

# Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Policy

## 1. Statement

Transit Smart Skills & Consult Ltd is committed to the development of a whole organisation approach to IAG. We aim to provide a free and impartial service that ensures each of our learners are supported to identify their own continuing training needs and to make informed decisions about how to improve their employment prospects and skills, obtain a qualification, gain a promotion or just make the most out of their current job, whilst also ensuring that our employers' training and support needs are accurately identified and met.

## 2. Introduction

It is the expectation that learners are able to progress to further training, Further/Higher Education and or enhanced/other career opportunities and that these choices should be accessible based on appropriate IAG relating to an individual's personal interests, aspirations and opportunities.

Therefore, TR-SSC views the process of giving information, advising and guiding learners as crucial in preparing them, not only to achieve their aspirations, but also to manage the transition to new roles and situations throughout their lives and to develop independence in their decision making regarding the opportunities and challenges of career progression and working life.

We will maximise the benefits for every learner by ensuring staff receive the support they need for their own development and to enable them to support learners to fulfil their potential and experience success through an educational and training environment that responds to individual need and stimulates and challenges each and every learner.

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on how Train will effectively deliver its IAG service as an essential part of the preparation for training, progression and the responsibilities and experiences of enhanced/other employment opportunities learners may encounter on their lifelong learning journey.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and clients accessing IAG provided by the Company.

## 5. Definitions / References / Key Terms

**The Service** – refers to the information, advice and, or, guidance provided by the Company to support individuals in identifying their training needs, choice of career, learning, work and life goals.

**Clients** – refers to people who access the service whether they are internal (employees of the Company) or external users of the service i.e. employers, learners, parents of learners (16-18 years) potential learners or other agencies seeking advice on behalf of their clients.

**Information** – refers to data on learning and work opportunities conveyed through printed media, audio visual materials or computer software, or through information officers in careers or other helpline services such as Learn Direct.

**Advice** – refers to helping a client to interpret information and to understand their options or how to go about a given course of action in relation to their own personal circumstances, their abilities and targets and may include signposting to refer clients who may need more in depth guidance and support.

**Guidance** – refers to the exploration of the client's circumstances, including their ideas, values, needs and beliefs in relation to opportunities or issues that are confronting or confusing them, to support them to develop new perspectives and solutions to problems and be able to better manage

their lives and achieve their potential. Guidance may also involve advocacy on behalf of some clients and, or, referral for specialist guidance and support.

## 6. Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- empower clients to make informed decisions about learning and work and to develop independence in their decision making
- ensure that the delivery of IAG within the Company is informed by social and economic priorities at local, regional and national levels and is responsive to changes and developments both internally and externally, including changes to our clients' markets
- support the improvement of clients' completion and progression rates and therefore enable them to achieve their study and career goals
- work proactively and collaboratively internally to enhance the effective delivery of IAG
- identify and work in partnership with external organisations to inform and enhance our service to clients

We will achieve these objectives by:

- raising awareness of the service so that clients know what they can expect and how to access it
- producing and regularly reviewing an annual development plan to ensure we continually improve our service
- providing timely and targeted IAG to clients at key points along their journey that recognises and is responsive to diverse and distinct need
- ensuring our verbal, printed and online information and advice is personalised, accessible, accurate and up to date
- providing opportunities for clients to access advice and guidance in a variety of ways including one to one, online feedback, email and telephone
- ensuring members of staff have the training, skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles
- encouraging and acting on client and staff feedback
- identifying key internal and external stakeholders and agreeing processes by which we can work collaboratively

## 7. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff, within the remit of their work role, to provide information, advice and guidance. It is important for each staff member to understand that they must not offer guidance in areas outside of their occupational competence and that they should, instead, signpost learners to other staff members or providers as appropriate. These may include: BDMS, Course Leaders, Line Managers, The Collective, Further Education Colleges, Other Training Providers, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions, National Careers Service, CFBT, Next Steps and Learn Direct.

Staff responsibilities in the delivery of IAG are as follows:

**Administration staff** provide IAG by handling enquiries about products and services Train offer and, where necessary, by transferring callers to an appropriate person for further support.

**Business Development Managers** (BDMS) play a fundamental part in the provision of IAG to individual employers and at network meetings and marketing events in particular; they may also provide IAG to clients making initial enquiries.

**Assessors and Tutors** play a large part in the provision of IAG to clients as they are responsible for carrying out initial assessment and providing IAG around individuals' needs and circumstances. IAG will also be provided throughout the duration, of the programme at induction, progress reviews and at the end of programme. Assessors and tutors may also provide IAG to employers about existing or new services and products offered by Train and, where necessary, signpost clients to other organisations that may more appropriately their needs.

**Line Managers** provide IAG to staff in respect of their own personal and career development at one to one meetings, appraisal and on an ongoing basis.

## 8. Staff Training

All staff will receive in-house training and, where appropriate, a recognised qualification will be identified as part of their training plan. Additionally, one to one support is available via an IQA or the Quality Manager to any staff member on request. Updates and workshops will be made available as and when necessary to all staff by the Quality Manager.

## 9. When will IAG be provided?

IAG will be provided at 4 stages:

i. At the engagement stage

The initial engagement with clients is a crucial part of the IAG service. To ensure that this is effective, Train's staff will:

- staff dealing with queries have full details of products and services
- ensure that information given is current and relevant
- clients are signposted to appropriate people to deal with their queries
- appointments are booked and planned effectively

ii. At the recruitment stage i.e. initial assessment and induction

This part of the service can be delivered on an individual or group basis. Individuals wishing to participate have the option for a one to one IAG session with an assessor or tutor. At this stage TR-SSC's staff will:

- look at individuals' training needs and identify appropriate learning (including screening for English and Maths)
- discuss the benefits of learning
- provide advice on any issues or concerns e.g. course expectations, study skills etc.
- inform the clients of the next steps and advise them of the on-going support available.

iii. Ongoing and at Progress Reviews

The option to access on-going information advice and guidance can be organised as and when required. It will also be offered at learner progress reviews. This part of the service will include:

- information of progress and achievement
- general learner support
- identification of targets remaining to achieve
- timeframes for achievement
- help to overcome any barriers to learning
- referral for independent IAG if required

iv. End of programme

The key to encouraging clients to continue in learning and develop their skills further is the provision of IAG at the end of a period of learning such as exit information. Therefore, assessors and tutors will arrange to see each learner to:

- review their learning experience
- discuss how this may be of benefit in their current role
- complete an evaluation of their learning
- consider other options for continuing learning related to their current and future roles

- agree their next steps with them

## 10. Information materials

Train will provide sufficient information materials about its services available. These will consist of information about available learning programmes, newsletters containing updates and information that may be of use to the sector, learning materials and handouts.

Information will be reviewed as programmes change and on an annual basis.

Feedback will be analysed from learners and employers about information materials and will help to form the basis for reviewing them.

Information materials will be accurate and up to date and will identify the version number and date to ensure all are using the most recent information materials available.

Information materials that are no longer up to date will be archived.

All staff will be kept up to date with the range of information materials available.

## 11. Recording of IAG

IAG will be recorded in clients' Individual Learning Plan (ILP) at the induction stage, on progress reviews and exit reviews upon completion of the learning programme.

IAG provided additionally should be recorded on a Planning and Feedback record.

## 12. Quality Checks

The standard of IAG provided will be monitored through the observation of initial assessment, induction, progress and exit reviews.

Induction and final evaluations will also be analysed for feedback on the provision of IAG.

ILPs, progress and exit reviews will be audited to monitor the standard of recording of IAG.

## 13. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Train will handle information in compliance with the Data Protection Act and any current or subsequent human rights legislation, which guarantees a right of privacy.

Only agreed information will be shared with relevant partners in order to aid clients' progression or access to services from other providers.

We acknowledge that, on rare occasions, it may be necessary to break the basic rules of confidentiality. These may broadly be defined as situations where the safety, rights and liberties of other people or the person giving information may be seriously at risk, in which case, the client would be informed that information they are giving must be passed to an appropriate person.

## 14. Equality

A DfES report<sup>1</sup> highlights that although “*age often bears little, if any, relationship to people’s career ambitions and potential to succeed, age discriminatory practices can start well before 50, and 45 represents an approximate watershed*” and emphasises that age barriers tend to escalate for the age of 50.

TR-SSC is very keen to promote that learning and development is a lifelong experience and recognises that people in their 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond are enthusiastic learners and are active volunteers often contributing critically important services to their local communities. We are also very aware that learners aged 45+ make up a third of our work-based learning cohort and almost a quarter of our preparation for employment training. Therefore our practice is to encourage individuals and employers, to see the importance of career development and learning as a continuum, with “*no false breaks based on age demarcations*” and ensure that our IAG supports learners to make decisions that enable them to balance “*the often high personal and financial responsibilities for caring, grandparenting with opportunities and new directions.*”

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<sup>1</sup> **Challenging Age: Information, Advice And Guidance For Older Age Groups:** Research Team: Geoff Ford, Barbara Watkins, Sara Bosley, Ruth Hawthorn, Barbara McGowan and Patrick Grattan: DfES: Crown Copyright 2003