



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

All Wales Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Training Pathway

Adapted from ComIT*/ SEWC** pathway

For all childcare practitioners working with children aged 0 to 4 years 11 months

* Communication Intervention Team ** South East Wales Consortium



Introduction

The Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) training pathway is a tool that early years' childcare practitioners working with children aged 0 to 4 years 11 months can use to identify their training needs regarding Speech, Language and Communication (SLC). It has been designed to align with both the [Speech, Language and Communication Framework \(SLCF\)](#) and the [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) transformation programme](#). The training pathway was developed by the [Communication Intervention Team \(ComIT\)](#) under the South East Wales ALN Transformation fund, and has been adapted for use across Wales.

The implementation of the pathway is the responsibility of Local Authorities (LA), Education Consortia or both, and local arrangements will inevitably vary. While some of the courses which meet the relevant competencies are free, others require funding and this will need to be planned for and communicated at local authority or consortium level. Quality Assurance (QA) arrangements will vary locally, and will need to be communicated across the sector within each LA or consortium.

There are many courses on SLC available across Wales, which will meet the requirements within each competency level, and not all courses will be available in all localities. For this reason, examples are given within the pathway but this document does not attempt to provide an exhaustive course directory. In some cases, refresher training will be recommended and timescales specified. It is important that refresher training is factored into ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plans and it would be beneficial for timescales to be agreed locally for this.

Skill levels and the SLCF

It is not possible to include the entire content of the SLCF here, but a summary is provided in the diagram on page 3. In the SLCF, skill levels are defined at 4 levels: foundation, universal, advanced and specialist. These levels are summarised below to fit in with the 3 ALN transformation descriptors 'core', 'advanced' and 'specialist'. The pathway includes both sets of descriptors so that practitioners can be assured that they are accessing training at the appropriate level.



Core

Foundation:

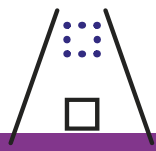
- Suitable for those coming into contact with children but not working with them directly on a regular basis, e.g. managers; strategic leads; owners; management committees
- Basic awareness of Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), including typical development and practical strategies to support SLC

Universal:

- Suitable for all childcare practitioners working with children in the early years on a regular basis (including childcare practitioners; Health Care Support Workers, trainees, apprentices)
- Covers the basic skills and knowledge that everyone working directly with children aged 0 to 4 years 11 months should have in relation to SLC and SLCN
- Includes knowledge of how to signpost for additional support

Example of learning outcomes includes:

- "Can define the terms 'speech', 'language' and 'communication'"



Advanced

Advanced:

- For those working in the early years with a specific role in supporting SLC and SLCN. May include the Lead Communication Practitioner (LCP); Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) and those supporting individual children with SLC needs

Examples of learning outcomes include:

- 'Has a thorough understanding of the norms of SLC; causes of SLCN including risk factors; strategies to develop SLC and help with SLCN'
- 'Is able to explain links between SLCN and other areas of development'



Specialist

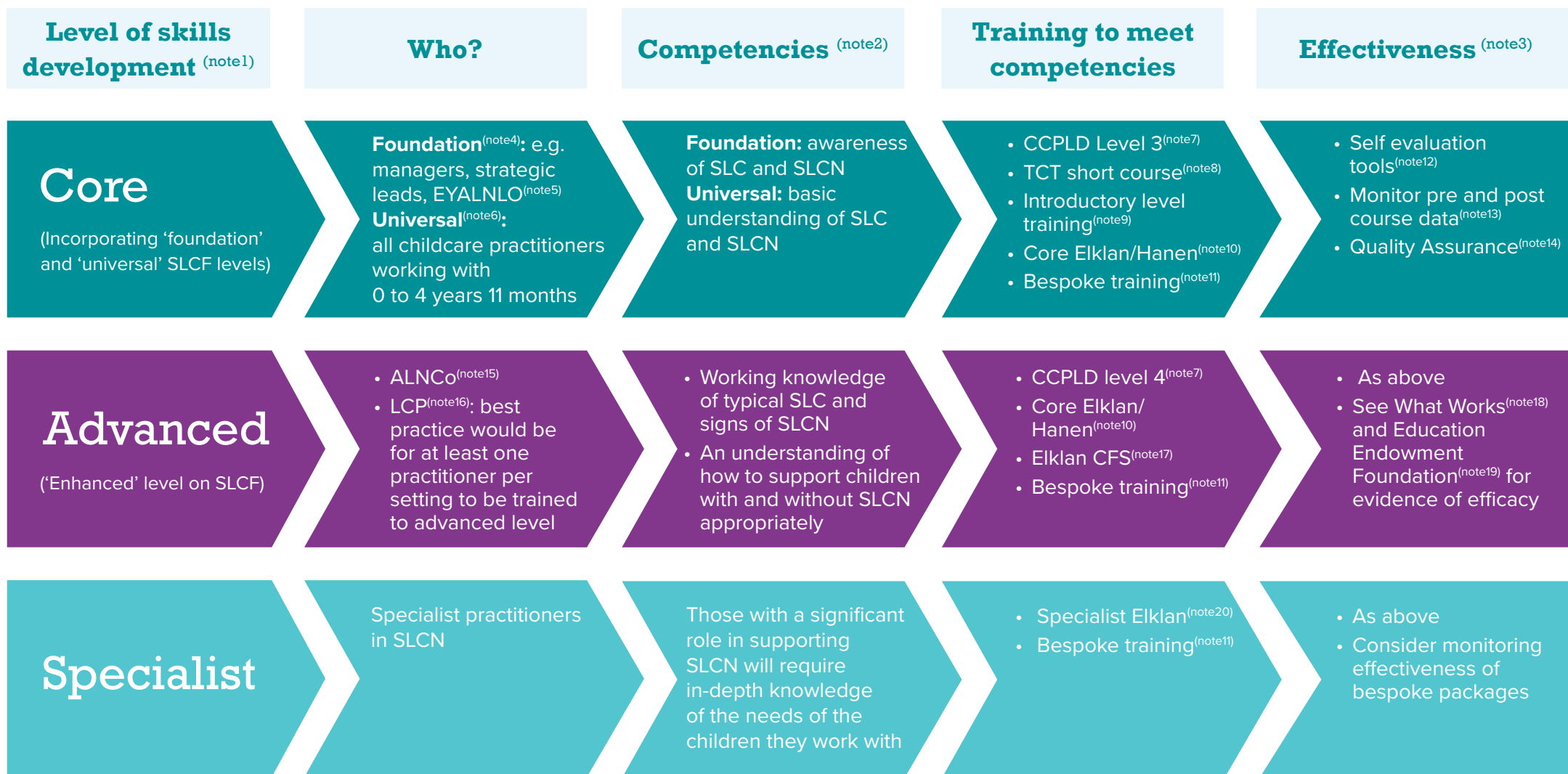
Specialist:

- For those with a significant role in supporting SLCN. Examples of practitioners at this level would include Teachers of the Deaf; Teachers of the Visually Impaired; Specialists in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) etc.
- Learning at this level would include: Appropriate specialist knowledge of the particular needs of children you work with, e.g. Deaf children, AAC users

Examples of learning outcomes include:

- 'Able to identify children at risk of long term SLCN'
- 'Able to support other practitioners working with children with SLCN'

All Wales Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) practitioner training pathway: 0 to 4 years 11 months



All Wales 0 to 4yrs 11 months SLC training pathway (adapted from ComIT pathway)

Notes

1. The level descriptors 'core, advanced, specialist' are taken from the [ALN Transformation Programme](#) (Welsh Government, 2018), and the corresponding staff groups at each level are as described in the programme. The 'core' level incorporates both 'foundation' and 'universal' levels in the SLCF; while the 'advanced' level equates to 'enhanced' level in the SLCF. Specialist level is the same across the SLCF and ALN descriptors
2. The competencies required at each level are summarised in this column, and explained in more detail in the table on page 3
3. It is essential that staff are confident that any training they undertake will be effective in terms of changing practice. This column in the pathway is intended to direct staff to existing evidence as well as helping them to identify ways of monitoring their own effectiveness within the setting
4. 'Foundation' level refers to the level of competence described in the Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF). This will be all practitioners working directly with children
5. The Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLO) is a role described in the ALNET Act 2018 (see [ALN Code for Wales](#), chapter 10 page 84). The expertise required for the EYALNLO role is described in the Code at 10.4 on page 85; and requires at least the 'foundation' level on this pathway
6. 'Universal' level refers to the level of competence described in the SLCF. This will be the majority of the workforce, with all those working directly with children as their main role at this level of skills development. This may include e.g. Health Care Support Workers as well as members of the childcare workforce
7. The Child Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD) qualifications include SLC at levels 2, 3 and 4. The content at levels 3 and 4 meet the competencies at universal and advanced level respectively. NB: previous entry level childcare qualifications did not include content to meet SLC competencies
8. The Communication Trust ([TCT](#)) [short course](#) is an online introduction to Speech, Language and Communication (SLC). The course is free, and takes approximately half a day to complete.
9. 'Introductory level' courses refer to entry level competencies in terms of SLC and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
10. [Elklan](#) and [Hanan](#) are training providers specialising in SLC. They train trainers to deliver courses locally according to need. Examples of core Elklan courses include 'Speech and Language Support for 0 to 3s'; and examples of Hanan courses include 'Learning Language and Loving It' (LLLI)

Notes (continued):

11. Bespoke training will be identified by a specialist (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist) and is specific to the needs of the setting or individual, e.g. Signing; Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). While these are specialist topics, they may be relevant and necessary for staff at all levels of the pathway depending on the topic and the needs of the child or children
12. A range of self-evaluation tools are available for practitioners and settings. These are included or discussed in the training courses within the pathway, and include the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Early Years Toolkit; TCT and Elklan checklists (Elklan checklists are only available to practitioners who have undertaken Elklan courses). The TCT checklists are free and links are provided here for reference:
[Quick reference checklist](#)
[More detailed checklist](#)
[Communication Supporting Classroom observation tool](#)
13. The TCT short course and Elklan courses incorporate pre and post training questionnaires which look at e.g. practitioner confidence and knowledge in relation to SLCN. Completing these will help training providers and staff to monitor the effectiveness of training
14. Quality Assurance (QA) of SLC training will need to be considered and agreed locally
15. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) is a role described in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) (ALNET) Act 2018 (see [ALN Code for Wales](#), chapter 8 p72). The [ALN Transformation Programme](#) (WG, 2018), stipulates that the ALNCo should be trained to the ‘advanced’ level of skills development (p4, section 2 ‘workforce development’)
16. A Lead Communication Practitioner (LCP) is the term used by Elklan for a practitioner within a setting whose role is to support the team in delivering SLC support to all children within their setting. Different titles for the same role may be used locally. This is not a statutory role but designating an LCP can help to ensure consistent best practice in SLC
17. The Elklan ‘Communication Friendly Settings’ (CFS) programme is an accredited programme which includes training and quality assurance within settings, including appointing an LCP. See [Elklan](#) website for details
18. [What Works](#) is a database of evidence based training for SLCN
19. [Education Endowment Foundation](#) (EEF) Early Years Toolkit
20. Examples of [specialist Elklan courses](#) include: Supporting pupils with hearing difficulties, unclear speech, verbal pupils with ASD

References

- The Communication Trust (2017) [Speech, Language and Communication Framework \(SLCF\)](#)
- Welsh Government (2018) [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act \(ALNET\)](#)
- Welsh Government (2021) [Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales](#)

Appendix 1: Training record for settings

This template has been designed to help setting leaders to keep track of the training requirements and status of practitioners. It is provided as an Excel spreadsheet along with the electronic version of the pathway, and is fully editable to enable practitioners to include bespoke local training etc. The Excel version is available for you to download at www.exchangewales.org/talk-with-me-speech-language-and-communication-slc/

		Name of course:			Name of course:			Name of course:		
Name of practitioner	Level of Skill (see competencies on pathway)	Required? Y/N	Completed? Y/N/NA	Date completed, if applicable	Required? Y/N	Completed? Y/N/NA	Date completed	Required? Y/N	Completed? Y/N/NA	Date completed