4: Learning in work placements

What's in this section?

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4.1 Drafting the Placement Learning Plan with the learner and partners

Your learners now have most of the important information they need to plan their work experience programme:

- a self-assessment of the skills they have and those they need to develop;
- an idea of the kind of work experience programme that will benefit them based on their research;
- an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to health and safety and equality and diversity;
- key objectives for the E2E programme confirmed and ready to draft SMART[1] targets for the next steps.

The next stage is to draft the PLP. The template in this resource is based around the employability framework we introduced in **Planning and providing work experience for your learners**. It also indicates who is involved in supporting and assessing the learning.

The PLP on the next page shows Step 4 for Darren. He would like to work in construction but is not yet completely sure about which craft area he prefers. His learner profile is one of a clear vocational interest, or 'narrow focus'.

Darren's work tasks have been broken down clearly to identify specific tasks, *Skills for Life* and Key Skills, personal and social skills, and vocational and employability skills learning components. He is also thinking about his progression route after E2E. Remember that the PLP is a working document that can be added to and amended as necessary.

Notice that the level of detail here is now sufficient to develop SMART learning targets for Darren's Activity Plan at his learner review, which we cover in **Getting the most out of learner reviews** in this ring binder.

[1] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related.

Darren's PLP: Step 4

GOING TO WORK			
Step 4: My Placement Learning Plan.			
What I will be doing	***Skills for Life***	**Personal and social skills**	**Vocational and employability skills**
Ordering wood from the stores.	Writing the order down, asking for the lengths of wood needed (for example 20 lengths of 6 metres of 4x4) and checking the lengths are right.	Listening carefully to instructions, concentrating on the job and asking the storekeeper politely for what is needed.	Learning the types and sizes of wood needed for different jobs and judging how to use it so there is little waste.
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?	*Mr Smith and Ronnie will show me how to write down the orders and help me check the lengths.*	*Mr Smith will give me feedback every day so that I can check I'm concentrating and working well as part of the team.*	*Ronnie will go through the types and sizes of wood they use most often and explain what they're used for.*
Checking tools and materials each morning.	Make a list of the tools needed each day and fetch them from the stores.	Using my initiative and helping people. I'll clean and return the tools safely at the end of the day without being asked.	Learn the names of the woodworking tools and what they're used for.

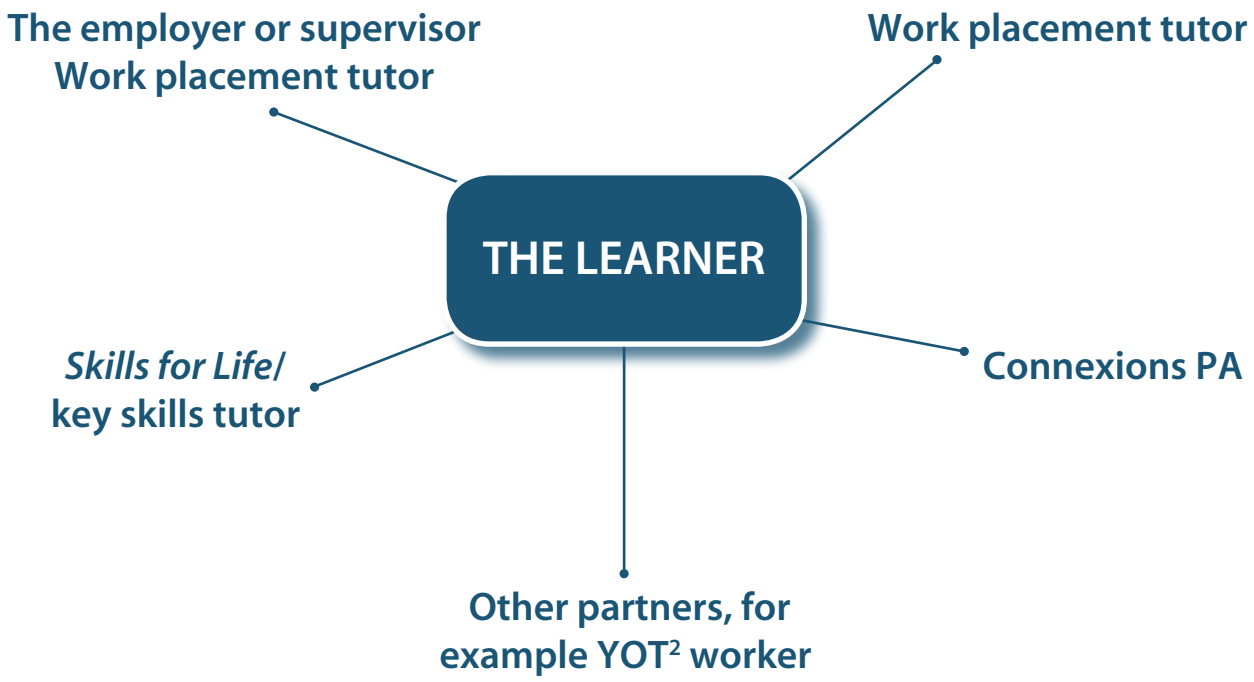
What I will be doing	*Skills for Life*	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?	*Ronnie will help me make a list of all the tools we'll use and show me how to spell them.*	*Mr Smith will give me feedback every day on how I'm doing.*	*Ronnie will check that I know the names of the tools we use most often.*
Find out about training as an Apprentice in joinery.	Read leaflets about Apprenticeship training from Connexions. Ask Mr Smith questions about Apprenticeship. How long does it take? Is it mostly practical? Does he do the training on the job or would I go to college?	Shadow Ronnie as he works and ask him about his training. What were the best parts? The hardest parts? Is there a lot of paperwork? What jobs will be open to him at the end?	Learn about the types of job a joiner does and the qualifications I would need to do the work.
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?	*Connexions Personal Adviser to supply information. Mr Smith to help with the questions.*	*Ronnie will give information and answer questions.*	*Mr Smith will describe the sort of jobs his company has done over the past 12 months and what skills were required.*

The benefits of a PLP

The PLP should support the E2E Passport, not replace it. It is useful because it:

- emphasises the need to devise learning experiences across the three E2E core curriculum areas;
- helps the learner to identify and talk about skills they will use on the job;
- helps to maximise all the learning opportunities available in work placements that may otherwise be overlooked;
- engages all partners in playing their part to support and assess learning so that the learner benefits from an enriching and integrated learning experience;
- records the shared understanding of all partners and helps communication;
- provides a structure for reviewing progress and helping the learner to develop the habit of reflecting upon skills learnt.

Remember to use the PLP template as a working document that you and the learner can develop as you discuss the learning opportunities the placement offers. Creating the plan should involve the key people responsible for providing the learning opportunities, and might include:



[2] Youth Offender Team.

An effective PLP

The learner should now be aware of the skills they need to develop across the three E2E core curriculum areas and these should be central to the planning conversation. However, it is your professional skills that will ensure the PLP is robust. An effective PLP will:

- set out the skills learners need to develop in order to progress in their placement and how they will do this;
- set out the new skills they will be expected to learn during the placement and how they will do this;
- indicate information about which professional person will support the development and assessment of the skills in the plan, for example, the *Skills for Life* tutor, the employer, the placement tutor or key worker.

A well-planned work experience will help the learner make step changes in their skills and abilities and so it is important to create a PLP that is both challenging and realistic.

Learner review point LR

At this stage you can ask your learner to prepare for a learner review. They can use the template, Preparing for my learner review, on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM. Ask them to bring to the review their notes from the research activities they have done in this section. You can also use this review to check their understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work.

The E2E Passport

During this review you may:

- confirm the learner's key vocational objectives;
- draft or confirm SMART targets for work experience in the Activity Plan.

4.2 Using the learner profile flowchart to help design the PLP

In planning the PLP, we need to be aware of the particular characteristics of E2E learners who may:

- not yet be ready for a placement that involves a commitment of whole weeks of attendance;
- lack confidence and self-esteem and are concerned about relating to people in authority in the workplace;
- need to develop the communication skills necessary to function with confidence in the workplace;
- be working towards the development of functionality in literacy and/or numeracy;
- experience external pressures on their time that interfere with their commitments, such as housing issues or the need to liaise with external agencies;
- be working towards the development of employability skills that will enable them to cope with the demands of the workplace.

The characteristics and personal circumstances of each individual learner will help to shape and form the priorities they have on their placement. By identifying the particular needs of the learner through a robust process of initial assessment and planning and preparation, a learning plan can be prepared that enables the learner to:

- feel safe and secure on their work placement;
- be fully aware of their learning goals while on their placement;
- feel that they have a clear structure and purpose for their placement;
- be confident in relating to employers and fellow employees.

Designing the PLP is easier if you use a structured approach. You may want to remind yourself about the three learner profile case studies in **Section 2.5**. Look at the three example flowcharts that facilitate the learning journey for Naz (not yet focused), Gemma (ready to find a focus) and Darren (narrow focus).

The flowcharts suggest prompts and questions, and support ideas that need to be considered at different stages in the journey for learners who fit these profiles. It is important to remember that we must not categorise learners or lose sight of their individual needs. However, using planning tools such as flowcharts or checklists ensures we do not forget important matters such as the need to offer choice, opportunities for 'quick wins' to build confidence, and the need to build breadth as well as depth to the work experience for each learner.

The PLP planned and negotiated by Naz with his tutor follows. Before you look at it, see how the tutor used the learner profile flowchart from **Section 2.5** to plan and design the route for Naz.

Facilitating Naz's learning journey

Starting profile

- Entry Level 3 literacy skills, Level 1 numeracy skills.
- Would like to work outdoors – likes sports.
- No particular occupational interests yet.
- Lacks confidence in himself and others after difficult family life and finds relationships difficult.
- Needs to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- Determined to succeed; he identified persistence as his main strength.

Stimulus

- An outdoor placement would be ideal. Could be sports centre, garden centre, construction, ground maintenance?
- Numeracy is strong, so a chance to apply this skill would build confidence and self-respect.
- Working in a well established, small team would be supportive.
- The right placement will motivate learning in literacy and numeracy.

Engagement

- Naz can research jobs with these specifications in the local paper and Job Centre.
- Check the jobs he finds on *Connexions* website to find out the sort of work he would be doing.
- Short list two or three of particular interest then rank them in order of interest. Initially consider the first choice job, keep the others for second or alternative placements to widen experience later.

Skills development

- Naz will plot the skills needed for his first choice job using centre tutors as support. Use a grid to record them under the E2E curriculum headings: *Skills for Life*, personal and social skills, vocational skills.
- PLP will include learning targets relating to these skills needs.
- Practise job search skills: letter writing, telephone skills, interview skills, learning to analyse information and ask relevant questions.
- Use *Skills for Life* Embedded Learning Materials where context is relevant.
- Aim for Numeracy Level 1 National Test in two months.

Building self esteem

- Support Naz by checking out placement possibilities with the employer for his first choice job.
- Support Naz to write up a CV emphasising his achievements and personal qualities.
- Encourage Naz to write to his first choice employer, including information he has found out about the job he's interested in and his understanding of the skills he'll need for the job, matched with his own skill set and interests.

Focus

- Prepare for interview: prepare a list of questions for the employer at initial visit, including "What will I be doing?".
- Consider how he will relate to the people he'll be working with.
- Prepare PLP with learning targets for his first work placement including *Skills for Life*, personal and social skills and vocational/employability skills.
- With Naz, discuss learning targets with employer and establish how they can help him on his placement.

Bringing it all together

Now look at Naz's complete PLP. It relates to a two-week placement in the Parks and Leisure Department of the local council. Notice that not all the sections are totally complete. This is to allow Naz to add any other essential learning tasks that happen during the placement.

For guidance on how to manage this stage of the planning process look at CPD Activity 5, **Using learner profiles to develop Placement Learning Plans**, in **Section 5.2, Messages for Subject Learning Coaches: Developing tutors' skills**. There are templates on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM to help you draft flowcharts and for the Placement Learning Plan.

Naz's Placement Learning Plan

On my placement:

I feel worried about having to turn up on time every day;
I want to get more support to plan my future;
I am keen to meet new people but concerned they won't like me or think I'm very good;
I want to find out more about what type of work I like best;
I want to become more self-disciplined;
I am keen to try out some new things;
I want to find out what it is I am good at.

ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK		
Step 1: What will I get out of work experience? How do I feel about work experience?		
Skills for Life	**Personal and social skills**	**Vocational and employability skills**
No problem working out change and taking bookings using analogue or 24-hour clock.	Feel confident about working with young people and helping them become more confident in their sporting activities.	Football and basketball coaching will be no problem as I can play these quite well. But I need to learn how to coach.

Step 2

Step 2: Skills and knowledge I can develop as I find out about the world of work		
Skills for Life	**Personal and social skills**	**Vocational and employability skills**
Need to brush up on literacy skills by doing practice activities prepared by tutor.	Get to work on time each day by planning my time for getting ready and my journey to work.	Need to go through the Sports Leadership (*SfL* Embedded Learning) pack to find out more about what I might be doing and what I might want to learn on a placement.
Need to work hard to get the names right and record the correct information, especially when booking people onto courses and taking reservations.	Need to practice doing talks to people on the training sessions so that I don't come across as too shy.	Need to work on health and safety using the Standards Unit materials to make sure I know all the hazards in the workplace and the rules and regulations about fire extinguishers and fire drills.

GETTING READY FOR WORK

Step 3: My placement

What do I already know about the placement?	What will I be doing?
The placement will be with the Leisure, Parks and Gardens Department of the local council. I will have the chance to work on quite a few things during the two weeks I am on placement. I have already met the supervisor and she seems really nice, though I have not met any of the other workers. The placement will involve some work in the park and some work in the leisure centre – this should help me to decide which one of these I really like.	Need to know about lunch break and arrangements – do I need to take a packed lunch in every day or is there a shop nearby that I can use? I am supposed to work for 37 hours but I don't know how this is spread out – also will I be expected to work late or evenings and is this part of my 37 hours? Need to know what I will be doing for each week so that I can be prepared – especially for working on the booking desk. I may need to get some help from the *Skills for Life* tutor before I do this.
Health and safety issues	**Equality and diversity issues**
Fire hazards – need to know about this. Using equipment – need to know about this. Checking the safety of equipment – need to know how to do this if I am expected to fill out the forms.	Find out about special arrangements for people with disabilities to use the centre and how I can help.

GOING TO WORK			
Step 4: My Placement Learning PLan			
What I will be doing – week 1	***Skills for Life***	**Personal and social skills**	**Vocational and employability skills**
	Taking payments, issuing tickets and taking reservations.	Getting used to the discipline of work by turning up on time when people might be relying on me.	Helping to ensure that all areas and facilities are clean and tidy.
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?	*Key worker will help me to practice skills and my supervisor will arrange for me to shadow bookings staff.*	*Key worker will help me if there are any problems with transport or at home.*	*Will be working with another employee on this, shadowing at first and then trying out myself.*
What I will be doing – week 2	Complete the round daily for setting up and checking the equipment. Plan out two sessions for my sports coaching.	Run the training sessions with Gary for basketball and football for the under-15s on Wednesday and Thursday early evening sessions.	Plan coaching sessions. Find out where all the equipment is kept for the training sessions and make sure it is all put back in the correct place.
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?	*I will be shadowing the setting up and checking of equipment on Tuesday and Wednesday. My tutor will help check the session plan on his visit so there are no spelling mistakes.*	*Gary will provide help with the training sessions, though I will be in charge.*	*Gary will help with coaching plans. Work with Gary to find out where the equipment is kept and ask him to check with me that everything is in the right place.*

4.3 Using the PLP to agree SMART targets and complete the E2E Passport Activities Plan

Setting SMART targets is an important and challenging final step when preparing the learner for the work place.

Effective targets are:

- 'bite-sized' steps that build up to achieve the learner's overall objectives;
- relevant and achievable to provide positive reinforcement and build confidence;
- sufficiently challenging to encourage the learner to move forward;
- decided, set and written down by the learner.

The last of these essential features is arguably the most critical to success. Learners need to decide and set their own targets to be fully motivated but it takes time and practice to be able to do this well, and many learners will need support. If you and your learners have been following the steps to creating a PLP, your learners should be engaged, well motivated, keen to do well in their work placement and ready to create and record their SMART targets in their E2E Passport Activity Plan.

Below you will find Activity Plans for the two weeks of Naz's placement, relating to the PLP in **Section 4.2** above. He has now recorded the learning targets that will structure and guide his learning at work. This is the document that Naz will take to work to remind himself and his employer or supervisor what he needs to cover each week. He can also use it to record and reflect daily on the learning outcomes and the staff supporting him can add feedback.

The PLP and the Activity Plans will form a structured and detailed record of what has been achieved on the placement, of which skills need practice or reinforcement and where attention needs to be focused in the next learning cycle. The learner will bring their completed PLP and their Activity Plans to their next learner review.

To help you and your learners develop SMART targets, see **Section 5.2, CPD Activity 6, Getting better at target setting**. This activity can be adapted to use with learners.

Activity Plan **Plan Number: Week 1**

Name: Naz		
Date of week beginning	What am I going to do today to help me achieve the targets agreed at my last progress review?	Learner's comments, for example: What skills have I learnt and used? What have I enjoyed/not enjoyed? What have I done well in? What do I need help with?
Monday	Turn up for work every day at 9.00am. If there are any problems, phone my key worker first and then the placement by 9.30am. Get to know the routine for cleaning the areas and facilities and do two shifts on this by myself in the first week. Make a checklist to help me.	
Tuesday	Observe three afternoons of booking on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Includes taking payments, giving change, issuing tickets, taking reservations.	
Wednesday	Do a cleaning shift by myself to make sure all areas are clean and tidy. Use the checklist to help me. Ask supervisor to check my work and give me feedback.	
Thursday	Do a cleaning shift by myself to make sure all areas are clean and tidy. Use the checklist to help me. Ask supervisor to check my work and give me feedback.	
Friday	Run my own booking session with a colleague helping and checking my work on Friday afternoon.	
Comments from my Key Worker, trainer and employer		

Activity Plan **Plan Number: Week 2**

Name: Naz		
Date of week beginning	What am I going to do today to help me achieve the targets agreed at my last progress review?	Learner's comments, for example: What skills have I learnt and used? What have I enjoyed/not enjoyed? What have I done well in? What do I need help with?
Monday	Complete at least one round of checking and setting up the equipment this week. Use the centre folder and make my own checklist of activities and equipment to help. Complete two session plans (basketball and football for under-15s) with no spelling mistakes using the template in the Sports Leadership (SfL Embedded Learning) materials.	
Tuesday	Find out where equipment is kept for training sessions and make sure it is put back in the correct place. Shadow the setting up and checking of equipment on Tuesday and Wednesday. Use my checklist.	
Wednesday	Run the two training sessions on Wednesday and Thursday and get feedback from Gary on at least one of the sessions. Check that under–15s are able to put equipment away properly.	
Thursday	Run training sessions and get feedback from Gary. Check that under-15s are able to put equipment away properly.	
Friday	Complete a round of checking and setting up the equipment on my own. Use my checklist of activities and equipment to help. Get feedback from Gary.	
Comments from my Key Worker, trainer and employer		

4.4 Supporting the learner through the first few days

Learners need to feel safe and secure at work before they can think about what they need to do next and how to be successful. The first few days of a placement can be an anxious time for many, particularly those who lack confidence or have experienced failure in previous placements or those who have set themselves particularly high aspirations.

Some of the Standards Unit pilot centres helped their learners overcome initial worries by creating work placement log books which included some simple but re-assuring 'what to do if …' information. You might adopt this idea to create a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) leaflet for your own organisation.

Section 5.5, Messages for Subject Learning Coaches: Working with employers, has more ideas for building communication between learner, employer and E2E provider, and maintaining a supportive environment in the workplace.

Here is some of the essential information your learners will need. You can probably add more.

Young person contact details	name, address, date of birth, emergency contact, telephone numbers. National Insurance number. Email address, E2E start date.
Key Worker contact details	Name, address, telephone number, email address.
Personal Adviser contact details.	Name, address, telephone number, email address.
Employer contact details	Name, address, telephone number, email address.
The workplace	Start date of placement. Days and dates to attend. Start and finish times. What to do if you can't go to work, or you are late. Break times. Eating arrangements.
People at work to support you (and their roles).	Supervisor or line manager – who to report to? Work colleagues in the team. Personal mentor or 'buddy'.
Health and safety	Work place health and safety rules. What to do if you notice something unsafe at work. What to do if you are asked to do something unsafe or for which you are not trained. First aid officer. First aid arrangements, for example first aid box or first aid room.
Equal opportunities	What to do if you: ● feel you have been unfairly treated or discriminated against; ● feel uncomfortable or upset; ● see others being unfairly treated.

4.5 Supporting learners and assessing learning during the work placement

Receiving and acting on feedback is an important part of the learning process and one that E2E learners sometime find difficult to cope with.

Research[3] shows that while learners with high self-esteem do not need praise to perform well, those with low self-esteem need to hear what they have done well in order to believe that they actually have.

There are some techniques that you can use to ensure your formative feedback is effective and shapes future learning behaviour:

- Be positive. Celebrate what the learner can do and has achieved, that is, what they know and understand.
- Describe what actually happened and do not be judgemental. Avoid words such as 'good,' 'bad,' 'right,' 'wrong'.
- Assess performance against specific learning or work targets. Use success criteria to judge and measure progress. This is easier to do if you have agreed well-structured targets with clear outcomes. **Section 5.2, CPD Activity 6, Getting better at target setting**, can help you with this.
- Involve learners and encourage them to reflect and assess themselves against their targets. Help them to identify how they can improve their performance in future. Self-assessment checklists are valuable tools.
- Focus on the benefits to the learner and not to the trainer, assessor or employer.

[3] Butler R., *Enhancing and undermining intrinsic motivation: effects of task-involving and ego-involving evaluation on interest and performance*, 1988, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 56, 51–63.

- Give feedback when the learner is likely to be most receptive to hearing it and in a quiet, private area. Privacy is particularly important if the feedback needs to focus on areas for development.
- Feedback should always be constructive, identifying strengths and achievements, and strategies for improving future performance.

Successful feedback relies on tutors having good coaching and communication skills. You can find more in-depth help and guidance to develop these skills in **Getting the most out of learner reviews** in this ring binder, and the Standards Unit resources Using motivational dialogue to help E2E learners progress, published separately.

Remember that employers and others will be supporting your learners, assessing their performance and giving feedback in the work place. Their feedback will be most valuable to learners if it follows the good practice guidelines above. You could use these guidelines as a checklist to help employers help learners most effectively.

Employers and other professionals may also be in a position to provide evidence for, or to assess learners for, accreditation. They will need the skills and abilities described above, recording and tracking documentation and criteria against which to measure success. Your work placement records should take account of this assessment opportunity, particularly as your organisation begins to adopt the Recognising and Rewarding Progress and Achievement in Non-accredited Learning (RARPA) 'Staged process' to recognise and record soft skills.

Learner review point LR

At this stage you can ask your learner to prepare for a learner review. They can use the template, Preparing for my learner review, on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM resource. You can ask them to bring to the review their PLP and their completed Activity Plans with their own reflections and feedback from employers and others in the work placement. You can also use this review to check their understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work.

The E2E Passport

During this review you may:

- confirm the learner's key vocational objective and plan for the Moving On phase of the programme, identifying and planning progression routes;
- revisit Steps 1–3 of the PLP and identify the next appropriate stage of the work-related learning programme for the learner.