.

They also needed support in expressing their ideas in writing and within the VLE framework. The group approach, with weekly meetings, proved easier to implement

as well as having obvious benefits in terms of social skills. These issues were more acute, however, where youngsters were being supported on an individual basis (Cambridgeshire and the West Midlands). Here tutors were working with geographically dispersed learners and it had been hoped that, after an initial period, there would be fewer face-to-face sessions and more support at a distance, backed by email and mobile phone. In practice these youngsters did make some variable progress towards such levels of independence but tutors still felt that regular visits were necessary; certainly during a student's initial year of involvement with wider key skills and a VLE-based approach.

These tutors also felt it might be useful to explore a 'cluster' approach for the future; trying to address the challenge of dispersed youngsters by identifying very small groups (two or three learners) who could realistically meet. In addition these tutors further highlighted concerns about communication 'blackspots' and slow transfer speeds, as supportive visits to widely dispersed individual learners could prove very frustrating when such problems were encountered.

The other key areas of concern were about reinforcing both literacy and the broader vocational objective of the project. There was felt to be a need to complement Level 1 activity with learning packages (web-based or on CD ROM) which could improve literacy levels and provide a much better foundation for further education and job options. In parallel with this there was a clear feeling that the wider key skills qualifications shouldn't be seen as ends in themselves. The project should widen its remit by developing an integrated approach, with tutors also actively encouraging young Travellers to explore vocational options; including links with colleges and Connexions.

## **Section 1: The teaching-learning experience (Year two of the pilot)**

This section is divided into two parts, one focused on the young members and the other on their advisors. Information and feedback was gathered via both questionnaires and interviews; including in-depth interviews with three of the learners. Some tutor feedback is also based on a project sharing event which was held in April, 2008.

### **1.1 The members**

#### **1.1.1 Background information**

85 young participants had been recruited by TESS up to July, 2008. Of these 52 were girls and 33 boys, reflecting a significant increase in the proportion of girls who joined the project compared with the first pilot year. Eighteen of the 85 (approximately 21%) left early, i.e. before taking a qualification. Twelve of these were girls and six were boys so that in practice the gender balance of active participants became more even and closer to the first year pattern. Most of the information collated in this subsection is centred on the remaining 67 members, but it is important to take note of the relatively high turnover.

Reasons for early leaving were varied. Four learners had to withdraw because their families left their TESS area permanently (making effective support impossible), and three withdrew because of changed personal circumstances; both situations characteristic of work with Traveller families. Two others nearly completed an IOLP qualification but then left to seek jobs, and were reported to have had positive benefits from participation even though they didn't submit work for moderation. One of the eighteen 'leavers' also started with ELAMP but then switched to a supported GCSE revision programme; in this case a clearly positive reason for withdrawing. Commitment seems to have been a key factor for the other eight early leavers (approximately 10% of the whole cohort), sometimes affected by frustrations with equipment delays or poor local connectivity, and sometimes with problems in organizing early support.

Most of the remaining 67 learners were still involved with the project up to July 2008. However, three girls and three boys who had also been active participants left after completing a qualification; in each case IOLP. [One girl left because her family moved and the other girls decided not to continue but didn't share a specific reason. One lad left with his family to travel in Germany making continued support impracticable. One left hoping to move on to college and another had always intended to take just one qualification and to develop his ICT skills before joining the family business.]

Most (63%) of these 67 youngsters had first joined the project during their Y10 year, with 18% joining in each of Y9 and Y11. As noted in the previous section, almost all of the young Travellers who became members during the first year of the project were disengaged from school. The overall second year profile continued to include a clear majority of disengaged pupils; 75% of the total<sup>12</sup>. However, the shift in balance to include more new members who were still on the fringes of schooling (now 25% of the total) was an interesting year two development. Indeed four of the new partners only recruited youngsters who were still at least tenuously registered with a school, and two made such registration a condition for involvement. Here the rationale was to strengthen and encourage school linkage whilst offering a relevant vocational dimension to learning experiences.

Being disengaged or in situations where the project could reinforce problematic school linkage were key criteria for being invited to join the project for its second year. Other criteria for selection had also included the minimum reading age of 8 years. Here the initial profile information collated by the project managers suggested an estimate of some 70% of the 67 active members who would need some support but had reasonable basic literacy skills. About a quarter were reported to have significantly higher literacy standards, and a handful of youngsters had been taken on with an acknowledgement that they might need considerable literacy support. The profiles also suggested that roughly one half of the cohort had a good basic set of ICT skills to build from, another third some experience, with about 10% having no experience at all.

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<sup>12</sup> This figure included a handful of youngsters who had been excluded or were school phobic. The rest had been withdrawn from schooling.

The profile information was also interesting in suggesting that girls were more likely to have mentioned general objectives like access to college courses as part of their reason for wanting to join ELAMP, whilst boys were more likely to mention specific vocations or going on to work in the family business.<sup>13</sup>

The profiles also indicated that most of the families involved would be either static or had limited amounts of time away from base, although up to 10% might well be travelling extensively during part of the year; especially during the summer period.

### **1.1.2 Working towards the qualifications**

TESS partners for the project have been recruited in the early autumn of each project year; 2006-07 and 2007-08. However, most youngsters then start with the project during the subsequent spring term, after a preparatory period for tutors. Their 'project year' therefore effectively runs through to the following December and they would normally expect to carry on through at least to the following summer. The first cohort of students therefore started early in 2007 and, given the late start from St Helens, there were effectively 20 original learners. Fifteen of these had gained at least one qualification at level 1 by July, 2008 (75% of participants) and two of these had gone on to achieve at Level 2. In total they had achieved 24 different Wider Key Skills qualifications.

There were nine new partners for 2007-08 supporting 32 active learners. One, Ealing, had to temporarily withdraw from the project following staff changes, but five of the other eight new TESS had submitted work for moderation by December, 2008, and seventeen youngsters had gained a qualification. The other TESS expect to enter their young members in July, 2009.

It is also interesting to note the pattern of skill areas and challenge topics used with the young members to make up their qualifications. A breakdown for the 67 youngsters where July feedback was available suggests that the vast majority started with 'Improving own learning and performance' (IOLP), with the 'Becoming an ICT expert' unit then as a universal choice. The rationale here seems to have been to use the challenge as an early vehicle for reinforcing necessary ICT skills within the project. These members were then given more of a choice for their second IOLP challenge. Most of the girls chose the 'Hair and Beauty makeover' option although three chose 'Looking after an animal'. The second choices amongst the boys were a bit more varied but most centred on 'Looking after an animal'. Other choices were 'College application and interview' and 'Telling other people about the dangers of drugs', and one chose a generic option (focusing on the 'driving theory test' as a topic).

The main exception to the IOLP norm was West Sussex where the tutor used the group meetings focus to tackle 'Working with others' with her four learners first. Two generic titles were chosen: 'Preparing a healthy meal' and 'Planning a day trip'.

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<sup>13</sup> The evidence for a possible divergence of objectives by gender is somewhat tentative given the nature of the profile question. It is hoped to explore this further with the new project intake for 2008-09.

Three of the original partners had also moved on to involve some of their successful young learners with other options. Gloucestershire had moved two girls on to Level 2.<sup>14</sup> Members from Cambridgeshire and the West Midlands had also tackled other key skill areas. Both TESS addressed 'Problem Solving' and Cambridgeshire had also introduced 'Working with others'. In total three boys and three girls had been involved with 'Problem Solving'. There was quite a spread of choice across possible challenge topics, with no clear gender differences. Options chosen were: 'Discovering my family history', 'What will I do when I am 16+', 'Pricing a job' and 'Marketing a product or skill that I have'. The three youngsters pursuing 'Working with others' had all chosen generic options focusing their work on 'Planning a trip', 'Cooking a meal' and 'Designing a poster'.

It was interesting to see the two alternative starting points; with the majority emphasis on laying a foundation of ICT skills, but a different group-based rationale in West Sussex. Equally it was interesting to note that Cambridgeshire used the 'Choices at post-16' option towards the end of the learning programme designed for their young members. This meant that exploring college and job/apprenticeship options became part of a systematic framework, timed to coincide with taking up next-step opportunities.

### **1.1.3 Broader views about student benefits and the vocational dimension**

This subsection draws together information from a sample of young learners and the views of all active advisors across the project. Students' perceptions and experiences of ELAMP are clearly an essential part of the evaluation process and the sample was based on the learners in one partner area, Cambridgeshire, together with three in depth interviews with learners who were in their second year of ELAMP.

Tutors from the original TESS partners were asked to complete a short 'progress questionnaire' for each of their young learners. Tutors from partners joining in 2007 were asked about the progress of their learners in more general terms via telephone interview sessions.

#### ***Young Members views***

The three in-depth interviews took place in early 2008 with learners based in Staffordshire, Cambridgeshire and Gloucestershire. Their responses have been written up in individual vignettes to give a flavour of their learning environment and experiences on the project. [The vignettes have also been used as the basis for a short magazine style publication which is available separately from the project]

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<sup>14</sup> The generic options chosen by these members were 'Driving theory preparation' (both), 'Better baking' and 'Improving my photography', all within the 'Improving own learning and performance' framework

## CHARMAINE



Charmaine comes from Staffordshire and at the time of the interview was 16. She “*didn’t get on at school*” and left, along with other local Traveller children, during Y5 following incidents of racist name calling. At that time they lived on a local site but the family is currently housed. In spite of encouragement over the years, the family has remained negative about possibilities of going back to school. Nevertheless Charmaine’s mum has always been very active in supporting her daughter’s learning outside the school environment.

## ELAMP

When interviewed Charmaine had been on the project for one year and ELAMP had had a very significant impact on her in terms of self-confidence and learning skills; according to mum “*she never leaves the laptop at times*”. She is supported by regular visits from her tutor and back-up phone calls, as well as mum, but has increasingly been able to work independently.

Charmaine has worked at Level 1 throughout and started with the ‘ICT’ and ‘Hair & Beauty’ challenges. She enjoyed both in different ways, learning new skills and combining practical work with creativity, although she did find some of the wording of the worksheets difficult at first. [Having gained her ‘IOLP’ qualification in December, 2007 she subsequently went on to do two ‘Problem Solving’ challenges, ‘Family History’ and ‘Options at Post-16’, and successfully submitted these in July, 2008]

Charmaine found that unlike school ELAMP hadn’t “*... involved pressure, and you have your own time to figure things out*” and according to her tutor Charmaine has made great progress, including progress with literacy skills and a range of ICT skills.

**The future** In Charmaine’s own words “*before ELAMP I didn’t have a clue*”. As part of her work in the second year she joined a group of other young Travellers on the project and they met weekly at the local Connexions office. Here they explored a range of post-16 options. At the time of the interview Charmaine was initially planning to get a job and will then think about college opportunities for a career in Health and Beauty.

## ALFIE



Alfie lives on a small site in East Cambridgeshire where his family has been settled for a number of years. Alfie's experiences of primary and secondary school were negative and he left at the beginning of year 9. He did not enjoy the work or find it relevant and did not get on with teachers "*I just didn't get on at school*". Neither his older sister nor brother completed secondary education; his other school-aged sisters are both at primary school.

## ELAMP

Alfie was the first young person in Cambridgeshire to start with the project. Initially he completed the 'Pricing a Job' and 'Family History' challenges for which he was awarded a 'Problem Solving' certificate. He then went on to complete work on 'ICT' and 'Caring for Animals' and gained the 'IOLP' qualification. All his work has been at Level 1. [He has subsequently completed and successfully submitted his final 'Working with Others' challenges, which concentrated upon his post-16 options and planning in a team.]

The challenge Alfie enjoyed most was 'Caring for animals' where he focused on his own chickens. He feels that he has learnt a lot from all the challenges because they have widened his knowledge of the topic areas but also improved his ICT and literacy skills. Alfie feels that "*Elamp4 is a lot different because you don't have to go to school, I don't mind doing the work, I just don't want to go to school.*" His family have also found the laptop a useful tool for research and it has initiated an interest in further learning opportunities for other family members.

Alfie has clearly made a lot of progress but felt he needed the ongoing support of face-to face meetings with his tutor "*to carry on helping with my learning*". He is definitely more confident in using the laptop and on-line programme but finds some of the wording in the assignment sheets difficult to follow. "*I reckon I could do it by myself but it would be hard, very hard*".

## The future

Alfie has expressed an interest in working as a bricklayer and at the time of writing was considering a course or apprenticeship. His last challenge was very appropriate as it focused on finding about what his choices were when he becomes 16. ELAMP has therefore allowed him to consider his future more thoroughly, especially as he has now also spent several months on a work placement in a timber yard which has taught him much about the reality of working life.

## LISA



Lisa has always lived in Gloucestershire where the family are on a small site. She enjoyed primary school and made good progress, but left secondary school during Y8. At that stage school had come to seem both “*boring*” and irrelevant. None of her Traveller friends completed secondary education and she joined the project when she would have been in Y10

## ELAMP

Lisa has found ELAMP much more stimulating than being at school. “*It’s good*”, “*more relaxing*” and “*fun as well I reckon*”. During the first year she attended weekly group meetings with her tutor and four other ELAMP students. She found these very productive and enjoyable, and also carried on her projects with the laptop at home.

She started with the ‘ICT’ and ‘Hair & Beauty’ challenges at Level 1, and especially liked doing activities like a Hair and Beauty makeover on her friend, and then making a Power Point presentation about it as evidence for her ‘IOLP’ qualification. She feels that the project has improved her ICT skills as a platform for the future and she regularly uses email and the internet as well as her digital camera. The project has also improved her independent learning skills. At the end of her first year she moved on to Level 2 and was working on improving her photography and driving theory at the time of the interview. To complete work at this level she was working independently at home, with email and telephone support from her tutor. According to her tutor she has made outstanding progress and now just needs occasional support in framing her work: “*I know what to write but not always how to write it*” [Lisa subsequently gained her Level 2 qualification in July, 2008]

## The future

Lisa appreciates the way in which the project has given her more of an education and some qualifications which could be useful for a future job. She has also discussed college options with her tutor but at the time of interview not yet made any firm decisions. From her tutor’s perspective the project has reinforced Lisa’s confidence in her literacy skills but perhaps even more important has raised her expectations of herself as well as giving her a platform of transferable skills.

The views of other (Cambridgeshire) members who were interviewed also had a positive flavour. They too found it enjoyable and “*more exciting*” than other learning programmes they had experienced. They also liked the project’s voluntary nature and the flexibility of being able to choose when and where they did their work; all felt safer and more comfortable working outside the school environment. This enthusiasm and positive approach to learning suggests that although many young Travellers leave the education system it is not due to lack of a desire to learn.

From comments made, students clearly benefitted from a blended learning approach with a combination of face to face meetings, e-mail and phone support from their tutors. Face-to-face support was especially important in the early stages to re-engage with learning and develop their ICT skills. Most felt that they had become more confident and independent as they gained experience, however all students recognized the need for some continued face-to-face support to enable further progress and motivation. There was clear evidence of students overall growing self-esteem which enabled them to consider their post 16 options much more seriously than before.

Key benefits from a student perspective therefore included:

- Being able to continue their education with a supported learning programme that was enjoyable and relevant to their educational needs.
- Having tutor support which was flexible and sensitive to their learning needs and ambitions.
- Gains in self esteem and confidence enabling students to explore their chosen options for further education and employment.

### ***Advisor views about member progress***

Looking at the broader evidence, i.e. as collated from tutors across the cohort of 67 young members, it is interesting to see clear resonances with the feedback from the sample of members and from the first year of the project. It is also useful to separate the commentary into feedback from the original partners, who had gained experience and were reflecting on progress over an 18 month period, and the second year partners who were facing all the challenges associated with a new venture.

#### **a) Existing partners**

These partners had been working with a total of 35 students and feedback was generally very positive. The opportunity to re-engage in learning was reported as have been significant for many of the members. The range of benefits mentioned included the qualifications themselves plus member realization that they could be useful; significant increases in confidence (as learners) and related self-esteem; plus a new awareness that learning and working with a tutor could actually be enjoyable. There were also reported increases in ICT and literacy skills levels, as well as planning skills and improvements in the ability to take and make use of advice. Similarly there were indications that many had begun to develop more independence and to

take initiative as learners, but to vary degrees and some still needing integral support from their tutors. Most members continued to be offered a structure of weekly support (occasionally fortnightly), with email and telephone back-up where practicable. Some were now less dependent on face-to-face meetings; but this seems to have been a minority as some level of background reassurance remained important for most. One tutor also added an important reminder about needing sufficient time to prepare youngsters if the family is to be away from base even for short periods, and just how difficult distance learning support could then be especially given the connectivity situation. Social skills were again mentioned as important gain-areas in the group/hub context. One tutor also commented on 'boredom avoidance' related to some of the girls who had become involved; an interesting gender-related observation which may partly reflect gender roles within some families.

In vocational terms there were reported to be several encouraging examples of linking up with Connexions and colleges. There was also evidence of much more focused and realistic thinking amongst participants about FE and job options, and several youngsters had gained enough confidence to take concrete steps in exploring college and job options. These included work experience, visits to college and making both job and course applications. However, there were also frustrations; fathers wanting their lads to focus on the family business which could lead to tensions, and one refusing to let his daughter explore a college course. ELAMP was generally felt to have made a positive impact with families, but with a clear need for sensitive dialogue.

#### **b) New partners**

As noted above, one new partner (Ealing) temporarily withdrew following staffing changes. Others were affected by staffing or reorganizations which caused some delays. The feedback from new partners again also reflected the challenges faced in getting underway with any new project. However in specific ELAMP terms it was disappointing to see the continuance of some significant purchasing delays within the new partner LAs. For some there were also anticipated and sometimes protracted problems with internet connectivity. These were particular issues in North Yorkshire which, like St Helens the year before, was only able to start work with youngsters in the autumn term. Flexibility and ingenuity were again evident and once partners from the seven TES were able to make a start they generally reported positive progress with most of their 28 students.

Of these, 23 were felt to be making decent progress in terms of ICT skills and handling the challenges, whilst five had needed significant support. Apart from (target) weekly meetings tutors had also continued to communicate by email and/or phone where they could. As with feedback last year, the first run through with a challenge had been taxing for many students in terms of understanding the worksheets and what was required. Although they could normally cope with subsequent paperwork the jargon was still something of a hindrance in developing independent use of the materials. This apart, other benefits mentioned were again related to increased self-confidence and

getting back into learning. There were also some comments about the social-skills value of the hub model; especially from West Sussex which, as noted above, had opted for 'Working with others' as the first skills area to be explored.

In addition there were some comments about the learning rationale of the approach which echoed experiences from the previous year but which were now more explicit. These highlighted the way in which members tended to focus in on the challenges themselves, and found it more natural to get on and tackle these, rather than being able to appreciate that the qualifications are about a process, from planning through action to review. There is seemingly an important balance here if members are to get the most out of the overall experience. As some tutors noted, the activity associated with a challenge topic needs to be carefully designed to maximize interest and benefits, whilst the process dimension needs to be highlighted in appropriate ways to maximize the value of the overall learning experience.

Unfortunately new partners weren't asked specifically about initiatives to develop broader vocational linkage; a design fault with the questionnaire schedule. However some of them added comments within other responses which indicated that college options were being actively explored. Two respondents also repeated concerns that Level 1 qualifications made for a good start but were not a sufficient foundation for a range of relevant college-based courses. One of these, West Sussex, expressed an interest in exploring a broader ELAMP offering which would also enable youngsters to develop literacy, and indeed numeracy, skills in a more structured way; the ideal target being qualifications in ICT, literacy and numeracy as well as wider key skills.

## **1.2 The advisor role**

As with feedback about learners there were clear parallels with comments made by tutors during the first year of the project. In particular new 'advisors' felt that there had been a steep learning curve, that there had been distinct advantages in adopting a group-based (rather than one-to-one) support model wherever possible, and that face-to-face sessions needed to be thought of as an integral part of ongoing work with most youngsters, certainly during their first year. They also endorsed the importance of seeing ELAMP as including an emphasis on the exploration of vocational options; not just working towards wider key skills qualifications.

However, at this stage, overall feedback from both the original group of tutor-advisors and new project advisors also proved very valuable in providing much more specific pointers for the future. These are summarized here, but an extended version was also issued to tutors during the summer term (2008) in the form of a newsletter based on shared experience.

These pointers were about the need for clarity in understanding the project 'year', and project targets/requirements; about deciding which youngsters were likely to

benefit most; about how to prepare and support them over time; and ideas for an active vocational strategy.

### **1.2.1 Understanding the project**

New partners have normally been recruited in September, the start of the academic year, to fit with funding constraints. However experience has shown that the autumn term is needed to set the project up locally; including equipment purchase, addressing connectivity issues, and preliminary training. Indeed, as noted above, some partners have experienced delays in equipment purchase processes, or faced connectivity issues, so that this period can become extended. To take account of this preparatory period, tutors have recommended that it is best to plan in terms of a project 'learning year' which runs past the academic year and through to December. The young members can then enter work for moderation in July or the subsequent December and tutors can plan accordingly.

Apart from recommending clarity about the project year, tutors also felt that they had underestimated time commitments when joining the project, and that it was important to ensure that potential new partners had a better picture of requirements. Many of these requirements become clear in the next subsection, but one fundamental issue needing clarity was that the project was NOT about distance learning; i.e. supporting youngsters at a distance<sup>15</sup>. Rather the emphasis needed to be on blended learning, with a commitment to face-to-face sessions whilst encouraging independent learning, at home, with the laptop and VLE.

In terms of recommendations, another point worth highlighting from the feedback is the value of peer support. As noted above for the first year, having two members of staff on the project to address the workload was found to be very beneficial. Some tutors in year two were still working alone on the project, and noted that isolation had been a factor in their progress and understanding of the project. One suggestion here was for additional support from other local TESS, especially if they had more experience. Tutors also continued to emphasize the value of the project review meetings as opportunities to share experience and renew enthusiasm.

### **1.2.2 Selecting new members and support over time**

Here experience suggests that the recruitment emphasis should be on trying to ensure that potential members had a clear understanding of the project in terms of the challenges and work required of them, and that both they and their parents were felt to be in a position to make a realistic commitment in terms of time and effort.

In this context it was noted that a learning 'contract' could be helpful for students, families and tutors as a way of confirming roles and expectations for all parties. This could include support arrangements, anticipated/expected time commitments and health and safety issues. Some advisors had also found it very beneficial to set out a

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<sup>15</sup> This had been part of the remit at the start of the project, when some highly mobile youngsters were included. However it had quickly proved impracticable.

planned learning pathway with each young member as part of this process, taking account of personal needs/targets and with a clear exit strategy.

Once support was underway, tutoring needed to be seen as a multidimensional task. Initial training in ICT and the use of the Nisai VLE needed to be complemented with a focus on internet safety. Moving on to work at the challenges meant that advisors needed to balance the tasks involved with encouraging the members to complete assignment sheets; and to be aware that youngsters would be more motivated towards completing the challenges than focusing on the process requirements. This meant that careful planning of sessions was important and where there was a group approach some flexibility was needed to allow for individual support. Time was also needed to review and assess work, and to troubleshoot any technical problems.

There were also helpful comments about supporting the learning process with a view to addressing the challenge of reinforcing independent learning skills:-

- Know your student: their needs and interests, use their existing skills and interests to develop work.
- Support and encourage - growing self-confidence increases independent learning but needs planning for. A learning pathway from the start can enable this process.
- Get them into learning routines - regular session slots (mornings can be more productive than afternoons!)
- And, from the perspective of the VLE, use the comment box on the assignment sheets to aid independent working

### **1.2.3 An active vocational strategy**

For those already disengaged from school there were reports of successful practice in working closely with the Connexions framework and through other local organizations like Business Enterprise. Such partnership has led to work placements and other useful employer-led activities as well as positive links with colleges and training. Dependent on the local context, direct college links and visits arranged by TESS had also proved successful. To date, initiatives had included tasters or attending open days and supporting induction events. Visits to groups from the college where partners were using the hub/group approach had also been explored. These are encouraging steps and other ideas include input from local Travellers who have made good use of training/college opportunities themselves, and the exploration of Traveller-related enterprises for work experience opportunities.

Again there are important pointers here for future practice, and clearly where youngsters were still on the fringes of schooling such initiatives need to be developed in cooperation with relevant school staff. Here experience suggested that a proactive approach might be important as access to positive post-16 options' are not always prioritized for Traveller pupils within the school setting.

## **Section 2: Project management and support**

The project has a small steering group which brings together its manager, assistant manager and the evaluators. This has proved a valuable forum and has also allowed formative feedback to be considered as part of the planning process.

The challenges faced by management start with recruitment, move on to preparing new TESS staff each year and then to a more generally supportive role. They also include liaison with the VLE provider, Nisai, with Synetrix (an internet connectivity provider) and with the Ormiston Education Trust which has become responsible for developing project materials as well as the moderation process. This section will be divided into two parts, one concerned with training and support, and the other with broader management considerations including links with the other three agencies and what costed, consolidated longer-term provision might entail.

### **2.1 Training and support**

Initial project training (for tutors) has been designed as a two phase process. The first training event has been scheduled for November when new partners have been clearly identified, and the second for the following January. Sharing events have also been organized later in the project year, and these draw together new and existing partners with obvious benefits.

The main recommendations made last year were that the balance of training content should be amended to include more on pedagogy, that the time gap between familiarization with the VLE and starting work with new members should be narrowed, and that follow up visits from the managers should be implemented in order to help partners get underway during their first year. The concern with the balance of content was intended to ensure that the training events were not solely focused on an introduction to the technology, the materials, the moderation process and safety concerns. They should also raise tutor awareness about issues like creating structure, the balance between the content of the challenges and the processes required for key skills development, and the importance of regular face-to-face sessions. This was partially implemented for the 2007-08 training and will be fully implemented for new partners joining this year. The timing of training has also been changed for 2007-08 so that the main familiarization input will take place at the January session.

The follow up visits were fully implemented for new TESS joining the project in 2007-08 and proved very successful. In the previous year it had been noted that some partners didn't report early problems and others hadn't internalized advice and guidance from the training sessions; common issues in multi-partner projects. The visits proved beneficial in two ways. First: they allowed the managers focused time with each partner to support their planning and identify their issues. Second: it created a climate within which partners were much more likely to contact them if they encountered new problems. The first set of visits took place in February/March and focused on discussions about hardware purchase, setting up

connectivity, the approach to be adopted with learners, and progress towards learners' preparation and training. Local issues were explored with, for example, direct contact with LA purchasing officers where there had been delays. Each partner was also asked to outline an action plan. The second visits took place in June. These centred on experiences with internet connectivity, any ongoing problems with hardware, progress with using the environment and preparations for submitting student work for moderation (the July deadline).

The new partner visits will be repeated this year (2008-09), but with 12 new TESS joining the project it has also been decided to explore a consultancy approach where this makes sense in terms of geography. This will mean using experienced tutors to act as consultants to a small group of new partners.

## 2.2 Project coordination.

One of the critical issues for the project is internet connectivity via GPRS (and latterly 3G) mobile phone networks. Data collected by the project managers indicated that almost half of our young learners had been significantly affected by communication black-spots, or other problems associated with the service offered by the mobile phone companies. This led to two developments during the project year; the introduction of off-line materials for two of the Wider Key Skills areas, and cooperation with a new organization, 'Synetrix', which emerged as the Becta approved connectivity provider for the DCSF 'Computers for Pupils' programme.

As acknowledged in last year's report, partners had experienced a range of problems with the mobile telephone companies which provided their GPRS access to the internet. Establishing contracts through Synetrix has had the advantage of a one-stop helpline which is more readily monitored by the project managers. Another advantage is the built in, and Becta approved, filtering system for internet traffic which also has safeguards so that users can't download MPG files. In the previous project year there had been instances of substantial excess bills caused by one or two learners downloading such files so this has been a significant advance. The arrangement with Synetrix also means that partners pay for a 12-month service at the start of their contract year but are not charged for excess use even if individual users do go over agreed limits.

Experience in the first year has been mixed. The new type of contracts are a major step forward, but some of the filtering has caused frustrations to both tutors and learners who have not always been able to access 'recommended' sites. There were also some reported problems with equipment supplied via Synetrix, and experiences with the helpline have been variable. However, it is difficult to know whether these were teething issues or systemic. The ELAMP project managers have now set up a logging system which partners will use to record their interactions with the helpdesk. Partners will also be asked to report unresolved issues to them within a set period of time and regular reviews have been arranged with the Synetrix staff responsible for the contract.

Another change during the course of the project year was that the work of our original partner, Chrysalis Club 2000, was absorbed into 'Ormiston Education', a

larger Birmingham-based trust. Arrangements for moderation have continued in the same way but costings have now been formalized. In the light of comments from tutors and learners the 'Improving own learning and performance' and 'Problem Solving' materials were revised and the Trust will also be responsible for putting these on the Nisai VLE site, as well as producing Word versions for DVD<sup>16</sup>. These off-line options are intended for youngsters who are significantly affected by communication blackspots (see below). The project has also commissioned exemplar material to go onto a separate DVD and Ormiston Education will continue the CC2000 input to partner training.

The working relationship with Nisai has continued to be positive, with a good service level agreement and clear costings. However there seem to have been delays with introducing the new platform discussed in last year's evaluation report and this may well mean that the project will need to explore other VLEs as part of a review of functionality requirements and the changes which will be necessitated by modifications to the QCA wider key skills specifications. This review will need to take place in good time to ensure changes for the 2009-2010 academic year.

As noted above, the main management functions within the project relate to the training and support of partners and to linking with key agencies which provide services and can also assist in future project development. Other key functions include dissemination of project experiences (a responsibility currently shared with the evaluators) and strategic planning concerned with establishing the project as a longer-term service independent of DCSF funding which is only underwritten until 2010. Up until now three staff days have been allocated to management, via secondment arrangements. On this basis the minimum financing required to continue this service has now been estimated to be of the order of £800-£1000 per learner per annum on the basis of a cohort of 100 learners and allowing for laptop depreciation over a three year period. This costing exercise has established a useful working baseline and has enabled the beginnings of discussion with existing partners. However, wider policy considerations have recently impacted on these discussions and these are further discussed in the next section.

### **Section 3 The future: some brief notes on broader issues**

At the time of writing the project is now in its third year, and, as noted in feedback from advisors (subsection 1.2), there are already a number of useful pointers for future good practice. This final section will touch on some of these but will concentrate on three strategic considerations which seem critical to future progress within the project:- tutor time, internet connectivity and the vocational emphasis. It will conclude with some brief notes about the longer-term, including new possibilities prompted by the recent publication of the White Paper 'Back on Track'

**First tutor time.** Currently the project depends on input from TESS staff who take on the tutorial role as part of their day-to-day work and often find the role more time-

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<sup>16</sup> The 'Working with others' specifications will change more radically when new qualifications are introduced by the QCA, so that revision of this skill area has not been prioritized this year.

intensive than they had anticipated. At the same time, many TESS are finding themselves under pressure through reorganizations and staff reductions. There is also clear evidence of changes in focus to advisory/supportive (rather than tutorial) roles. The impact of these changes has been evident amongst some of the ELAMP partners. From the immediate perspective of the project it remains important to maintain and improve a strong, supportive central structure, with responsive procedures for tutors. In the longer term it also seems important to consider ways of costing in dedicated TESS staff-time (see below).

The second strategic consideration is **internet connectivity**. As noted above, the Synetrix arrangements are potentially a significant step forward for TESS in handling issues like accounts and dealing with technical problems with the equipment. However, although actual coverage has improved considerably over the last few years it is clear that there will continue to be communication blackspots; just as with mobile phones. The challenge for the project is that Traveller sites and homes are all too often within low population density areas where connectivity is intermittent, poor or non-existent. This is not a situation which will change in the short term and a significant number of ELAMP learners will continue to be affected.

Fortunately, where there have been serious problems, most TESS have managed to meet with youngsters at other venues where internet access has not been an issue. However, as the main worksheets required for the key skills qualifications are on-line, there have been frustrations and delays. Similarly email communication has of course been problematic. It therefore seems important to establish an alternative route within the project where worksheets and other essential support materials are available off-line, and where both face-to-face sessions and independent learning tasks are planned in a different way. As noted above, the worksheets have been revised and the new versions will be produced in Word on a DVD. This is an important first step in establishing alternative approaches which now need to be integrated into project thinking rather than being part of ad hoc responses to connectivity problems.

The third strategic consideration relates to **improving the approach as a platform for bridging into vocational training and the world of work**. On the plus side, the feedback from tutors this year shows that many TESS have made significant progress in this area, for example by encouraging linkage with colleges and Connexions. However, it would seem important to make this a more systematic focus for all learners, and currently vocational planning and review sheets are being introduced alongside 'personalized learning plans'. These will both be trialed in the current project year. It may also be important to take more account of gender issues and how they relate to family priorities.

In addition there are still concerns that wider key skills qualifications are not in themselves an adequate preparation for work or for college courses. Following last year's evaluation report it was recommended that partners should be encouraged to purchase suitable literacy reinforcement software, as an important first step in meeting this concern. However, none of them took this step; the problem seems to have been the suitability of packages on offer, with no 'ideal' solution. Currently a central decision has been taken and the 'Education City' package is being made available to all learners. The package also covers numeracy and it will be

interesting to see (a) the extent to which it is used in practice and (b) the perceived impact.

These strategic considerations also need to be considered within the context of the **longer-term viability of the approach**. If it is to provide a secure and useful service for Traveller youngsters, it will be important to explore the possibility of direct payment for staffing. This would provide a secure base from which to develop imaginative approaches to using the scheme where there are connectivity challenges and a continuing strong focus on providing youngsters with the life skills they need.

In the previous section a figure of £800 to £1,000 (per learner, per annum) was suggested as a baseline for funding a central service and providing both equipment and connectivity. If TESS partners are using a group-based approach with five learners then tutor input costs would be of the order of £1,300-£1,500 per learner over a 38 week teaching year. This estimate is based on teaching cover costs and allows for half-a-day a week contact time plus half-a-day for preparation and learner support. Costs for working with smaller groups or dispersed learners would be proportionately higher. However, this calculation is helpful in suggesting a minimum of the order of about £2,500 per learner.

In this context it is important to look at the overall profile of the learners. Currently 75% are completely disengaged from school, and in many cases their parents have opted for Elective Home Education (EHE). The other 25% are still on the fringes of schooling and a handful are registered with an 'alternative provision' agency funded by their LA to work with youngsters who are 'out of school'.

In the longer term the service offered by the ELAMP Wider Key Skills project may be attractive to schools and 'alternative providers' as a positive or preventative measure which they are prepared to fund. However, the ELAMP approach faces constraints in offering a service to families who have opted for EHE or have failed to register their children with secondary schools, and it seems likely that such youngsters would need to re-engage with the education system in some way in order to be considered for a place. In the light of these considerations the project is currently exploring the possibility of working within the framework which is being developed following the publication of the White Paper 'Back on Track' (May, 2008) which calls for an overhaul of alternative provision in order to make it more effective in terms of outcomes.

## Appendix: A list of project partners

<b>Partners</b>	<b>Involvement in the phases</b>
Cambridgeshire	Original E-LAMP <sub>4</sub> partner (from 2006-07)
Gloucestershire	Original E-LAMP <sub>4</sub> partner (from 2006-07)
Leeds	Original E-LAMP <sub>4</sub> partner (from 2006-07)
St Helens	Original E-LAMP <sub>4</sub> partner (from 2006-07)
WMCESTC <sup>17</sup>	Original E-LAMP <sub>4</sub> partner (from 2006-07)
ACTES <sup>18</sup>	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
Ealing	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
East Yorkshire	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
Hillingdon	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
Northants	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
North Yorkshire	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
Richmond on Thames	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
West Sussex	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)
York	Additional partner for E-LAMP <sub>5</sub> (from 2007-08)

<sup>17</sup> The West Midlands Consortium Education Service for Traveller Children covers 11 LAs

<sup>18</sup> The Avon Consortium covers 4 LAs.