

Gathering and interpreting information

The strengths list

All of the information you have gathered should be used to draw up a *strengths list*.

A list of strengths should show:

- the pupil's skills, i.e. a summary of significant attainments in the key areas of development;
- the pupil's preferences, i.e. a summary of strong motivators;
- the conditions which evoke positive behaviour from the pupil;
- the conditions under which the pupil learns best.

The formulation

The next step is to arrive at a *formulation* about the factors implicated in the development and maintenance of the challenging behaviour. The formulation will contain details about:

- the challenging behaviour(s);
- the results the challenging behaviour appears to achieve;
- apparent triggers for the challenging behaviour;
- environmental setting conditions;
- personal setting conditions;
- related skills deficits, e.g. lack of specific communication, social, occupational or cognitive skills.

The statement of needs

The final step is to make a general *statement of needs*. The needs statement should be used to prioritise teaching objectives and establish behaviour management plans. A list of needs should not be a catalogue of all the things an individual cannot do. Instead, it should include statements about skills which should be learned or extended. In this sense it may be regarded as identifying long-term objectives and short-term targets. Long-term objectives are set for a 6-12 month period; short-term targets should be achievable in 1-6 weeks. Targets should be SMART, i.e. they are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-related.