



CPD Activity: What do coherent, personalised programmes look like for SEN/LDD learners?

A continuing professional development resource to help Foundation Learning providers understand how to design coherent, personalised programmes for learners aged 14–25 with special educational needs (SEN) or learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)

Learning objectives

This resource should help providers to:

- understand the concepts of coherence and personalisation in the context of Foundation Learning
- design programmes that meet learner need and are consistent with the principles of Foundation Learning
- plan delivery models which ensure that learners are offered a coherent learning experience.

Introduction

The concepts of coherence and personalisation are key to Foundation Learning. All learners should be offered a programme that is tailored to their individual needs, taking account of their starting point and their planned destination.

Personalisation relates to:

- the content of a learner's programme – the knowledge, skills and understanding being developed and the units and qualifications used to recognise the ensuing achievements
- the learner's experience of their programme – for example the way in which they are helped to address barriers to learning, the support provided, and the way in which their learning preferences and styles are accommodated.

The individual elements of a learner's personalised programme should together form a coherent and meaningful whole, so that the learner is able to see how each aspect of their learning is helping them to progress towards their destination. Research suggests that, in the past, some entry level and level 1 learners have experienced an assortment of provision that did not always relate to their planned progression route. Foundation Learning sets out to improve this situation, by requiring providers to offer coherent, progression-focused, personalised programmes.

Foundation Learning programmes are usually expected to contain a mix and balance of three curriculum elements:

- vocational or subject-based learning (typically 8–40 credits)
- personal and social development (typically 3–21 credits)
- functional skills (typically around 15 credits).

The balance of these three elements is determined by learner need. For most learners, the amount of learning for each element will fall within the ranges described above. But for many learners with SEN/LDD, this may not be the case.

It is a key principle of Foundation Learning that programmes should reflect learners' needs, interests and aspirations. This may mean, therefore, that for some learners with SEN or LDD, the mix and balance of their programmes will not match the credit ranges described as typical in the *Foundation Learning Tier: 14-19 Delivery Guidance for 2009/10* (LSC/QCDA, August 2009). For example, a learner with profound and multiple learning difficulties, for whom employment of any kind is an unrealistic goal, would not be expected to include vocational learning within their programme.

For some learners with SEN/LDD, the functional skills qualifications may not be accessible. In this case, they can use alternative units or qualifications at entry level 1, which allow their achievements in communication, number and/or information and

communication technologies (ICT) to be recognised. However, it is not a requirement that in **all** cases, **all** learners with SEN/LDD must include some communication, number and ICT in their programmes and use Qualifications and Credit Framework qualifications to capture their achievements; these elements are to be included where learner need demands it.

Throughout the process of planning and delivering the learner's personalised programme, remember to:

- involve the learner in reviewing their learning and planning their next stage
- have systems in place to consult and collect learner feedback on the decision-making process
- clearly locate ownership of the individual learning plan (ILP) with the learner, rather than with the institution.

Tasks

Task 1

Look at the two learner examples (Max and Shrupti) on pages 7-8. Read through the learner profile, assessment information and the aspirations of each learner. Then choose one of them to discuss with a colleague.

- For this learner, would you want to include all three curriculum elements (as described on page 3) in their Foundation Learning programme?
- How would you weight the different curriculum elements? Where would you spend most time? Where would you spend least time?
- Would you be more likely to use functional skills (if so, at what level?) or other entry level 1 units in communication, number and/or ICT?
- What aspects of personal and social development would be addressed?
- How does your understanding of where the learner wants to progress to affect your decisions?
- How are you using your knowledge of the learner's starting point?

Now look at the account that the provider has given of the Foundation Learning programme they put together to meet the learner's needs (see pages 9-12). How does this differ from the suggestions you have made in Task 1?

Task 2

Look again at the providers' accounts of the learning programmes. This time, use both examples provided. Pick out all the things that each provider is doing to ensure a coherent experience for the learner. You might like to record them on the 'Features of coherent delivery' sheet provided on page 13.

When you have finished writing your own list, compare it with the features listed in the 'Did you consider ...?' checklist on pages 14-15.

Resources

Resources include:

- Learner example 1: Max (page 7)
- Learner example 2: Shrupti (page 8)
- Max's learning programme: the provider's account (pages 9-10)
- Shrupti's learning programme: the provider's account (pages 11-12)
- 'Features of coherent delivery' sheet (page 13)
- 'Did you consider ...?' checklist (pages 14-15).

Learner example 1: Max

Learner profile

Max is 14. He has some moderate learning difficulties and has been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). His challenging behaviour has resulted in him being placed on School Action Plus and, in the last term of Year 9, he received a fixed-term exclusion for aggressive behaviour towards another pupil. He is on roll at a mainstream secondary school.

Assessment information

Assessments conducted at the end of Year 9 established that Max was working at around National Curriculum level 3 in English and ICT and level 2 in mathematics. His teachers predicted that if he were to follow a GCSE curriculum, he would probably achieve around five or six GCSEs, mostly at grades E–G.

He has good manual dexterity, including fine motor skills, but his difficulty in concentrating (a symptom of his ADHD) means he finds it hard to follow instructions, so he has not always done as well in practical subjects as he probably has the potential to do.

Max is very confident orally, but does not always communicate appropriately. He is quick to anger and then struggles to control his temper. He finds it hard to see other people's point of view and tends to view criticism, even when constructive, as a personal attack.

Max has started going to a running club outside school, after being encouraged by his GP to find a structured form of exercise to help channel his hyperactivity. He is extremely enthusiastic about his new hobby and appears to have a real talent for it.

Learner aspiration

Despite his own mixed experiences of school, Max informed his Connexions Personal Advisor that he wanted to be a PE teacher. Further discussion of what attracted him to the role, and an explanation of the entry requirements for the teaching profession, helped identify that he may prefer to be a sports coach, play worker or youth worker involved in providing sporting activities for young people. His initial aim is to get on an appropriate post-16 college course that will help him to head in the right direction.

Learner example 2: Shrupti

Learner profile

Shrupti is 17 and has just enrolled at a further education college. She has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair to get around. Since the age of 11 she has been in a special school for learners with physical disabilities including those, like Shrupti, who also have associated learning disabilities.

Assessment information

Initial assessment, including dialogue with Shrupti's teachers from school and consideration of attainment data passed on by the school, suggests that Shrupti is working at the higher end of entry level 1 (P levels 6–8/National Curriculum level 1) in most areas of learning. She can communicate in short phrases and make her preferences understood. She can recognise a range of key words in written format, including her own name, and appears to have the capacity to widen that range. For example, she could pick out 'college' on the prospectus, having been shown the word on a number of other documents where the college logo was also included. She has some basic ICT skills, developed using an interactive individual learning programme at school.

She has little understanding of the world of work, or of the range of different types of workplaces or jobs that are available. She has had limited opportunity to get out and about in the community and has little concept of personal safety (eg 'stranger danger'). But she is very enthusiastic about being more independent and has been really keen to move to a college setting, which she sees as 'more grown up'.

Learner aspiration

Shrupti wants a job. She doesn't know exactly what she wants to do, but she wants to work with people. She would like to be able to use the bus to get to work and live in her own house, possibly with some other people with learning disabilities. She is aware that she may need to be supported at work and at home, but she wants to have a say in what type of support she gets.

Max's learning programme: the provider's account

'We put Max on our Work Ready programme. This means that he's out of school three days a week with a training provider, doing vocational training that he has chosen from the extensive off-site menu that we offer. Max chose sport and recreation because that fits with what he wants to do post-16. He'll be working towards a level 1 qualification and he'll get the chance to do a work placement later in the programme, so long as he meets his behaviour targets. We will be looking to find an opportunity for Max to do some sports coaching on his placement. Some of his sports-related learning with the training provider and on placement will also contribute towards his personal and social development (PSD) qualification.

'While he is off-site, he also gets some PSD input. There are a couple of whole-group sessions and a one-to-one for each learner at the start of the week. The PSD tutor sets goals each week for each individual learner and produces a recording sheet, which the learner carries around with them.

'At the end of each functional skills lesson in school, or session with the training provider, the learner and the tutor or teacher complete the recording sheet to allow them to reflect on whether Max is on target to achieve his goals. For Max, the goals have been around appropriate communication (ie not swearing and shouting), learning to respond positively to criticism and developing better listening skills. These goals also go onto the learner's electronic individual learning plan, which can be accessed by everyone involved in the Work Ready programme.

'The functional skills are delivered in school. For mathematics and ICT, Max is in a group of learners who will only be taking the functional skills qualifications and not GCSEs. For English he will be dual-entered for GCSE English and functional skills English. We have mapped the functional skills against each of the vocational qualifications offered on our menu, so that the training providers can point out when the learners are putting these skills to use and how they are relevant to the vocational areas they are interested in.

'Every learner has a key worker who is based at school, usually a specially trained learning support assistant, and he or she talks to each learner on a Friday about how they've got on that week, whether they've had any particular difficulties or achieved something important. He or she helps keep the learners on track and, if they've started to get negative about something, reminds them why they are doing particular bits of their course.'

Qualifications in Max's Foundation Learning programme

- Edexcel Level 1 Certificate in BTEC Sport and Active Leisure (13 credits)
- Functional Skills in English (probably level 1) (5 credits)
- Functional Skills in Mathematics (probably entry level 3) (5 credits)
- Functional Skills in ICT (probably level 1) (5 credits)

- NCFE Entry Level Award in Exploring Employability Skills (6 credits) including:
 - Problem-solving skills for work (2 credits)
 - Working in a team (2 credits)
 - Behaving appropriately at work (1 credit)
 - Making the right impression at work (1 credit).

Shrupti's learning programme: the provider's account

'Shrupti enrolled on our Learning for Life and Work programme, which is a discrete course for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is a highly personalised course, with the aim of helping the learner to achieve their own goals. Some learners have a course that is primarily about life skills; some are focused mostly on employability skills; and the majority are on a joint programme, which sets out to prepare learners for supported employment and to help them develop the independent living skills they will need to make the most of their working life and their adult life in general.

'Every learner has a "life goal" in their ILP, which we revisit at various points on the course. Shrupti's is pretty much what she expressed as her aspiration: to get supported employment, to be able to live away from the family home and to be able to travel independently in her local community, particularly between home and work. All parts of her programme are contributing towards making this life goal a possibility for Shrupti. We make a visual map for each learner, which links the activities they are doing with the goal.

'Shrupti's course includes general employability skills, some of which we cover in the classroom but they also get addressed in a range of different settings in the college. Learners get a chance to work at reception, in the café and canteen, sorting the internal mail and with the caretaker. When we think a learner is ready, we arrange a suitable work placement. We work with a supported employment agency, which helps us set these up. Shrupti will probably do several short placements, to give her an idea of different sorts of workplace. When the agency worker first meets a learner, we use the visual map to explain what the learner is aiming to achieve, and this map is also shared with the employer.

'Shrupti will also get the opportunity to develop some independent living skills. These will cover both practical skills – like cooking, cleaning and washing, handling money and using public transport – and other things, like learning how to speak up for herself and let people know what she wants. This will be important if she wants to help determine her support package with adult social services. We don't run separate sessions for this kind of skill, but thread it through all the activities we do and particularly focus on it in tutorial time. So Shrupti might be learning to express preferences or make choices when she is thinking about what activity to do in our 'Keep active' session or when she's making decisions while she's out doing travel training. Then we'll reflect on how she's doing during tutorial.

'In the last term of her course, Shrupti will spend half a day each week on the premises of the supported employment agency, doing job search activities and learning how to present information about herself and to respond in an interview situation. By this time she'll have a dedicated agency worker who has visited her on work placement. The job

search activity will be plotted onto her visual map along with everything else she is doing.'

Qualifications in Shrupti's Foundation Learning programme

NOCN Entry Level Certificate in Personal Progress (Entry 1) units:

- Developing communication skills (3 credits)
- Developing independent living skills: having your say (3 credits)
- Developing independent living skills: keeping safe (2 credits)
- Developing independent living skills: looking after your own home (2 credits)
- Developing skills for the workplace: getting things done (4 credits)
- Developing skills for the workplace: looking and acting the part (2 credits)
- Dealing with problems (4 credits)
- Travel within the community: going places (3 credits)
- Understanding what money is used for (3 credits).

Features of coherent delivery

In Task 2 (see page 5), use this sheet to jot down your ideas.

	Features
Max	
Shrupti	

Did you consider ...?

Here's a checklist for Task 2. Did you think of all (or most) of these features?

	Features of coherent delivery
Max	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max is able to make a vocational choice (sport) that is coherent with his longer-term aspirations. • Improvement in behaviour is linked to the work placement (not as a reward, but as a kind of entry requirement: 'We can't ask an employer to give you their time until you can be trusted to behave responsibly on their premises'). • The work placement will match his aspirations. • Personal development and vocational learning happen on the same site. Some of what Max does on the vocational course will also contribute towards his PSD qualification. • PSD targets are monitored across the whole programme. • There is an electronic ILP that is accessible by the training provider and the school, so information can be shared. • Functional skills are mapped against the vocational learning, so learners can see how they are important in the sort of job roles they might want to pursue. • Each learner has a key worker to help them make sense of their programme and to monitor progress across all elements.
Shrupti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent living skills and employability skills are presented as part of a single course preparing for a fulfilling adult life which, in Shrupti's case, includes work. • The learner's aspiration is put at the heart of the programme, with all elements contributing to making the 'life goal' possible. • The programme is explained visually (in an accessible way) to the learner, with all activities demonstrably leading to the achievement of the goal. • Early contact is made with the supported employment agency that will eventually support Shrupti in finding work. This helps to build a continuity of experience for the learner. • The external agency worker understands the life goal and the contribution that her contact is making to help Shrupti achieve the goal. • The life goal is also explained to the employer, who can then help to ensure that the experiences provided on the work placement help Shrupti to progress towards the goal. • Generic skills, like self-advocacy, are threaded through the whole

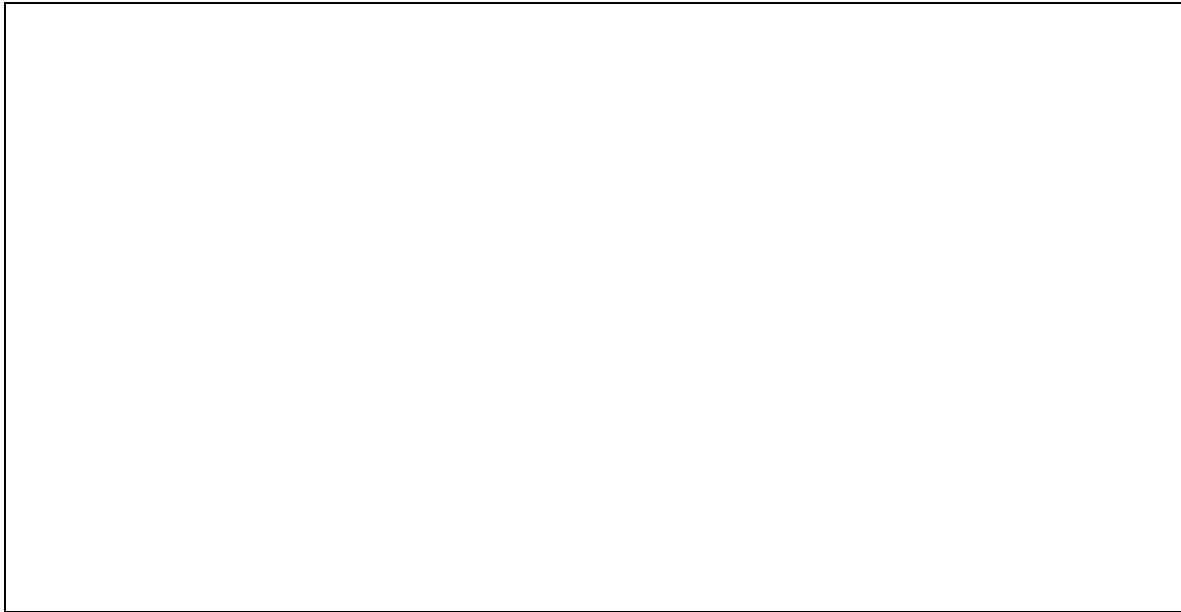
	curriculum, giving lots of opportunities to develop and practise the skills and to use them in different contexts.
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Reflecting on your learning

You may find that the following prompt questions help you to reflect on what you have learned in working through the tasks above.

- What have I learned about personalisation within Foundation Learning?
- What have I learned about the concept of coherence in the context of Foundation Learning?
- How different is what we do now, in terms of developing personalised, coherent programmes, from what is expected of us in Foundation Learning?
- What might we need to do to improve our current offer?
- What actions should we be putting into our Foundation Learning implementation plan?

Use the space below to record your initial reflections.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their reflections on the prompts listed above.