



# The Speech, Language and Communication Framework Handbook

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# Introduction

## What is the Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)?

The SLCF is a free professional development tool, accessible to all, which sets out the key skills needed to support the speech, language and communication (SLC) development of all children and young people.

It is a self-assessment tool which enables individuals to map out their skills, knowledge and confidence in supporting the development of these essential skills in the children and young people they work with.

The SLCF provides users with a personalised analysis of their current confidence levels and offers suggestions for next steps in continuing professional development (CPD) including training courses, reading and resources. In addition, at the Universal level, there are opportunities for practitioners to develop their learning through short interactive online activities.

## Why do we need the SLCF?

Speech, language and communication are central life skills. They are linked to learning, attainment, behaviour, social and emotional development as well as mental wellbeing, so it is essential that everyone working with children and young people understands the importance of their role in supporting and developing these crucial skills.

The SLCF brings together competencies in supporting the speech, language and communication of children and young people into one place. Using the SLCF practitioners can easily see what they currently know and what areas they need to develop further.

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) affect a huge number of children and young people in the UK. Approximately two children in every year one classroom will experience a clinically significant language disorder that impacts on their learning. Language disorders are also more than seven times more prevalent in children than other developmental conditions such as autism<sup>1</sup>.

1 Norbury, C. (2016). The impact of nonverbal ability on prevalence and clinical presentation of language disorder: evidence from a population study. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Volume 57, Issue 11 November 2016, Pages 1247–1257.



## Prevalence of SLCN in the UK:



**In some areas of deprivation, more than 50% of children start school with SLCN**

**10% of all children have long-term SLCN.**



**7.56% of all children have a Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)**

**1% of all children have severe and complex SLCN**

Norbury, C. (2016). The impact of nonverbal ability on prevalence and clinical presentation of language disorder: evidence from a population study. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Volume 57, Issue 11 November 2016, Pages 1247–1257.

Ruben, R. J. (2000). Redefining the survival of the fittest: Communication Disorders in the 21st Century. *The Laryngoscope*, Volume 110 (2), p241.

# How to use the SLCF

## How the SLCF supports professional development

The SLCF is designed to be used as a professional development tool. It allows you to:

- Identify where you might want to improve your knowledge and skills in certain areas of SLC
- Take part in short online professional development activities that can be completed as you work through the competencies at the Universal level
- Find more information, resources and reading that may be of interest and support your practice
- Find out about training and development opportunities that will support your identified areas of development
- Monitor and track your CPD progress over time, allowing you to see where you have increased your knowledge and confidence

The SLCF allows you to assess your confidence levels across a broad range of skills to support children and young people's SLC development. It is divided into areas of knowledge and skill, known as **strands**, which fall into broader **categories** of learning.

Within each strand the framework looks at your skills at different **levels** of learning according to your role or professional learning need.

# The SLCF Structure - levels, categories, strands and competencies

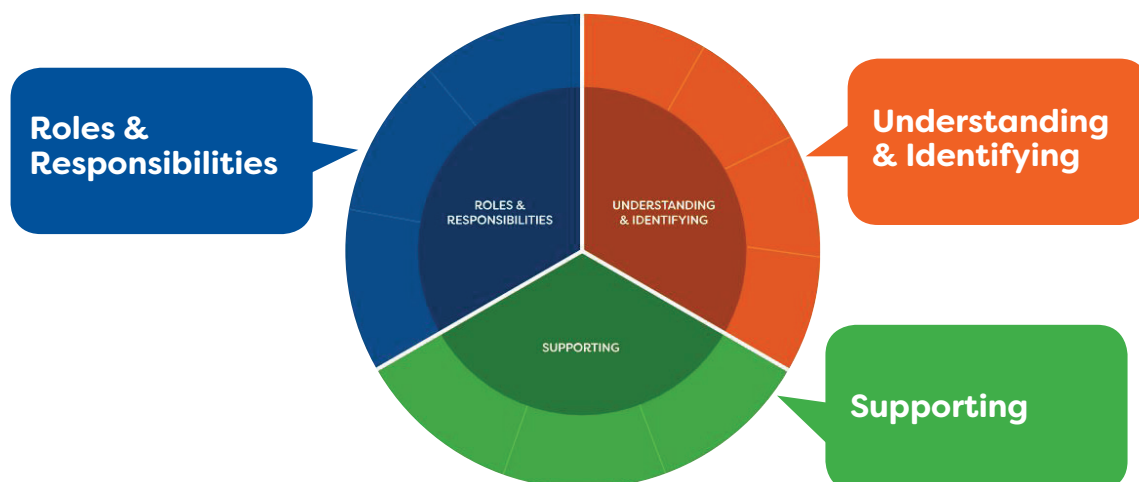
## Levels

There are four different levels of the SLCF. You may choose to start with the lowest level to make sure you've covered all competencies, or you may wish to start at the level that you feel best suits your current role. Below is guide to the different levels and some suggested roles they may correlate to:

Level	Start at this Level if you:	Examples of Professional Roles
<b>Foundation</b> Outlines a basic awareness of SLC and SLCN, appropriate for those who may not work with children and young people as the main part of their role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come in to contact with children and young people during the course of your work but children and young people are not the primary focus of your work</li> <li>• Would like to have an increased awareness of the importance of SLC and the impact of SLCN</li> </ul>	Staff in non-educational settings such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the police</li> <li>• the fire service</li> <li>• GP surgery staff</li> <li>• shop workers, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Universal</b> Outlines the basic skills and knowledge that everyone working with children and young people should have around SLC and SLCN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already meet the Foundation level competencies</li> <li>• Work directly with children and young people</li> <li>• Need a general awareness of typical SLC development for your role</li> <li>• Would benefit from an awareness of how to identify features of SLCN</li> </ul>	All staff in education, health or social care settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Practitioners</li> <li>• Social Workers</li> <li>• Children's Centre staff</li> <li>• School Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Teachers</li> <li>• Youth Workers, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Enhanced</b> Outlines more specialised learning around supporting SLC development as well as identifying and supporting SLCN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already meet 80% or more of the competencies at the Universal level</li> <li>• Support typical SLC development as part of your role</li> <li>• Are likely to be involved in identifying children with SLCN and/or work with children with SLCN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Learning Support Advisors (LSA)</li> <li>• Early Years Workers</li> <li>• Speech &amp; Language Therapy Assistants (SLTAs)</li> <li>• Inclusion Coordinators (INCo)</li> <li>• Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo)/or work with children with SLCN</li> <li>• Family Support Workers</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist</b> Outlines the skills and knowledge needed by those with a significant role in identifying and supporting children & young people with SLCN, and supporting other practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already meet at least 80% competencies at the Enhanced Level</li> <li>• Spend a significant amount of your working life supporting children and young people with SLCN</li> <li>• Play a significant role in identifying and assessing children and young people's SLCN</li> <li>• Are likely to support other practitioners in working with children and young people with SLCN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech &amp; Language Therapists (SLTs)</li> <li>• Advisory Teachers</li> <li>• Communication Leaders</li> <li>• Area SENCos</li> <li>• Educational Psychologists</li> <li>• Portage Practitioners</li> <li>• Specialist Nursery Workers</li> <li>• Language Unit Teachers &amp; TAs</li> </ul>

## Categories & strands

The framework is divided into 10 strands which form three broader categories of learning:



Category	Strand	Description
Understanding & Identifying	1. Typical SLC development	Your confidence in knowing the typical stages of SLC development for all children and young people
	2. Identification and assessment of speech, language and communication needs	Your knowledge on the skills, methods and tools to use to identify children with SLCN
	3. Learning English as an additional language	Your confidence in understanding the needs of children where English is not their first language
	4. Relationship between SLCN and other areas of development	Your knowledge and confidence in the impact of SLCN on other areas of a child or young person's development
Supporting	5. The communication environment	Your understanding of the influence of the environment on children's SLC development
	6. Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN	Your knowledge and confidence in using techniques to help children and young people develop their SLC skills
	7. Reflecting on professional development around SLC and SLCN	Your awareness and understanding of the importance of reflecting practice and continuing professional development
Roles & Responsibilities	8. Involving children and young people with SLCN	Your confidence in keeping the child at the centre of the planning process and decision making
	9. Your roles and responsibilities: supporting children and young people with SLCN	Your awareness of your role in supporting children and young people with their SLC development
	10. Parents, carers, families, peers and friends	Your knowledge and confidence in supporting and working with the child or young person's wider support network

### Competencies

Within each strand are a number of **competencies**. These outline the skills and knowledge that everyone in the children's workforce should have, or be aiming for, when working with children and young people. These competencies form the basis of the self evaluation tool.

There is a detailed table of all of the competencies in each of the four levels available to download on the SLCF website, or you can download it by clicking [here](#).

Once you've chosen the level that's right for you, you can start working through the competencies and deciding how confident you feel about each of them using the four point confidence scale.

At any stage throughout completion, you will be able to see your **online learning profile**, which outlines the strands and categories that you feel more and less confident in. You can print out your profile page allowing for easy sharing at appraisals or CPD meetings.

You will also be able to see your **online learning log** at any stage throughout completion, which outlines the strands that you have completed.

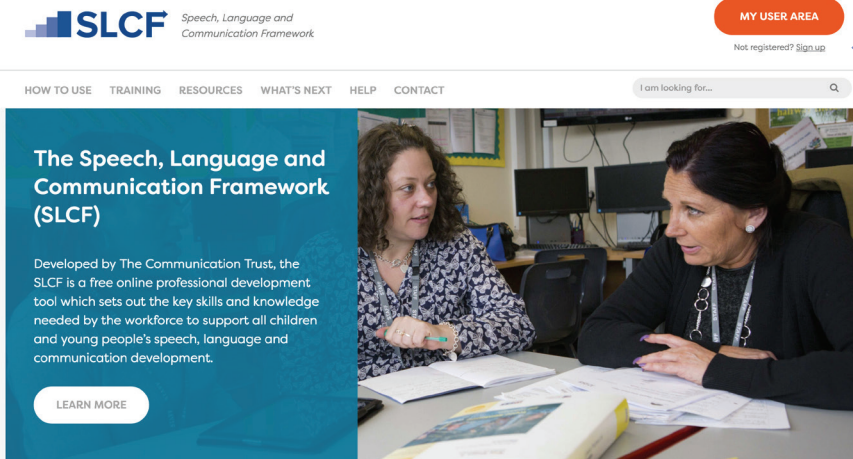
The aim of the SLCF is not necessarily to continue through the levels but rather to develop your skills and knowledge at the level that is most relevant to you and your role. Then, if you'd like to, you can move on to the subsequent level to strengthen and broaden your skills.

For competencies at the Universal level, there are some short online activities that users are encouraged to complete. These activities may help you decide how confident you feel about a particular competency and will also help to develop your knowledge in that particular area if you are lacking in confidence.



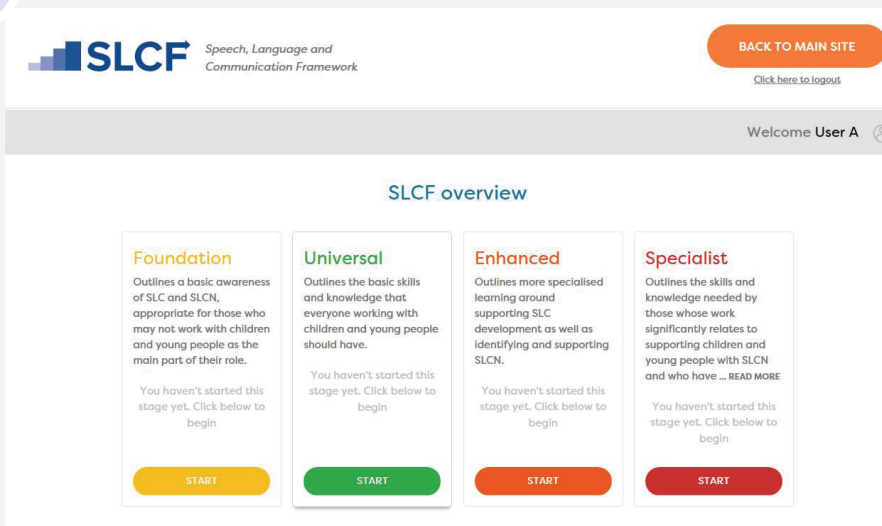
# Creating your login

1



- Visit [www.slcfframework.org.uk](http://www.slcfframework.org.uk) to visit the SLCF homepage
- Click the **sign up** button in the top right hand corner of your screen and enter your details.
- You will be sent an automated e-mail containing a link to set your password. Once this is set you will be able to log in using the details you have just registered with.

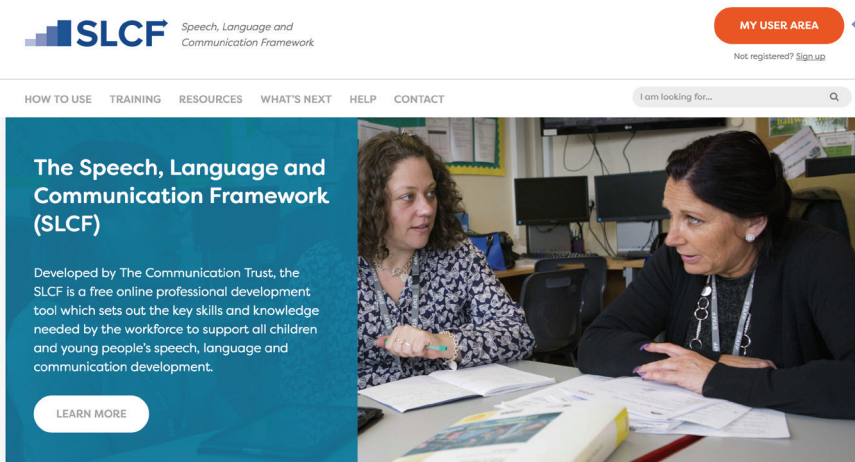
2



- When you have logged in you will be able to complete the SLCF self-evaluation by selecting your starting level.

! If you are unable to complete the SLCF online you can download and print a table containing the framework of competencies [here](#). You can then mark yourself against the competencies manually and calculate your own level of confidence in the skills and knowledge set out in the framework. If you choose to use the tool in this way you won't be able to benefit from the functions that the website has to offer including overview graphs, progress tracking and signposting to relevant training and resources.

3



- Each time you wish to return to the SLCF click on **My user area** to log in again, entering your e-mail address and password as instructed.



If you're completing the SLCF self-evaluation as part of a group you will need to ask your group leader for an invite to join the group, and you will still need to create an individual login for yourself. Your group leader is likely to be your manager or the CPD leader in your school or setting. You can find out more about the group function on pages 15-17.

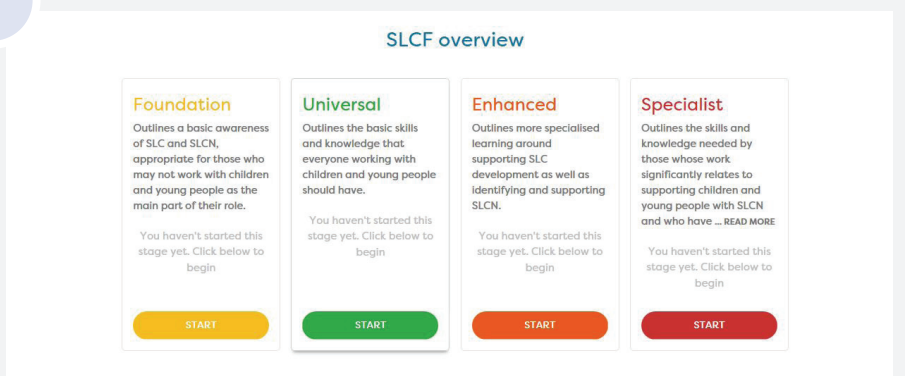
# Completing your self evaluation

1



- Go to: [www.slcframework.org.uk](http://www.slcframework.org.uk)
- Click on **My user area** to access your personal profile. You'll need to sign up to create an account if you don't have one already.

2



- Choose the level you wish to complete - **Foundation**, **Universal**, **Enhanced** or **Specialist** - and click on **start**, or **continue** if you are returning. You will then enter your **learning profile** and see a summary of your SLCF progress so far. If this is the first time you're completing the self evaluation you will only see a blank graph.

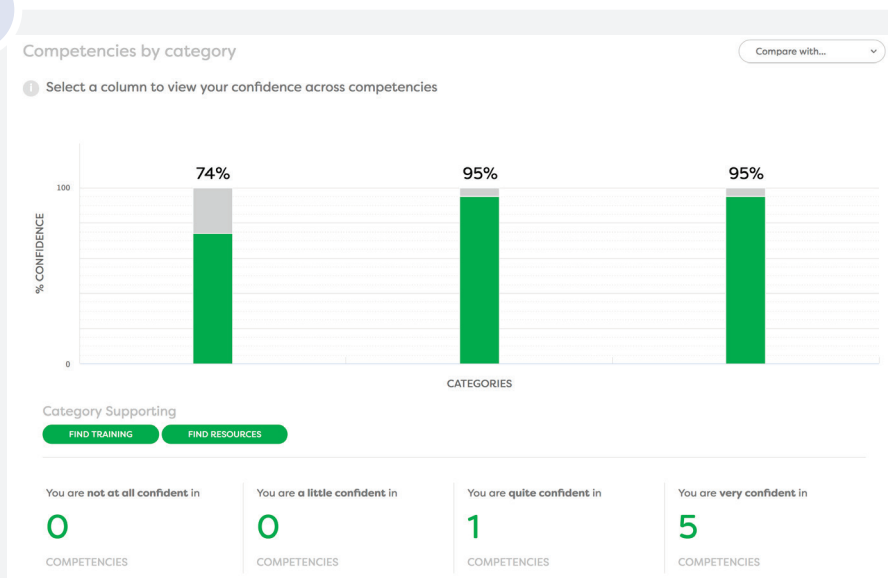
3

- Complete the online self evaluation by clicking on the numbered strand circles at the top of your learning profile. For each strand, rate your confidence level against each **competency**. You can work through the strands in order, or skip to a different strand if you wish. When you have completed a strand the numbered circle at the top of the self-evaluation will have a coloured line. Once you reach at least 80% confidence in a given strand the circle will be filled with colour. If you're working through the **Universal** level you'll be able to access short online activities to help you to check your existing knowledge, or help you to learn a little more about a specific competency. Click on the '?' icon next to each competency to access that competency's activity.

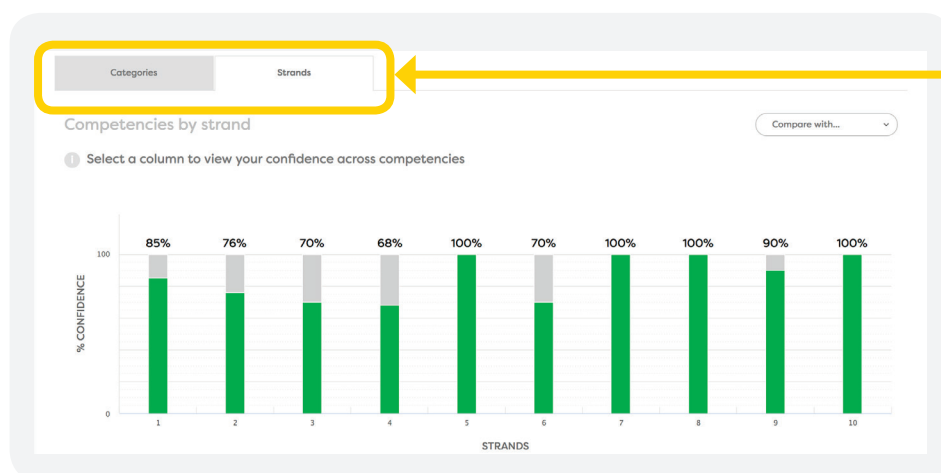


Click on the 'i' icon on your learning profile to see the full descriptors for each strand.

4

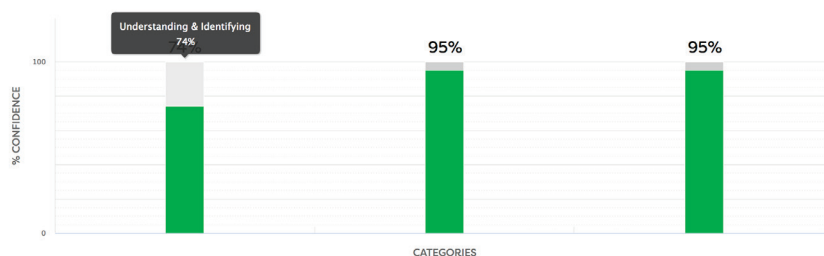


- At the end of the self evaluation you can then view your **learning profile**, which shows a summary of your confidence levels across the categories and strands in graphs, percentages and numbers. The numbers below the graph will show you the categories or strands in which you are very, quite, a little and not at all confident in. Your learning profile can inform your personal development.



To see your results in different graph formats (e.g. showing the three categories, or showing the 10 strands) click on the tabs at the top of your graph.

5



Category Understanding & Identifying

FIND TRAINING

FIND RESOURCES

You are not at all confident in

0

COMPETENCIES

You are a little confident in

1

COMPETENCIES

You are quite confident in

9

COMPETENCIES

You are very confident in

3

COMPETENCIES

- To see how many competencies within each category or strand you are confident, or not so confident in, hover your cursor over the bars on the graph. Clicking on the bars in the graph will allow you to find training or resources to help you to develop your skills and knowledge in that category or strand. Clicking on **find training** or **find resources** will automatically filter relevant courses or resources for you.



You don't need to complete the SLCF all in one go, or in any particular order. The **save and exit** function allows you to pause the self-evaluation at any time and return to it later. You can also switch between strands by clicking on the numbered circles at the top of your learning profile, or the self-evaluation.



Search via course name or keyword

### Filter

LEVEL Select	STRAND Select	FORMAT Select
PROVIDER Select	LOCATION Select	COST Select
AGE OF BENEFICIARIES Select	ACCREDITED Select	CATEGORY Select

- SHOW LESS FILTERS

- You will be able to access and browse the resources, training courses and Universal level activities on the website without needing to sign up, or complete the self evaluation. The main website has training and resource databases which allow you to use a number of filters to search for training, resources or activities suited to you.

**!** You may view or update your **personal profile**, and your learning profile at any time when you are logged in. To update your personal profile click on your name in the top right hand corner of the screen.

6

HOME

/ Universal stage

Download your certificate

- Once you have achieved 80% confidence across all of the competencies within a level you will be able to **download a certificate** as confirmation of your competence at that level. This can be used as evidence of progress in appraisal and CPD meetings.

The SLCF is a continuous development tool so we recommend you make plans to revisit the SLCF frequently to see how you're progressing with your competencies and build on your skills and knowledge base.

You can compare your results over time and monitor your progress by adding previous data to the graph in your learning profile. You can choose to add data from 1, 3, 6 or 12 months ago to compare with your latest results.

# Individual and Group learning profiles

The SLCF is an online tool that identifies the confidence levels of skills and knowledge for individuals, or groups of individuals.



**Individual profile** – if you want to identify your own learning needs, track progress and print out information to take to appraisals or professional development meetings.

## Individual learning profiles

Your individual learning profile will allow you to:

1. See a clear profile of areas where you feel confident in particular areas relating to speech, language and communication development and SLCN
2. See the areas where you feel less confident and would benefit from development opportunities
3. Highlight specific areas where you will benefit from further professional development around SLC/SLCN
4. Download certificates as evidence once you've successfully achieved 80% or more of the competencies at any given level.



**Groups** – if you're a manager or CPD leader looking to check the learning needs of a group of individuals. You can look at the collective and individual learning needs of your group, team, department or whole workforce to identify strengths, gaps in skills, knowledge and confidence, and track progress over time.

## Group profiles

### As an individual within a group:

If you are completing the SLCF as part of a group, you will have your own individual profile, as above. You will be able to go in to your learning profile and update your confidence ratings as and when you require.

### As a group leader:

You will have access to the individual self evaluation results of members within in your group, as well as access to overview reports which show the confidence and knowledge of the group as a whole. This will allow you to see the professional development needs for your group of practitioners. This is useful for managers or CPD leaders who are looking at the professional development needs of a whole school or setting.

You will be able to see the reports, in the same format as your individual graphs, which will help to:

1. Identify any trends in the professional development needs of a whole setting, or individuals
2. Identify any gaps in individual and group learning
3. Appraise staff based on their CPD progress
4. Share overall performance at CPD or team meetings and inform objective setting.

# The Group Function

If you want to analyse the training needs of a group of practitioners, or a whole setting, to identify strengths and learning needs or to see which kinds of professional activities would benefit the wider staff team you can create groups on the SLCF.

**To create a group follow these steps:**

1

## Add new group

Group name

CREATE GROUP

CANCEL

- Click on **Add group** in the **My groups** box underneath your results graph in your learning profile.
- In the box that appears, give your new group a name.
- Click **create group**.



You can add or remove people from your group at any time by clicking **Manage group** in the blue tool bar above the graph.

2

## Add new users

Enter user email addresses below separated by a comma

slcf@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk x |

ADD USERS

- To add people to your group, enter their e-mail addresses in the space provided, separating each new e-mail address with a comma. Then click **add users**.
- Your invite to the group will then be sent out via e-mail. When people click on the link in their e-mail they will join the group and you, as the group leader, will be able to see their SLCF results for each level they have completed, or will complete.



If someone adds you to a group you will be notified by via e-mail.

3

### Manage tct

NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
Kelly Bracken	kbracken@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk
Kelly I CAN	kbracken@ican.org.uk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosie Alouat	ralouat@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

REMOVE SELECTED USERS

- Only group leaders are able to see the group's results – group members will only see their own data. As a group leader you will be able to:
  - see a summary of the categories and strands that your group feel more and less confident in
  - compare the group's progress over time by choosing to compare their graph with 1, 3, 6 or 12 months ago
  - choose to see the results for any individual within the group, and also compare their progress over time.
- If someone in your group moves on to a new job, or they are no longer required to be in the group, you will be able to remove people from the group by clicking **Manage group** in the blue tool bar above the graph and selecting group members from the list to remove.



Anybody can leave a group at any time by clicking **Leave group** in the **My groups** panel. Once an individual has left a group they, and the group leader(s), will receive an e-mail confirming that they have left the group.

3

### Sample group

VIEW PROGRESS

ADD USER

EXPORT REPORT

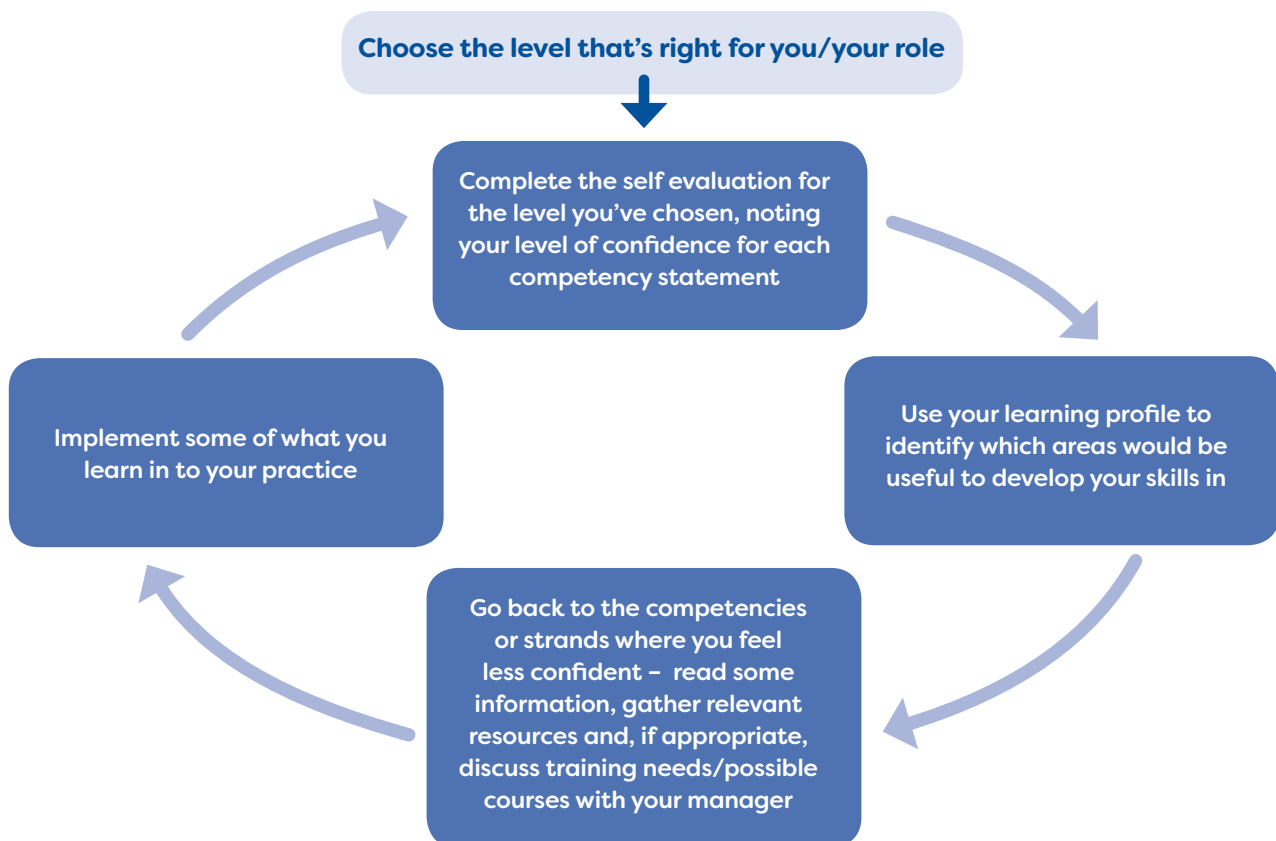
- You can access your group(s) results at any time when logged in to the SLCF by clicking on **view progress** under your group's name in the **My groups** tab in your learning profile.
- You can download your group's results as an Excel file by clicking on **Export Report** in the **Manage Group** area.
- You can exit the group results to see your own graphs by clicking on **Exit group mode** in the blue toolbar above the graph.



Each group can have up to two group leaders. If you have created a group and would like someone else to become a leader and be able to see the group's results, or if you wish to delete a group, contact [slcf@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](mailto:slcf@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

# Tracking your progress using the SLCF

The chart below shows you how you might progress through the SLCF to help your continued professional development:



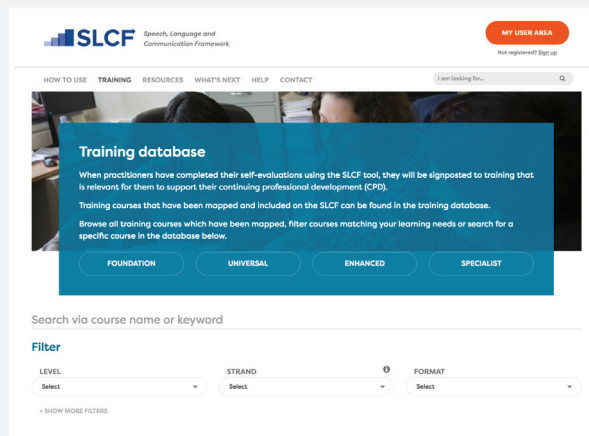
By following this process, you can use the SLCF to **identify your professional development needs** and **track your progress**, comparing your results over time.



# Professional Development options on the SLCF

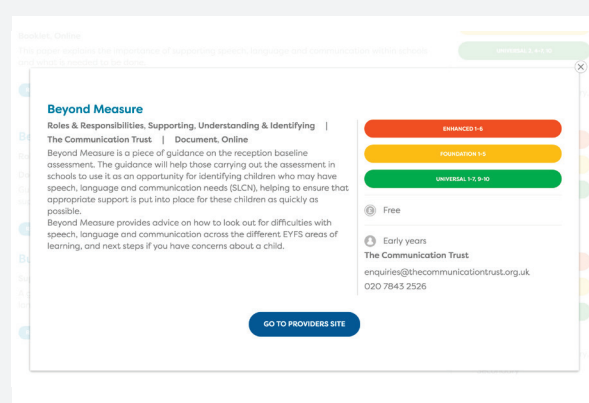
## Training courses

The SLCF signposts to available local, national and online training courses appropriate to your learning needs. The database is updated with new training courses periodically, as and when we receive submissions from training providers.



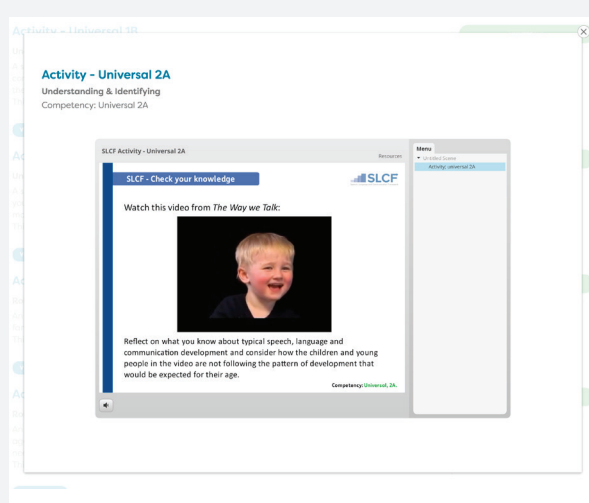
## Resources and information

The SLCF also signposts you to a range of resources and sources of information, again linked to a particular competency or your area(s) of learning need. This means you can immediately begin to develop your knowledge and skills in the areas where you need it most.



## Learning activities

Each competency within the Universal level has a learning activity associated with it to support you to develop knowledge within a particular area. These activities may be an online quiz, video or suggested reading. Depending on the competency and your current level of knowledge, the learning activity may be enough increase your confidence in a particular area, or may be a useful first step in the right direction to building your knowledge. They may also be useful in helping you to determine whether or not you are confident in a particular competency.



Click on the 'i' icon to see the full descriptors for each strand when searching the databases.



# SLCF Professional Development Plan (PDP)

The SLCF can also help you to develop a professional development action plan to track your progress, either as an individual, group or whole setting. The example below uses the SLCF PDP template which can be downloaded from the website or by clicking [here](#).

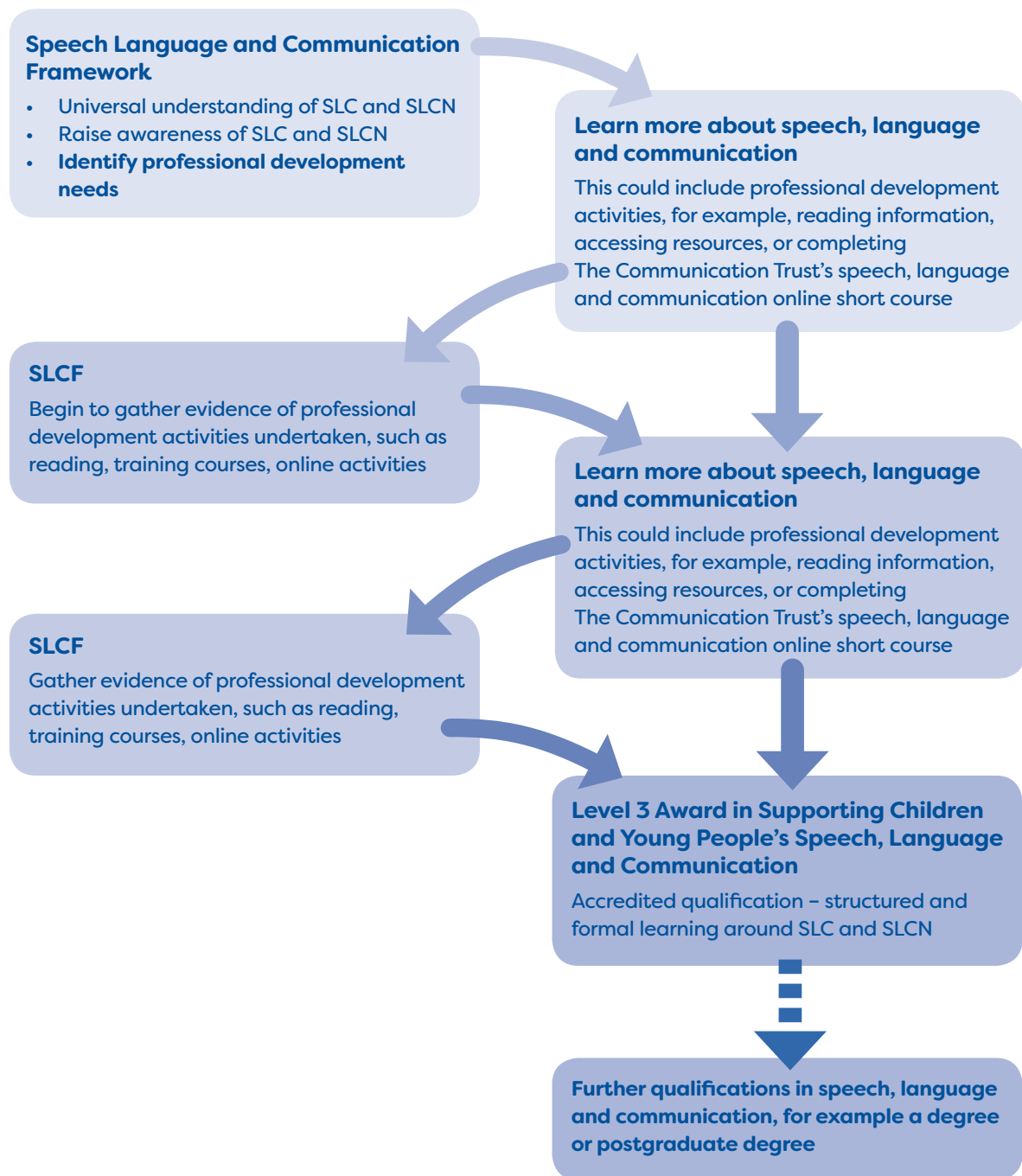
## SLCF Professional Development Plan

Date	Competency to develop	Learning actions	Feedback	Next steps
17/02/16	<b>Universal 1B:</b> I understand that speech, language and communication development follows a typical pattern, with different skills expected at different ages	<b>Resources:</b> Universally Speaking booklets  <b>Training:</b> Complete SLC online short course	<b>Review meeting 17/04/16:</b> Feeling more confident about typical development  Completed SLC short course  Changes to practice - using knowledge on a daily basis particularly with key children, taking more note of their language stage	Re-do SLCF self assessment to update learning profile

# The SLCF as part of a learning pathway

If you have an interest in developing your knowledge of children and young people's speech, language and communication and SLCN, the SLCF is a useful beginning point to a learning pathway – a structured way to build your skills and knowledge around this topic.

Below is an example of how the SLCF can fit in to a learning pathway around this topic, eventually leading to an accredited qualification in speech, language and communication:



# Further qualifications for learning more about SLC

If completing the SLCF has inspired further interest in SLC and SLCN, why not look to gaining a qualification in this area.

**The Level 3 Award: Supporting Children and Young People's Speech, Language and Communication** was developed by The Communication Trust, in partnership with City and Guilds, and is an accredited qualification.

There are currently three different routes available to undertaking this Level 3 Award; more information about these routes can be found [here](#).

Further information about the course can be found on The Communication Trust's website [here](#).

