



## **CPD Activity: Destination-led planning for SEN/LDD learners**

**A continuing professional development (CPD) resource to help Foundation Learning providers working with learners aged 14–25 with special educational needs (SEN) or learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)**

## **Learning outcomes**

This resource should help providers to:

- understand the concept of 'destinations' and 'destination-led planning' in the context of Foundation Learning
- identify appropriate destinations for their learners
- adopt destination-led planning techniques in their programme design.

# Introduction

## Destination-led planning in Foundation Learning

When planning Foundation Learning personalised programmes, teachers or tutors need to identify a starting point for each learner and an end goal or 'destination'. The learner's Foundation Learning programme should then be designed to equip the learner with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to make their individual learning journey successfully and to progress from their starting point to their destination.

## What might the 'destination' be for learners with SEN/LDD?

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) outlines the following possible destinations for young people at the end of their Foundation Learning programme:

- GCSEs/A levels
- Diplomas
- Apprenticeships (or jobs with other forms of training)
- supported employment
- independent living (ie increased autonomy or enhanced quality of life).

It may be appropriate for some learners with SEN to progress directly to one of these destinations at the end of Year 11. For example, a learner might progress from a school-based entry level Foundation Learning programme at Key Stage 4 to a Foundation Diploma at a local further education (FE) college.

For many learners with SEN, however, these destinations will not be achievable at the end of Key Stage 4. Their Foundation Learning programme will need to extend post-16. Progress for these learners may be from entry level to level 1 or within entry level, including lateral progression (the consolidation or broadening of skills at the same level). It is still useful to define some sort of destination for the Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning programme for these learners. Teachers have found that it helps to ensure a proper focus on progression and preparing the learner for the next stage of their learning journey.

Learners with LDD on post-16 Foundation Learning courses may also progress to any of the destinations listed above. However, it is likely that a considerable number will be working towards either supported employment or independent living.

## How might we agree a destination for our learners with SEN/LDD?

A learner's destination needs to be where **they** want to progress to. Person-centred planning approaches, as part of initial assessment and the early stages of the Foundation Learning programme, can be used to help establish the learner's own aspirations.

This will mean giving the learner opportunities to:

- tell others about themselves
- show what they can do
- make choices and express preferences about what they want to do or be
- express hopes and dreams for the future.

It will also mean (particularly in the case of learners with more complex needs) working with:

- the learner to build up a rounded picture of them as a person
- any other agencies involved with the learner (eg health or social services) to understand any related needs
- a range of people significant to the learner (sometimes called a 'circle of support') to get a wider perspective and to benefit from their knowledge and understanding of the learner.

For learners working towards supported employment, it can be useful to employ vocational profiling techniques. Vocational profiling is an information-gathering process dependent on a trusting relationship between the learner and the person compiling the profile. The information collected might include experience and understanding of the workplace, values and assumptions about work, as well as work-related likes and dislikes, strengths, interests and aspirations. This approach allows both tutors and learners to determine a destination that is based on a much fuller picture of the learner and a better understanding of the world of work on the part of the learner.

Destinations need to be realistic and achievable for the learner. Alongside the learner's own views and those of their circle of support, teachers need to consider relevant attainment data and other existing information on the learner's abilities and potential, as well as local progression opportunities. This may need to be negotiated with the learner (and, in some cases, their families) where their own aspirations may not be attainable.

Learners will change their minds, new strengths may emerge, new progression opportunities may come on line. All of this means that it will be important to keep the destination that was agreed at the start of the course under review. It may be necessary to change it completely, or amend or refine it to make it more specific as the Foundation Learning course progresses. Learners should be involved in this process wherever possible.

Some learners may switch courses or re-engage in learning mid-year. Providers will need to have processes in place to identify suitable destinations for these learners too, and to plan appropriate Foundation Learning programmes that reflect their stage of commitment, level of confidence and personal situation. It

will be important that this process happens quickly, so that learners are set on an appropriate path as swiftly as possible.

### **What does destination-led planning look like for learners with SEN or LDD?**

Destination-led planning means factoring in the learner's intended destination when planning the curriculum and when considering how best to accredit learner achievements.

For learners working at higher levels who want to progress to further learning, it is often the case that they will need to meet certain entry requirements for their next course. For example, a Foundation Learning learner who would like to become an apprentice might need all three functional skills (English, mathematics and information and communication technologies (ICT)) and a vocational qualification in a relevant subject at level 1 as a minimum requirement for entry to the Apprenticeship course. A key part of destination planning for teachers and tutors will be to ensure that the learner's Foundation Learning course gives him or her the opportunity to achieve these entry requirements.

For learners working at entry level, many of whom will have SEN or LDD, many of the 'destinations' towards which they are working do not have formal entry requirements. For these learners, it will be important to identify what skills, knowledge and understanding they will need in order to progress successfully to their identified destination and to sustain that progression beyond the initial transition period.

## Tasks

### Task 1

#### ***For teachers working with Key Stage 4 learners***

Look at the examples of destinations for Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning learners with SEN, provided on page 8. Discuss with a colleague how these examples fit with the destinations listed by the DCSF on page 3. Then compare your observations with those provided in the 'Commentary on destinations for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN' on page 9.

#### ***For tutors working with post-16 learners***

Look at the examples of destinations for post-16 Foundation Learning learners with LDD, provided on page 10. Discuss with a colleague how these examples relate to the destinations listed by the DCSF on page 3. Then compare your observations with those provided in the 'Commentary on destinations for post-16 learners with LDD' on page 11.

### Task 2

Discuss with colleagues what processes you might use to identify destinations for your learners.

- What existing procedures could you use?
- What might you need to do differently or in addition?
- How might you accommodate learners who enrol mid-year?

### Task 3

#### ***For teachers working with Key Stage 4 learners***

Look again at the examples of destinations for Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning learners with SEN on page 8. Consider in each case how the learner's intended destination might affect the content of their Foundation Learning programme. Then compare your observations with those provided in the 'Commentary on destination-led planning for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN' on page 12.

#### ***For tutors working with post-16 learners***

Look again at the examples of destinations for post-16 Foundation Learning learners with LDD on page 10. Consider in each case how the learner's intended destination might affect the content of their Foundation Learning programme. Then compare your observations with those provided in the 'Commentary on destination-led planning for post-16 learners with LDD' on page 14.

## Resources

Resources include:

- Examples of destinations for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN (for Tasks 1 and 3) (page 8)
- Commentary on destinations for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN (for Task 1) (page 9)
- Examples of destinations for post-16 learners with LDD (for Tasks 1 and 3) (page 10)
- Commentary on destinations for post-16 learners with LDD (for Task 1) (page 11)
- Commentary on destination-led planning for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN (for Task 3) (pages 12-13)
- Commentary on destination-led planning for post-16 learners with LDD (for Task 3) (page 14).

## **Examples of destinations for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN (for Tasks 1 and 3)**

### ***Andrew – Year 10 pupil with statement of SEN at a mainstream school***

Andrew's planned destination at the end of his Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning programme is a Foundation Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment at an FE college.

### ***Bernice – Year 10 pupil with statement of SEN at a school for learners with moderate learning difficulties (MLD)***

Bernice's planned destination at the end of her Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning programme is to be in a position where she can choose an appropriate Foundation Diploma to which to progress, based on a clear understanding of a range of different vocational areas.

### ***Casim – Year 10 pupil with statement of SEN at a school for learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD)***

Casim's planned destination at the end of his Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning programme is to have increased confidence and independence within his own community. This will be evidenced through his ability to handle small amounts of money, ask for help in familiar settings and make informed choices about how he wants to spend his time. He will be able to access a 'Learning for Life and Work' course at an FE college, if that is what he and his family choose for him at the end of Key Stage 4.

### ***Darren – Year 10 pupil with statement of SEN at a school for learners with SLD or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)***

Darren's planned destination at the end of his Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning programme is to be able to respond actively to people, events and activities. He will be able to assert himself within his environment and communicate his preferences to a range of familiar people. He will have some sense of agency, including body awareness and the ability to control some aspects of his life by using switches.



## **Commentary on destinations for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN (for Task 1)**

### ***Andrew***

Andrew's destination, following Key Stage 4, is a Diploma. As Andrew knows exactly what area he wants to work in, he is able to identify which line of learning he wants to follow: Construction and the Built Environment. Given that he is working largely at entry level 2 and in some areas at entry level 3 at the beginning of Year 10, his teachers feel confident that a Foundation (ie level 1) Diploma is a realistic goal by the end of Key Stage 4. His tutor has already checked out which colleges offer this Diploma and has identified that the local FE college is currently running this course. It is likely that Andrew will need to progress to level 2 learning, perhaps an Apprenticeship, at the end of this course before he will be ready to enter the construction industry.

### ***Bernice***

Bernice's destination, following Key Stage 4, is also a Diploma. Bernice, though, does not know what sector she might want to work in or what sort of job might match her skills and interests. Her teachers are therefore unable to be more specific about the destination at this stage. However, Bernice does want to do some sort of vocational course at college after she leaves her MLD school. A key focus for Bernice's Foundation Learning programme is to give her sufficient experiences to enable her to make an informed choice about which vocational area to pursue. As the programme progresses and Bernice develops preferences, her teachers plan to revisit her destination and make it more specific.

### ***Casim***

The beginning of Year 10 is too soon to determine whether Casim will one day be capable of working. His eventual destination will therefore be either supported employment or independent living, but this will be reached at the end of a post-16 programme, not at the end of Key Stage 4. His teachers, however, have defined a Key Stage 4 destination for him, to ensure that his Foundation Learning programme delivers what he needs by the end of Year 11. The key focus is increased independence. A further aim is that Casim will be able to make the transition to a further Foundation Learning programme at the local FE college, if he chooses that route, rather than moving on to the Key Stage 5 facility at his own school.

### ***Darren***

Darren has complex needs. It is clear that employment of any kind is not a realistic aspiration and his eventual Foundation Learning destination will be independent living, ie increased autonomy and quality of life. Like Casim, Darren will continue in Foundation Learning provision post-16. His family is keen that he stays at school until he is 19. His teachers have agreed that for Darren the key focus of his Key Stage 4 Foundation Learning programme is to encourage him to become a more active agent in his own life, as he is currently a rather passive recipient of what is offered to him.

## **Examples of destinations for post-16 learners with LDD (for Tasks 1 and 3)**

### ***Umer – 17 year old learner with LDD at an FE college***

Umer's planned destination at the end of his two-year FE college course is to be in a position where he is able to communicate with the people that he comes into contact with on a regular basis, including college staff, support workers and other learners in his group. He will be able to express preferences between given options, such as taking part in one activity or another, and will be able to indicate likes and dislikes. He will be able to make simple requests and accept or reject offers of support or to be involved in an activity.

### ***Ruby – 16 year old learner at an independent specialist college***

Ruby's planned destination at the end of her Employability course at a residential college is to achieve supported employment in an office environment. She would also like to move out of the family home into some form of sheltered accommodation in the town where her parents live.

## **Commentary on destinations for post-16 learners with LDD (for Task 1)**

### ***Umer***

Umer's degree of learning disability means that he is unlikely to achieve employment, even with support. His programme is therefore intended to increase his independent living skills in order for him to be more actively involved in what is going on around him. Developing better communication skills will allow Umer to have more control over what happens to him and to make some choices for himself.

### ***Ruby***

Ruby's destination is supported employment. As she knows what sort of environment she would like to work in, her tutors are able to qualify this general descriptor so that it becomes supported work in an office environment. They are aware, however, that Ruby may change her mind about the sort of job she might like, as she has limited knowledge or experience of other options. It may be that the destination will need to be revised at a later stage in the course. As Ruby also wants to be able to live in sheltered accommodation, independent living will also be considered an important goal.

## **Commentary on destination-led planning for Key Stage 4 learners with SEN (for Task 3)**

### ***Andrew***

In Andrew's case, it will be important to check whether or not the college that he wants to go to sets any entry requirements for the Foundation Learning Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment. Given that the Diploma requires learners to achieve functional skills at level 1, it may be that applicants are expected to have achieved functional skills at entry level 3 before they start the course. Regardless of whether or not the college requires them, it is advisable for Andrew to achieve at least two of the functional skills at entry level 3 (perhaps dropping to entry level 2 for English, his weakest area), if he is going to be able to cope with the demands of the course when he moves on.

As he is already very committed to the vocational area, he is likely to enjoy an entry level 3 vocational certificate in construction, which will provide a motivating context for delivering the functional skills. The Diploma course requires a fair amount of independent study, which is something that Andrew has not had to do before. His teachers will begin to introduce some of these study skills during his Foundation Learning course and will look to accredit them through personal and social development (PSD) units.

If Andrew is to enjoy life at FE college, he would benefit from becoming a little more confident, in particular in communicating with unfamiliar people. His Foundation Learning course will give him the opportunity to develop his interpersonal skills and his teachers will use PSD units to accredit his achievements in this area.

### ***Bernice***

As Bernice is currently undecided about exactly what she wants to do next, her Foundation Learning course is designed to offer her a range of opportunities to explore different vocational areas. An entry level 3 vocational taster qualification will allow her to have her achievements recognised in a number of different areas.

As Bernice does not yet know which course she will progress to, it isn't possible for her teachers to check out precise entry requirements. But, like Andrew, if she is going to succeed on a Diploma course, she will need to be able to cope with level 1 functional skills, which means her Foundation Learning programme should give her the opportunity to gain all three skills at entry level 3.

Bernice has the travel skills to get to college independently, but she is socially a little naive, approaching strangers to chat, for example, which makes her vulnerable in unfamiliar settings. Part of the PSD element of her Foundation

Learning course will focus on appropriate social interaction, to reduce her vulnerability.

### ***Casim***

Casim's Foundation Learning programme is focused on increased independence, including the possibility of a successful transition to the local FE college. Working closely with Casim's family, his teachers have identified the skills he needs to gain to make him more independent within his own community. They include the ability to handle small amounts of money, so that he can go to the corner shop on his own, to ask for help from appropriate people and to make decisions about how he spends his leisure time. If a move to college is going to be realistic, he also needs the confidence to cope with less familiar environments and a wider range of people. The school needs to check whether or not transport will be available to take Casim to college. If this is not the case, they will need to develop his independent travel skills, so that he will be able to make the journey using public transport, in his case a short bus journey.

Casim's Foundation Learning programme will therefore be heavily weighted towards PSD. He is working within entry level 1, so the functional skills are not appropriate for him. However, he will use the Entry Level 1 Certificate in Personal Progress to recognise relevant money-handling and communication achievements as well as the personal development which will make up the rest of his programme.

### ***Darren***

Darren's Foundation Learning programme is intended to develop his sense of agency. His largely sensory curriculum will therefore be designed to give him a wide range of different contexts and activities through which he can develop body awareness and, later on, the ability to control some aspects of his environment through the use of switches.

Staff will work with Darren to encourage him to become aware of cause and effect and to use this to begin to develop a means of expressing preferences. His achievements will be recognised through Engaging with the World Around You units, which can be combined to gain an Entry Level 1 Award in Personal Progress.

## **Commentary on destination-led planning for post-16 learners with LDD (for Task 3)**

### ***Umer***

Umer's programme is focused on increasing his independent living skills, largely through developing his communication skills. He will be offered a varied curriculum involving a range of different activities and experiences through which he can improve his communication skills. He will have the chance to explore a number of different communication methods, including the use of pictures, symbols and gestures, as well as working intensively with a speech therapist to develop his verbal communication.

Opportunities to make choices and express preferences will be offered throughout the curriculum. His achievements will be recognised through units in communication and getting on with other people, which can be combined to gain an Entry Level 1 Award in Personal Progress.

### ***Ruby***

As Ruby would like to progress to supported employment, her programme will cover a range of basic employability skills. The focus will be on transferable skills so that she will be equipped to work in a variety of settings. Ruby will be given the opportunity to learn about a number of different working environments, so that she can be sure that an office is the right setting for her or to allow her to make a different choice. She will also go out on at least one work placement with the support of a job coach. Towards the end of her course, she will begin to work with a supported employment agency, which will help her to find work and will provide on-the-job support once she is in employment.

As Ruby is also very keen to live independently, the college is working with her family to identify which skills will be most important to her. She will have the opportunity to learn basic money management, how to look after her own home and how to make the most of what is on offer to her in the community, including support services. Ruby's communication skills are quite good, so her tutors plan to enter her for functional skills in English, either at entry level 1 or entry level 2. She may also take functional skills in ICT, probably at entry level 1, provided she makes good progress in her course. Both these areas of learning will be important in whatever kind of employment Ruby opts for. However, it is unlikely that she will achieve functional skills in mathematics, so her tutors plan to focus mainly on money-handling as far as numeracy is concerned.

Ruby's tutors will look for an entry level qualification that includes units at entry level 2 and entry level 3 to reflect her 'spiky profile'. They also want the qualification to cover both employability and personal development, to capture the independent living element of her course.

## 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 the concept of a destination for learners with SEN/LDD within Foundation Learning?
- How will we identify appropriate destinations for our learners, including any who enrol mid-year?
- To what extent do we currently use our understanding of learners' aspirations and planned progression routes to influence the way we shape our learners' programmes?
- How might we need to change our approach to programme design in the light of what I have learned?
- What actions should we be putting into our Foundation Learning implementation plan?

Use the space below to record your initial reflections.