

“Being a career development professional and helping people to maximise their human and social capital and make the most of the transitions throughout their working lives is a privilege. To be able to do this effectively requires professional training and the ongoing maintenance and development of skills and knowledge throughout the career development professional’s career. This complex role requires specialist skills and knowledge.” – Career Professionals in the 21st Century A Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in the UK Career Development Sector, CDI, December 2016

Who is this for?

- The framework is for the use of all career development professionals who carry out one-to-one interventions with clients. It has been developed principally for use with those professionals who work with young people in school/college but can also be used to assess the quality of interventions with other types of client.
- It is particularly useful for those professionals who are working in schools/colleges who hold or are working towards the Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS), where quality checks of interventions is a requirement, and especially if the practitioner is self-employed or is employed directly by the school/college and is therefore not subject to quality checks already by their employer.

What is the purpose?

- Registered Career Development Professionals and other CDI Members must adhere to the CDI Code of Ethics and those on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals must undertake and record a minimum of 25 hours CPD each year.
- The Career Development Intervention Observation/Self-Reflection Process allows Career Development Professionals to be observed in their one-to-one interventions with clients; to reflect on practice and to plan for development based on the feedback. It thereby provides a valuable focus for CPD.
- It is a useful tool for CPD for any professional who is looking to continuously reflect on practice; reflection arguably being the most widely-used self-evaluation strategy for continuing professional development.ⁱ
- As in all professions, the Career Development Professional needs to be constantly upgrading their knowledge and skills including ongoing development of techniques, strategies and models as well as underpinning knowledge. It is incumbent upon us to keep up to date. If we neglect to pursue this continuing learning process we are short changing our clients.
- Observation of practice and receiving constructive feedback allows the practitioner to gain an objective insight into their own practice. It provides an opportunity to learn and practise new skills and to find better ways to help clients.

- It can provide evidence of quality assessment and evaluation of professional practice for purposes of the Quality in Careers Standard.

How can it be used?

- It is a tool that can be used to quality assure interventions and/or to facilitate reflection and to demonstrate commitment to good practice and CPD.
- We recommend that a Career Development Professional undergoes a quality assurance observation of a one-to-one intervention at least once a year. This should include identification of development needs to be recorded and taken forward by the practitioner. (NB if a process is already in place which performs this function, then you may continue to use your current system).
- Reflection is a key part of this process and practitioners should ensure that they have taken appropriate time and effort to reflect on the intervention and act on any feedback.
- Feedback and any identified development needs should be taken forward to form part of any support and supervision and/or performance review and CPD prioritised and planned accordingly.
- The process may also be used a tool for self-assessment and/or peer assessment but it should be noted that, although to be encouraged, these methods will not replace any need to be observed formally once a year.

Who will carry out the observation?

- The observation should be carried out by an experienced Career Development Practitioner (qualified to level 6 or above) who has an up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in career development activities and is sufficiently objective.
- It is good practice for the observer to hold a recognised assessor qualification (D32/33, A1, Award in Assessing Competence in the Workplace) but they should, as a minimum, have a sound understanding of good practice in assessment.
- The arrangements for the observation can be agreed between the adviser and observer to meet their needs and situation. However, the planning, process and recording of the observation should adhere to good practice in terms of the practitioner and observer being i) fully prepared and having a clear understanding of what is required ii) the client being made aware of, and satisfied with, what is going on. The written feedback will include, as far as possible, the client's responses after the intervention which should be obtained by the observer without the adviser present.
- The practitioner and observer should agree in advance how and when feedback will be provided and discuss and record any development needs together; how these will be met and an appropriate timescale. The CDI CPD Resources area, accessible to CDI members, has a range of resources which can help with the development of skills and knowledge related to career development interventions.

The process

- The process is deliberately straight forward so that it can be adapted to fit a range of contextual situations.
- It has been mapped to the National Occupational Standards: Career Development. <http://www.the CDI.net/National-Occupational-Standards>, in particular, NOS numbers 1,2,3,4,5,7,9 and 12
- Although presented for practical purposes as a linear process, it is very important that the intervention is assessed holistically and not in a linear fashion. *For example, contracting and agreeing ground rules will be covered (and revisited) as is deemed appropriate to the client and the situation and does not have to be seen as the first activity during the intervention.*

Notes on the process

Agree	The Career Development Professional (CDP) must ensure that the client has full understanding of what has been discussed. – “Is that OK?” is not sufficient to demonstrate agreement.
Skills and Strategies	For example, may include the use of career related information (CRI) and labour market information (LMI) to inform the discussion, referral, reframing, challenging, accessing alternative/specialist support, summarising, reflecting, paraphrasing, responding appropriately to the client’s verbal and non-verbal signals. Use of motivational techniques
Communication	Level of language appropriate to the age, experience and ability of the client. Avoidance of jargon and technical terms. Adapting to needs of clients with disabilities.
Career development strengths, needs and barriers	Strengths e.g. resilience
SMARTER	<p>“S” is for Specific.</p> <p>“M” is for Measurable.</p> <p>“A” is for Attainable.</p> <p>“R” is for Relevant or sometimes defined as Realistic</p> <p>“T” is for Time-specific.</p> <p>“E” is for Evaluate. Constant evaluation of goals is essential to reaching goals.</p> <p>“R” is for Revise or sometimes defined as Reviewed</p>
Ethical and reflective practice	See CDI Code of Ethics .
Challenging	<p>Challenging is a supportive activity which is about addressing and exploring discrepancy. It is an essential skill used by the CDP to help raise the client’s self-awareness. It is used to confront inaccuracy, ambiguity and to check realism.</p> <p>Clients should be challenged when there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal messages • Inconsistency in an account • Discrepancy between action and words • Confused, inconsistent or unrealistic perception of self, others or the situation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misinformation • An unwillingness to take responsibility
Environment	<p>You may not always be able to choose your environment (e.g. when using premises that are not yours) but you should do your utmost to meet your client’s needs re the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • welcoming (e.g. greet clients appropriately, show them where to sit) • comfortable (e.g. have comfortable seats, try to sit at the same level) • a place with few distractions (e.g. minimise interruptions) • somewhere where privacy and confidentiality can be maintained non-threatening (e.g. a place where people can feel relaxed and comfortable). <p>Creating an environment of trust and confidentiality is especially important for certain clients e.g. who are distressed or have special needs.</p>

Recording of the observation

It is important that observers record the interaction in enough detail to be of practical value to the professional being assessed. Agreement should be negotiated between the professional being observed and the observer about how and when feedback will be received.

Further information

The above process was developed by the CDI Professional Standards Committee. If you have any questions or comments please contact the CDI Professional Development Manager, claire.johnson@thecdi.net.

ⁱ Reflection and reflective practice are prominent features in Career Professionals in the 21st Century Blueprint; the National Occupational Standards: Career Development and the CDI Code of Ethics.