

# Learning Support Policy

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## **Introduction**

Derwent Training Association's (Derwent Training) approach to Learning Support is to deliver support wherever and whenever it is required.

Derwent Training believes Learning Support removes barriers to learning enables learners to achieve their learning goal and make the most of their potential. It is also used to make reasonable adjustments to the learning programme based upon an individual learner's circumstances under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 including disability or disadvantage.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Section 91), Derwent Training must not discriminate against a learner

- (a) in the way it provides education for the learner;
- (b) in the way it affords the learner access to a benefit, facility, or service;
- (c) by not providing education for the learner;
- (d) by not affording the learner access to a benefit, facility, or service;
- (e) by excluding the learner;
- (f) by subjecting the learner to any other detriment.

In the view of the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) *"Learning Support is aimed at enabling the Provider to work flexibly and provide support activity to meet the learning needs of learners. This will enable these learners to achieve their learning goal and make the most of their potential. Learning Support also provides funding for you to meet the costs of reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010."*

Derwent Training tailors the way it provides education to learners based upon the learner need. These needs will either be mental, physical, or social. The ESFA agree to meet the cost of reasonable adjustments to the programme within the guidance, however whether we receive funding or not will not affect our commitment to ensure learners make the most of their potential.

## **Challenges and inequality our learners face**

North Yorkshire is diverse and can be socially very challenging. There are several social barriers that commonly arise in the client groups Derwent Training primarily work with and these affect the ability of learners to meet their true potential. In many cases these obstacles are barriers to learning as well as to their personal social growth and development.

Common difficulties include learners encountering their first experiences of work or resumption of education when having a negative view of learning. This magnifies the presence of any underlying social issues that may exist.

We encounter barriers on a regular basis and this leads to a necessity of amending the design of the programmes offered and the delivery resources used to assist learners in overcoming these barriers and help them progress.

## **Education**

At entry, some learners have low GCSE attainment. Even despite apparent higher grades, learners often score low in Maths or English on their initial diagnostic assessments and this causes particular challenges on the qualifications we deliver. With many learners needing to ultimately achieve Level 2 functional skills, but who below this at the start, this is a significant learning journey and learners have to be given the greatest chance to progress.

## **Demographics**

In North Yorkshire we have a range of social demographics from affluent to poor. Social factors including unsupportive home environments, crime and substance abuse are more common place than would be expected and affect families of learners as well as individual learners themselves. Single parent families are common within the region, with many young people raised in this environment, raising the need for individual learner support based upon the issues that arise where the learner has difficulties. Mentoring and pastoral support are needed at a much higher frequency.

## **Teenage Pregnancy**

Increased sexual health advice is commonly delivered and those young people who do fall pregnant often need additional advice to ensure their wellbeing. The same is true of young men who become fathers.

## **Specific Learning Disabilities and Difficulties**

Learners do present themselves at Derwent Training who are affected by specific learning disabilities and difficulties. Learners may be affected mildly by these needs or be affected more severely however all are independent of intellectual ability, socio-economic or language background and require adjustments to an individual programme as a result.

## **Assessing learner needs**

All learners are interviewed during the recruitment phase, and during this time they receive a comprehensive Maths and English assessment using tools based on the national literacy and numeracy standards and core curriculum assessment. The screener occurs at sign up indicating an initial level of comprehension. This forms the individual components of the Maths/English support activities that are mentioned in the Learning Support Plan.

The ESFA fund additional support costs for learners who do not have Level 2 in Maths or English. Derwent Training view learners who are assessed as being below Level 1 in Maths or English as being at a disadvantage to their peers and will make adjustments to the learner's programme in terms of the support services provided in order to ensure they are able to meet their potential.

Learners also complete a Personal and Social Development Self-Assessment (Annex A). This document identifies potential barriers to learning that are based on social needs. Indication of needs here leads to a discussion of the needs in greater depth, the evidence of which captured on a Learning Support Plan. A decision is subsequently taken on whether there are necessary adjustments to the programme that might necessitate a claim to meet the costs of support or whether the adjustments are in line with what would normally need to occur and so no claim made.

Where there are other mental, social, or physical barriers to learning beyond the Maths and English that require additional support a claim will be made for the costs of the adjustment where a support package is delivered.

Based on either Maths, English or social need a Learning Support Plan is produced and this identifies where assistance will be required in the learner's programme. Key to this process is the presence of a specialist English or maths Trainer who specialises in working with the learners identified at being at a disadvantage based on assessment of their Maths and English needs. Each learner has a Trainer who is responsible for overseeing their programme whilst on programme. This includes ensuring their learning support needs are met.

A potential social need for support may only arise part way through the programme, for example changes in learner home environment. This would result in a referral for a one to one interview where the need would be investigated. In all instances a Learning Support Plan would be produced.

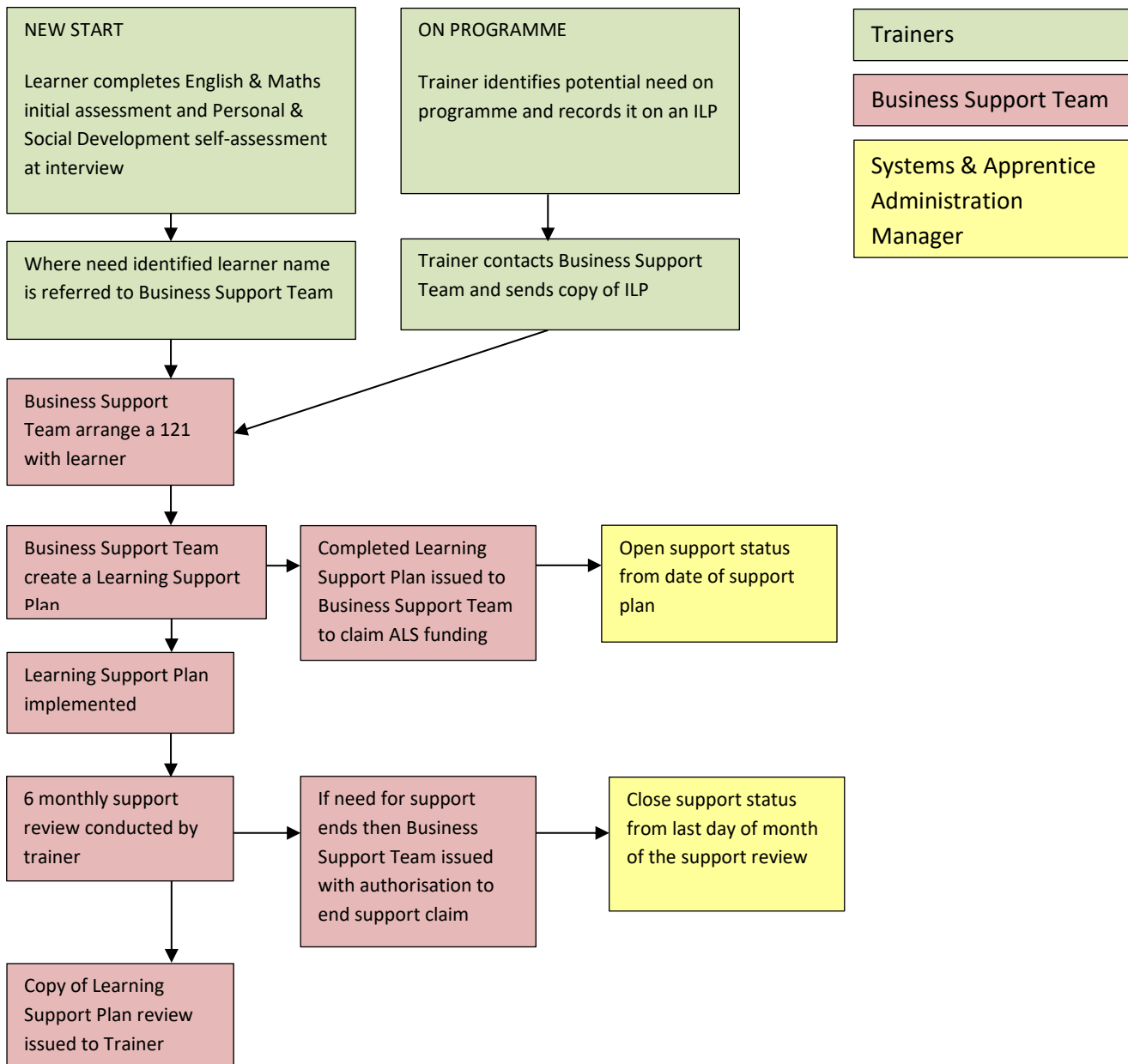
Each Learning Support Plan is reviewed on a six monthly basis and the support arrangements amended as required. Support claims would end when the support is no longer required or when the learner reaches the end of their programme<sup>1</sup>.

See the support identification flow chart.

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<sup>1</sup> ALS funding can be claimed after PED if the learner needs the support to achieve.

## Support identification flow chart



## Support documentation

### 1. Initial assessment

All learners receive an initial assessment comprising of an English and maths assessments that establish levels of competence. Learners will sit an initial screening test that identifies their approximate level. Where potential needs are identified, the learner is referred to the Business Support Team for further discussion and interview where a Learning Support Plan is prepared.

### 2. Personal & Social Development self-assessment

This document is completed at interview and focuses on five core areas where barriers to learning can exist:

- Learning History
- Home Environment & Support for Learning
- Emotions & Feelings
- Other Social Factors
- Work Readiness Skills

The document asks fifty questions linked to factors that could be barriers to learning and development. The learner's self-assessment of a need results in referral to the Business Support Team for further investigation. There is a User Guide that explains the trigger questions and identifies 19 questions that would indicate a potentially significant need. The remaining questions indicate a potential need, though may not result in significant adjustments to the programme.

### **3. Learning support plan**

Following the initial assessment, a Learning Support Plan is completed as an annex to the learner's Individual Learning Plan. This is reviewed on an ongoing basis with a formal review at least every 6 months.

When the Plan is in place and a claim deemed necessary, this is confirmed to the Business Support Manager who would add the learning support claim to the learner's ILR from the date of Learning Support Plan.

For social needs the learner would receive support from the Trainer.

### **4. Individual Learning Plan**

This is supplemented with the Learning Support Plan. This explains how the learner's needs affect the programme undertaken.

### **5. Reviews**

General programme reviews will comment on the learning support delivery and will take place regularly. The need for support will be evaluated on an ongoing basis but documented within the general programme review.

### **6. Contact log**

Where a learner has social needs the results of mentoring and support activities occurring will be reflected in a contact log.

### **7. Support review**

The six-monthly support reviews are managed by the Business Support Team and where support is no longer deemed required, the Business Support Manager is informed to update the claim. Where support is no longer required, the claim for Learning Support is ended. The frequency of support review can be increased based on the type of need encountered.

## **Types of Support**

Support activities will affect either the learner's activity within the training environment or out at the workplace. The elements below are an explanation of some of the adjustments to education that can take place. For many learners the support activity will simply be increased time spent with their normal Trainer; however, their amendments to the planned method of delivery are also justified in learning support claim.

#### **a) Specialist Maths or English support in the classroom**

Maths and English is delivered by the Trainer. Where a learner is indicated as being below Level 1 in Maths or English a Trainer can be assigned to deliver additional sessions to assist the learner. The learner's difficulties are identified through a diagnostic assessment and these areas worked upon to develop the problem area and progress the learner.

#### **b) Ongoing mentor support for Personal and Social Development (PSD)**

Where social needs are identified, a Trainer is assigned to deliver ongoing mentoring activity. This can be one to one activity in the workplace, additional contact via a variety of methods and is again dependent upon learner need. Regular contact via email, phone, Skype, Facetime is necessary with some learners, be they vulnerable or at risk based on their social needs to address their barriers. Signposting will occur to relevant support materials and sources.

## **Frequency of Support**

#### **a) Specialist Maths or English support visits in the classroom**

The frequency of the support will be flexible and dependent upon needs. These could be monthly, bi-monthly, fortnightly, or weekly.

#### **b) Frequency of mentoring**

The frequency of the mentoring activity is flexible and dependent upon need. This can be daily, weekly, or monthly but will be set out in the Learning Support Plan. A contact log will be retained evidencing the activity occurring.

#### **c) Support review**

Every learner receiving support will receive a six-monthly support review which will evaluate the effectiveness of the support and make adjustments where necessary. Frequency can increase dependent upon the severity of the need. For learners with social needs for example, frequency could be weekly, fortnightly, or monthly dependent upon the issue faced.

### **In class resources**

- **Additional days in centre**

Due to their learning or social needs sometimes, learners may require additional days at the training centre or workshops to be provided, usually on a one to one or smaller group basis but occasionally delivered through distance learning.

- **Revised attendance pattern**

Due to learning or social needs some learners do not react well in a group teaching environment and their pattern of attendance at the training centre would require amendment. This is always in conjunction with extra one to one delivery in the workplace or placement.

- **In class support**

This is the most common form of support provided in class or workshop environments. We generally have smaller class sizes than other institutions. Additional in class support may be provided to increase the one-to-one attention on those learners with support needs. Additional teaching resources can be provided either to reduce class sizes or to provide support in or out of the class.

- **Weekly one to one private discussion**

Some learners benefit from close mentoring on a one-to-one basis and receive more regular staff attention. The weekly one to one takes place away from the group and can be used to discuss personal and social difficulties and revise the Learning Support Plan and assist with learning.

- **Dexterity support**

Some learners as a result of social or physical / health needs require additional help in the practical implementation of skills. Additional training is provided to address this need. However sometimes this barrier is not solvable through additional training and ongoing support is required.

- **Intentional limited class size**

In some cases, much smaller groups will be formed which requires greater resource. Putting learners with high level needs in large classes is not going to help most of them, so tailoring the support to a smaller sized group can result in more effective results.

- **Educational seminars**

Additional training workshops can be provided to address skills deficiencies in Maths and English as these skills have significant impact on the progress made on a course. Seminars can also occur in social need support areas including family planning, budgeting, confidence building and communication.

- **Additional guided learning on Maths or English**

Some learners will require more time and individual activity on their Maths and English skills, with the need determined by their diagnostic assessment.

- **Additional or revised teaching resources**

These can be available where learner requires additional or revised teaching or learning resources, for example coloured paper and larger font.

- **Reader or note taker**

This can be provided for those learners with difficulties in this area.

- **Transport between sites and to other off-site activities for learners with mobility difficulties**

This may be required on occasions but would be an exception rather than a norm.

### **Additional support activities provided by DTA**

- **Additional visits in the workplace**

Where a learner requires additional or amended visits due to their specific learning needs, the time taken for staff to travel to and from the location has to be considered as is the cost of travel itself. This type of support would apply to a learner who requires more direct delivery in a one-to-one working environment. The learner may also require a greater number of visits based on their inherent learning needs and the programme will take longer as a result.

- **Shorter but more frequent visits**

This would be necessary for those learners with attention deficit disorders or symptoms where learning activities have to be condensed to shorter sessions to deal with the learner's problems. This increases the number of visits required in the workplace and carries additional costs.

- **Increased length of programme**

Based on their learning needs, some learners are likely to require additional guided learning hours before achievement and an increase in their planned stay as a result. This would be classed as time spent that exceeds the normal contact time with a learner without learning support needs. The programme length would be planned to be longer at start, this will not be changed on ILR while on programme.

- **Increased marking and assessment**

Learners with difficulties will often take longer to complete activities successfully and this lengthens the learning process but also the teaching process. Greater time will be required to mark, assess, and grade the learner's work.

- **Additional guided learning hours**

Some learners will require additional guided learning hours or resources on specific aims in their programme, particularly where units present a greater challenge based on learner needs in Maths or English. This would result in additional resources and time to address the need and progress the learner.

- **Increased frequency of assessment or reviews**

The frequency of reviews can be increased to address the learner's needs. For vulnerable learners, including learners with social needs, reviews will commonly be increased to deal with the individual issues that can arise as a result of the learner's needs. Weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly reviews could be needed. This may not always be a formal review and could include regular contact by their mentor. The method and frequency of assessment may also require modification to take account of learner need. This can be linked to learner confidence and self-esteem issue, health, or behaviour conditions where the pattern of assessment may be amended to that of other learners, frequency adjustments having an impact on cost.

- **Exam adjustments that will be necessary (Based on literacy or numeracy need)**



Based on need, some learners will require adjustments to exam situations they might encounter on programme, for example for functional skills or knowledge-based aims. Adjustments can include for example: reader, note taker or additional time for exams. All require adjustments to the programme and incur extra cost.

### **Additional activities to be provided by external third parties**

Where significant social needs exist, there may be need for expert external third-party delivery.

- **Personal Counselling**

On occasion a third party may be brought in to provide specialist assistance based on an individual need.

- **Speech Therapist or Communication Support Tutor (Braille)**

Again, based upon need, expert assistance may be required.

- **Social Worker**

Where social workers or other third-party support tutors are involved, there will be additional liaison between the Business Support Team and the third party to coordinate the learning package.

## Annex A

**The Personal & Social Development Self-Assessment:** Where the tick boxes are highlighted in RED, these are significant factors that would indicate a clear social need requiring support. Where highlighted in ORANGE there is likely a need that should be identified through further discussion with the Business Support Team. Where highlighted GREEN there may be a need but this must be discussed with the Business Support Team.

Your Name:		Date Completing this form	
<b>Do any of the following apply to you? (Tick where relevant)</b>			
<b>Learning History</b>			
I have difficulties with reading or writing	RED	I have difficulties with Maths at a low level	RED
I had poor or erratic attendance at school or at college	ORANGE	I had difficulties getting on with teachers	ORANGE
I had difficulties getting on with other students	ORANGE	I rarely attended school	RED
<b>Home Environment and Support for Learning</b>			
I live on my own	GREEN	I live on my own and have difficulties with my parents or legal guardians	RED
I live in temporary accommodation or have no fixed address (including sofa surfing or living with friends)	RED	My family often moves to different locations and this may affect where I can learn	GREEN
I live with parent or guardian but I do not get along with them	RED	I live with parent or guardian but I do not get along with their partners or friends	RED
A parent or my guardian would prefer me to get a job rather than be in education	ORANGE	A parent or my guardian would prefer me to get stay in education rather than get a job	RED
Where I live there are regular or often serious arguments or difficulties that affect me	RED	Where I live there are regular or serious arguments or difficulties that affect others who live at home	ORANGE
Where I live, I have a care responsibility (including a child or relative you look after) and this affects my ability to work or learn	RED	In my home there are individuals who are unemployed or have had difficulty being employed	GREEN
I have other family problems not indicated above	GREEN	I have other problems in my peer group or amongst my friends that have an impact on my ability to learn	ORANGE
<b>Social Factors</b>			
I have had issues in the past or present with the police or other crime difficulties (for example any offending behaviour or have been a victim of crime)	RED	I have had issues in the past or present with drugs or alcohol and this has affected my ability to become employed or learn	RED
I have significant difficulties managing my money or have money worries	ORANGE	I currently rely on benefits or money from your parent or guardian	ORANGE
<b>Work Readiness Skills</b>			
I have little or no work experience	GREEN	I have little or low practical skills	GREEN
I have little or no experience of attending job interviews	GREEN	I have experience of job interviews but have been mostly unsuccessful	GREEN
I do not have an up-to-date CV	GREEN	I have difficulties completing application forms	GREEN
I am worried by the prospect of work	ORANGE	I have applied for many jobs but not been offered interviews	GREEN
I do not feel I have sufficient grades or qualifications to achieve what I want to achieve	GREEN	I have difficulty using computers or modern technology	ORANGE
<b>Emotions and Feelings</b>			
I have difficulties with confidence or shyness (I see myself as having low confidence or I consider myself to be very shy)	ORANGE	I have low self-esteem (I think unfavourably of myself and my abilities)	RED
I have difficulties motivating myself (for example I struggle to get out of bed or be on time)	ORANGE	I have a low attention span and have difficulty focusing on a task for long periods of time (I get bored easily)	ORANGE
I have significant worries about my health and wellbeing	RED	I have difficulties managing my anger or frustration	RED
I regularly doubt myself or my actions	ORANGE	I have regular and significant mood swings	RED
I often feel anxious (for example in everyday situations)	RED	I sometimes feel anxious but usually only in new situations	GREEN
I have difficulties communicating with people my age	ORANGE	I have difficulties communicating with people older than me	GREEN
I have difficulties communicating with people in positions of authority	GREEN	I have difficulties communicating when in a group	GREEN
I feel panic or significant stress in new situations	ORANGE	I feel panic or significant stress in most situations	RED
I do not like taking instructions	ORANGE	I react badly to taking criticism	ORANGE
I often feel "low" or "depressed"	RED	When I feel "low" or "depressed" it is for significant periods of time	RED
I have other attitude or behavioural difficulties not indicated above	GREEN	I can get angry when taking instructions	RED

The version learners complete does not show the colours. The trainer will refer to this version to see if there is potential significant need.

## **Annex B**

### **Social Development Needs**

The SFA<sup>2</sup> regulations from 2011-12 identify in depth details of the Additional Social Needs barriers. The following are common social needs barriers with comments as to how they would impact upon our learners.

#### **i. Recent or Current Offending Behaviour**

*The [learner] must be known to the criminal justice system and be considered by others or themselves to be at risk of re-offending, or still be offending. Where offending behaviour appears to have come to an end and there is no record of further problems, these criteria must apply only if the original offence is still affecting the [learner's] life. This could include serious offences that make it more difficult for them to gain employment, or to access learning without additional supervision and support.*

This type of social need can exist amongst recruits, where such a need exists, we would need to liaise closely with the learner's social worker / parole officer / Support Tutor from an outside agency if an active area of concern, though may be an historic issue that no longer is a risk. If a live risk, we would ensure day to day advice and guidance and mentoring is available on request. Patterns of learner attendance at their placement or employment may be affected on a live issue. The time spent addressing these concerns would be additional support. We also do not underestimate the impact on the victim of recent offending behaviour, of which our learners may also be.

#### **ii. Poor or Erratic Attendance in Education**

*This may be evidenced from the school records or by the [learner] themselves when school records are incomplete or unavailable. It includes all those who missed regular full-time schooling, whether this was as a result of behavioural problems such as bullying, moving around the country or truancy and so on. In the case of a conflict between school records and the evidence of the apprentice, greater weight must be given to the testimony of the apprentice. Evidence from parents, guardians or professionals may also be used as required. Individuals who have been tutored at home or who have attended alternative education programmes, which are often part-time and have reduced attendance requirements, may also be included.*

This can be a common barrier identified among the client group, and this often results in greater mentoring needs and can affect learner attendance on programme or their presence at planned workplace visits. The learner's participation at the place of employment is likely to require close monitoring and ongoing advice. A programme of confidence building and inclusion is developed and one to one sessions help foster a sense of well-being. For older learners this is often an historic issue which is linked to confidence in the education process, dealing with fears and perception of education as a negative. Even if not a current need, its presence historically would require some form of evaluation on whether it will affect the learner's ability to learn in the present.

#### **iii. Unsupportive or Unsupported Home Environment**

*The following must be considered:*

*\*all individuals aged 16-18 who are living independently (whether they are care leavers or have left home for other reasons)*

*\* those living in temporary accommodation or of no fixed abode must be automatically included*

*\* those who are carers who have no other substantial support*

*\* those living away from the family home with other members of the family, as this may indicate conflict or other problems.*

*For individuals who have been in care for short periods of time, their home circumstances, and the impact that this has had upon them must be evaluated.*

*Evidence may be available from Support Tutors, but information from the [learner] must also be acceptable where substantial problems have been identified. Examples of this may include:*

*\* where families are in crisis or unable to cope*

*\* where there are dependency problems within the family*

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<sup>2</sup> SFA is now the ESFA

*\* where changes to the composition of the family have brought individuals into conflict, for example with a new partner of a parent or carer*

*\* where the [learner] is used to care for siblings to the detriment of their programme*

*\* where the [learner] comes from a culture of entrenched unemployment that affects their commitment to learning.*

Another common barrier faced, which can affect attendance and progress. Commonly this is the perception of the peer group rather than family, with cultures of negative attitudes to education requiring greater emphasis on new learning techniques. The main solution to the above is increased mentoring but also interaction with the family to address queries and concerns. A major barrier is low wages in several sectors we operate in and the impact this has on independent living. Educational seminars in life skills can be taught in addition to the curriculum to help with monetary planning. Learners will need additional motivation and confidence building to progress.

#### **iv. Significant Problems with Confidence or Self-esteem**

*While everyone lacks confidence in some situations, individuals with significant problems are likely to demonstrate high levels of anxiety about doing anything new, and may dwell on their failures rather than their successes, feeling unable to take even small risks. They will be either withdrawn and uncommunicative or extremely disruptive in their attempts to avoid failure. They will probably have unrealistic expectations of what they must achieve, and so attempt little because of this fear. Individuals with low self-esteem may show extremes of behaviour, such as aggression and bullying, or they may avoid contact with others.*

*Further indicators include the way that individuals present themselves. For example, they may have poor personal hygiene, be unkempt or even threatening in their appearance. Individuals with low self-esteem are likely to feel rejected, and will therefore be unable to feel positive about themselves.*

This can occur and manifests itself through disruption to learning either through non-attendance or withdrawal. The perception of self among peers is our main issue in this area. Historic labels given to the learner or that the learner has given themselves with regards education require rejuvenation of the learning process and benefits to learner. Mentoring and one to one activity is key to addressing this need, alongside the recognition of short term goal achievement, building confidence and the view of self.

#### **v. Significant Problems with Motivation or Attendance**

*Individuals who can be shown to have received a thorough initial assessment and to have received support to identify and address any underlying problems, but who still demonstrate significant problems with motivation and attendance, must be considered. This may be a continuation of school patterns. The Provider must also consider and address any difference in patterns emerging from attendance at the workplace and in-house learning. The work that the Provider undertakes to address the problems may reveal the need for a structured and more intensive programme of support.*

Motivation can be a barrier particularly linked to low wages in the sectors we operate and the pressures of family to either earn more, or not earn linked to the family benefit status. Close monitoring of behaviour is key to progress, alongside regular communication with the employer or placement.

#### **vi. Attitude or Behavioural Problems**

*This includes individuals whose attitude or behaviour problems mean that they are likely to need a high level of supervision and additional support to make the transition to the workplace, or a high level of support and supervision in the workplace. Evidence for this may be available from those supporting the apprentice when they join the programme or from school records, but individuals must also be given the opportunity to make a fresh start where this does not endanger themselves or others. Those who might be considered to be at risk may be expected to have undergone a risk assessment, and this will be acceptable evidence for this criterion. Alternatively, the Provider must have evidence that has been generated during the programme. Evidence must show the involvement of more than one member of staff, and that the apprentice has been fully involved in addressing the problems. Where an apprentice has lost a placement, this must be shown to be as a result of their poor attitude or behaviour. Evidence may include records of the support the Provider has given the apprentice, corroborated by the employer. It will be important to show that the problems were not caused by inappropriate placing or a personality clash.*

Learners can fall out with their employers, but it is an important distinction to note when it is due to a social need rather than a personality clash. Close contact is needed with employers and placements to ensure that learners are engaged correctly. The teaching style for such learners can be different and group size or delivery method amended accordingly.

**vii. Drug or Alcohol Problems**

*This does not include those who could be considered to be recreational users, where their use of drugs, alcohol or other substances does not impact upon their programme in any way. Evidence for drug or alcohol problems will usually come from their timekeeping, concentration, behaviour and so on. While some individuals may be accessing support, the majority will not and may not even have accepted that they have a problem. It will be important to build trust to facilitate these discussions. In the most severe cases, where individuals need and are prepared to undertake rehabilitation, it may mean that a more flexible programme must be considered.*

This social need can lead to withdrawal quickly. What are more common are other forms of addiction which can lead to real risk of disengagement. Learners are monitored and external advice sought for this need. Activities can include guest speakers on health and other aspects of independent living through workshops, webinars, or other means.

**viii. Health Problems**

*It is important to clarify the difference between health problems that can be addressed by the provision of specialist equipment and those problems that require higher levels of support to ensure that the apprentice is able to make the most of their learning. It is likely that only a small percentage of individuals will have seen an educational psychologist or have been statemented at school. A higher percentage will have undiagnosed problems leading to behaviours that will mean that some of these individuals may be assessed under other categories. Individuals are often reluctant to admit to mental health problems because of the stigma attached to them. An [learner] with a phobia will have intense symptoms of anxiety, but these fears will arise only in the particular situations that frighten them. A phobia is likely to lead to the [learner] avoiding situations that they know will cause them anxiety. In the worst cases, their life will be dominated by the precautions they have to take to avoid the situation they fear. Support may be required to help them to face any issues that impact upon their programme and to seek medical help where appropriate.*

The use of specialists including physical Support Tutors and mental health workers can be implemented if a need identified. In many instances the delivery mechanism of learning is the key aspect that can change to suit the need.

**ix. Significant Problems with Communication and Interaction**

*An [learner] with significant problems with communication and interaction will usually be identifiable from the first interview. Individuals may have problems communicating with all age groups, or with specific groups. For example, some individuals have particular difficulty in communicating with adults, or those who may be perceived as being in authority. They may also interact inappropriately in certain situations. These individuals may have difficulty in listening to what others are saying and in reading other people's facial cues and body language. Some individuals will talk very quietly, avoid eye contact, and display an inability to hold a normal conversation and reluctance or inability to ask questions – they are often termed as being extremely shy. Others may be unable to hold a normal conversation without shouting or being overly demanding. They may tend to invade other people's personal space, and appear to be aggressive. In group situations, individuals meeting these criteria may be at either end of the continuum, being either extremely withdrawn or disruptive. In the workplace, individuals with communication problems will find it hard to build working relationships and to develop the support that they need in order to learn. In some cases, this may affect their ability to work safely. This may also apply to individuals with language difficulties or those who speak English as a second language. However, those individuals who have significant issues with the English language must be directed to appropriate ESOL provision before commencing an [another programme].*

Learners with this barrier find it difficult to secure or maintain employment. Or this can be a historical issue that learners subsequently relapse into. Ongoing mentoring required but also educational activities within a classroom or one to one setting can assist.

**x. Single Parents with Particular Difficulties Finding Time to Learn**

*This includes individuals who are solely responsible for the support of one or more children, and pregnant young women who are without the support of a partner. These individuals would be unlikely to access learning provision. They are likely to have had a disrupted or possibly unsuccessful experience of school.*

This barrier can be encountered. A change to the delivery method is common, with visits having to occur often around an unusual schedule or pattern of attendance. This can incur additional costs, more postponed or amended visits and unsocial hours. There is an increased cost where this exists.

**xi. Work Readiness Skills**

Though not recorded in previous Agency guidance these social barriers would commonly be addressed through the most appropriate learning pathway. Little or no work experience, low practical skills, no experience of attending job interviews, difficulties completing application form, worries about the prospect of work would be addressed primarily through alternative learning pathways.