System2

ASPIRE Implementation Toolkit





START HERE

About this toolkit

This toolkit helps managers, team leaders and learning and development staff introduce ASPIRE into their organisation and support Employment Consultants to use it in everyday practice.

What is ASPIRE?

ASPIRE is a framework of six behaviours that support person-centred employment services. It helps consultants make conversations more collaborative, clear and connected to what matters to each job seeker.

Where did it come from?

ASPIRE was developed and tested through the Building Agency and Trust (BAT) project, delivered by System 2 and BIT with job seekers, Employment Consultants and providers. The research highlighted the value of practical behaviours, interactive learning and ongoing support to sustain practice.

How to use this toolkit

Start with the implementation readiness checklist. Identify what is already in place, agree your priorities and use the accompanying resources to prepare, plan, train and embed ASPIRE. You can start with one team or site and build from there.

How ASPIRE supports the direction of reform

ASPIRE offers practical ways to strengthen frontline capability, tailor conversations to individual goals and circumstances, and learn from staff and job seeker feedback. This guide helps organisations build those practices into training, supervision and service delivery. ASPIRE is one contribution to these priorities. It complements practical employment assistance, specialist support and local service connections.

For detailed findings, see the BAT report. For guidance on using the behaviours, see the Employment Consultant toolkit.

Resource 1: ASPIRE quick reference

Align with what matters to JS

Connect support to the job seeker's personal interests, goals, and needs.

- Acknowledge holistic needs (not just job search).
- Show how each step is relevant and meaningful.

Structure guidance & feedback

Create clear, mutual expectations and provide timely feedback.

- Keep guidance practical and confidence-building.
- Link feedback directly to their goals.

Provide real choices

Offer genuine, simple options that let job seekers decide.

- Encourage them to express preferences.
- Make choices meaningful enough to foster ownership.

Invite participation

Use language that feels collaborative, not directive.

- Invite their views and make space for preferences, questions and disagreement.
- Show willingness to co-create their journey.

Relay the 'why'

Always explain the purpose behind requests or activities.

- Link each task to a reasonable "why."
- Show how it connects to their values or future goals.

Express understanding

Give space for job seekers to share openly.

- Validate their feelings and experiences, even the negative ones.
- Show empathy before moving to next steps.



PLAN

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PREPARE

Resource 2: Implementation readiness checklist

1. Prepare

Build a shared understanding of why ASPIRE is needed and whether your organisation can support it.

□ **Agree on the purpose**. Identify what you want to improve for job seekers and how ASPIRE will help.

□ **Confirm approvals and support.** Identify whose approval is needed to introduce ASPIRE, allocate staff time and make changes to practice. Confirm which managers, team leaders and other staff need to be involved.

Use: Who needs to be on board? pg 10

□ **Secure leadership commitment.** Identify a senior sponsor who can protect time, approve resources and address barriers.

Use: Who needs to be on board? pg 10

□ **Name an implementation lead.** Agree who will coordinate the work and involve frontline staff and managers.

Use: Who needs to be on board? pg 10

□ **Understand current practice.** Gather staff and job seeker perspectives on what already works and what needs to change.

Use: Where are we now? pg 11

□ **Check capacity and willingness.** Discuss whether staff understand the change, support it and feel able to implement it.

Use: Where are we now? pg 11

□ **Identify practical barriers.** Consider appointment time, caseloads, administrative demands, staff turnover and competing priorities.

Use: Where can ASPIRE live? pg 12

Resource 2: Implementation readiness checklist

2. Plan

Turn your commitment into a realistic, supported implementation plan.

□ **Choose where to start.** Identify the first team or site and the staff who will participate.
Use: Our ASPIRE implementation plan pg 13

□ **Define what good practice looks like.** Translate each ASPIRE behaviour into observable examples in everyday appointments.
Use: ASPIRE quick reference pg 4 and Employment Consultant toolkit (separate resource)

□ **Agree what can be adapted.** Clarify which elements must be maintained and which materials or examples can be tailored locally.
Use: What can we adapt? pg 14

□ **Set actions, owners and dates.** Create a short plan covering training, launch, coaching and review.
□ **Protect time and resources.** Arrange time for training, practice, supervision and team reflection.
Use: Our ASPIRE implementation plan pg 13

□ **Plan how to track progress.** Decide how you will assess use of ASPIRE, staff experiences and job seeker experiences; establish a starting point and review dates.
Use: How will we know it is working? pg 15–16

Resource 2: Implementation readiness checklist

3. Train

Help staff understand, practise and apply ASPIRE.

□ **Brief managers and supervisors.** Ensure they understand ASPIRE and their role in supporting its use.
Use: Manager briefing: Supporting ASPIRE pg 18

□ **Deliver introductory training.** Cover the purpose, six behaviours and their application to employment support.
Use: How to train your team pg 19–21 and ASPIRE Training Facilitator Guide (separate resource)

□ **Practise realistic scenarios.** Include difficult conversations, explaining requirements and offering meaningful choices.
Use: ASPIRE Training Facilitator Guide (separate resource)

□ **Make resources easy to access.** Provide the EC toolkit, reflection rubric and relevant prompts in a shared location.
Use: Employment Consultant toolkit (separate resource) and ASPIRE quick reference pg 4

□ **Confirm team readiness.** Use a practice scenario and feedback to identify where staff need further support.
Use: ASPIRE Training Facilitator Guide (separate resource)

□ **Arrange follow-up coaching.** Name the coach or supervisor and schedule opportunities to reflect on real interactions.
Use: Manager coaching guide pg 23

□ **Arrange peer learning.** Give staff opportunities to discuss real examples, practise together and share approaches they have found useful.
Use: Team reflection activity pg 24

Resource 2: Implementation readiness checklist

4. Embed

Make ASPIRE part of everyday practice and keep improving its use.

□ **Start using ASPIRE and review early.** Gather feedback from the first team or site and resolve practical problems.
Use: First implementation review pg 25

□ **Include ASPIRE in supervision**. Use the reflection rubric and manager coaching prompts in regular conversations.
Use: Manager coaching guide pg 23

□ **Build in team reflection.** Make space in existing meetings to share an interaction, the behaviour used and what was learned.
Use: Team reflection activity pg 24

□ **Listen to job seekers.** Ask whether they felt heard, understood their options and participated in decisions.
Use: Job seeker feedback prompts pg 27

□ **Review practice and remove barriers.** Combine staff feedback, practice examples and job seeker feedback to identify changes needed to workflows or support.
Use: First implementation review pg 25

□ **Plan for continuity.** Include ASPIRE in induction, refresher learning and ongoing coaching, with a named owner and continuing resources.
Use: Keeping ASPIRE going pg 26

Resource 3: Who needs to be on board?

Identify the approvals, practical support and participation needed to proceed.

Consider senior leaders, regional/site managers, practice or quality leads, L&D, frontline staff and job seeker representatives. Involve other teams only where the proposed changes affect their responsibilities.

Person / role	Approval or support needed	Who will approach them / by when	Agreed / next step

Confirm the arrangements

- Who can approve staff time and any spending?
- Who can authorise changes to local workflows or learning arrangements?
- Who can resolve barriers that the team cannot address itself?
- Who needs to help shape the approach, even if they are not an approver?

Resource 4: Where are we now?

Understand existing strengths, gaps, willingness and capacity.

Ask people to reflect individually before discussing as a team. Different views can reveal barriers worth addressing. Use the job seeker feedback prompts to understand the service experience; staff views alone are insufficient.

Discussion prompt	What we heard / examples
Where do we already use ASPIRE behaviours?	
When is person-centred practice hardest?	
Do we understand and support the proposed change? Why / why not?	
How confident are we that we can make the change together?	
What time, skills, resources or support are missing?	

Use de-identified examples. Make it safe to discuss difficulty and disagreement; this is a learning conversation.

Our strengths to build on	Our most important gaps or concerns

Resource 5: Where can ASPIRE live? How could Aspire be embedded?

Existing touchpoint	What would need to change	What resources do we need?
Staff onboarding		
Staff training		
Appointments		
Supervision		
Team meetings		
Peer learning		
QA/practice observation		
Job seeker feedback		
Physical environment		

Resource 6: ASPIRE implementation plan

Turn the chosen starting point into manageable actions with clear ownership.

Action	Person responsible	Complete by	Time/resources needed	Review date

Resource 7: What can we adapt?

You can adapt how you introduce and support ASPIRE to suit your team. Keep the purpose of the six behaviours intact. The examples below show what you can tailor and what should stay consistent. Contact System 2 or Ria if you are unsure whether a change preserves the intended behaviour.

Maintain the intent	Tailor to your setting
Understand what matters to the job seeker.	Local examples, language and accessible formats.
Offer genuine choice where it exists; be honest about requirements.	Training delivery and session length, while retaining meaningful practice.
Invite meaningful participation and give clear explanations.	Where resources and reminders are located.
Provide useful guidance and acknowledge the person's experience.	How coaching and reflection fit into existing meetings.

Avoid changes that turn choices into pressure, participation into agreement-seeking, or reflection into punitive scoring.

Proposed adaptation	Why needed?	How will intent be maintained?	Who reviews it / when?

Resource 8: How will we know it is working?

Track both implementation and job seeker experience using manageable information.

What to understand	Possible information	What it tells us
Participation	Training attendance and coaching access.	Who has received support; not whether practice has changed.
Use in practice	De-identified examples, reflection and agreed observation.	How behaviours are being applied and where support is needed.
Feasibility	Staff feedback on time, fit and barriers.	Whether the approach can work within current routines.
Job seeker experience	Voluntary feedback using toolkit prompts.	Whether support feels collaborative, clear and relevant.
Continuity	Induction, refresher and coaching arrangements.	Whether support is likely to continue through staff changes

Agree what would count as useful progress and what would trigger additional support. Compare feedback over time, noting changes in who responds. Training completion and satisfaction are not evidence of improved practice. Small local feedback samples help learning but cannot establish that ASPIRE caused a change in employment outcomes.

Resource 8: How will we know it is working?

Chosen measure / question	Starting point / baseline	How / who collects it	Review date / reviewer



TRAIN

Resource 9: Manager briefing: Supporting ASPIRE

ASPIRE brings six behaviours into everyday employment support. Introduce it as a way to strengthen existing practice.

Manager responsibilities

- Explain the purpose and model collaborative, clear and respectful conversations with staff.
- Protect agreed time for learning, practice and reflection.
- Help staff access the toolkit and work through difficult situations.
- Use coaching to explore learning rather than score staff against a script.
- Address local barriers and escalate issues outside your authority.
- Review staff and job seeker feedback and explain what will change.

What might staff need from us to use ASPIRE?

We will provide	
Our coaching arrangement	
How staff can raise concerns	
Manager responsible / review date	

Resource 10: How to train your team

ASPIRE is designed to become part of everyday practice, not a one-off training exercise. The original BAT training combined learning about the behaviours with practice, reflection, action planning and follow-up support.

Choose the approach that works best for your organisation.



Option 1 – Full ASPIRE training

Use the ASPIRE Training Facilitator Guide to run the full training with Employment Consultants.
The training includes:

- Foundations of motivation and person-centred practice
- The six ASPIRE behaviours
- Practical activities and role-play
- Using the BAT tools in practice
- Action planning and peer learning
- A follow-up reflection session



Option 2 – Introduce ASPIRE through existing learning

You don't need a standalone training day. ASPIRE can be incorporated into:

- Existing professional development
- Team learning sessions
- Practice workshops
- Refresher training
- Manager coaching and supervision

For example, dedicate a team session to one ASPIRE behaviour at a time, discuss what it looks like in practice, and practise it using a real scenario.



Option 3 – Embed ASPIRE into onboarding

Introduce ASPIRE to new staff as part of how your organisation approaches person-centred practice from day one.
New ECs could:

- Learn → What ASPIRE is and why it matters
- See → Examples of ASPIRE in practice
- Practise → Apply the behaviours to common scenarios
- Reflect → Identify behaviours they want to strengthen
- Revisit → Discuss their experience in supervision

Whichever approach you choose...

Training should be the start, not the end, of implementation. Plan how staff will have ongoing opportunities to practise, reflect, share what they're learning and receive support. The original BAT training used self-assessment, action planning and peer accountability to help sustain the behaviours beyond training.

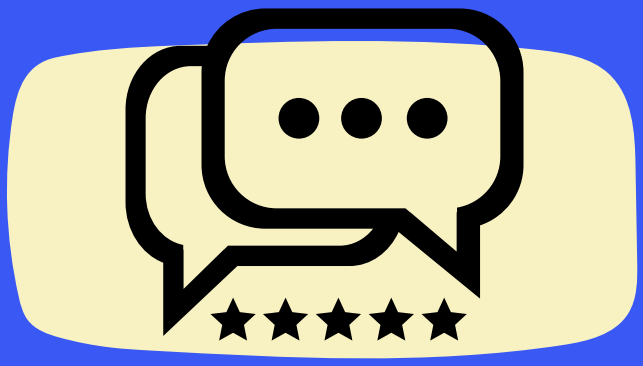
> **Tip**: Start small. Staff don't need to master all six behaviours immediately. The BAT training encouraged ECs to focus on one or two behaviours and gradually layer in the others as they became more natural.

What we learned about training

BAT participants valued interactive learning, opportunities to ask questions, reflection and sharing approaches with colleagues. Follow-up practice and organisational support were important for sustaining the behaviours.

Before delivering a session

□ Protect staff time and arrange service cover where needed.
□ Prepare relevant scenarios and learning materials.
□ Confirm the facilitator, venue or online arrangements.
□ Schedule follow-up coaching and peer learning.



EMBED

Resource 11: Manager coaching guide

5–10 minutes during regular supervision

Use these prompts to help staff learn from real interactions and agree what to try next. Choose two or three questions rather than working through every prompt.



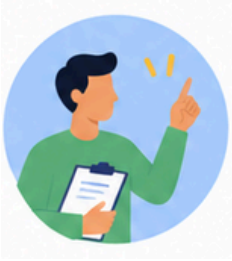
Reflect

- Which ASPIRE behaviour have you been practising?
- Tell me about an interaction where you tried it. What happened?
- What did you notice about the job seeker's response?



Explore

- What felt difficult?
- Was there a moment when you became more directive? What was happening?
- What practical barriers affected the conversation?



Plan

- What would you try differently next time?
- Which behaviour will you focus on before our next check-in?
- What support do you need from me or the team?

Resource 12: Team reflection activity

10 minutes during a regular team meeting

Invite one team member to share a recent interaction. Use a de-identified example and include difficult experiences as well as successes.

Situation: What happened? What was happening for the job seeker?
Behaviour: Which ASPIRE behaviour did you use? What did you say or do?
Response: How did the person respond? What happened next?
Learning: What worked, what might we try differently, and where else could this help?

Finish with one practical takeaway. Invite difficult examples as well as successes. Avoid assuming an immediate positive response proves effectiveness.

- **Our takeaway:** What did we learn?
- **What we will try:** What will we do differently?
- **Support needed:** What would help us do this?
- **Follow-up:** Who will act, and when will we review it?

At the next meeting, briefly check what happened when the team tried it.

Resource 13: First implementation review

Learn from early use and decide what to keep, change or support.

Review question	Learning / examples
What have we actually tried, and who has participated?	
What is working well?	
What is difficult or not being used?	
What are job seekers telling us?	
Which barriers can we solve locally, and which need escalation?	

Change / support agreed	Owner	By when	How we will check it helped

Resource 14: Keeping ASPIRE going

Maintain learning and support when staff, managers or priorities change.

□ Introduce ASPIRE during induction and link new staff to the toolkit.
□ Arrange practice and a follow-up coaching conversation for new staff.
□ Keep coaching and team reflection in existing schedules.
□ Identify refresher needs from practice and feedback.
□ Keep materials accessible and assign an owner to maintain them.
□ Document responsibilities and hand over when leads or managers leave.
□ Confirm continuing time and resources.
□ Review whether ASPIRE is still being used and how job seekers experience it.

Continuity action	Owner / backup	When / existing routine	Support needed

Who takes over if our lead leaves?

Resource 15: Job seeker feedback prompts

Job seeker feedback can help teams understand whether ASPIRE is being experienced in the way it is intended — not just whether staff feel they are using the behaviours.

Feedback doesn't need to be a lengthy survey. Providers can build a few simple questions into existing feedback processes or use them periodically to support reflection and improvement. You can implement asking for feedback at the end of the appointment.

Quick feedback prompts

Thinking about your support today…

- Did you feel heard and understood?
- Did you feel involved in decisions about your support?
- Did you feel you had choices where possible?
- Did you understand why you were being asked to do things?
- Did the support feel connected to what matters to you?
- Do you feel clear about what happens next?
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Responses could be kept simple:

□ Yes, definitely □ Somewhat □ Not really

One open question:
What could we do differently to better support you?

Using the feedback

Don't collect feedback just for reporting. Regularly bring it back to team reflection and ask:
What are job seekers telling us? → What are we doing well? → What might we change?

Tip: Keep feedback voluntary, quick and easy to give. Consider different ways for job seekers to respond so they can provide feedback comfortably and honestly.

Notes



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