



# Supporting induction with online assessment



## Background and context

This case study is from the Family Services Staff Development Unit of a Metropolitan District Council in the north of England. The Council worked in partnership with a company focussed on delivering information technology and social care solutions to the social care sector.

The company has developed a modular suite of assessments. These enable local authorities and care organisations to quickly and easily assess new and existing social care workers' knowledge against the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Induction Standards. The suite includes an e-assessment tool.

## Scope of the case study

This induction programme has been provided for new children and young people's staff within the District Council's Family Services Unit. Trainee social workers also have access online to the e-assessment tool.

## Highlights

- Through the e-assessment tool, it has been possible to identify workers' strengths and weaknesses at the start of their employment, enabling an accurate focus on specific learning needs
- The e-assessment provides instant results, generating reports that can be used to plan further development
- The online tool has proved to be a reliable method for benchmarking a staff member's growth and development over time
- Managers can be creative in how the tool is used. It can be used individually for new staff or as part of team development to assess experienced workers' knowledge. If used across the entire workforce, it can test staff members' overall knowledge and understanding of the Common Core



## Description of the new induction arrangements

The District Council's induction programme previously used workbooks and training activities. They have now integrated online assessments to streamline the induction process and enable managers quickly to gain a clear picture of a new staff member's knowledge and experience.

The induction programme now addresses all six areas of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge based around CWDC's seven Induction Standards.

Standard 1	Understand the principles and values essential for working with children and young people
Standard 2	Understand your role as a worker (employed/self employed)
Standard 3	Understand health and safety requirements
Standard 4	Know how to communicate effectively
Standard 5	Understand the development of children and young people
Standard 6	Safeguard children (keep them safe from harm)
Standard 7	Develop yourself

The online assessments are designed to support existing induction programmes, whether taught, e-learning or a blended learning model. The e-assessments are intended to be simple, user friendly and available online. Each completed assessment generates a report that can be used by managers for induction planning and training needs analysis.

Induction is completed within a suggested 24 week timeframe from the commencement of employment. The line manager signs off completion of the induction activities and of the workbook, which generates a certificate of successful completion.

The initial impact of the e-assessment tool has been positive. Managers are aware that the induction process is their responsibility and have welcomed the assessment tool in support of this process.

When used with trainee social workers, the e-assessment tool has measured levels of knowledge at the start of training.

Managers' feedback on the e-assessment tool's effectiveness

**"It is an excellent tool. I have also used it with social work students."**

**"I can really see the benefit of it and will be using it on a team development day to ensure that all staff are assessed on the induction standards. It will be a great opportunity to stimulate discussion within the team about best practice."**

## Roles and responsibilities

The line manager takes responsibility for the induction process, obtains the CWDC Induction Standards workbook, and books staff onto basic training, including appropriate health and safety training.

The staff member is assessed online at the start of employment, part way through and at the end of the induction period.

The line manager also liaises with the District Council's staff development unit to identify appropriate training programmes to meet participants' individual learning requirements. Mentors are allocated, drawn from staff with greater experience.

This induction model was introduced through an initial presentation to the divisional managers group and the extended managers group. It was accompanied by an introductory workshop on the use and purpose of the e-assessment tool. The District Council staff development team continue to provide support as required.

Managers can be creative in how the tool is used. They can use it individually for new staff or as part of team development to assess experienced workers' knowledge. If used across the workforce, the tool can be used as a check on all workers' knowledge and understanding of the Common Core.

Currently service users' and line managers' involvement in relation to staff performance is ad hoc. This will be addressed more formally in the coming year.



## Resources

Induction, including the online assessment tool, is guided by the CWDC's detailed workbooks. For each induction standard a clear statement sets out what the participant is expected to know, and understand and do to demonstrate they have met that standard.

The assessment tool has been developed so that, if used several times, different questions are asked. It is flexible enough to monitor staff know-how at any stage. The individual assessments provide important evaluation evidence to show that learning has taken place and that training is achieving the desired outcomes.

Following every completed assessment, a page of results shows the questions asked and whether they were answered correctly or not. A learning needs report identifies areas for further development to meet the standard.

The Induction Standards can be accessed at [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/induction-standards](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/induction-standards)

## Links to qualifications

The induction programme links to the Health and Social Care National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and completion of the induction programme is considered to provide some evidence to support achievement of NVQ.

There is not an exact match between the CWDC Induction Standards and the knowledge specifications for NVQs but there is a good deal of common ground to support the assessment and achievement of both the Induction Standards and, where appropriate, relevant core units within NVQs.

## Quality assurance

The e-assessment tool is a very recent innovation. The District Council does not yet have a specific system for quality assuring its effectiveness. However, this has been identified as a priority for the near future. The verification of induction workbooks by the District Council's training department offers one way forward.

## Lessons learned

The online assessment tool reinforces the message that learning and the evaluation of competence begin from day one in the workplace. It has helped to create specific links to Every Child Matters and the Common Core, as well as National Occupational Standards/ NVQs. There have been challenges in ensuring that all managers take responsibility for induction and that all staff members have access to a robust induction process.

### Plans to improve induction include:

- Make better links between the Common Core and aspects of training delivery beyond induction
- Ensure a more robust quality assurance system within the induction process
- Improve and ensure service user involvement throughout the induction process
- Look at the assessment tool in relation to foster carers and how it will support their training, support and development standards

There is now potential for using the online assessment tool in recruitment. As the assessments give a fast and accurate reading of an individual's knowledge, they could assist decision making in the recruitment process.



## Induction Case Studies - Contact Information

This is one in a series of nine induction case studies. The other case studies are listed below.

Case Study	Sector	Contact
An integrated workforce approach to induction	Children's Workforce Development Council	<a href="http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/">www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/</a> <a href="mailto:Integratedworking@cwdcouncil.org.uk">Integratedworking@cwdcouncil.org.uk</a>
The induction of Youth Offending Service staff – an example of a multi-disciplinary team	Skills for Justice	<a href="http://www.skillsforjustice.com">www.skillsforjustice.com</a> <a href="mailto:info@skillsforjustice.com">info@skillsforjustice.com</a>
The induction of staff working with children and young people in custody through the Juvenile Awareness Staff Programme	Skills for Justice	<a href="http://www.skillsforjustice.com">www.skillsforjustice.com</a> <a href="mailto:info@skillsforjustice.com">info@skillsforjustice.com</a>
The induction of creative practitioners within and beyond the arts and creative and cultural sector	Creative & Culture Skills	<a href="http://www.ccskills.org.uk">www.ccskills.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@ccskills.org.uk">info@ccskills.org.uk</a>
The induction of school lunchtime supervisors, school administrators and teaching assistants	Training and Development Agency for Schools	<a href="http://www.tda.gov.uk">www.tda.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:supportinduction@tda.gov.uk">supportinduction@tda.gov.uk</a>
The induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs)	Training and Development Agency for Schools	<a href="http://www.tda.gov.uk">www.tda.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:induction@tda.gov.uk">induction@tda.gov.uk</a>
The induction of teaching assistants	Training and Development Agency for Schools	<a href="http://www.tda.gov.uk">www.tda.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:supportinduction@tda.gov.uk">supportinduction@tda.gov.uk</a>
<b>Supporting induction with online assessment</b>	<b>Children's Workforce Development Council</b>	<b><a href="http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/">www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/</a></b> <b><a href="mailto:Integratedworking@cwdcouncil.org.uk">Integratedworking@cwdcouncil.org.uk</a></b>
The induction of activity leaders at outdoor activity centres	SkillsActive	<a href="http://www.skillsactive.com">www.skillsactive.com</a> <a href="mailto:skills@skillsactive.com">skills@skillsactive.com</a>