

BSquared

Introduction to Steps4Life Assessment Framework

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Background

Steps4Life is our new framework for individuals with SEND who are working towards independent living. It is primarily designed to be used from Key Stage 4 onwards. In England, the law states that although you can leave school at age 16, you must either remain in full time education, start an apprenticeship or traineeship or spend 20 hours or more a week working/volunteering while in part-time education or training. The new SEN code of practice extended the age councils have duty to support individuals with SEND from 19 to 25. These changes mean there are more places required for students over the age of 16. There is also a requirement for a more relevant curriculum and assessment framework to suit the needs of this growing cohort.

The majority of settings I have talked to change the curriculum students follow at the end of key stage 3, from a curriculum linked to the national curriculum to a curriculum designed to make the students more independent and to prepare the students for life after their time in education. A curriculum designed to teach life skills, employability skills and independence. Schools often talk about their Post-16 department which follow this approach to learning, but they often start the approach from age 14, when they look at the suitability of GCSEs for their students and look for alternatives. Some students will be working on this curriculum for 11 years, and when you think that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers a 5 year range, the Primary Curriculum covers a 6 year range and the Secondary Curriculum covers a 5 year range, 11 years is a long time and will have a big impact on the individual. Currently there are limited resources available and limited choices when it comes to assessment. The majority of resources and assessment tools follow a narrow and simple approach, based on guidance from the DfE, that misses out a wide range of areas.

The majority of settings follow an accreditation system for their curriculum assessment purposes. There are a number of providers including ASDAN, Princes Trust, AQA, SQA, OCR and others that provide accredited qualifications after completing a scheme of work. These schemes of work and qualifications only cover a small part of the curriculum individuals will be following, Accreditation is only appropriate for some areas.

Steps4Life

The aim for Steps4Life is to provide a broad assessment framework that settings can use to prepare individuals for life. Some individuals will be working towards independent living, with employment while others will be working towards semi-independent living and others will be in supported living. Individuals could be assessed using this framework for 11 years (or more) and there is a need for professionals working with individuals to show progress as part of the EHCP process, the assessment system they use needs to support this. The Steps4Life framework is designed to support professionals in showing progress by showing how an individual has developed existing skills, learnt new skills or has used skills in different contexts. A student may learn to tell the time within Maths, but then apply that skill within daily routines, journeys, socialising and within other areas. Some individuals can transfer skills easily, for others the transference can take longer to embed.

The Steps4Life has been designed to support any individual prepare for independent living. One aspect of the EHCP process is supporting the student 'Preparing for Adulthood'. Schools are also required to support pupils' personal development, part of this is preparing students for the next stage of their life.

The framework is primarily aimed to support individuals aged 14 to 25 who have an EHCP and are in an education setting, the framework can also be used with:

- Students with SEND who may be working towards GCSEs or other qualifications, but need support around independence, living skills and employability skills
- Students in Alternative Provisions who are following a more practical curriculum
- Younger students to help promote independence, life skills and preparing for adulthood
- Individuals in care settings. Being in care may be a temporary situation, individuals may be working towards semi-independent living or even independent living.

4 Broad Areas of Need

For some individuals using a skill within a practical situation is a big challenge due to their individual needs Steps4Life is designed to be used alongside our other new frameworks designed to cover all 4 broad areas of need. The Steps4Life focuses on Cognition and Learning, but our other frameworks we have developed to cover Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory Physical will allow settings to profile and help support development across all 4 broad areas of need. An individual may know who to talk to when they need help, but due to their anxiety is unable to do this in practice. Settings need to support individuals across all 4 areas of need.

Steps4Life Areas

Academic Skills	Employability Skills	Life Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speaking and Listening ○ Reading ○ Writing ● Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number* ○ Using and Applying* ○ Shape, Space and Measure* ● Digital Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Being responsible online ○ Devices and Information ○ Communicating ○ Creating and Editing skills ● PSHE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health and Wellbeing ○ Relationships ○ The Wider World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership Skills ○ Choosing a Job ○ Getting a Job ○ Attitudes and Behaviours ○ Occupational Skills ○ Know your Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preparing Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using Utensils & Appliances ○ Preparing Meals, Snacks & Drinks ○ Hygiene, Health & Safety ○ Taking Nutrition ● Self-Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing Clothing Needs ○ Washing & Bathing ○ Managing Toilet Needs ○ Managing and Monitoring Health ● Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Entertainment, Leisure & Recreation ○ Around the Home ○ News & Current Events ○ Managing Money ● Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moving Around ○ Planning a Journey ○ Completing a Journey

Personal Independent Payments (PIP)

As part of the development of this framework, we have been looking at the areas within PIP. A large number of individuals working on the Steps4Life framework will go on to be assessed against the PIP framework. We have ensured that Steps4Life framework covers all the areas of the PIP when used in combination with our Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Sensory Physical frameworks.

PIP Area	Steps4Life Area
Preparing food	Preparing Food
Taking nutrition	Preparing Food
Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition	Self-Care
Washing and bathing	Self-Care
Managing toilet needs or incontinence	Self-Care
Dressing and undressing	Self-Care
Communicating Verbally	Communication & Interaction Framework
Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words	Communication & Interaction Framework
Engaging with other people face to face	Communication & Interaction Framework
Making budgeting decisions	Independence
Planning and following journeys	Travel
Moving around	Travel

Steps4Life Ability Range

The Steps4Life covers a wide range of areas and a wide ability range, it has 12 levels in total:

- 7 levels that are the equivalent of P1 to P8 which replace the old Milestones
- Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
- RFQ Level 1 and 2

The grid below shows how the Steps4Life levels compare to our other frameworks

B Squared's Post-Rochford Assessment Frameworks for Connecting Steps			
Engagement Steps	Progression Steps	Primary Steps	Steps4Life
	PS 10		
	PS 9	Greater D&B	Level 2
	PS 8	Y 6	
	PS 7	Y 5	Level 1
	PS 6	Y 4	Entry 3
	PS 5	Y 3	Entry 2
	PS 4	Y 2	Entry 1
	PS 3	Y 1	
	PS 2	PS 3	LS 7
	PS 1	PS 2	LS 6
ES 6		PS 1	LS 5
ES 5			LS 4
ES 4			LS 3
ES 3			LS 2
ES 2			LS 1
ES 1			

Academic Skills

Study programmes should always include English and maths at an appropriate level - all learners need to work on these core skills. We believe that, in addition, learners would benefit from developing skills and knowledge within the fields of ICT. A proportion of learners with SEND will find computer-based work more motivating and less overwhelming than traditional subjects. It is therefore important to encourage settings to develop this area to help current learners to find work in the future. Some learners will have social, emotional or mental health difficulties (SEMH) which affect their ability to engage with communal or communication-based learning. These learners will benefit from continuing study within the field of PSHE.

The 'Academic Skills' assessment frameworks will comprise the following areas:

- The 'English' framework will assess the practical communication skills that learners use in everyday-life. It will focus more heavily on English language skills rather than English literature.
- The 'Maths' framework will assess the real-world uses of maths are require in modern society. It will focus on problem solving; reasoning; and the practical application of mathematics and statistics.
- The 'Digital Skills' framework will assess the commonplace computing skills required to use technological devices. It will focus on interacting with technology; the inventive and productive uses of computer systems; e-safety and privacy.
- The 'PSHE' framework will assess a wide variety of applied social skills. It reflects the recent guidance from the DfE on Sex and Relationship Education. The areas within PSHE are Health and Wellbeing, Sex and Relationship Education and Citizenship

Employability Skills

A large number of learners with SEND will go on to gain purposeful occupation and be able to contribute to their communities in some way. It is important that they are supported in achieving this goal. They need to be able to identify the skills they already possess and may need, identify relevant jobs and be able to find employment. The pupils will also need to understand the various aspects and implications of a job as well as their rights.

Most learners benefit from work experience to help inform their career choices, develop the relevant occupational skills and help instil the attitudes and behaviours expected at work. Work experience can take many forms including work tasters, participation in social action projects, or a work placement. Work experience should be an integral part of most learners' study programme and for those choosing to enter a particular occupation or profession or those taking a technical route to achieve their career aims.

The 'Employability Skills' assessment frameworks will comprise the following areas:

- The 'Employment' section will assess universal work-related skills. It will focus on leadership skills, identifying appropriate employment, gaining employment, interpersonal skills, personal organisation and workplace rights.
- The 'Vocational Skills' section will be an ongoing project to assess the prerequisite skills required by specific job types. This will take time to develop and will be developed in partnership with schools.

Vocational Skills

These are planned to follow later and could include Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Care, Business, Construction, ICT, Leisure, Travel and Tourism and Retail and Commercial Enterprise. We will need to work with schools to create the content.

Life Skills

A major part of provisions for KS4 and beyond for learners with SEND focuses on personal skills that they will need in adult life. Learner's future living arrangements will vary widely; some will live in fully supported residential or medical care centres, others will live in semi-sheltered accommodation, whilst many will live independently. The duties and requirements on each of these individuals will also vary. However, where possible all learners should be encouraged to undertake as many tasks and activities which enable them to support themselves to the best of their ability. In doing this, settings can assist learners to attain the most independent mode of living that they can cope with later in life.

The 'Life Skills' assessment frameworks will comprise the following areas:

- The 'Food' section will assess a learner's ability to make meals and snacks, use a range of appliances and utensils, understand hygiene and Health and Safety and understand nutrition.
- The 'Self Care' section will assess a learner's ability to manage and monitor their own health, manage their clothing and their ability to wash, bathe and use the toilet
- The 'Travel' section will assess a learner's ability to plan and follow journeys; and their ability to move around.
- The 'Independence' section will assess the learner's ability to manage money, follow routines, manage a living space, to socialise, use leisure and recreation facilities and to understand and be part of their community and the wider world.

Life Skills is a Big Area!

When you first look at the Life Skills framework, you may feel daunted at the amount of content it contains, but remember:

- The areas are huge! There are so many areas which are bigger than we realised when we started this project. There are so many areas, so many skills or knowledge we take for granted.
- The developmental range is also huge, skills go from *Reacts to movement with minor physiological changes when objects or people move suddenly* on Step 1 to *Identifies some legal entitlements if the journey is affected, e.g. how the rail operator should help if a lift is broken at a step-free station or their train is cancelled* at Level 2
- You don't have to do it all. Choose the areas that are right for the individuals you are working with, but it may make you think about areas you aren't covering.
- The individuals may be working on this content for a long time
- The framework is designed to help individuals enjoy life, not just survive. This means we have added sections on getting involved in the local community, using leisure facilities, socialising, online gaming and more. These are often missed out in Government guidance but will help promote lifelong positive mental health.
- The world is complicated and is getting more complicated every year. In some parts of the UK you will still buy a paper ticket for a bus, but in London it is all contactless, tickets are on mobile phones, the Government is moving towards digital first across all areas to improve efficiency. Individuals need to understand subscription services, micro transactions on mobile devices, fake news and more.
- The world is getting smaller. Travel is easier and cheaper, technology has made it easier to find information about travel destinations and remove the language barrier. Technology has also changed the way we interact, it has removed a number of barriers that face people with disabilities and allows them to exist in worlds/communities where their disability doesn't define them. Individuals need to understand these communities exist and how they can access them.

Feedback

Steps4Life is a new framework from B Squared and as with all our products we welcome feedback. Feedback is important to us and we use the feedback we receive to improve our products. The Steps4Life framework covers a wide range of areas and a wide range of abilities. If you feel we have missed an area or skill or we have content at the wrong level, please get in contact. Please call 01252 870133 or send an email to dalep@bsquared.co.uk.