

Career kickstart reviews

A guide for union learning reps

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Introduction

For learning and development to be effective, it must be underpinned by good-quality information, advice and guidance (IAG). But career IAG provision and support for young people is patchy across the country and so unionlearn and unions have developed **career kickstart reviews**. The reviews are designed to provide support to young people, start a conversation with them about their career plans and give them the best possible start to their career.

Career kickstart reviews provide a range of benefits. Young people will be able to:

- identify transferable skills
- think about potential career pathways
- build confidence and motivation
- consider progression opportunities and the support needed to get on at work.

Union learning reps (ULRs) and union reps will be able to:

- reach those young people who have had little careers advice
- help young people develop confidence in making decisions
- encourage them to become active union members.

Employers will benefit from the increased motivation of staff, employees with higher skills, and reduced staff turnover.

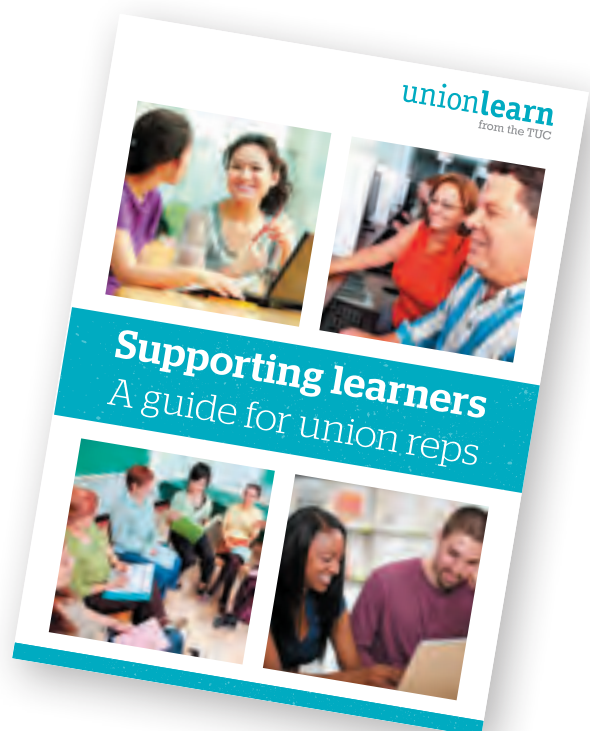
This guide provides support and resources for ULRs and other union reps to deliver career kickstart reviews. It offers:

- underpinning knowledge
- contextual information
- the basic theory behind IAG
- a suggested structure for reviews
- information on resources and signposting.

It is best used with other support resources provided by unionlearn, including:

- *Supporting Learners: a guide for union reps*
- *Getting Active!* (the resource pack to support mid-life development reviews)
- *Youth Employment Guide for Union Representatives*
- *Helping Young People into Work and Training* (case studies)
- *Valuing the Skills of Older Workers* (a guide to conducting a mid-life development review).

We hope that you find this guide helpful in planning and conducting career kickstart reviews and we welcome any feedback you may have. Please send your comments and views to unionlearn@tuc.org.uk



1

Background

Underpinning principles

Union reps are not expected to become career guidance experts. But they are equipped with a lot of skills to start a conversation about careers and progression with young people.

Union reps should think about the following principles of good practice when conducting career kickstart reviews:

Be inspirational – demonstrate enthusiasm for your role and ensure learners leave feeling stimulated to take further actions.

Be motivating – find out what stimulates and drives each learner and help them build their plans around this.

Be encouraging – not every idea seems like a good one, but we can always be supportive or reassuring as well as willing to suggest alternatives.

Be knowledgeable – nobody knows everything, but demonstrating a basic knowledge of the subject gives learners confidence in you.

Be non-judgemental – every learner comes with a different story to tell and may well share personal information with you. Be ready to be accepting of what they tell you.*

Be calm – learners may come to you with a whole range of conflicting and overlapping issues that make them unable to see things clearly. Part of your role is to stay measured and unruffled to help them make sense of their situation.

Be holistic – very few issues exist in isolation of others, so try to see the interconnectivity between different issues and help learners to plan in a way that takes all issues into account.

* There are certain issues in relation to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and terrorism that require a formal response in line with your organisation's policy.



Working with young people

Providing advice and support for young people demands the same skills, qualities and attitudes as working with any adult. What can be different is the context. Young people may be keen to discuss things such as:

- learning to work alongside other adults in the workplace
- ensuring they are on the correct career pathway
- relationships
- sexuality
- health and wellbeing
- finances.

Finances for a young person may be about discussing how they can afford to move to their own place, while for an older adult, finances could involve discussing their pension options. There may also be some differences in what is available to young people in relation to funding their learning – as ULRs, you just need to ensure that you have the right information or know how to access it.

Understanding the national context

Without going into detail, it may be useful for you to have some basic background information about how IAG is provided in England. This information is designed to help you understand how career kickstart reviews fit into the support that is available from other places. This is subject to change as government strategy develops.

Responsibility for the provision of IAG falls to different bodies, as outlined in the government's careers strategy (gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents):

- Schools, (including academies, special schools and pupil referral units) have a responsibility to provide IAG through suitably qualified staff who can be independent from the institution or employed by them
- Local authorities have responsibility for providing support to 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- The National Careers Service (NCS) offers a website and a helpline (available to young people and adults) and one-to-one IAG for adults (<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>)
- The Careers and Enterprise Company (careersandenterprise.co.uk) provides funding for programmes that support careers education and guidance in schools and colleges, with responsibility to promote these eight Gatsby benchmarks of good careers guidance (gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance):
 1. A stable careers programme
 2. Learning from career and labour market information
 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
 5. Encounters with employers and employees
 6. Experiences of workplaces
 7. Encounters with further and higher education
 8. Personal guidance.

- organisations delivering apprenticeships and traineeships have a responsibility to provide IAG for all of their learners and achieve the matrix Standard (<https://matrixstandard.com>) to demonstrate this.

Current national priorities

While priorities regularly change, the following provide an insight into the areas that are currently deemed to be of importance in the careers world.

Post-16 skills and technical education

The post-16 skills plan and the report into technical education by an independent skills panel, chaired by Lord Sainsbury (gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education), has recommended the simplification of the current system providing 15 high-quality routes with standards set by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Methods of assessment, clear routes to occupations, transferability between academic and technical and transition arrangements for those aged 16+ are all key features that need to be developed.

English, maths and functional skills

English and maths provision are also referred to in the post-16 skills plan and report. Each of the 15 routes will include a 'common core' which applies to all individuals studying that route and is aligned to apprenticeships. The panel also recommends "a single set of maths and English exit requirements which should be seen as the minimum level of maths and English which all individuals must achieve ahead of securing technical education".



Apprenticeships

The 2012 Richard Review of Apprenticeships (gov.uk/government/news/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships) brought about fundamental changes to apprenticeships, making them the mainstay of work-based learning. Employers of a certain size have to pay an apprenticeship levy and can only claim this funding back to train new or existing staff (of any age), using accredited frameworks or standards.

ICT and digital skills

The digital skills strategy published in March 2017 (gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy/2-digital-skills-and-inclusion-giving-everyone-access-to-the-digital-skills-they-need) emphasised the importance of these areas for individual employees and the overall competitiveness of the economy and highlighted the lack of digital skills that many people have.

The TUC focus on young people

Young people are a strategic priority in the TUC Campaign Plan. Unionlearn is committed to promoting high-quality training and careers provision for young workers. The Gatsby Benchmarks www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance can be a useful guide to support the quality assurance of the IAG support offered to young people.

2

Understanding information, advice and guidance (IAG)

Common terminology defined

When we are talking about careers support many words and phrases are used interchangeably. While it often does not matter (as long as everyone understands what is meant), it is useful to provide simple definitions for some of the terminology that you may come across.

Information

In a careers context, information is either electronic or in printed form. It covers issues relating to employment, education courses or training programmes and learners will use it to help them know what options are available to them. It can be provided formally or informally.

Advice

“...is providing an immediate response to the needs of clients who present an enquiry or reveal a need that requires more than a straightforward information response. Advice is usually limited to helping with the interpretation of information and with meeting needs already clearly understood by the client.” Corney and Watts (1998)

Guidance

“Guidance seeks to explore behind the ‘presenting wants’ and gain a more holistic or in-depth understanding of what the client may need before taking action.” Watts (1999)

The illustration, below, of an iceberg, shows what is above and below the surface of the water, represented by the blue line. Above the line are the **presenting situation** and the **presenting needs** – basically what a learner shares immediately with you about what their position is and what they want from you. This requires information or advice. Below the line is where there are **additional needs** that could be very important and where you have to **explore the story** to find out what they are and their potential impact. This requires guidance.

In some instances, there are situations in which what is asked for is exactly what is wanted and all that is needed. In these situations what you provide is **information...**

Learner: “Can I have information about where I can do a college course in joinery?”

Union rep: “Certainly. Here is a leaflet of all local colleges, with links to their websites.”

or **advice...**

Union rep: “I’m not sure if you know but many college courses only start in September and another option could be to consider an apprenticeship...”

INFORMATION AND ADVICE



In other situations, they may ask for some support and not realise that there are deeper issues that also really need to be addressed. Or they have issues that they are initially uncomfortable in revealing and they may want to ‘test you out’ with some simple questions before getting to the real issue if they feel that you ‘pass the test’. So, taking the previous example further...

Union rep: *“Do you mind me asking why you are thinking about a career change to joinery?”*

Learner: *“I’ve just been told we are in danger of being made redundant and I need to think of some other options.”*

Such a response could lead into a broader-based discussion covering issues such as...

- the likelihood of this happening
- the financial and other implications for the learner and their family
- the suitability of the career idea, linked to skills, qualifications, aptitudes
- exploration of alternative ideas
- discussion about the most suitable learning pathway.

Union reps are not expected to be providing the guidance level of support, but to signpost young people to organisations such as the National Careers Service, should they need this level of support.

The challenge for union reps is to recognise which situation you are in and act accordingly – and only go as far as your skillset permits.

Coaching

In a workplace context, coaching is providing someone with the tools, skills and opportunities that they need to make themselves more effective. It will usually involve helping them reflect and learn from situations and opportunities that they have encountered.

Mentoring

Mentoring and coaching often overlap. In some instances, it involves a less formal relationship with the person and a mentor can be someone who is not an expert in the field but who is taking an impartial and detached view of what has happened with the mentee.

Signposting

In this context, signposting involves actively referring a learner to another professional or colleague who is better placed to support them with a particular issue. For example, you may want to signpost a learner to the National Careers Service if they need in-depth careers guidance. Knowing the boundaries of your role and expertise and having a good knowledge of local support networks will make signposting effective.





Career

This is perhaps the nub of understanding your role. The definition of ‘career’ has changed and continues to change over time. The Cambridge English Dictionary defines career as:

“the job or series of jobs that you do during your working life, especially if you continue to get better jobs and earn more money.”

While this is not incorrect, it does hint at the traditional linear concept of a career: someone selecting an occupation that they undertake for their entire working life, with perhaps some moves to different organisations and some promotions along the way. For many people born in the last century, this is their experience of a ‘career’. But for younger people a more accurate way of looking at a career is not a direct path but like a roadmap with varying routes, and perhaps destinations.

Many people now make changes to their main occupation or to their style of working, with ‘portfolio’ careers made up a number of different roles (employed, self-employed, caring responsibility, voluntary work, part-time, etc.) becoming more common.

The style of ‘career’ can be our choice, but can also be dictated by a range of factors beyond our control, including:

- our chosen occupational sector
- the part of the country in which we live
- shifts in the economy
- changes to the political landscape
- advances in technology.

For IAG practitioners, this means that our guidance and support can be described as **career planning** for those considering linear-style careers, or **career management** for those for who are on portfolio careers.

Career planning

This involves self-evaluation, learning about different careers, understanding about and selecting appropriate career pathways and successfully applying for learning and employment.

Career management

This also includes all of the facets of career planning, but in addition incorporates understanding the broader range of sub-decisions that have to be made and learning how to be equipped to recognise and respond to a wider range of fluctuating personal and societal circumstances.

Careers education

Careers education is the underpinning learning about careers that many believe should be a feature of all education. At its most fundamental, those in education should be taught how to

- develop self-awareness – understanding your own skills, abilities, likes, dislikes
- make a decision – understanding the process of deciding on something
- understand what opportunities are available – this is an ever-changing picture, so we need to learn the skills of how to keep ourselves up to date
- make effective transitions into new environments – between education, training, employment, etc. and possibly back again a number of times.



This model was developed by Law and Watts (1977, 1996) and is known as the ‘DOTS’ model

Decision-making
Opportunity-awareness
Transition skills
Self-awareness

Unfortunately, careers education is not compulsory in schools or colleges and you will find that many young people do not have this important level of understanding before they are expected to make career decisions, meaning that any IAG that they can access is often less effective than it could be.

Learning styles

You may well have heard about the three commonly accepted learning styles: **visual**, **auditory** and **kinaesthetic** (brief definitions below). Most people do not respond exclusively to one style but do tend to have a dominant style or a preferred mix of two styles.

It is useful to give these some consideration before you do your reviews because each learner will respond to a different combination of styles and resources, meaning that you can tailor your approach to what will be most effective for them. You should remember that the learning style to be adopted should be that which is preferred by the learner, not that which is preferable to you!

Visual

Visual learners are those who process and retain information best when they can see it. Often, they will find that information makes more sense when it is explained with the aid of a chart, diagram or illustration.

Auditory

Auditory learners retain information best when it is presented through sounds or speech. So, they would prefer to listen to a lecture rather than read text.

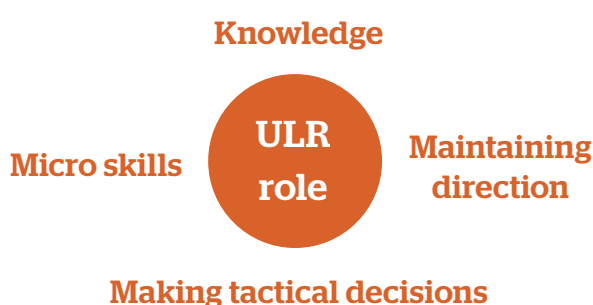
Kinaesthetic

Kinaesthetic learners process information best when they are physically engaged during the learning process. So, you may want to get them involved in practical activities as part of your IAG, such as using computer-based resources or drawing out their own pathway or action plan.

The activities included later in this handbook should appeal to all the different learning styles.

3 The career kickstart review model

A career kickstart review involves combining skills and attitudes with a structure. The ideal reviewer has the ability to mix all of these things together. The model below shows the component parts of what is needed to conduct the reviews effectively. At the heart of the model is the ULR role or union rep, in supporting, coaching, mentoring and signposting young people to help them progress and get on at work. We will look at each element of the model in turn.



Knowledge

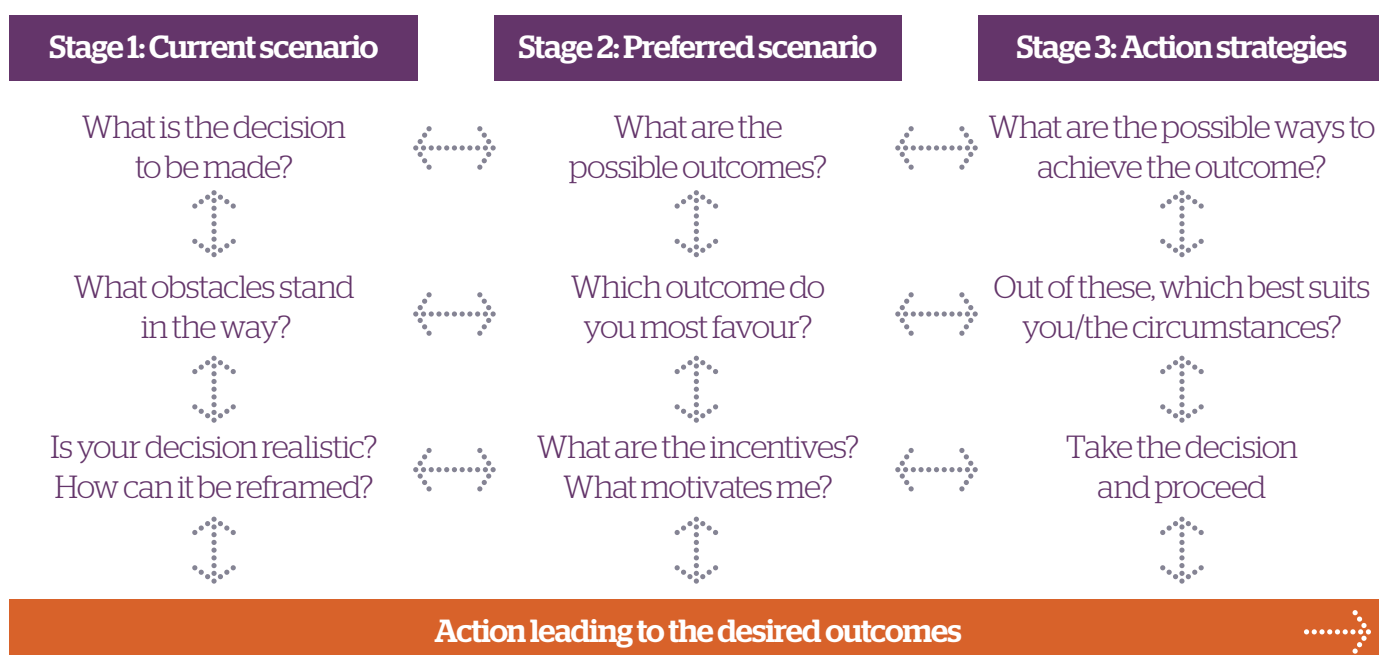
This does not mean that you have to know everything – in fact believing that you do know everything is quite dangerous! What it means is that you have the ability to find knowledge either from resources or from other professionals. As you develop experience you will expand your network of resources and colleagues so that you will be able to obtain the knowledge that is required.

Maintaining direction – structuring a review

An interview with someone cannot just be a chat. It has to have a purpose and an outcome for it to be of value. There are many different ways of structuring an interview – none are intrinsically right or wrong. What they all provide is a way of you managing the process effectively so that the young person and you get the most out of it. Having a workable structure is vital because:

- it ensures a consistent approach
- it is flexible enough to deal with all scenarios
- it helps you to manage the interaction
- it can be shared with the young person (from the beginning) so that they are aware of the process and feel part of it.

One simple but effective structural model was developed by Gerard Egan and is called *The Skilled Helper* (see below). It splits an interview into three sections: **current scenario**; **preferred scenario**; and **action strategies**.



Stage 1 involves understanding the ‘story’ of the young person. Learning about their situation, finding out about what are the challenges or barriers that they face.

Stage 2 is about looking ahead to what they would like their situation to be and why. It also involves checking whether they have thought things through and if their preferred scenario is realistic.

Stage 3 is about plotting how the change can be made. What are the steps needed and who needs to do what in putting the plan into action.

The outcome should be an agreed plan with timescales and review points.

Making tactical decisions

This means that when conducting a career kickstart review you don’t just do the same thing every time, but you respond to what the interviewee says and make tweaks to how you conduct the interaction. The interview is similar, and you need to be responsive and willing to try new tactics if you sense you are not progressing towards your anticipated outcome.

Micro skills

These are the range of skills that you need to make an interaction effective. This guide has identified what we consider to be the most important and provided some helpful hints and tips that will help you to develop and use these skills.

Listening

If one key skill stands out as being the most important for you in this role, then it is listening. It helps you assimilate information about what the learner wants so you can tailor your response appropriately. And it demonstrates to them that you are interested in what they have to say, helping to make them feel comfortable in sharing information with you. If you reflect on conversations with the best manager you have ever had, or where you have received top-quality customer service, it’s likely that those involved were active listeners.

Listening is not as easy as it may first appear. Below are 12 ‘blocks to listening’:

Comparing: You are always trying to assess who is smarter, more competent, more emotionally healthy – you or the learner. You cannot listen effectively because you are too busy seeing if you measure up.

Mind reading: This is when you are trying to work out what the other person is really thinking and feeling, rather than actually listening to what they are saying.

Rehearsing: You don’t have time to listen because you’re rehearsing what to say. Your whole attention is on the preparation and crafting of your next comment.

Filtering: This is when you listen to some things and not others and you let your mind wander. Sometimes, we simply want to avoid hearing certain things - particularly anything threatening, negative, critical or unpleasant.

Judging: Because negative labels have enormous power, we can pre-judge someone as lacking in intelligence or unqualified and then do not pay much attention to what they say.

Dreaming: This is when you are half -listening, and something the person says suddenly triggers a chain of private associations.

Identifying: You take everything a person tells you and refer it back to your own experience. Everything you hear reminds you something that you have felt, done or suffered, so there is no time to really hear or get to know the other person.

Advising: You are a great problem-solver, ready with help and suggestions. You don't have to hear more than a few sentences before you begin searching for the right advice but can subsequently miss the most important pieces of information.

Sparring: This is where you argue and debate with the learner. The other person never feels heard because you're so quick to disagree.

Being right: This means you will go to any lengths to avoid being wrong. You can't listen to criticism, you can't be corrected, and you can't take suggestions to change. Your convictions are unshakable.

Derailing: This is accomplished by suddenly changing the subject or by making light of the situation, making a joke or quip in order to avoid the discomfort or anxiety in seriously listening to the other person.

Placating: You want to be nice, pleasant and supportive. You want people to like you, so you agree with everything. You are placating rather than tuning in and examining what's being said.



So how can we get better at listening?
Here are Ten Top Tips to becoming a more effective listener...

- 1** Listening requires concentration and a desire to understand the other person.
- 2** Start from a position of believing what the learner tells you.
- 3** You must want to know what the learner is saying, not be preparing for your next opportunity to speak.
- 4** Beware of prejudging people based on how they look or their early comments to you – our first impressions are often incorrect.
- 5** Remember that your interaction is about the learner, not you.
- 6** Many of us want to help – and can often jump in too early because we think we can help a learner.
- 7** Use short, encouraging words to support a learner: “right”, “mmm”, “OK”.
- 8** Use non-verbal encouragers: nod your head, raise your eyebrows, smile.
- 9** Avoid indicating that you are judging what they say – mainly done through facial expressions.
- 10** We have two ears and one mouth – we should listen twice as much as we speak.



Questioning

The other side of the coin from listening is questioning. Asking the right types of questions at the right time in a meeting will help you get more information and make the young person feel able to talk to you.

There are many different types of questions – and we often ask different types without realising what we are doing.

Open/closed questions: Both have a place in an interview situation, and it is wrong to assume that open questions are ‘right’ and closed questions are ‘wrong’. The closed questions can curtail or close the young person’s options for responding whereas the open question leaves their options open. Open questions are designed to give the young person the chance to speak freely and often start with “Tell me...” or “What is your...”. Closed questions are useful if you need a definite answer from the young person, such as “What qualifications do you have?”

Leading questions: Leading questions put pressure on the young person to answer in a certain way and they often include an answer in the question, e.g. “Would you say that young people nowadays are more interested in going to college?” At worst, leading questions can be used to catch somebody out – think about the sort of questions that you see being asked in a legal case.

Multiple questions: These are usually a confusing and complex string of questions and the young person often answers either the first one or the last one – but rarely all. Television and radio interviewers regularly fall into the trap of asking multiple questions. Interviewees simply pick out the one they want to answer and ignore the rest.

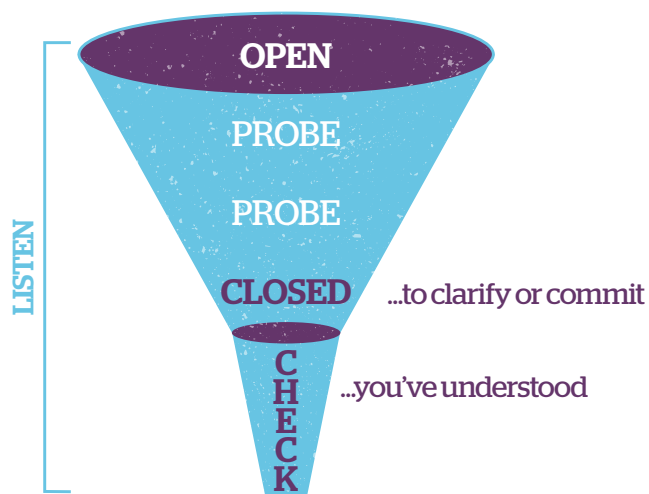
Probing questions: Probing questions often follow on from open questions. A good listener may pick up on something that has been said and go back to it to get more information. For example, “You said earlier that you didn’t get on with people in your team. What sort of things caused problems?”

‘Why’ questions: The risk of ‘why’ questions, such as “Why did you do it?” is that they can make the young person feel that they must justify their answers in some way. For instance, a ‘why’ question might be “Why don’t you like maths?” The alternative question “How is it that you’ve come to dislike maths so much?” seeks the same information but without sounding judgemental and requiring a justification.

Rhetorical questions: These questions are not really questions at all but are often used to persuade or get across a point of view. For example, “I think we all realise that apprenticeships are better than college, don’t we?”



Questioning can be illustrated as a funnel:



You gather information through using open questions; use probing questions to clarify things; ask closed questions to agree on a decision and then check your understanding and that of the young person. All the time, you are listening effectively.

So how can we get better at questioning? Here are **TEN TOP TIPS** to becoming a more effective questioner...

- 1 No types of questions are inherently “good” or “bad” – they all need to be used at the correct time.
- 2 “Open” questions are useful to get people talking and opening up.
- 3 “Closed” questions are useful when you need a simple, clear, unambiguous answer.
- 4 A common fault is where we ask “multiple questions” without giving time or space for the young person to answer.
- 5 Some questions can come over as aggressive: asking “why did you do that?” can be softened by asking “can you explain to me how you came to do that?”
- 6 Voice modulation is also important when asking questions – it must be suitable for the occasion.
- 7 In some instances, we need to get more information from a young person by asking “probing” questions which are based on what they have said to us.
- 8 Most successful meetings involve a mixture of open, closed and probing questions.
- 9 Being aware of the types of questions you are asking will help you to get the correct blend.
- 10 Avoid having a series of set questions that you always ask because you may then not respond or react to the answers you are given.

Summarising and paraphrasing

When we work with a young person, they sometimes have difficulty in articulating what they want to say, meaning that we need to check that we understand things properly. Summarising is an important skill in which you reflect back the main points of what the young person has said, allowing you to make sure that you have understood its essence: “So let me just check; what I think you are saying is...” Paraphrasing means rephrasing what has been said, again to make sure that it has been understood correctly. Both skills can act as ‘verbal punctuation’ and help the young person feel confident that you understand what they are saying.



So how can we get better at summarising and paraphrasing? Here are **Ten Top Tips** to becoming a more effective summariser or paraphraser.

- 1** Summarising can help the young person understand the information they have given you by breaking it into smaller chunks.
- 2** Both skills allow you to check that you have properly understood what the young person has told you.
- 3** Paraphrasing allows you to test out the impact of what you have been told: “From what you said it sounds like that made you angry”.
- 4** Avoid making assumptions without checking them with the young person.
- 5** Both skills can be used as a type of verbal punctuation to a conversation.
- 6** Both skills can be used to effectively move from one stage of an interaction to another.
- 7** Make sure that you just summarise the key points and not go over everything or it is repetitious.
- 8** Summarising at the end of an interaction allows you to ensure that you have all of the information that you need.
- 9** It also allows you to agree with the young person what is going to happen next.
- 10** Decide if you need to write any summary down for the young person.

The ULR role

ULRs are uniquely placed in the workplace to carry out a career kickstart review. In the case of undertaking career kickstart reviews, ULRs have the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to effectively provide careers support to young people. As such, the ULR role underpins all of the other elements of a successful review.

4

How to do the reviews

This section is designed to give you some practical support in doing career kickstart reviews.

Preparation

Unionlearn's *Supporting learners: A guide for union reps* provides more detailed information on this, but the key points are:

Prepare the person

- Make sure they know why they are meeting with you.
- Give them plenty of notice and clear details about the venue and start/finish times.
- Reassure them that their employer has been consulted.
- Tell them if there is any preparation they need to do – maybe bringing their CV or details of training they have already completed.

Prepare yourself

- Make sure that the employer and all relevant managers know about the career kickstart review.
- Book a location that is private, comfortable and easy to access for both of you.
- Ensure you have all the resources you will need.

Introduction

While you may want to make a note of the things that an introduction should cover, it's best not to have a standard script. A script doesn't put either you or the young person at ease and sounds unnatural. A more effective way of starting off the review is to open the conversation with the sort of thing you would say to someone if you met them in the kitchen...“It's a bit cold today, isn't it?”; “Did you find your way here OK?” etc. The main objective is to make them feel relaxed and to start a conversation with you – getting them talking is the main objective.

The things that you may want to cover are:

- Check that they know why they are here.
- Confirm it is supported by the employer.
- Explain about confidentiality and sharing information.
- Agree what you want to achieve from the review and decide what you want to discuss.

Information gathering

For you to be as effective as possible, you will almost certainly need to gather some information about the young person. Again, this should be tailored to the situation, but some things that will be useful include:

- personal details (name, contact details, job title etc.) that are data protection regulation compliant
- education achievements
- career history
- career and personal aims
- any barriers to achieving these.

Be aware that the reviewee may not give you all the information at this stage – they may feel uncomfortable or not yet have the confidence to share it. If you can develop a relationship with them, then they will be more likely to share this information with you over time.

Career kickstart review themes

There is no set format for a review. Doing the same thing with every young person won't meet everyone's needs. However, there are certain themes that it may be useful to address – similar to the themes of careers education programmes below.



On the following pages are some strategies for dealing with each of these themes.

Self-awareness

Simply asking good questions can help you and the young person analyse this. If you use the review questionnaire (see Section 6, page 32) the young person will have given some consideration to their own situation. Below is another simple questionnaire that might prompt some interesting discussion points. Your role is to probe the answers to help you and the young person develop a more rounded understanding of them:

1. Likes and dislikes

What do you enjoy doing?

What would make a job unbearable for you to do day after day?

2. Strengths and weaknesses

What skills do you particularly excel in?

What do other people say about you – positive and negative?

3. Wants and needs

Think about what would be simply ‘nice’ to have for a career and separate these areas from your needs. Addressing these areas will help you narrow or widen your search. Here are some areas you may want to consider.

Location: does it need to be close to where you live?

Salary: do you need to earn a certain amount or will benefits make a difference?

Working hours: is there a maximum amount you can work every week?

Industry stability: how stable do you need your work role to be?

Company values: does the company need to follow an ethos e.g. green energy, importance of family time etc?

The National Careers Service has a skills health check exercise that can also help contribute to developing self-awareness in a young person: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/skills-health-check/home>



Opportunities

An important element of providing careers-related IAG is to take into account the labour market. It is vital to remember that the labour market has local, regional, national and international nuances that can influence career choices. It is a huge challenge for ULRs (for whom careers work is a relatively small part of their role) to ensure that they are always up to date with labour market information (LMI). Often the safest way of doing this is to know about accurate sources of LMI and teach young people how to access them themselves at any time. The *Youth Employment Guide: for union representatives* and the *Supporting Learners: A guide for union reps* have a broad range of contact information, and many regions of the country have their own LMI resources organised by their Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which can act as good starting points.

Unionlearn has created Careerzone to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for career information to support career kickstart reviews with young people. You can visit the Careerzone by going to unionlearn.org.uk/careerzone. Careerzone uses official data sources to power a comprehensive careers directory, and combines this with data analysis, videos, guidance and many other resources. Some of these include:

- careers directory: explore almost 400 job profiles containing information on pay, job role, qualifications and vacancy rates
- Careerometer: to compare different careers
- a Value My Skills transferable skills online assessment tool
- a collection of careers advice videos from various sources
- an identifier that shows which careers have the biggest gender pay gap.

The union learning Climbing Frame <https://climbingframe.unionlearn.org.uk> has information to help you with careers information and opportunities. There is a dedicated Learning Theme about Personal Development and Career Planning.

The NCS has some useful resources, including Job Profiles, to provide general information about particular careers. Their helpline (0800 100 900) will provide information about courses available at local colleges and through training providers. Local colleges and training providers also have up-to-date online prospectuses. Don't be afraid to make use of Google www.google.com – some people regard this as an admission of failure, but you can often find information that is valuable.

Making decisions

If we look back on our learning and career decisions, we often recognise that we made them in a haphazard way. Making decisions in a sensible and structured way is likely to lead to better outcomes.

Here is an activity designed to help young people see that making a career decision is not just a random choice on the spur of the moment but can be thought through to make it more effective:

Instructions

Tell the group/individual that they have been given £1,000 each to spend on a holiday. Ask them to come up with the various things that they need to take into account before booking the holiday. You can prompt if necessary, but the outcome will probably include the following:

- type of holiday
- who is invited
- time of year
- how it is booked
- type of board
- length of holiday
- type of transport used
- cost
- actual resort or location
- any restrictions (visas etc.)
- distance they want to travel
- type of accommodation
- what to pack
- allocating responsibilities
- currency needed.

Get them to do a similar exercise to identify all the things they need to consider when they decide on a career pathway.

They will be surprised at how many different elements there are and how many different decisions are required.

You can move on to talk about:

- who can help them (and the pros and cons of the advice from each person)
- where they can find relevant information (and its reliability)
- when they need to start work on this
- prioritising what they need to do.

Effective planning

The best way to move from one situation to another is to have a clear plan. This should be the outcome of a career kickstart review. There are many forms of action plan and you may want to look at a number of options before choosing what is best for you and the young person – taking into account their learning style as explained in Section 2. An excellent resource for action planning is the union learning Climbing Frame: <https://climbingframe.unionlearn.org.uk>. You can use the Learner Management section of the website to help learners set goals and actions, and create an action plan.

Most action plans follow the SMART formula –

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Timebound

Opposite is a simple example of a plan that you could use:

Career kickstart review Action Plan

NAME: _____

ULR/UNION REP: _____ DATE: _____

ULR/UNION REP: _____ DATE: _____

[illegible]

5

Helpful activities

Here are some resources you may find useful to initiate a conversation or discussion (either in groups or with individuals). Doing these fun activities should encourage people to take an active and responsive approach to their career kickstart reviews.

1. Value my skills

The Value My Skills online tool aims to help workers identify transferable skills. Everyone has experiences and skills from all areas of our lives and this tool helps reviewees identify their strengths and areas for development. Users of the tool might be considering a change of job or promotion, doing a course or some voluntary work, or simply want to review what they can offer to the jobs market.

The tool takes users through steps with clear instructions to identify and rate their skills, keep reflection notes, design an action plan and record their progress. To access the tool you will need to register at www.tuceducation.org.uk

2. Power Cards®

Power Cards are a resource used to help people to achieve their goals in any situation. They have been developed by an organisation called Positive Steps* who have given their permission for them to be reproduced in this guide. Sets of cards can be purchased from them or you can photocopy or cut out the cards on pages 23 to 26.

The 15 cards create a dynamic and clear path towards the achievement of goals. They are joined together by a Power Line which passes through each card in the form of a transition curve – this helps to describe the process of change.

The transition curve is made up of three elements: planning, implementation (also called ‘do’) and review. Each element can function separately, although the cards do link together easily.

*Positive Steps is a registered charity that supports young people, vulnerable adults and families in Greater Manchester. Power Cards and other similar resources have been developed with young people. For more information, contact them at: www.positive-steps.org.uk

The cards provide a framework for people to be creative and build their own futures through a structured approach to creating a pathway towards their goals. As well as providing linked imagery, the cards include a calibration scale and additional questions. They generate motivational drivers as well as exploring areas when resilience is tested.

The planning phase can empower you to take ownership and with it responsibility for the creative building of your ideal future.

PHASE 1-PLANNING:

Goal, Pull, Resistance, Energy, Team

This phase is concerned with creating a goal: e.g. a skill, an outcome, an attitude or an achievement.

PHASE 2-IMPLEMENTATION (DO):

Map, Attitude, Danger, Shift, Progress

This phase can be retrospective or in the immediate future. It can make plans real and influence the three elements.

PHASE 3-REVIEW:

Learning, How, Changes, Rewards, New Goals

This phase focuses on the importance of reflection. Identifying what was enjoyable and what was learned.

Instructions

Photocopy and cut out the 15 illustrated cards. In discussion with the group, or one-to-one, identify a goal to achieve and hold that vision in your mind for a moment. Complete the activity of joining the 15 cards together to form the transition curve. The Goal card is the starting point and the power line and colour of each card are clues to completing the puzzle.

Once the puzzle is completed, return to the goal that was originally identified and use the Power Card supporting statements to complete the **Plan** phase (first five cards) and/or **Implementation** phase (next five cards if you are ready to start working towards achieving your goal). Finally, the **Review** phase is to reflect on the achievements and learning experience.

Goal



Team



Pull



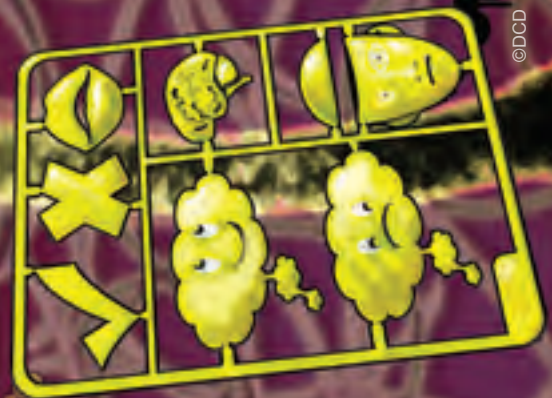
Map



Resistance



Attitude



Energy



Danger





How strong is your support team?



No Support

Strong Support

Name your support team and say how they can each help you?

Who might think this is not a good goal for you?



Team



How confident are you that you will achieve this goal?

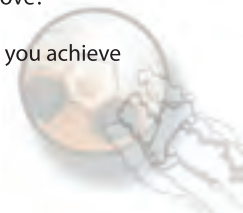


Will Not

Certain

Describe your goal and say in what ways could achieving this goal help your life improve?

What will you see, hear and feel when you achieve your goal?



Goal



How well do you know your route?

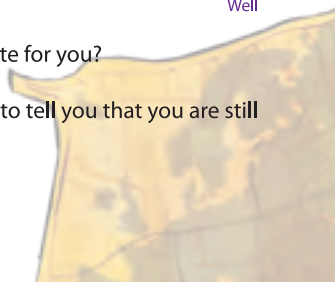


No Idea

Well

What makes this the best route for you?

What signposts will you pass to tell you that you are still on the right track?



Map



How much do you really want to achieve this goal?

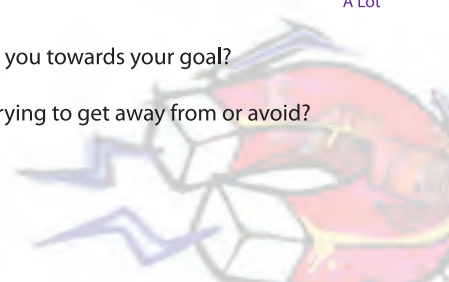


Not Bothered

A Lot

What is pulling you towards your goal?

What are you trying to get away from or avoid?



Pull



How easy is it for you to change your attitude?

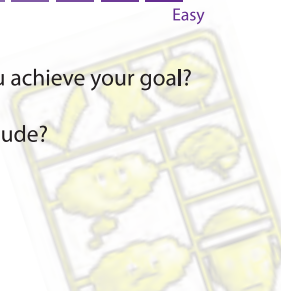


Impossible

Easy

What attitude is best to help you achieve your goal?

When did you last have this attitude?



Attitude



How confident do you feel at overcoming obstacles?

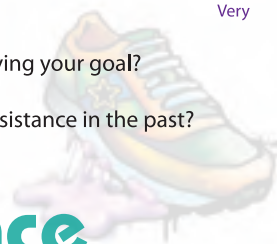


Not

Very

What could stop you achieving your goal?

How have you overcome resistance in the past?



Resistance



How able are you to deal with dangers on your route?

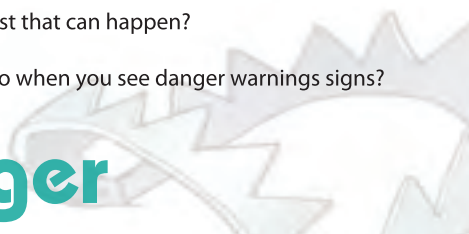


None

Many

What is the worst that can happen?

What will you do when you see danger warnings signs?



Danger



How much energy have you got to help you achieve your goal?



No Energy

High Energy

What activities do you do that reduce your energy levels?

How can you increase your energy?



Energy



Changes



Rewards



New Goals





How many changes have resulted from this process?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Lots

How has your life changed during your journey?

What beliefs have you changed during your journey?

Changes



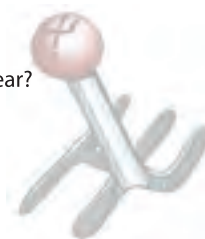
How fast are you moving towards your goal?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Stationary Fast

What gear are you in (1-5)?

How will you know when to change gear?

Shift



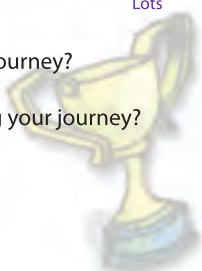
How many rewards can you name?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Lots

What did you enjoy most on your journey?

What are you most proud of during your journey?

Rewards



How much progress have you made?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Lots

Where are you on your route map?

What do you think about your progress so far?

Progress



How many new goals can you name now?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None Many

What makes it easier now, to aim even higher?

What new goals are possible now?

New Goals



What have you found out about yourself so far?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Nothing Lots

Describe something you have found easy to learn.

What made this learning easy for you?

Learning



How well have you managed yourself during your journey?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Badly Well

What have you done well on your journey?

How have you made yourself stronger when you needed to?

How



3. Five ways to wellbeing

Our wellbeing encompasses our capacity to feel good, our happiness and our overall satisfaction with our lives and it is important to engage in activities to ensure that we maintain our physical and mental wellbeing. Based on research by the

New Economics Foundation (NEF), there are actions we can take to improve our wellbeing. These work by enhancing how well we function within our lives. The NEF whittled these down to five action themes: the five ways to wellbeing.

Connect

Make sure you connect with people around you - friends, family, colleagues and neighbours. Building relationships with others will support and enrich your life every day.

Be active

Find a form of exercise you enjoy. Exercise causes your brain to release chemicals into your blood stream which lifts your mood and makes you feel good about yourself.

Take notice

Be curious. Be alert to the things around you. Be aware of your surroundings and how they make you feel. Reflect on your experiences to help appreciate the things that matter.

Keep learning

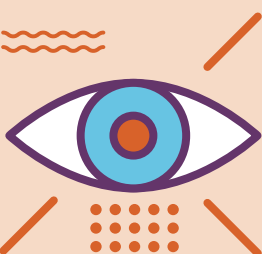
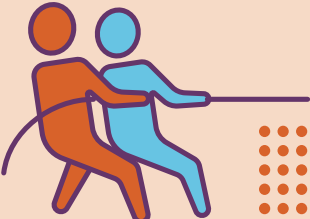
Try something new. Sign up for courses. Learn a skill. Set yourself a challenge. Grow in confidence as you do more things and be satisfied with a sense of achievement.

Give

Do things for others: family, friends or strangers. Get involved in volunteering. This encourages us to look 'out' as well as looking 'in' to yourself. We are hard-wired to get a sense of achievement from helping one another.

Instructions

Using the table below, consider how you can incorporate all five areas of wellbeing into your life. **Be realistic, but don't be afraid to try something new either.**

Five areas of wellbeing:	Things I can do:
Connect 	
Be active 	
Take notice 	
Keep learning 	
Give 	



4. Turn and face it

Any change to our routine or circumstances can be stressful – even going on holiday. What makes us strong is our ability to cope with change. What have been the biggest changes in your life? Were they stressful? What helped you to cope?

Instructions

The stages of your life can be seen in lots of ways. One way is to see them as steps on a spiral staircase. Think of the major changes or turning-points in your life. On the steps of the staircase below write a few words, or draw a picture, to sum up each turning point.

Each step represents one year. Some examples could include:

- choosing your options at schools
- deciding whether to continue studying or look for an apprenticeship
- considering leaving home to get your own place
- deciding on applying for a promotion
- deciding on ending a relationship.

5. The stress container

You will need: blank pieces of A5 paper, a pen, small cup.

Ask the group or individual to write down a list of what makes them worried or stressed. Money worries, buying a house, relationships, holidays, deadlines, driving, personal appearance, family, friends, job security, emails, bills, etc.

Scrunch these up and place them in the cup. (The key is to make it impossible for the cup to hold more than three or four scrunched-up pieces of paper).

Stress can be manageable but can easily overload (link this to what happens when they try to put all their stress in to one cup). This is where overloading occurs, burnout, breakdowns and can lead to poor mental health.

The next step is to arrange in order the things that are causing you worry or stress. Then, starting with the highest ranked issue, you can now take time to discuss this issue and explore techniques to manage stress levels to feel more positive and happier. Focus on the things that you can control rather than things outside of your control.

[illegible]

6

Other issues to consider



Mental health

Statistics taken from the Mental Health Foundation (www.mentalhealth.org.uk) found that one in four people in the UK will experience some kind of mental health issue over the course of a year.

As well as affecting people's personal lives, well-being and morale, mental health issues also impact on performance at work. It can be hard to spot signs of mental ill health, but in the role of a union rep or ULR you are well positioned to identify indicators of poor mental health, be supportive and take appropriate action, such as having a conversation.

If you see someone is struggling (whether during a review or otherwise) then providing a sounding board can have a significant impact, as this allows the person to explain their situation and feel listened to. It also enables you to understand what is going on in their world and signpost them to available support at the right time and in the right way.

Addressing mental health issues increases the effectiveness of the information, advice and guidance you give, because it establishes a rapport that will set the understanding of professional boundaries and lead to the productive IAG conversations. It will increase the chances of you agreeing action plans that are SMART, for you and the individual to follow with full motivation and maximum effort.

Measuring the effectiveness of career kickstart reviews

While career kickstart reviews are valuable, it is useful for you and the reviewee to be able to see and measure the benefits. By completing the following pre- and post-review questionnaire you will have some indication of how much progress has been made with that young person.

Career kickstart review pre- and post-review questionnaire

NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____

UNION: _____

EMPLOYER: _____ DATE OF REVIEW MEETING: _____

This questionnaire will help you and your rep identify which career issues you are most (and least) confident in handling. By identifying these before and after the review you can see whether the review has helped. The scale is 1–6.

I am very confident 1 2 3 4 5 6 **I am not confident at all**

Issues	Pre-review score	Post-review score
Finding a new job	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Changing career	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Keeping current job	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Getting promotion with current employer	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Flexible working arrangements	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Managing my finances	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Caring responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Health	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Relationships	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Making a difference to society	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

Other issues you can think of	Pre-review score	Post-review score
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

Answer this question **BEFORE** your first review meeting

Please explain a little more about the two most important issues to you that are listed above.

Answer this question **AFTER** your final review meeting

Please explain how the review process has helped you deal with any particular issues.

Thank you

7

Useful resources

Unionlearn online resources

Unionlearn website: unionlearn.org.uk

The union learning Climbing Frame website:
<https://climbingframe.unionlearn.org.uk/Home>

Unionlearn Careerzone:
unionlearn.org.uk/careerzone

Unionlearn SkillCheck: unionlearn.org.uk/skillcheck

Value My Skills: tuceducation.org.uk

Unionlearn Skills Network website:
<https://unionlearn.theskillsnetwork.com>

Unionlearn publications

Supporting Learners: a guide for union reps
unionlearn.org.uk/publications/supporting-learners-guide-union-reps

Youth Employment Guide: for union representatives
unionlearn.org.uk/publications/youth-employment-guide-union-representatives

Helping Young People into Work and Training
unionlearn.org.uk/publications/helping-young-people-work-and-training

Opening Doors to All unionlearn.org.uk/publications/opening-doors-all-how-union-learning-tackles-disadvantage

Apprenticeship Toolkit unionlearn.org.uk/publications/apprenticeships-toolkit-updated-june-2018

Your Rights as an Apprentice unionlearn.org.uk/publications/your-rights-apprentice

Accessible Apprenticeships unionlearn.org.uk/publications/accessible-apprenticeships

Tackling Apprenticeship Gender Inequality
unionlearn.org.uk/publications/tackling-apprenticeship-gender-inequality

Apprenticeships for Existing Staff unionlearn.org.uk/publications/apprenticeships-existing-staff

TUC publications and online resources

Getting By and Getting On – a guide for reps about issues affecting young workers
www.tuc.org.uk/getting-and-getting

My Union My Voice! www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/My%20Union%20My%20Voice_o.pdf

I Feel Like I Can't Change Anything
www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/i-feel-i-cant-change-anything

The Great Jobs Agenda
www.tuc.org.uk/publications/great-jobs-agenda

The Gig is Up www.tuc.org.uk/publications/gig

TUC www.tuc.org.uk

Resources from TUC Education

TUC Education's eLearning modules helps keep reps up to date on key workplace issues. Each eNote is a self-contained module that contains a mixture of text, video and quizzes. They last between 20 and 45 minutes and can be returned to as many times as you like. Topics include Supporting Learners; Apprenticeships: a guide for union reps; Mental Health in the Workplace; Apprenticeships: know your rights; Mentoring; Bargaining for skills; and many more.

eNotes: tuceducation.org.uk/enotes

There are also regular webinars that you can tune into as they happen or see recordings of later. Topics include engaging young workers and wellbeing in the workplace.

Webinars: tuceducation.org.uk/webinars

Useful websites

The National Careers Service:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/home>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

Apprenticeships: www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships

Information regarding apprenticeships available in different work areas.

Barclays LifeSkills: <https://barclayslifeskills.com>

This website helps young people understand and develop key skills they need to go forward into work. It includes information about getting the skills you need, how you can supercharge your CV and find work experience.

icould: <https://icould.com>

Careers website with short videos giving information on a wide range of different careers.

Careers Box: careersbox.co.uk

National online careers film and video library with real people to help learners, teachers, parents and other professional advisors.

Career Camel: careercamel.com

Offers advice from professional and peers, a job search engine and a social platform to create an engaging network.

Career Pilot: careerpilot.org.uk

Offers a range of careers tools, job sector information, qualification levels, real stories and lots more.

Learning and Work Institute 'What Employers Want':
whatemployerswant.org

This website provides information, advice and activities to support young people to get a job and progress at work. All the material is based on feedback from employers about what they look for when recruiting a young person.

Not going to Uni: notgoingtouni.co.uk

Information about apprenticeships, gap years options, training and employment opportunities for young people.

PEARL (Part time education for adults returning to learn): pearl.open.ac.uk

PEARL is a website which aims to bring the worlds of education and work closer together. It includes information on a range of learning opportunities, an advise me tool, information about types of learning, advice and support and a range of case studies.

UCAS: ucas.com

UCAS is an independent charity providing information, advice, and admissions services to inspire and facilitate educational progression.

App

The union learning Climbing Frame App:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/climbing-frame/id669443030>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.org.tuc.wbcfmobile>

This title may also be made available, on request, in accessible electronic format or in Braille, audiotape and large print, at no extra cost.

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