

Safe Arrival Project

Toolkit



This publication is a product of Leonardo da Vinci Partnership called Safe Arrival (Reducing Dropout of Young People in Vocational Education and Training).

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SAP Toolkit

Introduction:

The Safe Arrival Project (SAP) is a project worked on by a consortium of 5 European institutions examining the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

By equipping professionals with the skills to identify those learners on initial Vocational Educational Training (iVET) who are at risk of drop-out and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) much earlier, the project aims are to reduce the numbers of learners in those categories.

The project is based on research from the following references:

- Arnold, C. and Baker, T. (2013) "Becoming NEET: Risks, Rewards and Realities" Stoke: Trentham Books
- Arnold, C and Baker, T (2012) "Transitions from School to Work: applying psychology to NEET" Educational and Child Psychology Vol 29 No3. Leicester: BPS

The consortium members are:

- Sandwell MBC in the United Kingdom
- Galway Technical Institute in Ireland
- Partners Hungary Foundation in Hungary
- Xabec in Spain
- Zlinsky Kraj in the Czech Republic

The objectives are to:

- rollout the screening tool across partners through two pilots
- introduce interventions based on research
- devise a user only website
- develop further interventions through extension of the use of the tool in Sandwell
- create an e-learning programme on how to use the SAP tool
- develop case studies and materials to enable further dissemination
- fully evaluate the activity

What does the SAP tool do?

The SAP tool can be used with any group of students of any age that you wish to work with – this may be a year group, department, class group etc. By screening the selected cohort against the SAP tool questions you will be able to determine which young people possess the most risk factors and therefore predict who is at risk of drop-out from the start of the course. This can provide a basis for targeting resources and help prevent disengagement.

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

This toolkit has been created through the SAP project to aid its sustainability beyond the life of the project. It is aimed at future users and is a self-explanatory guide embracing both the strategic and practical aspects of the project.

With its guidance, the toolkit will give the user information on initially how to create a localised tool and then how to use the tool within their institution.

Creating a SAP tool

In order to create and use a SAP tool there are 2 stages to complete consisting of 9 steps.

STAGE ONE – CREATION OF THE TOOL

Step 1:

Form a task group to include a wide section of professionals who work with young people who dropout from vocational schools or courses in your area. Identify a comprehensive list of local risk factors that you think may affect young people. There is no limit to this, consider as many as you can. You could also involve young people themselves and ask them what affects them. As a guide, the list should be in excess of 20 factors.

Step 2:

Go through your original risk factor list and identify how each factor can be measured. You must be able to determine whether a risk factor is present or not for a particular young person.

Think of how you can obtain the data against each risk factor by considering whether the data is inexpensive to collect, is held centrally or which data is too difficult to obtain and measure against.

For example: Attendance

This can usually be gained from school/college records and can be quantified e.g. less than 85% then it is classed as a risk factor.

Step 3:

Now consider which factors can be easily collected for a large number of young people. Disregard those that are not feasible and concentrate on those that are readily available and those you feel are most important. You should then be left with a list of factors to test for significance. In the current SAP project this varied from 2 -5 factors that were significant.

Often, if risk factors cannot be gained through a central system or from data held by your institution, the young people themselves can be asked questions in order to determine data on a risk factor. For example:

Punctuality Issues – this may be quantified by being late for school on a number of occasions. Therefore, in order to determine if there is a risk factor relating to punctuality, each student could be asked the question – “Whilst attending school were you late more than once a week”? In this instance, punctuality is classed by the professionals involved in the creation of the SAP tool, as being late more than once a week for school. It was felt that this was a good indicator of having punctuality issues.

To easily determine if the risk factor is present, a closed ended questionnaire (for completion by individual students) may need to be developed.

Step 4:

Identify a sample of 40 young people in Vocational Educational Training (VET) matched against young people who have dropped out of VET. This will be your sample cohort to identify differences between those students. Whilst 40 is a minimum suggested sample size, if you intend to use the tool in a large institution then consider using a larger sample size to increase its accuracy.

Step 5:

Collect data on each factor for the required number of young people. Record and collate all answers onto a simple spreadsheet.

Input the data: Input the data: As stated above, the answer to each question will identify whether or not the risk factor is present. For each student, record a 1 if the risk factor is present and 0 if the risk factor is not present. Remember that answers to the SAP tool questions may not always be a no means 0 and a yes means 1.

For example;

Question 1: Have you ever been in social services care?

This looks at if being a looked after child is a risk factor. In this case, if a young person answers ‘Yes’ then the risk factor is present and should then be recorded as 1. Alternatively if the young person answers ‘No’ then a 0 would be recorded.

Question 2: Do you know what you want to do as a career?

This looks at low motivation as a risk factor. In this case, if a young person answers ‘No’ then they are classed as having low motivation which should be recorded as 1 as the risk factor is present. If the young person answers ‘Yes’ then there is no risk factor present and should be recorded as 0.

Collate the data onto an excel spreadsheet – see example below:

Name	Risk Factor 1	Risk Factor 2	Risk Factor 3	Total Risk Factor Score*
Student 1	1	1	1	65
Student 2	1	1	0	47.5
Student 3	0	0	0	0

* There may be weighting produced in the statistical analysis of your SAP tool – the formulae for this should be included in this column and may produce larger numbers as shown.

Step 6:

The data you have collected now needs to be statistically analysed to provide you with the final localised SAP tool.

This completes the first stage and once completed you will have created your own SAP tool that contains significant risk factors for your young people.

STAGE 2 –USING THE TOOL

The second stage includes the following steps to provide support in how to use the SAP tool within your institution and identifying those at greater risk of dropping out of iVET with ideas of support to help prevent them from disengaging.

Step 7: Using the tool with your chosen cohort

Decide on a cohort - which young people do you want to use the SAP tool with? – This could be every student in your institution, a department, or high dropout classes. Remember that you will have to ask all students within your chosen cohort the questions on the SAP tool so make sure that this is realistic.

Collect the SAP tool data - gather data for each student in the chosen cohort. This may be done through existing information systems or through asking each student individually. If you have an induction process at your institution, this is a very practical way of gaining the data quickly and at the very start of the course.

Input the data onto a simple spreadsheet as you completed in Stage 1 – creating the tool (Step 5)

Step 8: Sort the data

Sort the Total Risk Factor Score from highest to lowest. This will then rank each young person in order of their risk factor score and those who are most at risk of dropout will be at the top of the list.

You now need to determine from the data displayed, the level of support required i.e. which young people will need the highest level of support, which young people will need some support and which young people will require no support. This can be done by banding the data set.

You should now consider what interventions you would like to put in place for those who are shown to be most at risk and also consider what resources are available to achieve this. As a guideline you may want to split the data as follows:

- 10% Most at risk - greatest intervention
- Next 20% - intermediate intervention
- Remainder – use existing or universal services

Name	Risk Factor 1	Risk Factor 2	Risk Factor 3	Total Risk Factor Score
Student 2	1	1	1	3
Student 5	1	0	1	2
Student 1	0	1	1	2
Student 4	1	0	0	1

Student 3	0	0	1	1
Student 10	0	0	0	0
Student 7	0	0	0	0
Student 8	0	0	0	0
Student 9	0	0	0	0
Student 6	0	0	0	0

Step 9: Interventions

Once you have determined your intervention levels – you will need to consider what interventions will make up each category.

Interventions

Background:

The main emphasis on the interventions is based on psychological principles including Chaos theory. This helps illustrate the multiple sources of instability in young people's lives and we should consider the additive nature of this instability across the several risk factors. Consequently, this will increase the risk of dropping out.

The original study showed a positive impact on truancy based on an intervention of a senior member of staff simply saying good morning to high risk students every morning they attended school. (Arnold, Emery, Hughes & Travell (1995) "Predicting and preventing poor attendance in an urban comprehensive school: a computer-assisted approach" Pastoral Care in Education Vol 13 No.4 (1995) p24-28.) This small intervention reduced the truancy rate by approximately 50%.

Further research found a study from The University of Melbourne (Discussion Paper from May 2008) that looked at Effective Intervention Strategies for Students at Risk of Early Leaving. This concluded that a series of targeted interventions underpinned by a school-wide commitment was key in improving retention.

The targeted initiatives included student-focused strategies such as:

- mentoring
- early and more intensive pathways and careers planning
- careers guidance managed by appropriately qualified staff
- fine-grained co-ordination of welfare needs
- outreach
- case management
- targeted assistance for skill development among low achievers

They also included school-wide strategies:

- familial-based forms of organisation such as mini-schools
- team-based approaches to teaching, learning and pastoral care
- early intervention to support literacy and numeracy skill growth
- project-based and applied approaches to learning
- broad curriculum provision with strong VET options
- high expectations on attendance and behaviour

The schools with the greatest success in improving student retention combined a range of these strategies, working to develop a whole staff commitment to engaging students, and

constantly refining approaches as student and parent needs shift.

SAP Intervention Examples:

From these studies and our own research talking to young people it seems that personal attention is very meaningful. It also acts as a stable influence in a life that may otherwise be filled with instability.

So when looking at what interventions to put in place, here are some examples of what have been shown to have an impact:

- Allocate a dedicated person to each high risk student; this may be done through a tutor or another member of staff. This person should build a relationship with the student to promote trust. This may highlight any potential issues before they escalate. This element has been found by all partners to be a foundation to build successful interventions.
- Keep in regular contact with students by their preferred contact method, i.e. by text, phone or in person to monitor how things are going.
- Provide a tailored package of support – this may include detailed and early careers guidance/planning. Talk to students about what support they feel they need as well as what you can offer. Our partner PHF introduced a workshop to help with this - the goal of the workshop was to

identify the already existing measurements that prevent drop out and also to introduce new ones to increase efficiency in prevention.

- Give out personalised invites to any careers/institution events.
- Allocate peer mentors – this could be a slightly older person to act as a role model and support at a peer level. As the project develops, previous students that have been identified as high risk may also act as peer mentors to the next cohort.
- Contact parents throughout the year to keep communication open between the institution and the students' home.
- Offer advocacy services where required.

When developing your intervention strategy, it is important to talk to students about what support you can offer and what they feel their needs are. Be careful not to make the student feel as though they have been singled out and that they are different to their peers. Make sure they are aware that it is just additional support that is aimed at helping them.

Other handy hints can be found on the included USB stick.

Case Study

Sandwell College

As part of the SAP project, Sandwell College produced their own localised tool. The following five courses had a high drop-out rate and were identified for a pilot within the college:

- Plastering Level 1
- Childcare Level 2
- Photography Level 3
- Hairdressing Level 2
- Beauty Level 2

Initially a group of college staff got together to discuss risk factors that may affect the young people on these courses. After looking at the feasibility of what they could collect, a list of factors was produced for use with the sample cohort. These were as follows:

- Being a young carer
- Support from family to attend college
- Career motivation
- Attendance issues
- Punctuality issues

- Drug use
- Being in Social Service Care
- Parental Financial situation

Each factor was measured via questions to students on a web based questionnaire on the college's student's virtual network.

The questionnaire was as follows:

1. Do you look after someone in your family?
2. Were your family happy for you to go to college?
3. Do you know what you want to do as a career?
4. Was your attendance at school less than 85%?
5. Were you late more than once every week at school?
6. Have you got children?
7. Have you ever taken drugs?
8. Have you ever been in social services care?
9. Do your parents claim benefits?

All data was gained and put into an excel spreadsheet to be analysed and the significant factors were found to be:

- Career Motivation – Factor 3
- Punctuality Issues – Factor 5
- Being in social services care – Factors 8

Through the statistical analysis the model was weighted producing the final Sandwell SAP tool.

Risk Factor Score:

$$(\text{Factor 3}) * 27.5 + (\text{Factor 5}) * 20 + (\text{Factor 8}) * 17.5$$

Max Score = 65

As a result of this, the September 2014 cohort for all 5 of these courses was screened to identify a list of students that would be targeted for additional support.

Interventions put in place were through a designated Connexions Personal Adviser to provide individualised programmes of support to each vulnerable student. This included:

- One to one interviews
- Regular contact through students preferred method including text, email, telephone and in person
- Independent, impartial Information, Advice and Guidance support
- Support to make a positive transition where required
- Personalised invitation to careers events
- Advocacy services between student and college

Resources

Action Plan

In order to undertake creating your own SAP tool it is good practice to plan out the process so you can clearly see what you are trying to achieve and to anticipate any potential issues. This toolkit includes a blank action plan for you to complete alongside the steps outlined in the booklet.

SAP website – www.safearrivalproject.com

This includes background information on the safe arrival project including information on all partners' involved and detailed information on the development of the project throughout its duration. Additional resources include a SAP practitioner guide and research articles.

E-learning video

The 9 steps are also individually outlined with additional handy hints on how to practically achieve each step through an e-learning guide. The link for the e-learning video is: https://youtu.be/MeJv6nj_gBM and can also be found on the included USB stick.

Intervention Handy Hints

This is a short video of 5 handy hints when working with students. It focusses on practical things to consider when looking at interventions and how to work with those

highlighted as high risk. This can be found on the included USB stick.

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