

# Effective communication

The following principles underpin effective communication:

- a good relationship with the learner must be established and maintained
- the emphasis should be on enabling the learner to talk and then listening carefully to the learner's point of view
- the style of communication must be suitable for the age, ability and language of the learner

Establishing a relationship, particularly in a short interview requires the interviewer to show respect and empathy towards the interviewee(s). It also involves recognising and overcoming barriers to communication.

**Respect** is demonstrated by behaviour that makes others feel that they are important, worthwhile and special in some way.

**Genuineness** is shown by behaviour that conveys the message that you are human, trustworthy and have nothing to hide.

**Empathy** is implicit in behaviour that shows that you try to understand the other person's world as they are experiencing it. In other words, you make an effort to 'see it their way'.

Such behaviour includes:

- introducing yourself and remembering the other person's name
- explaining the purpose of the meeting
- asking questions tactfully and clearly
- showing you are listening and asking questions to clarify and check understanding
- not interrupting or talking over the person
- being aware of your own and others body language and the emotions that it conveys
- showing a friendly disposition by smiling and being welcoming, showing appreciation to the learners for giving of their time
- responding naturally and as honestly as you can
- avoiding being defensive

However, we need to guard against becoming over-familiar when attempting to put pupils at their ease, and to always remain professional, for example by avoiding flippant remarks.