Person-centred practice in education: a guide for early years, schools and colleges in Wales

One-page profiles

What's working –
What's not working

Important to –
Important for

Appreciations

Best way to
support me

Guidance

Person-centred practice in education: a guide for early years, schools and colleges in Wales

Audience	All schools, colleges and pre-school settings.
Overview	This document provides guidance and examples of how person-centred practice can be used in education settings to support learners aged 0–25.
Action required	This is recommended good practice.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Support for Learners Division Infrastructure, Curriculum, Qualifications and Learner Support Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 029 2082 5789 e-mail: AdditionalLearningNeedsBranch@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Learning Wales website at gov.wales/learning
Related documents	Two other guidance documents on person-centred practice are available from the Learning Wales website. *Developing as a person-centred organisation* (2015) http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/developing-as-a-person-centred-organisation/?lang=en *Person-centred reviews toolkit* (2015) http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/person-centred-reviews-toolkit/?lang=en Graphic images reproduced by permission of Julie Barclay. The Aspirations graphic on page 42 is reproduced by permission of Jon Ralphs. The graphics were not created specifically for these documents.

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Introduction

Think of a class you know well. Now think of the learner in that class whom you know the least. Are you sure that they are learning as well as they can? Do they have strengths and talents you are unaware of? Is something holding them back that you could address, if only you knew more about it?

We all know it is easier to teach and support learners when we understand them, and this is why person-centred approaches are at the heart of the best education practice today. That's the theory at least – but how can we apply person-centred practices every day in our schools and colleges and make them work for everyone?

This guidance describes a range of person-centred thinking tools that will help you to work individually with the learners you teach and support. They are practical and easy to use, and they give you information that you can use directly in the classroom and beyond. Above all, they focus on what is important to an individual, allowing you to understand what matters to them, and to discover the best ways to support them. You won't simply end up with a list of challenges or problems to overcome, because you will gather and share what is most important to and for learners, from their perspective and from that of the people close to them. You will have a rounded picture that really is centred on that individual.

The Welsh Government has commissioned a set of resources to promote and support the development of person-centred practice in early years, schools and colleges. In this publication, we describe 10 key person-centred thinking tools that can be used with learners, parents, staff and governing bodies.

In addition, there are two more publications that will help any education setting to become a person-centred organisation:

• a self-assessment tool to help you identify your current level of person-centred practice and plan suitable next steps

• a toolkit providing practical guidance on how to run effective person-centred reviews, including preparation booklets for learners, their families and professionals.

All these publications are available as free downloads from the Learning Wales website at gov.wales/learning.

What difference will using these thinking tools make?

If you use person-centred practices in every aspect of your school or college's life, you will find that all your learners learn more effectively, because their learning reflects their individual strengths and interests. Relationships will be more productive and positive. Staff, learners and parents will find it easier to share information and communication will flow more easily.

If you are involved in carrying out person-centred reviews, the thinking tools in this book make it easy to gather the information you need, to reflect on what you have discussed, and to focus on the actions you want to take. They allow you to take an informal approach to review meetings so that they are relaxed and unthreatening for everyone, while giving you a thorough and systematic means of running really effective reviews that lead to productive planning, action and outcomes which make a powerful difference to learners' lives.

What can you use the thinking tools for?

You can use these thinking tools to gather and share information, and to plan and monitor your actions, throughout your school or college. You can use them with learners, staff, governors – anyone who is involved in the life of your school. Some schools and colleges initially create **one-page profiles** for a small group of learners who may need some extra support. Other schools create **one-page profiles** for every learner in a class, or a year, or even the whole school. You can start small and build on your experience, or you can start big if you want everyone involved and excited straight away.

Many schools start by getting staff to create their own **one-page profiles** together. By doing this, they learn about the process from their own experience. They also often find that their colleagues have skills and talents they hadn't suspected, allowing them to support each other far better, and building a far stronger team as a result.

How do you get started?

A good place to start is the **one-page profile**, because it's such a powerful and effective way of gathering and sharing the most important information about an individual. The next steps are up to you.

You can use the tools in any order, and revisit tools over a period of time. You will find that using the tools generates information that you'll want to add to the **one-page profiles**, and this is useful because a **one-page profile** is a dynamic tool that should reflect changes, growth and developments.

What is each tool for?

These 10 person-centred thinking tools can be used in any order, though many schools and colleges start with a **one-page profile**. On the other hand, each thinking tool offers a valuable way of gathering information that could be included in a **one-page profile**, so you may decide to start with, for example, the **appreciation** thinking tool.

One-page profiles

The foundation of person-centred support, a **one-page profile** contains key information about an individual's character, gifts and talents; what is important to them; and the best way to support them.

Appreciation tool

This tool is used to gather information on what others like and admire about an individual; their gifts, talents and interests.

Good day – bad day

This tool is used to gather information on what makes an individual's day good or bad, and what you can do to make sure they have more good days than bad days.

Aspirations

Helps you to find out, based on an individual's gifts and talents, what is important to them, what they want to be, and what they want to do. What steps can they take?

What's working and not working

A snapshot from different people's perspectives of how things are, what's working well, and what needs to be different. It can focus on one small area of the learner's education or be more general.

Communication chart

What is this individual communicating through their behaviour, and how do they want you to respond?

Decision-making profiles and agreements

A picture of the decisions a learner makes, how they make them, and the support and information they need.

Relationship circle

A visual summary of who is important in an individual's life.

Learning log

A record of an individual's learning that helps you see what needs to stay the same and what needs to change.

4 plus 1

A thinking tool that helps you reflect on what has happened by looking at what you've tried and learned, are pleased about and concerned about – and then helps you decide what you'll do next.

In the next section, a practitioner describes her own experience of introducing person-centred thinking. After this, in the following 10 sections you can find out what each thinking tool can do for you and your learners, and how to use each one.

Person-centred thinking in practice in Carmarthenshire

Helen Etherington is a Senior Educational and Child Psychologist working in Carmarthenshire. Here, she reflects on her experience of using person-centred thinking tools, both in schools and colleges, and in her own practice.

Introducing one-page profiles in a primary school

Carmarthenshire local authority was one of the original counties involved in the Welsh Government's 'Statements or Something Better?' programme, and led the development of a person-centred approach within the participating schools. One of Carmarthenshire's schools, Burry Port Primary School, embraced the approach and, following initial whole-school two-day training, the headteacher decided to develop **one-page profiles** for all the learners, not only for those identified as having additional learning needs.

Why one-page profiles?

Following the whole-school training, all members of staff were very positive about the potential use of **one-page profiles** to:

- support learners' learning

- reflect 'pupil voice'

- support transition across the key stages

- provide key information for supply teachers.

I attended twilight sessions at the school on the development of **one-page profiles**. Individual members of staff (both teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs)) brought examples of **one-page profiles** they had developed with the learners. Initially, these were produced only with learners who had statements of special educational needs (SEN). However, over the period of one academic year, the practice was expanded to include all learners.

Recognising success

1. The school has developed **one-page profiles** for all learners. Teaching assistants and teachers also visit pre-school learners and their families to develop **one-page profiles**, resulting in learners entering the nursery at the school with **one-page profiles** already in place.

2. The relationship between home and school has generally improved due to increased communication. **One-page profiles** are shared with parents during parents' evenings, and they are sent home with the end of year reports.

3. Members of staff at the receiving secondary school, which was also involved in the 'Statements or Something Better?' programme, have commented positively on how the **one-page profiles** have been effective in supporting transition.

4. Information obtained from educational and child psychology consultation records is also used to update the **one-page profile**, together with advice from other supporting professionals.

5. Members of staff have become more focused on what is important to learners, and teaching activities have been developed to reflect this.

6. Learners are more actively involved in decisions made about the support they receive at school.

7. The **one-page profiles** are used to promote self-esteem.

Problems and how they were overcome

Initially, there was some inconsistency around the **one-page profiles**; however, following the twilight session, when members of staff were requested to bring examples with them to share, the quality of **one-page profiles** improved considerably.

What could be done differently

I would break down the two-day training into more manageable chunks, e.g. focusing on **one-page profiles** specifically in one session in order to reinforce the importance of using the person-centred tools (e.g. **good day – bad day**, etc.) to develop them. This could also be achieved through getting e-learning and coaching staff to utilise this in the classroom.

A more person-centred approach to educational and child psychology

I have adapted my paperwork to reflect a more person-centred way of working. My educational and child psychology consultation record is now organised under the person-centred headings, and I try to conduct all of my conversations with learners and their parents in a person-centred way.

The thinking tools and practices used

I used these thinking tools.

1. **Appreciation**

2. **Important to/for**

3. **What's working and not working**

4. **What could be better**

I have found that I can record the majority of information I need under these headings, and that actively applying them in my consultations helps me to focus on the needs and wishes of the learners. I also wanted to ensure that I was involving the learners I work with as much as possible in identifying the support they feel they need.

I usually use **good day – bad day** to try to ascertain what is important to someone, and how to support them, although I also find **relationship circle** particularly useful when trying to identify a key individual who may be able to effect change.

Recognising success

1. Schools have commented that they prefer this new method of recording information. They feel that it is presented in a clear way, and that it supports the 'pupil voice'. On some occasions, the information has encouraged schools to address issues in less traditional ways, and adopt a more solution-focused, collaborative way of supporting learners based on their interests and what motivates them.

2. Schools have started using the information in my consultation records to update their **one-page profiles**.

3. Parents also appear to be happier with this way of reporting, particularly with the focus shifting towards the positive, i.e. what the learners can do, and the development of practical interventions which take into consideration the learners' viewpoints, and the parents' viewpoints.

4. Tools such as **good day – bad day** and **routines** have helped me to identify key pieces of information which may not have been obtainable through direct questioning techniques or through other methods of assessment. The rich information provided has helped to build up a far clearer picture of the holistic learner and how they are pivotal in their own learning.

5. Some schools have gone on to develop **one-page profiles** for their learners using the information outlined in the consultations.

Problems and how they were overcome

All the schools, parents and learners I have worked with appear to have embraced this person-centred way of recording information.

There was, on occasion, some resistance, mainly governed by current criteria-led LA systems, to this needs-led approach, but I feel positive that this culture shift is beginning to gain momentum. The leadership of headteachers in resolving these issues was crucial.

What could be done differently

I think I would involve learners and their parents in the development of person-centred paperwork for the Carmarthenshire Educational and Child Psychology Service. This would help to identify what the learners themselves and their families would find useful in terms of recording assessment, identifying appropriate interventions and evaluating progress.

What person-centred thinking felt like at Pennaeth School

Alison Williams is headteacher of Pennaeth School – the school that Helen describes above. Here is her experience of the power of person-centred approaches.

'As a parent of a child who had a statement of SEN while in school, I attended around seven annual review meetings. I am certain that the professionals involved in those meetings did their best to make me feel comfortable. However, I often felt intimidated by the large number of professionals around the table, who all seemed to be telling me what my child could not do or found difficult.

As an education professional, I had a full understanding of the jargon and educational terms being used and the implications of those on my child's learning and development. As a parent, I often found myself burying my emotional response to the more objective views of my child held by those professionals.

Working with parents through a person-centred approach always begins in a positive way with a celebration of what makes the learner unique and valued. Target-setting is close to the actual needs of the learner and therefore more easily attainable, with all present fully accountable and committed to success. Parents, learners and professionals are equal partners and the approach is carried out with the learner at the centre.

At our school, we have a number of families who have been involved in this approach for some time. They now have strong relationships with professionals that promote open dialogue and problem solving for the success of the learner. Parents have commented positively on the approach, in particular the way that it builds trust and strong relationships across professions and communities.

In many cases, it has empowered parents and ensured their full understanding of the support in place and the progress their child is making.

As a school, we are now seeking to work in a more person-centred way with families experiencing issues that affect the learner's attainment or engagement in school. For example, we use person-centred approaches when we identify and refer families for support when social or health needs affect the learner's attendance.'

One-page profiles

Important to/important for

Getting a balance of what is important to and for a learner underpins person-centred practice. All too often documents, plans and reviews focus on what is important for a learner – the things that teachers and other professionals think the learner needs in order to learn. Person-centred practice brings the focus back onto the learner.

Finding out what is important to and for a learner is at the heart of creating their **one-page profile**, and later in developing outcomes and actions in person-centred reviews.

Important to

What is important to a learner includes the things that really matter to them, that give pleasure and meaning, and provide quality of life. If these things aren't present the learner may feel anxious or unhappy. For example, a learner might say that spending time with their friends out of school or sitting near the door in class is important to them. If these things didn't happen, they might feel unsettled or upset.

Important for

What is important for a learner includes those things that must happen in order for learners to progress in their education, develop, and stay healthy and safe. These are often described by professionals as 'assessed need'. For example, it might be important for a learner to have a particular differentiation of a lesson, or to have things held a specific distance in front of them in order to be able to focus on them. Understanding what is important for a learner means you can describe the best way to support them – it is information on how best to support them that is included in their **one-page profile**.

Balancing important to and important for

We all have to balance what is important to us and what is important for us – it's a familiar compromise we make every day. For example, we may have to find a balance between wanting to eat chocolate and needing to maintain a healthy weight, or between wanting a relaxing evening and wanting to get fitter at the gym.

The **one-page profile** helps you to describe this balance for a learner by setting out clearly what is important to and for them in one place.

Using the important to/for thinking tool

When working with a learner, you need to find out:

- what is important to the learner?

- what is important for the learner?

These questions are deceptively simple. As well as the fundamental **important to/for** thinking tool, which we give completed examples on pages 13 and 14, you can use a range of other person-centred thinking tools to gather this information. Conversations about what makes a good day and a bad day, routines, relationships and possessions can all contribute to identifying what is important to and for a learner. There is more information about how to do this in the following sections.

Important to
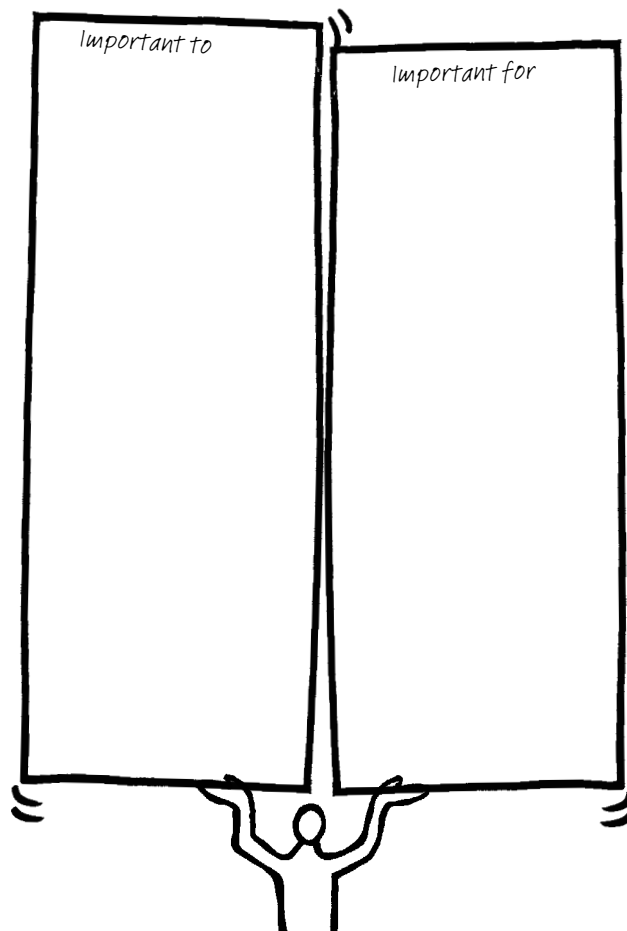
Important for

Examples of the important to/for tool

Laura

Laura is 17 and attends her local college. These are some of the things that she describes as being important to and for her.

Important to me	Important for me
To be on time or early for college. To be organised, to pack my bag the night before. To have everything I need for the day. To have my breakfast – I am really fussy and only like a cereal bar. To always have a back-up plan. To make sure I have my homework done and to hand it in on time.	To be reminded to have a rest and take breaks when I am studying. That my tutors know I have autism and how to support me. For tutors to offer me help when I am looking down in lessons. To have information broken down into steps. I can struggle in group work but know it is good for me – it helps if I get to know people first. To have somewhere quiet to relax if I am stressed. Not to have too much work given to me at once.

When you add information like this to a **one-page profile**, you need to develop it more fully. See the following examples.

To be on time or early for college.

This could be written in the 'important to' section as:

'I like to arrive at college on time, as I dislike being late. It also gives me time to catch up with my friends before lessons start. I catch the 8.15a.m. bus, which gets me to college by 8.40.'

For tutors to offer me help when I am looking down in lessons.

This could be written in the 'how best to support' section as:

'When I am anxious or I don't understand something, I will look down and not make eye contact. If you see me do this, ask if I need any help, and I will explain what my problem is.'

Caitlin

Caitlin has more profound and complex needs. Professionals, family and friends who know her well have described what they think is important to and for her. They can make 'best guesses' about what is important to her based on observing her reaction to things. They know that she enjoys swimming because she gets excited when she is told she is going, and smiles and is happy in the water. They know what is important for Caitlin based on their professional opinion or knowledge of Caitlin. They know what will help and support her to progress, stay healthy and safe. Here are some examples of what is important to and for her.

Important to Caitlin	Important for Caitlin
Spending time at home with her mum, dad and brother Tomos. Getting out and about locally, especially to cafés, restaurants, shops and the cinema. To go swimming or use the hydrotherapy pool. Listening to quiet, relaxing music.	To use her wheelchair when outside. To be supported while walking to keep her from falling. To have support with her communication. Not to eat quickly or have large pieces of food on her plate. To be told in advance of any changes to routine.

On Caitlin's **one-page profile**, you could develop these statements as follows.

To go swimming or use the hydrotherapy pool.

This could be written as:

'To go swimming or use the hydrotherapy pool at least once a week. I prefer to go when it is quiet and with a small group as lots of noise makes me anxious.'

To be supported while walking.

This could be written as:

'Caitlin is unsteady on her feet. Support her when walking by holding onto her right hand and placing a hand on her left shoulder.'

Why use one-page profiles?

The **one-page profile** is the foundation of personalised education support. It gathers key information about a learner so it can be quickly shared and understood.

A **one-page profile** describes a learner's character, gifts and talents; what is important to them; and the best way to support them.

You can find an animation describing what **one-page profiles** look like and how they can be used in many contexts at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnaKnVWFh44

The **one-page profile** is a powerful tool, and individuals and organisations across all sectors are using it to transform the way they work.
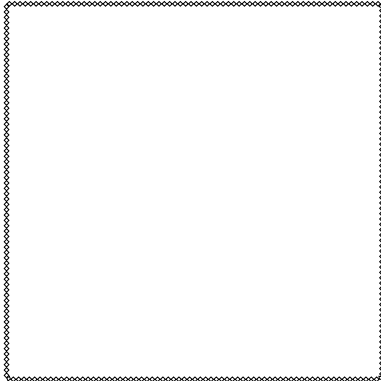
How to use one-page profiles

The elements of a one-page profile

There are three elements in a **one-page profile**.

- Appreciation: what people like and admire about the learner; their character, gifts and talents.

- What is important to the learner: what matters to the learner, from their perspective?

- How to support the learner: expertise about how to get the best out of the learner, from the perspective of the learner themselves and their family, teachers and other staff.

Your aim in creating a **one-page profile** is to discover what support a learner needs, and to balance this with what is important to the learner.

One-page profile

What people appreciate about me
(like and admire)

What's important to me

How to support me

Using thinking tools to gather information

You can gather the information for a **one-page profile** in a range of ways. You can use other thinking tools in this book to discover information for the profile.

Use the **appreciation** thinking tool to find out what others like and admire about the learner.

Use the **good day – bad day**, **aspirations**, **what's working and not working**, and **relationship circle** thinking tools to find out what and who matter most to the learner.

Use the **good day – bad day** and **what's working and not working** thinking tools to find out how best to support the learner.

See 'Summary of person-centred thinking tools' on page 77.

Guess, ask and write

It can take time to find out what matters to each learner. You will discover information through conversations and by observing behaviour – sometimes while using a thinking tool, sometimes during everyday interactions.

Guess

Start by noting down what you think you already know about the learner – what do they seem passionate about? What makes them laugh and smile? What makes them sad or angry? What do they show no interest in at all?

Ask

Now you need to find out if your guesses were right. Here are six questions to start conversations with the learner. You can adapt them to suit the learner's communication and understanding, and if the learner doesn't use words to speak you can ask family, friends and staff members who know them well. It's best not to ask all the questions in one sitting as this is a lot of information for one person to think about.

1. Who are the most important people to you? Have a look together at their **relationship circle** if they have one.

2. What would be your best and worst day?

3. What do you usually do during the day, evening and weekend?

4. What makes you feel better when you are unhappy, angry or upset?

5. What would you never leave home without, e.g. in your bag or pocket?

6. What would your family and friends say that they like, love or admire about you?

Write

Once you are confident that you have understood the learner's feelings, you need to record them as accurately and specifically as possible. Use the learner's own words where you can.

If the learner cannot tell you their feelings directly, you may need to write down your best guesses. You can test your guesses by using the **learning log** and **4 plus 1** thinking tools.

Tips on writing a useful one-page profile

There is no one way to make a **one-page profile**, but it is important that everything you write is accurate, clear and easy to read.

- Keep all the statements short and specific.

- Focus on the positive.

- Give enough detail so anyone can use the information straight away.

Here are some tips and examples of statements for each element shown on an empty **one-page profile**.

Photo of young person here

Like and admire

This element needs to be a positive, proud list of the learner's qualities, strengths and talents.

Avoid words like 'usually' or 'sometimes' or anything that sounds like faint praise.

What's important to an individual

Include enough detail so someone who doesn't know the individual can understand what matters to them. If you took the names off the **one-page profiles** in a class, it should still be easy to identify everyone.

Instead of this	…write this
Loves break time	Playing games (usually involving running and skipping) with Hannah and her other close friends at break times.
Being organised	Having her pencil case and school bag packed the night before, and making sure her tray in class is tidy.
Having friends	Walking to school with her friend Ella every day, and sitting with Ella, Lucy and Nina at lunchtime.

How to support an individual well at school

Include enough detail that a supply teacher could immediately support the individual well and know both what to do and what to avoid.

Instead of this	…write this
Be patient with Liam	Liam may need you to repeat a task a couple of times before he feels confident trying it. You can tell if he is unsure because he will look out of the window and chew his pencil. Asking if he has any questions about the activity usually works better than asking if he understands what to do.
Chloe needs help with friendships	Chloe takes time getting to know people and making friends. It helps if you can find ways for her to spend her time and sit with different girls in the first weeks of term. She appreciates you asking how her friendships are going in one-to-one time.

Examples of one-page profiles in practice

Georgie

Georgie is a young woman who has used her **one-page profile** through primary and secondary school. She talks about how it has helped in this video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0DNl8z6xPw

Wrexham Educational Psychology Service

To spread the philosophy of person-centred thinking throughout schools in Wrexham and Flintshire, the Wrexham Educational Psychology Service invited headteachers and senior managers to train together.

They have since reconvened at reconnector days, sharing practice and learning points and developing their knowledge further.

All the schools that attended the reconnector days are using **one-page profiles**, and every school in Wrexham will have been trained by October 2015.

Jamie's one-page profile

Jamie's story shows how **one-page profiles** can help learners who experience autism communicate what is important to and for them, while sharing their personal skills and gifts in a way that works well for them. It also demonstrates how **one-page profiles** can be used in person-centred reviews as an alternative to solely setting targets through statements of SEN, putting the individual at the heart of all decision making. It is told by Jamie's SENCo.

'Jamie is eleven years old and has a dual diagnosis of speech, language and communication difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. He is very caring and loves singing and drama. His personality endears him to adults and he has built some good friendships. He speaks as he finds and has a sense of humour if the joke isn't on him.

Jamie's **one-page profile** was created in readiness for his transition to comprehensive school, so that the new people in his life could get to know him a little before meeting him and Jamie could tell them what he thought was important for them to know about him.

Jamie completed 'What's important to me?' of the **important to/for** tool independently and **good day – bad day** was shared with staff who added information on what is important for Jamie to create

'How best to support me'. His peers, staff and family contributed to 'What we like and admire'. He created his profile in school using his tablet, and included a video. The profile was completed over the course of five teaching sessions in a week.

Jamie's profile is on display in school and has been shared with staff in his new school, his family, the local authority and professionals who are currently working with him. It was sent out with his invitation to his first person-centred review. It has been used in the preparation for this review, during discussion with Jamie and his mother, teacher and speech and language therapist, and for identifying what's working and not working and possible outcomes to be considered in the review meeting. It's a working document which he can amend and add to.

He has loved making it and it portrays so much about him, even down to his choice of colours and use of video. It has helped staff working with him gain a deeper insight into his views in and out of school. It has certainly helped us realise the importance of not assuming we know everything. Even his mother was surprised at one thing he included in 'Best ways to support me'. It helped us realise how astute Jamie is about his likes, strengths and needs. It has helped both family and professionals realise how to support him. They can use the profile as the link to encouraging him to become increasingly independent by offering something that he wants or is important to him, and by putting strategies in place that will enable this to be successful.

Jamie loves sharing his profile with others; it has helped him to build relationships with less familiar adults and peers. The profile, as part of the person-centred review process, has undoubtedly made Jamie central to the decision-making process and the outcomes are pertinent to him at this moment in time, rather than set targets linked both to his statement of SEN and what we as parents and professionals consider to be important for him.

We thought we knew Jamie well before producing his **one-page profile**, but he still surprised us and his mother. It gives an amazing insight that we just hadn't managed to achieve before. The person-centred review process has changed the way we will prepare for and conduct review meetings. Jamie is now at the heart of the process, being fully involved in the meeting and actively buying into the outcomes because they are important to him.'

My name is Jamie

What people like and admire about me:

Good singer, good friend, funny, helpful, very good boy. Very caring towards others and concerned if they are ill or upset. Being a good big brother to Amelia making sure she's safe. Being loving, good sense of humour, cheeky and being myself, amazing, has beautiful handwriting, is very expressive creatively, and has a beautiful singing voice, lovely imagination, helpful.

What's important to me ...

Playing video games most days.
Eating healthy food like fruit. My favourite fruit are apples.
Building with building blocks. I build something new every time. I like playing with building blocks on weekends and in school holidays.
I like playing 'boo' with my baby sister. Sometimes she gives me kisses and hugs. I love giving my mum hugs too.
Racing against dad when we play video games on dad's games console in the holidays.
The people I see in school are important to me because they help me with my work.
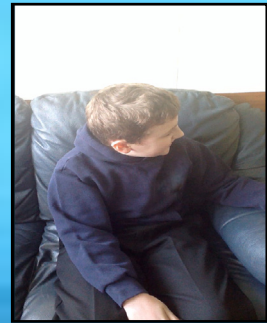
Best ways to support me:

Get me up before 7:50 a.m. so that I have time to get ready without rushing.
Remind me to go faster in the morning when I get to school so I have time to do my jobs and be in time for breakfast.
Sometimes I get my maths wrong when I rush. Remind me to stay calm and take my time so I can think about what I am doing.
If I ask please let me join in with the game.
If I have a problem on the yard, I like to try and sort it out on my own. Sometimes I need an adult to help me sort it out.
If I get a note wrong when I'm singing I get annoyed with myself. Tell me that it is okay.
If someone hurts me it pushes my big red button, which means I am really angry. A teacher should remind to calm down and tell me that if I hit them back I will be in trouble and this helps me to calm down.
Sometimes it is really noisy on the minibus going home from school. It would help me if everyone could calm down a bit and the radio went on.
If I get the blame for something I haven't done, let me have my chance to say what has happened. If you don't believe me you can look at the cameras to see I'm telling the truth.
Sometimes I take a long time to eat my lunch and I don't have time to play at dinnertime. Please give me a little bit less squash because I always finish everything in my lunchbox and it takes me a long time to drink it.

Elis' one-page profile

Elis is a 14-year-old boy, one of twins. He is on the autistic spectrum and has no verbal language, but makes his needs known by making noises and reaching for items. Elis has severe learning difficulties, and attends a special needs school.

Why did Elis have a one-page profile?

As a school we took the approach that each learner would have a **one-page profile** and a person-centred review. Elis' profile was developed as part of that piece of work. We wanted to take a person-centred approach to education, as we found it difficult to know how to differentiate between each learner and to make sure that visitors and professionals had positive and useful information about each learner as they came into school.

Elis' **one-page profile** was developed by classroom staff, as well as others who know him well. It has been added to and changed over the years as Elis has grown and developed. We use the person-centred review process at the annual review, and this has given us the opportunity to formally review and update Elis' profile with his parents and other professionals who support him.

How was Elis' one-page profile used?

Elis' **one-page profile** can be accessed immediately from a file in the classroom. This enables people to identify Elis and to be immediately aware of how best to support him, as well as giving them a positive description and information which helps them to engage with Elis. As he enters transition, it will be used to inform the development of his transition plan.

What difference did it make to Elis?

Developing **one-page profiles** throughout the school has made understanding the needs of learners at each level much easier. For Elis, it has taken the guesswork out of getting to know and understand him, especially for new staff coming into school and those professionals who are starting to work with him through transition, such as his careers advisor.

Others know how to approach and interact with Elis. This has resulted in making him more comfortable with staff and visitors to school and has reduced his anxieties when new people come into the classroom or the school. This has resulted in him having more positive connections with more people, and he will now sit alongside other learners in the class of his own accord.

As staff have understood the importance of consistency in supporting Elis, he is now able to have more social opportunities in the community as part of his school day. This has also been reflected in the work his support workers are able to do with him.

All of this has enabled us to share information in a positive way and has had a great impact on what Elis does at school and his day-to-day life. Staff no longer have to delve into files to find information which is not clear and concise nor easy to access. **One-page profiles** have made it easy for everyone to communicate directly with each learner.

Elis Williams

How best to support Elis

Know that if you ask Elis to do something, he will take time to process what you have asked him to do and to complete the task, so please be patient and always make sure that you phrase it in an encouraging and positive way.

Know that Elis must wear his helmet, particularly when he is not happy, as he is liable to hurt himself. Elis likes to wear it and will put it on himself.

Know that Elis can be unhappy or stressed sometimes, and we may not know the reason. Support him by giving him a stress toy to hold in his hand. Sometimes he will want to move away from where he is, enable him to do this.

To have a structured day but to be flexible within the structure depending on how Elis is feeling or reacting to activities. If Elis will not engage with an activity, offer him something else to do.

Let Elis know what is happening now and next and support him by using symbols and pictures that he recognises and are in his communication passport.

Know that if Elis wants something, he will let you know by going to get it or by using very basic Makaton signs. These are recorded in his communication profile.

Know that Elis finds crowded places difficult. If you are planning a trip with Elis, always check out how crowded it is likely to be when making the arrangements. If you arrive somewhere together and it is unexpectedly busy, support him by taking him back to the car and verbally reassuring him.

Elis enjoys tactile experiences, so when working with him at school, make sure that you incorporate them into his day.

Elis responds to basic letter sounds to develop his interaction with others. It is best if this is done with people that Elis is familiar with.

Know that Elis needs complete support with all aspects of his personal care information; see Elis' personal care folder in the classroom.

Know that Elis finds it difficult if the car he is traveling in has to stop at lights or for road works, he will become anxious and agitated. Support him by avoiding routes where you know there are likely to be delays and always making sure that you have a stress ball with you.

Understand that Elis needs to have 2:1 support in the community, one person each side of him with arms linked when possible. If you need to use a pedestrian crossing, support him by sending someone ahead to press the button before Elis reaches it.

If Elis is tired when he arrives at school, he will go to sleep in the chair in the classroom for a short period. Let him know this is ok to do by telling him and showing him to his chair.

Know that Elis will knock cups off the table if they are left in front of him. Support him by remembering this and always moving them when he is there. Elis uses an insulated cup with a lid on.

Remember that Elis doesn't usually initiate requests so it's important to give him choices throughout the day. You can do this verbally and Elis will respond by going to what it is he wants.

What do we appreciate about Elis?

He has a cheeky smile and twinkle in his eye.
He is sensitive towards his friends.
The way he uses his eyes and expressions to communicate.
That he knows what he wants, he is very determined.
The way he builds relationships and interacts positively with people he knows and likes.

What's important to Elis

His mum, dad, and brother.
To have 1:1 support from staff he knows and likes in the class.
To be in a small classroom with only a few other people.
To be able to go to Allt Wen to the sensory room every Thursday afternoon with Shelly.
To go to Antur Waunfawr every Tuesday morning to use the sensory equipment and to walk around the gardens there.
To go swimming in Pwllheli twice a week with Shelly, this is usually on a Monday and Wednesday.
To be able to go outside when he wants to so that he has more space around him.
That people do not crowd Elis. This means that no more than one person is with him and that he can sit on his own at a table if he wishes.
To be part of the class and to be with his friends in the classroom. This means being given the opportunity to do the same thing as everyone else.
To go out with his support workers Shelly and Gwion twice a week to walk on the beach, to rebound therapy, or the sensory room.
To have a structure to his day and to know what will be happening each day. To Elis this means being told what is happening when the activity will be stopping, and what is coming next.
To be able to use a tablet; Elis likes to switch the camera on and look at himself on it.
To be able to use the interactive whiteboard; Elis enjoys a variety of programs.
To be able to listen to music and play the drums. He likes most popular music.
Elis likes to have his head covered either with his helmet or a hat.

Erin's one-page profile

Erin is 16 years old and lives at home with her family. Erin has cerebral palsy and attends her local mainstream secondary school. She is a determined and focused young lady who loves listening to music, being with her friends and swimming. She is currently training for the trials for the Paralympics in Rio in 2016.

Erin had a **one-page profile** when she was in transition and was starting to think about her next steps. She had a transition key worker who thought it would be a good idea to develop her profile so that Erin could introduce herself to the new professionals who were beginning to work with her, without having to repeat everything all of the time. She also felt that it would help professionals to get to know Sara quicker, and have a better idea about who she was and the support she might need when they met with her.

Erin's key worker visited Erin at home and at school to find out what other people appreciated about her, the things that were important to her and exactly what support she needed. She asked Erin about what made a good day for her, and to describe what happened when she had a bad day. She spoke to her teachers and her personal assistant at school, and to her family at home. Erin checked everything her key worker had written, and agreed, or changed what needed to be changed.

Erin's key worker made sure that everyone who was working with her had a copy of her **one-page profile**. It was given to her careers advisor, her social worker and her support worker, as well as to staff at school. They used it to get to know Erin and to make sure that they were supporting Erin in the right way, but it was also used as a starting point to further develop Erin's transition plan. Without this, her life would have taken a very different direction.

Erin said "It helped other people to get to know me better and other teachers to understand me better."

Erin and her family agree that the **one-page profile** set them off on a journey that they would previously never have considered possible. It was the catalyst for the whole transition process, the profile, the person-centred reviews and the action plan. People started to listen to Erin and to help her to explore the different options available to her.

Erin Edwards

What others appreciate about Erin

Her humour and sense of fun
Absolutely adorable
Her big heart and thoughtfulness towards others
Her perseverance, she gives 100% to everything
Always ready to help
The way she faces difficult situation
She laughs at her dad's jokes!
She is sensible and mature

What's important to me now

- I enjoy spending time with my family, my mum, dad, big brother and little sister. We do lots of different things together and always have fun. I also enjoy seeing my wider family; they all live away, so I don't see them quite as often.
- I love spending time with my friends. I have friends locally, but also have lots of good friends who live away, who I see every few months and keep up with on social media.
- To go to swimming training once a week as I am preparing for the trials for the Paralympics in Rio in 2016.
- I really enjoy going out with Cari, my support worker, once a week. We do lots of different things together, and I choose when and where we go. I do like to go to the cinema and cooking with her. We did a 'come dine with me' with my friends and that was great fun.
- To be able to do my school work. I always try to do my best as I want to go to college when I finish school to do Health and Social Care.
- Rhian is my personal assistant in school and she helps during lesson times. I have a great relationship with her and she really helps me to do well.
- I love to have time to read my favourite magazine. I love to catch up with what's happening with the 'celebs' and especially enjoy reading about Kate and Wills.
- To have some time to myself in my bedroom to listen to whatever music I want to. I haven't got a particular favourite, but like to listen to whatever is in the charts at the time.
- I like to know what is happening, when, and what to expect so that I can prepare myself.
- To be able to go on the computer at home so that I can go on social media.

How best to support me

- Make sure that I have 1:1 support at school. Rhian is my Practical Assistant and usually helps me, but if she is not available, I need to have someone else to help me.
- Sometimes I feel overwhelmed with my school work. You can support me by firstly talking to me and reassuring me. It helps if you show me how to break work down into manageable tasks.
- If I don't understand the work, go over it with me individually so that I can ask any questions I need to quietly.
- Know that I use a laptop at school to do my work, and need help to read any questions. This also applies to internal and external exams.
- Know that when we are using rulers, protractors or other equipment, I need you to help me by holding them in place for me. If we are using graphs or diagrams, I need you to draw them, and I will label them.
- Know that I need support with other practical tasks such as putting my socks and shoes on and closing buttons or zips. I will ask you for help when I need it.
- I need support to do my homework at times. I will ask when I need support, and this usually involves breaking tasks down into manageable chunks with me, and practical support if I need to use any equipment. My mum and dad usually help me, but Cari helps me to revise too.
- I like to know what is happening and when and so I have started to use a diary to help me. I need support to remind me to put appointments, social activities or specific dates in, and for you to give me the information to put in the diary when you have it.

"It made me feel better about myself and boosted my confidence. People know me, understand me and they helped me."

Erin was involved in making decisions about what she wanted and has decided to go to her local college to study health and social care in September. Her family had not previously considered this, and thought that she would follow in her brother's footsteps and carry on in the school sixth form. She had to sit a basic skills test before she was accepted to the college, and she and her mum say that she would never have had the confidence to do that before starting this work. She did really well in the test, and even surprised herself. All of this gave Erin the confidence to attend her annual review, something she had previously refused to do, and she and her key worker made sure that it was a person-centred review so that Erin would feel more in control. This resulted in, among other things, Erin saying that she wanted to learn more independent living skills, so she is now learning to cook, and has even taken part in a 'come dine with me' with her friends, which was great fun.

Starting with a **one-page profile** has proven invaluable to Erin and her family. It's given her a voice to choose and be in control of her own life, but most importantly, it's given her the confidence to try new things.

More benefits of one-page profiles

One-page profiles bring many benefits and their effects can be far reaching.

All learners
At times of transition, a **one-page profile** enables everyone to get to know the learner quickly and as an individual.

A **one-page profile** ensures that decisions don't just reflect a learner's support needs, but also what matters most to them.

One-page profiles can help a school or college to identify changes – small or large – that can make a real difference to some or many learners' lives. They can form the basis of more detailed documents such as person-centred plans, CVs, personal statements and career plans. Also, learners can use them in support of their applications to take part in activities in and out of education.

Learners with special educational needs

Professionals are often very adept at deciding what is important for a learner who has special educational needs: traditionally, they have focused on documenting the support the learner needs. Information about what is important **to** the learner – what and who matters to them most – gets lost or remains undiscovered. Labels and diagnoses can mean that the learner's identity is hidden or ignored.

A **one-page profile** can put the learner and their family back at the centre. It helps everyone who works with them to understand them quickly as a person rather than a label. And it focuses longer-term planning on the balance between the support a learner needs and what matters most to them.

An extended **one-page profile** allows you to include more information, when one page simply isn't long enough.

Parents

Parents are involved, and their expertise about their child is heard and valued. They feel more confident that the school understands their child and will make sure parent and child are well supported.

Staff and school

By getting to know new learners quickly, staff can personalise learning immediately and avoid dips in progress. Lessons run more smoothly.

When staff have **one-page profiles**, they can support each other well. Used in supervisions and one-to-ones, they provide a useful record of the best way to support each staff member. They can be used to inform development plans such as the school development plan, and to support focused performance management meetings.

Staff **one-page profiles** can reveal what is working and not working, both for individuals and whole teams, and can drive positive change. They can be used to start a person-centred team plan.

One-page profiles of governors help them to get to know each other and think about how to work together.

Top tips

- Listen to what someone is saying **and** the way that they are saying it – body language and tone of voice can say a lot.

- Use other person-centred tools to generate conversations, e.g. you can talk through a learner's **relationship circle** or **what's working and not working**.

- Think about the things the person is not saying.

- Look out for repeating themes.

- Gently challenge what you are hearing from others. For example, you could ask 'How are you sure that's important to this learner?'

- Start with yourself. The best way to understanding the approach and the importance of getting it right for others is to experience the process of creating your own **one-page profile**. You might do this as part of a training day, e-learning, coaching session or twilight session.

- Practise. The more **one-page profiles** you do the easier it becomes: the questions you ask become more refined and you become adept at guessing, asking and writing what is important to the person.

- Ask someone who does not know the learner to read over the **one-page profile** you have created with them. Would that person know exactly how to support that learner based on what is written in the profile? Do they feel that they have a real insight into that person from reading the **one-page profile**? Jargon and vague statements that can mean different things to different people need to be replaced with strong, clear and specific statements.

Appreciation tool

Why use the appreciation thinking tool?

The **appreciation** thinking tool helps us to find out what others like and admire about an individual's character and personality. It identifies the learner's skills, gifts, talents and interests.

When others appreciate the learner they often bring insights into the learner's talents and qualities that the learner is not aware of. More than this, the act of appreciation is so positive that using this thinking tool can significantly boost learners' sense of self-worth and their well-being.

You can use the information you gather with the **appreciation** thinking tool to inform the learner's **one-page profile**, in reviews, and to think about ways the learner can contribute to their school, college or community.

How to use the appreciation thinking tool

What we like and admire

Gifts, talents and interests
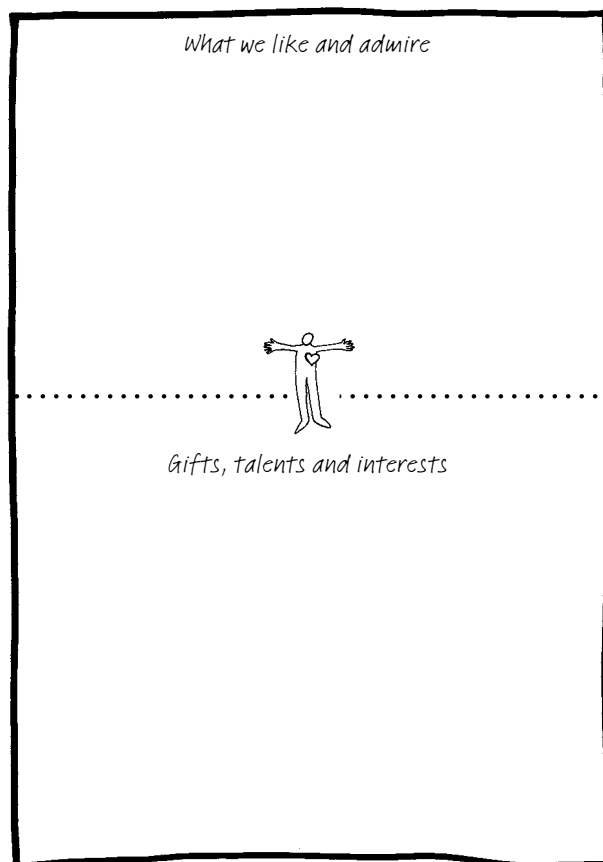
You can gather the information for the **appreciation** thinking tool in all sorts of ways. Some classes or groups talk together about what makes someone a good friend, or gather all the positive words they can think of to describe someone. With this insight, the learners then share their appreciations of their classmates. You can see how two different schools did this in the examples below.

Some schools send home a blank postcard and ask parents to send it back with five positive statements saying what they and their family appreciate about their child. The postcards make the learners feel extremely positive about themselves and can make a wonderful display.

Examples of appreciation tools in practice

Thinking positive

Kate Goodwin from a primary school in Wrexham took a whole-class approach to collecting appreciations for each learner. She describes the process below.

'As an introduction, we had a think about how many different positive adjectives we could think of to describe another person. There were certain ground rules – we were to be respectful to people's feelings and emotions, and at this stage the person they were thinking of did not need to be in the room or in school. Learners were allowed to think of family members or someone else who was important to them personally in their lives.

From this one activity, we gathered an amazing word bank that we discussed as a class.

This led in to my sharing with the learners the postcard activity that we completed as 'homework' as part of a person-centred practice training day. I explained that I had met up with two friends that evening and I had asked them to complete 'my postcard'. They were to write three qualities that they felt described me.

Following on from this, I explained to the learners that they were going to be using three adjectives to describe another person from within the class. We discussed how they would like to 'pair up'. We offered a choice of working with 'talking partners' or having some choice about who they worked with. The learners felt that they would prefer to work with a partner of their choice: generally the pairings were gender matched, but not always, and we didn't consider this factor to be important.

We revisited the word bank as a reminder of the fantastic work the class had already done.

The learners were allowed to pair up and each learner was given an A5 postcard template numbered 1, 2 and 3. The learners were then told that they were to complete the postcard for their partner in secret. Once all the learners had completed their postcard they exchanged them with each other. The lasting memory I have here is of the emotions that came from each of the learners when someone had really valued their individual qualities. Many were on cloud nine. After a short while we gathered the learners together and they shared what others had written about them.

We explained to the learners that these special postcards would be used when we began work on their own **one-page profiles**.'

The quilt of qualities

A north Wales school took the **appreciation** tool and made their own 'Quilt of qualities', 'Quality street' and 'The stairway of strengths' and displayed them throughout the school. They described how they did this.

'Through a whole-school mini personal and social development (PSD) topic in January 2015, "Health and happiness", the learners brainstormed words connected to this theme. Learners viewed friendship as a central part of being happy. Through discussion, stories and circle time, the learners reflected on questions such as 'What are the personal qualities my friends have?', 'How can I ensure that I am a good friend?' and 'Why is friendship important?'

All the learners from Nursery to Year 6 either did a self-portrait or had a photograph taken and they recorded qualities that they or their friends had in a hexagon shape. The shapes combined to make displays in the form of a 'Quilt of qualities', 'Quality street' and the 'The stairway of strengths'.

The tessellation of the hexagons symbolises and celebrates the importance of lifelong personal qualities in enabling us to form and maintain friendships as part of a happy and healthy life.'

'She plays with me in the sand and water' – Callum

'I like Elan she plays with me' – Lois

'I just like her' – Meirion

'She always plays with me and Eleanor' – Katy

'She colours with me' – Elliw

'She plays with me' – Gwenlli

Elan
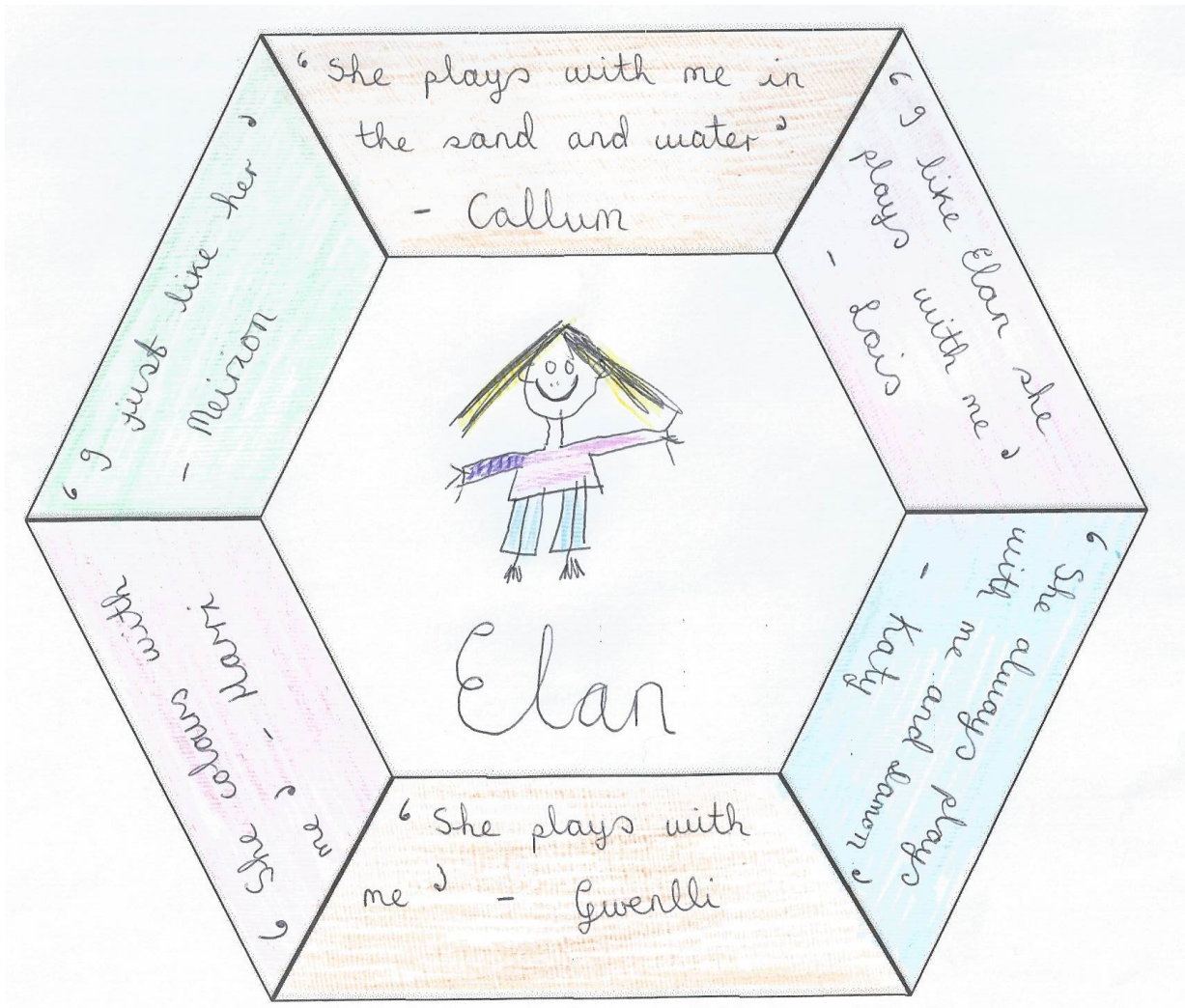
More benefits of the appreciation thinking tool

Learners

You may discover that a learner is gifted or talented in an area you were not aware of. This could inform your programmes for gifted learners.

Parents

This activity sets a positive tone for conversations and reviews with parents that can lead to more creative thinking and problem solving.

Staff and school

This is a useful tool for staff to use themselves as part of team-building activities. It can identify underused or hidden strengths and talents in the staff team and governing body. Used across the school, it can help senior staff to gather information about everyone's values and this can inform a school mission statement.

You can use this thinking tool to collect information about what learners, parents and staff like and admire about the school in preparation for inspections or external meetings.

Top tips

- Five good-quality, strong statements for each element of the **appreciation** thinking tool are usually enough.

- Focus on characteristics rather than on appearance or academic accomplishments.

- Think about the learner's gifts, skills, qualities and talents as well as the things that make you proud to know them.

- Avoid words and phrases such as 'usually', 'is sometimes' and 'can be'. Writing that someone 'can be' caring implies that most of the time they are not.

- Practise different ways of sharing appreciation: most of us are uncomfortable at first when people praise us and are unsure how to react.

- Some learners prefer to read an appreciation than to hear someone saying it to them.

- Increase your vocabulary: try describing famous people as a start. For example, your learners might describe Roald Dahl as 'creative', 'imaginative', 'humorous' and 'inventive'.

Good day – bad day

Why use the good day – bad day thinking tool?

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 What will it take to have more good days
 and less bad days?              ════════▶
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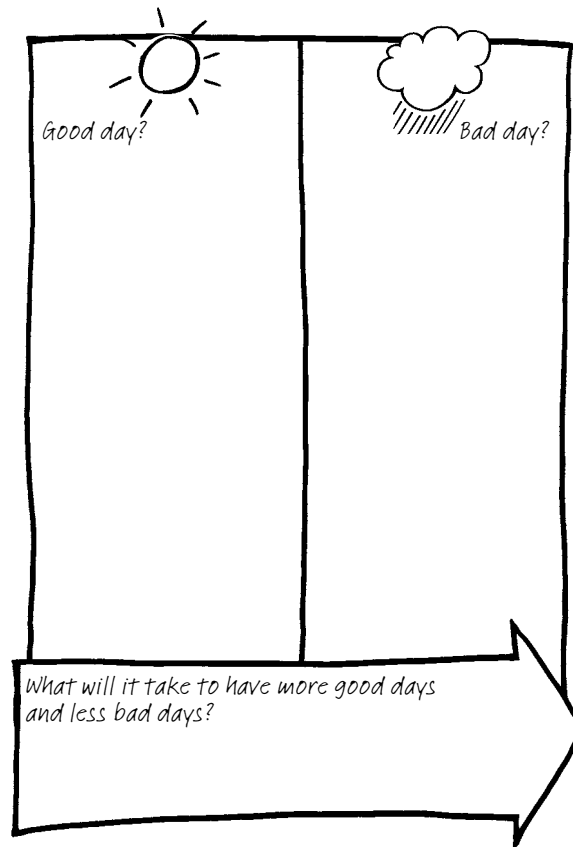
The **good day – bad day** thinking tool lets us find out specifically what makes a good day and a bad day for each learner. This can include information about home, such as liking to share breakfast with an older sibling or not liking being late for the bus, as well as specific information about school or college, such as liking to have a list of every task for the day or feeling anxious when asked to read in front of other learners.

With this information, you can understand more about what is important to the learner, and you can make sure they have exactly the support they need each day in school or college.

You can also use the information to create rules for the whole class that describe what everyone needs to have a good day. You can even extend this to the whole school or college, helping to make it a place where everyone is happy to learn.

How to use the good day – bad day thinking tool

You can think about and gather information about good days and bad days in informal conversations with a learner and with people who know them well. You can also draw on observations of the learner, both in and outside school or college.

Alternatively, you can make this a more structured activity by designing lessons to help learners think about what makes a good day and a bad day.

Breaking a day up into chunks

One approach is to ask the learner to think about their very best day. Break the day into chunks from when they wake in the morning to when they go to sleep at night and go through the day one chunk at a time.

Next ask the learner to think about their worst day, again breaking it into chunks.

Some learners find talking about a bad day difficult – as if they are reliving it – so you might choose instead to think about a good morning followed by a bad morning, then a good lunchtime and a bad lunchtime, and so on.

Ask questions and tease out information. Be prepared for the conversation to meander.

Teasing out information with questions

Questions you could ask include (rephrase them according to the learner):

- what do you do on your favourite day of the week?

- can you tell me about the times you have most fun?

- what are the things that make you feel really good?

- who are you with for each part of the day, or for a particular lesson or activity? A good or a bad day might depend on the people who are around. This information can help you to match learners and staff

- where are you when you do this activity or when this thing happens?

- do you like to be busy or to take life at a slower pace?

- how do you feel about knowing exactly what is going to happen?

Examples of good day – bad day in practice

Primary school

This primary school teacher used the **good day – bad day** thinking tool to begin developing **one-page profiles** with her whole class.

'To set the scene I showed the learners my "little bag". I had secreted inside it a few items that help to make a good day for me.

Before sharing any of the items, we discussed first what a good day is and their perception of what makes a good day. Learners were all able to identify what makes a good day in school: sunny playtimes, lots of friends to play with, getting to play on the field, etc. No real surprises here. We then went on to think about the little things and actions that help to make a good day for them as individuals.

When I shared with the learners my bone china mug and a tea bag, the learners became clearer about the personal element. They know me so well and realised that with a cup of tea Mrs Goodwin is a happy bunny. I then showed the class two photographs and some of the learners identified that the two people in the photos were my children. I then asked the learners 'why had I included photos of my children?' There were a range of answers but after careful questioning, the most important fact is that as they both live in London, I have to speak to them both each day, and that it is not negotiable and is very important to me. There is no need for a long chat: I just need to hear their voices. The last two items came as no surprise to the learners: lipstick and perfume.

The next stage was for the learners to share with their talking partners five things that were important to them. One little girl, Rhiannon, said "I need to pick Daddy's tie in the morning." After further questioning, the hidden meaning behind this simple act became clear – this meant that she was up early enough to have a chat with Daddy, choose his tie and see him off to work.

Learners then progressed on to individual work where they compiled their own **good day – bad day** pages. This work fed into their own **one-page profiles**.'

Molly's good day

- Mum drops me off in the morning.
- I say a proper goodbye to mum and dad in the morning, have a hug and kiss.
- I get to walk for at least 5 minutes to school.
- Have lessons that let you be creative and take a chance – experiment and it doesn't matter if you get it wrong.
- Lots of laughing with my friends.
- Our 'huddle' all play together.
- Mum or dad picks me up at the end of the day.
- I have a job from the teacher with a friend.
- Mum or dad are at home when I get back from school.
- We do writing and drawing, posters are best.
- Reading good adventure books.
- I walk part of the way home after school.

Molly's bad day

- Mum has to go to work early and can't take me to school.
- I see on the board that there is something I don't like.
- A teacher is stressed and shouty.
- A teacher shouts at someone, makes me feel stressed and uncomfortable.
- Feel like I've done something bad like not done homework or filled in reading record.
- The teacher does check-ups on reading records – makes me worried.
- My work gets shown to the class without asking.
- Have to sit for a long time in assembly.
- We don't get a break or it's shorter.
- I feel 'off target' – I've not done what someone expected of me or I've done it wrong.
- A test is sprung on you – don't get any warning.
- The teacher reads out test results.

Further education

Katy is in her second year at college studying health and social care. She prepared what makes a good day and a bad day for her in college, ready for her person-centred review. This helped her to think about things that were both important to her, e.g. having time to be with her friends, and the best ways to support her, e.g. lecturers making sure that they give her information in small bites so that she can easily follow what needs to be done and doesn't become overwhelmed.

Katy's good day	Katy's bad day
The taxi gets me to college in time to spend some time with my friends before class.	Tuesday as it is a full day for me.
Kirsty is waiting for me when we arrive at college.	Lecturer throws out too much information and I can't keep up.
All my friends, especially Angharad, are in college.	Lecturers don't explain exactly what they want me to do and then I worry.
Mondays and Fridays are good as I have free time to catch up at my own pace.	When lessons get cancelled and I have to wait around for the taxi on my own.
Studying nutrition and equal rights, I really enjoy those subjects.	
I have the right support from lecturers and they go at the right pace for me.	

More benefits of the good day – bad day thinking tool

Learners

You can use the information to start developing a **one-page profile**. Thinking like this can help learners understand what is important to them in education, and how they can be a better learner. Learners can appreciate what makes a good day and a bad day for the people around them.

Parents

Parents may identify ways they can help their child to have more good days.

Staff

Staff can use this thinking tool to think about ways of changing the room, day or lessons to benefit a whole class or group. If staff use this thinking tool themselves, it provides great information to help them to support each other.

The whole school or college

The school can use the information to develop strategies. For example, if many learners said that bad days related to break times, organising structured games or clubs might be a useful response. Or if a good day happened when learners were outside, the school could look for more ways to do this.

This thinking tool is a useful way to assess how best to run extracurricular activities in colleges.

Top tips

- If the learner finds it hard to think about what makes a good or bad day, ask them to describe a day last week that was really good or really bad and then find out why. If the learner has not had good days for some time, ask them about a day from their past.

- If the learner can't tell you themselves, then identify family, friends and staff whose opinion you can ask – you could use their **relationship circle** to do this.

- Make sure that the focus is on the learner. What makes a good day or bad day for them, not for the staff supporting them?

- Write detailed and specific statements and avoid generalisations such as 'receiving the support I need'. What does this support look like and who is involved?

- Don't see bad days as something that can't be fixed. What can you do to make sure that the learner has more good days and fewer bad days? Make sure you agree SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) actions.

- The information you gather by using the **good day – bad day** thinking tool may be useful when you use other thinking tools. For example, you may discover things about the learner's communication that you could add to their **communication chart**. Or you may find out about their gifts and be able to add them to the appreciation section of their **one-page profile**.
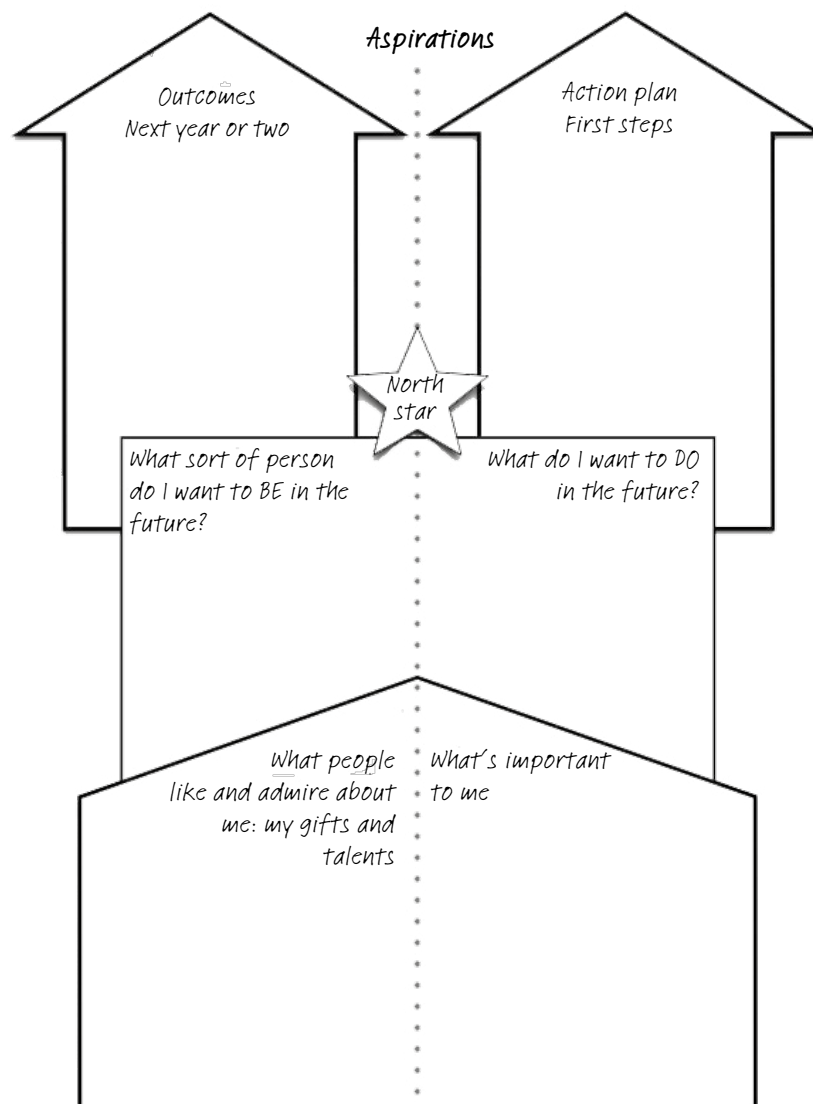
Aspirations

Why use the aspirations thinking tool?

Learners are often asked what they want to be when they grow up, or what career they would like to pursue. We much less often ask them what kind of person they would like to be when they are older. The **aspirations** thinking tool helps learners to think about their dreams, personality, needs, preferences and aspirations, and to consider their future with insight and understanding.

With this knowledge, you can nurture and support learners' qualities and dreams. With your support, learners can begin to plan and take steps to make their aspirations a reality, both in the short and the long term.

How to use the aspirations thinking tool

Aspirations

Outcomes
Next year or two

Action plan
First steps

North
star

What sort of person do I want to BE in the future?

What do I want to DO in the future?

What people like and admire about me: my gifts and talents

What's important to me

A learner's aspirations are an important part of who they are, so this thinking tool is extremely useful as you develop **one-page profiles** or prepare for person-centred reviews.

You may use the **aspirations** thinking tool with an individual learner (you can see an example of this below) or with a group. The first thing to do when thinking about aspirations is to find out what people like and admire about the learner and what is important to them. If the learner already has a **one-page profile**, this information will be recorded there. If the learner does not have a **one-page profile**, you can use the **aspirations** thinking tool to help you develop it.

When you ask the learner about the kind of person they would like to be, it can be helpful to ask them to think about people in their life who they admire. This can help them to identify qualities they would like to nurture in themselves.

You can talk to the learner themselves, as well as to other learners and parents and your colleagues, to find out what they admire about the learner and what they see as their strengths.
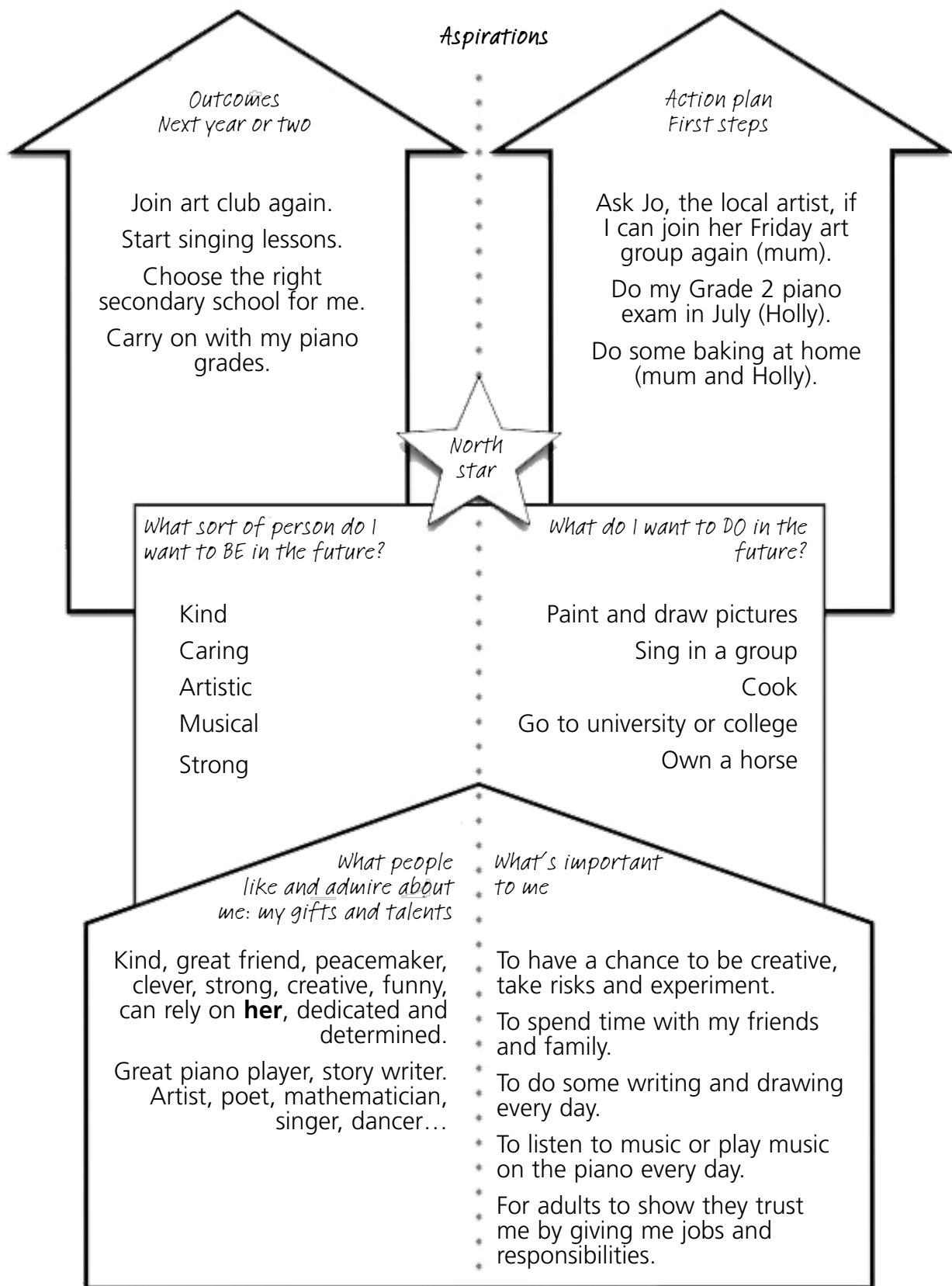
Link all the information you gather, weaving what is important to the learner and their strengths together to describe their aspirations. You can identify short- and long-term actions with the learner and those around them, setting out who can support the actions or be responsible for making them happen.

Examples of the aspirations thinking tool in practice

Molly's aspirations

Molly is in Year 5, and she and her teacher used the **aspirations** thinking tool to help her identify areas in her life where other people can support and encourage her, and to make plans that she can work towards.

There is a common thread of creativity and self-expression running through Molly's **aspirations** thinking tool, and she and her teacher have identified opportunities to encourage this in music and art, which are both areas that are important to Holly.

Aspirations

Outcomes
Next year or two

Join art club again.

Start singing lessons.

Choose the right secondary school for me.

Carry on with my piano grades.

Action plan
First steps

Ask Jo, the local artist, if I can join her Friday art group again (mum).

Do my Grade 2 piano exam in July (Holly).

Do some baking at home (mum and Holly).

North star

What sort of person do I want to BE in the future?

Kind

Caring

Artistic

Musical

Strong

What do I want to DO in the future?

Paint and draw pictures

Sing in a group

Cook

Go to university or college

Own a horse

What people like and admire about me: my gifts and talents

Kind, great friend, peacemaker, clever, strong, creative, funny, can rely on **her**, dedicated and determined.

Great piano player, story writer. Artist, poet, mathematician, singer, dancer…

What's important to me

To have a chance to be creative, take risks and experiment.

To spend time with my friends and family.

To do some writing and drawing every day.

To listen to music or play music on the piano every day.

For adults to show they trust me by giving me jobs and responsibilities.

Jake's aspirations story

Jake is seven years old and his review this year is an important one because he is ready to move on from his current educational placement. Decisions need to be made about his future primary education.

Jake's **one-page profile** tells us that his family and the staff at school admire and like his outgoing and friendly nature, that he encourages others to join in, leads in play and always has a smile on his face. The most important things to Jake are playing with his friends, playtime at school and going out on his bike. We know that it is important for Jake to be given time to process what he hears, to be supported with his work through being given step-by-step instructions and work he feels he can do. He finds understanding the concept of time hard and it works best for him when language is related to the here and now.

Jake's review started by talking through his **one-page profile** and checking that it gave a good picture of Jake. The conversation moved on to Jake's aspirations for the future, something that had never been talked about before. Jake's mum said she wanted him to be happy and safe and Jake's nan added that she wanted him to always be the lovely person he is now. Jake had been asked about what he wanted for the future but it was very difficult for him to understand the concept.

Because of Nan's comment we went back to Jake's **one-page profile**. What could the person he is now tell us about future aspirations for Jake? We looked at what we like and admire about him and talked about the kind of person he would want to be in the future, rather than focusing on what he would do. Looking at what was important to Jake would also help in mapping future aspirations for him.

We agreed that Jake would want to be 'a friend to everyone', and to have opportunities for social interaction and busy playtimes with a wide social circle. He would be a great candidate for buddying up with some of the younger learners, and would spot when someone needed to be helped to get involved. He would be a good ambassador for school and could welcome visitors with his ready and friendly smile.

The discussion then turned to what educational setting could provide Jake with the opportunities to be the person we thought he aspired to be. Prior to the meeting, Jake's mum was considering a small special school for learners with moderate learning difficulties that provided outstanding support, particularly for learners who have autistic spectrum disorders/social communication difficulties.

However, after thinking about Jake's aspirations, we felt maybe this wasn't the best provision for him. The discussion turned to supported provision within a large mainstream school where Jake would be part of a much wider social group. He could have the busy playtimes he loved with lots of friends to play with and the things that are important for supporting Jake could be put in place in a smaller class with a specialist teacher.

On paper, Jake's attainments pointed us in the direction of an educational provision based purely on what was important **for** Jake rather than **to** him. Had Jake's review not been person-centred, we could easily have missed the opportunity to provide an educational setting that would better enable him to be the person that we like and admire.

More benefits of the aspirations thinking tool

Learners

Using this thinking tool demonstrates to learners that some of the things others like and admire about them are qualities they aspire to have. This thinking tool also encourages learners to think not only about what career they would like to have, but also what kind of person they would like to be.

Staff and parents

This thinking tool enables adults in the learner's life to identify opportunities to nurture the learner's strengths, and find ways for the learner to use their strengths in work experience and in future roles.

Top tip

- It's important to recognise the difference between what a person wants to do and the kind of person they would like to be. However, the two are closely connected and you also need to identify the links between them.

  For example, if a learner is described as kind and says that helping others is important to them, maybe key members of staff can nurture this quality and aspiration. You can identify opportunities for the learner to care for younger learners, older people in the community, or animals, depending on the learner's interests.

What's working and not working

Why use the what's working and not working thinking tool?

This thinking tool is a great way to gather from everyone who knows a learner their views about what's working for the learner at school or college and what needs to be different. The information you generate with this thinking tool can be extremely useful for your person-centred planning with the learner.

The learner is always at the centre of your thinking, and the information you gather gives you a snapshot of how things are now for them. Using this thinking tool gives you an excellent opportunity to acknowledge what is working well for the learner, and a clear way of highlighting what needs to be different and what actions you will take.

Sometimes people think 'not working' means they are doing something wrong or failing, but this is not the case. 'Not working' is designed to identify those things that need to change, or that have been tried and were not suitable for the learner.

How to use the what's working and not working thinking tool
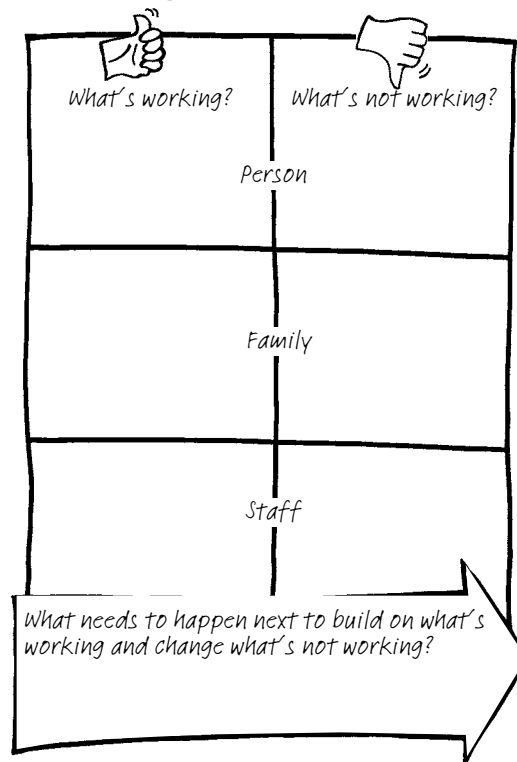
This person-centred thinking tool is most effective when everyone works together. You can capture the perspective of everyone involved and decide on action as a group.

You can use this thinking tool with groups or with individuals. It is a useful activity for class or form time to help learners think about their school or college life and their performance.

If you are using this thinking tool with an individual learner, ask them who they want to involve, e.g. family and staff members. The learner may need some support before you start using the thinking tool in order to think things through from their perspective.

Planning for change

You can use **what's working and not working** within a class or group to identify and address issues and plan for change.

One way to do this is to give each member of the class two red cards and two green cards. Ask the learners to write two things that are working about their class on the green cards, and then two things that are not working about their class on the red cards. Give learners explicit instructions not to mention other individuals, but to write about their experience as a whole. Then cluster all the cards into themes and name each theme. Once the theme is named, you can think together about how to address the issue.

Open, honest and productive meetings

If you are facilitating a meeting, create an atmosphere in which everyone feels they can be honest and can express how they are feeling. You may find it useful to follow these three core negotiating principles.

1. Make sure everyone is listened to, e.g. by using rounds.

2. Start with common ground, and record all perspectives.

3. Be unconditionally constructive and don't take sides.

When the meeting is about a learner, always start by looking at the situation from the learner's perspective and find out what they want to happen. If you are making your best guesses on behalf of a learner, always check out your assumptions with people who know the learner well before taking action. Develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) actions that will retain what is working and change what is not working.

Example of what's working and not working in practice

Jill is the additional needs coordinator at a mainstream secondary school. She describes how they use the **what's working and not working** thinking tool when they create **one-page profiles** for learners.

'The **what's working and not working** tool is an excellent way to gather the thoughts and concerns of the learner, parent and the school, and we can use it as part of the review meeting process.

At the meeting we explain the tool and, if possible, the learner starts with what is working well at school. They can focus on their favourite lesson and what is working, perhaps explaining what the teachers do in these lessons that they feel helps their learning.

We try to encourage the learner to have their say and allow them to formulate their own ideas without interruption from the parents. We remind everyone in the nicest possible way that they will get their chance to give their opinion. We try not to focus on what is not working, but rather on what needs to change so that things can work as well in other parts of the learner's life.

The **what's working and not working** tool takes different perspectives into account and the clear sections focus on the person who is talking. We formulate action plans and identify the person who is responsible for each action, plus the date by which it is to be achieved.

The actions are not always things the school needs to do; responsibility ownership can be placed with the learner and parents and other people where appropriate. Some of the actions can be achieved very quickly, which is excellent as it means the learner and their family will have more faith in the process.

We can also use this thinking tool when we review a **one-page profile**, by which time all parties are more familiar with the format of the meeting.'

William attends a specialist provision for learners with autism, and has a 52-week placement. This example of what's working and not working from different perspectives is taken from his person-centred review. Actions from this included developing a specific and detailed transition plan to support his move into supported living. This transition plan detailed information about what was important to William, the best way to support him, information about how to support his communication, and how to involve him in choosing his new provision and the support staff that would be working with him.

What's working	What is not working
William	**William**
Mum, Dad and sometimes Alan coming to see me on a regular basis and sometimes going out for tea with one of the support staff coming along. Trying out new things, especially bouncing on the trampoline, which I now really enjoy. Having activities planned. Going to places I know well, especially Llandudno with Tony. He knows me well and knows what I like. I go most Thursdays after school on the train. Working on the computer at school.	When I do not know or understand what is likely to happen next. Not knowing what is expected of me. Being in an environment that is not familiar and too busy.
Family	**Family**
Having regular contact and access to school. Phone calls home to update us on the activities William has been doing and trips he has been on. The parent login of the school website so we can see what William has been doing.	We are very happy with how William is supported currently, but are anxious for this to be transposed into the supported living arrangement for the future.

Local authority	Local authority
Current contact works well, especially when William's parents visit him at school.	When William goes for family visits he struggles with his personal hygiene routines.
William's community access has increased with community activities now being very varied and meaningful.	When William doesn't want to go somewhere he will sit on the floor and not move.
School	**School**
Having a structured activity plan.	William doesn't like being on his own for long periods of time.
Being encouraged to participate in new activities.	Having to spend longer periods at his desk.
Staff know how best to support all my activities and how to keep William safe.	Going to places with too much noise and too many people.
William seeing his family on regular visits.	
Good relationship between support staff and family.	
Being with other learners who have similar interests to William.	

More benefits of what's working and not working

Learners

Learners can use the **what's working and not working** thinking tool alongside their **one-page profile** to agree actions. This can work well, for example, in individual time with a teacher or lecturer.

Where a learner has additional provision in school, you can assess how well it is supporting them by using this thinking tool in termly individual education plan reviews. You can use this thinking tool to gain an understanding of a learner's perspective if they are distressed in school or college, and develop a targeted plan to support them.

You can find out what needs to be put in place as learners make the transition from one class or key stage to another, from one school to another, or from school to college.

Parents

Use the thinking tool as a way to consult with parents about what they think is currently working and not working, and plan actions with them to address this.

Staff and school or college

Suggest the school or student council uses the thinking tool to reflect on issues and to gather learners' views, e.g. on the school development plan. The staff can come together and use the thinking tool for this too. It is a useful way to reflect on your organisation's mission and values, and how you are implementing them.

You can use this thinking tool in staff meetings to look collectively and from different perspectives at what's working and not working about a situation or issue. It is also a useful thinking tool in one-to-one appraisals.

Top tips

- If you use this thinking tool with a staff team, make sure as many members of the team are involved as possible so everyone's perspectives are heard. You need to think about how to get other people's perspectives, or how you will check out your best guesses at their perspectives with them.

- Identify which are the most important things that are not working. Start developing an action plan with these so you address the highest priority areas first. You could ask people to vote for their priorities.

- Make sure you look at things that are working that need actions to keep them happening.

- Remember that the other person-centred thinking tools can help you to change what is not working.

Communication charts

Why use communication charts?

We all communicate in a variety of ways and **communication charts** are a simple but powerful tool to discover and record how a learner communicates through their actions as well as their words.

Through using this thinking tool you can listen to learners, no matter how they communicate, and your management strategies will have a far greater success rate because you can focus on changing the right thing, whether it relates to what is happening or the learner's perception of it.

You will also be able to ensure that everyone who works with a learner gets to know them and responds consistently to their communications.

You can use a **communication chart** to help you to understand how any learner is communicating. For example, it might be useful to know that when one learner sits quietly in the corner looking at a book, they are happy, but another is feeling left out. For a young person moving into college, it would be useful for staff to get to know them and be able to recognise, for example, when they are feeling anxious or frustrated, and the best ways to support them with this.

Most often, staff use **communication charts** to help understand what a learner who finds it hard to communicate verbally is telling them. There are two types of **communication charts**: 'What am I communicating to you?' and 'What are you communicating to me?' The first is a clear, powerful description of how the learner communicates. In the second, instead of recording what the learner does, we record what we are trying to communicate to them, and then what we are encouraging them to do.

How to use communication charts

First you need to know about the people who matter to the learner, as they will have insights into the way that learner best communicates. If the learner has one, you can look at their **relationship circle** to decide who to involve in developing their **communication chart**.

Using the 'What am I communicating to you?' communication chart

On this first **communication chart**, begin with the second and third columns. Once you have completed the second and third columns, add information to the first and fourth columns.

At this time: This describes the context – what is happening in the environment or what has just happened ('the trigger').
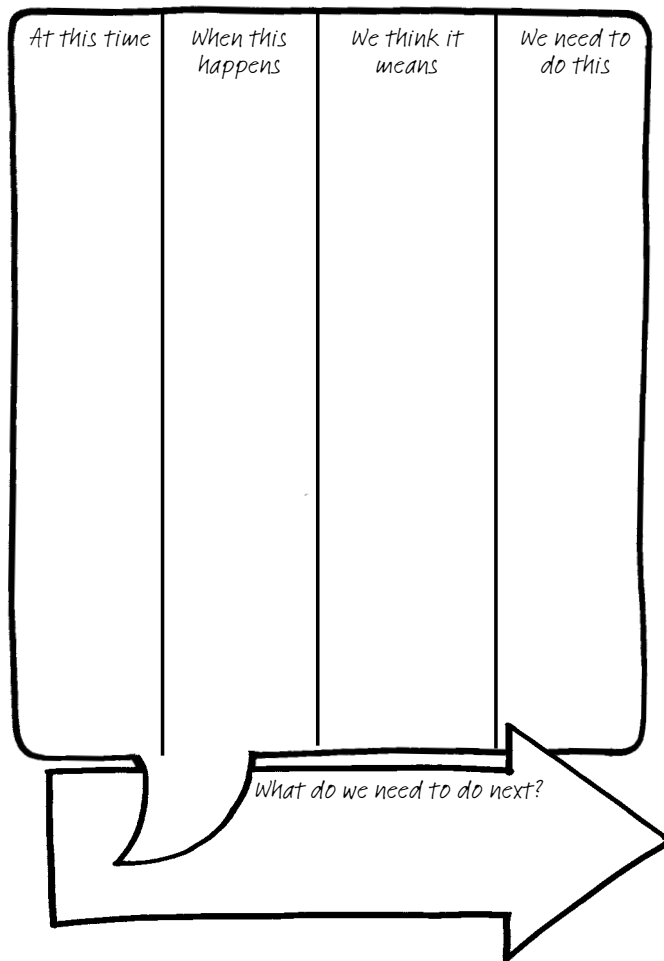
When this happens: This describes the learner's behaviour – what other people can see or hear.

We think it means: This describes what you think the behaviour means the learner may be thinking or feeling.

We need to do this: This describes what others should do or not do in response.

At this time	When this happens	We think it means	We need to do this

What do we need to do next?

Using the 'What are you communicating to me?' communication chart

On the second **communication chart**, work from left to right.

We want to tell: Here you describe what you want to tell the learner about, e.g. that an activity is coming to an end.

To do this we: Here you describe **how** you tell the learner. For example, perhaps you tell them that the activity is coming to an end and what you will be doing next.

Helped and supported by: This element describes the other communication aids you can use to support the learner's understanding, such as traffic light cards or widget symbols.

We want to tell	To do this we	Helped/supported by

What do we need to do next?

Here are some examples from William's communication chart.

What do we want to tell William?	To do this	Supported by
That it is mealtime.	Make sure that William is looking at you and say the word 'breakfast', 'lunch' or 'dinner'.	Showing William his plate.
That it is time to go.	Make sure that William is looking at you and say the word 'go'.	Showing William the green traffic light symbol.
That it is time for a bath	Make sure that William is looking at you and say the word 'bath'.	Supporting William to put his dressing gown on.
That he needs to choose an activity.	Make sure that William is looking at you and say the word 'choose'.	Showing William what he can choose from, giving no more than two choices. You can use objects of reference or pictures to do this.

Examples of communication charts in practice

The Assessment Centre

The Assessment Centre in Wrexham is a highly specialised resource centre that provides placements for 3 to 7-year-olds. The centre assesses learners' additional learning needs while developing their learning skills through a suitable differentiated Foundation Phase curriculum.

Communication charts have become a key part of the assessment process with the learners and their families. Key workers capture how best to respond to a learner's various means of communication. This begins with asking parents what they think their child is communicating when they see certain behaviours and what the best way of responding is.

Communication charts can be a vital resource for teaching staff to help them support the learners they are working with; frustration and upset from the learner can be avoided if the adult knows what they are communicating and the best way to respond to this. The charts are shared with the wider team so that any adult learns from the in-depth knowledge and understanding of those who know the learner well.

Max's communication chart

At this time	When this happens	We think it means	We need to do this
Playtimes	He looks back at adult repeatedly	He doesn't want to play independently	Keep hold of his hand unless he asks. Use cards to enable him to show if he is happy or sad with what is happening.
Activity time	Repeating phrases from TV programme or adult phrases	He wants to socialise with the person	Encourage socialisation by modelling appropriately
Lunchtimes	His 1:1 is not there and he looks to another adult or holds out his hand to them	He needs adult support because he is feeling anxious	Make sure he knows who the adult is that will be looking after him
Changes in routine	Asking consistently where he is going	Too much choice, he struggles to make a decision as to where to go	Provide an activity board so he can choose between two activities
Continuous provision	Runs around excitedly on carpet	He doesn't know what is expected of him	Find him a place to sit next to an adult
Lunchtime in the hall	Wandering around looking unsure	Anxious about where he is going	Ensure he is informed in advance with pictorial timetable about any changes in routine
Any time	Dancing on the spot	He needs the toilet	Ensure toilet door is not closed
Toilet time and potentially new environment	Repeating 'no hand dryers'	He has a big fear of hand dryers	Turn hand dryers off completely at the wall, show him this and allow him to observe other children going in and trying to use them

More benefits of communication charts

Learners

Learners' behaviour is understood as communication, and staff can support them far more effectively. **Communication charts** let learners share what works best for them when they feel upset or angry. New and supply staff can use the information immediately to give support with insight and understanding. Other learners can also use the information on the **communication chart** to build better relationships, as well as an understanding that everyone is different and communicates in a variety of ways.

Parents

Parents can share the insights they have about their child's communication strategies and know that they will be understood and shared.

Staff and school or college

The day is smoother: staff are more aware of when learners feel anxious or upset, and can respond promptly and appropriately.

Top tips

- Include the date when the **communication chart** was developed, and when you are going to review and update it.

- Where people are unsure or disagree, think about how you can check out the information, e.g. through using **learning logs**.

- Be as clear and specific as possible – colleagues should know exactly how they need to respond and how to communicate with the learner.

- Once you have completed the **communication chart**, see if there is information to add to the learner's **one-page profile**.

- Doing the **communication chart** may give you information about the best people to support the learner.

- Make sure you have a way for everyone who is involved in the learner's life to see and use the **communication chart**.

- Add more information to the **communication chart** as you get to know the learner better and observe behaviours you didn't originally see.

Decision-making profiles and agreements

Why use the decision-making thinking tools?

The **decision-making** thinking tool lets you understand and record the best ways to support a learner as they make decisions. It creates a clear picture of how a learner makes decisions, the range of decisions they make, and what information and support they need. This will ensure that you do not under- or over-support the learner.

How to use the decision-making thinking tools

The **decision-making** thinking tool has two parts: the **decision-making profile**, which shares the learner's preferences in decision making; and the **decision-making agreement**, which specifies the important decisions the learner needs to make and how they want to be supported as they make them.

You can gather the information you need for these thinking tools through conversations and by understanding the learner's communication.

Decision-making profile

This is how I like information presented to me	This is how to present choices to me	This is how you help me understand the information being presented	These are the best times to ask me to make a decision	This is when it is not a good time to ask me to make a decision

Start with the **decision-making profile**. Look at the information you have about the learner, e.g. on their **one-page profile** and **communication chart**. What do they tell you about the best times and ways to support the learner to make decisions?

Talk to the learner and those who know them well to check out and add to this information. It may help to think back to an important decision and the support the learner received. What worked and did not work for them as they made this decision?

Decision-making agreement

Important decisions in my life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision?

Once you have completed the profile, move on to the **decision-making agreement**. Again, look at the learner's **one-page profile** and **communication chart**, and look at information gathered using **good day – bad day** too; these thinking tools will help you and the learner to think together about the important decisions in the learner's life.

Once you have listed the decisions, look at the process for making that decision, and the support the learner needs to be at the centre of their decision making.

Examples of the decision-making thinking tool in practice

Thomas' decision-making agreement

Decisions in Thomas' life	How to involve Thomas and who can help	Who makes the final decision
What Thomas will do when he leaves school.	Understand what is important to Thomas, the things he enjoys doing and the types of people he likes to be around. Thomas' mum, dad, teacher and teaching assistant can help with this information. Take Thomas to different daytime activities, providers, colleges and community activities. Thomas' support worker and careers advisor can help. Take photographs of Thomas doing different activities. Whoever supports him in these visits to take photos. Use **learning logs** to monitor how he reacts in the different places. Person who supports him in the visits to monitor. Use Talking Mats with Thomas to find out what he liked and didn't like. We know it is best to do this with different people in different places to get consistent information from Thomas. Use this information to develop a 'perfect week' to present to the panel.	Thomas will decide what he would like to do, but the funding panel will make the final decision as to what will be funded.

Thomas' decision-making profile

How Thomas likes to get information	How to present choice to Thomas	Ways you can help Thomas to understand	When it is a good time to ask Thomas to make a decision	When it is not a good time to ask Thomas to make a decision
Speak to Thomas to give him the information he needs, use photographs and widget symbols.	Using clear photographs and Talking Mats so that Thomas can put the picture of the thing he chooses under the happy face.	Give Thomas time to process what you are asking him to choose. Test that Thomas is not giving you the answer he thinks you want by repeating the Talking Mat with other people in different places.	In the afternoon, after lunch. When you have informed Thomas that the next thing you are going to do is to ask him to choose. When he is in a quiet environment with no distractions.	When Thomas is under pressure – he will tap his hand on his wheelchair if he is feeling anxious. In the morning, Thomas needs time to warm up. If there is someone new in the room, he will want to meet that person rather than concentrate on what you want him to do.

More benefits of the decision-making thinking tools

Learners

Learners can make well-informed decisions themselves, with support. Learners and staff can use the tools to think about how to build their ability to make decisions and increase their responsibility.

Parents

When parents are involved in a learner's decision making (e.g. parents and teachers), this thinking tool creates clarity about who is involved in decision making and how the final decision is made.

Staff and school

This thinking tool can help schools work out which decisions should be shared with parents, learners and governors, and the processes they will use. Staff teams use this thinking tool to clarify what decisions they can make: what is within their control? Staff teams who need to make decisions use this tool to clarify how the decisions will be made. For example, is this decision to be made by consensus, majority vote, or is it down to the headteacher alone?

Top tips

When you are creating a **decision-making agreement** you need to:

- use strong, positive statements (not 'usually' or 'sometimes')

- use clear, everyday language with no jargon

- include details about how the learner would like information to be presented to them, e.g. audio or pictures.

- add the date that the **decision-making agreement** was completed and who contributed

- add any actions that need to be taken and by whom

- make sure that there is a review date and that someone is responsible for this

- include details about how a learner makes decisions when they are stressed, unwell or in pain.
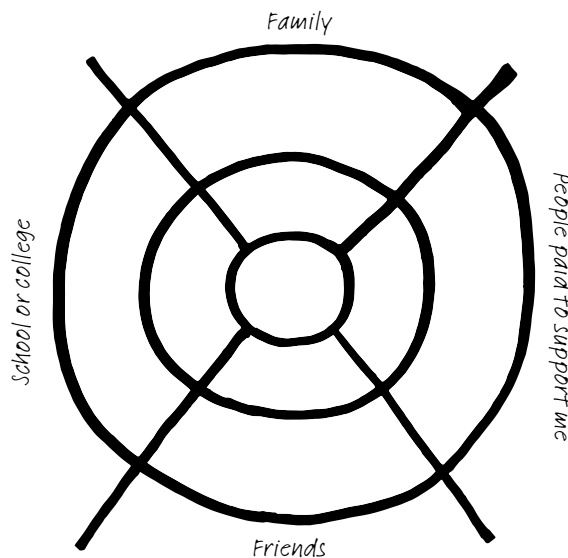
Relationship circle

Why use the relationship circle thinking tool?

A **relationship circle** is a visual summary of the important people in a learner's life. It shows the number, spread and depth of the relationships and is an excellent way to help you and the learner to think about how to strengthen existing relationships and develop new ones.

The **relationship circle** is useful in its own right, and is a key tool when you gather information for a learner's **one-page profile**.

How to use the relationship circle thinking tool

To develop a **relationship circle**, start by writing the name of the learner in the centre of the diagram. Learners can use photos or draw pictures too. Then place the people that they know around them, with the most important people closest to the centre.

You can place people in one of four categories:

• family

• school, college or daytime

• friends

• paid supporters.

When you are helping someone to complete their **relationship circle**, you may find it useful to use prompts to help them to explore their relationships, such as:

- photographs

- social networking sites

- class photos

- address books.

If you are supporting someone who does not use words to speak, use the most appropriate communication methods for them, e.g. pictures and objects.

Family

Family can include any relatives who are a part of someone's life. For example, this could range from Mum who they see every day, to Uncle Joe who they only see once or twice a year. You must also recognise the fact that not all families are close. Each person's perspective and situation is unique.

School, college, work or daytime

Think about where the learner spends their day. Who are the people they spend time with and how well do these people know them? Are there any people that the learner would like to get to know better?
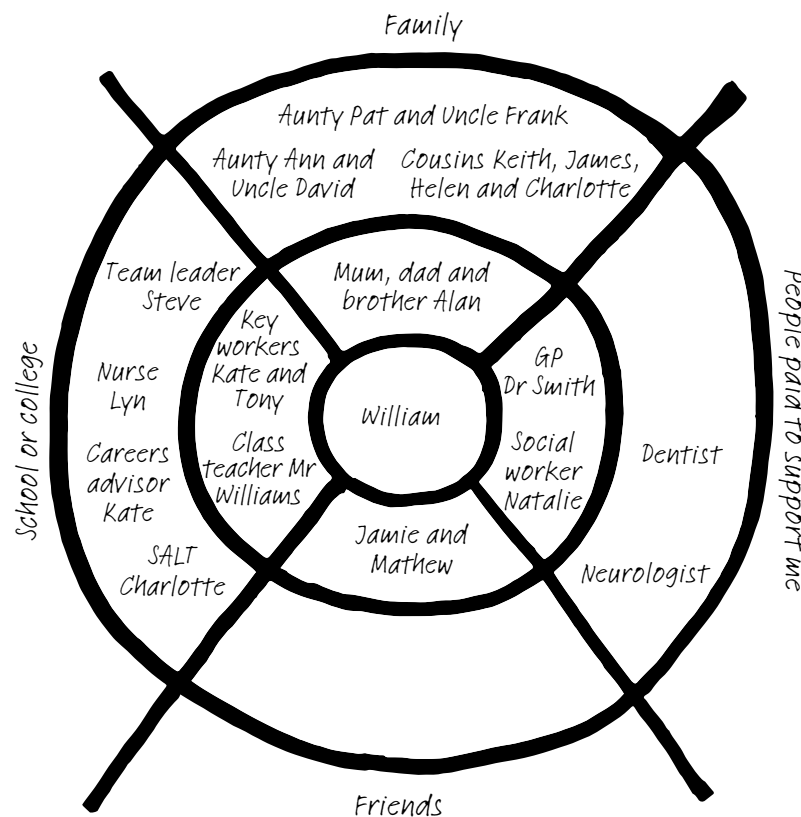
Friends

This category covers anyone that the learner knows and has a relationship with. This could include people that they don't know well but who they see or chat with regularly, like the woman who works at the post office or the man who serves at the school canteen. It might include people that they knew in the past, but with whom they have lost contact.

Paid supporters

Paid supporters include anyone who is paid to be in someone's life such as a support worker, GP or taxi driver. On the Think and Plan website (at www.thinkandplan.com/) there is another version of this thinking tool that lets you map relationships in rows instead of circles.

Examples of relationship circles in practice

This is William's **relationship circle**. It was developed as part of his transition planning to look at who was important to him, and who he might want to keep in contact with once he moved on from college. William's team was also able to identify the skills and qualities of the support staff that were important to him, in order to think about these things when recruiting for new staff when moving into his supported living placement.

Family

Aunty Pat and Uncle Frank

Aunty Ann and Uncle David

Cousins Keith, James, Helen and Charlotte

Team leader Steve

Mum, dad and brother Alan

Key workers Kate and Tony

GP Dr Smith

Nurse Lyn

William

Careers advisor Kate

Class teacher Mr Williams

Social worker Natalie

Dentist

SALT Charlotte

Jamie and Mathew

Neurologist

School or college

People paid to support me

Friends

More benefits of relationship circles

Learners

If a learner needs support, their **relationship circle** can help identify who may be able to offer it.

When you are matching a learner with support, this thinking tool is a vital resource for looking at the relationships that work well and the characteristics of the people they get on with best. You can use this tool together to begin to develop a circle of friends.

Parents

This thinking tool can help parents to understand their child's network of friendships and relationships, and to see how they can support it.

Groups of parents can use this tool to think about how to improve and develop relationships within the school as part of the school development plan.

Staff and school or college

Staff and governors can (separately or together) think about people and relationships that are important for the school or college – e.g. families, parent–teacher association, inspectors, local employers, local community leaders, suppliers, professionals and community teams – and create a relationship map that helps them to see how to improve or extend these relationships.

Governors can use the tool to learn who is important to the school or college; they can map its stakeholders to inform its development plan. The school or college's **relationship circle** can make it clear with whom the school or college should share successes and challenges.

Top tips

- Include the date when the **relationship circle** was created.

- Be clear about who each person is: give their name and state their relationship to the learner.

- If you include people who have not been in someone's life for a while, note how long they have not been around.

- Think about the role each person on the **relationship circle** could have in supporting the learner to achieve the life they want to lead.

- If the learner has very few people in their life, think together about what it would take to make connections and friendships, or deepen existing relationships. Set specific goals to move towards this if this is what the learner wants.

Learning logs

Why use the learning log thinking tool?

A **learning log** helps you continuously to improve the way you deliver learning and support to an individual learner. Through noting information and observations every day, you build a picture of what needs to stay the same and what needs to change.

The **learning log** can help people to understand how best to support a learner each day, and so enhance the learner's opportunities to learn effectively and make the best possible progress.

You can use the **learning log** to create a summary of all the learning information about one learner, including what is important to the learner. This can be extremely useful as you develop or review their **one-page profile**. A **learning log** plays the same role as other daily records, including the home–school book, so you could consider using it instead.

How to use the learning log thinking tool

Date	What did the person do?	Who was there?	What did you learn about what worked well?	What did you learn about what didn't work?

What do we need to keep doing, and what do we need to change?

The headings on the **learning log** make it easy to note your observations about each event in the learner's day. It is important to record what you learned about a situation as well as to describe the events or the learner's behaviour.

As you complete the **learning log**, think about what went well and what you learned for next time. Think too about what didn't go well and what you learned about this for next time.

Examples of learning logs in practice

Learning logs in an early years centre

Wrexham Early Years Centre caters for learners aged between three and four years. The Nursery and Early Years provision are resourced provisions, providing assessment places for learners with identified learning needs. Rachel Costello is a teacher and one of the additional learning needs coordinators. She describes how she has started to use the **learning log** to gather key information about a little boy, Rhys, who attends the setting every morning.

'Rhys' speech is delayed and he mostly uses signs, noises and behaviours to communicate his likes, dislikes and needs. The **learning log** was a great place to begin to gather key learning points from staff about what Rhys' behaviours were telling them, what was working well for him and what needed to change.

This capturing of learning from experiences can inform what we need to do to best support a learner. This is beneficial in the first few weeks of a new term when the learner is new to the setting, and staff are getting to know them and deciding what support to put in place. However, we are constantly learning about people as they change, develop and face new experiences, so the **learning log** is useful to have as an ongoing working document.

At Wrexham Early Years Centre, we find the **learning logs** and the **communication charts** invaluable. There are many learners at our school who are unable to communicate, and the person-centred planning tools allow us to understand and support each learner in a variety of situations.

Each day, we reflect and review each learner's learning by making careful observations, which allow our team to complete the **learning logs** and **communication charts**. This information is shared among teaching practitioners and other professionals.

We receive very positive feedback from parents with regards to the **learning logs** and **communication charts**. The process allows them to share observations made at home, which helps them to feel included in their children's learning. We then share the tools with other practitioners and professionals, and strive to improve how we deliver personalised learning and support for our learners.'

Rhys' learning log

Date	What did the person do?	Who was there?	What did you learn about what worked well?	What did you learn about what didn't work?
24.3.15	Having his lunch	Three other children and the teaching assistant	Sitting with other children he likes. He liked finger food, and enjoyed his meal. Going to sit at his table before the other children.	He tried to put too much food in his mouth, so the teaching assistant tried to move his plate away so he didn't have any more food until he had finished what he had. He became upset at this. Once he had finished his lunch, he wanted to leave the table straight away, and not wait for the other children.

What do we need to keep doing, and what do we need to change?

Keep him on the same table for now.
Find out from home if there are any foods he doesn't like.
Encourage him to wait before he puts more food in his mouth. We could do this verbally; if this doesn't work try a traffic light system. We can try the same to encourage him to stay at the table until everyone has finished.

More benefits of learning logs

Learners

Learners receive more personalised support because staff better understand what they need. Learners can learn more effectively and make the best possible progress because staff can identify how to help them. Learners benefit from positive changes because staff can learn what support is helpful and what needs to be different.

Parents

Parents can add their knowledge to the **learning log** and participate in planning support for their child. Parents can learn what support works well for their child in school or college.

Staff and school or college

Staff may spot patterns in the information gathered that help them better understand how to support a learner. The school or college may identify changes that will help one or many learners to have better support or learning opportunities. Staff can record and share the detailed information they often hold in their heads.

Recording information can help you to remember: creating a **learning log** can help you to draw up or review a **one-page profile**. Governors can draw on the consolidated information gathered from many learners as they work on development plans, e.g. the school development plan.

Top tips

- The **learning log** thinking tool is most useful when learners are doing something new or being supported by new staff.

- Some learners may want to complete their own **learning log** or do this together with you.

- Make sure that there is a regular time for **learning logs** to be reviewed and the information added to the **one-page profile** or other records (e.g. in a regular team meeting).

4 plus 1 tool

Why use the 4 plus 1 tool?

The **4 plus 1 tool** is a really useful way to reflect on a situation or something you have done, whether you are staff or a learner. It asks you to acknowledge what worked well and to share your concerns. More importantly, it looks ahead to what you can do to answer your concerns. Essentially, this thinking tool helps you to learn from experience.

How to use the 4 plus 1 tool

What have we tried?	What have we learned?

What are we pleased about?	What are we concerned about?

What do we need to do next?

If you are using this tool in a group, decide on the best people to invite: who has knowledge and learning about the issue? Make sure that people come prepared to share their knowledge.

One way of using this tool in a group is to write each of the questions on a large sheet of paper and ask people to write down their thoughts under each heading. It's important to make sure that everyone feels comfortable writing; let people know that spelling and grammar don't matter. If someone feels that they can't write, then someone else can write for them.

If the learner is at the meeting, make sure they have the support they need to post their thoughts. If they are not there, you must check out any best guesses that you make on their behalf before taking action. Remember, the learner's point of view is central to all person-centred thinking tools.

What have we tried?

In this section you need to describe exactly what you have tried. Make sure that you give enough details.

What have we learned?

Don't confuse what you have learned with what you are pleased about. Learning is about finding out new information that might be useful in the future.

What are we pleased about?

It's great to share and recognise successes. This section is all about taking time to celebrate achievements and identify what's working. It's also an opportunity to take actions that will safeguard what people are pleased about, particularly if it is an unforeseen consequence of what has been tried.

What are we concerned about?

Sometimes it can be hard for people to find an opportunity to express their worries about a situation. This section of the tool encourages everyone to think about and discuss those things that concern them and identify what changes need to happen.

What do we need to do next?

After you have captured everyone's thoughts, look together at the answers and ask people 'Given what we now know, what do we do next?'
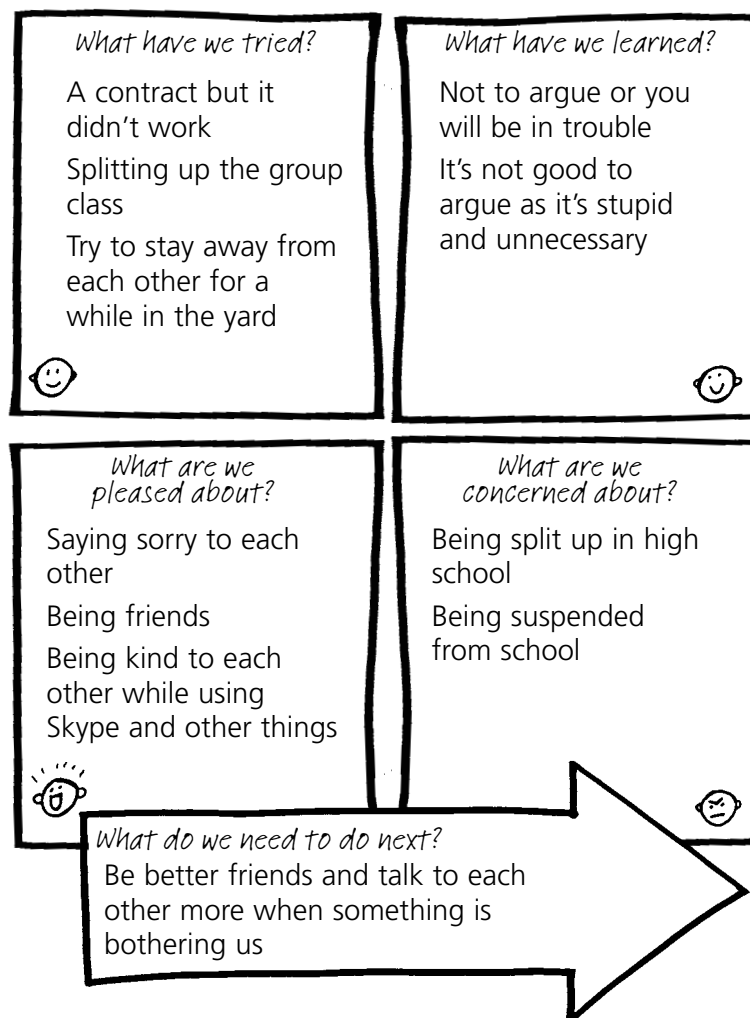
Then develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) actions. Make sure you say who will do what, when, where and how. Ensure that you add what you have learned to the **one-page profile**, person-centred plan or other relevant thinking tool.

Examples of the 4 plus 1 tool in practice

Using 4 plus 1 tool with learners

Sion Owen, from a bilingual north Wales primary school, talks about how he used the **4 plus 1 tool** with a group of learners in his class.

'During the year, a number of Year 5 girls have been arguing with each other on a regular basis. They've fallen out on numerous occasions, including over arguments they had with each other over Skype at home that they continued at school.

What have we tried?

A contract but it didn't work

Splitting up the group class

Try to stay away from each other for a while in the yard

What have we learned?

Not to argue or you will be in trouble

It's not good to argue as it's stupid and unnecessary

What are we pleased about?

Saying sorry to each other

Being friends

Being kind to each other while using Skype and other things

What are we concerned about?

Being split up in high school

Being suspended from school

What do we need to do next?

Be better friends and talk to each other more when something is bothering us

We have tried numerous different strategies to help resolve these issues including Student Assistance Programme sessions and a contract between the girls setting out clear rules to help avoid any more arguments. Although things were quiet for a while, the girls did begin arguing again.

Therefore, we decided to use the **4 plus 1 tool** as a different approach. The girls responded well to it and were able to see exactly what worked and what didn't. They were able to share opinions about what actions to do next and agree the best way to proceed.'

More benefits of the 4 plus 1 tool

Learners

This thinking tool provides a structured way for learners' views to be heard. Learners can:

- identify what they and others have learned from any situation

- recognise and celebrate what has worked well

- see that you are genuinely listening to their concerns

- plan actions to resolve their concerns.

Parents

Parents can clearly see what has been learned in situations involving their child, and what will be done to resolve concerns. Parents can use the thinking tool themselves to reflect on issues relating to their own child. They can also use the tool to contribute to reviews of issues affecting the whole school, perhaps at parents' evenings.

Staff and school or college

Staff can use the thinking tool to measure and analyse the impact of new interventions. Staff and governors can use this thinking tool to ask for feedback from parents, the staff team, classes, year groups, or the whole school or college to help plan initiatives and organisational development plans such as the school development plan.

Staff can reflect on the value of pilot projects and set actions to build on the pilots. Governors can use the thinking tool as a means of reflecting on and learning from compliments and complaints. If the school or college works in partnership with other bodies, this thinking tool is a valuable way to reflect on the process of joint working and to set actions.

Top tips

- This person-centred thinking tool is useful in lots of situations, such as: review meetings, one-to-ones between managers and staff, team meetings and individual work with families.

- The questions are a powerful way to reflect on a particular area of someone's life when they face a specific situation or challenge.

- The tool is also a great way to start meetings and it is an effective use of meeting time, focusing people on useful discussions, problem solving and action.

- Make sure you use what you have learned to update the learner's **one-page profile** or other relevant information.

Summary of person-centred thinking tools

The person-centred thinking tools in this book offer you powerful and flexible ways to work with every learner individually. You can use the thinking tools to get to know and understand your learners well, gathering information systematically and in ways that are easy to share with your colleagues.

With this information you can give your learners the support that is right for them, when they need it. You can observe and measure how effective your support is for each learner, and make changes that you can share with everyone around the learner so that the support you give is always consistent.

Your whole school or college can benefit from these thinking tools as they allow you to gather information from large groups, analyse it and see patterns. Above all, they give you a means to make decisions about what you will do next that are based on evidence, and to continue to test and examine the effects of your approaches so that you continually improve your practice.

More information about person-centred practice

Other free resources from Welsh Government on person-centred practice include the following.

Developing as a person-centred organisation: A self-assessment tool and practical steps for progress
http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/developing-as-a-person-centred-organisation/?lang=en

Person-centred reviews toolkit: a guide for early years, schools and colleges in Wales
http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/person-centred-reviews-toolkit/?lang=en

Organisations that provide information or training on person-centred practice include the following.

Helen Sanderson Associates
http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/readingroom/

Learning Disability Wales
www.ldw.org.uk

Personalising Education
www.personalisingeducation.org/