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Health Education England



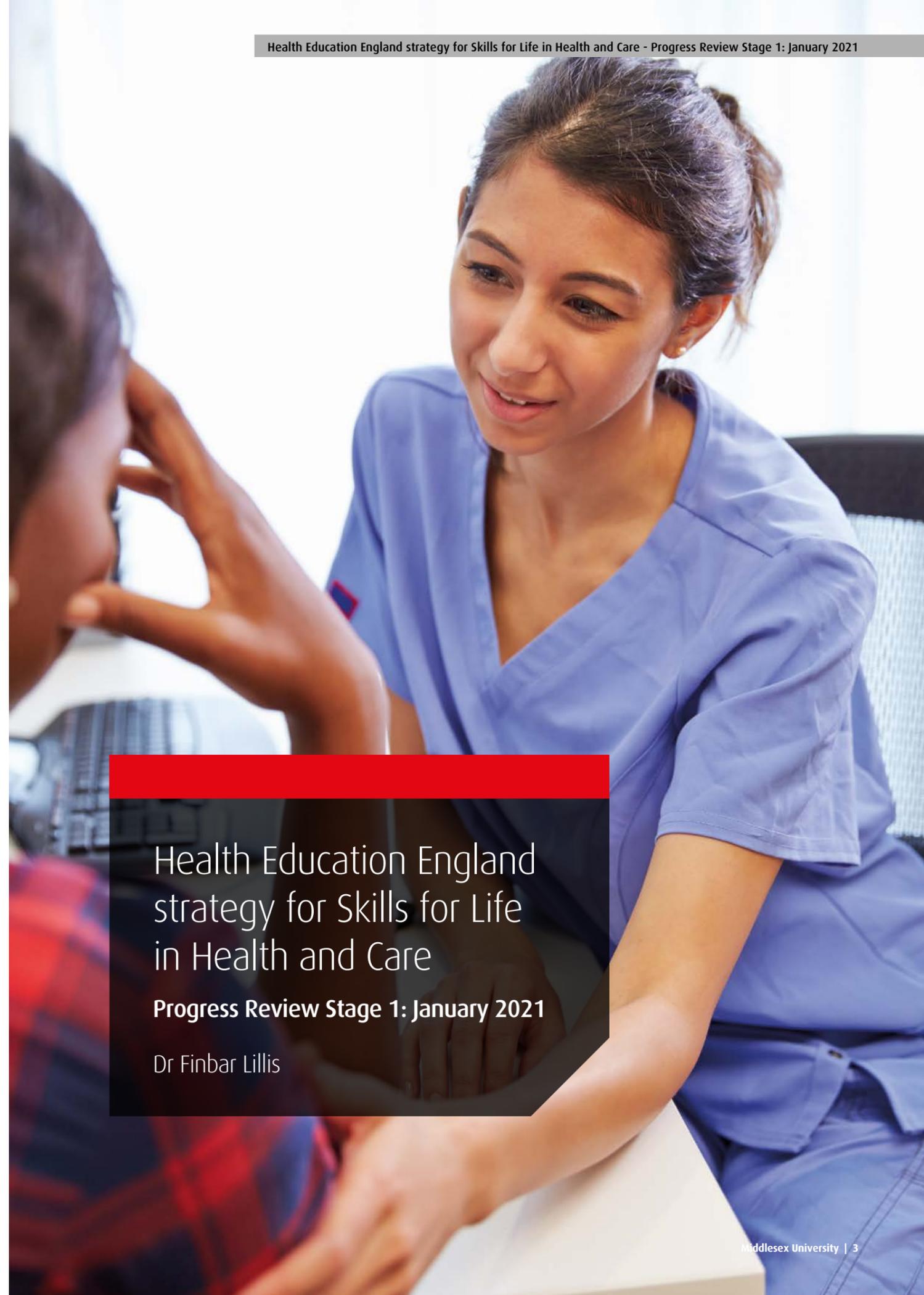
# Health Education England strategy for Skills for Life in Health and Care

Progress Review Stage 1:  
January 2021

Dr Finbar Lillis

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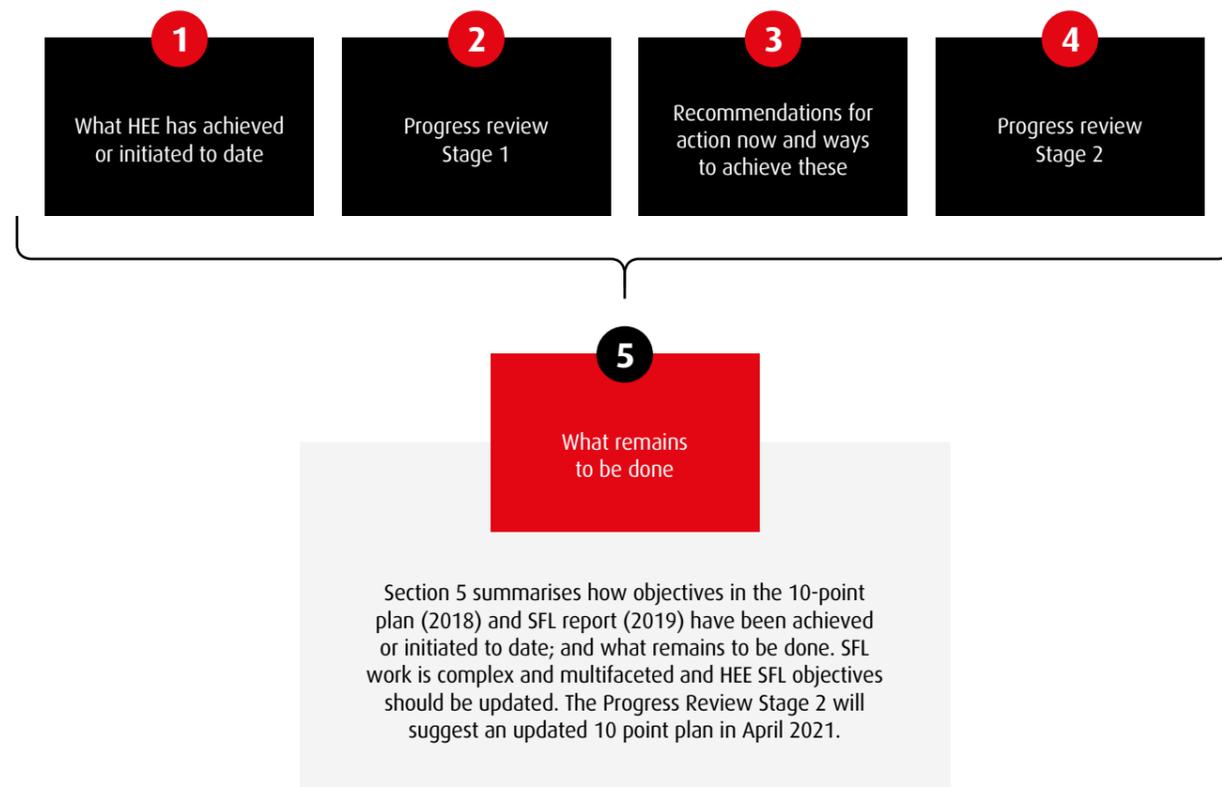
# Summary

'Skills for Life' achievement and progression issues were identified in recent attempts to support healthcare workforce progression, into Higher Education 'health related vocational programmes'. Firstly, as obstacles to progression for the healthcare support workforce, in the [Bridging Programme report](#), (Skills for Health, 2015), then following a depth investigation, in the [Beyond the Brand](#) report (Skills for Health, 2017).

In July 2018, Health Education England (HEE) responded to 'Beyond the Brand' with an initial 10-point plan (Section 5) and asked Middlesex University to produce a national 'Skills for Life' strategy (Lillis 2019). **This set out in practical detail** what needed to be done to enact the HEE 10-point plan.

Middlesex University is conducting a Progress Review of HEE Skills for Life (SFL) activity since November 2019.

## This Stage 1 Progress Review report sets out:



# Progress and recommended actions

## Significant Progress

**Overall, HEE has made significant progress on enacting the Skills for Life strategy. Some actions have gone beyond the aspirations of the initial 10-point plan (work with BKSb and the National Literacy Trust for example), while some specific actions are needed now, for example on Digital Skills and ESOL and are recommended in Section 3 below.**

The initial 10-point plan looked for ways to build SFL understanding and capacity inside the sector and Section 5 of the 'Skills for Life' report set out in detail how to achieve this aim:

“...building infrastructure and sustainability for employers, by developing in-house teaching expertise, workplace coaches and support for managers and mentors’.

## Required Improvements

**As the SFL strategy develops and expands, HEE needs to improve how it shares SFL knowledge and information; it needs to make better use of SFL expertise to know what is worth sharing. This report makes some recommendations (Section 3) about how to do this.**

Inter-relational weaknesses in Skills for Life continue to impede career progress for many in the healthcare support workforce. The impetus to act on SFL is probably greater now, than when SFL issues were first formally researched. Responses to HEE's actions to date, show how a pro-active approach is welcomed by the sector. There is much more to do, for a comprehensive, sustainable SFL strategy to work.

## Securing Progression

**Securing Progression for Senior Healthcare Support Workers into Nursing Associate (NA) and Registered Nurse (RN) Apprenticeship Programmes: the place of Skills for Life**

Securing progression for Senior Healthcare Support Workers (SHCSWs), from support roles into regulated health professions, has been a key HEE policy objective, through its Talent for Care and Widening Participation strategy (and preceding initiatives), since at least 2013. The need to address Skills for Life learning emerged from early work on progression, prior to the introduction of degree apprenticeships or the Nursing Associate role. SFL learning and achievement is a requirement for SHCSW apprenticeship achievement and essential for onward progression. There is a pressing need now, to secure progression routes for successful SHCSW apprentices into Nursing Associate and Registered Nurse Apprenticeship programmes, to fulfil their potential as health professionals and to achieve the goal of significant expansion of the nursing workforce in coming years.

Current dialogue between Middlesex University, HEE, Skills for Health and other organisations, seeks to establish a comprehensive way forward on this issue, working with all Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approved providers of NA and RN apprenticeship programmes across England.

# 1. HEE achievements to date

## 1.1 Appointment of new HEE staff with SFL responsibilities

At the start of 2019, HEE Talent for Care dedicated staff time to SFL work, making it a key deliverable for one of two National Apprenticeship Programme Managers; a dedicated resource for 24 hours a week with an associated budget. Both National Apprenticeship Programme Managers facilitate SFL dialogue with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Education (DfE), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE), Trade Unions (TUs) and other key bodies, to advance the SFL agenda in the health and social care sector.

HEE has appointed 7 Regional Relationship Managers (RMs) with responsibilities for promoting and supporting apprenticeships in the sector including SFL, where SFL weaknesses are an obstacle to apprenticeship entry or achievement.

Relationship Managers facilitate dialogue between Talent for Care and employers on workforce SFL needs. For example, employers reported to RMs that they were failing to fill Trainee Nursing Associate (TNA) vacancies because aspiring HCSWs were struggling to absorb written information. These learning needs informed subsequent HEE Talent for Care (TfC) work commissioned with the National Literacy Trust (NLT). In summer 2020, a series of NLT webinars were to broadcast to help Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) staff improve their literacy. RMs advise employers on sourcing SFL provision (either through HEE funded SFL tools or local Further Education (FE) options), on collaborative working with TUs and on implementation and support in specific contexts, such as primary and social care.

## 1.2 Healthcare Apprenticeship Standards Online (HASO): SFL web pages

The HEE SFL portfolio currently sits on the HASO website. The primary audience for this 'site within a site' is health and care sector staff - apprenticeship leads, Learning and Development and Organisational Development staff. This site was commissioned by the HEE TfC initiative, operates on a rolling yearly contract and is managed by Skills for Health.

'...As such, it benefits from all the support of the main site. This June, we re-designed the look of the pages and added a lot of new content, with very quick turnaround times. The main HASO site has a scheduled weekly newsletter, into which we often input new content. Further to this, when things change quickly...e.g. during the Covid-19 lockdown, we can update information at short notice...the TfC contract for HASO includes a dedicated staff member, whose job it is to respond quickly to demands and design appropriate solutions. She does this for the whole HASO site, not just the Skills for Life section.'

National Programme Manager - Apprenticeships

## 1.3 Basic and Key Skills Builder (BKSB Ltd)

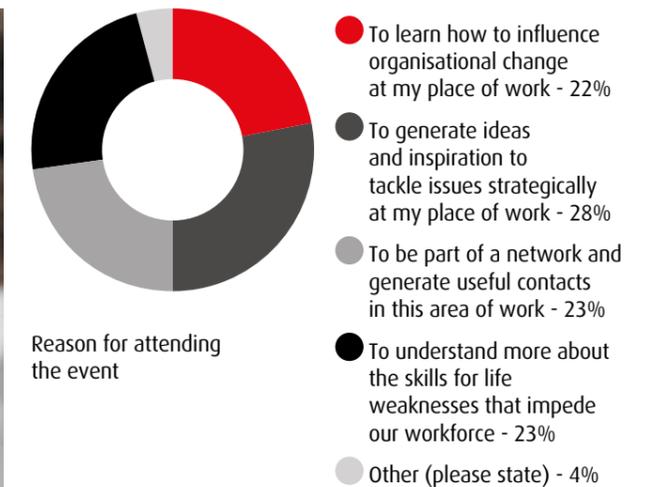
'At BKSB, we write, develop and supply EdTech products which improve English and maths skills. Our solutions are designed to meet the GCSE and Functional Skills Criteria, but are also suitable for any other skills improvement programme.'

HEE invited suppliers of online SFL products to tender for a contract to supply SFL learning services to the sector in 2019-20. HEE selected BKSB Ltd. Potential suppliers were asked to specify (for example) how their products and services would enable initial diagnostic assessment, reach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners, personalise learning and track progress, and reach staff working in large Hospital Trusts or small GP practices. Sector employers (user organisations) would be asked by HEE to contribute to evaluating provider performance, using a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

At the time of writing, c. 7,000 learners (from over 100 employers in the sector) are currently using the BKSB programme. A wide range of health and social care employers are represented, including large hospital trusts, GP surgeries, residential care homes and health and care staff with local authorities. HEE is currently working on improving reach to primary care, developing further webinars and widening general reach through newsletters to the sector from multiple sources, including the HEE Training Hubs team.

## 1.4 HEE SFL Master Classes

170 delegates from a wide range of health and care employers attended HEE Skills for Life 'Master Classes' between Nov 6, 2019 and March 11, 2020. The master classes were held in London, Manchester, Taunton and Birmingham. 75% of those attending said their expectations were 'fully met'. Those who said their expectations were partially met, made constructive suggestions about what they would like in future sessions. New partnerships were formed between Trusts at Master Class events; evidence of HEE facilitating collaboration between employers around their common SFL interests. HEE produced a comprehensive evaluation report which helped to inform the recommendations made in this report.



## 1.5 SFL Network building

Currently there are 400 members in the SFL network who have first access to news, events and offers through the mailing list.

“You do an amazing job and this series is also hopefully going to help individuals who contact me as the Supportive Signposting Person during the next three month trial- I await their calls. Apprenticeships are definitely the way forward for many learners who find class based study difficult without the opportunity to put their learning into action and explore ways of using their knowledge in the workplace. The links with the Literacy Trust, BKSb, HASO, ESOL and HEE all link in to support the people I will need to help - it has definitely been a valuable resource to be involved in the HEE Webinars.”  
**Midwife, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

## 1.6 HEE partnership work with National Numeracy (NN) Challenge

“National Numeracy is an independent charity working to improve numeracy across the UK”

In 2018, 2019 and 2020 HEE was a lead supporter for the NN National Numeracy Day. In 2018, the Talent for Care team commissioned NN to produce ‘Train the Trainer’ materials for workplace numeracy champions, in the form of video content on numeracy topics, including: understanding adult skills levels, guidance for staff on becoming a ‘Numeracy Champion’, guided access to the National Numeracy Challenge website, plus blogs, a message board, research summaries and links to complementary sites. These resources will shortly be made available on the HASO site.

In addition to HEE commissioned work, National Numeracy staff spoke at all 2019-20 HEE SFL Masterclasses and hosted four online sessions in April and May 2020, to introduce employers to their approach and the National Numeracy Challenge.

[Read a case study about NN support for people pursuing the Care Certificate here.](#)



## 1.7 Trade Unions

The HEE Apprenticeships National Programme Manager chairs the HEE TFC Trade Union Sub-Group, ‘a shared, dedicated forum for trade unions, NHS Employers and HEE to discuss apprenticeships and work experience within the context of the national Talent for Care work’.

National Organisers from Unison and the TUC spoke at each of the SFL masterclasses (see 4 above) to share how employers could work with TUs nationally and locally, to upskill staff with support from Union Learning Reps (ULRs).

Unionlearn is the learning and skills organisation of the TUC and provided helpful advice and information for the Progress Review on ESOL and Education and Skills Funding Agency [ESFA Adult Education Budget \(AEB\) 2020-21](#). [HEE has produced a guide available on HASO for working with TU branches.](#)

## 1.10 Direct employer access to resources: Functional Skills qualifications

Health and Social Care employer-providers often have difficulty in directly accessing the SFL resources and services they need. Centrally commissioning online SFL learning resources, that employers can access for free has proven successful. Learner and employer use of the BKSb platform grows daily. But access to FS qualifications (i.e., the formal assessments of FS achievement by an Ofqual approved Awarding Body (AO) is another process, with employers having to seek separate ‘AO centre approval’ to be able to offer FS qualifications (run the examinations).

At the time of writing, HEE is exploring this possibility:

“A challenge for the sector, in term of access to resources, includes accessing functional skills exams. This is particularly true when the learner has studied independently, e.g., through BKSb. Employers from every region of England have fed back (through their Talent for Care Relationship Manager) that they cannot find exam provision, often on top of not being able to find course provision. This proves a challenge for learners on BKSb, for the employers who support them and don’t want to set them up to fail, and overarchingly for sector progression. HEE could support employers by commissioning an Ofqual approved AO to provide FS exam only services to Health & Social Care employers across England. Thought would need to be given as to how different employers would access this.”  
**National Programme Manager – Apprenticeships**

There is no doubt of the value to employers in HEE taking on responsibility for securing contracts for such services, where it is feasible. There will be practical benefits (scale, reduced costs and improved effectiveness) and the potential for improvements in shared learning about SFL across the sector.

## 1.8 National Literacy Trust

In 2019, HEE commissioned the National Literacy Trust to provide a series of 9 online literacy support sessions. 250 employers signed up for these sessions (Writing, Reading, Speaking & Listening) between July and September 2020. HEE is in the process of doing final edits to webinar session recordings and uploading all associated resources to E-Learning for Health.

In addition to the commissioned work, [The National Literacy Trust \(NLT\)](#) partnered with HEE to offer 500 NHS staff [free access to audio books](#). 300 health and care sector employees have accessed this offer to date.

## 1.9 Skills for Life Special Interest Group

The HEE Special Interest Group on Skills for Life brings together employers, academics, HEE staff and other interested parties to discuss current SFL activity and inform the direction of future travel lead by employer interest and priority. The group was convened from those attending the ‘Beyond the Brand’ report review meeting in July 2018 and meets quarterly.

## 2. Progress Review Stage 1: August 2020



3. A daily influx of SFL information, resources, knowledge, expertise and good practice is gratifying and exciting. But HEE needs a means to manage this influx of knowledge and expertise to ensure widest possible access to the sector, fairness all round, best value and high quality.
4. There is a need to expand the strategy to take account of all SFL learning needs, including ESOL and Digital Skills. Skills for Life weaknesses are inter-relational. Poor literacy makes for poor maths understanding, basic digital skills are needed to access to SFL learning - which has rapidly moved online. ESOL learners lacking basic language skills are more likely to be from BAME groups and are further excluded from learning and progression. Higher qualified staff from BAME groups with ESOL learning needs are less likely to progress to senior roles.
5. And at the same time, there is a need to make it much easier for all those with an interest to access and learn from SFL network knowledge and best practices. By significantly improving access, HEE could better facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange among those with an interest in SFL in Health and Care.

As HEE SFL activity has developed, demand for SFL information and support (from Healthcare employer/providers and learners) has broadened in range and become more complex in nature. It will be increasingly difficult to meet such demand unless HEE adopts approaches that enable it to make better use of the SFL network to gather and manage the sharing of knowledge and best practices. Day to day demands on the SFL team will inevitably become more various and more complex. As the SFL work succeeds, expectations will rise. **Recommendation 1 needs expert staff to filter and better manage employer needs and expectations, generating content for Recommendation 2 to share and develop expertise in the sector.**

The **webpage in current use** was essential for launching the SFL Strategy, opening access to the sector to SFL knowledge and better ways of SFL working. However, knowledge radiates from the webpage centre outwards; there is no current capacity for users to contribute their knowledge and practices about providing or learning SFL, in an interactive way. This is not a flaw in the current website or a sign of poor service. It is more a case that as SFL knowledge and information grows, creative ways are needed to manage and share these SFL learning 'assets'.

### 2.1 Exploratory work

Exploratory work on the SFL Progress Review began in July 2020. This included discussions with the HEE national programme manager for SFL, members of the TFC team, external experts and learners. A SFL SIG meeting (July 22, 2020) discussed the Progress Review and commented on its objectives. Helpful contributions were made on **reaching Social Care employers**. Discussions with HEE on NARIC (National Recognition Information Centre<sup>1</sup>) helped to position the **HEE NARIC support** offer alongside SFL activities. A **Middlesex University webinar exploring ESOL** in SFL for Health and Care (August 11, 2020) included provider and learner case studies and discussed recommended actions on ESOL, as part of the HEE SFL strategy.

### 2.2 Essential learning so far:

1. High quality SFL resources are available, many free and either ready to use, or adaptable for sector needs. HEE has begun to make excellent use of some of these resources.
2. High quality SFL expertise is available in the SFL network and among expert organisations with an interest in helping the SFL strategy work. HEE has begun to build successful partnerships, with expert organisations committed to helping HEE enable its SFL strategy.

1. The **National Recognition Information Centre** for the United Kingdom, UK NARIC, is the UK's agency for recognising international qualifications and skills.

### 2.3 Interactive learning platform

The SFL network is potentially, a rich source of knowledge, expertise and practice, that could be shared very effectively across the network, using an accessible **interactive learning platform**.

The learning platform could sit on the current HASO site, a dedicated SFL site, or both.

**A SFL 'learning platform' = a learning platform with a range of interactive features which enable sharing of knowledge and information. Using a platform would transform the way HEE SFL knowledge transfer is managed and shared.**

There are a wide range of platforms now available, with the best capable of being used on any device, via any browser on any operating system. A platform could be used to:

1. Create simple introductory guides to complex information, using video and infographics
2. Transform plain text SFL information into 'learning modules'
3. Use interactive SFL routes to steer users through complex information
4. Allow users to self-check their knowledge and understanding through gamification (e.g. quizzes, scenarios and 'tests')
5. Allow users to go directly to the knowledge and information they need
6. Allow users to review and feed back on all platform material
7. Allow users to interact directly with each other in groups or teams
8. Articulate with LMS (useful to have in scope)

Content would be generated by SFL network members and others with an interest. SFL network members are already offering to share their knowledge and practice. The issue is – how can this be captured and shared? And the process managed by HEE?

9. A learning platform creates a structured space and a range of possible tools to do that. For example, SFL network members could work in a 'project team' on the platform, to share their expertise about (for example) how to choose a FS/ESOL provider, or make best use of BKSb or NN products, or how to fund non-accredited informal learning in digital and communication skills through the AEB. This recommendation is a significant step and may take a little time to implement. In the meantime, SFL Practice groups are emerging (from webinars and other HEE activities), which will use whatever online resources are freely (and securely) available, to help them meet and share practice in particular fields. Their experiences will be useful for informing how the learning platform should work for employers interested in sharing practice.
10. HEE's role would be to oversee development of the platform, working with content designers and network members to generate learning resources. This might for example, include a simple video guide for health employers on choosing a FS/ESOL provider, an interactive planning tool to help employers select providers, scenarios and a quiz for acting out and practising provider selection.

**Caveat:** Staffing resources would be needed to manage knowledge flow and transfer and to generate content for the uses (1-10) outlined above. Expert knowledge of the full range of SFL would be required, to help HEE gather, filter, and then share SFL information, knowledge and expertise, through the learning platform. **Note:** A platform could encompass all Talent for Care/Widening Participation activity if that were required. Or begin on a smaller scale with SFL and expand to include or become a TFC/WP platform.

#### Case study:

One SFL network member is responsible for improving SFL provision across a number of Trusts. She knows that these Trusts are using BKSb but lack the expertise to make best use of BKSb tools, including those for initial assessment. Her preference would be to create a set of simple (free) video guides and learning tools for practitioners on how to adapt BKSb initial assessment tools for use in Healthcare workplace learning. Those guides shared through an interactive learning platform, would be useful to the whole SFL network, providing contextualised help to improve the quality of IA [Initial Assessment]. Poor IA leads to poor assessment results and low rates of retention and progression, among other negative consequences. Currently, there is no way of shaping or sharing interactively, what could be very useful advice and learning for a much wider healthcare workforce audience.

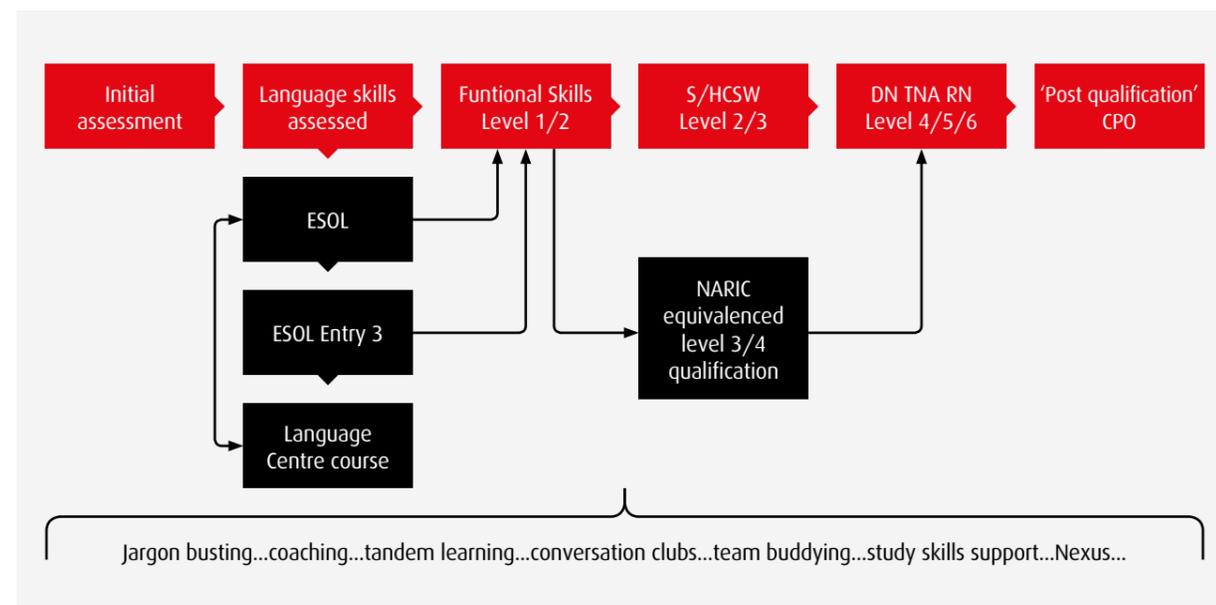
## 2.4 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Middlesex University and HEE ran three webinars in 2020, the first two for 100+ registrants in August and November 2020: *Skills for Life - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Health and Care*. These webinars looked at what ESOL information and resources might be available for use or adaptation and what needs to be done for ESOL to properly interlock into HEE's Skills for Life strategy. ESOL learning needs have been raised regularly in HEE commissioned English and maths research and in Talent for Care work to support progression in the healthcare support workforce.

“ESOL is an issue ...for HCAs [Health Care Assistants] where English is not their first language and want to become nurse associates.” (Beyond the Brand report, 2017)

“Many HCSWs and nurses or aspiring candidates have qualifications from overseas and need help and guidance to achieve GCSEs or Functional Skills prior to entering university for further study. They may have maths skills but if their English language is limited then they struggle with the more complex maths questions and fail their tests.” (Skills for Life report, 2019)

In the webinars, Simone Walker (University Hospital Southampton Foundation Trust) described how ESOL learning needs in the workforce were identified at recruitment, diagnosed in detail through initial assessment and learning programmes designed accordingly. So for example, the Trust supported staff who were not yet ready to pursue FS programmes at level 1/2, to follow a suitable ESOL programme – at a local language centre – prior to following an Entry level 3 ES programme (ESFA funded) and moving onto FS qualification programmes, usually as part of an Apprenticeship. The Trust works closely with a local FE College, which staffs the SFL provision at the Trust and provides additional 1/1 support for ESOL learners who need it.



ESOL learning needs are not confined to those in the support workforce. As the diagram shows, ESOL learning needs are as likely to be present in staff operating at or following programmes at level 4+, and after professional registration. This ESOL diagram could stand for all routes through SFL, and (with the addition of Digital Skills) provide a starting point for visualising the place of Skills for Life learning in supporting career progression at all levels.

A second case study came from interviews with Iolanda Pedrosa, Integrated Discharge Team Co-Lead (Whittington and University College London Hospitals NHS Trusts) and an ESOL learner. Iolanda described her learning experiences as a qualified nurse, and made useful suggestions about how to improve language skills learning for qualified staff, including jargon-busting at all stages of career progression, access to coaching, team buddying and study skills support. A RN qualified abroad, she was recruited 3 weeks after qualification in her home country to work in a hospital in England. After a spell as a HCSW she was accepted onto the register by the NMC. She now operates at band 8 and has recently started a level 7 (Master's Degree) Apprenticeship. She described how she has tackled her language learning needs ever since she arrived, including keeping a 'little book' of new jargon, accepting informal mentoring from colleagues, attending musicals, reading for pleasure and 'asking, asking, asking...'

'Living The Language, a nurse's guide to English usage in British life and work' (OET, HEE 2020) has been published since. Work to join up HEE action on ESOL for the support workforce, nursing and other staff is needed.

A third webinar - ESOL in Health and Care Sharing practice, (November 25th 2020) asked three health and care practitioners to talk about specific aspects of their practice:

- Management and ESOL – whole organisation approaches (Iolanda Pedrosa)
- Learning – the pros and cons of delivering ESOL with an FE partner provider (Simone Walker)
- Working across Trusts - Improving the quality of ESOL provision across 10 Trusts and a GP Federation (Catherine Bailey, Functional Skills Project Manager, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust)
- Terms Of Reference for a new ESOL practice group (Finbar Lillis)

There is little or no hard data about ESOL learning needs in the health and care sector. However, it is possible that where learners from BAME groups also have ESOL needs that this may result in further learning disadvantage. Given that Black NHS staff are underrepresented in senior NHS management (Nuffield Trust, 2020), it may be possible that not meeting ESOL needs may exacerbate barriers to career progression. This question alone shows how important it is for more investigation into ESOL learning needs in the sector. Specific recommendations are made in this report for HEE action on ESOL.



## 2.5 Digital Skills (DS)

Since the first Covid-19 lockdown, most adult learning (including SFL) has gone online. Basic DS are needed to access SFL learning and increasingly, to function generally in life. DS poverty (lack of access to digital devices, adequate internet connectivity, poor digital skills) will further exacerbate the difficulties faced by SFL health and care learners. Ironically, more free SFL resources are now available online than in pre-Covid times. But learners need guidance on how to access these and when they get there, the DS to use them.

There is now an **entitlement to funded DS learning at Entry 3 and Level 1 for all adults in England** - from August 2021. (DFE 2020)

The new Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs) allow providers to integrate DS into broader programmes of learning - and assessments can be contextualised. One Awarding Organisation has **EDSQs approved for use by Ofqual at the time of writing**, several others have EDSQs in the pipeline.

This new entitlement should help shape the DS element of HEE SFL and has potentially very useful benefits to those working in Health and Care.

Providing guidance to HC employers will be essential - on how to use / incorporate DS provision into workforce development plans and training, especially in the support workforce, alongside other SFL and in apprenticeship programmes.

Cross-referencing is needed, between the NHS **'Health and Care Digital Capabilities Framework'** and **DFE Essential DS standards**. There is an opportunity now to contextualise the new DFE DS standards, in DS for health and care.

The government policy position on DS is now supportive of the aims of TFC and Widening Participation (WP) in the support workforce.

The SFL report recommendations on DS (there are 50 references to DS development, with specific DS recommendations) are now more achievable than they were, given access to funding and Government recognition of DS as an entitlement.

BKSB has recently upgraded DS tools offered within its online SFL resources. These are a welcome addition, and HEE has negotiated their inclusion in the HEE SFL offer.

## 2.6 ESFA AEB 2020-2021

Healthcare employers **should take advantage of the new flexibilities in ESFA AEB funding provision** for adults, to improve the SFL offer to entitled employees.

“ESFA funded AEB also supports delivery of flexible tailored provision for adults, including qualifications and components of these and/or non-regulated learning, up to level 2 – we call this ‘local flexibility’... Where appropriate for the learner, you can deliver local flexibility provision alongside a legal entitlement qualification”

This is a significant development as it includes:

- Scope to include in a learning programme (alongside a FS/ ESOL/DS qualification):
- A unit or units from other qualifications
- Non-accredited learning (up to 10% of the programme)



# 3. Recommendations



## 3.1 Interactive Learning Platform

Commission development of a learning platform for managers, tutors and learners, to share SFL expertise and knowledge and to guide practitioners on how to make best use of these SFL resources, from recruitment to ‘post-qualification’ continuing Professional Development (CPD).



## 3.4 Digital Skills

- i. Provide guidance to Healthcare employers on the new Digital Skills Entitlement; and how to adapt/ use published guidance to incorporate Digital Skills provision into workforce development plans and training, especially in the support workforce.
- ii. Cross-reference the NHS Digital Skills Framework and DFE Essential DS standards.



## 3.2 Expert Knowledge

Put staffing resources in place with expert knowledge of the full range of SFL, whose job it is to help HEE gather, filter, and share SFL information, knowledge and expertise, through the learning platform (and through all other outlets as required), generating content, using criteria which ensure fairness all round, best value and high quality.



## 3.5 ESFA AEB 2020-2021

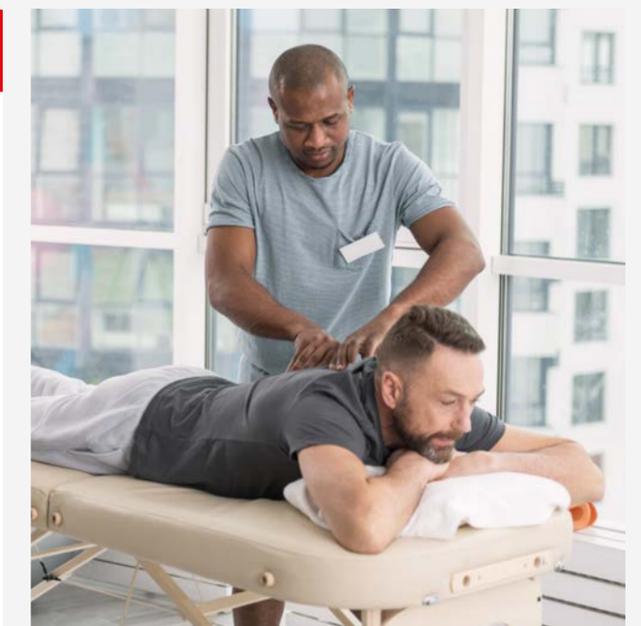
Provide guidance for healthcare employers on the new flexibilities in ESFA AEB funding provision for adults, to improve and contextualise the SFL offer (including DS) to entitled employees, including adult apprentices.



## 3.3 ESOL

These actions are needed to kick-start action on ESOL in SFL:

- i. Gather information about the scale and type of ESOL learning need in health and social care
- ii. Gather and systematically share good practices, quickly and accessibly
- iii. Make sense of government policies that affect people with ESOL learning needs in the workforce
- iv. Keep the sector up to speed on funding for ESOL provision
- v. Review the resources described (and any useful others) for adaptation / use in the sector
- vi. Test out / pilot approaches on a small scale in diverse settings
- vii. Review HEE commissioned SFL products/ resources/services for ESOL inclusivity



## 4. Progress Review Stage 2: January - April 2021

The Progress Review Stage 2 will use principles of good practice in commissioning and agreed success criteria to:

1

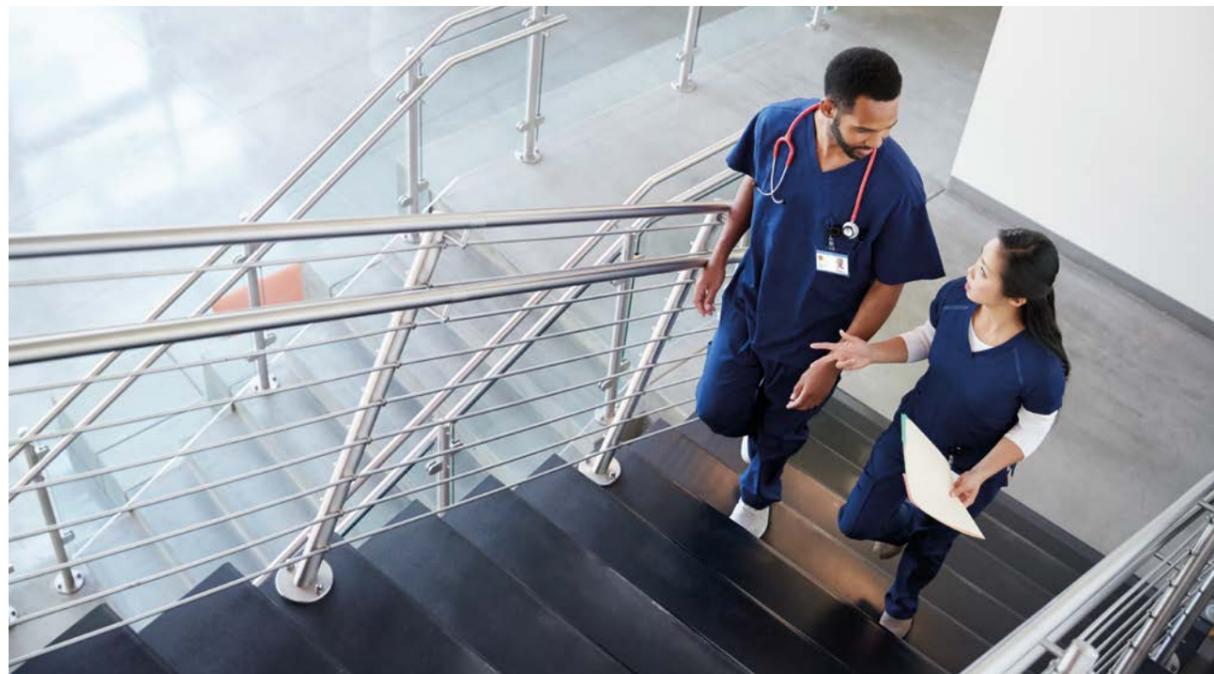
Evaluate the effectiveness of existing HEE commissioned SFL products and services to date. For example, by asking for qualitative and quantitative evidence of success, using a survey of learning outcomes, user experiences and costs.

2

Evaluate the effectiveness of non-commissioned partnership work with organisations supporting the HEE SFL strategy.

3

Inform HEE thinking on future SFL commissions/partnerships.



### The Progress Review Stage 2 will focus on:

1. Relationship Managers: Look at the capacity and capability of RMs to support SFL learning, alongside apprenticeships. RMs will be asked for their views on what SFL resources and expertise would be most helpful to them and employers in their regions, for achieving their apprenticeship objectives. RM activity to support SFL learning will also be reviewed.
2. HASO SFL web pages: Review HASO SFL activity and sector reach.
3. HEE SFL Master Classes: Ways to create online master classes are in discussion. In stage 2 of the PR, the future for master classes will be explored. The master class evaluation report will be used to help inform questions in an online survey of SFL Network members.
4. SFL Network building: Recommendations in this report require the involvement of the SFL network to succeed. The PR Stage 2 will seek the views and involvement of the network in each of its review activities.
5. Basic and Key Skills Builder (BKSB Ltd): Look at scope for segmenting BKSB data and tracking learner progress, including its impact on apprenticeships.
6. National Numeracy Challenge: Review NNC evidence of healthcare employer/staff participation data, segmentation and tracking of learner progress, including impact on apprenticeships.
7. National Literacy Trust: Review impact of NLT sessions; and the place of NLT informal learning in developing the full range of Skills for Life.
8. Trade Unions: Explore ways to further connect Unionlearn activity to HEE's SFL strategy. HEE staff have involved Unionlearn representatives in SFL Master Classes, the TU TfC sub-group and the RNDA development project. At national level, the TUC has provided very useful network links and information on ESOL and on wider adult learning funding. The PR Stage 2 will explore scope for joint practical actions at a local level, on specific SFL work (for example, ESOL, DS, informal literacy and maths learning).
9. Skills for Life in Adult Social Care: Review SFL resources and support for workers in adult social care settings, including the [Cuppacare app](#) and SFL resources developed for Skills for Care in the recent past. Estimate the scale of ESOL learning needs in the adult social care sector using [Skills for Care available data](#) on the care workforce.
10. Skills for Life Special Interest Group: The SIG SFL group could benefit from more input from experts and practitioners. Stage 2 of the PR will explore ways to achieve this, without formal expansion of the membership. The NHS has moral support in the country like no other organisation. It is also the largest employer of adult learners in Europe. Many organisations would be willing to offer access to their expertise, to offer support and advice and share what they know. A SFL learning platform would also create a structured space to encourage SFL network members and supportive experts/organisations to come forward to share their knowledge and practices.
11. SFL work is complex and multifaceted and HEE SFL objectives should be updated. Progress Review Stage 2 will suggest an updated 10-point SFL plan.

# 5. What remains to be done?

How does current HEE SFL work measure up against the aspirations of the 2018 HEE 10-point plan - and the 2019 Skills for Life report goals and actions?

**NOTE:** Progress Review Stage 2 will suggest an updated 10-point SFL plan.

This table is a quick headline guide to what has been achieved so far and what remains to be done, to date. Details are in Sections 1-4.

HEE 10-point plan	Skills for Life report goals & actions (2019)	Achieved/Initiated	To do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Develop a bold statement to support the approach; link to sustainability; with recognition of issues; highlight at highest levels; aim to have senior champions throughout the system.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Goal 1</b> Develop and share a common understanding and language for describing basic and transversal skills for person-centred care. Explain how these skills are integrated with clinical and technical skills to offer effective person-centred care.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Adopt a title for the national strategy: "Skills for Life in Health and Care: a national strategy for basic and transversal skills in the health and care workforce" and include basic and transversal skills as defined in this report (1.6)</li> <li>1.2 Create a competence framework of basic and transversal skills for person-centred care, across health and care occupations.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Skills for Life in Health and Care' brand adopted</li> <li>2. SFL report accepted by HEE senior management</li> <li>3. Senior HC staff are members of SFL network</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a skills for life competency framework/ OR show how SFL are integrated into occupational /apprenticeship standards.</li> <li>2. Commission design of a SFL brand identity</li> <li>3. Involve senior staff in learning platform launch/ activities/promotional campaigns</li> <li>4. Identify potential senior champions in the SFL network</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Identify what is a 'safe' level benchmark which is aspirational, for numeracy and literacy, and English for speakers of other language (ESOL), contextualised to health and care. Investigate the potential for a need to update skills, and if there is an appetite to mandate minimum level achievement.</li> <li>— Seek to support and embed basic skills with transferable skills/life skills in health and wellbeing policies, and patient safety approaches. Identify or develop example policies and frameworks.</li> <li>— Seek to develop a return on investment model and showing impact, for example on finance, recruitment, retention and progression, and seek ways to achieve and maximise economies of scale, by sharing best practice, teaching and support resources, tools and facilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Goal 2</b> Gather baseline data about the possession of these skills across the workforce and create systems for monitoring and recording their ongoing development.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Use 'large data' to contextualise and inform plans and actions at regional, local and employer level.</li> <li>2.2 Use the analysis generated by recommendation 1.2, in designing (or adapting) a basic and transversal skills profiling tool for the whole organisation workforce.</li> <li>2.3 Identify which basic and transversal skills are developed through formal programmes and practice, across occupations.</li> <li>2.4 Measure progressive development of basic and transversal skills within and across occupations, from recruitment onwards.</li> <li>2.5 Use the monitoring process to examine how basic and transversal skills are used, developed and maintained after qualification/registration.</li> <li>2.6 Use a range of measures to examine impact of basic and transversal skills development on quality of care, the personal well-being of staff and productivity.</li> </ol>	<p>2020 Progress Review includes assessment of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact of HEE SFL measures on learner retention, progression and achievement</li> <li>2. Value of centralised purchasing and sharing of resources</li> <li>3. Value of SFL resources to healthcare employers</li> <li>4. Online sessions on numeracy and literacy attended by upwards of 250 employers from large acute trusts to GP surgeries and care homes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Goal 2 actions 2.1- 2.5</li> </ol>

### HEE 10-point plan (2018)

- Promote a holistic approach translated to practical guidance – particularly case studies from existing examples of best practice in supporting staff in their roles, in their progression and developing life skills

### Skills for Life report goals & actions (2019)

**Goal 3**  
Commit to a whole organisation understanding of how basic and transversal skills are used across occupations and roles at all levels, and a whole organisation approach which supports their learning and ongoing development.

**Actions:**

- 3.1 HEE should adopt a whole organisation learning approach to understanding, using and developing basic and transversal skills within HEE.
- 3.2 HEE to encourage health and care employers to take a positive, progressive view of the place of basic and transversal skills across the whole workforce and using best practice examples, offer guidance on how to develop whole organisation learning.

- Support the ‘Train the Trainer’ approach – aimed at building infrastructure and sustainability for employers, by developing in house teaching expertise, workplace coaches and support for managers and mentors.
- Seek to support and embed basic skills with transferable skills/life skills in health and wellbeing policies, and patient safety approaches. Identify or develop example policies and frameworks.
- Scope potential to integrate Maths and English skills development into other established programmes (e.g. Care Certificate), have a range of opportunities/develop tools for individuals, managers and mentors to enable and support an ‘its ok to talk about it’ approach.

**Goal 4**  
Ensure health and care employers have access to and control of resources and education provision that teaches and supports development of basic and transversal skills for health and care.

**Actions:**

- 4.1 Use analysis of best practices to develop guidance and resources to help employers:
  - plan and deliver high quality basic and transversal skills provision
  - assess risks and impact of interventions
- 4.2 HEE should track and share analysis of current policy developments in FE and HE as these will directly affect health and care employers’ workforce development plans.

- Develop / identify standard assessment(s) for basic skills – evaluate, what is there, and develop new content as required. Include scoping and working with other agencies and support networks in for example education and charitable sectors to maximise opportunities for utilising expertise, in the context of health and care.
- Develop, support and promote a Champions Network: to support network have champions forum, ongoing support and development for Champions, sharing best practice, look at what works operationally; easy to follow guidance (e.g. How to access different funding streams) and scope development for each element – numeracy, literacy, ICT and digital skills and cross cutting themes.
- Seek to develop a social media presence e.g. hashtag, Twitter presence, celebration of successes, sharing resources, and raising the profile at a high political level, to get senior leaders on board and maybe drive the programme with some money.

**Goal 5**  
Facilitate networking between health and care employers and education providers, to share knowledge and best practice in the learning and development of basic and transversal skills.

**Actions:**

- 5.1 Establish a network - starting with the 80 respondents to the survey - to develop and share their skills and learning about how to make basic and transversal skills learning happen effectively.
- 5.2 Explore relatively cost-effective ways to share learning now-to facilitate knowledge and skills exchange among those with an interest in the sector, starting with the potential network of practitioners that responded to the survey for this study.

### Achieved/Initiated

1. SFL case studies published in HASO site
2. SFL Master Classes
3. Joint ESOL webinar with Middlesex University

### To do

1. Rec 1: Commission development of a learning platform
2. Rec 2: Put staffing resources in place with expert knowledge of the full range of SFL to manage Rec 1

1. Basic and Key Skills Builder (BKSBLtd): HEE commission; 6000+ learners on programme
2. Access to upgraded BKSBLtd tools now included in HEE offer.
3. HEE SFL Master Classes: 170 employers attending across 4 sites
4. Publication of ‘Living the Language - A nurse’s guide to English usage in British life and work’
5. National Numeracy Challenge (NNC): Train the Trainer Numeracy Champion resources; NN day participation.
6. Trade Unions – involvement in SFL Master classes; TU TFC sub-group
7. National Literacy Trust – 250 webinar sign-up, 300 take up free audio books
8. Dedicated working group established with Care Certificate colleagues to support mutual objectives and synchronise efforts

1. Rec 1: Commission development of a learning platform
2. Rec 2: Put staffing resources in place with expert knowledge of the full range of SFL to manage Rec 1
3. Rec 3: Actions on ESOL
4. Rec 4: Actions on Digital Skills
5. Goal 4 action 4.2

1. Appointment of new HEE staff with SFL responsibilities
2. HASO SFL web pages/ frequently updated resources
3. SFL Network – now 400 members
4. Skills for Life Special Interest Group – established and meeting 1/4ly

1. Rec 1: Commission development of learning platform
2. Rec 2: Put staffing resources in place with expert knowledge of the full range of SFL to manage Rec 1
3. Rec 5: Provide guidance for healthcare employers on the new flexibilities in ESFA AEB funding provision for adults

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