

## Section 139a assessments

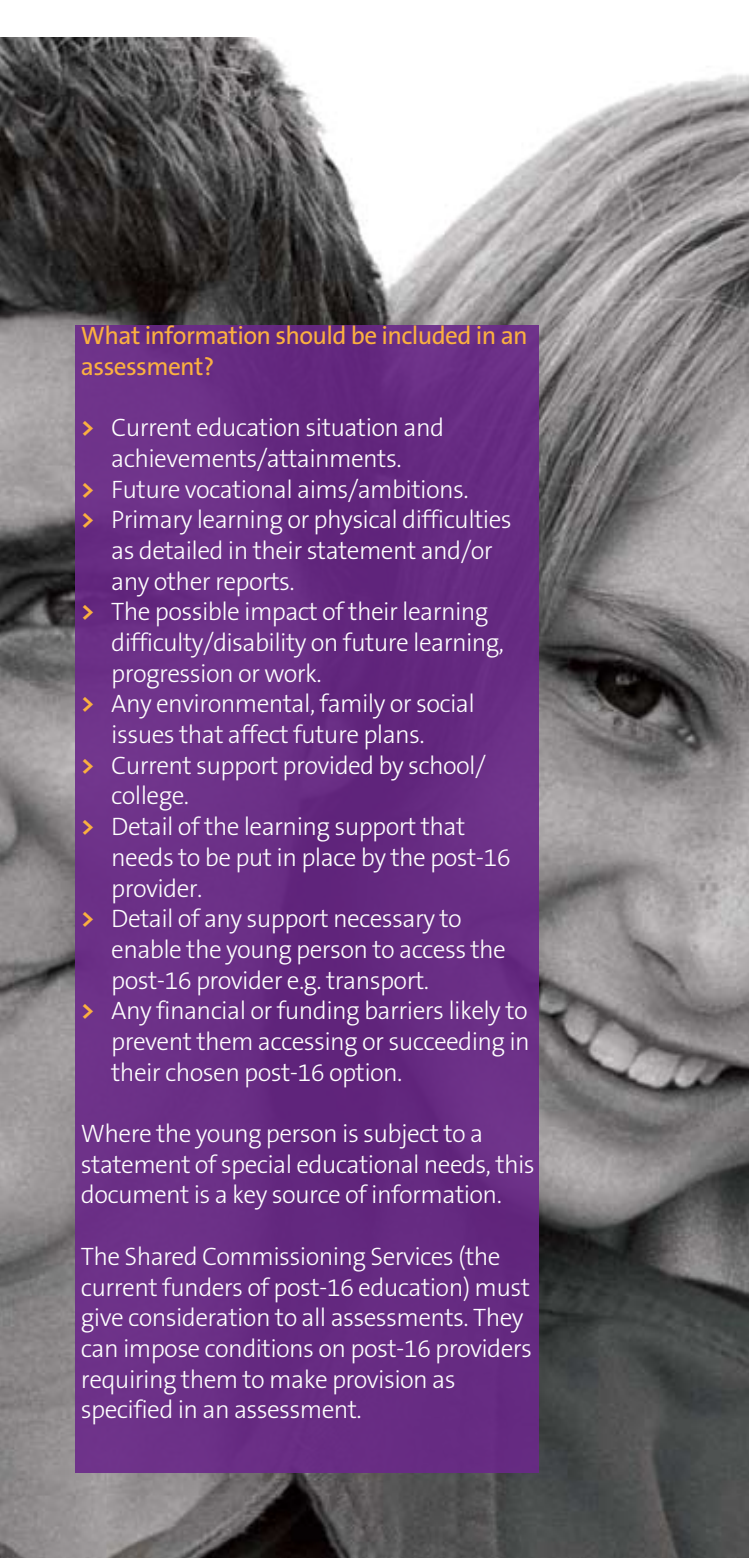
[ A GUIDE for schools,  
colleges, training providers  
and partner agencies ] 2010/11

*Throughout this document the section 139a assessment will be referred to simply as the assessment.*

# What is the purpose of a section 139a assessment?

The purpose of the assessment is to provide a comprehensive report of the support needed, by a young person with a learning difficulty and/or disability, to ensure they are able to succeed in post-16 education or training or higher education.

It must be a stand alone document which meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. It should bring together all salient and relevant information about the young person.




## What information should be included in an assessment?

- Current education situation and achievements/attainments.
- Future vocational aims/ambitions.
- Primary learning or physical difficulties as detailed in their statement and/or any other reports.
- The possible impact of their learning difficulty/disability on future learning, progression or work.
- Any environmental, family or social issues that affect future plans.
- Current support provided by school/college.
- Detail of the learning support that needs to be put in place by the post-16 provider.
- Detail of any support necessary to enable the young person to access the post-16 provider e.g. transport.
- Any financial or funding barriers likely to prevent them accessing or succeeding in their chosen post-16 option.

Where the young person is subject to a statement of special educational needs, this document is a key source of information.

The Shared Commissioning Services (the current funders of post-16 education) must give consideration to all assessments. They can impose conditions on post-16 providers requiring them to make provision as specified in an assessment.

A young man with short, light-colored hair is smiling broadly, looking towards the left. He is wearing a white t-shirt. The background is a blurred classroom or office setting with a whiteboard and some papers visible.

## Which young people are eligible for an assessment?

Any young person with a learning difficulty/disability (as defined opposite) who:

- > is in year 11 and intends to leave his/her current school to attend a different school, college or start a work-based learning (WBL) placement. Includes foundation learning provision.
- > is in year 12 (or higher) and is moving into a different school, college, WBL placement or into higher education.

## Who is responsible for ensuring assessments take place?

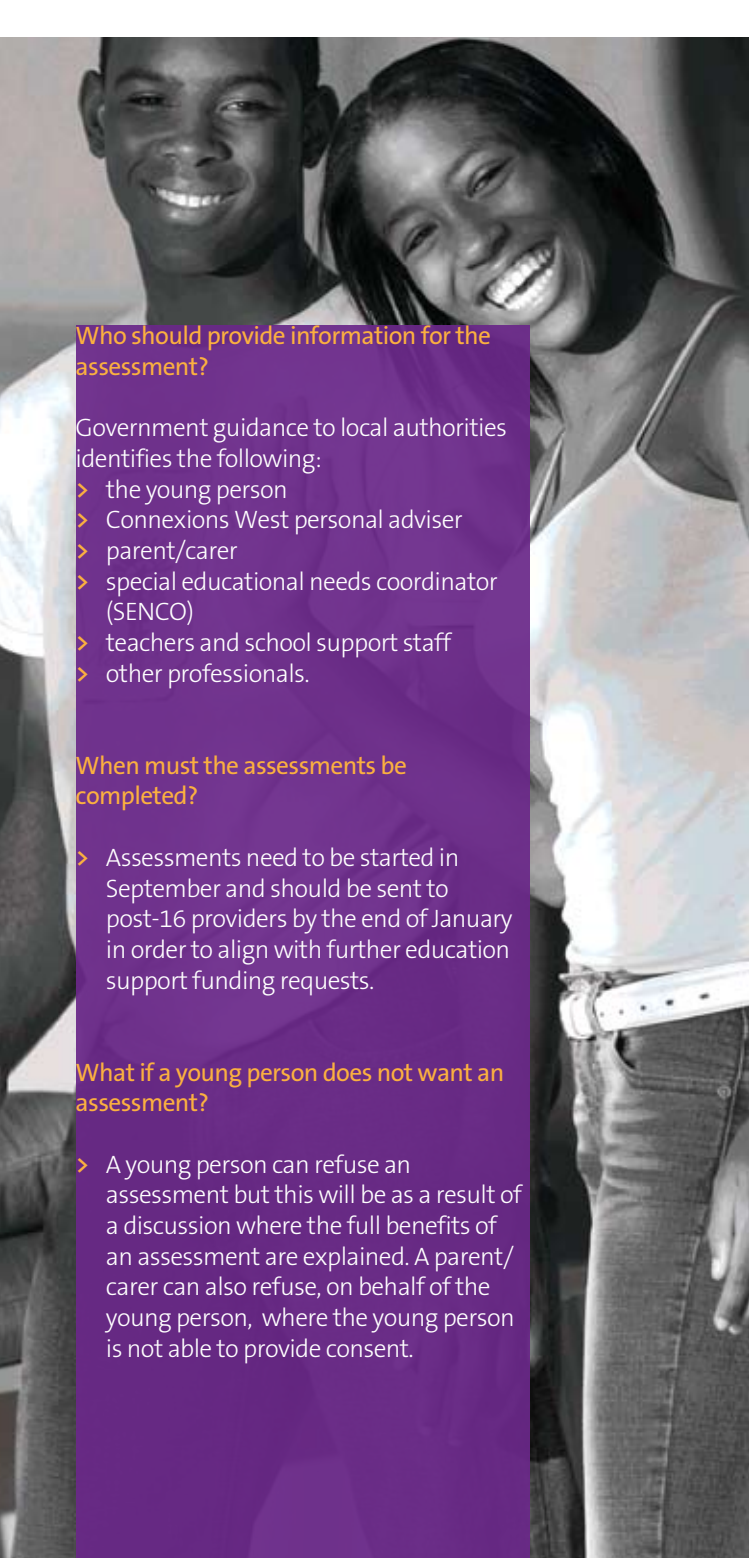
The statutory duty to ensure assessments take place lies with the local authority. The four local authorities in the West of England have delegated the responsibility for writing assessments to Connexions West.

## How is a learning difficulty/disability defined by the Learning and Skills Act 2000?

A person has a learning difficulty/disability if:

- > s/he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons of his/her age, or
- > s/he has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided by institutions providing post-16 education or training.

*A person is not to be taken to have a learning difficulty solely because the language (or form of language) in which s/he is, or will be, taught is different from a language (or form of language) which has at any time been spoken in his home.*

A young man and woman are smiling together. The man is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white tank top and jeans. They are both looking towards the camera.

### Who should provide information for the assessment?

Government guidance to local authorities identifies the following:

- > the young person
- > Connexions West personal adviser
- > parent/carer
- > special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)
- > teachers and school support staff
- > other professionals.

### When must the assessments be completed?

- > Assessments need to be started in September and should be sent to post-16 providers by the end of January in order to align with further education support funding requests.

### What if a young person does not want an assessment?

- > A young person can refuse an assessment but this will be as a result of a discussion where the full benefits of an assessment are explained. A parent/carer can also refuse, on behalf of the young person, where the young person is not able to provide consent.

## What happens to a completed assessment.

- It is sent – using recorded delivery or e-mail receipt – to a post-16 provider contact.
- It is used to construct a support plan ready for when the young person starts their course or training.
- Post-16 providers may use the assessment to identify any additional funding requirements from the Shared Commissioning Services.

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