

www.ncsl.org.uk

talk2learn

talk2learn is simple, fun and rewarding to use. Spending 10 minutes getting to grips with the basics will give you access to a whole new world of ideas, advice and support from colleagues across the country. The ability to discuss issues that matter to you, the opportunity to question those making decisions which affect you and the potential to support your learning – all in a secure environment – make talk2learn totally unique.

Getting started

Your starting point is the NCSL home page at www.ncsl.org.uk
Click the **learning gateway** button on the home page:



A login screen will appear in which you will need to enter your username and password.
If you have mislaid this information or have difficulties logging in please call the NCSL helpdesk on 0845 6013032.

You will now enter the NCSL Learning Gateway. talk2learn is a component of the Learning Gateway and your membership will provide you with access to additional resources within the Learning Gateway.

The NCSL Learning Gateway contains:

- talk2learn – NCSL's online community environment for school leaders (open to all members)
- specific learning activities and resources for a number of NCSL programmes (open to members registered for these programmes)
- an increasing range of generic learning resources (open to all members)

Finding your way around

When you first log in to talk2learn you will see the **my info** page:

The screenshot shows the 'my info' page of the talk2learn website. The page has a dark blue header with navigation links: 'my info', 'NCLSL in Dialogue', 'my community memberships...', 'help', 'help', 'who's online', 'help', and 'log off'. Below the header is a search bar and a list of links: 'my info', 'my notes', 'search', 'my files', and 'my pages'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- my membership card**: A section with a star icon and the title 'Favourites'. It lists 'forums', 'Keith Andrews', 'files', 'plans', 'building', and 'practical steps towards the future'.
- notes**: A section with a notepad icon and the title 'notes'. It lists 'Notes sent to', 'Thanks for the message', 'Have been helped', 'Beyond the education system', and 'CONGRATULATIONS'.
- forum contributions**: A section with a speech bubble icon and the title 'forum contributions'. It lists 'Latest forum from life', 'Keith Andrews', and 'Share I seem to be creating'.

Annotations in red boxes point to specific sections:

- 'Links to favourite communities & forums' points to the 'Favourites' section.
- 'Most recent notes' points to the 'notes' section.
- 'Most recent forum contributions' points to the 'forum contributions' section.
- 'Up and coming community events' points to the 'CONGRATULATIONS' section.

Wherever you are in talk2learn you will be able to see:

The screenshot shows the navigation bar of the talk2learn website. It has a dark blue background with white text. The navigation links are: 'my info', 'NCLSL in Dialogue', and 'my community memberships...'. There is a search bar to the right of the navigation links.

Visit a community by clicking on **my community memberships**. Use the tabs to return to the **my info** page or to visit **NCSL in Dialogue** where current community activities are highlighted.

If you cannot see all your communities in the dropdown list, go to **all my communities**, tick alongside your favourite communities, scroll to the bottom of the list and click **add to favourite communities**.

NCSL in dialogue

All members of talk2learn have membership of the **NCSL in dialogue** community. Here, you can take part in hotseats organised by NCSL. In these hotseats, a range of policy-makers and key thinkers on issues of school leadership will answer your questions and debate issues with you.

Search

Clicking on the **search button** will take you to a page where you can quickly locate other talk2learn users.

My info

This is your personal area of talk2learn where you will be notified of any new notes, community events and latest contributions to forums.

My page – what others will see when they access your personal area of talk2learn. Create and publish items about yourself here so others will feel welcome to your area of talk2learn.

Click on **my membership card > edit image** to upload a photograph of yourself which will be used as a personal icon. This image will appear alongside any contribution you make and helps create a feeling of community.

Introducing forums

Community membership is all about contributing and sharing. talk2learn has a range of different tools available which encourage your participation. These tools are called forums and they include:

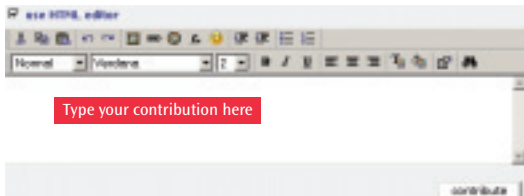


Contributing to any of these items is made easy with the text editor feature.

Making a contribution

To contribute to a forum:

- Find an item that interests you in one of your communities.
- Scroll through and read what others have said.
- Type in your contribution using the text editor to enhance text or add images.
- Click **contribute**.



Publishing an item

You may wish to publish some text about yourself or your school that other talk2learn users can read. To do so:

- Make sure that your starting point is **my info > my page**.
- Click on **edit** at the top right of the page.
- Click **insert text** and the text editor will appear (as shown above).
- Type the text and use the toolbars to change font, size, colour etc. You can also add images.
- Click **save**.

Your text is automatically published on the page. Just make sure that the **published** check box (top of page) is ticked to make your page viewable by all talk2learn members.

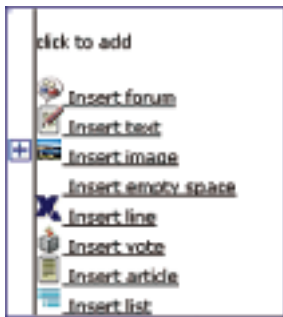
Creating a forum

You can also create items such as forums to which other talk2learn users can contribute. These can be published on your own pages, or in a community.

- Make sure that you are either in the community in which you wish to publish the item or in **my info > my page**.
- Click on **shared files/file store** to set up an item in a community or **my files** if you are creating an item for your own page.
- Select **new forum** from the list of items at the top of the filing list.
- Give the forum a title, select the type of forum, type more details of the subject for discussion into the text editor and set opening hours.
- Click **save**.

Your item is now created and will be listed in the filing area. You now need to publish the item so that it is visible to others:

- Go to **my page** or the community page and click **edit**.
- Decide where you wish to place the item on the page. If there is already a container present click to **insert a forum**. If this option is not available click on a + sign to add a container, then click **insert forum**.



- Choose correct file store and folder and locate the forum that you wish to publish (you will need to click on the folder name and you might also need to scroll down to see the complete list).
- Click the item to add it to the page. Make sure the **published** check box is ticked.

Notes

Most recent notes are listed in **my info**. To view all your notes, click **my notes** on the dark blue menu bar. New notes can also be sent from here, by clicking **new note** at top right. Alternatively you can send a note whilst visiting another users page by clicking **new note** in the left hand frame.

New communication tools

Instant messages

Instant messaging allows you to send and receive messages with other individuals who are currently online. To send an instant message, click **see who's online** and then click a name to have a one-to-one conversation.

Chat

Some communities may have the chat tool added – check the blue menu bar and click chat to have live group discussions.

Whiteboard

Some communities may have the whiteboard tool added – check the blue menu bar and click whiteboard to share drawings and diagrams.

Support

NCSL Helpdesk tel: 0845 601 3032

email: ncsl.support@bt.com

E-learning facilitators are always on hand in talk2learn. Click on a name to send a **note** or try an **instant message**. For more information about talk2learn online communities and the learning gateway visit www.ncsl.org.uk

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