

Standards Unit

Improving initial assessment of personal and social skills in Entry to Employment

Tackling barriers and helping learners
progress in E2E

Tutor guide

Produced by the Department for Education and Skills Standards Unit

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Produced by the Standards Unit working with the Skill Boosters Team at BDP Media Ltd.

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Foreword

We are committed to the following principles which underpin all our work:

- We will recognise and celebrate excellence in the post-16 sector.
- We will recognise and celebrate diversity.
- We will be open and participative in our approaches to development.
- We will recognise barriers to excellence and be supportive of those working in challenging contexts.
- We will challenge under-performance.
- We will embed the concept of the 'safe learner':*

**Guidance for Employers. Safe Behaviour is Sound Business. Supervising the Safe Learner. LSC. MISC/0611/03.*

This pack of resources draws on the experiences of learners, tutors, trainers, managers and inspectors who worked with us during the development and testing of the resources, which have been produced as part of the Success for All strategy.

Success for All is a partnership between the DfES Standards Unit and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Standards Unit leads on Themes 2 and 3 and the LSC on Themes 1 and 4:

- Theme 1 – meeting needs, improving choice.
- Theme 2 – putting teaching, training and learning at the heart of what we do.
- Theme 3 – developing the leaders, teachers, trainers and support staff of the future.
- Theme 4 – developing a framework for quality and success.

The Standards Unit was set up in January 2003 to embed excellence in teaching and learning and to modernise and upgrade the sector's workforce. It acts as a catalyst, selecting priority areas for action and harnessing the work of partners to improve quality in the sector – in adult and community learning, colleges, prisons, school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and work-based learning. The Unit's staff includes officials and expert practitioners seconded from providers and the inspectorates and it also calls on the services of other practitioners on a consultancy basis. The Unit selects curriculum areas because of their importance to the economy, social inclusion and progression and because inspection outcomes show room for improvement.

We are indebted to the learners, tutors, trainers and managers who have generously contributed their ideas and reflections during the development of these resources. They are only the first phase of our work. Further resources will be available at later stages and regional activities will be arranged by our regional teams to share best practice in teaching and learning. We trust you will take a full part in these.

We hope that you will enjoy using these resources and would welcome your views and ideas for adapting them further – do let us know by email: standards.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Jane Williams
Director of Teaching and Learning
Head of Standards Unit

Introduction

The Entry to Employment (E2E) programme forms part of the apprenticeship family. Although not every young person on E2E will select an apprenticeship as their identified programme route, it is important that E2E can offer a robust and respected pre-apprenticeship experience within its framework for those young people who wish it.

The E2E programme is important and unique. Its learner-friendly and flexible design will benefit young people who:

- are not yet ready or able to enter a Foundation or Modern Apprenticeship;
- lack the attitudes, motivation or skills that would enable them to enter employment directly;
- are not currently engaged in, or may be disaffected from, education and training.

The purpose of the programme is to:

- improve learners' motivation and confidence;
- develop learners' Key Skills, literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy by one level;
- develop learners' personal effectiveness;
- help learners acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in vocational subjects;
- help learners to identify their vocational progression routes and support them in moving on.

Rationale for these resources

There are two main reasons why the Standards Unit has chosen the area of initial assessment of personal and social skills for its first set of resources for E2E:

- designing a comprehensive initial assessment programme can be challenging for providers;
- personal and social factors can present barriers to further learning and it is essential that initial assessment in this area is carried out effectively.

Initial assessment is an essential part of a learning programme. It enables the tutor and the learner to understand existing strengths and needs. Learners should experience initial assessment as a positive and motivating programme and providers are expected to take between two to six weeks of the E2E programme to carry out a comprehensive range of assessments. At the same time it is important that learners get started on work that they find relevant and motivating.

You will need to plan opportunities for your learners to develop the personal and social skills they need to benefit from the E2E programme.

However, assessing personal and social skills accurately is challenging. The method described in this guidance will help you carry out assessment while at the same time providing opportunities for your learners to develop and demonstrate their personal and social skills.

Teaching and Learning Framework for E2E

These resources are part of a Teaching and Learning Framework for E2E. They have been piloted and developed with providers and include:

Learners' resources

- Activities to help develop and demonstrate personal and social skills

Tutors' resources

- Session plans
- Activities to adapt
- Guidance on using the process for the initial assessment of personal and social skills
- A CD-ROM that illustrates the process in action

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) resources

- CPD activities
- Guidance on creating schemes of work and session plans
- A video resource to illustrate CPD activities in action

These resources are intended to be used by anyone who is supporting learning in E2E, tutors, managers and partners. They will help you design, review and continuously improve your assessment processes within the E2E curriculum framework and the *E2E Passport for Learners*.¹ We use the terms 'tutor' and 'manager' to cover the different job titles and roles of E2E practitioners.

The materials have been piloted by a wide range of providers. They have adapted materials to suit their learners' needs and evaluated various approaches to the initial assessment of personal and social skills in E2E.

¹ *E2E Passport for Learners*, March 2004, LSC. This LSC document provides full guidance on the process for completing the E2E Passport. It is available on the LSC website.

Using this book

This book is one of the resources in the Teaching and Learning Framework for E2E. Its purpose is to provide guidance on the initial assessment process for personal and social skills. You may want to work through the whole book or dip into sections as you need them. Two case studies, using the *E2E Passport for Learners*, run through the book to illustrate the process. The guidance in this book will be useful to tutors, managers and E2E partners involved in initial assessment. We indicate whom each section is aimed at using the following symbols:

- T tutor
- M manager
- P partner.

Below is an overview to help you find your way around.

TMP **Section 1: Initial assessment in E2E programmes, page 9**

This section is aimed at tutors, managers and E2E partners. It covers an overview of:

- initial assessment in E2E programmes;
- the E2E learning cycle and its relationship to the E2E Passport;
- guiding principles that underpin a learner-centred initial assessment programme.

Case study 1: Michelle is introduced. This illustrates how to plan initial assessment in the context of a vocational programme.

TM **Section 2: Personal and social skills – what do we need to assess? page 20**

This section is aimed at tutors and managers. It covers:

- characteristics of E2E learners;
- defining personal and social skills;
- an example of a framework for personal and social skills.

TMP **Section 3: Finding the starting point, page 24**

This section is aimed at tutors, managers and E2E partners. It covers:

- working with partner support services.

Case study 2: Spike is introduced. This illustrates how to build on information from partners and tackle immediate barriers and challenges that Spike presents.

T **Section 4: Assessing personal and social skills – the approach, page 30**

This section is aimed primarily at tutors developing and assessing personal and social skills. It covers:

- the context and an overview of the observation-based approach to initial assessment of personal and social skills;
- guidance on working through the four stages of the process:
 - 1 preparing to assess and develop personal and social skills;
 - 2 using observation to gain evidence about personal and social skills;
 - 3 making objective assessments;
 - 4 giving feedback and agreeing key objectives.

The two case studies of Michelle and Spike are used throughout this section to illustrate the four-stage process and outcomes.

M P **Section 5: Designing and managing the process for the initial assessment of personal and social skills, page 49**

This section is aimed primarily at managers.

It covers:

- a learner-centred initial assessment process as a ‘joined-up’ process;
- a flow chart of the initial assessment process for personal and social skills;
- a self-assessment checklist to help review and develop the initial assessment process.





Section 1: Initial assessment in E2E programmes

This section covers an overview of:

- initial assessment in E2E programmes;
- the E2E learning cycle and its relationship to the E2E Passport;
- guiding principles that underpin a learner-centred initial assessment programme.

Case Study 1: Michelle is introduced

An overview of initial assessment in E2E programmes

What is 'initial assessment'?

'Initial assessment, although a well-used term is perhaps unhelpful'.² 'Initial' suggests that all the assessment happens at the start of the programme. In this book, we use the term 'initial assessment' to mean a carefully planned process that is implemented *throughout a learner's induction programme* and, as appropriate, beyond. It is a means of collecting information about learners, and enables tutors to plan learners' E2E programmes tailored to the interests, abilities, aptitudes, aspirations and learning needs of each individual.



Why is it so important?

You cannot design an individual learning programme that will help your learners to progress without finding their starting points. This involves identifying both their strengths and their needs through a careful initial assessment process. 'The importance of getting initial assessment right cannot be overstated'.³ The need to strengthen the initial assessment process is a recurrent theme in Chief Inspector reports. Inspectors have expressed their concern because an inadequate assessment can have a damaging effect on the success of a programme. On the other hand, a well-planned and comprehensive initial assessment will make a significant and positive contribution by:

- ensuring that learners are on the right type and level of learning programme;
- identifying learners' previous experience and achievement, and using this to improve their progress through their learning programme;
- enabling the identification of an appropriate starting point for each learner, against which their progress can be measured;
- allowing for the planning of an appropriate, individual learning programme matched to the learners' aspirations and identified progression;
- assessing each learner's specific learning pathway to develop literacy, language (ESOL), numeracy or Key Skills ability;
- assessing each learner's specific additional support needs;
- inspiring and motivating learners;
- identifying learners' strengths and potential for employment and relating these to the E2E programme.

² Green M, *Improving initial assessment in work-based learning*, 2003, LSDA.

³ Starting point: Initial assessment; A survey report by ALI, September 2003

Because poor personal and social skills can present barriers to further learning and achievement, it is particularly important to carry out a careful and accurate assessment of your learners' needs in this area.

To do this, you need to plan and implement an initial assessment programme of activities that:

- provides you with comprehensive, accurate and robust information about your learners;
- motivates learners and helps them to 'buy in' to the initial assessment process;
- provides the learner with a supportive environment in which to test out and develop new and different skills.

Only then will you and the learner have the information that will enable you, jointly, to plan an E2E programme to help them achieve their aspirations and potential.

What is the timescale of the initial assessment?

The initial assessment period on E2E programmes is expected to take between two and six weeks. Initial assessment may take place during induction, classroom sessions and work placements. It is important

that you use a variety of learning experiences through which to assess your learners. The actual length of the period for initial assessment will depend on the needs of individual learners.

For the learner, the first stage of initial assessment actually takes place before they meet you! They begin the process with their *Connexions* Personal Adviser (PA) or other referral agencies. This stage is recognised in the 'E2E learning cycle' that is explained below.

The E2E learning cycle and E2E Passport

The E2E learning cycle identifies six mandatory components for the E2E programme.⁴ These components are interdependent and are reflected in the E2E Passport.⁵ Throughout this booklet and the accompanying resources, we use the terminology set out in the E2E Passport.

The table below gives an overview of how the E2E learning cycle is intended to be implemented and how the E2E Passport records each component. The **initial assessment components** in the learning cycle are highlighted.

⁴ The Entitlement Curriculum, March 2004, LSC, provides guidance to E2E partnerships in applying the learning cycle and designing individualised E2E programmes.

⁵ E2E Passport for Learners, March 2004, LSC. This document provides full guidance on the process for completing the E2E Passport.

The scope of the components in the E2E learning cycle	Using the E2E Passport to record actions
<p>1. Referral and recruitment</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● giving information; ● guidance; ● support; ● the first stages of initial assessment. <p>It is completed by the <i>Connexions</i> Personal Adviser (PA) who then passes information to the provider.</p> <p>Alternatively, the young person may be referred to an E2E programme by other referral agencies, such as a Youth Offending Team or Social Services.</p>	<p>1. Referral and recruitment</p> <p>Completed by the <i>Connexions</i> Personal Adviser (PA) and recorded on the <i>Connexions</i> Personal Adviser (PA) E2E Referral Form.</p> <p>Where appropriate, a referral agency records information on the Referral Agency Form.</p>
<p>2. Initial assessment and induction</p> <p>This component will last from a minimum of two weeks to a maximum of six weeks, depending upon the needs of the young person. It covers a wide range of areas for assessment and development. The information is crucial to the formulation of the key objectives for the young person's E2E programme.</p> <p>During this period, the young person should receive feedback about their assessment and be given opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills in a range of contexts.</p>	<p>2. Initial assessment and induction</p> <p>The E2E provider is responsible for completing the Initial Assessment Summary document. Several members of staff may contribute and the document will be signed by the young person and the designated 'key worker'.</p>
<p>3. Entitlement curriculum</p> <p>This component identifies the young person's career and progression aims; their key objectives while on the E2E programme; and the specific learning support modules planned to provide the three core strands of the Entitlement Curriculum. These strands are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key Skills, literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy; ● personal and social development; ● vocational development. 	<p>3. Entitlement curriculum</p> <p>The E2E provider's key worker completes the E2E programme document. It identifies the key objectives and the learning programme for each of the three core strands.</p> <p>The young person, the key worker and the PA sign their agreement to the planned programme.</p>
<p>4. Accreditation of learning</p> <p>Learners are entitled to work towards qualifications within E2E. They are also entitled to undertake activities that will generate evidence of their achievements across the three core curriculum strands.</p>	<p>4. Accreditation of learning</p> <p>The E2E provider identifies how achievement will be recognised. This is also recorded on the E2E programme document.</p>

The scope of the components in the E2E learning cycle	Using the E2E Passport to record actions
<p>5. Reviewing the learner’s progress and planning activities</p> <p>Reviewing progress and planning the next steps should propel the learner forward. This process is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term SMART⁶ targets are agreed with the learner. The targets should relate to the agreed key objectives and be negotiated between the key worker and the learner. Learner and tutor and/or key worker agree the learning activities that will help achieve the targets. They then create an activity plan. Learner and tutor regularly review progress. The PA and other support workers contribute to the review. The activity plan should also be used as a log to help learners reflect on their progress and achievements. <p>This important cycle is repeated until the learner achieves their key objectives and moves on from the E2E programme.</p>	<p>5. Reviewing the learner’s progress and planning activities</p> <p>SMART targets are recorded in the E2E review document by the key worker and the learner.</p> <p>The Activity plan records the activities designed to enable the young person to achieve their targets. It should be completed by the learner with the assistance of the key worker, tutor or employer.</p> <p>This cycle of review and planning activities is recorded regularly.</p>
<p>6. Progression and aftercare</p> <p>The key worker and PA, together with the learner, agree a support and follow-up plan when the young person has completed the E2E programme and is ready to progress to one of these options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an apprenticeship; employment with training; further education vocational provision; employment without immediate training. 	<p>6. Progression and aftercare</p> <p>The key worker and PA complete a Moving on plan with the learner. This sets out the continuing support that will be offered for at least eight weeks after the young person leaves the E2E programme.</p>

Initial assessment and induction programmes

In the past, initial assessment may have been carried out as a brief series of one-off activities at the start of a learning programme. In E2E, the time-frame of the induction programme gives you scope to include a range of different assessment opportunities.

Bear in mind that most young people are keen to get on with practical activities related to their vocational interests, so consider how you can design assessment activities around these interests. This will

help to make the programme motivating and relevant.

We use two case studies of E2E learners: Michelle and Spike. They have different starting points and aspirations and their needs are reflected in the initial assessment process. Michelle and Spike are characters created from examples of typical E2E learners.⁷ We follow these two learners to illustrate the initial assessment process for personal and social skills.

⁶ SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-related. These terms are explored in Section 4.

⁷ The case studies are based on learners observed during the Standards Unit pilot with 40 providers.

Case study 1: Michelle

Michelle's case study shows how Diamond Training set to work.

The referral information from *Connexions*

Diamond Training received a *Connexions* Personal Adviser Referral form for Michelle. It included the following information about her.

Where is the young person now?

Since she left college about 5 weeks ago, Michelle has been spending most days at home or at a friend's house. She had begun an apprenticeship in hair and beauty with Works Training (part of the college) in August. After three months, she felt very unhappy because 'the staff in the shop never talked to me and didn't like me' and she found college too difficult. Eventually, after the shop manager gave her a warning for 'her attitude', she didn't go back to the shop and stopped going to college. Michelle admits that she did swear and shout at the manager in front of customers because 'the more experienced staff were always criticising me'.

Where does the young person want to be at the end of their E2E programme and in the longer term?

During Years 10 and 11, Michelle had a Saturday job at a small salon on the other side of town. She really liked the job and felt like one of the staff. Michelle still wants to work in hair and beauty and would like to get onto an apprenticeship after E2E. Eventually, Michelle wants to get a car and be a mobile hairdresser.

What action does the young person need to undertake within E2E to help them get to where they want to be and what support will they need?

Michelle needs to try work tasters and placements in salons of different sizes and types and to develop her personal skills so that she feels more confident in trying to make friends at work.

Does the young person have any comments on the referral?

Michelle is looking forward to E2E. She is a lot happier since she left the salon and with a lot of encouragement from her mum, she is keen to get into an apprenticeship again.

E2E recognises that each learner may require a different initial assessment programme. You should develop a range of initial assessment and induction activities, then select combinations of these according to the needs of each learner. Most importantly, the induction programme should help young people to:

- settle into the learning environment;
- adopt positive attitudes to learning;
- begin developing their skills.

For you, the induction period is also a time for carrying out initial assessment:

- identifying learning and support needs;
- identifying the most appropriate positive

progression route for your learners based upon accurate and in-depth assessment;

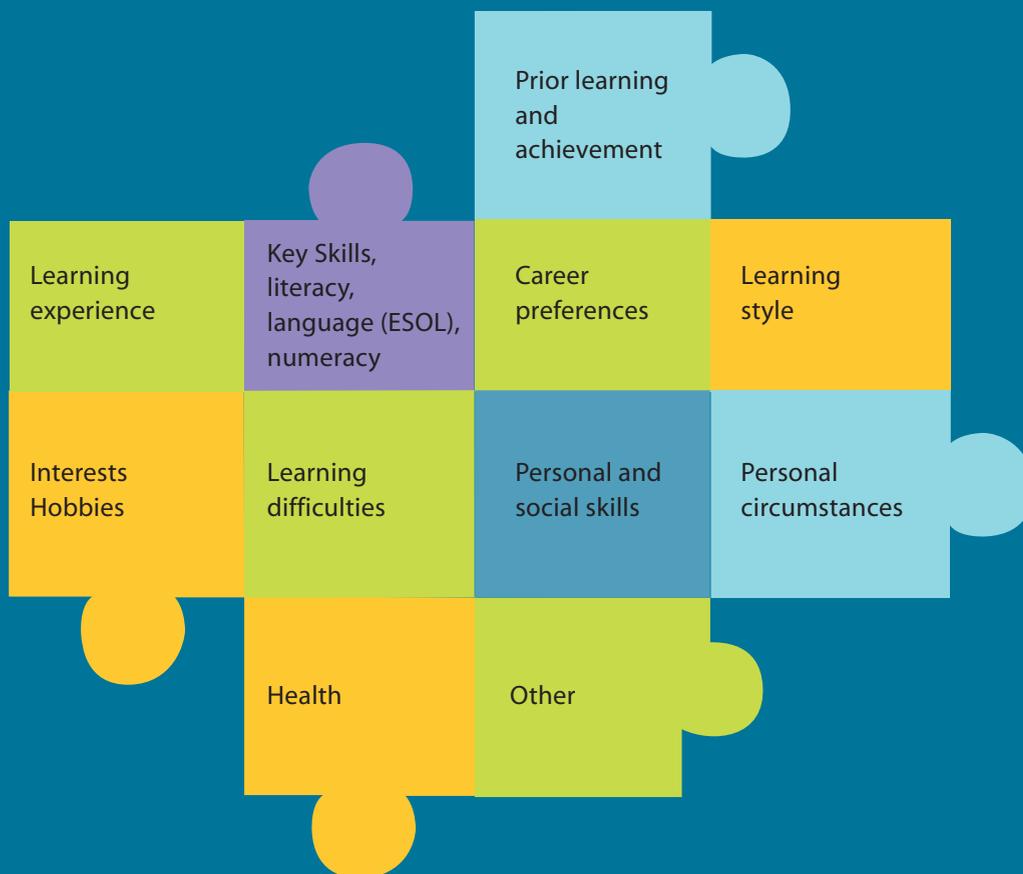
- providing feedback to learners about what they **can** do, not simply what they can't do.

As an outcome of the whole initial assessment process, you should be able to set key objectives with your learners that will drive their E2E programme. The objectives will cover the E2E Entitlement Curriculum:

- Key Skills, literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy;
- personal and social development;
- vocational development.

They will be based upon a realistic assessment of their current abilities and their potential.

Initial assessment jigsaw



What should we assess?

There has been considerable emphasis in recent years on improving the way we assess the abilities and needs of learners. We need to gain a well-rounded picture of the learner's strengths and needs across a range of relevant areas. The jigsaw on the previous page illustrates the wide range of information that will be drawn into the assessment process for an E2E learner.

You will be completing the Initial Assessment Summary on the E2E Passport for all the ten areas shown on page 14, plus any other area that is relevant to the young person.

Providers explored a variety of tools and methods to carry out initial assessment in the Pathfinder phase of the E2E programme.⁸ You have the opportunity to design an exciting initial assessment programme for your learners in order to draw out the information you need.

Assessing your learners' Key Skills, literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL)

It is essential that you plan the E2E programme to enable learners to achieve appropriate standards in basic and Key Skills. It is expected that, whether or not they are working towards a qualification outcome, learners will improve their literacy and numeracy skills by at least one level. This is a vitally important area for initial assessment. The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) has provided detailed guides to help you assess and develop learners' skills in these areas.⁹ A summary of the process is provided as an annex in this book. See pages 58–59. The assessment process for these skills is as follows:

● Screening	For evidence of a need in literacy, language or numeracy
● Initial assessment	For level of skills
● Diagnostic assessment	For detailed learner profile to inform individual learning plans
● Formative assessment	For regular review of progress to inform learning programme
● Summative assessment	For national test or qualification and completion of the individual learning plan.

You will need to design your initial assessment programme so that you are able to carry out these processes.

⁸ *Initial assessment in the E2E Pathfinder Phase projects, tools and case studies*, 2003, LSDA, www.lstda.org.uk

⁹ *Delivering Skills for Life: The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills, a series of guidance booklets for providers*, 2004, DfES publications.

Case study 1: Michelle (continued)

Tutors at Diamond Training begin the initial assessment phase of E2E with Michelle

On the first day at Diamond Training, Michelle's E2E key worker sits down with her to sort out the key issues. He quickly establishes that Michelle:

- is keen to get into a salon as quickly as possible;
- doesn't want to be 'stuck' in the training centre;
- feels OK in a work environment so long as she gets off to a good start with the employer and the existing staff;
- realises that if she had plans for getting to know people and fitting in, she would make friends more quickly – which is important to her.

His database shows two salons that are looking for a trainee. Michelle also comes up with a suggestion of her own, saying that the salon she worked at in her Saturday job is now much busier, the owner has changed and they might want a trainee. She and her key worker call two of the salons and agree appointments for them both to go in later that week to meet the managers with a view to Michelle doing a 3-day work taster.

On the second day, they speak to the college and get a copy of the results for the literacy and numeracy diagnostic assessment she completed only eight weeks ago. They also speak to the provider's *Skills for Life* specialist (Jan) and discuss sitting the literacy test. Jan says that it can be taken on-line. Michelle's diagnostic assessment from college suggests that if she takes part in the three-day intensive literacy test project, she is likely to pass. Michelle goes home that day feeling really positive and looking forward to visiting the salons later in the week.

Learner-centred initial assessment

It is important that initial assessment is **learner-centred** so that the learner experiences this phase as a coordinated process. Young people will want to get started on interesting and motivating activities – not a series of one-off tests or assessments. It is helpful to think of the initial assessment as a **programme** of interesting learning experiences that includes a variety of activities, tools and techniques that will interest the learner and give you the information you need.

The following guiding principles will help you to keep the learner at the centre of your planning and implementation.

1. You take into account any initial assessment information already provided by a referral agency, so that the learner experiences continuity.
2. The learner:
 - understands why you want an accurate picture of their skills;
 - finds out what their strengths are, or what they can do;
 - gains confidence in their potential to develop new skills;
 - receives motivating feedback on progress made during the initial assessment and induction period;
 - formulates key objectives as a result of their experiences and assessments.

3. You devise assessment activities that:
 - are relevant to the individual learner’s aspirations;
 - enable the learner to develop or learn new skills and demonstrate potential;
 - enable you to see each learner’s strengths.
4. All partners and staff teams:
 - share information and avoid duplicating initial assessment;
 - discuss the outcomes of initial assessment and together plan learning activities that will build skills. If a learner has had previous occupational or educational psychologist’s reports, these might identify areas of strength as well as support needs for disabilities that may not have been immediately apparent. This information must also be taken into account.

Using observation in assessing personal and social skills¹⁰

In this book, we are concentrating on one method of initial assessment, **observation** for the purpose of assessing one aspect of the learner, their **personal and social skills**.

Observation as a method tends to be underused but it can be highly effective. It offers tutors the opportunity to be creative, and helps to make initial assessment a fun and engaging experience for the learners. Below is an overview of the four stage process. Go to Section 4 for guidance and case studies on each of the stages.



¹⁰ This approach has been piloted by tutors and learners in the pilot centres over a period of a year. Out of this pilot has emerged a range of activities that can be used at different stages in the programme. They are published in the loose-leaf binder that accompanies this book.

The process of initial assessment of personal and social skills through observation

<p>Stage 1: Preparing to assess and develop personal and social skills</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With your colleagues, agree on a framework of personal and social skills as a basis for observation. • Create an observation checklist. • Engage learners in meaningful and motivating activities that will help them develop personal and social skills. • Determine which activities give the learner opportunities to demonstrate the skills you have defined and also help you profile their strengths. • Decide which learners you will observe during a session.
<p>Stage 2: Using observation to gain evidence about personal and social skills</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with the learner what skills you will observe and give feedback on. • Using the checklist, observe the skills you have identified. • On a recording sheet, record what you observe.
<p>Stage 3: Making objective assessments</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your observations with appropriate colleagues and partners. • Compare evidence you have from other activities where the learner had a chance to demonstrate the same skills. • Record your assessments, noting the progress the learner has made. • Prioritise areas for development that will make a key difference to help positive progression. • Identify short-term targets for discussion with the learner.
<p>Stage 4: Giving feedback and agreeing key objectives</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the learner to reflect on their experience. • Give the learner positive feedback about what they do well and check that they 'hear what you say'. • Help the learner understand the skill areas they need to develop and agree priorities for action. • Set short-term SMART targets and further assessment activities and record. • Agree E2E objectives for personal and social skills and record in E2E Passport.

Key points

- Initial assessment is not a one-off event. The E2E initial assessment period can last for up to six weeks where appropriate. It should be a carefully designed, relevant and motivating part of the whole E2E programme.
- Comprehensive and accurate initial assessment is vital. It helps the learner arrive at key objectives and underpins the learning programme.
- The E2E Passport supports the process.
- The approach to the initial assessment of personal and social skills described in this book is based on evidence gained through observation.
- There are four stages in the process. These are described in Section 4.



T M

Section 2: Personal and social skills – what do we need to assess?

This section covers:

- characteristics of E2E learners;
- defining personal and social skills;
- an example of a framework for personal and social skills.



The characteristics of our learners

In E2E, learners bring a range of circumstances and experiences that can be barriers to getting engaged in and succeeding in learning. For example, they can have:

- low personal self-esteem;
- a history of offending behaviour;
- unsatisfactory previous educational experience;
- a history of low achievement and under-attainment;
- health, family and accommodation issues.

However, E2E learners have many positive and exciting attributes, which is why many people find it so satisfying to work with them.

E2E learners:

- are imaginative;
- are prepared to take risks;
- do not accept at face value what is told to them;
- have a wealth of experience – often beyond their years;
- manage complex lives;
- can be very supportive towards each other;
- can be quiet, shy and timid yet ready and eager to find out what to do next;
- can become good colleagues, working with you to support other hard-to-help young people;
- have potential and can make significant progress;
- can be fun, witty and good company;
- can provide you with motivating feedback about your own skills.¹¹

¹¹ The *Connexions* service recognises that these attributes make 'hard to reach' young people ideal partners in social change and democratisation. *Involving hard to reach young people in the Connexions services: Why involve the hard to reach?* Connexions and Crime Concern.

Young people, particularly those who are labelled as disaffected or disruptive, often respond well to being taught by staff who demonstrate a genuine interest and commitment to helping them realise their potential. There is widespread recognition among providers that learners can transform their prospects when they get help in tackling the barriers that, so far, have held them back.

Learners who are referred to E2E by their *Connexions* Personal Advisers or other referral agencies like Social Services or the Youth Offending Team, are judged to be suitable and ready to benefit from the programme. Some learners may require additional specialist support from expert agencies or services during the programme. Others will be able to make progress with the support you provide.

Defining personal and social skills

We all use personal and social skills throughout our lives but there is no single set of definitions for them. One over-arching definition is:

‘the ability to attain personal goals in social situations.’¹²

This is a useful definition for E2E learners who are encouraged to think about and develop their goals as a starting point for planning their E2E programme.

One of the first decisions you need to make as a tutor or manager is to define which particular personal and social skills your learners most

need to develop. It will be helpful to you, your learners, colleagues and partners if you start out with a shared framework. You might already have one if, for example, you are:

- using a particular assessment tool that sets out skill areas to assess;
- following a programme that leads to accreditation, where the skill areas have been prescribed;
- working for a provider who focuses on a specific definition of ‘employability skills’.

If you do not already use a common set of skills descriptors, you can adopt the framework for personal and social skills developed on the next page.

Developing a framework for personal and social skills

Young people on the Entry to Employment programme expect to progress to apprenticeships, employment with training, or further education and training. To make this progression, learners need to:

- demonstrate the skills employers require;
- develop skills to overcome their own particular personal and social problems.

The framework on the next page reflects both these areas and gives you a good starting point for designing your initial assessment programme for personal and social skills development. If the length of the list is a fair criterion, personal qualities are crucially important.

¹² Dr Ged Lombard, Director of the Independent Psychological Service. Publication: Lombard G, *Motivational Triggers*, 2003, Lifetimes Careers Publishing.

Generic employability skills: all learners need to develop these skills		
Basic and Key Skills	Thinking skills	Personal qualities
Literacy Communication Language (ESOL) Numeracy Application of number ICT	Being able to learn Reasoning skills Thinking creatively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● observing ● making an hypothesis ● testing ● revising Making decisions Problem solving Risk-taking	Sense of responsibility Self-confidence Self-control Social-interaction skills Honesty Integrity Adaptability and flexibility Team spirit Leadership ability Respect for others Punctuality Efficiency Self-directed Positive attitude to work Personal presentation Cooperation Self-motivation Self-awareness
Personal and social skills to overcome individual issues		
<p>The skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● manage own anger and stay calm when faced with others' anger ● read accurately others' behaviour and non-verbal communication signals ● develop and maintain personal relationships ● choose friends with pro-social values ● resist negative peer pressure ● resist offending behaviour ● moderate aggressive behaviour ● take directions or instructions ● deal with authority 		

Alternative frameworks

As well as the framework above, or other frameworks you are already using, you may find it useful to consider:

- The QCA non-statutory guidelines for PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and Citizenship for 14–19 year olds:¹³ this could help you describe skills and design a personal and social development curriculum.
- The six Key Skills: communication; application of number; information and communication technology; working with others; improving own learning and performance; and problem solving.¹⁴

¹³ www.qca.org.uk

¹⁴ www.qca.org.uk

Key points

- Many E2E learners are likely to have a range of personal and social needs that need to be addressed before they can move on.
- Many E2E learners have positive and exciting attributes that make them rewarding to work with.
- Providers need to determine a framework of personal and social skills that they will use to develop and assess the skills their learners need.

T M P

Section 3: Finding the starting point

This section covers:

- working with partner support services.

Case study 2: Spike is introduced.

Working with partner support services

The initial assessment process should start with the referral agency, which helps the learner identify the most appropriate programme to join. There are two examples below.



The *Connexions* Service

In most cases, the *Connexions* Personal Adviser (PA) will have taken the young person through the process of assessment, planning, implementation and review (APIR).¹⁵ This can cover up to 18 areas that may be summarised in four broad areas on the E2E Referral form:

- personal health
- social behaviour
- family environment
- education and employability.

Some *Connexions* Services and providers also use other tools to profile a young person.¹⁶

The case study of Michelle introduced in Section 1 illustrates how the provider built on the information from her *Connexions* PA.

Youth Offending Team referrals

A young person may be referred by the Youth Offending Team (YOT). He or she may have worked through the Young Offender Assessment Profile: Asset. Following this assessment, the summary of the young person's present situation and their aspirations will be recorded on the E2E Referral Agency form.

Assessment activities can sometimes feel intrusive to young people who may have experienced considerable difficulties in their young lives. They may find it hard to share their thoughts about themselves. However, some of the tools your partners may use to assess personal and social development can help the young person open up, begin to reflect on their experiences and articulate their present position. Used skilfully, they provide motivating and positive initial assessment experiences and build a rapport that will prepare the ground for conversations in subsequent stages of the initial assessment process.

¹⁵ A guide for E2E providers and local Learning and Skills Councils on the APIR framework, 2003, LSC.

¹⁶ A description of several tools is included in *Initial assessment in the E2E Pathfinder Phase projects; tools and case studies*, 2003, LSDA, www.lsda.org.uk

Case study 2: Spike

The referral information

AP Training, who run E2E programmes, received an Asset report on Spike from the local YOT. The information included the following comments.

Living arrangements: Currently living rough. Previously lived with friends, some of whom were known offenders.

Family and personal relationships: Parents have been through acrimonious divorce. No longer in contact with mother. Volatile relationship with father, which prompted Spike to leave home.

Education, training and employment: Nothing currently arranged. Has not attended school since Year 9. Said he found it boring. Got into conflict with teachers.

Neighbourhood: Spends most of his time in run-down inner-city district with high crime rate and few amenities for young people. Gang culture prevails.

Lifestyle: Associates predominantly with pro-criminal peers. Lacks non-criminal friends. Has nothing much to do in spare time.

Substance abuse: Cannabis when he has the money for it. Occasionally acid (LSD).

Physical health: Persistent cough.

Emotional and mental health: Anger towards parents, particularly father.

Perception of self and others: Shows some signs of low self-esteem.

Thinking and behaviour: Actions characterised by need for excitement. Poor control of temper. Has described verbal aggression towards father.

Attitudes to offending: Expresses some regret for damage he's caused.

Motivation to change: Shows real evidence of wanting to stop offending. Has a helpful and friendly manner when discussing his options.

As well as the information from the YOT, Spike is also getting support from *Connexions* who supplied the following information.

Where is the young person now?

Spike is not currently involved in any training and did not attend school during Year 9. He was finding the work difficult, and his frustration at this triggered angry exchanges with his teachers. The Police took Spike to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) last week as he had been involved in car theft and is currently living rough. The YOT and *Connexions* are supporting Spike in finding suitable accommodation and Spike needs to be engaged in a measure that will help prevent further criminal activity. Nigel from the YOT will continue to work with Spike whilst waiting to find out when his assault case will go to Court.

Where does the young person want to be at the end of their E2E programme and in the longer term?

Spike says that he would like to work in a garage, as he likes using his hands and is already familiar with the way engines operate.

What action does the young person need to undertake within E2E to help them get to where they want to be and what support will they need?

Spike needs support with finding somewhere to live and in learning how to control his temper so as to keep out of trouble. He will also need support when his case comes up for trial. Once accommodation has been organised, Spike will need to look at independent living skills (including budgeting), anger management and goal setting.

Does the young person have any comments on the proposed referral?

Spike said: 'Not sure what this is going to be like but I do not want to end up in prison.'

Personal health

Spike has had a cough for the last 3 months that he does not seem to be able to get rid of.

Social and behavioural development

He has a tendency to get frustrated and wound up, particularly if people explain things more quickly than he can take in. His temper has got him into trouble on a number of occasions, most recently resulting in an assault charge that is due to go to court. Spike has also been in trouble for stealing cars (TWOC) and joy riding. Spike admits that when he can afford it, he likes to smoke cannabis and has tried acid (LSD).

You **must** use and build on any referral information passed to you by a referral agency. Young people will understandably become frustrated if they experience a repeat of assessments. You should also build on positive experiences the young person has with other

services, for example successful youth service projects. Continuing to develop successful relationships with adults and other young people can provide a crucial support infrastructure.

An important note

As you are aware, many young people on E2E programmes are vulnerable and it is important that you are sensitive about how you use activities that could invite young people to discuss personal and confidential areas of their lives. Tutors need to be skilled at handling confidentiality and disclosure. Tutors should be aware of their organisation's policies on disclosure. If you need advice about developing policies and training in this area you can contact your local Area Children's Protection Committee: www.acpc.gov.uk. Guidance about appropriate action in the event of disclosure of confidential information by learners is part of the Government's Quality Protects programme – see <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualityprotects>

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

Tutors at AP Training begin the initial assessment phase of E2E with Spike by prioritising key issues.

Spike's E2E key worker works with Spike to prioritise the issues facing him. Together, they decide that his most pressing needs are to:

- find somewhere to live;
- prepare for his up-coming court appearance;
- identify the type of work placements to seek out during his E2E programme.

Since accommodation is such an urgent issue for Spike, his key worker starts tackling this immediately after her first interview with him. She speaks to Sarah Jenkins (who had contact with Spike at a youth work project), *Connexions* and two Foyer projects. She drives Spike to both Foyers and he accepts the offer of a place at the second one. The following day, his PA meets Spike at the training centre and, with a small amount of hardship funds set aside by AP Training, they go into town to buy Spike another set of clothes and some toiletries.

Spike and his key worker meet on the third day to plan his initial assessment programme. She encourages him to consider the immediate challenges he faces, which they jointly identify as:

- independent living;
- preparing to present himself in the best possible light when he appears in court;
- attending the training centre regularly.

They also take a longer term view, and discuss his career aspirations: he says he would like to work with cars. They agree that it would be useful to develop a back-up plan in case Spike's TWOC offences make it difficult to source work placements in the motor industry. Spike agrees, and mentions an interest in ground works, including drainage. He also says he has always had an ambition to drive a JCB.

By the end of the day Spike has been placed in an existing E2E group in the centre, as he knows another learner in the group, and has received advice from the local primary care unit about his cough. His key worker notes their discussions and decisions.

Training providers and their partner support agencies need to work together to improve initial assessment so that the learner experiences a 'joined up' process. This contributes to the quality of the relationship you are able to establish with your partner support services and can make an enormous difference to a young person's progress.¹⁷

It is important to remember in the process that young people may have differences arising from disabilities, culture or other issues. Your aims will include exploring how their positive strengths and abilities can be used to encourage and motivate them, especially when they face challenges related to learning needs.

¹⁷ The LSDA has published the *E2E Good Practice Guide: Partnership, 2004*, to help partners develop their practice.

Paul has a sight-related disability that prevents him from reading effectively but he has excellent verbal skills. In the tutor's feedback this is recognised and praised. Paul is given opportunities to use oral presentation in his future work. This will maintain his confidence while learning more challenging areas such as ICT.

Sharon has Asperger's Syndrome and finds exercises to do with communication and body language confusing. Her Personal Adviser has noted that she loves computers and surfing the web. This is highlighted in her first days and she is helped to use this skill to research information about communication and body language. During ICT she works closely with her tutor who helps her practise areas that are a real challenge.

Mufa is a language (ESOL) learner on an E2E programme. He is making very good progress in his language skills. He is very keen to ensure that he uses the correct form for questions and answers. He can sometimes appear to be abrupt in team-working situations because of his efforts to communicate clearly. In these situations he is prioritising his use of language rather than his team-working skills. Mufa's tutor works with him to help him develop his body language to demonstrate cooperation and willingness to listen to others.

Working with your external partners, you can provide the network of support and development a vulnerable young person needs. Support service and provider managers need to be pro-active in developing this relationship.

The process improvement checklist in Section 5 of this book will help managers develop their practice.

Key points to remember about this first stage of assessment are as follows:

- The young person must give their consent for the information to be shared.
- You must use the referral information and build upon it.
- Tools like the APIR Framework and the Asset Profiling Tool have the potential to engage the young person in reflecting upon their current situation and thinking about the skills they need to develop.
- Managers should be pro-active in developing a strong relationship with partner support services to provide a network of support for the learner.
- All staff should be aware of their responsibilities in respect of disclosure and confidentiality.

Footnote

There are many learners who have to look after themselves like Spike. If you're not already doing so, you may consider following the lead of those E2E providers who have established refreshment areas and organised breakfast clubs at the beginning of the day. There are several clear benefits to this:

- young people who need nourishment start the day with more energy once they have eaten;
- offering them food sends a signal that they are welcome;



- eating with others is a social event and gives you another opportunity to observe their informal interactions with their peers;
- learners can develop skills by taking turns to prepare and serve food to their peers.

“ I have heard many training centres and schools reporting that since the introduction of breakfast clubs, peer confrontations have reduced, positive peer relationships have been enhanced and manners have improved! Dr Ged Lombard¹⁸ ”

Key points

- Prioritise any immediate barriers that need to be tackled.
- Where possible, help to remove the barriers to progress. Enlist the help of other agencies (to tackle housing issues, for example).
- Design a relevant and motivating initial assessment programme that will help you gain an accurate picture of the learner’s abilities and development needs.
- Design a programme of activities that will enable learners to practise and develop their skills in a secure environment.

¹⁸ Dr Ged Lombard, Director of the Independent Psychological Service. Publication: Lombard G, *Motivational Triggers*, 2003, Lifetimes Careers Publishing.

T Section 4: Assessing personal and social skills – the approach

This section covers:

- the context and an overview of the observation-based approach to initial assessment of personal and social skills;
- guidance on working through the four stages:
 - 1 preparing to assess and develop personal and social skills
 - 2 using observation to gain evidence about personal and social skills
 - 3 making objective assessments
 - 4 giving feedback and agreeing key objectives.

Context of the assessment process

One of the keys to the success of an E2E programme is the extent to which learners develop a clear understanding of where they are now, where they're going, and how they're going to get there.



Relevant and interesting activities will provide learners with the opportunity to practise certain skills. Tutors' frequent and accurate feedback will shape their picture of their present position, and short-term targets will help learners move forward and develop skills.

The direction in which they need to move will be defined by their key objectives. These are the objectives that you and they will arrive at jointly, by the end of the initial assessment process. So over the period of two to six weeks, you will draw on all the data available to you and help learners to identify what it is they will aim to achieve on their E2E programme.

In the case study about Spike, he and his key worker had tentatively identified two key objectives in the third week.

During his initial assessment period he was set numerous short-term targets, such as keeping a record of his weekly expenditure. These were small steps designed to help him move towards his key objectives.

In Michelle's case, her overall goal of getting a hairdressing apprenticeship meant that she and her tutor could confidently set key objectives very early on in her programme.

Case study 1: Michelle (continued)

By the end of the first week, Michelle and her tutor had identified a range of things she needed to be able to do in order to move on to an apprenticeship. So they set two key objectives relating to her personal and social skills:

- 'I will improve my verbal communication skills so that I can accept and respond to feedback from my boss over a two-month period without answering back in a way that she would interpret as insubordination.'
- 'I will show that I can manage my time and attendance in line with the standards set, over a six-week period on placement.'

Key objectives and short-term targets

The **key objectives** are the objectives you and the learner agree for their E2E programme. You agree these at the end of the initial assessment period. There should be no more than five key objectives covering the three core areas in the E2E Entitlement Curriculum. It is likely, then, that you will set one or two objectives for personal and social development that will also help the learner attain their vocational and skills objectives.

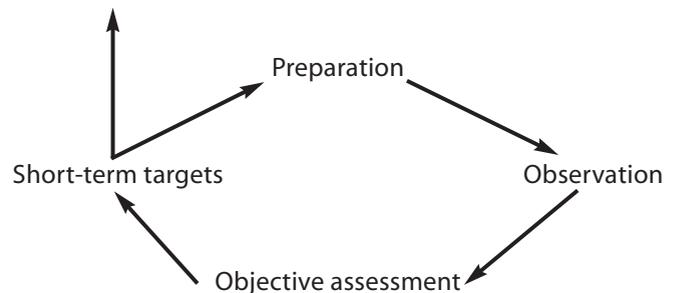
Short-term targets help the learner take the steps to achieve their key objectives. You will set these regularly as you and the learner review progress.

Because the initial assessment programme can take up to six weeks, you should start to set short-term targets during this phase. They will help the learner's personal and social development and demonstrate their potential. At the same time, the process will help you to develop key objectives that are really challenging and useful for progression from the E2E programme.

You will arrive at the short-term targets, and relate them to the key objectives, by using the four stages we describe in this section. These stages will give you a framework for working with learners and colleagues – throughout the initial assessment period – to build a picture of your learners' abilities, needs and potential. You can repeat this cycle as many times as you need during the initial assessment programme. Bear in mind that you and your learners will need time to articulate key objectives that they find genuinely attractive and motivating. So be prepared for them to emerge gradually over a period of weeks.

Overview of the observation-based approach to the initial assessment of personal and social skills

Key objectives for the E2E programme



As well as introducing this approach for initial assessment, you can continue to follow this process to develop personal and social skills throughout the E2E programme. This will enable you to give your learners assessment and feedback to develop and practise the personal and social skills they need for their continuing development.

There are some real benefits to adopting this approach:

- Tutors and learners work through the four stages as many times as they need in order to identify the key objectives for the learner's personal and social development on their E2E programme.
- Tutors develop and use their own skills in observing and assessing the personal and social development of their learners.
- Tutors are able to observe their learners' behaviours in a range of contexts.
- Learners are not only involved in the assessment process: they are participating in a meaningful learning activity at the same time.
- The feedback on the basis of observation provides the opportunity to celebrate small achievements and builds the habit of working towards specific goals.

- Tutors build personal and social skills development activities into a wide range of contexts to enable their learners to practise and demonstrate their skills.
- The process can be used both from the beginning of the initial assessment period and throughout the review activities of the E2E programme.
- This approach fosters the ethos of conveying a 'shared effort' about the tasks.

On the Tutor guide CD-ROM that is part of this resource pack, you can see examples of tutors and learners engaged in each of the four stages. The Continuing Professional Development resource and video also support professional development in each of the stages.

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

Using observations as the basis for setting targets

From their very first meetings, the key worker and other tutors make informal observations of Spike's personal and social skills and keep notes about what they see. In the second week, they move to structured observations, using the materials developed by the Standards Unit. They help Spike to identify the personal and social skills that will be most important for his immediate challenges as well as those that will equip him for work. In the latter context, they list the following short-term targets as intermediate steps towards making him employable. These are that he:

- attends every day, or phones to say he is unwell;
- uses techniques for controlling his anger and cooling off;
- maintains his personal appearance and hygiene;
- maintains a healthier lifestyle and eats regularly;
- asks questions if he's not sure or doesn't understand;
- follows instructions;
- shows that he hasn't been re-offending.

Tutors work with Spike over six weeks to develop and assess his personal and social skills, with a special focus on the skills listed above.

Where possible, tutors devise activities that relate to Spike's work and lifestyle aspirations, in order to make them meaningful and maintain his interest and motivation. As well as arranging a programme for him at the training centre, tutors arrange for him to take part in group visits to a small backstreet garage that specialises in refurbishing MGs, and a Ford dealership that services vans and trucks. He also spends three days on a work taster at Tread Training, a local apprenticeship training provider, working with trainees in their workshop. Spike also does a two-day work taster at a car valeting company and a two-day taster with a hire plant company operating a fleet of JCBs. As well as giving him insights into the world of work, these vocational activities provide opportunities to practise certain behaviours relating to his targets, and supplement the activities at the training centre.

Stage 1: preparing to assess and develop personal and social skills

The sessions and activities you prepare for the initial assessment programme should be designed so that:

- you and your colleagues can use an agreed framework of personal and social skills when carrying out your observation of the learners;
- learners are engaged in meaningful and motivating activities that will help them develop personal and social skills;
- you choose activities that have the potential for the learner to demonstrate the skills you have identified;
- you decide which learners you will observe during the session. You should aim to observe a few learners carefully, rather than gain an impression of the whole group.

As a starting point, you and your colleagues will need to define and use a common framework of personal and social skills. You can use the example on page 22.

The steps you will need to take are:

- a) Identify the skills you want to assess from the framework.
- b) Identify or develop the activities that will allow you to observe the skills you have identified.
- c) Prepare observation checklists.
- d) Identify the learner to observe and decide who will observe them.

a) Identify the skills you want to assess

Working with your colleagues:

- Identify the skill areas that are most relevant to the individual learner.
- Break the skill areas down into specific behaviours that you can observe and provide feedback on.
- Describe the behaviours as exactly as you can, avoiding vague, subjective judgements such as ‘poor’ or ‘good’, ‘appropriate’ or ‘inappropriate’.

Below is an example of how three broad skill areas might be broken down.

Communication	Self-awareness	Relationships
Initiating a conversation	Reflecting on past and current events	Giving and receiving constructive feedback
Turn-taking	Making decisions as a result of reflecting on experience	Supporting others
Eye contact	Setting goals for the future	Dealing with peer pressure
Asking questions	Realistic engagement about strengths and qualities	Negotiating and compromising
Responding to questions		Making changes/modifications in the light of others’ views
Body language and facial expression		

Case study 1: Michelle (continued)

On the fourth day, Michelle and her tutor plan out her initial assessment programme.

Bearing in mind her wish to train as a hairdresser, they first identify the personal and social skills that will be most important in working in a salon:

- managing her attendance and timekeeping;
- having techniques for starting conversations with staff and customers;
- having strategies for avoiding getting into gossip about colleagues;
- having strategies for ignoring comments she interprets as unjust;
- using both positive and negative feedback as an opportunity for learning.

They then move on to timetabling some activities and placements. They agree that Michelle will undertake her initial assessment programme at the training centre on Mondays and Tuesdays. All being well, she will start the work tasters on Wednesdays and join the literacy and numeracy sessions on Thursdays. Her tutor will also involve the work placement supervisor and the *Skills for Life* (SfL) tutor in the assessment of Michelle's personal and social skills. In subsequent weeks, it is planned for her to take part in a *Skills for Life* trip to Blackpool Pleasure Beach to look at numeracy in a theme park. They will meet the customer service manager and find out how he analyses and deals with complaints from customers. She also works as part of a team to plan the transport for a group trip to a hair and beauty exhibition at Manchester Arena.

b) Identify or develop the activities that will allow you to observe the skills you have identified

The 'observation' approach to initial assessment has dual benefits, in that it provides:

- an opportunity for you to observe behaviours;
- an opportunity for the learner to participate in a learning activity.

Most vocational, Key Skills activities, and health or citizenship topics can be adapted so that learners are developing their personal and social skills alongside the specific learning for which the activity was designed. You can construct your whole E2E programme with this in mind.

You will be able to see your learners demonstrate their current and potential personal and social skills best when:

- they are engaged in doing things: practical tasks, team tasks, discussing ideas and plans with their peers and tutors;
- the activity is fun, relevant and interesting to them;
- the activity presents some personal challenge appropriate to an individual. This will help you to observe potential.

In the *Activities for learners* (ring binder) that accompanies this book, there are 17 examples of activities that providers in the pilot project adapted from six core ideas. The purpose behind the activities is to elicit behaviours that are the outward signs of the current personal and social skills of the learner. At the same time, the activities themselves help develop their skills.

Providers in the pilot found that the activities were most successful when they:

- are used in a planned initial assessment programme;
- are adapted to suit their learners;
- embrace the whole observation process;
- are not used as isolated one-off sessions.

Overview of the activities you can use and adapt with your learners

There are adaptations of each of the following core activities in the *Activities for learners* (ring binder).

Core activities	Examples of adaptations
<p>1. Ice-breakers</p> <p>Designed to help learners and tutors get to know each other.</p> <p>This activity can be adapted to different learner interests.</p>	<p>Bedford Training Group provides engineering training. It adapted the ice-breaker activity so that learners, on their first day, explored tools and visited different engineering workshop areas. The activity helped them talk to each other and to workshop tutors. It helped learners think about their work taster choices and tutors were able to observe their interactions with each other and with staff.</p>
<p>2. What are you like? Self-assessment and peer assessment</p> <p>Creates opportunities for learners to become more aware of their strengths and capabilities and to experience the value of having this confirmed by others.</p>  <p>This can be adapted so that learners are provided with a 'safe' challenge through which to explore their potential.</p>	<p>St Helens College used video when they adapted this activity as a team-building exercise at the end of a three-week induction programme. Teams were set the challenge of building a paper tower. Two learners videoed the teams to provide them with evidence about their skills. Learners assessed themselves individually and tutors used the self-assessment together with their observations in the feedback session.</p>
<p>3. The Life Map – a whole person approach</p> <p>Helps young people to think about their goals and objectives for future life and work. Used sensitively, this activity can also be used to explore key events in the past.</p> <p>Can be used during the first week and revisited during the programme at any stage. Useful for formulating key objectives.</p> <p>The Life Map lends itself to creating wall displays using a range of art materials.</p>	<p>Learners at Acorn Initiative, Nottinghamshire, developed their Life Maps exploring key events in their past. They worked with an art therapist to create the maps in clay and other art materials. A few weeks later, when they came to the end of their initial assessment period, they revisited their maps to plan their goals for the future and the key objectives for their E2E programme.</p>  <p>Their maps provided a helpful tool for the tutor and learner to review progress and plan key objectives.</p>

Activities	When and how to use the activities
<p>4. Why are we all here?</p> <p>Identifies the ambitions and interests of young people by inviting them to explore why and how they joined the E2E programme.</p> <p>Can be used in the first week of the programme or at later stages.</p> <p>Most effective when there is a group that is large enough to complete a survey.</p> <p>Can be used to develop some numeracy skills.</p>	<p>Learners at Springboard, Sunderland, adapted this activity. Learners interviewed each other and pooled information about their reasons for joining the E2E programme. One learner collated the information on the whiteboard and small groups created bar charts to illustrate the group profile.</p> <p>At YMCA Doncaster, a tutor used the activity to reinforce numeracy when the learners created individual pie charts based on the collated information about the group.</p>
<p>5. How did I do? Self-assessment in a simulated vocational context</p> <p>Allows learners to assess how they have responded to others after an event in which they worked together.</p> <p>Learners need to know each other and feel fairly confident about giving and receiving feedback from each other.</p>	<p>Language (ESOL) learners at Haringey ALS are keen to take up work placements. Their tutor adapted this activity so that they could develop language skills in asking and answering questions. He set up a role-play exercise based around a sports shop. Learners practised question and answer through simulated interviews.</p> <p>At the end of the session learners gave each other feedback. Their tutor observed their personal and social skills during the role play and feedback exercise.</p> <p>At Wakefield College E2E learners took part in residential outdoor activities with a group of students with learning difficulties. Each E2E learner was the 'buddy' of a student with learning difficulties. During the course they made video diaries and kept a log of their reflections. Back in college they looked at the videos and discussed their own personal and social skills in a small group.</p>
<p>6. Personal and social skills at work</p>  <p>Allows personal and social skills to be assessed in a vocational or simulated vocational context where these skills are determined by the nature of the work. The skills checklists provided for this activity can be adapted for different vocational contexts.</p>	<p>South Nottinghamshire College E2E programme is based around sports and recreation. It adapted this activity to help learners develop the personal and social skills they need to work in sports and recreation environments.</p> <p>At Head to Head Training, the induction programme is based around a multimedia project. Teams of learners work together to produce a brief for a client. Learners find the challenge motivating. As they develop and demonstrate their personal and social skills tutors are able to observe and assess them.</p>

c) Prepare observation checklists

It does take time to develop a checklist: identifying skill areas, breaking them down into specific behaviours, and preparing checklists for all staff to use. However, the benefits are that it will:

- provide your team with an efficient way to plan learning so that you can be confident that the initial assessment programme you design will cover all the skill areas you need to assess;
- help you get better at defining and explaining the skills by increasing the vocabulary you use to describe personal and social skills;
- help you to be able to provide meaningful feedback to the learner;
- help you and the learner to create specific targets for further learning.

In the *Activities for learners* (ring binder) there are examples of checklists that can be adapted for each activity. Once in place, the checklists will serve the whole staff team and will be invaluable for training tutors.

d) Identify the learner to observe and decide who will observe them

You will need to observe all your learners during the initial assessment phase of their programme, so you will need to plan how you will do this.

One observer can probably observe up to three or four learners effectively during an average session. You need to plan staff timetables so that one tutor can facilitate the session and another tutor, or tutors, can observe identified learners. This can pose challenges for small-scale providers.

Head to Head Training overcame the shortage of staff available for observation by engaging a freelance tutor just to carry out observations at particular times in the programme. She completes the checklist designed to cover the activity and then discusses her notes with the tutor who will provide feedback to the learner. They communicate by email and telephone if a meeting is not possible.

Some providers arrange for key and support workers to work together at the beginning of the programme.

St Helens College provides intensive staffing for a three-week induction period when 3 tutors/key workers work together for some induction activities with a group of around 15 learners. One facilitates and the other two take turns at observing. After the activity, they meet to share their observations.

After the first three weeks, learners move on to individual programmes: either work tasters or work experience. Tutors identify the opportunities for observing personal and social skills in these vocational activities. They continue the initial assessment of their learners on a one-to-one basis and also involve work experience supervisors in the process.

Stage 2: using observation to gain evidence about personal and social skills

When it comes to doing your observations, the steps are:

- a) Agree with the learner what skills you will seek evidence of and give feedback about.
- b) Observe the learner during the activity with those particular skills in mind.
- c) Record what you actually see.

a) Agree with the learner what skills you will observe and give feedback about

The learner should be aware of the skills they are practising and demonstrating; and be told that you are observing them and that you will give them feedback. Talking to them before the activity will:

- convey the sense of partnership with the learner;
- make the learning overt, as the learner is made more aware of the skills they are practising and the opportunities the activity will give them to learn;
- set the tone for a positive and constructive feedback session.



b) Observe the learner during the activity

If learners are aware of the purpose of observation, they are likely to react positively to your presence as an observer. You can move around the room and focus on a few learners, so that you can see how they develop during the course of the activity and what skills they demonstrate. Many observers do also interact with learners during the process, assisting at times – but if you do this, you might miss key evidence.

c) Record what you actually see

This approach to initial assessment is based on recording what you actually see, uncontaminated by your opinions, assessments or judgements. It's an important skill to develop because we can all feel vulnerable when people make judgements about our personal and social behaviour based on opinion rather than evidence.



Here is an example.

Judgement/opinion	Pure observation
'She hasn't got the right attitude for this programme.'	'On the last three mornings, she's arrived about 30 minutes later than agreed.'
'He doesn't make appropriate eye contact with staff.'	'When he is talking to a tutor, he looks down at the floor.'
'You'll never get a job if you can't even get to your training course on time.'	'In my experience, learners who miss one or more training sessions a week are less likely to complete the course and get a job than those who attend each session.'

It is particularly useful to record evidence that demonstrates how the learner developed during the course of an activity. For example, a learner initially reluctant to engage in a group task may actually become highly motivated or even take a leadership role later on in that same activity. Be aware also that when skills are in their early stages of development, a learner may find it easier to use them in some situations than in others. Look out for this because exploring why this might be so can be a rich learning experience for a learner.

Check your own prejudices. It is particularly important to be aware of the cultural backgrounds of all your learners.¹⁹ Making pure observations based on what you actually see and hear will give you a basis for discussing how behaviour can be interpreted in different contexts. Young people can then learn to use a range of behavioural codes appropriate to a given context.

When Kerry, while at St Helens College, was asked to take part in a team-building session that involved being filmed, she was initially reluctant. During the course of the activity, Kerry emerged as the chosen leader for her group. She was able to keep the group together to achieve the challenge they had been set. Later, she reflected on the skills she had demonstrated and realised that they were skills she would use in her work placement.

You can observe Kerry in action on the Tutor guide CD-ROM.

¹⁹ The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, QCA, provides a set of values and a helpful checklist in the Inclusion section of their website: www.qca.org.uk/inclusion

Here is an example using Spike's experience. The tutor has chosen an assessment based on observation and other evidence.

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

Skill area under observation	Range of possible assessments	Examples of observed behaviour	Evidence from other tutors and activities
Reflecting on experience	<p>Able to reflect on the past and current situation honestly and accurately and is able to make decisions as a consequence</p> <p><i>Makes some accurate observations about past and current events</i></p> <p>Unable to relate past and current events to existing situation</p>	<p><i>Many reflective statements in the Life Map about wanting to change his lifestyle from what it has been in-between prison sentences</i></p> <p><i>Says he can see how his circle of friends has led him astray in the past. Is looking for support in saying 'no' to old mates wanting him to go joyriding</i></p>	<p><i>Opted to look at budgeting and money management in numeracy skills sessions to support his goal of managing his life in his new flat</i></p>
Making decisions as a result of reflecting on experience	<p>Has realistic and tangible ideas based on analysis of past and current situation</p> <p>Starts to make decisions on the basis of reflective thinking</p> <p><i>Has some ideas but needs help to crystallise them into real choices</i></p> <p>Unable to make decisions without lots of help and ideas</p>	<p><i>Knew he was interested in cars, and in driving a JCB, but when it came to planning which course and qualification to aim for, he said he was confused by the choices available</i></p>	<p><i>His supervisor said he seemed a bit unsure about what he wanted to get out of his work placement</i></p>
Setting goals for the future	<p>Sets realistic goals within a clear timescale</p> <p><i>Some goals forming but of a non-specific nature</i></p> <p>Goals are very general with no fixed timescale</p> <p>Unsure of what to do or how to proceed</p>	<p><i>He's clear that he wants to work with vehicles, but he's not yet sure in what capacity</i></p>	<p><i>Discussed job and training possibilities with staff on his work placements</i></p>
Dealing with peer pressure	<p><i>Shows he can be clear about own needs and reject pressure from others when in conflict with these needs</i></p> <p>Swayed by peers in some aspects of planning</p> <p>Easily swayed by peers</p> <p>Rarely acts without peer approval</p>	<p><i>He reported that when one of his mates challenged the value of E2E, he defended the programme and said he was finding it useful</i></p>	<p><i>Nigel (runs the Cool Off programme) reported Spike's willingness to try all the exercises, despite pressure from other participants not to participate</i></p>

Stage 3: making objective assessments

It is important that the assessments you make are **objective** and based upon evidence rather than on **subjective** judgements.

The steps are:

- a) Share your observations with appropriate colleagues and partners.
- b) Compare evidence you have from other activities where the learner demonstrated the same or similar skills.
- c) Record your assessments, noting the progress the learner has made.
- d) Prioritise areas for development that will make a key difference to help positive progression.
- e) Identify short-term targets for discussion with the learner.

a) Share observations with appropriate colleagues and partners

As soon as you can after observing an activity, try to make time to share your observations with the tutor who facilitated the session and any other observers present. This process will enable you and your colleagues to check your perceptions and begin to note the most significant behaviours you have observed.



b) Compare evidence you have from other activities where the learner demonstrated the same or similar skills

You and your colleagues can arrive at a well-evidenced assessment if you consider other sources of information.

These may be:

- earlier observation records;
- informal observations you or other team members may bring to the meeting;
- observations contributed from other partners, for example a workplace supervisor or a *Connexions* PA or YOT officer.

This process should highlight for you:

- how the learner has progressed since you last observed and reviewed these personal and social skills areas;
- how the learner may behave in different contexts or with different tutors or support workers;
- where the learner needs opportunities to learn and practise a skill.

c) Record your assessments, noting the progress the learner has made

One of your team should note the objective assessments you arrive at. You can refer to these again when you next discuss the learner's progress and you can use these records as a prompt to give feedback to the learner.

d) Prioritise areas for development that will make a key difference to help positive progression

This is an important step. You will have been able to observe many different skills at work in an activity that is motivating and challenging. Some skills you will want to highlight, in order to give positive feedback to the learner about

what they do well. However, you must also prioritise the key areas for further development.

The big question to ask here is: What is preventing this learner from moving on and achieving their goals tomorrow? Answering this will help you to focus on the barriers that are preventing the learner from progressing. Record these and feed them into the next step.

e) Identify short-term targets for discussion with the learner

In this step, you and your colleagues think through the short-term targets that will support the areas you have prioritised.

You will be able to:

- plan the learning strategies that will help the learner achieve the targets;
- consider a variety of different contexts where the learner can practise and demonstrate the priority skill areas identified, for example in Key Skills, vocational, literacy, language (ESOL) or numeracy sessions as well as through the personal and social curriculum;
- draft the targets you want to discuss with the learner. When you agree the targets with the learner you will need to ensure that they are SMART.

SMART targets are:

S pecific	They say exactly what you need to do.
M easurable	You can prove that you've reached them.
A chievable	You can reach them in the next few weeks.
R ealistic	They are about actions you can take.
T ime-related	They have deadlines.

Case study 1: Michelle (continued)

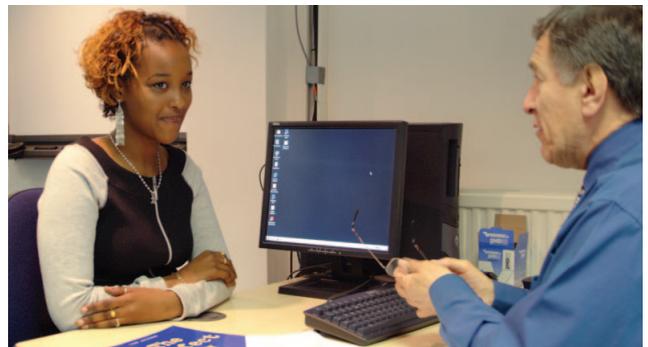
Here is an extract from the tutor's records showing how an objective assessment helped inform priorities for development and short-term targets.

Objective assessments	Priority areas for development	Examples of short-term targets to discuss in feedback
Michelle has worked hard on building relationships with staff. She greets us with a smile and 'hello' when she arrives in the morning.		Over the next two weeks: I will report on situations in which I have felt annoyed without resorting to swearing or accusing people of unjust treatment. <i>(continued)</i>

Case study 1: Michelle (continued)

Objective assessments	Priority areas for development	Examples of short-term targets to discuss in feedback
<p>So far, she has missed two Thursday morning sessions, which she puts down to going clubbing on Wednesday evenings. She has been on time for her work tasters.</p> <p>She says she's enjoying E2E but is finding some of the others in the group a bit childish.</p> <p>She's getting better at expressing her views but sometimes they can come across as a bit aggressive, as happened when one of her group didn't do what she said she would.</p> <p>Michelle is showing interest in, and enthusiasm for, the experiences she's having. Her response to the group fighting in the corridor showed presence of mind. She still gets worked up when she interprets people's feedback to her as critical, and sometimes takes time to recover her composure. When she's in this state, she is likely to say 'That's it. I'm out of here.'</p>	<p>Develop strategies for keeping going even when she is feeling angry or despondent about the way she perceives other people are treating her.</p> <p>Help her keep in mind her long-term aim of an apprenticeship, adopting a lifestyle that supports it rather than gets in the way.</p> <p>Build on her demonstration of presence of mind by gradually increasing her responsibilities.</p>	<p>Over the next two weeks:</p> <p>I will take a deep breath and count to ten before I hear a comment as 'criticism'.</p> <p>I will investigate the training and qualifications needed to be a permanent employee in a hairdressing salon.</p> <p>I will act as a 'buddy' for a new entrant to E2E who is having difficulty in settling in.</p> <p>I will find things to do in the evening that mean I don't sit at home getting bored and then going clubbing.</p>

Note that areas for development can build on a positive baseline, as well as areas of deficit. In Michelle's case, her response to the fighting showed a mature side that her key worker wanted to encourage further.



Stage 4: giving feedback and agreeing key objectives

The feedback session is one of the most powerful opportunities you have to motivate and help the learner move forward. A skilled tutor will use the review session to get the learner to talk about their learning and become aware of their personal and social skills. Giving motivating feedback is a highly skilled area.²⁰ You can develop your skills by referring to the CPD resource that accompanies this book.

The primary purpose of giving feedback is to help learners improve their performance. In the E2E programme, the **formal** feedback session occurs as part of the session to review the learner's progress and plan activities. However, feedback is a vital part of learning, so it would also be helpful to the learner to give encouraging **informal** feedback as part of the everyday process of learning and working together. Here we look at the process for carrying out the important one-to-one feedback meeting.

The steps are as follows:

- a) Encourage the learner to reflect on their experience.
- b) Give the learner positive feedback about what they do well and check that they 'hear what you say' and believe in their own abilities.
- c) Help the learner understand the skill areas they need to develop and agree priorities for action.

Following these steps you will: set short-term SMART targets and further assessment activities and record them; agree E2E objectives for personal and social skills and record them in the E2E Passport.

a) Encourage the learner to reflect on their experience

It is sometimes difficult to help the learner to talk about their learning experiences or to focus upon what they need to do next. However, if learners can reflect realistically on their learning then they will more readily buy in to the next stage of development.

You should:

- set the scene by booking a private and pleasant space for the feedback;
- be open and clear about the purpose of the feedback and review meeting and invite any questions about what will happen;
- ask the learner questions that help them explain what they did in the activity you observed. For example:

...I noticed that you gave Marie help with the questionnaire. What led up to that?...

...You seem to prefer working on your own to working with a team. What could you do to make working in a team more enjoyable?...

- help the learner sum up their reflections.

Above all, consider your own listening skills. It can be tempting to give advice and dominate the conversation or to anticipate what the learner is going to say and interrupt them.

b) Give the learner positive feedback about what they do well and check that they 'hear what you say' and believe in their own abilities

By showing that you have high expectations of the learner and praising their success, you can help build their self-esteem and encourage

²⁰ A useful publication that takes you through the whole process of giving motivational feedback is: Green M, *One to One Tutorials*, 2002, LSDA. Although the case studies are from colleges of further education, the techniques described are transferable to any feedback situation.

them to strive for improved performance. It will help you do this if you:

- use your records to give the learner positive feedback and give examples of the evidence you used to come to this assessment;
- check that the learner acknowledges the strengths you are identifying;
- ask the learner how they think they can build on their success.

c) Help the learner understand the skill areas they need to develop and agree priorities for action

If you have followed the steps above, you and your learner should be able to explore the

areas to develop. Again, the most effective technique is the one where the learner identifies their weaknesses and priorities for themselves. During this step, you should:

- encourage the learner to consider their goals or main E2E programme objectives;
- elicit from the learner the personal and social skills they will need to reach their goals;
- give feedback based on your observations;
- sum up with the learner the personal and social skills areas that are most important to tackle next;
- convey to the learner your belief in their potential to get to the next stage and beyond.

Set short-term SMART targets and agree key E2E objectives

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

Beginning to think about key objectives for the E2E programme

Spike and his key worker began working on his E2E key objectives in the third week of the programme, and estimated how long it was likely to take him to achieve them. The key objectives were to help Spike focus on what he wanted to achieve by the end of his time on the E2E programme. They initially identified two draft key objectives and undertook to revisit them later.

Draft key objectives

- I will demonstrate through my behaviour on placements that I am a cooperative and enthusiastic employee.
- The way I am living in a flat of my own will demonstrate that I am coping with living independently.

The following week, Spike and his key worker decide to incorporate these two draft key objectives into his E2E programme.

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

Identifying short-term targets

After agreeing the E2E programme with his *Connexions* PA, they begin to work up a review record and draft some target or small steps to help Spike work towards his key objectives over the next three weeks. These include the following:

- I will volunteer to do something, without being asked, in training sessions or on placement, at least three times a week.
- I'll keep a list of all the things I spend cash on for two weeks and I'll draw up a budget for a week as if I were living in a flat.
- I'll have a quick shower after five-a-side football, 3 out of 4 weeks minimum.

Depending upon the point you have reached in the initial assessment and induction programme, you will either:

- Agree short-term targets and activities that the learner will work on during the initial assessment programme. These will enable the learner to try out new things and provide further assessment opportunities for you.

or:

- Agree the **key objectives** for personal and social development that will make up the young person's E2E programme. These will be recorded in the E2E Passport.

In Spike's case, he and his key worker believed that they had sufficient information by the third week to draft two key objectives. For

other learners, the process may take much longer but key objectives should be agreed by the end of the initial assessment period.

Setting SMART targets and key objectives can be challenging for both learner and tutor. It is crucial that targets are set with learners by agreeing:

- what personal and social skills need to be developed to help them achieve their goals;
- how these skills will underpin learning outcomes in other areas of the learning programme;
- how they will be developed;
- when the opportunities for development will occur;
- what support the learner may need to help them develop and practise the skill.

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

Summary of Spike's initial assessment

At the end of the first and each subsequent week, his key worker has a one-to-one meeting with Spike. The purpose of this meeting is to review and record his progress. She also uses it as an opportunity for him to develop his IT skills, by helping him enter his information into a Word document himself. Spike intends to email it each week to Sarah at the youth centre drop-in to show that things are getting better for him.

At the end of week 6, one section of the form contains the following information. It captures a lot of information about his personal and social skills but forms only part of the total picture built up through the whole initial assessment process.

Personal and social skills

Spike has been trying really hard to ask questions when he doesn't understand things in sessions and there haven't been any situations in the centre where he has lost his temper.

Spike admits that he has been aggressive sometimes when he speaks to staff in the Centre and he has had a warning from the Foyer after 'losing it' a little bit with one of the security staff after he'd been drinking. Apart from this one incident, he is settled at the Foyer and has stopped sniffing glue since he moved in there – something that he talked about for the first time last week.

Spike has started the Cool Off course with Nigel from YOT and he has tried two of the techniques he has learned. He reported more success with one than the other.

Spike has attended 80% of his planned sessions and rang in on the days he was absent. He has missed 15 late afternoon sessions.

Spike realises that he sometimes comes into the Centre without checking that he is looking as good as he can. After the five-a-side on Tuesdays, he needs to shower and change before joining the group. He feels he's really getting back into football though.

Spike's cough is now sorted. He is eating every morning by coming into the Centre early, though he still rarely eats lunch and gets bored and hungry in afternoon sessions. He thinks this is why he sometimes doesn't come back after breaks in the afternoon.

Set weekly targets for using techniques learned on the Cool Off course.

Set little weekly targets for speaking first to staff, simple stuff – saying 'hi', starting small talk to show enthusiasm.

Sign up for the advanced Cool Off course with the YOT.

Continue to improve commitment and attendance rate: aim for over 95% attendance by the end of E2E.

More help for Spike with personal presentation skills, particularly independent living, washing, ironing, etc.

Help Spike get signed up with a Sunday league football team, go with him to show him where they train and to meet the manager.

Help Spike make a couple of sandwiches and grab some fruit for his lunch. Do this when he comes in early.

(continued)

Case study 2: Spike (continued)

The telephone reports from Spike's work tasters were really positive and both employers said Spike did exactly what he was asked to do in practical situations. One said he came across as a bit quiet and shy though.

Set up a two-day a week placement at the valeting centre, and set weekly targets for speaking to people he doesn't know – customers, other staff.

Key points

- Learners should be able to develop and demonstrate personal and social skills through activities that are relevant and interesting to them.
- Tutors should develop and use an agreed framework and checklists for observing personal and social skills.
- Managers and tutors need to plan time to share evidence and arrive at objective assessments.
- Feedback, both formal and informal, provides a powerful opportunity to help the learner move forward.
- Tutors need to develop skills to carry out the process for developing and assessing personal and social skills. The resources that accompany this book support continuing professional development.



Section 5: Designing and managing the process for the initial assessment of personal and social skills

This section covers:

- a learner-centred initial assessment process;
- a flow chart of an initial assessment process;
- a self-assessment checklist to help you review and develop your initial assessment process.

This section is aimed at managers. They have the responsibility to make sure that the whole process is well designed and effectively managed.



In the pilot project, tutors who found the Standards Unit materials most useful developed a 'whole organisation' approach to the initial assessment of personal and social skills. These organisations have identified a framework of skills to be assessed, have adapted activities to assess these skills, and identified and recorded the skills during observation using a checklist.

Responsibilities are clear and tutors are supported by their managers to carry out the whole assessment process, including sharing observations and agreeing objective assessments.

Managers need to ensure that:

- the documentation flow is efficient;
- every member of staff understands their role in the process.

Although our emphasis in this book is on the initial assessment of personal and social skills, the process we describe holds good for the initial assessment of all the skill areas you will be assessing during this phase of the E2E programme.

A learner-centred initial assessment process

The initial assessment process should be done **with** learners and not 'to' them. It needs to be a positive experience, and should contribute to the building of a picture of the learners' abilities and needs in relation to their:

- Key Skills and literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy;
- learning support needs;
- vocational aptitudes;
- personal and social skills;
- perceived barriers to learning.

Several key people are involved in the initial assessment process, such as:

- the learner;
- the *Connexions* Personal Adviser;
- referral agencies and their key workers;
- the young person's key worker;
- tutors;
- employers.

To arrive at a 'joined up' process, it is useful to think about the design of the process from the perspectives of all stakeholders in the process:

- learners;
- tutors;
- partners;
- managers.

A checklist is provided at the end of this section to help you review your processes from the standpoints of these stakeholders.

The learners' perspectives

Your learners will be involved in a range of initial assessment tasks and activities when they join your E2E programme. They will also have experienced some initial assessment with your partners – for example, *Connexions* or a referral agency – before joining your

programme. From the point of view of the learner, the process should be clear and there should be no duplication of assessment activities.

The tutors' perspectives

If learners are to be clear about the process, rather than confused or anxious, then your tutors must be sure about what you are assessing and why. They must also be able to explain how they are going about initial assessment.

You need to plan how your tutors will:

- share information with colleagues and partners;
- use information to provide feedback to learners;
- use information to build activities that will help learners develop their personal and social skills.

As well as thinking about the logistics involved in sharing information and enabling the learner to travel through the stages of recruitment, referral and initial assessment, it is important to consider how the tutor and learner will interact. All staff should set the tone for conveying a sense of 'shared' effort about the task.

Partners' perspectives

In one sense, the person with the 'bigger picture' is actually the learner. They will have worked with several individuals as part of the process of arriving on the E2E programme and will continue to have a relationship with a *Connexions* PA and other key workers during the programme.

Partners will carry out their roles most effectively when they provide a 'joined up' network of support. They need to be involved

in the initial assessment and feedback process. There should be no duplication of assessment unless it is to demonstrate 'distance travelled'; that is, to compare results in order to show improvements over time.

What managers need to do

If you are a manager, it is part of your role to:

- implement a process that is informed by the perspectives of learners, tutors and partners;
- ensure that the process is coherent and that roles and responsibilities are understood by all involved;
- lead on the quality of the process and ensure that there is a shared understanding of a learner-centred ethos.

You will want to be sure that all your tutors have the skills to make objective and respectful observations about the skills and behaviours they observe. Providing training and support for tutors will be crucial to the effectiveness of the process.

An initial assessment model

The model illustrated in the flow chart that follows is designed to support a comprehensive initial assessment process. It shows that the process is not a one-off event but an on-going process: an important feature of E2E programmes. The learners' aspirations are central to the process and you must identify those skills that will give them the best chance to achieve their goals.

A flow chart is an effective way of explaining the process to tutors and learners but it does not represent a rigid process. You may well find that you need to return to different stages along the way according to the individual needs of your learners.

Drawing up a flow chart can help you to review and improve the different stages in the process. It will help you manage and implement the process effectively if you ensure that for each stage:

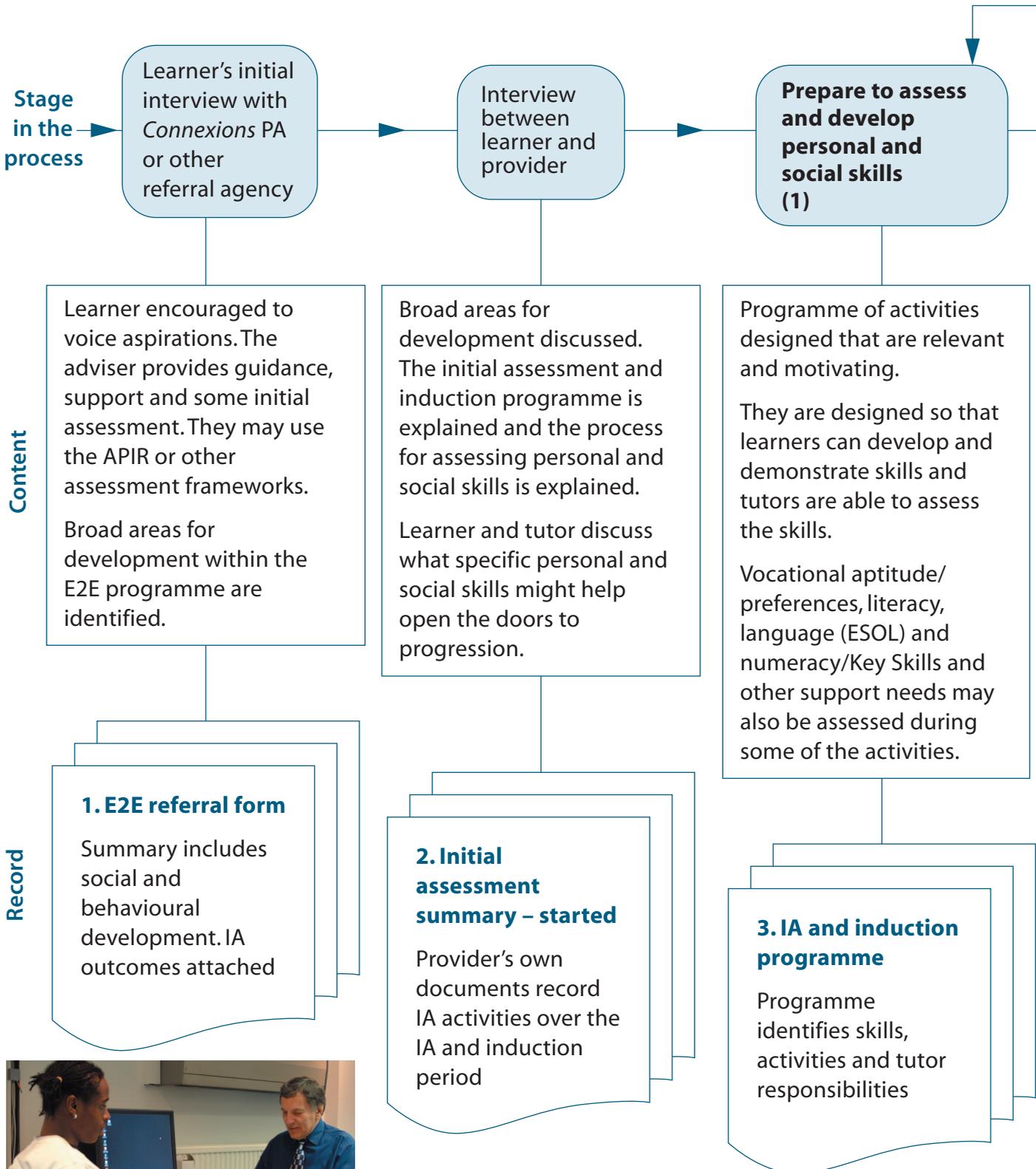
- roles and responsibilities are defined;
- documentation and procedures are clearly set out;
- links to other procedures in the E2E programme are explained.

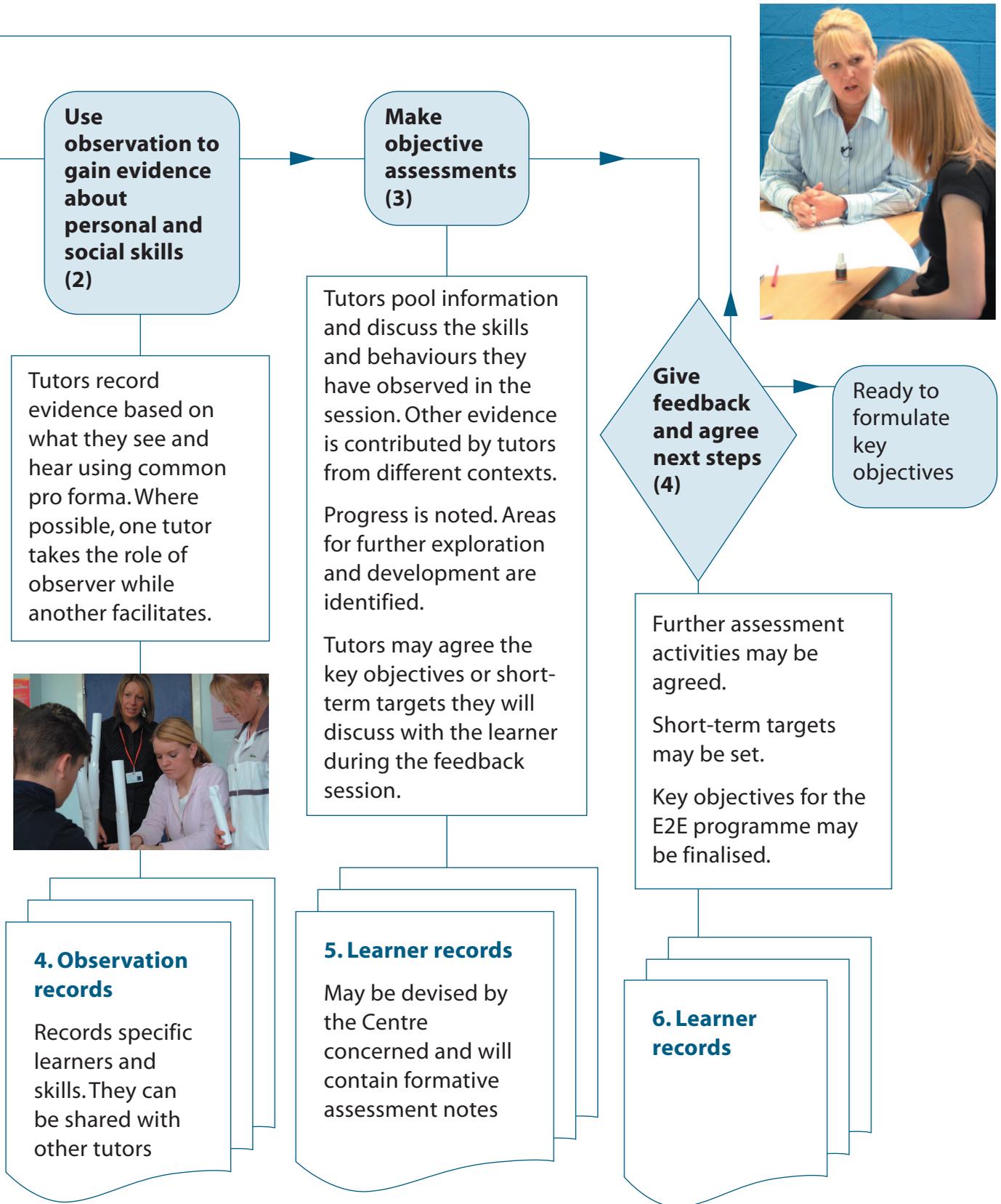
Evaluating and improving your processes

Many providers say that they already carry out many of the initial assessment activities that are described in the flow chart. However, they also say that they do not have formal processes documented; they do not always share the outcomes of initial assessment with colleagues and partners; and that the learners' experience is frequently inconsistent.

You can use flowcharting as a technique to improve your process as it can identify inconsistencies, gaps and duplication in your procedures. The Continuing Professional Development resources in this pack explain how to do this.

The process of initial assessment (IA) of personal and social skills





The four stages in the highlighted shaded areas represent the four stages in the approach to the initial assessment of personal and social skills, as described in Section 4.

Towards a learner-centred initial assessment process

As noted earlier, the principles that underpin the process described in this section, hold good for all aspects of your initial assessment processes. You could extend the flow chart (on pages 52–53) to show where you introduce screening and diagnostic activities for assessing literacy, language (ESOL), numeracy and Key Skills for example.

To be effective, the process for initial assessment needs to be understood by all who have a role in its implementation. If you are a manager or a coordinator you will also need to think about Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The self-assessment checklist on the next pages can help you and your team think through the essential features that characterise good practice in the initial assessment of personal and social skills.

A copy of this checklist can be downloaded from the Continuing Professional Development: Supporting materials CD-ROM.

Good practice features present in our initial assessment and induction programme			
Learners experience a positive process	Yes	No	Action to take
Our initial assessment process identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what learners need and want to do with their lives; • where they are now; • what social and personal learning they need to do to get where they want to be. 			
Our process brings 'the future into the present' by helping learners understand how their learning programme will help get them where they want to go.			
The learner is an active partner with plenty of opportunities to voice aspirations and opinions.			
The learner's skill and potential are recognised and rewarded through the process of assessment.			
Learners are 'doing', not just writing or undergoing tests.			
Learners have planned opportunities to find out what their peers think about them, as well as to hear from adults.			
Learners are helped to understand how to set learning objectives and targets by talking about their actions and attitudes with tutors.			
Learners can see how their individual activity plans will help them achieve their personal and social learning objectives.			
Learners are helped to find strategies to tackle their personal and social learning objectives.			
Our process is positive for learners, enabling them to identify what they do well and what they like about themselves, as well as what they need to learn.			

Tutors are skilled in using the process	Yes	No	Action to take
Our tutors actively engage with learners, conveying a sense of 'shared effort' about the tasks.			
Tutors who plan activities are well informed about the background of learners.			
Our tutors are able to plan activities that maximise the opportunities for learners to develop and demonstrate their personal and social skills.			
Our tutors plan activities to take account of learners' different learning styles and abilities.			
Our tutors are skilled at making observations based upon objective evidence.			
Our tutors' ability to make objective assessments based upon evidence is a crucial part of the process.			
Our tutors are able to provide motivating feedback during the process.			
Our tutors have the skills to use the outcomes of initial assessment to create meaningful and achievable key objectives for their learners.			
Our tutors have the skills to create meaningful and achievable SMART targets to help the learners achieve their key objectives.			
All tutors working with a learner share assessment information about the learner and know what their key objectives and targets are.			
The process is planned and well managed	Yes	No	Action to take
We and our partners have agreed a shared suite of initial assessment tools and approaches.			
We work with a network of specialist support services. This enables us to identify and provide support for individual learning needs.			

The process is planned and well managed	Yes	No	Action to take
We implement a comprehensive initial assessment process that is documented and understood by all tutors and partners.			
Our staff and partner organisations share a common language to describe personal and social skills.			
Our tutors understand their roles and responsibilities at different stages of the process.			
All tutors are trained to carry out their roles and responsibilities in the process effectively.			
All tutors are trained to be aware of cultural and learning differences.			
The process includes planned time for tutors and partners to meet and share information about learners.			
The process is planned to use and build upon assessments carried out by partners in the referral stage of the programme. Tutors have access to this information.			
All partners in the process understand their responsibilities in respect of confidentiality and disclosure.			
Initial assessment is planned as part of an induction programme, not as a single 'one-off' test or interview. The programme is designed to be interesting, relevant and motivating.			
The initial assessment process can be differentiated to take account of learners' different social and cultural backgrounds and any learning difficulties or disabilities.			
Systems are in place to track and record learners' progress towards their key objectives for personal and social development.			
Continuing professional development supports the implementation of the process.			
We review the effectiveness of the initial assessment process with the stakeholders – learners, staff and partners – as part of our quality assurance process.			

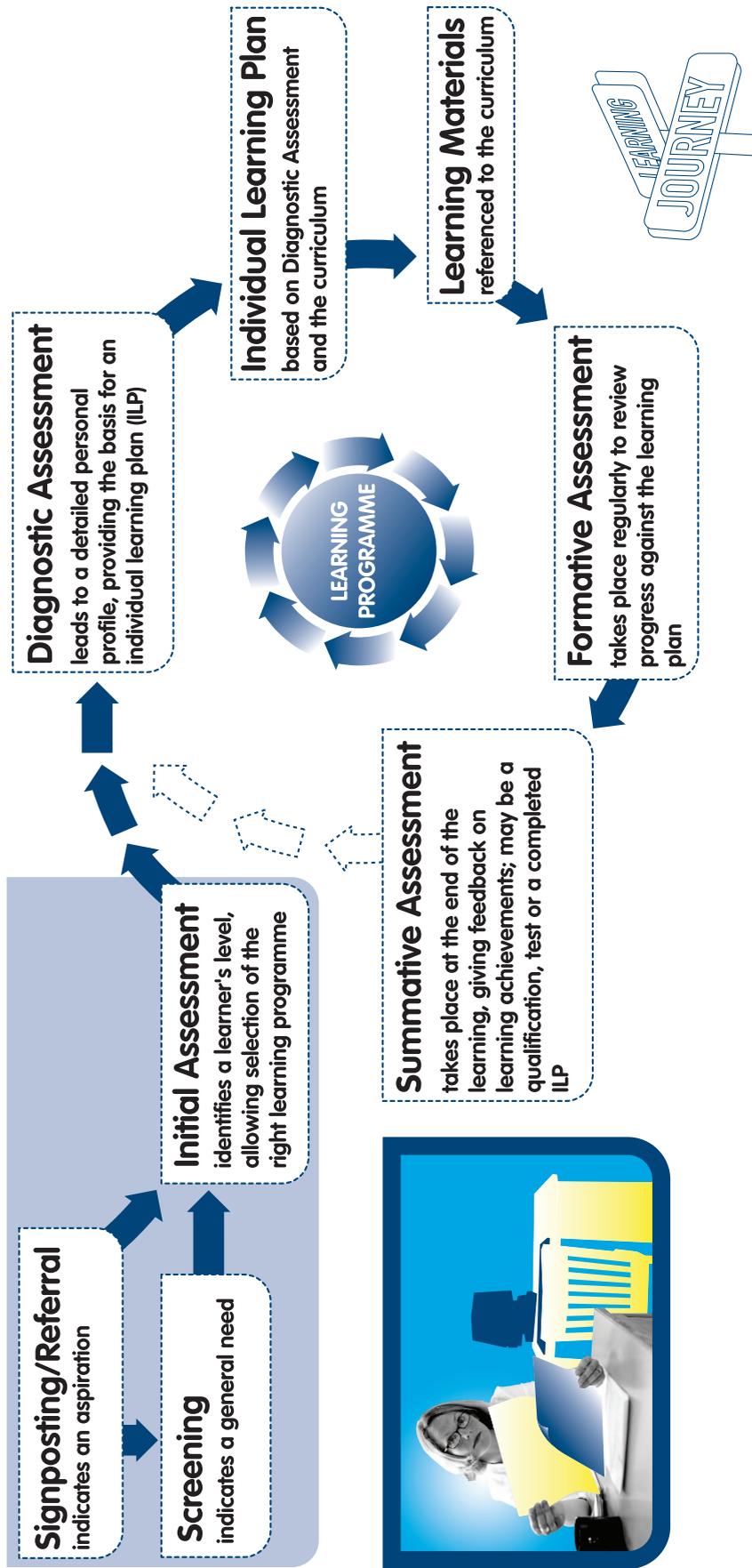
Annex: The Learning Journey – Delivering Skills for Life

Delivering Skills for Life

The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills

The Learning Journey

Don't get by get on



The Learning Journey

Don't get by **get on**

The various stages of the learning journey are defined in many different ways. The Department for Education and Skills uses these definitions:

1. Signposting/Referral

Individuals are *signposted* when they are given information on where they can find further information, advice, guidance or learning provision. The individuals act on their own behalf to follow this information up.

Individuals are *referred* when they are transferred to a source of more in-depth information, advice, guidance, related services or learning provision. This process is mediated by the adviser, who makes an appointment for the client or gives the client's details to a provider. Referral always requires the client's permission. The adviser then contacts the agency to ensure that the referral has taken place.

The first unit of the Level 2 Adult Learner Support Qualification provides ideal training in *Skills for Life* awareness and signposting.

2. Screening

Screening is the process of assessing whether an individual has a literacy, language or numeracy need. It should be used to identify learners who might benefit from more in-depth assessment. Screening usually takes around 10 minutes.

Screening must be administered by a practitioner trained in the use of the screening tool. The Level 2 Adult Learner Support Qualification equips candidates with these skills.

3. Initial Assessment

Initial assessment identifies a learner's skills against a level or levels within the national standards. It should be used to help place learners in appropriate learning programmes at an appropriate level. It is usually followed by detailed diagnostic assessment. Learners may have different levels of reading, writing, numeracy and language skills. The process may take around

30 minutes.

Initial assessment must be administered by a practitioner trained to at least Level 3 with the support of a qualified teacher.

4. Diagnostic Assessment*

Diagnostic assessment identifies a learner's strengths and weaknesses and highlights any skills gaps. It helps provide a detailed learner profile against the standards and curriculum documents and should also be used to inform and structure a learner's individual learning plan (see point 5) to use as a basis for a programme of study. This process takes several hours and should be carried out as part of a learner's learning programme.

5. Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

An individual learning plan is an outcome of Initial and Diagnostic assessment. It sets out the learner's plan to learn, a timetable for learning, ways of learning and resources required.

ILPs are compiled, reviewed and developed by the teacher in consultation with the learner.

6. Formative Assessment*

Formative assessment helps both learner and teacher to review progress and is a central part of the learning process. It will take place during a learning programme on a regular basis. It helps learners and their teachers to identify progress in relation to the learning plan. Progress should be recorded and new learning goals identified.

7. Summative Assessment*

Summative assessment provides evidence of what a learner has achieved at the end of a specific period of learning. It provides feedback to a learner and teacher on achievements in relation to the standards and curriculum documents. Summative assessment may take the form of a record of achievement, a unit of qualification, a whole qualification or a test.

*** Ongoing Diagnostic, Formative and Summative assessments should be carried out by a Literacy/Numeracy/ESOL specialist fully qualified at Level 4.**



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Acronyms

ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
ALP	Association of Learning Providers
AoC	Association of Colleges
APIR	Assessment Planning Implementation Review
CSNU	Connexions Service National Unit
E2E	Entry to Employment
LSC/NO	Learning and Skills Council/National Office
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SU	Standards Unit
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOIs	Youth Offender Institutions
YOS	Youth Offending Service

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Green M, *Initial assessment: a learner-centred process*, 2003, LSC, LSDA.

The Learning and Skills Development Agency with the LSC is developing a set of guidance booklets:

Approaches to the delivery of E2E

E2E delivery models

Employer resource pack

Focused progression

Induction: the first few weeks

Partnership working

Referral and recruitment

Excalibur Good Practice Database, Adult Learning Inspectorate, www.ali.gov.uk/GoodPracticeDB/

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 Head to Head Training
 Include – Durham
 Include – Norfolk
 JHP Training
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 Laird Foundation
 Liverpool Community College
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