



# SUPPORT GUIDE:

Supporting learner to complete  
their vocational profiles



# 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.

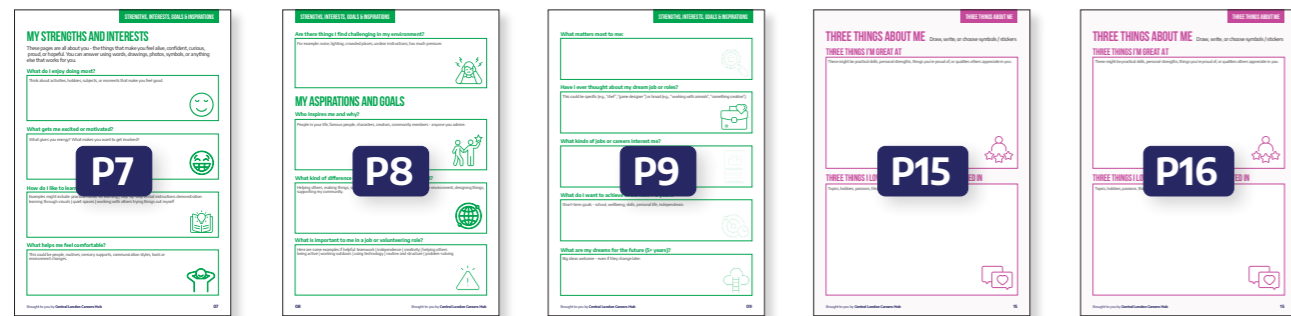
# WORK EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHTS

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

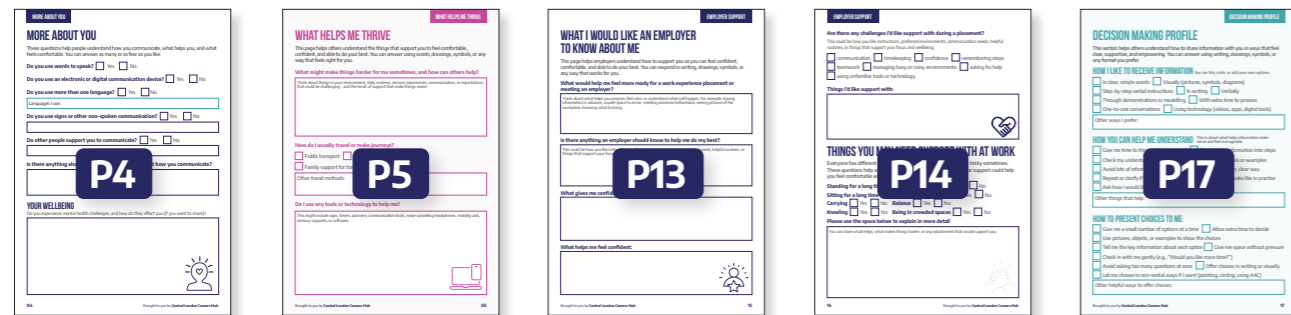
This page helps you to identify which pages in the vocational profile may support gathering the information when planning employer engagement activities.

### Strengths & Interests



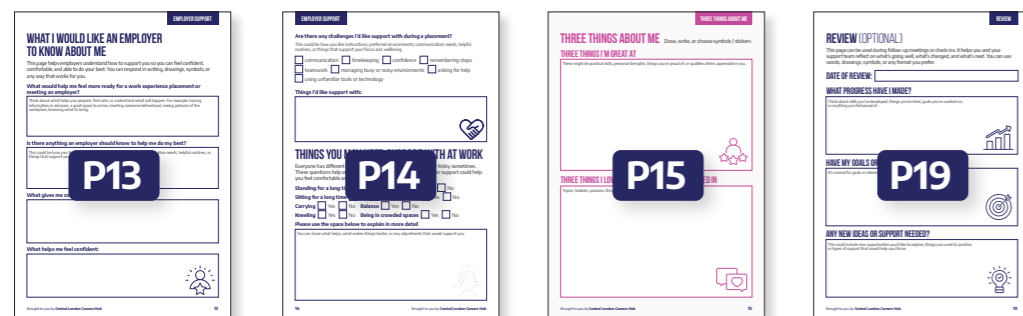
Helps identify tasks the learner enjoys, environments that suit them, interests that can shape placements

### 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> 2.2 Addressing the needs of all learners 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 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers	Personal development and wellbeing – fostering self-awareness and growth	Explore possibilities Grow through life	Careers education & guidance	<b>Theme 2: Learner-centred</b> 2.2 Addressing the needs of all learners 2.5 Learner perception	Enables tailored curriculum links	Builds self-awareness and confidence
<b>Aspirations &amp; Goals</b>	1. A stable careers programme 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil 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> 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 6. Experiences of the workplace	Achievement – enabling development of skills through meaningful experiences	Create opportunities Manage Career	Careers information & experience	<b>Theme 5: Employer encounters</b> 5.2. Meaningful encounters with employers 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 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> 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 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> 1.3 Strategic careers planning 6.1 Engagement with personal guidance 6.2 Meaningful approach to personal guidance	Enables tracking and accountability	Provides clarity and direction
<b>Review Notes</b>	1. A stable careers programme 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil 8. Personal Guidance	Leadership and governance – continuous improvement and evaluation	Grow throughout life	Continuous improvement	<b>Theme 1 &amp; 2: Evaluation &amp; planning</b> 1.1 Strategic careers planning 2.1 Development of progressive careers learning journeys 2.2 Address the needs of all learners 2.5 Learner perception	Supports impact measurement	Encourages reflection and progress tracking



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