

# Skills Checks, Screening and Self-Assessment

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# Overview

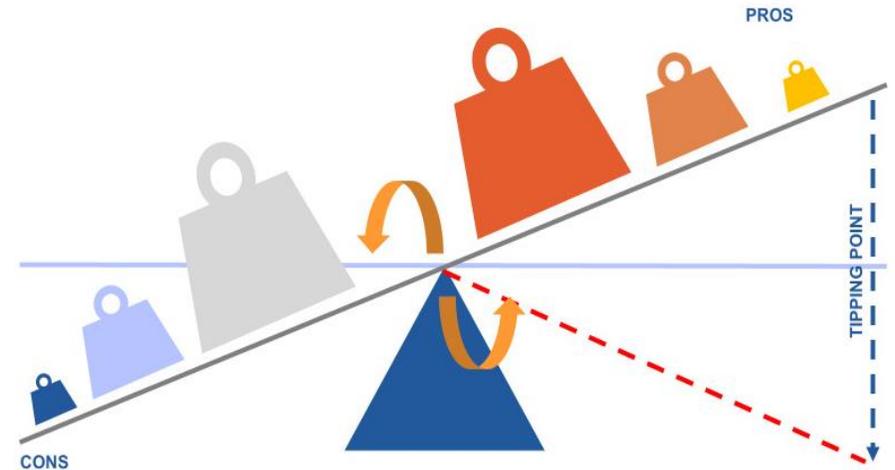
- Skills checks – what do we mean and why is it important?
  - The UK landscape – short overview
  - Online skills checks – barriers and challenges
  - Desirable features
  - Engaging more adults in skills checking
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- Based on a range of projects: DfE research (2020) into the feasibility of online skills checks, projects on skills screening for Jobcentres and in prisons.

# What is screening?

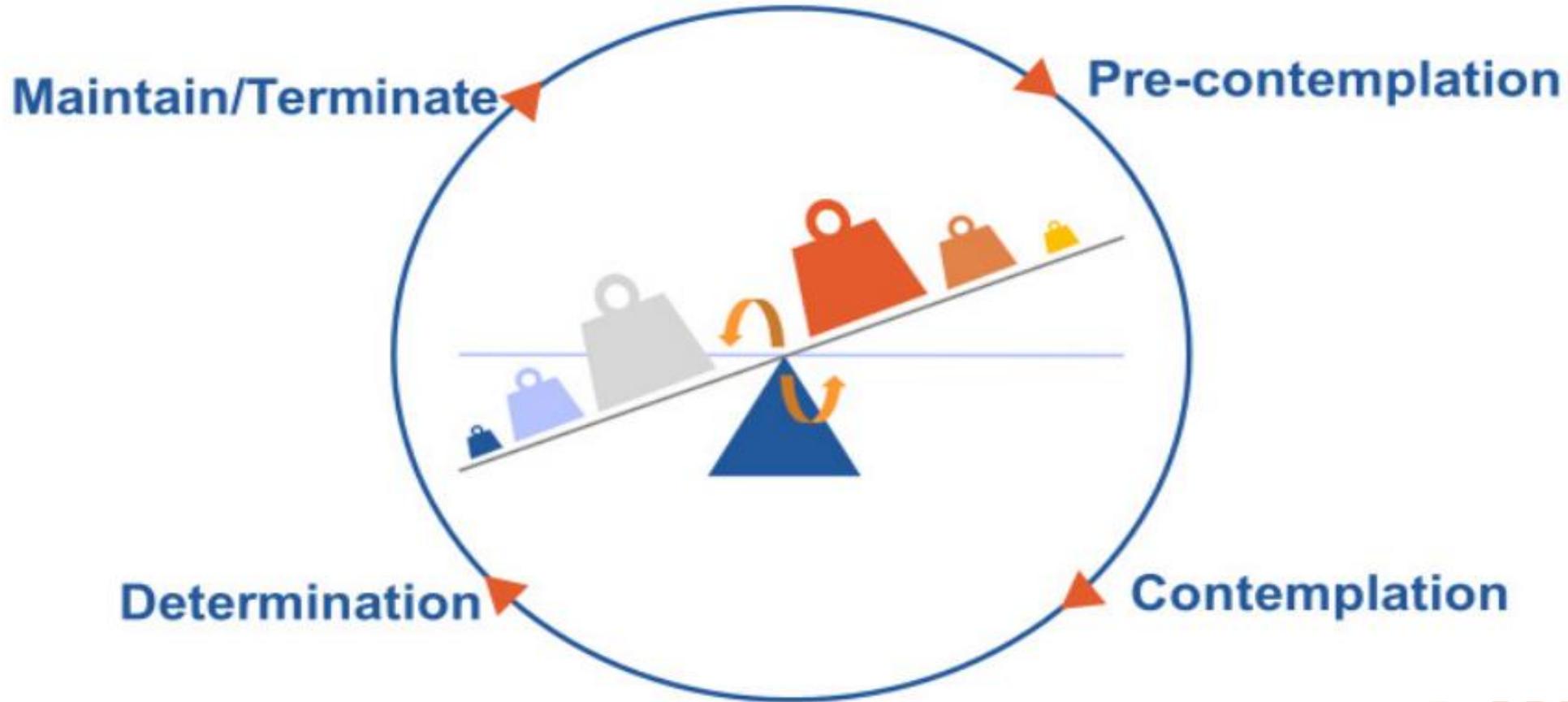
- Screening or skills checking vs. initial and/or diagnostic assessment
- Used by an individual or with support
- Aims to identify a skills gap – or, rather that an individual may benefit from basic skills learning

# The potential of online screening

- Considerable interest – especially policy makers
- Helps quantify skills needs – consistently, in different settings
- Joining up support e.g. employment and skills – also rehabilitation, housing, health ...
- Address challenges in participation and engagement



# Decisions of Adult Learners



# Current context - UK

- No single up-to-date, reliable screening tool – online or paper-based
- Confusion over terminologies and purpose
- Funding and quality mechanisms mandate initial / diagnostic assessments
- Where screening or skills checking does take place, it's as an informal process, often face-to-face

“Our staff are told to just have a little conversation, work out what the plans are, what they would like to do and then get a follow up phone call to say, “We will invite you in, have a chat, discuss what your needs are,” and then we sort of like add the screener on the side of that” (Stakeholder)

# Challenges and barriers

- Lack of information, promotion and positive messaging
- Attitudinal barriers – or lack of incentive, especially in-work
- Supported adults were reported to be more motivated – ‘warm’ contact with services
- Literacy skills and digital skills barriers, especially online
- Practitioner confidence and expertise – especially in non-specialist, non-educational settings

# Desirable features

- Range of formats – e.g. option to deliver online or face-to-face
- Short! 10 – 15 minutes maximum
- Option to share results – but discretion and confidentiality important
- Broad contextualisation – e.g. workplace, seeking work
- Accessible language, interface and navigation – visually appealing
- Clear information and signposting to next steps – including ‘live’ support
- Content could combine self-assessment of attitudes and behaviours, with questions to assess skills.

# Engaging more adults

- Clear communication and information, in a range of settings
- Positive, relatable messaging to build confidence - “seeing people like me”
- Clear messaging about potential benefits and positive outcomes, linking to adults’ goals and motivations
- Involve employers – to encourage take up and provide support.

“It’s like you know you’re not alone. There are other people out there that are in the same boat...it can encourage you.” (Focus group participant)