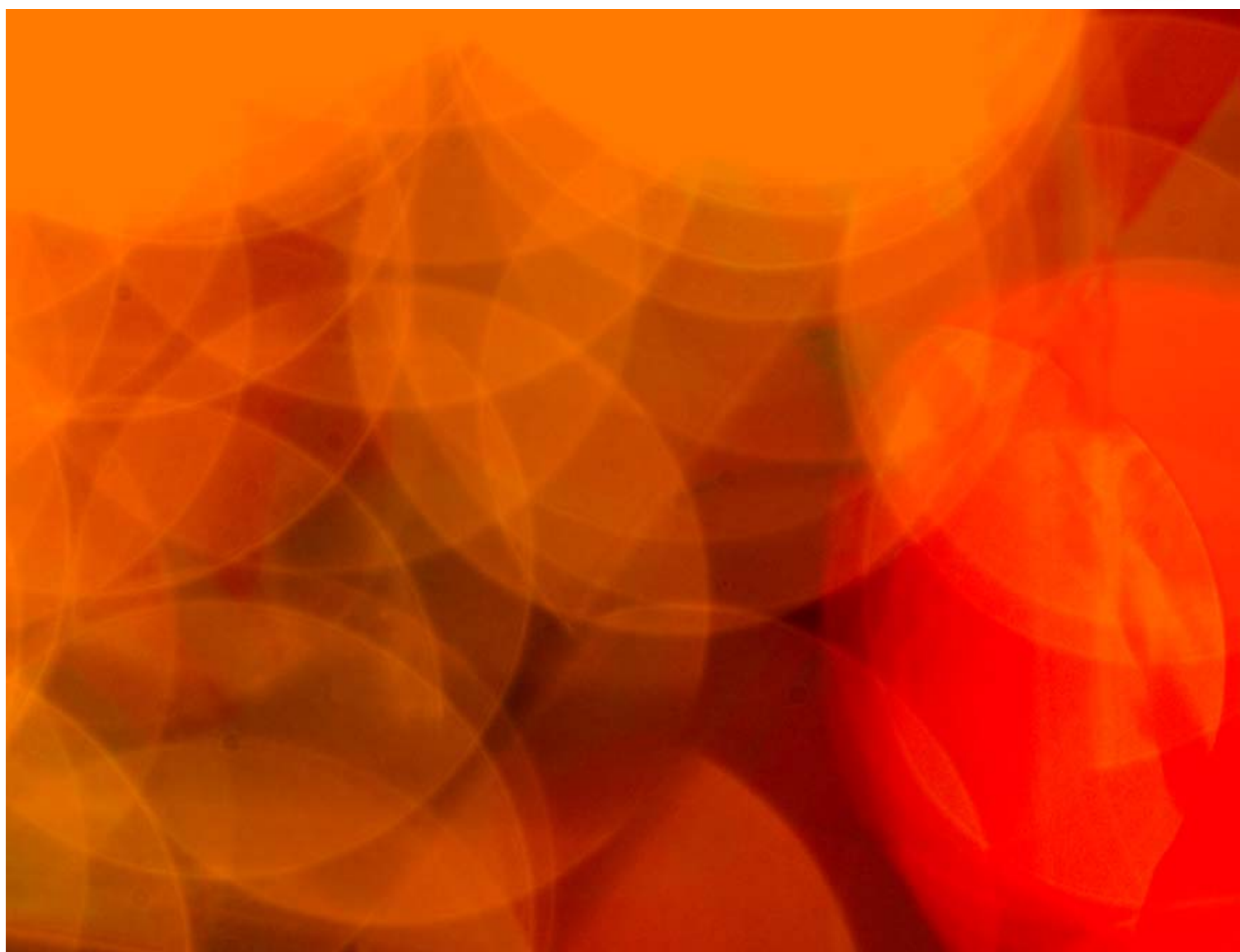


WCS

Developing Responsive Provision



Initial assessment: checklist

Check the process and contents of your initial assessment against the following list.

1 What you might want from initial assessments:

- information about a learner's prior experience
- clear picture of what a learner can do already
- information about the demands of their job and whether these are likely to increase
- accurate assessment of a learner's Skills for Life needs
- accurate assessment of a learner's vocational needs
- a joint understanding with the learner about the way forward.

Note

You will also need to consider the employer's expectations in relation to the training and development of their employees.

2 Holistic assessment might encompass:

- literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) assessment covering Skills for Life assessment/key skills/functional skills assessment
- work competence testing
- a review of relevant skills using a computer or paper-based checklist
- learner's previous experience/interests
- learner's life plans and career aspirations
- training needs analysis in relation to learner's current or desired job
- the extent of match between requirements for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and levels of relevant skills
- job description
- learner's self-assessment
- information, advice and guidance.

3 How the information might be used:

- to agree effective learning targets with learners
- to draw up ILPs with learners that inform and support embedded learning?
- to feed into session planning, so that the contents of sessions can be differentiated according to individuals' needs
- to establish the range of contributions to the learning process – from employers, supervisors and line managers as well as the learner and provider
- to establish the contribution of the workplace to the learning process.

4 Who needs to know the outcomes of the initial assessment:

- Skills for Life staff
- vocational staff
- curriculum managers
- employers, supervisors and line managers (as appropriate, see below).

5 How learners might be engaged:

- make sure that learners understand the purpose of initial assessment
- explain that it is not another test or examination that they have to pass, and elicit information in a way that supports this
- clarify the steps in the process
- provide feedback
- explain who will see the information from the initial assessment and how they will use it
- show how the information will be used in learners' individual learning plans and how this can help them progress
- involve learners in setting goals and targets that they then 'own'.

6 What the management issues are:

- a clear process for undertaking and reporting on initial assessments needs to be in place and understood by all staff
- staff need to understand the purpose of initial assessment
- staff need to be trained in how to elicit information
- assessments should be done in private, quiet places
- the way assessments are done should be consistent throughout the organisation
- there should be minimum standards set for the time between undertaking the assessment and reporting on the outcomes
- the information from assessments should be used in a way that makes a real contribution to teaching and learning
- the Individual Learning Programmes that result from the assessment should be regularly reviewed
- additional support for learning should be clearly related to the initial assessment and its effectiveness regularly reviewed.

7 What the confidentiality and data protection issues are:

- avoid embarrassment – information about the level of a learner's Skills for Life might not be revealed to an employer
- the move towards online individual learning plans may raise issues of data protection.