Supporting aspirations through Vocational Profiling

Vocational profiling is a powerful tool that helps young people identify their strengths, interests, and aspirations which helps to lay the foundation for meaningful employment and adult life. It is especially valuable for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as it ensures that career planning is tailored to their individual goals and support needs.

A Vocational Profile is a personal-centred, flexible, and live document that captures a young person's:

- Experience
- Skills and abilities
- Interests and aspirations
- Hopes and dreams
- Support needs

It can help them make informed and realistic choices about:

- Employment
- Career development
- Education pathways

Visual Journey of a Vocational Profile



Getting to know the young person

- Build rapport
- Establish communication preferences
- Identify interests, hobbies, aspirations and dream jobs

Collecting/exploring key information

- Identify strengths and support needs
- Consider previous experiences (including education and work/volunteering)

Prefered work settings

- Identify preferences - e.g., indoors or outdoors?
- Quiet or noisy?
- Working alone or in a team?



Identifying support requirements

- Completion of Support Profile (how best to support me)
- Identify potential barriers (e.g., travel)
- Discuss possible assistive technology

Creating the Vocational Profile

- Summarise findings
- With permission share with practitioners, employer, families and support networks

Ongoing review - a live document

- Update as the young person grows and gains different experiences (good or bad!)
- Carry the profile forward at key transition points

Vocational Profiling and transition planning

A Vocational Profile can also be effectively used at key transition stages within education. This is particularly useful for young people, including those with additional needs or disabilities in planning their educational and vocational pathways.

Responses provided within a Vocational Profile can also be integrated into transition planning. This helps to facilitate adjustments to:



Post-16 education and training



Community living



Employment

As a person-centred document, a Vocational Profile belongs to the young person and should therefore travel with them when transitioning between settings or leaving education, supporting them through key milestones and into adulthood.

For those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a Vocational Profile can reflect the young person's voice and evolving goals, whilst providing practitioners with a shared understanding of the young person to coordinate support effectively.

A Vocational Profile is therefore the ideal tool to help in the planning and writing of Preparing for Adult EHCP outcomes with a focus on "Higher Education and/or employment"

How parents and carers can support with Vocational Profiling

Parents and carers can play a key role by encouraging conversations about aspirations and helping young people explore what they enjoy and excel at.

One way to start is by asking the young person's school or college whether they offer vocational profiling as part of their careers or transition planning

To support this, Targeted Employment offer free training for both practitioners and families on how to use vocational profiling effectively to ensure that young people's aspirations are captured and translated into realistic, achievable employment pathways.

To find out more:  targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk

★ Top tips when exploring aspirations ★

1. Regularly talk about the young person's interests and strengths
2. Encourage exploration of different job roles and work environments - use some of the resources on pages 34 to 35 as conversation starters
3. Be open to evolving goals as aspirations may change over time - help them explore different options
4. Recognise and celebrate success, no matter how small - building confidence is key to developing aspirations

Aspirations and careers resources

These resources may help to support young people in exploring their aspirations and making informed career choices. They include conversation starters, activity ideas, games and guidance on different jobs and career pathways. Please note that we do not endorse or favour any particular organisation over others but aim to provide a range of resources to help readers make informed choices:



I'm Thinking Ahead: How to be part of the world of work

Helps young people with learning disabilities explore work opportunities, build confidence, and plan for employment with support from families and professionals

https://www.togethermatters.org.uk/how-to-be-part-of-the-world-of-work-essex-editable/

Input Youth

Provides information on a broad range of potential careers and life skills

https://www.inputyouth.co.uk/jobguides/jobguideindex.html#K

National Careers Service

Provides details of qualifications needed, salary, progression opportunities and a description of daily tasks involved in different jobs

https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers

My World of Work

Browse job profiles and watch behind the scenes career insight videos

https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/search-job-profiles/

Beyond Autism

A free downloadable employability toolkit and resources

https://www.beyondautism.org.uk/professionals/resources/employability/toolkit/

Ambitious about Autism

Free resources and toolkits to support with the journey to employment

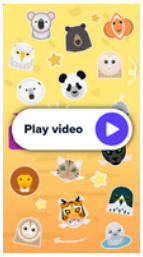
https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/services/i-am-an-autistic-young-person/employment-support-and-resources

Aspirations and careers resources (cont.)

I can be a...

Offers a range of online games which can identify jobs a young person may enjoy based on their interests and strengths

https://www.icanbea.org.uk/app/game/interests/



My World of Work: Animal Me

Take the personality quiz and learn about the things you're good at and jobs which may suit you - at the end, you'll find out which animal is most like you!

https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/tools-and-quizzes/animal-me/#/questionaire

First Careers

Offers guidance to primary and secondary school students in making decisions about future careers and professions.

https://www.firstcareers.co.uk/



The Way Up

A fun and engaging app funded by The DfE that provides up-to-date information on the long-term consequences of education and career choices.

https://www.thewayup.co.uk/

Talking Futures

Resources aimed at helping parents and carers support young people in making informed career decisions, including conversation guides, activity ideas, and information on different career paths.

https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk/resources/



BBC Bitesize: What is your perfect job?

A fun quiz to find out more about the types of jobs young people might enjoy and different careers they could consider.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9dmbk

Career Pilot

Useful links to career-related sites for parents and carers.

https://careerpilot.org.uk/parent-zone/all-questions/useful-links-to-career-related-sites-for-parents