

## Challenges card sort facilitator's guide

For some people, real or perceived challenges can be a barrier when looking for work or making career decisions. The Challenges card sort can help clarify these challenges and make it easier to identify and take steps to deal with them.

The Challenges card sort can be used with individuals and groups from a range of ages, backgrounds and learning abilities. They are especially suitable for use with those who are:

- unemployed, facing redundancy, or returning to work after a long absence
- at risk of not making a successful transition from school
- finding it difficult to make career decisions.

### Getting started

There are two sets of Challenges cards to choose from:

- The blue Challenges set can be used with a wide range of people.
- The orange Youth Challenges set is specifically for use with young people. These cards use phrases that are more suitable for them, and also present some youth-specific challenges. You can use the Youth Challenges cards on their own or as a substitute for some of the cards in the blue Challenges set. This table shows which cards can be substituted:

challenges	youth challenges
Accepting lower pay rates to start with	Pay rates for young people
Access to transport for work or study	Having transport Having a driver's license
Being clean, tidy and smartly dressed	Having good work clothes Tattoos, piercings, hairstyle
Finding suitable role models or people to support me	Support from family and friends
Having less time for leisure and sport Balancing the demands of work, study and family life	Having less time to hang out with friends Having less time to do the things I like Studying in my spare time
Keeping up a good attitude	My attitude to work or study
Knowing clearly what is expected of me on the job Knowing what the job involves and what learning is required	Stuffing up at work Having to know what to do without being shown
Managing responsibilities and workloads	Being given responsibility
Managing without family or friends around me	Having to be away from my girlfriend or boyfriend
Past challenges with the law	Past conflicts with the police
Staying motivated	Going to bed early and getting up early

## How to use the cards

1. Decide which cards are most appropriate to use with your client.
2. Explain that the card sort exercise will help them identify challenges they might have when looking for work or making career decisions. Tell them that you will make time at the end to discuss how they can start to deal with these challenges.
3. Arrange the three header cards, *Perhaps a challenge*, *A definite challenge*, *Not a challenge*, to form three columns.
4. Ask your client to place each challenge card under the header card that best describes how much of a challenge that card is. Clients will naturally interpret the cards based on their background, culture and life experience. You may need to help them clarify what they think each card means.
5. Once your client has done the first sort, get them to look over the cards and move any to a different column if they want to.
6. Remove the cards in the Perhaps a challenge and Not a challenge columns. Ask your client to look at the cards in the A definite challenge column and rank these from “biggest challenge” to “less of a challenge”.
7. If your client has identified a large number of “biggest challenges”, ask them to sort these into the following categories: *Can deal with now*, *Can maybe deal with now*, *Can't deal with now*. Discard all those that cannot be dealt with now.
8. Look at the challenges that your client has ranked as “biggest challenge”. Start a discussion about the possible things they could do to start addressing these.
9. Aim to end the session with at least 1-2 specific and concrete actions your client can take for each challenge they ranked as their biggest.

## Follow-up activities

Use the results of your card sort to start other career exploration activities such as researching study, training or job options.

Start a group activity brainstorming possible solutions to selected challenges.