



Staff Guidance for creating a pen portrait

A pen portrait is a collaborative description **of a young person, created with adult guidance**. It empowers young people to **share information they choose**, identify challenges in their education, and propose solutions. The process engages **students in positive change** while acknowledging their educational context. The content belongs to the young person, though an adult helps shape the wording.

This approach serves as a 'contract,' empowering students to improve their educational while reassuring adults working with them. The pen portrait effectively gives young people a voice, allowing them to actively participate in their educational journey and work towards positive outcomes and to identify strengths and interests.

We have compiled a form with a number of sections and questions to help prompt thought. The text within each section is kept to a minimum so as to facilitate easy access by all staff in The Greenhouse Team. The purpose is to be succinct, but to communicate those key messages which are most important to the young person.

An overview of the sections

'At a glance...'

This section is completed by the adult (with permission of the youngster) to give pertinent information where applicable e.g. simple explanation of current placement, ASD, attachment;

'My school experience'

This section is all about the young person's education experience. Are they in education? Full time-part time? When were they last in school?

'What helps me learn'

This section is to give the young person a voice. Do they learn better when working with another person/independently, when it is quiet, when the teacher clearly explains what to do?

'What doesn't help me'

As important as it is to know what helps a young person, it's important to know what doesn't. (When they're tired, when they're unsure of the task)

What interests me/future goals

This section is to delve into what interests the young person and what passions can they identify and want to develop. Education is more than books and we want to highlight opportunities based around each individual.

The final section is where the pupil identifies 'What the adults can do to help me'

To educate and learn requires teamwork and we want to hear from the young person on what they want from a mentor / teacher /coach (help me to be organised before learning, reassure me, let me work independently, prepare me the day before)

Please click on the link to start the pen portrait!





At a glance

First Name

What is your current living situation?

What do you like and dislike about your current living situation?

My school experience

Are you in education?

When was the last time you were in education or school?



What did you like and dislike about education?

What helps me learn

How do you work and learn with other people?

What environment do you work best in?

Do you prefer a noisy environment or a quiet environment?



When learning something new, which of the below do you prefer?
You can choose more than one.

- Reading about it
- Being told verbally by a teacher
- Being shown visually by a teacher
- Watching a video

What stops you from learning?

What interests me and what are my future goals?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Do you have any interest and passions you would like to turn into a job?



What do you want help with?

This is your chance to tell us about what you want. We are here to listen. Tell us how you want us to help you in whatever way?