



# SUPPORT GUIDE:

Supporting learners to complete their vocational profile



# INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to support educators, Careers Leaders, SENDCOs, teaching assistants, and wider support staff in facilitating learner-led vocational profiles with learners with SEND. It provides practical, strengths-based strategies to ensure that young people are meaningfully involved in shaping their vocational journey and future aspirations.

**The aim is simple: to help every learner communicate who they are, what supports them, and what they hope for - in a way that feels safe, empowering, and genuinely useful for transition planning.**

## PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL PROFILES

Vocational profiles are practical tools that help to:

- Celebrate each learner's unique strengths, interests, and aspirations.
- Support personalised career exploration and future planning rooted in learner voice.
- Encourage collaboration between learners, families, educators, and employers in a respectful and empowering way.
- Enable preparation for work experience and transitions, ensuring young people feel understood, supported, and ready.

These profiles can be used across school years, with regular updates at key transition points.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 1. Person-Centred Planning

Focus on the learner's preferences, communication style, lived experiences, and aspirations. Their voice leads the process.

### 2. Strengths-Based Practice

Highlight what the learner can do, enjoys, or is motivated by. Avoid deficit language.

### 3. Collaborative Working

Involve families, trusted adults, support staff, and external partners when helpful and appropriate.

### 4. Accessibility and Flexibility

Adapt the format to suit individual communication styles:

- drawing
- AAC
- symbol-supported text
- scribing
- photos
- low-demand response options

Make the process accessible, not prescriptive.

# PREPARING TO USE THE VOCATIONAL PROFILE

Introduce the purpose of the profile in a way that feels clear and meaningful to the learner.

- Use visual aids, simplified language, examples, or multiple communication methods.
- Create a calm, predictable and supportive environment - avoid rushing or pressuring.
- Allow time for reflection; some learners benefit from completing sections across multiple sessions.
- Use activities such as:
  - strength cards
  - interest inventories
  - storytelling
  - drawing or collage
- Encourage creative expression; there is no "right" way to complete a vocational profile.
- Clarify that learners can skip sections, come back later, or respond in alternative formats.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be patient and responsive to the learner's pace - avoid filling silences too quickly.
- Offer multi-sensory options and assistive technology where it would be helpful.
- Reinforce that the learner's voice matters and will be used to shape their future opportunities.
- Link profile content to real experiences:
  - work experience
  - taster days
  - employer visits
  - careers encounters
- Embed grounding or self-regulation options (e.g., "Take a break whenever you need to").
- Model curiosity and respect - follow the learner's lead.
- Revisit and update the profile regularly; it is a living document, not a one-off task.

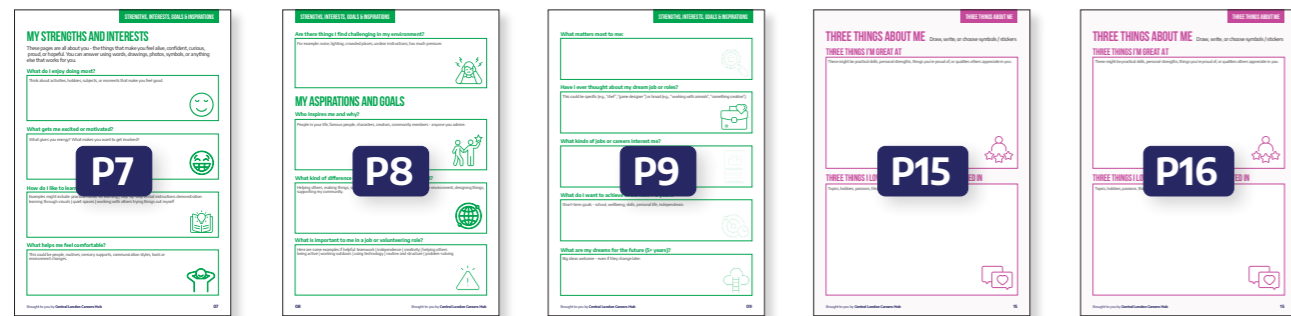
# WORK EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHTS

This page aims to support you use the vocational profile as practical steps for supporting preparing learners for safe, meaningful, and empowering work experience opportunities.

## QUICK NAVIGATION

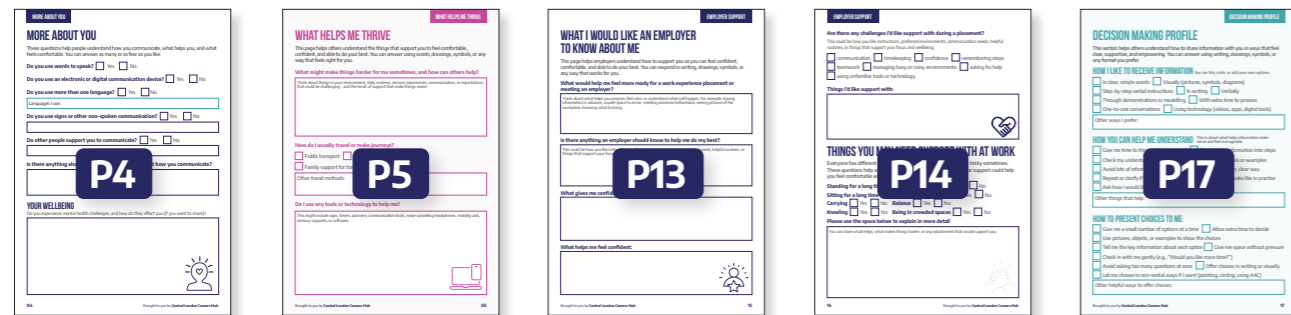
This page helps you to identify which pages in the vocational profile may support gathering the information when planning employer engagement activities.

### Strengths & Interests



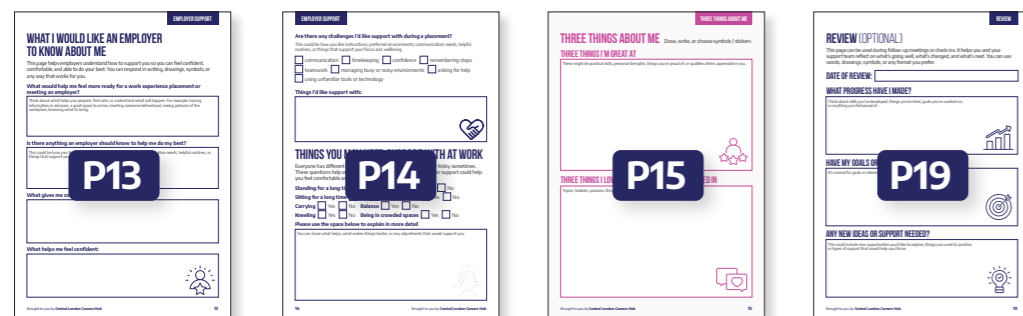
Helps identify tasks the learner enjoys, environments that suit them, interests that can shape placements

### Communication & Sensory Needs



Helps to plan how the information will be introduced, pace of the induction, what resources or tools the learner might need, how the employer can create supportive conditions

### Confidence and emotional readiness



Supports planning pre-placement visits, practice journeys, role play, visual schedules and meeting the employer beforehand if appropriate

## INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYER (optional - also available as a stand alone page)

Share only information that the learner consents to share. This page is available as a separate document to allow you to share with employers.

### Communication preferences

### What helps the learner do their best

### Any access needs or adjustments

### Tasks I enjoy/am confident with

### Early signs the learner may need support

### The kind of feedback that works best

### First-day preferences

### If you have concerns or need advice, please contact:

Named Person  Role

Phone  Email

### How to check understanding

- I prefer step-by-step instructions
- It helps to have things written down
- Modelling the tasks
- Recaps

Any other relevant information

| Profile Section                  | Gatsby Benchmark  | Ofsted Framework  | CDI Framework Area                         | Quality in Careers Standard      | Careers Impact System Theme  | Benefits for School                                   | Benefits for Pupil                          |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Learner Info</b>              | 1. A stable careers programme   | Inclusion – ensuring provision meets diverse learner needs                  | Grow throughout life                       | Personalised guidance planning   | <b>Theme 2: Learner-centred</b><br>2.2 Addressing the needs of all learners<br>2.3 Effective use of recording system   | Informs EHCP/ILP and careers planning                 | Recognises identity and context             |
| <b>Strengths &amp; Interests</b> | 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil<br>4: Linking curriculum learning to careers                                  | Personal development and wellbeing – fostering self-awareness and growth    | Explore possibilities<br>Grow through life | Careers education & guidance     | <b>Theme 2: Learner-centred</b><br>2.2 Addressing the needs of all learners<br>2.5 Learner perception  | Enables tailored curriculum links                     | Builds self-awareness and confidence        |
| <b>Aspirations &amp; Goals</b>   | 1. A stable careers programme<br>3. Addressing the needs of each pupil<br>4. Linking curriculum learning to careers | Achievement – supporting ambition, goal setting and progress                | Manage career                              | Strategic intent and planning    | <b>Theme 1: Vision &amp; intent</b><br>1.4 Strategic Leadership of careers   | Aligns careers programme with learner goals           | Encourages ownership and ambition           |
| <b>Skills &amp; Experience</b>   | 5. Encounters with employers and employees<br>6. Experiences of the workplace                                       | Achievement – enabling development of skills through meaningful experiences | Create opportunities<br>Manage Career      | Careers information & experience | <b>Theme 5: Employer encounters</b><br>5.2. Meaningful encounters with employers<br>5.3 Meaningful experiences of the work place   | Identifies gaps and opportunities for work experience | Validates real-world learning and skills    |
| <b>Support Needs</b>             | 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil<br>6. Experiences of the workplace  | Inclusion – ensuring equitable access and tailored support                  | Balance life and work                      | Inclusive careers provision      | <b>Theme 2: Learner-centred</b><br>2.2 Addressing the needs of all learners  | Supports accessibility and inclusion                  | Promotes self-advocacy and independence     |
| <b>Next Steps &amp; Actions</b>  | 1. A stable careers programme<br>8. Personal Guidance   | Leadership and governance – strategic planning of guidance and next steps   | Manage career                              | Careers advice & guidance        | <b>Theme 1 &amp; 6: Strategic planning &amp; guidance</b><br>1.3 Strategic careers planning<br>6.1 Engagement with personal guidance<br>6.2 Meaningful approach to personal guidance                               | Enables tracking and accountability                   | Provides clarity and direction              |
| <b>Review Notes</b>              | 1. A stable careers programme<br>3. Addressing the needs of each pupil<br>8. Personal Guidance                      | Leadership and governance – continuous improvement and evaluation           | Grow throughout life                       | Continuous improvement           | <b>Theme 1 &amp; 2: Evaluation &amp; planning</b><br>1.1 Strategic careers planning<br>2.1 Development of progressive careers learning journeys<br>2.2 Address the needs of all learners<br>2.5 Learner perception | Supports impact measurement                           | Encourages reflection and progress tracking |



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