Regional Speech, Language and Communication Skills Strategy

South Yorkshire Early Outcomes Project

August 2021

Executive Summary

Almost 30 per cent of children do not achieve the expected level of development in communication, language and literacy in South Yorkshire[1]. That's over 4,500 children that are at risk of not achieving their potential each year.

Speech, language and communication (SLC) skills are critical to children's development. Being able to speak clearly, process sounds, understand others, think critically and express their ideas are fundamental building blocks to overall development, and educational outcomes later in their lives[2].

SLC skills underpin other areas of children's development. They enable children to understand and be understood, to build relationships with others, and to learn. Children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have a high risk of difficulties with reading, writing and spelling[2].

Our ambition is that all children in South Yorkshire begin school ready to thrive. Adults in early childhood education and care can and do make a positive contribution to children's lives and promote social justice. We firmly believe that it is through a highly skilled children's workforce that we can support SLC development and identify and address SLCN.

Those working with young children enter their profession motivated by the chance to shape lives. They know that children develop rapidly in their early years and that their experiences between birth and age five will have a major impact on their development.

This document sets out our strategy to support the South Yorkshire Early Years workforce by identifying regional skills gaps and addressing these through tailored professional development opportunities during 2020 and beyond.

Building on our Regional Vision for Early Years, this strategy identifies the barriers to achieving our ambitions and outlines the steps we will take to overcome them.

[1] Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Education, 2020
[2] The Communication Trust, Importance of Communication, 2019

Contents

Background

Speech, language and communication (SLC) skills are critical to children's development. Being able to speak clearly, process sounds, understand others, think critically and express their ideas are fundamental building blocks to overall development, and educational outcomes later in their lives.

In South Yorkshire, too many children are falling behind with critical SLC skills at an early age. The South Yorkshire Futures Early Years Regional Group came together to address this problem.

The group collaborated on a project proposal to improve local systems involved in delivering SLC assessments and interventions and build the capacity and capability of the children's workforce, in order to improve outcomes for children across our region, develop a graduated response model to SLCN, and build the confidence of all who interact with children. The project bid was successful and in April 2019 was awarded over £1 million to address this problem[3].

We used the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) Maturity Matrix[4] to assess the maturity of our speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) systems, including an analysis of the local context and specific strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities in each local authority (LA) area. We analysed these findings and produced a combined maturity matrix to identify key priorities within the Early Outcomes project. Although there is some variation across all four local authorities, we all identified that our systems were at a basic or early progress level.

The project has three key deliverables within the funding period and is governed and driven by a regional, strategic SLCN group (Project Board) made up of SYF, Early Years LA leads and other key stakeholders.

The South Yorkshire Futures Regional Early Years Group brings together representatives from the four Local Authorities in South Yorkshire with the aim of sharing expertise and resources and exploring new ways of working to improve outcomes for children and families.

[3] www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-outcomes-fund-s31-grant-determination-letter

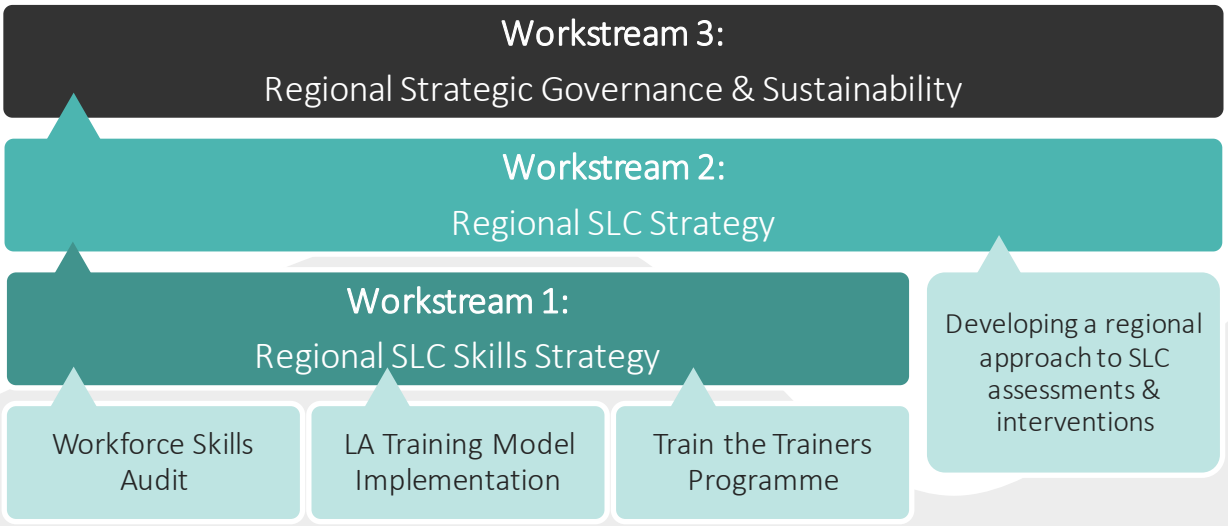
[4] Early Intervention Foundation, SLC in the early years, 2018: see Annex C.

There are three key deliverables within the South Yorkshire Early Outcomes project:

1. Developing a South Yorkshire SLC Skills Strategy, delivered through a sustainable 'Train the Trainers' model
2. Developing a South Yorkshire SLC Strategy
3. Developing Regional Strategic Governance and Sustainability

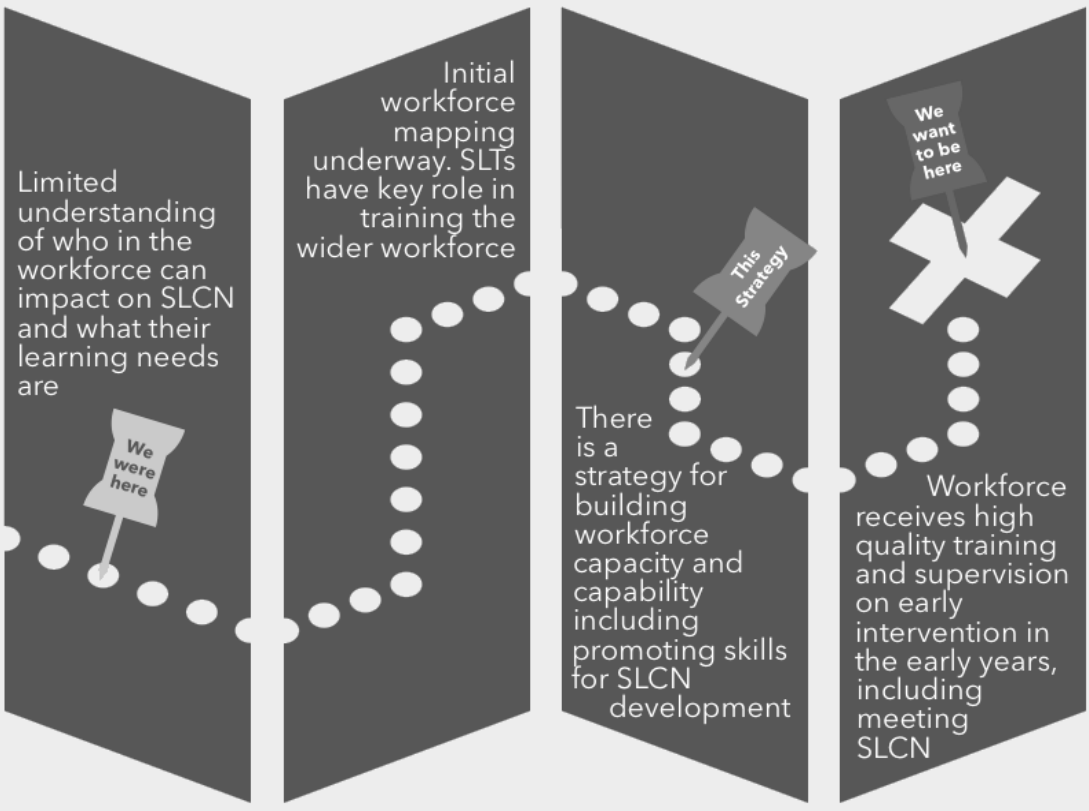
This Regional SLC Skills Strategy addresses the first project deliverable above, allowing each LA area to drive forward the implementation of training models within the funding period.

This Strategy will be incorporated into the Regional SLC Strategy produced in the second deliverable, which will focus on forming a regional approach to SLC assessments and interventions across the area. The third deliverable will ensure the implementation of the strategy and secure its legacy going forward.



Throughout this strategy, we have embedded the EIF Maturity Matrix, with the ambition of achieving a mature system of workforce planning across the region.

The implementation of this strategy will allow us to realise this ambition.



The Opportunity

Excellent early years education is the cornerstone of developing the cognitive, social and emotional foundations on which a child's future success is built. The Early Years sector in South Yorkshire ensures that children from all backgrounds are on the right track from the very beginning of their lives, enabeling them to start school ready to thrive and to achieve their potential.

However, there are servere pressures on the Early Years sector in the region, and research has shown that too many children in South Yorkshire are failing to achieve early learning goals with 4,650 children in the region not achieving the expected level of development in communications, language and literacy in 2018[5].

We have the opportunity, through our partnership, to address this challenge.

Challenges in the recruitment & retention of the children's workforce have put severe pressures on the Early Years sector. A recent survey of 705 nurseries in England found that 9 out of 10 reported loosing staff over the last 12 months. Those leaving the sector are predominately the highest qualified, resulting in the proportion of the children's workforce who have no qualifications increasing by 16 per cent over the last year[6].

In addition, more than half of employers in the Early Years sector are planning to reduce professional development opportunities as a result of poor funding levels. The cost of staffing is rising at above inflation rates and with funding for the sector remaining stagnant, there is a real strain on the Early Years sector's ability to recruit and retain the high-quality workforce they want and need[7].

Parts of the children's workforce in South Yorkshire don't feel confident identifying and addressing SLCN[8], leading to pressures on Speech & Language Therapy services. However, the children's workforce has the unique opportunity to support SLC development and to identify and, where appropriate, address SLCN. To do so requires a confident and highly skilled workforce, and with a high turnover of staff, and financial pressures on the sector, the level of high-quality training for new entrants is becoming increasingly challenging.

Our region should be a place where everyone who interacts with children can make a difference to build language and literacy skills. A region where our children's workforce has the confidence and the skills required to support SLC and identify and address children's SLCN. A region where the whole community is engaged, and children's speech, language and communication development is everyone's responsibility.

[5] Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, 2019, DFE
[6] NDNA Early Years Workforce Survey, 2019
[7] NDNA Early Years Workforce Survey, 2019
[8] See analysis of self-assessment data chapter

Approach

These are complex challenges. To address them, we developed an approach to understand the current strengths and challenges for our workforce and develop our approach to resolving any regional skills gaps.

The South Yorkshire Early Years Regional Group used the Communication Trust's Speech, Language & Communication Framework (SLCF), to understand the strengths and areas for development of the Early Years workforce in the region. Through this process, we asked professionals across the region to tell us about their role, and to complete self-assessments of their skill confidence levels against the levels of the SLCF.

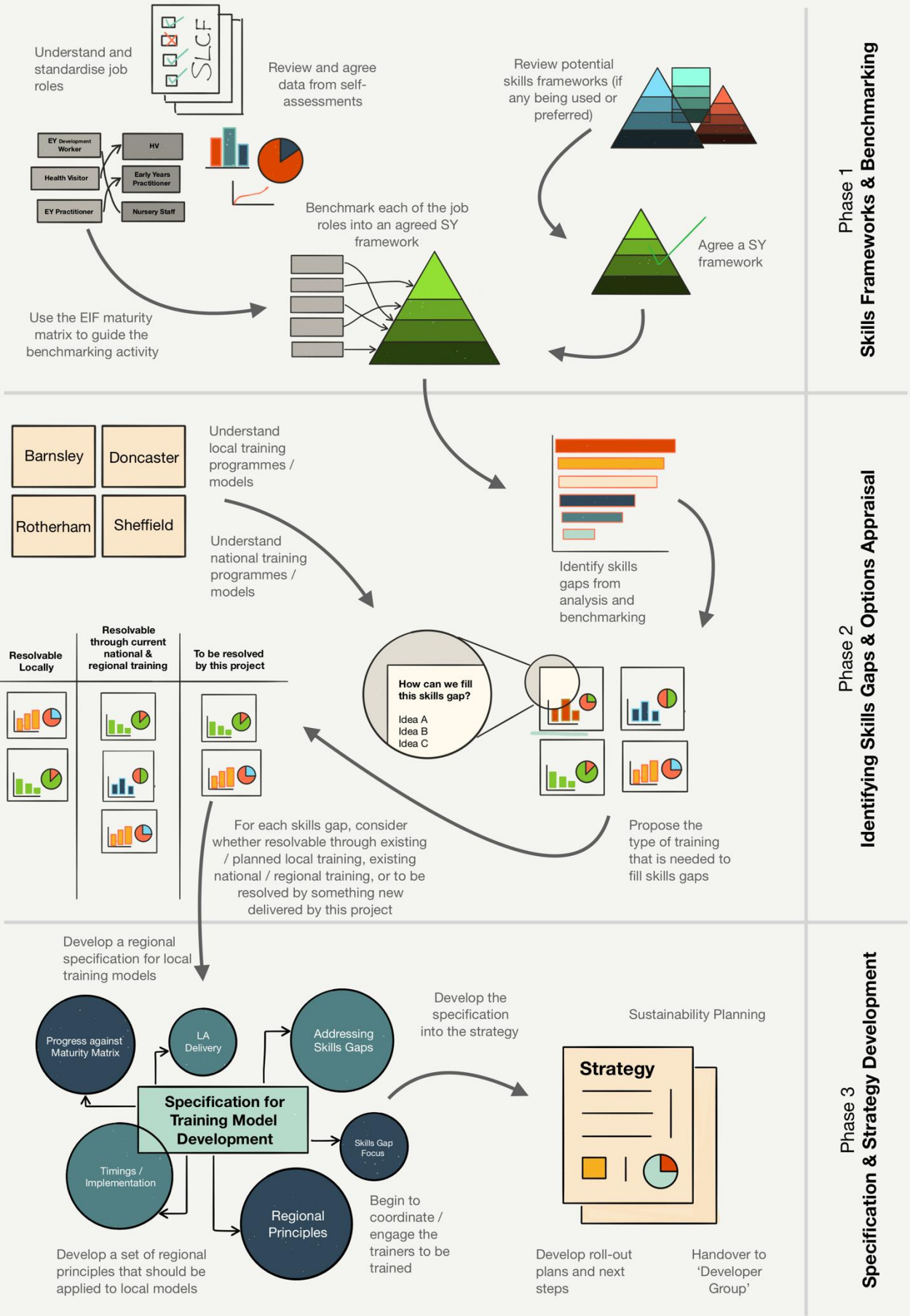
The Regional Group promoted completion of these self-assessments across the children's workforce.

822 professionals across the region took part in this exercise, and the resulting data was analysed to gain an understanding of regional skills gaps.

An expert panel[9] of Early Years professionals was convened by the Regional Early Years Group to review the evidence and develop the SLC skills strategy, following the approach outlined in Figure 1.

[9] See acknowledgments section for membership

Figure 1: Three Phase approach to development of the regional SLC skills strategy



The expert panel followed this three-phased approach to develop an evidence-based strategy that is responsive and sensitive to the existing skills and expertise across the region.

Phase 1: Skills Frameworks & Benchmarking

Skills Framework

The expert panel considered existing skills frameworks from across the region, alongside existing frameworks from other organisations.

Having reviewed the available options, the expert group decided that the framework most appropriate for the South Yorkshire children's workforce was the Communication Trust's Speech, Language & Communication Framework (SLCF).

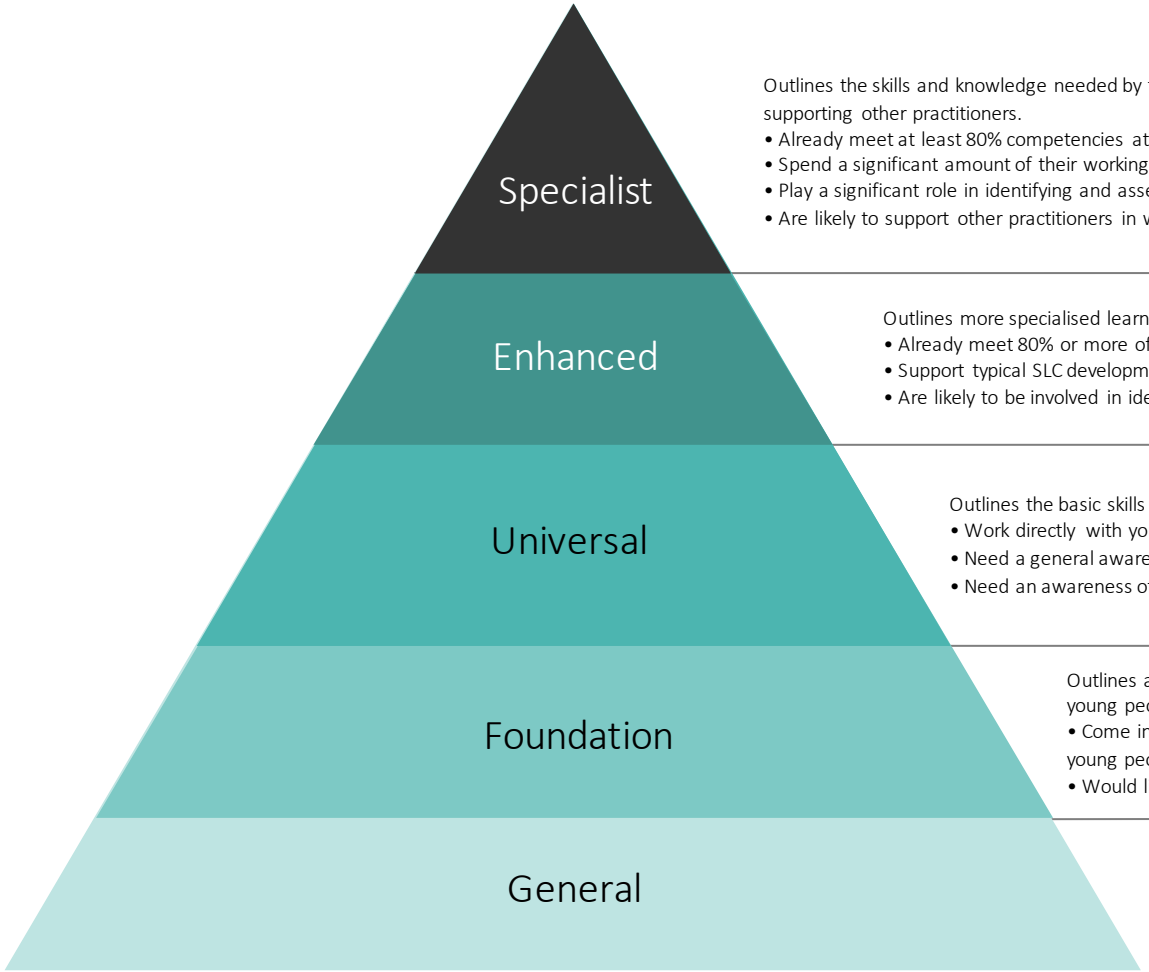
The SLCF brings together competencies in supporting the SLC of children into one place and allows practitioners to assess their confidence levels across a broad range of skills to support children's SLC development[10].

However, in order to be sensitive to existing approaches within the region, and to allow the expert panel to determine the minimum level each role should operate at, it was agreed by the expert panel to create a custom South Yorkshire skills framework.

This is largely based on the SLCF, with some amendments to reflect and be sensitive to the South Yorkshire children's workforce. The South Yorkshire SLC Skills Framework is shown in Figure 2.

[10] The Communication Trust, Speech, Language & Communication Framework, 2019

The South Yorkshire Speech, Language & Communication Framework



Outlines the skills and knowledge needed by those with a significant role in identifying and supporting young children with SLCN, and supporting other practitioners.

- Already meet at least 80% competencies at the Enhanced Level
- Spend a significant amount of their working life supporting young children with SLCN
- Play a significant role in identifying and assessing young children's SLCN
- Are likely to support other practitioners in working with young children with SLCN

Outlines more specialised learning around supporting SLC development as well as identifying and supporting SLCN:

- Already meet 80% or more of the competencies at the Universal level
- Support typical SLC development as part of the role and support the practice of others
- Are likely to be involved in identifying young children with SLCN and work with young children with SLCN

Outlines the basic skills and knowledge that everyone working with young children should have around SLC and SLCN:

- Work directly with young children and have some responsibility for supporting their learning & development
- Need a general awareness of typical SLC development for the role
- Need an awareness of how to identify features of SLCN

Outlines a basic awareness of SLC and SLCN, appropriate for those who do not work with children and young people as the main part of their role:

- Come in to contact with children and young people during the course of their work but children and young people are not the primary focus of their work
- Would like to have an increased awareness of the importance of SLC and the impact of SLCN

Increasing awareness of the general public of the importance of supporting young children with SLC and SLCN:

- Dissemination of a regional vision for young children's SLC development
- Through the production of regional materials distributed through a range of channels

Benchmarking roles

The expert panel considered the variety of roles within the children's workforce, including differences in naming conventions for similar roles across the four LA areas, to understand the similarities and differences across the region.

Having then agreed a common list of roles, the expert panel considered at which level each role should be benchmarked against the agreed skills framework.

Roles were benchmarked against the skills framework at the minimum level that would be required for each role.

For example, in order to be successful at their role, the expert panel agreed that as a minimum, childminders should be confident at the Universal Level.

Further information on the benchmarking approach and a full list of roles against benchmarks can be found in Annex A.

Phase 2: Identifying Skills Gaps & Options Appraisal

In phase 2, the expert panel used analysis of self-assessment data to understand the confidence levels of the children's workforce against the South Yorkshire SLC skills framework, identify regional skills gaps, and review existing training models and appraise the various methods that could be used to fill those gaps.

Analysis of self-assessment data

The purpose of this section is to outline the evidence-base on which the expert group have developed the South Yorkshire Regional SLC Skills Strategy.

This analysis uses the 822 self-assessments received from the children's workforce across the region to understand the strengths and areas for development of the workforce. In doing so, this report identifies a number of **skills gaps**, defined as the skills where the children's workforce had relatively low confidence levels.

Figure 3 shows the number of self-assessments received by role. These roles have been aggregated from 275 unique roles into 26 categories, for reporting purposes.

Figure 3: Number of self-assessments by role

Role	Benchmark	Count
Business Support Officers	Foundation	4
Childminders	Universal	132
Early Years Coordinators	Enhanced	4
Early Years Development Workers	Enhanced	39
Early Years Foundation Stage Leads	Enhanced	31
Early Years Practitioners	Universal	123
Educational Psychologists	Enhanced	4
Family Centre / Locality Managers	Universal	28
Family Support, Outreach & Engagement Workers	Universal	100
Head Teachers	Universal	24
Health Visitors	Enhanced	23
Miscellaneous (Combination of Roles)	Universal	11
	Foundation	8
	Enhanced	3
Nursery Nurses	Universal	16
Portage Staff	Enhanced	7
Quality Improvement & Inclusion Officers	Enhanced	41
SEN Development Officers	Enhanced	5
SENDCOs, SENDOs & SENCOs	Enhanced	9
Setting Apprentices / Assistants	Universal	4
Setting Managers, Leaders & Supervisors	Enhanced	89
Specialist Community Public Health Nurse	Enhanced	6
Specialist Staff for Looked After Children	Universal	2
Speech & Language Therapists	Specialist	10
Strategic Managers / Team Leaders	Foundation	8

Teachers	Enhanced	42
Teaching Assistants & Learning Support Assistants	Universal	22
Unknown / Unspecified	Not Applicable	27
Grand Total		**822**

Figure 4 shows the number of self-assessments received by level. This is the level assigned to each individual based on their role. A small proportion (3 per cent) of responses did not provide a role or had no facility to provide their role on the portal. For these respondents, no assessment can be made of their confidence, as it is not possible to identify the level their role requires.

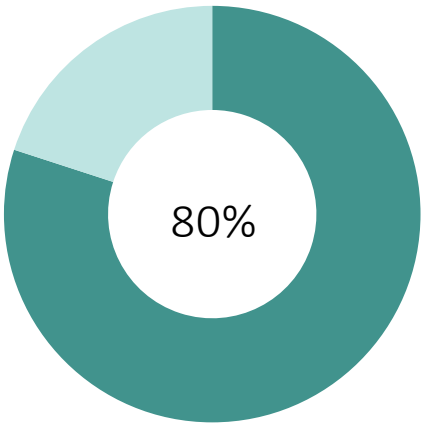
Figure 4: Number of self-assessments by level

	Total	Proportion
Specialist	10	1%
Enhanced	303	37%
Universal	462	56%
Foundation	20	2%
Unknown	27	3%
Grand Total	**822**	**100%**

Confidence Levels

The overall confidence level of the children's workforce is determined by analysing how each individual rated their confidence level for each strand of the framework, at the level assigned to them by the expert panel. The mean is then taken across the workforce to provide the overall confidence level.

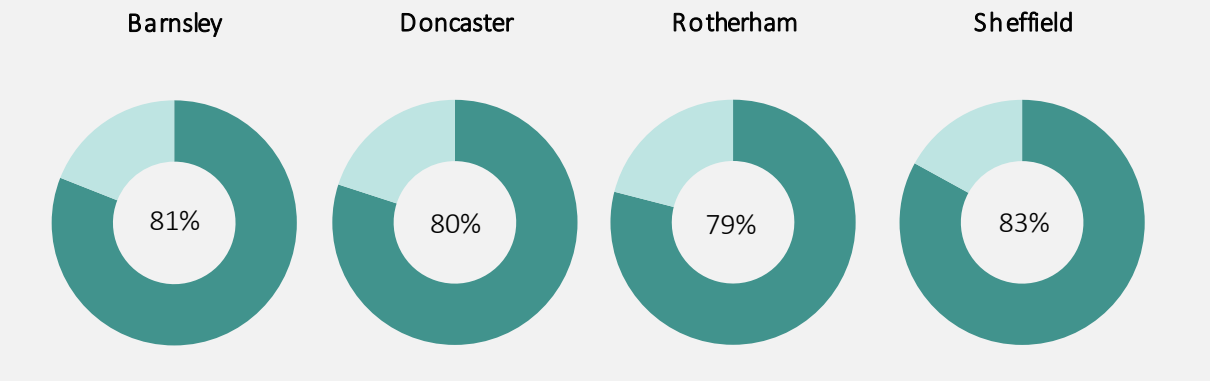
Figure 6: Overall SY Workforce Confidence



The overall confidence level of the South Yorkshire children's workforce is 80 per cent. This means that on average, professionals working with 0-5 children in South Yorkshire feel they meet 80 per cent of the SLC competencies required to undertake their role.

By each authority, the overall confidence level varies between 79 and 83 per cent, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Overall workforce confidence by LA area



Confidence Level by Category

There are 10 strands of the SLCF, which are combined into 3 categories as follows:

- Understanding & Identifying
    1. Typical SLC development
    2. Identification and assessment of speech, language and communication needs
    3. Learning English as an additional language
    4. Relationship between SLCN and other areas of Development
- Supporting
    5. The communication environment
    6. Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN
    7. Reflecting on professional development around SLC and SLCN
- Roles & Responsibilities
    8. Involving children and young people with SLCN
    9. Your roles and responsibilities: supporting children and young people with SLCN
    10. Parents, carers, families, peers and friends

The confidence levels of each of these categories are shown in Figure 8 below.
Understanding & Identifying has the lowest confidence level, at 77 per cent.

Figure 8: Confidence Levels by Category

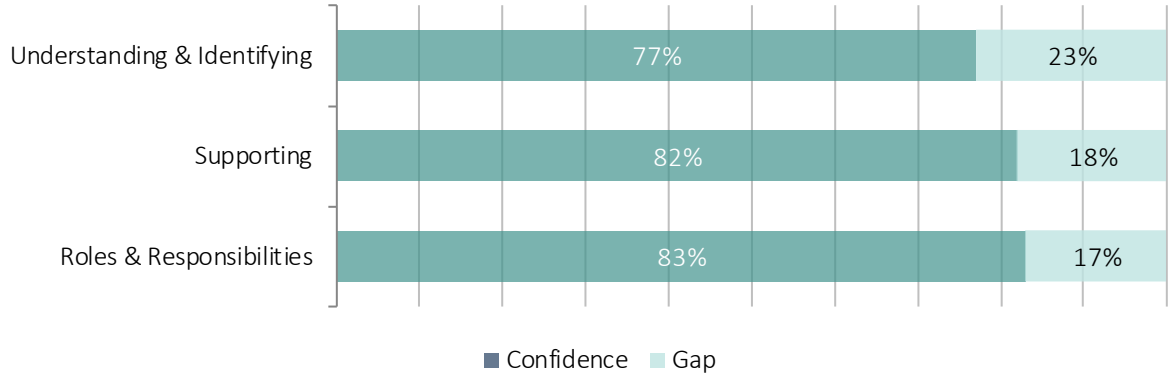
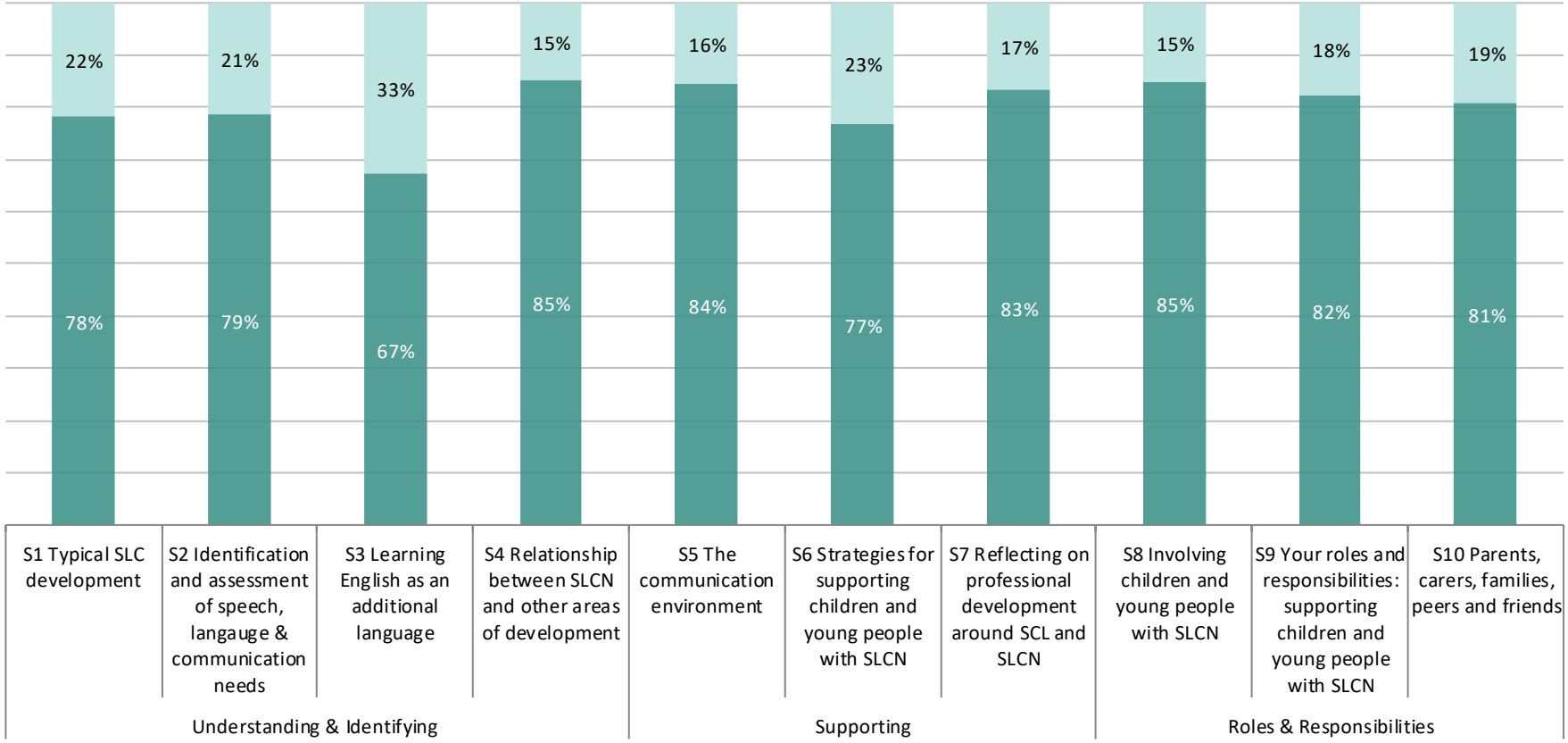


Figure 9 shows the overall confidence levels by strand, in order of overall confidence. The strand with the lowest confidence level was Strand 3 (Learning English as an additional language), at 67 per cent. This means that on average, professionals working with 0-5 children in South Yorkshire feel they meet 67 per cent of the competencies required to understand the needs of children where English is not their first language.

Figure 9: Overall confidence levels by strand



Confidence Levels by Strand and Role

In order to consider which roles have the greatest and least confidence in each strand, analysis of confidence levels by role and strand can be found in Annex B.

Summary of confidence levels by strand and role

Figure 10 shows a visual summary of confidence levels by strand and role, sorted by overall confidence.

Figure 10: Summary of confidence levels by strand and role (excluding those with unknown roles)

			Understanding & Identifying				Supporting			Roles & Responsibilities		
	Number of Assessments	Overall Confidence	Strand 1	Strand 2	Strand 3	Strand 4	Strand 5	Strand 6	Strand 7	Strand 8	Strand 9	Strand 10
Nursery Nurses	23	68%	61%	68%	56%	72%	72%	58%	80%	67%	71%	73%
Specialist Staff for Looked After Children	2	70%	69%	65%	56%	74%	77%	70%	80%	70%	70%	72%
Early Years Development Workers	39	73%	57%	68%	56%	79%	81%	73%	85%	80%	77%	80%
Teachers	42	77%	76%	75%	79%	78%	72%	76%	76%	85%	79%	73%
Health Visitors	4	78%	80%	79%	65%	84%	81%	70%	78%	82%	81%	76%
Early Years Practitioners	132	78%	79%	77%	66%	82%	81%	71%	79%	89%	78%	81%
Early Years Coordinators	31	79%	66%	73%	60%	86%	85%	75%	90%	84%	85%	82%
Childminders	100	79%	79%	75%	69%	87%	87%	74%	75%	84%	84%	80%
Early Years Foundation Stage Leads	22	80%	85%	74%	57%	100%	89%	85%	68%	100%	74%	69%
Family Support, Outreach & Engagement Workers	22	80%	81%	79%	63%	88%	83%	79%	83%	88%	78%	81%
Miscellaneous	123	80%	82%	82%	74%	83%	83%	78%	80%	83%	82%	77%
Teaching Assistants & Learning Support Assistants	4	81%	85%	75%	55%	88%	87%	93%	78%	85%	82%	81%
Setting Apprentices / Assistants	16	81%	73%	78%	68%	87%	86%	89%	81%	84%	81%	81%
Specialist Community Public Health Nurse	6	82%	61%	79%	70%	85%	93%	80%	93%	85%	90%	84%
SENDCOs, SENDOs & SENCOs	9	82%	81%	73%	70%	85%	92%	88%	86%	79%	84%	83%
Family Centre / Locality Managers	28	83%	83%	84%	70%	89%	84%	73%	80%	90%	87%	87%
Setting Managers, Leaders & Supervisors	89	83%	71%	76%	65%	86%	90%	85%	92%	90%	88%	87%
Head Teachers	24	88%	91%	84%	73%	98%	93%	83%	91%	87%	93%	90%
Educational Psychologists	4	89%	89%	81%	63%	99%	96%	85%	89%	100%	98%	89%
Business Support Officers	4	89%	85%	84%	79%	92%	92%	-	-	92%	-	-
Quality Improvement & Inclusion Officers	41	90%	88%	85%	76%	100%	100%	-	-	93%	-	-
Strategic Managers / Team Leaders	8	93%	100%	85%	60%	90%	98%	100%	100%	100%	99%	94%
Portage Staff	7	93%	91%	94%	75%	100%	100%	-	-	100%	-	-
SEN Development Officers	5	96%	96%	88%	77%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Speech & Language Therapists	10	97%	100%	99%	90%	98%	99%	99%	95%	95%	96%	97%
Average	795	80%	77%	78%	67%	85%	84%	77%	83%	85%	82%	81%

The expert panel reviewed additional analyses based on roles being benchmarked at different levels, to assess whether potential gaps were the result of high benchmarking or were indicative of a genuine gap in confidence with the strand in question.

This analysis found the same confidence gaps existed in the same places for the same roles across all levels, indicating that these were genuine gaps.

Phase 3: Specification & Strategy Development

In phase 3, the expert panel used the data analysis and local intelligence to develop a set of regional principles and applied these to identified skills gaps to develop a specification to be guide the development of local training models.

Developing the principles of the strategy

Our regional skills gaps vary in size, complexity and coverage, and to address them on a regional basis, we need an approach that is sensitive to the individuality of each LA area.

There is a wealth of talent, expertise and experience within our children's workforce, and drawing upon that is key to ensure the success of our strategy.

To address our regional skills gaps, we have developed a set of principles, and a framework for the creation of a regional training model, as detailed in the next chapter.

These principles were developed through the expert panel's collective experience and determination to create sustainable and impactful workforce development opportunities. Using this, we have then developed a specification where each principle is applied to each strand of the South Yorkshire SLC Framework.

The expert panel appointed representatives from the children's workforce in each LA area to form a virtual regional team called the 'developer group', to design and deploy a regional training model that addresses the identified skills gaps, using the principles and specification it has designed.

Principles of the Strategy

The 5 guiding principles of our skills strategy will ensure that we focus on the most important skills gaps, play to our strengths, prepare for the future, keep our workforce at the centre of our plans and be responsive and dynamic in the face of change.

Through system change, we will build a region where a higher proportion of children achieve at least expected levels in the communication, language & literacy goals by 2028, by working in partership to identify and confront development gaps at the earliest opportunity, and deploy evidence-based interventions through a highly skilled workforce. Delivered through a robust regional early years SLCN strategy, we will make an impact on children and families, especially those most in need of support.

Opportunity Focused

In order to ensure the sustainability of the regional skills strategy, the training model should focus on all strands of the South Yorkshire Speech, Language & Communication Framework.

However, recognising the extent of some identified skills gaps, the model should place a strong focus on the strands with the largest gaps, as identified by the expert panel, and especially on Strand 3: Supporting children where English is a second language.

Strength Seeking

The regional training model should be responsive to the strengths and challenges across the four Local Authorities and build upon existing expertise wherever possible.

The model should include mechanisms to share best practice across LA boundaries and recognise where there are weaknesses that could be addressed with the help of other SY LAs.

For instance, the model should make use of existing expertise in Sheffield in relation to children with English as an Additional Language.

Future Proof

The regional training model should, where possible, use and build upon existing resource in delivering professional development.

Priority should be placed on developing existing staff rather than procuring or externally recruiting additional resource, and the model should include clear plans for sustainability and legacy management. This will ensure the longevity of skills acquired through the model.

People Centred

The regional training model should target professionals at the relevant level of the South Yorkshire SLC Framework for each skills gap.

The model should recognise and be sensitive to the varying degrees of impact that each professional role is able to make on a child's SLC development, and tailor the approach to workforce development appropriately.

For instance, roles at the Enhanced level are likely to involve working on a 1:1 basis with a child with SLCN, whereas roles at the Foundation level require a more general awareness and knowledge.

Continually Improving

In order to be responsive and adaptable, the training models will be regularly reviewed by the Developer Group formed by the expert panel.

This is to ensure that the training model is regularly assessed and measured for impact, and approaches are revised where necessary.

In addition, the model should include plans to conduct additional skills audits to ensure plans are targeting the right skills gaps in the longer term.

These guiding principles set the foundations for the development of a regional training model to address the skills gaps identified earlier in the strategy.

Developing a training model specification

Each of the 5 principles has been applied to each skills gap, to create a specification. This specification is designed to embed the principles at the heart of the regional training model, ensuring each skills gap is met with a challenge focused, strength seeking, future proof, people centred, continually improving approach.

Specification

The regional skills specification applies the 5 principles to our regional skills gaps, setting the specification for the creation of a regional skills model. This specification sets out the requirements for the developer group to design and deploy their local training models.

Figure 11: Regional SLC training model specification

	Opportunity Focused	Strength Seeking	Future Proof	People Centred	Continually Improving
Skills Gap 1 Learning English as an additional language Overall confidence: 67%	This is a key priority for the region and all four local models must contain a strong focus on EAL throughout the universal and enhanced training offers. There should also be a bespoke EAL training offer at the enhanced level.	The developer group should review existing resources across LA areas and draw on expertise where possible for example: -The Barnsley Specialist SLC school -Sheffield EAL team / ESCAL tracker -Doncaster EAL Team	This skills gap should be addressed through formal training delivered via a Train the Trainers model that is incorporated into the trainer's core offer.	At the enhanced level there should be a bespoke EAL specific training offer, and EAL should be a common thread throughout all other training. At the universal level EAL should be embedded within all training. Sensitivity should be paid to geographical and demographic variations between and within LA areas.	EAL should be recognised as a key skills gap and should be given priority on agendas for the expert panel and developer group. In designing individual LA training models focus should be placed on developing common evaluation approach to ensure impact is measurable across the region as whole. Training models should include provision to monitor this over time via regular skills audits.

Skills Gap 2 Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN Overall Confidence: 77%	This is a key priority for the region and all four local models must contain bespoke training at the universal and enhanced levels.	The developer group should review and appraise existing resources across LA areas and draw on the range of training expertise that exists across the region to develop local models.	There should be a focus on formal training offers in each local model and information resources should be made available for all those interacting with children.	There should be a focus on the universal and enhanced levels of the children's workforce as well as a focus on the general and foundation levels including parents, carers and families.	Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN should be recognised as a key skills gap. In designing individual LA training models focus should be placed on developing common evaluation approach to ensure impact is measurable across the region as whole. Training models should include provision to monitor this over time via regular skills audits.
Skills Gap 3 Typical SLC development Overall Confidence: 78%	This is a key priority for the region and especially for new and prospective entrants to the workforce. All 4 local models must include typical SLC development across all training.	The developer group should review and appraise existing resources across LA areas and draw on the range of evidence-based practice that exists across the region to develop local models.	This skills gap should be addressed by a combination of formal training and information / resources such as website content and communication material made available to all.	There should be a focus on schools and PVIs especially for EYFS leaders, new entrants and supervisors / managers. In addition, the developer group should place a focus on professionals who work with children under 3 who are not accessing early years provision.	Typical SLC development should be recognised as a key skills gap. In designing individual LA training models focus, should be placed on developing common evaluation approach to ensure impact is measurable across the region as whole. Training models should include provision to monitor this over time via regular skills audits.

Skills Gap 4 Identification and assessment of SLCN Overall Confidence: 79%	The identification and assessment of SLCN should be a common thread throughout all four local models.	The developer group should review and appraise existing evidence-based practice when developing their local models.	This skills gap should be addressed by a combination of formal training and information / resources such as website content and communication material made available to all.	There should be a strong focus on addressing skills gaps in this area amongst Health Visitors, parents/families and professions working with the under 3s. The four local models should ensure strong focus at the Foundation level.	All local training models should include provision to monitor this skills gap over time using regular skills audits.
Skills Gap 5 Parents, carers, families, peers & friends Overall Confidence: 81%	Ensuring that everyone in the children's workforce has confidence working with parents, carers, families, peers and friends is paramount to the other strands of the South Yorkshire SLC Framework and therefore this area is a key priority.	The developer group should review and appraise existing resources across LA areas especially taking learning from family settings. The developer group should also consider the PPEL tool (a CEI taxonomy).	In addressing this skill gap the developer group should consider existing resources such as the NSPCC programmes, PEEP, PPEL and PEAL, and SAFE training. The developer group should consider addressing this area through signposting and information resources.	There should be a strong emphasis on the Foundation levels including parents and families, but all levels should have access to any materials. Focus should be placed on often overlooked roles such as receptionists in children's centres, foster carers and professionals who don't regularly interact with children.	Whilst progress with professionals can be monitored via self-assessment data collections over time, the developer group should consider evaluation techniques such as focus groups and surveys to assess impact with non- professional roles, parents and others.
Skills Gap 6 Roles and responsibilities supporting children and young people with SLCN Overall Confidence: 82%	Recognising the importance of this area, the South Yorkshire Regional Early Years Group will seek to address this area predominantly via Workstream 2 of the Early Outcomes Project.	The South Yorkshire Regional Early Years Group will review existing best practice across the region to develop a regional SLC strategy.	Formal training should not be the main focus of addressing this skills gap as Workstream 2 of the Early Outcomes Project will seek to address this skills gap.	Children's SLC development is everybody's responsibility and therefore all individuals should have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting children and young people with SLCN.	All local training models should include provision to monitor this skills gap over time using regular skills audits.

Skills Gap 7 Reflecting on professional development around SLC and SLCN Overall Confidence: 83%	Reflecting on professional development is an important area that should form part of each local training model.	The developer group should, where possible, incorporate reflection time before, during and after all professional development opportunities. This could include building gap tasks in between training sessions.	The developer group should consider making content available to the children's workforce allowing them to reflect on their professional development (for instance including self-assessment tools on a regional website).	It is important for all professionals to reflect on their development, especially for new starters.	The developer group should, where possible, develop plans to undertake refresher training for all universal and enhanced level training at regular intervals in the future to ensure sustainability.
Skills Gap 8 The communication environment Overall Confidence: 84%	The developer group must ensure their local models align with the PDP which is aiming to improve the quality of practice within settings.	The developer group should draw on the champions of the PDP to ensure alignment of their training models.	Whilst this area will be addressed predominantly through the PDP, the communication environment should be an element of all Universal level training.	There should be a focus on the communication environment within Universal level training, and particularly for agencies that interact with children and young people.	All local training models should include provision to monitor this skills gap over time using regular skills audits, and through evaluation of the PDP.
Skills Gap 9 Involving children and young people with SLCN Overall Confidence: 85%	Recognising relatively high confidence levels in this area, local training models should not make this area high priority. However, to ensure sustainability involving children and young people with SLCN should be a core part of any training offer.	The developer group should review and appraise existing evidence-based practice when developing their local models.	The developer group should ensure this area is not overlooked when developing the local models to ensure this area does not become a gap in the future.	Any provision to address this area should be available to all who interact with children and young people.	All local training models should seek to revisit analysis of self-assessments for this area in approximately 12 months, to review the position.

Skills Gap 10 Relationship between SLCN and other areas of development Overall Confidence: 85%	Recognising relatively high confidence levels in this area, local training models should not make this area high priority. However, this area is an important pre-cursor to understanding typical SLC development and is a key message to communicate to all those interacting with children and young people.	The developer group should review existing national resources such as the Bercow 'Ten Years On' report and the Oxford Review for key messages in this area.	Content and resources around the relationship between SLCN and other areas of development should be made key messages throughout local training models, and they should be strongly aligned with national strategies.	For this area the predominant focus should be for those falling into the General level of the South Yorkshire SLC Framework (i.e. retail workers, taxi drivers, housing officers) however, these messages should be embedded throughout training across all other levels.	All local training models should seek to revisit self-assessments for this area in approximately 12 months, to review the position.

Delivery

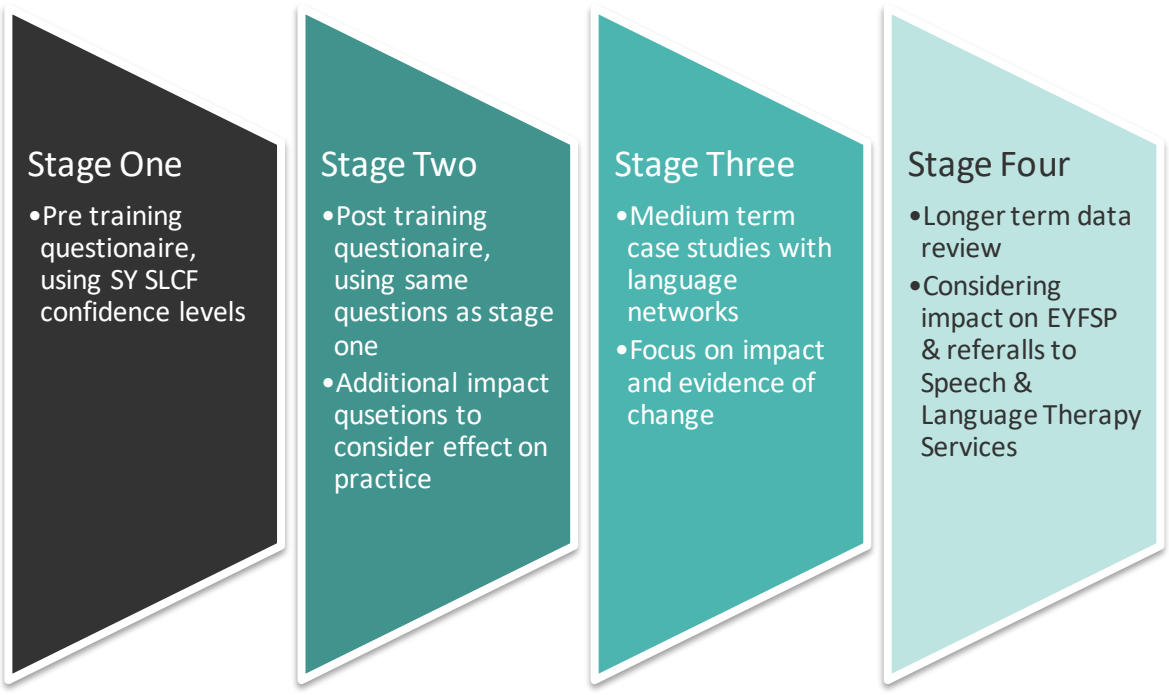
Local training models will be established by the 'developer group', who will design, test and implement their models to the specification outlined in this strategy. Training will be designed and then delivered to upskill a team of trainers across the children's workforce via a sustainable Train the Trainers model. This will then be cascaded to the wider children's workforce as part of the LA Areas individual rollout plan.

Broadly, the next steps for each LA area are as follows:

Sustainability

In order for the regional training approach to be successful and sustainable, the developer group will meet quartlerly for in line with the principles set out within this document. The developer group will monitor and evaluate the training, ensuring that the content meets requirements, making adjustments where required. The developer group will create a monitoring and quality assurance process to help identify local and regional improvements, following a broad 4 stage process:

Figure X: Four stage evaluation approach



The expert panel will reconvene at regular intervals to oversee the implementation of this strategy and to ensure the training models meet the principles and specification within it.

This group will conduct a new regional workforce skills audit after approximatley 12 months of training being live, to monitor the impact of the strategy, and ensure it is fit for the future.

As outlined in the Background section, this skills strategy will be incorporated into the wider 'Regional SLC Strategy', overseen by a regional strategic governance group, who will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the strategy and secure its legacy going forward.

Conclusion

Our ambition is that all children in South Yorkshire begin school ready to thrive. Adults in early childhood education and care can and do make a positive contribution to children's lives and promote social justice. We firmly believe that it is through a highly skilled children's workforce that we can support SLC development and identify and address SLCN.

This strategy has set out our approach to ensuring all children in our region can access a high quality, capable and confident children's workforce, by:

- gaining a detailed understanding of the skill confidence levels of our regional children's workforce
- devising an approach to addressing our regional skills gaps
- developing a set of principles to achieving our ambitions
- forming a developer group to design and launch bespoke local training models
- creating a specification to guide and shape the work of the developer group
- developing a robust strategic governance plan to drive forward the strategy

Acknowledgements

The development of this regional strategy would not have been possible without the work of the expert panel, made up of representatives from each of the 4 LAs and South Yorkshire Futures.

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Annex A: Benchmarking Approach

Figure X shows the level of the South Yorkshire SLC Framework that was determined as the benchmark for each role in the children's workforce. This is the **minimum** level that the expert panel agreed was required for each role.

For example, in order to be successful at their role, the expert panel agreed that **as a minimum**, childminders should be confident at the Universal Level.

Figure X: Benchmarking Approach

Benchmark	Role
Specialist	Clinical Lead for Speech and Language Therapy
	Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist
	Senior Speech & Language Therapist
	Speech & Language Therapist
Enhanced	Area SENCO
	Area SENDCO
	Attendance & Inclusion Officer
	Attendance & Inclusion Team Leader
	Childcare Quality Improvement Officer
	Clinical Lead for Child Development Centre
	Community Early Years Practitioner
	Community Nursery Nurse
	Deputy Manager (including additional responsibilities such as EYFS leader or SENDCO)
	Early Years Advisor, Moderation & Assessment Manager
	Early Years Consultant
	Early Years Coordinator
	Early Years Development Worker
	Early Years Inclusion Assistant
	Early Years Inclusion Officer
	Early Years Inclusion Service Coordinator
	Early Years Inclusion Teacher
	Early Years Manager
	Early Years Quality Improvement Manager
	Early Years Quality Improvement Officer
	Early Years Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
	Educational Psychologist
	EYFS Lead
	EYFS Lead (with additional responsibilities such as SENDCO)
	EYFS Quality Access & Moderation Officer
	EYFS Quality Improvement Manager
	Health Visitor
	Inclusion Teacher
	Lead Raising Achievement Officer
	Learning Support Service Teacher
	Literacy Campaign Manager
	Portage Home Visitor
	Principal Educational Psychologist
	Project Lead & Development Officer
	PVI Deputy Manager
	Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment
	Quality & Sufficiency Manager
	Quality Improvement Officer
	SEN Development Officer
	Senior Educational Psychologist
	Senior Portage Home Visitor
	Setting Deputy Manager
	Setting Leader
	Setting Leader (with additional responsibilities such as SENDCO)

	Setting Manager
	Setting Owner
	Setting SENCO
	Setting Supervisor
	Specialist Community Public Health Nurse
	Specialist Leader of Education
	Specialist Teacher
	Teacher
	Teacher (including additional responsibilities such as EYFS lead or SENDCO)
Universal	Apprentice Teaching Assistant
	Assistant Head Teacher
	Assistant Head Teacher (including additional responsibilities such as EYFS lead or SENDCO)
	Best Start Team Manager
	Child Support Assistant
	Childcare Practitioner
	Childminder
	Children's Centre Coordinator
	Community Practice Educator
	Deputy Head Teacher
	Deputy Room Leader
	Early Years Assistant
	Early Years Educator
	Early Years Modern Apprentice
	Early Years Practitioner
	Early Years Practitioner (with additional responsibilities such as SENDCO)
	Early Years Prevention Worker
	Executive Head Teacher
	Family Hub Coordinator
	Family Hub Manager
	Family Involvement & Information Officer
	Family Support Manager
	Family Support Worker
	Head Teacher
	Infant Feeding Support Worker
	Information & Involvement Officer for Disabled Children & Young People
	Integrated Working Lead
	Key Person
	Lead Early Years Practitioner
	Lead Teaching Assistant
	Learning Support Assistant
	Locality Service Manager
	Nursery Nurse
	Outreach & Engagement Coordinator
	Outreach & Engagement Senior Practitioner
	Outreach & Engagement Worker
	Parent & Family Support Worker
	Playgroup Leader
	Room Leader
	Senior Childcare Practitioner
	Senior Early Years Practitioner
	Senior Family Support Worker
	Senior Learning Mentor
	Senior Nursery Nurse
	Senior Teaching Assistant
	Setting Apprentice
	Setting Assistant
	Setting Practitioner
	Specialist Nurse for Looked After Children & Care Leavers
	Specialist Practitioner for Looked After Children
	Speech & Language Teaching Assistant
	Staff Nurse
	Teaching Assistant
	Young Carers Practitioner

Foundation	0-5 Children's Services Team Leader Administrative Officer Assistant Service Manager Business Support Officer Early Years Team Manager Health Improvement Coordinator Strategic Manager Youth Justice Social Worker

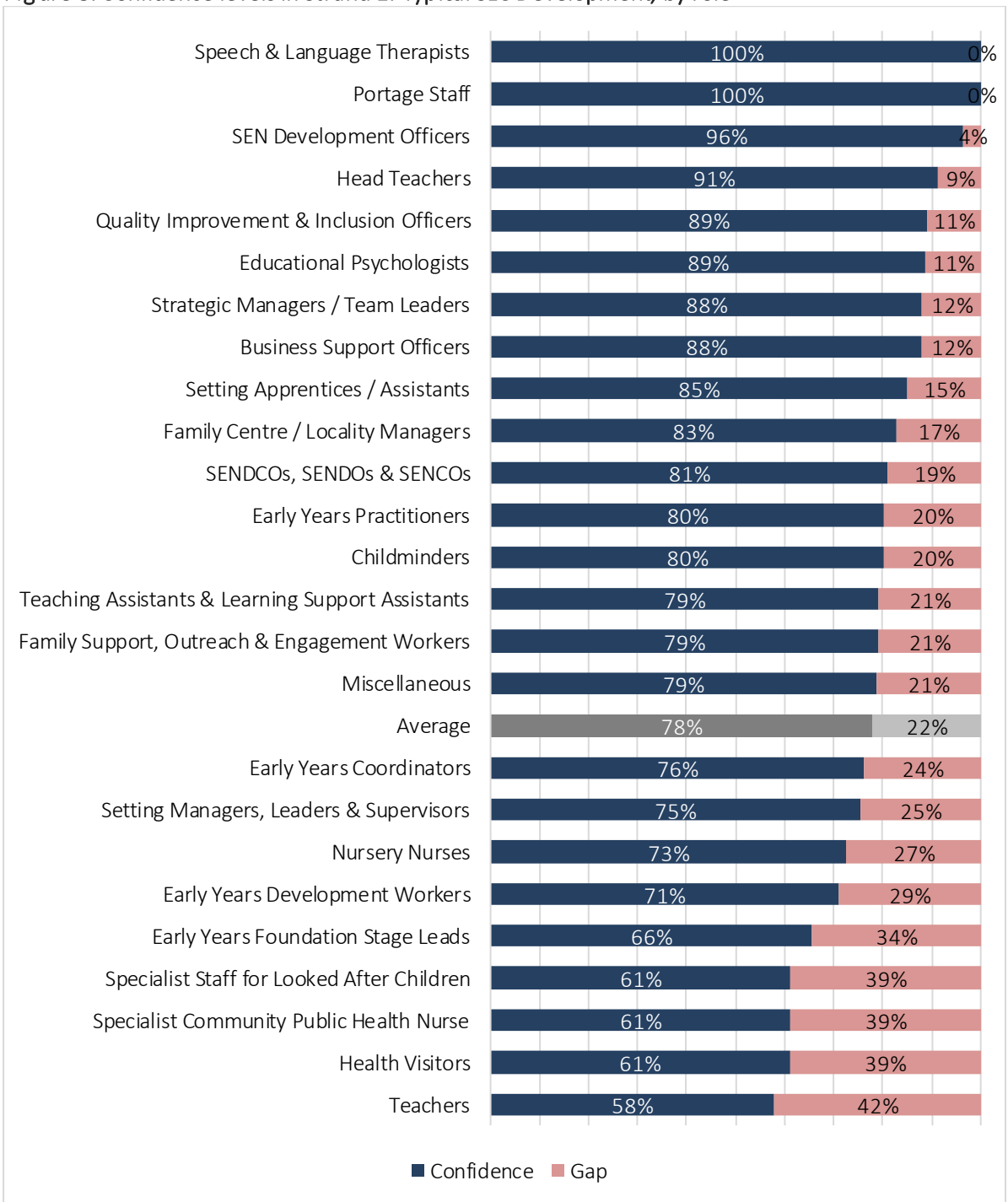
Annex B: Confidence Levels by Strand and Role

This section considers each of the strands of the SLCF by role, allowing us to consider which roles have the greatest and least confidence in each strand.

Strand 1: Typical SLC Development

Strand 1 measures levels of confidence in knowing the typical stages of SLC development for all children and young people. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 78 per cent, but this varies between 56 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

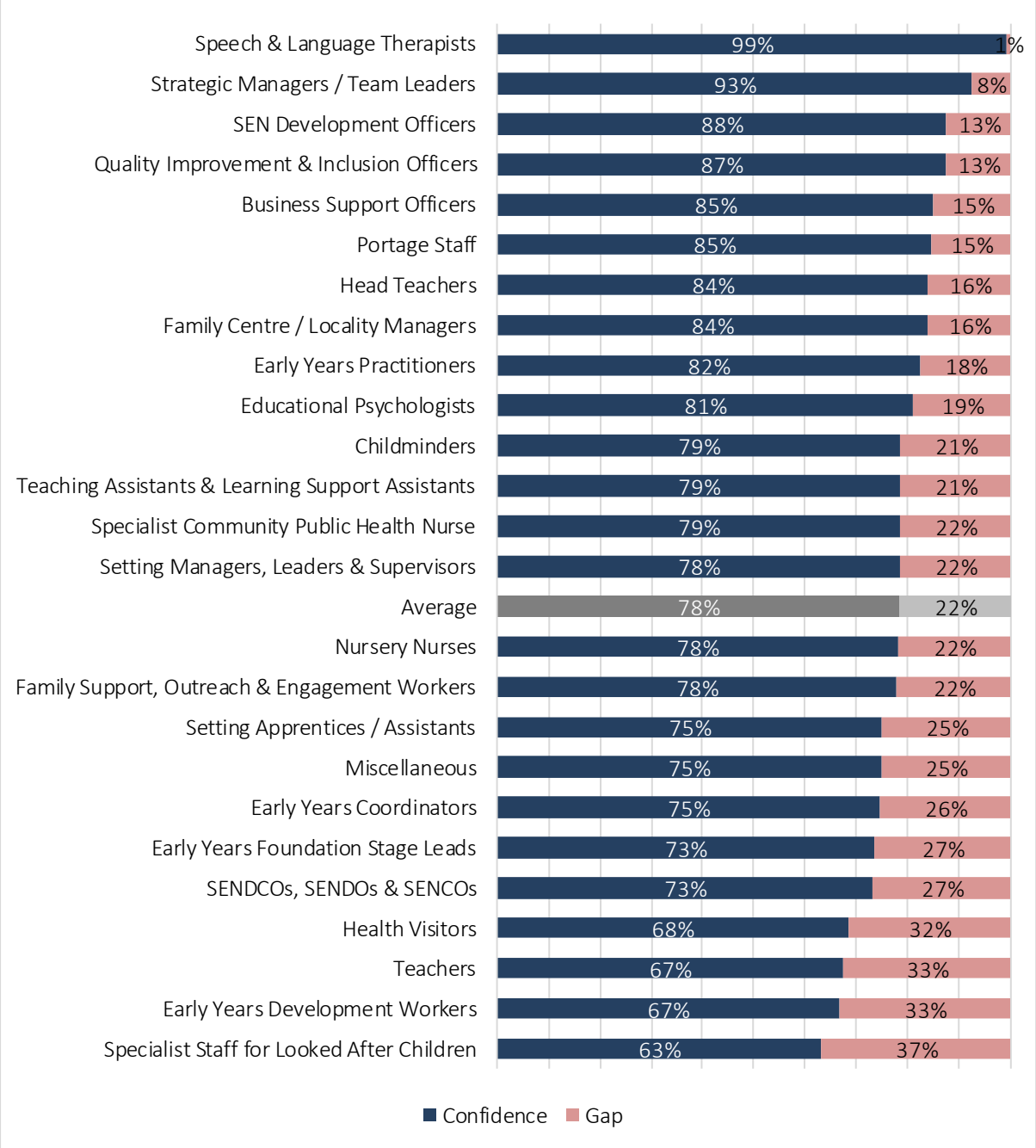
Figure 8: Confidence levels in Strand 1: Typical SLC Development, by role



Strand 2: Identification and assessment of speech, language & communication needs

Strand 2 measures levels of confidence in knowledge on the skills, methods and tools to use to identify children with SLCN. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 78 per cent, but this varies between 63 and 99 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

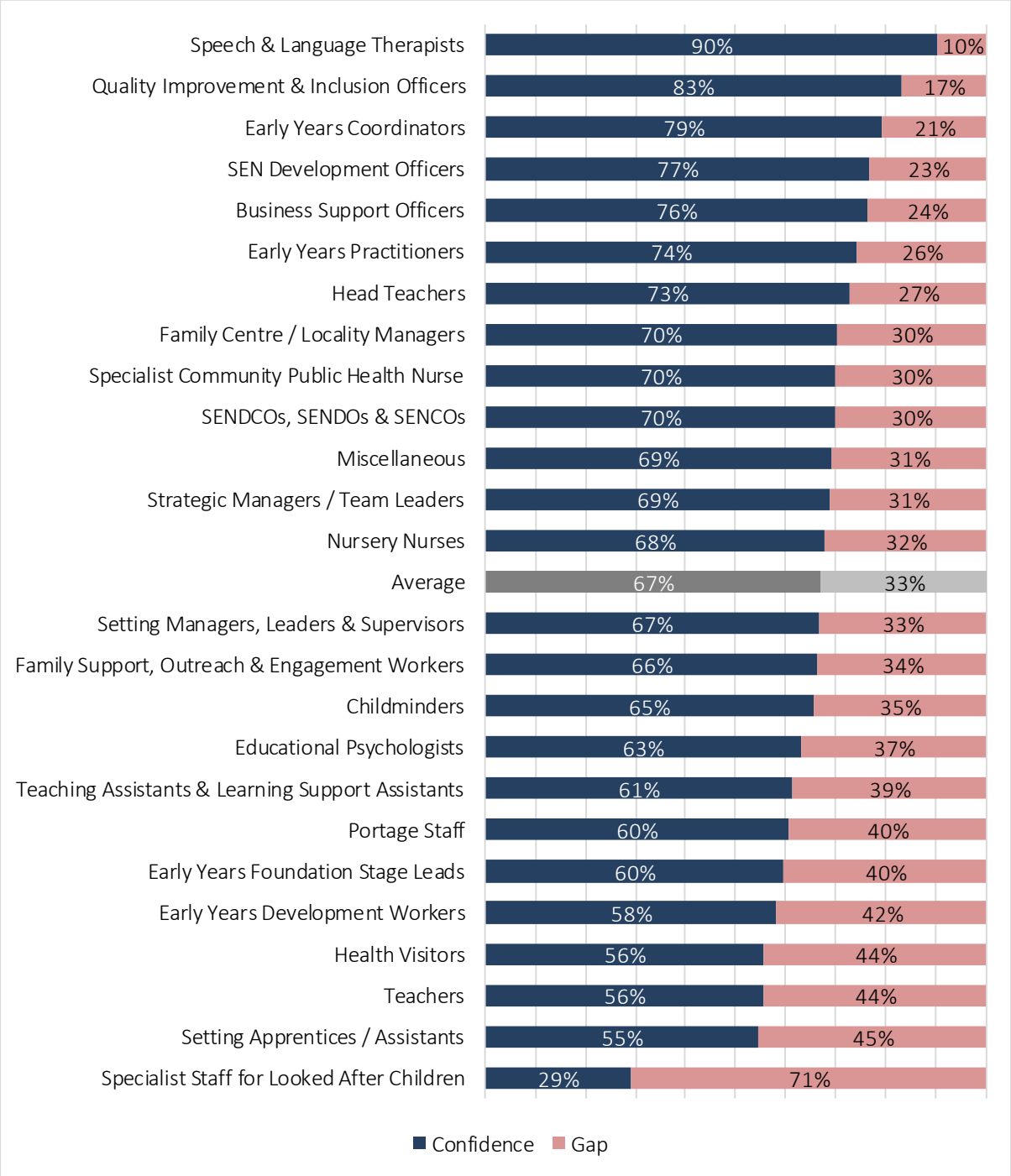
Figure 9: Confidence levels in Strand 2: Identification and assessment of SLCN, by role



Strand 3: Learning English as an additional language

Strand 3 measures confidence levels in understanding the needs of children where English is not their first language. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 67 per cent, but this varies between 29 and 90 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

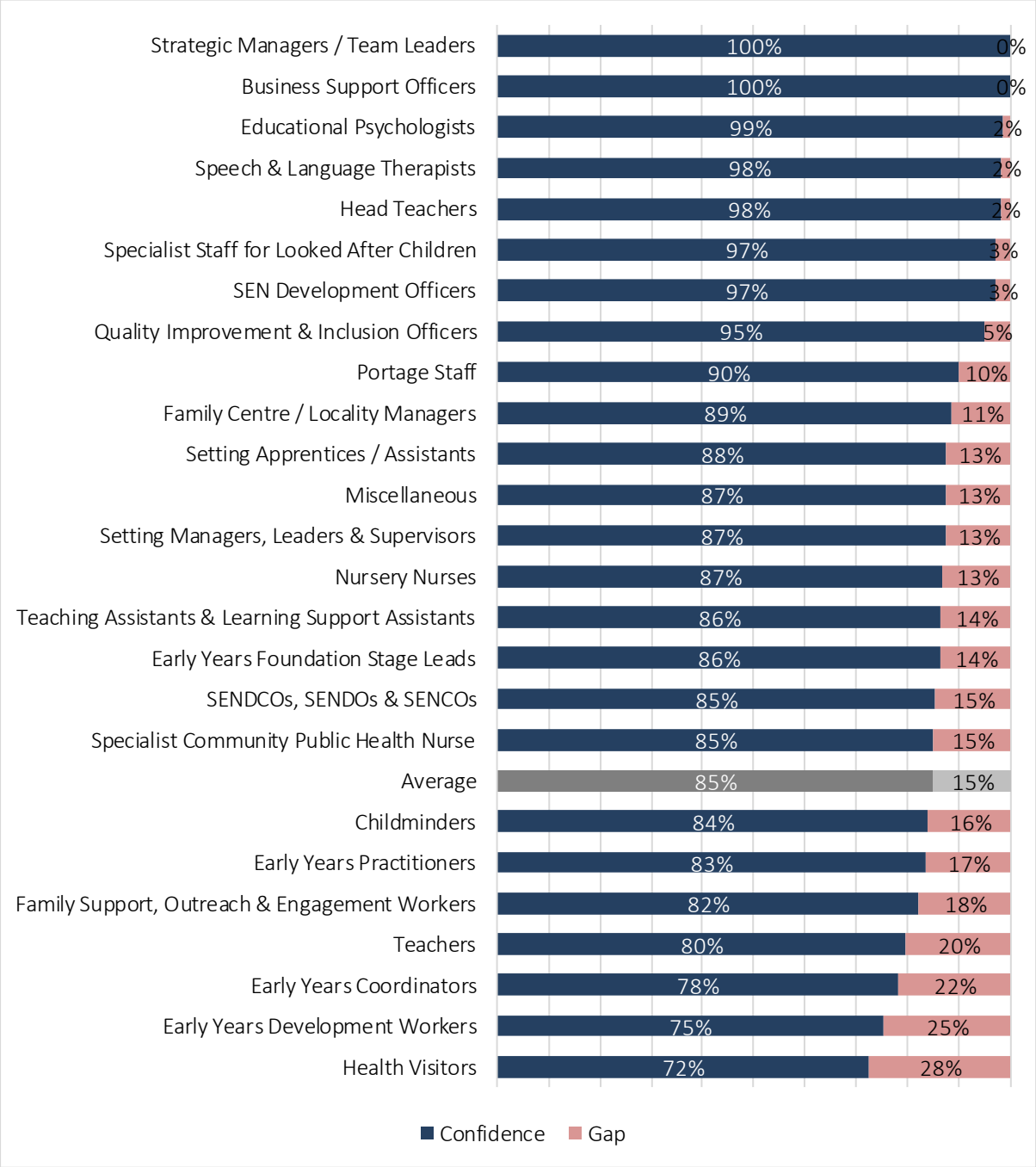
Figure 10: Confidence levels in Strand 3: Learning English as an additional language, by role



Strand 4: Relationship between SLCN and other areas of development

Strand 4 measures knowledge and confidence in the impact of SLCN on other areas of a child or young person's development. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 85 per cent, but this varies between 72 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

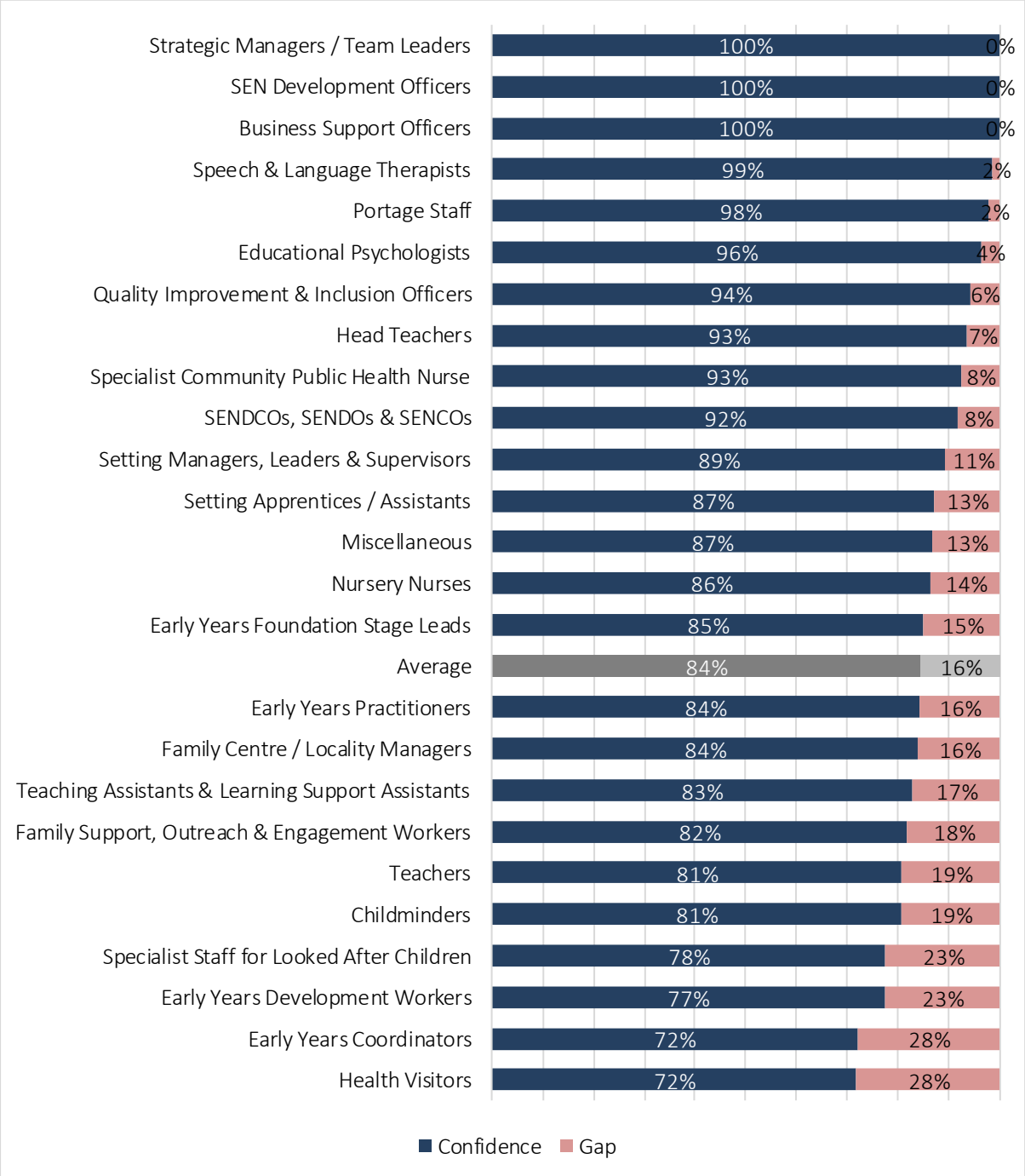
Figure 11: Confidence levels in Strand 4: Relationship between SLCN and other areas of development, by role



Strand 5: The communication environment

Strand 5 measures understanding of the influence of the environment on children's SLC development. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 84 per cent, but this varies between 72 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

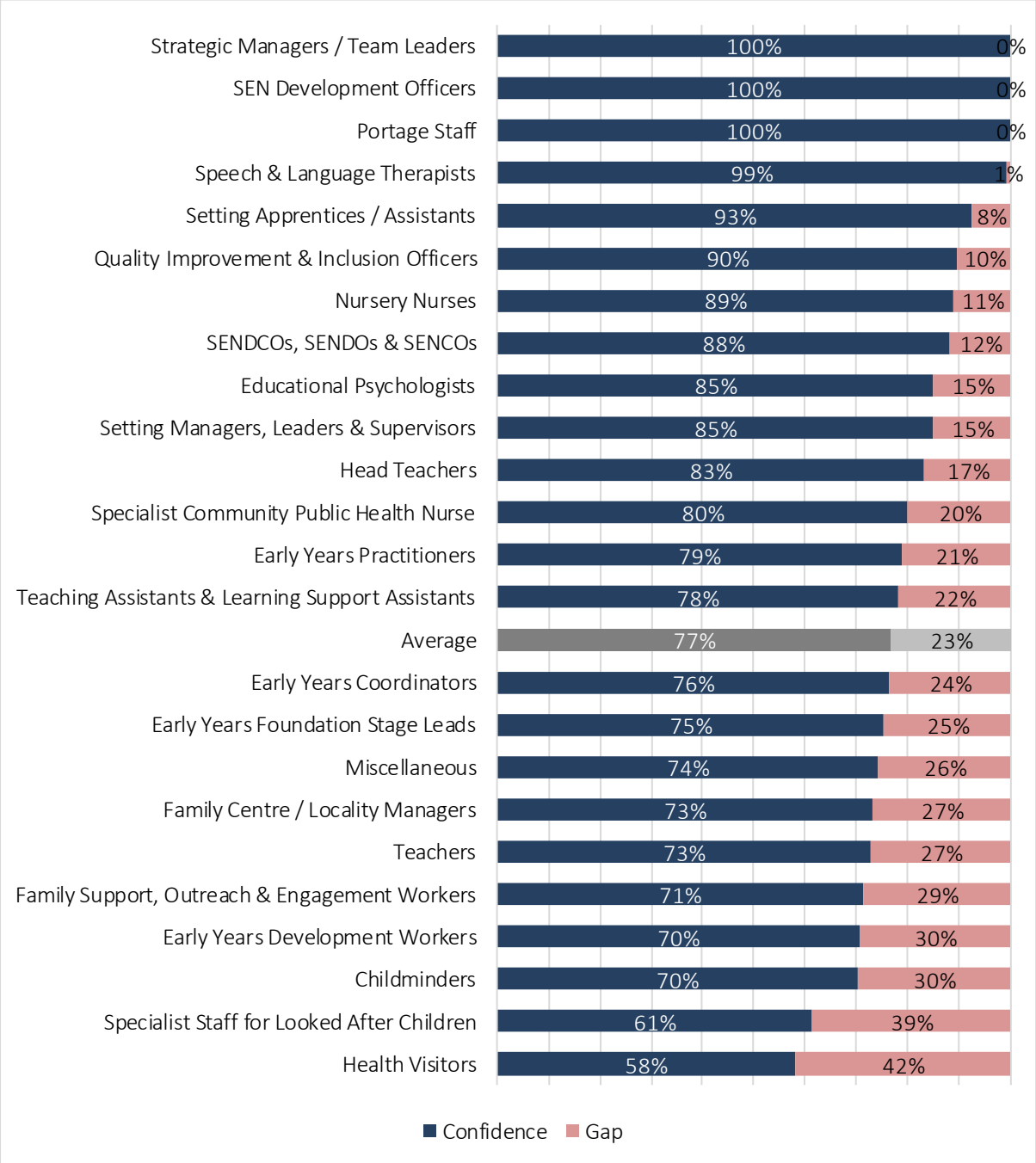
Figure 12: Confidence levels in Strand 5: The communication environment, by role



Strand 6: Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN

Strand 6 measures knowledge and confidence in using techniques to help children and young people develop their SLC skills. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 77 per cent, but this varies between 58 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

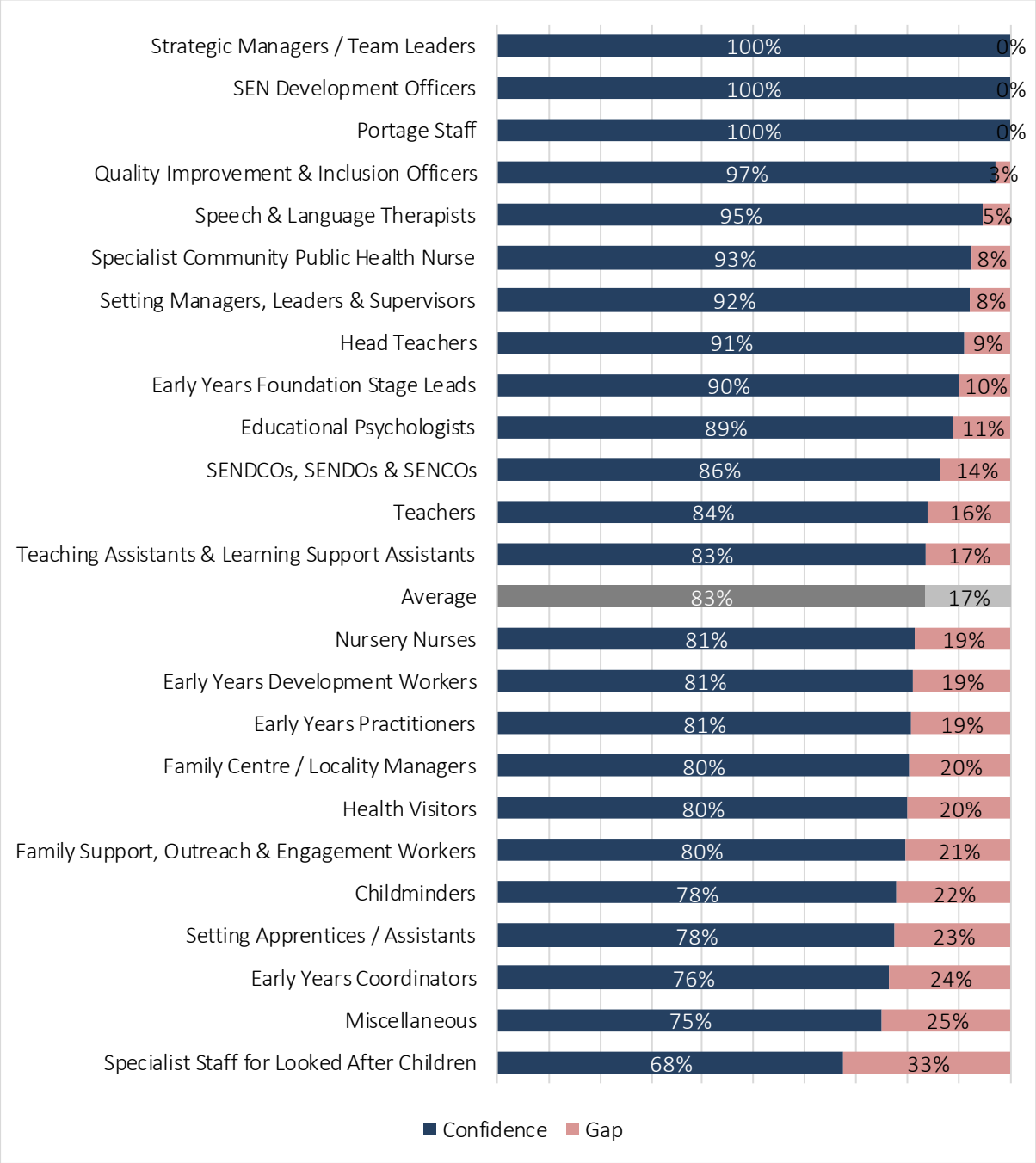
Figure 13: Confidence levels in Strand 6: Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN, by role



Strand 7: Reflecting on professional development around SCL and SLCN

Strand 7 measures awareness and understanding of the importance of reflecting practice and continuing professional development. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 83 per cent, but this varies between 68 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

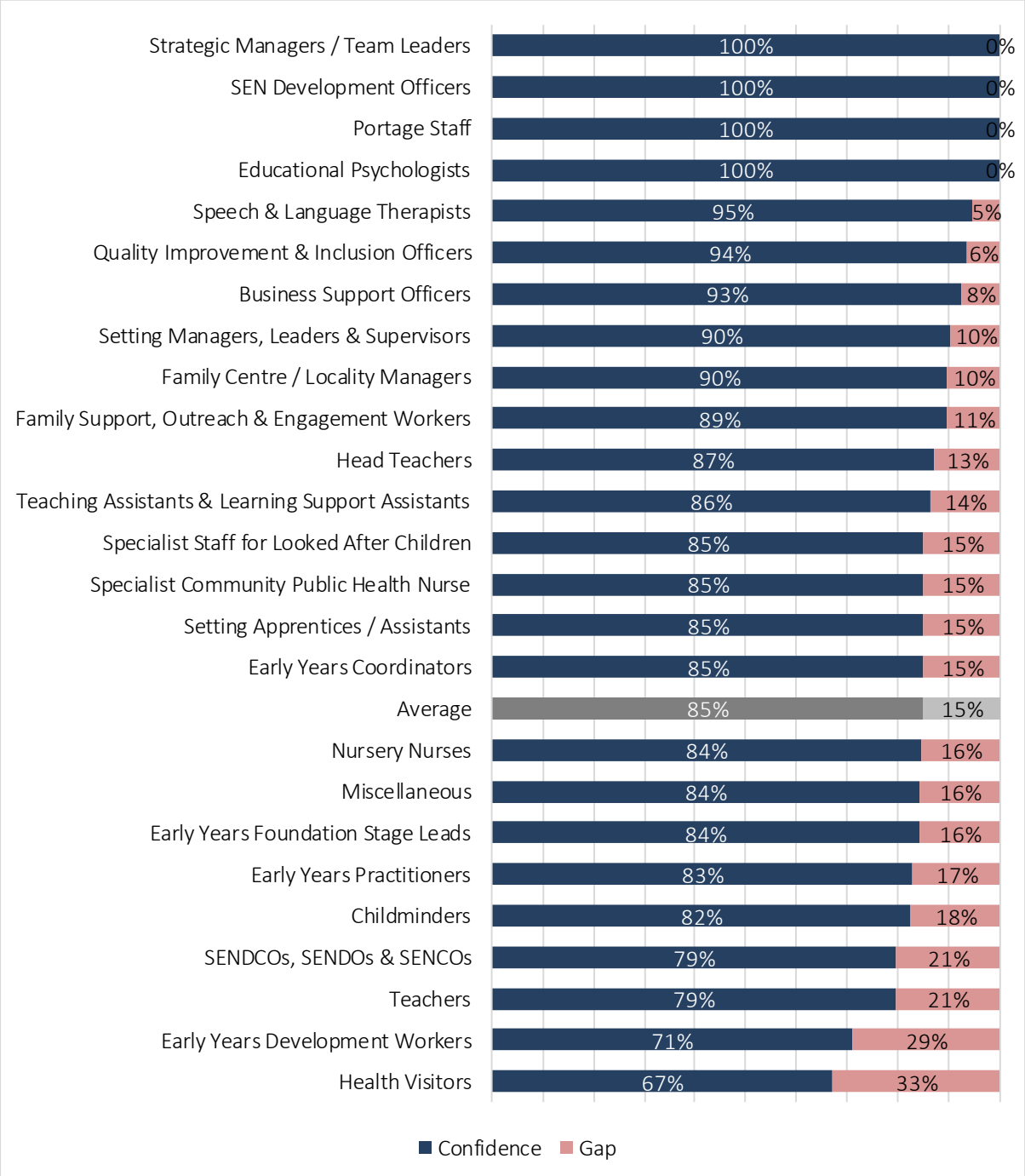
Figure 14: Confidence levels in Strand 7: Reflecting on professional development around SLC and SLCN, by role



Strand 8: Involving children and young people with SLCN

Strand 8 measures confidence in keeping the child at the centre of the planning process and decision making. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 85 per cent, but this varies between 67 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

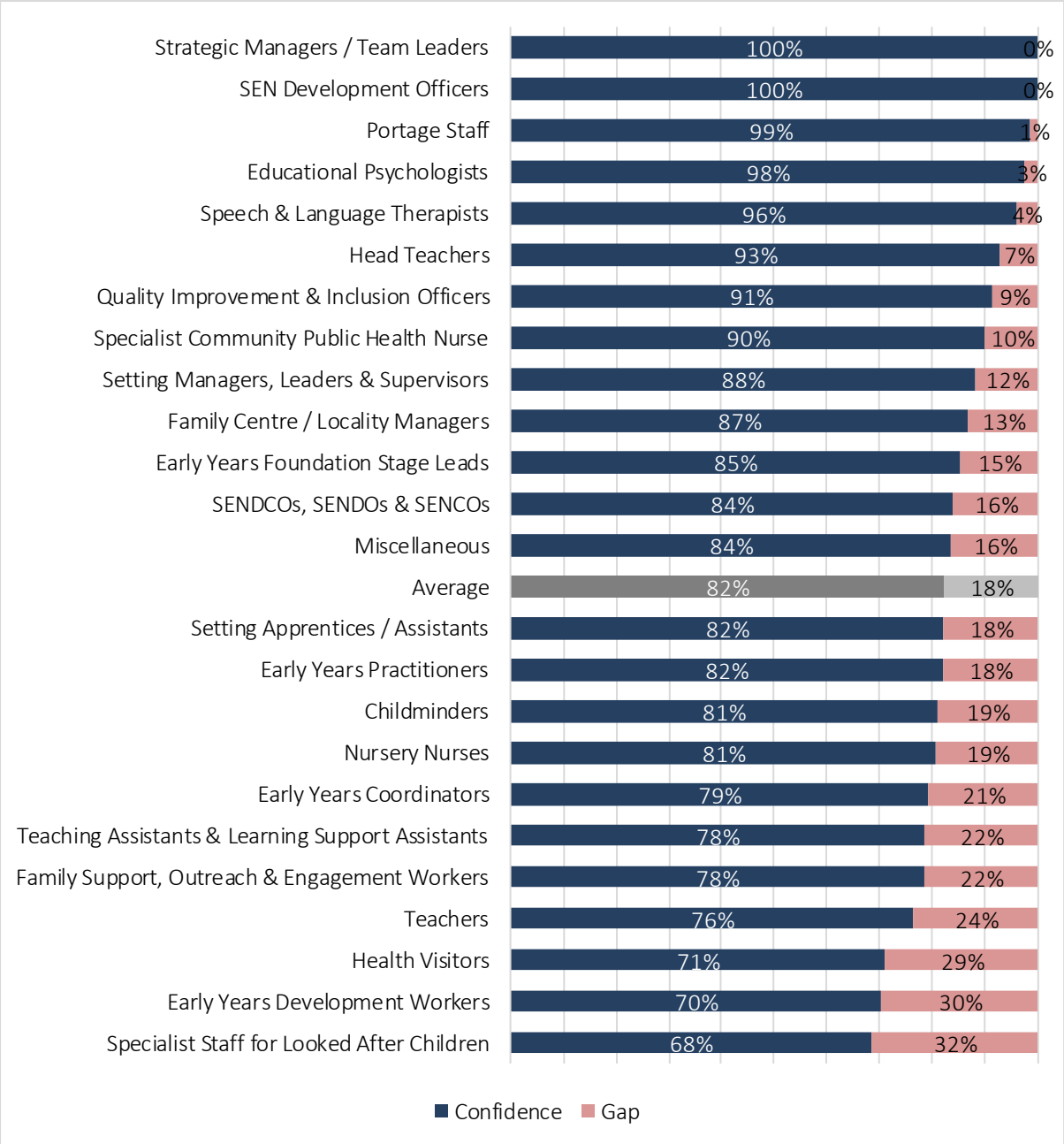
Figure 15: Confidence levels in Strand 8: Involving children & young people with SLCN, by role



Strand 9: Roles and responsibilities: supporting children and young people with SLCN

Strand 9 measures awareness of the professional's role in supporting children and young people with their SLC development. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 82 per cent, but this varies between 68 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

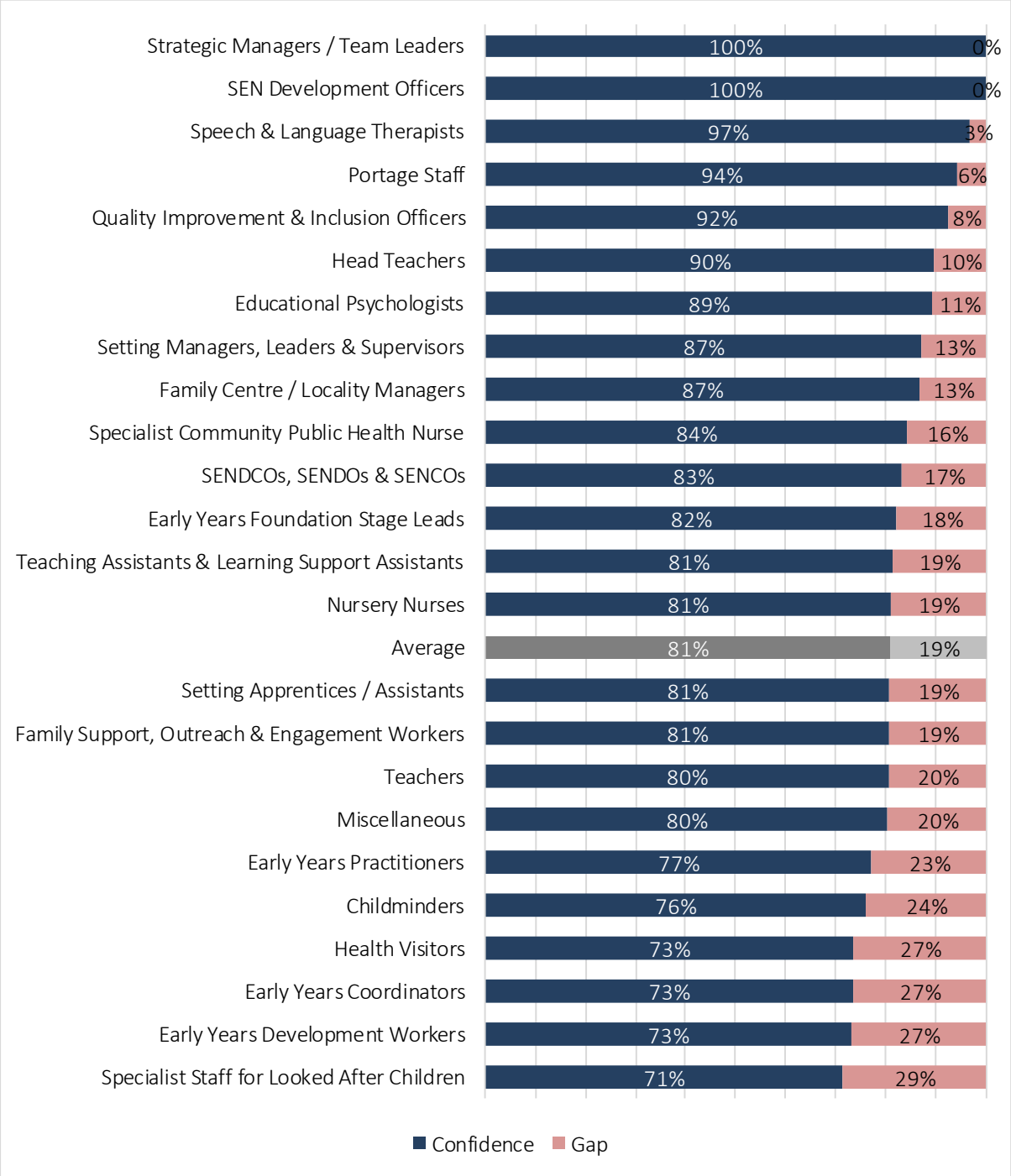
Figure 16: Confidence levels in Strand 9: Your roles and responsibilities: supporting children and young people with SLCN, by role



Strand 10: Parents, carers, families, peers and friends

Strand 10 measures knowledge and confidence in supporting and working with the child or young person's wider support network. On average, the SY children's workforce has a confidence level of 81 per cent, but this varies between 71 and 100 per cent by role, as Figure 8 shows.

Figure 17: Confidence levels in Strand 10: Parents, carers, families, peers and friends, by role



Annex C: EIF Maturity Matrix Assessments

The table below shows our initial assessment of the maturity of our speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) systems made during the development of our project proposals in December 2018.

Although there was some variation across all four local authorities, we all identified that our systems were at a basic or early progress level.

Figure X: EIF speech, language & communication in the early years maturity matrix: self assessments

		Progress Levels						
		Doncaster	Rotherham	Barnsley	Sheffield	Combined	Average	Deviation
Plan	1. Strategy	2	1	1.5	2	6.5	1.6	0.4
	2. Commissioning	1	1	1	2	5	1.3	0.4
	3. Workforce Planning	1	1.5	1.5	1	5	1.3	0.3
Lead	4. Partnership	2	1	1	2	6	1.5	0.5
	5. Leadership	2	1	2	2	7	1.8	0.4
	6. Community Ownership	1.5	1	1	1	4.5	1.1	0.2
Deliver	7. Services & Interventions	2	1.5	2	1.5	7	1.8	0.3
	8. Information & Data	2	1.5	2	1.5	7	1.8	0.3
Evaluate	9. Outcomes	1.5	1.5	1	1	5	1.3	0.3
	10. Using & Generating Evidence	2	1	2	1.5	6.5	1.6	0.4