

NEW STARTERS ESOL PROGRAMME TIPS TO AID A SMOOTH START



INITIAL INTERVIEWS

During the summer holidays, you may find that this is usually a busy period for initial interviews. It can be beneficial if it is the same person who undertakes all the initial interviews. A standard interview form can be used to gain the information needed at this stage. It aids communication if you can have pre-made visual prompt cards with pictures illustrating what you are asking for and what information you are telling the students. This can be as useful for communication as using a tablet to translate information, is not 100% accurate and not all young people are literate in their own language.

Once you have made the cards, you can add to them and have a bank of visual communication cards on hand to refer to.

Ideally, a Social Worker or Key Worker / Foster Carer should be with the young person at the initial interview so that they too can see and agree to any required declarations, such as safeguarding and data protection.

It needs to be carefully explained to the young person what you are asking them to sign, e.g. the code of conduct. Social Workers and Key Worker /Carers can also sign the initial interview form. The interviewer too should sign the form to say that the information shared has been understood.

At this point, it is important to check that the young person's name is spelt correctly. For example, does the spelling of their name on their ARC card match the spelling on the Social Care recording system, or your records or the name on their bank account.

This initial meeting is a nice opportunity to start building a rapport with the young person and you can ask them about their interests such as, football, cricket and music using the visual cards.

You may want to ask for ID at this stage, which could be their ARC Card or a letter from the Social Worker stating that they are a child in care. This is known as a Section 20 letter.

NEXT STEP, INDUCTION

Send a letter through the post to invite the young person to their induction session.

If they have had a late initial interview, then the induction invite can be sent via email, or via a telephone call to Key Workers, Carers or the Social Worker to ensure that the young person knows the date and time of their induction at the centre.

Some young people are also supported by Leaving Care Workers who can also be notified.

Induction works best when it can take place in small groups. The code of conduct can be explained again at induction. Induction works well as a full morning session.

During induction, initial learning assessments can be completed. A paper-based assessment works best at this stage, as a BKSB assessment may not be accessible to pre-entry ESOL learners. Please be aware that learners may not be computer literate.

The paper-based assessment can use lots of visuals to illustrate the questions being asked. The Pearson Entry 1 reading paper can be adapted to assess learners at a pre-entry stage and can also be a useful way of capturing progression.

Students need to be given a timetable of their learning days and hours.

The widget symbol online tool can be a helpful aid to communication and PP+ can be used to purchase Widget for the learners.

Again, using your bank of visual prompts will aid the success of the induction process. For example,

- I can do / I can understand = smiley face
- I can't / I don't understand = sad or confused face
- You can drink water = glass of water and a thumbs up
- You can't drink energy drinks, = picture of energy drink and a thumbs down
- You can ask questions = question mark and a smiley face
- You can't be late = a clock face with a sad face.



NEXT STEP, INDUCTION

During induction, you may want to conduct your health and safety briefing. This works best as a walk through the centre. If you have a fire evacuation procedure and meeting point, physically go there and walk through the procedure, starting with an image of fire and symbol for fire exit.

If you have a lockdown procedure, once again go through this physically to check that they understand what they will need to do. You don't want the fire evacuation and lockdown procedures getting mixed up if an alarm sounds. You could use a visual of a threat e.g. a fire symbol to explain why you need to follow the evacuation procedure.

We would recommend using cartoon visuals for this as it can be alarming to our UASC learners otherwise. Maybe something as simple as identifying a good man / woman and a bad/ man or woman, keeping it as simple as possible.

You may need them to understand that with a lockdown, they need to lock the door, turn the lights out and turn phones off etc - refer to your policy for details.

This needs to be shown as it would be done in real time.

During induction, it is helpful to show the students where they can go to pray or worship.

The same applies to a first aid situation. The students need to know what to do if they have an accident or if first aid is required. Simulation works best by going through several possible scenarios that may happen.

After you have been through the basic induction information that you need to share, you can then continue with participatory activities. These may include activities based around: -

- The Union Flag
- Voting
- Mutual respect for differences including types of worship or non-worship
- Democracy
- Rule of law
- The Prime Minister
- Liberty and freedom



NEXT STEP, INDUCTION

Visual prompts are helpful for all the activities. You don't need lots - just a few main images such as a picture of the prime minister or the Royal Family. Visuals work well when they are attached to sticks to make it easier for the person communicating. You can always keep a pack of master visuals in a file for continued use.

It can be helpful to role play some scenarios, such as speeding in a car and what would happen or as a group, you could conduct a mock vote.

Explain to your learners the signing in procedure and that they may need to wait in a queue to sign in and out of the centre.

Hint, remember some of your learners are learning to learn so you may want to think about how you would like them to communicate when they have a question. Do you want them to put their hands up or give a learner a talking stick to hold to indicate it is their turn to talk?

It works well to finish off the morning and induction with a quiz to check what the young people have remembered about the key points of information covered during induction. You could also check that they know their timetables so are ready to start the learning programme.

***Hint, it can be helpful to refer to analogue and digital formats when conveying time. ***

You may also want to cover areas such as:

- Phone use
- Returning to lessons on time
- When they can pray or worship
- Expectations surrounding eating in class.

Please be mindful that these discussions do require some sensitivity as learners have been through traumatic life experiences.

For example, if a learner is worried, they will not get to eat, it could be that you explain to them that it is permitted for them to have an item of food on their table but with the understanding that they can eat it at break time.



ONCE THE LEARNING PROGRAMME STARTS

BURSARY APPLICATION

The students will need to be supported by their Social Worker/Key Worker/ Carer to fill in a bursary application form. If the student has a bank account, the bursary can be transferred straight into the account at the end of a learner's week.

If the student does not yet have a bank account, a voucher for the value of the bursary can be given to the learner e.g. supermarket vouchers.

The bursary should be used to promote educational purposes, cover travel costs or fund educational equipment if needed.

You can refer to the vulnerable groups bursary which is found on the .GOV website for further details. <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund> Please be mindful that this guidance changes and should be checked in the summer for any government updates. The bursary application then can go through the Learning Centres Manager and finance team to be set up. The amount given to the students are usually attendance linked.



REVIEW AND PEP MEETINGS

It is expected that the young people have a six weekly review to discuss progress, address any concerns and plan next steps. This is usually with an allocated staff member at the centre.

A PEP meeting should be agreed early so that everyone is aware of the date for the PEP meeting and where it is being held. An interpreter, if required, should also be arranged in advance to attend.

It is advised to book a PEP date for new learners a few weeks into their learning programme so that there is meaningful initial feedback from the tutors and their individual learning needs can be understood and discussed during the PEP meeting. PEP meetings, supported by interpreters, are excellent opportunities to evaluate how the learner is progressing, for learners to explain what they think is going well or to raise any concerns they may have and to discuss any support they may need.

Pupil premium can be used to support a learner's educational progress. You might consider purchasing the following to support learning for ESOL students: dictionaries, home language to English, picture dictionaries, reading for pleasure books in home language, reading for English learning books, maths resources, books, educational games, laptop or other language learning aids etc.

If a need is identified and is linked to a target within the PEP document, pupil premium can be allocated to support this. This needs to be agreed by the Virtual School Education Advisor.

*Hint, it is useful to pre-order a basic starter pack for your learners and to distribute them when they first start the course/learning programme. This could contain A4 paper, pens, highlighters, an A4 ring binder, sticky notes and the course textbook that will be used with them in the classroom. *



FINAL THOUGHTS

It works well when:

- The student feel that their classmates are their teammates and that everyone is there to mutually support each other.
- The student know that their tutors are their champions who are there to support them.
- There is flexibility should a problem arise.
- There is the right balance between being welcoming, supportive and keeping them safe as well as maintaining expectations, routines and boundaries.
- There are consistent and confident personnel who work well, with and for the learners.



