



Leading learning and skills



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Developing excellence in E2E series

Improving positive progression within E2E

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Hints and Tips for Providers

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For

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Foreword

This is one booklet in a series of 'Hints and Tips for Providers.' These booklets are to be used to promote continuous improvement and the spreading of best practice for those providers who deliver the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme for young people. They will support providers bringing about a marked increase in the quality of their delivery. They have been produced by the Learning and Skills Council Greater Manchester in association with consultants Lynne Clough and Richard Sharples who are the authors of the series.

The 'Thematic Review of Entry to Employment,' published by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in early 2005, stated the areas for improvement within E2E. Some of these are:

- Providers do not use data sufficiently to measure and improve achievement. They tend to collect only that data required by their contracts.
- Few providers make an adequate assessment of individual learners' needs and fewer still follow this up with a well-designed programme of learning.
- General goals/objectives are set, but seldom broken down into smaller, measurable targets. Target setting and reviews of learners' progress are often inadequate.
- In the first year of E2E only thirty four percent of learners progressed into work-based learning, further education or employment. If E2E is to be more successful, it seems reasonable to expect more emphasis on vocational learning and better provision of literacy, numeracy and language and key skills.

The 'Hints and Tips for Providers' series has therefore been developed as an improvement aid for staff delivering the E2E programme. The four booklets in the series cover:

1. Collecting, analysing and using data within E2E
2. Improving initial assessment within E2E
3. Agreeing objectives and targets within E2E
4. Improving positive progression in E2E.

We hope you find that using these booklets will support you in enhancing the experience and skills of learners and improving their opportunities to progress.



John Korzeniewski Executive Director

Introduction

This document aims to offer hints and tips for E2E providers to consider in order to improve positive progression rates in E2E. At the end of the first year of E2E the number progressing into positive destinations was around one-third, with learners twice as likely to go into employment as work-based learning or further education.

There are clearly many factors, which influence a young person's ability to progress onto a positive route at the end of their E2E programme. Undoubtedly the most significant factor will lie in their ability to progress during their programme and in turn, the factors which affect this.

? Hint and Tip 1 – Ensure that each young person receives a thorough initial assessment

Initial assessment is a process of gathering a wide range of information from a young person including their career aims and aspirations, their previous experience and achievements, as well as identifying their learning and support needs. It should also identify the key barriers to achievement and progression and inform the planning of an appropriate E2E learning programme, which focuses upon these. Inaccurate or incomplete identification of a young person's needs may result in the design of a programme, which does not sufficiently address their needs and in turn inhibits positive progression.

Initial assessment in E2E will usually take place in two stages: at pre-entry and on entry to the programme. Pre-entry initial assessment will normally be carried out by the organisation or agency, which refers the young person to E2E.

This includes the Connexions Service or referral agencies such as Youth Offending Teams or Social Services. The second stage of initial assessment, will be carried out by an E2E provider with a young person, once they commence E2E and will be more diagnostic in approach. It is important however that providers do not simply adopt a deficit approach to this, or they will risk disengaging learners. Initial assessment should be learner centred and identify both positives as well as any barriers.

Within E2E, providers have a period of up to six weeks in which to carry out initial assessment. This is to ensure that a thorough initial assessment can be carried out. Whilst not all learners will require this amount of time all learners are entitled to a thorough initial assessment.

The second stage of initial assessment should be informed by the first stage and therefore the sharing of information between referral agencies and providers is vital. This will help ensure that the young person is not subject to repeated processes and experiences a seamless transfer. The *Connexions Personal Adviser Referral Form* and the *Referral Agency Form* in the *E2E Passport*¹ are designed to assist this.

During initial assessment providers will gather information about a young person's: achievements, qualifications and prior experience; learning experience; levels of basic and key skills (this will include both screening and diagnostic assessment activities); career preferences and suitability; interests and hobbies; learning difficulties; learning style; personal and social skills; health and personal circumstances. Providers will utilise a range of

¹The *E2E Passport*, LSC, March 2004

different techniques to do this including: one-to-one interviews; review of written information; assessments or tests; observation; self-assessments and vocational tasters. A structured programme of initial assessment activities should be drawn up for each young person and providers should consider setting appropriate targets for young people during this period. Information gathered during the provider's initial assessment phase will be summarised on the *Initial Assessment Summary* within the *E2E Passport*.

? Hint and Tip 2 – Ensure the initial assessment phase provides young people with information, advice and guidance on the range of progression routes

E2E is designed to help young people progress into either: an Apprenticeship, a job or vocational training at level 2. To help young people make an informed choice about their likely progression route, the features and benefits of each option should be explained and discussed with them, during the initial assessment phase. Providers should also try and arrange for young people to experience at first hand the different options. This might involve arranging short tasters or visits to employers or training providers for example. These may help in diagnosing progression routes and making or confirming career choices. Young people may also benefit from hearing the views and experiences of former learners who have progressed onto different routes.

? Hint and Tip 3 – Aim to identify the young person's preferred progression route by the end of the initial assessment phase

The sooner a young person's progression route can be determined the sooner their individual

E2E programme can be tailored to suit their needs. Whilst it may not be possible to identify every young person's progression route by the end of the initial assessment phase this should be the clear aim. If a young person later changes their chosen progression route, their E2E programme should be revised accordingly.

? Hint and Tip 4 – Talk to your local Connexions Service if you think a young person has been inappropriately referred for E2E or is unsuitable

If it emerges during the provider's initial assessment phase that a young person has been inappropriately referred for E2E or is judged unsuitable i.e. they are unlikely to progress positively at the end of E2E after experiencing what the provider can offer, they should be referred back to the local Connexions Service. A dialogue should be entered into with the Personal Adviser to determine the best way forward for the young person. If appropriate provision is not available to meet the needs of the young person the local E2E Partnership should be informed. Providers should keep a record of how many learners are classified as leaving early for this reason.

? Hint and Tip 5 – Think about learners' E2E objectives in terms of the barriers, which they need to overcome to achieve positive progression

The initial assessment phase should identify those areas, which the young person needs to address if they are to ensure positive progression. A useful question, which a provider should keep asking themselves during the initial assessment phase, is: *What will prevent this person from progressing positively at the end of E2E?* The answer to this question should

help determine the young person's key objectives for their E2E programme. For example if a young person's lack of social skills is likely to be a barrier to positive progression, their key objectives will need to be expressed in terms of which skills need to be learnt or developed to remove the barrier. A young person's key objectives will be recorded in the *E2E Programme* section of their *E2E Passport*.

Objectives should be based around what the learner needs to do, learn, improve, change or develop. Within E2E they typically fall into 3 groups: personal and social objectives; learning or educational objectives; and career or work related objectives.

Learners' key objectives are not only important for the learner but will be used by the provider, the LSC and ALI to measure progression during the learner's programme.

? Hint and Tip 6 – Identify bite-sized targets to show how and when objectives will be measured and achieved

Each objective should be broken down into a series of bite-sized targets which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound. These will allow progress towards achieving the objective to be readily seen by both the learner and the provider. Some objectives particularly in relation to personal and social skills development may appear quite broad and immeasurable e.g. developing motivation or confidence. By identifying specific, related targets however it should be possible to show clear progress in the development of skills in these areas.

? Hint and Tip 7 – Celebrate young people's achievement

Celebrating young people's achievements of targets, objectives, awards, qualifications or other successes is a vital ingredient in motivating them to continue their learning. There are many ways in which this can be done including: giving positive feedback to learners during reviews; acknowledging individual progress within activities; award ceremonies; drawing up rolls of honour; displaying examples of learners' work or photographs depicting success within the training centre; learner of the week or month awards; treats or prizes for successful learners.

? Hint and Tip 8 – Ensure that the E2E curriculum offer provides an appropriate range of learning and support opportunities

*The E2E Entitlement Curriculum*² defines the scope of a provider's E2E curriculum offer. It includes provision of an appropriate range of learning and support opportunities, which will allow learners to meet their needs and allow them to progress positively at the end of their E2E programme. This should include spending time with an employer, a college or Apprenticeship provider undertaking tasters or work experience.

The E2E curriculum includes 3 strands: basic and key skills; personal and social development; and vocational development. Each young person's E2E programme will include some element of development in each of these areas, although the exact mix will be dependent upon the needs of the young person. The curriculum areas will be implemented

²*The E2E Entitlement Curriculum*, LSC, March 2004

through a range of structured learning modules, with clearly identified learning aims and outcomes, and supported by schemes of work.

? Hint and Tip 9 – Ensure that learners select appropriate learning modules from the curriculum offer, which will help them, meet their objectives

In identifying which learning modules to undertake, it is important that the learner selects those, which are most likely to meet their objectives and ensure positive progression. Learning modules may have a range of different learning aims and outcomes. Within any particular group learners may be undertaking a module for different purposes. This may be particularly true, for example, where specific modules have been developed to address a range of personal and social skills.

? Hint and Tip 10 – Carry out reviews with learners at frequent intervals and in accordance with needs

Learners engaged in E2E should have their progress reviewed frequently. The frequency should be determined in accordance with the learner's needs and the stage which they have reached in their programme. Some learners' needs may dictate that they are reviewed formally every week whilst for others the period may be longer.

Learner drop out is often higher in the first few weeks of E2E than at other times and therefore it is advisable to carry out reviews more frequently with learners during this period. The maximum interval between reviews during E2E is four weeks.

? Hint and Tip 11 – Focus reviews around reviewing progress against targets and objectives to support positive progression

Reviews should focus upon the progress that the learner is making with their programme, and in particular the setting and reviewing of targets towards their objectives. Where a learner is failing to make progress, their objectives and targets may need to be reviewed to ensure that they can progress positively at the end of E2E.

Consideration also needs to be given as to how learners will achieve the targets agreed with them. Setting targets without providing appropriate support and learning experiences may run the risk of demotivating learners and lead them to drop out of their programme. *The Review Record* and the *Activity Plan* within the *E2E Passport* allow for this information to be recorded.

For those young people who are still on E2E after 22 weeks, a major review should be undertaken with them to ensure that the programme is meeting their needs and that progress is taking place. This process should be similarly repeated for those who reach the 52 week stage.

? Hint and Tip 12 – Use staff and individual case meetings to share and discuss a learner's progress

Within E2E providers, several staff may be involved in the implementation of a young person's programme. Others externally may also be involved including Personal Advisers, employers and professionals from a range of

support agencies. It is the job of the key worker to link all the relevant parties together and to co-ordinate the young person's overall E2E programme.

To ensure that the learner's progress is reviewed holistically consideration needs to be given as to how all these views can be brought together. Useful ways to do this might include staff meetings or individual case conferences.

? Hint and Tip 13 – Provide appropriate accreditation opportunities which can be used to demonstrate and support learner progression

The *E2E Entitlement Curriculum* states that although E2E is not a qualification driven programme as such, all young people should have the entitlement to work towards a qualification within E2E. Many young people enter E2E with few previous qualifications and therefore achievement of these can prove important motivators to their learning.

Within E2E providers have been given the flexibility to ensure that their qualifications portfolio is driven by learner need and is not a standard offer. It might include: external qualifications accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) leading to inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); awards that recognise young people's achievements in non-formal educational settings such as *Getting Connected* or *Duke of Edinburgh*³; learning aims with external or internal certificates of attainment; or learning aims with attainment but no certification. Whatever the qualifications offered however, they should aim to support learners in securing their chosen progression route at the end of E2E.

? Hint and Tip 14 – Put management information systems in place which record learners progress against objectives and targets

Management information systems should be in place, which allow E2E managers and key workers to see the overall progress of learners both individually and collectively during their E2E programme. The *E2E Passport* provides the vehicle for recording individual progress towards objectives and targets within E2E.

A centralised system should be in place which shows the planned objectives and targets to be achieved for each learner during their E2E programme and the actual achievement dates. This will enable managers to track the progress of all learners and see the extent to which they are achieving their objectives and targets over specific time periods.

? Hint and Tip 15 – Ensure managers use management information to make decisions about where learners' programmes need to be amended to ensure that they can achieve their progression aim

Managers should use management information on learner progress within E2E to make decisions about where learners' programmes need to be amended. Learners who are unsuccessful in achieving their objectives or targets, or making slow progress, may require more individualised support or changes to the way in which learning and support is being implemented.

³*National Framework of Awards in Non-Formal Educational Settings*, The National Youth Agency, 2003

? Hint and Tip 16 – Introduce management information systems which shows the numbers of learners progressing positively and in which routes

Management information systems should similarly be in place which show the overall proportion of learners who progress positively from their E2E programme and into which particular routes. If the profile is skewed, providers may need to consider whether they are providing sufficient information or opportunities for learners to progress across the range of routes.

? Hint and Tip 17 – Set targets for the numbers of learners progressing into positive routes

Use current management information to set targets for the numbers of learners progressing on to positive progression routes. Targets should be monitored on a regular basis and appropriate action taken where needed.

? Hint and Tip 18 – Follow up learners who drop out of their programmes early

Give staff responsibility to follow up learners who drop out of their E2E programme early. Connexions Personal Advisers may be able to help with this. Identify the reasons why learners have dropped out early and use this feedback to make improvements to the way your E2E programme is being delivered. Simply offering a different or more varied E2E programme might help attract some learners back on to E2E.

In order to try and minimise early drop out, some providers find it useful to risk band those learners which they feel are more vulnerable to dropping out early. Having done this they put in place appropriate strategies to support such learners.

? Hint and Tip 19 – Provide appropriate aftercare support to help learners remain in their chosen positive progression route

E2E providers are required to provide aftercare support for young people who progress into positive routes for a period of at least 8 weeks after the end date. Providers will therefore need to have identified appropriate arrangements for doing this. This might include communicating with the learner by phone, text or email, face-to-face meetings and contacting the learner's employer or training provider to see how they are getting on. It is important that the learner's views are taken account of when planning these arrangements. Some providers risk band learners, using a traffic light system, where they think they may be at high risk of dropping out of their progression route. Such learners may require closer monitoring during this transition period.

The agreed arrangements for the learner's aftercare programme should be documented in the *Moving On* section of the *E2E Passport*.

? Hint and Tip 20 – Use the *E2E Passport* to provide a storyboard of the learner's E2E experience and their progression

The *E2E Passport* provides a vehicle for capturing the learner's experience and progress during their E2E programme. The various documents have been designed to cover the key stages of the E2E learning cycle and aim to link them together in a coherent way.

Completed Passports should provide a storyboard of the learner's E2E experience and allow progress to be easily seen from the point of entry.

It is vital that Passports are 'owned' and valued by learners. If a learner cannot see how their Passport can help them to achieve and progress positively, it is unlikely they will see any benefit in having them. Learners should have access to their Passport when needed.

? Hint and Tip 21 – Ensure that arrangements are in place for quality assuring the learner's E2E experience

Arrangements should be in place for quality assuring the learner's experience during their E2E programme. This will include having clearly defined processes and procedures in place for each stage of the E2E learning cycle. One way of checking whether these are being followed might be to undertake an internal audit of completed Passports. Gathering regular feedback from both learners and employers will also be essential to ensure that they feel supported and learners also feel challenged.

Other arrangements will include observation of teaching and learning to ensure that this is of a high quality within E2E; self-assessment and

development planning to ensure continuous improvement in the E2E learner's experience; internal verification to quality assure the assessment process; analysing performance trends to see if learner performance is increasing year on year; and benchmarking and sharing practices with other providers in order to improve.