

Information, Advice & Guidance Policy

Aims & Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to provide an overview of what IAG is and how it relates to all activities for Creativity in Practice and associated partners, trainers, assessors and learners.

What are the aims of CIP IAG Service?

Everyone working with Creativity in Practice provides information and advice of some kind during the course of their work, whether this is to colleagues or to learners. Collectively, this work is often referred to as “Information, Advice and Guidance” or IAG.

Our IAG Service:

- ◆ Is people-centred and offered on a 1-1 basis
- ◆ Offers appropriate signposting and referral to colleagues and other agencies
- ◆ Addresses equality and diversity by being enabling and responsive to individual need
- ◆ Is impartial and transparent.

IAG is underpinned by a professional and ethical standard, known as the **matrix** Standard. At present, we are seeking accreditation – the **matrix** quality mark – for the IAG we deliver to learners and partners.

What is the matrix Standard?

The **matrix** Standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and/or guidance (IAG) on learning and work.

We are using the Standard to help us improve our own IAG service, focusing first of all on learners, partners and associates. The Standard ensures that anyone thinking about entering publicly funded education receives information and advice that at least meets minimum quality criteria.

To enable us to ensure we offer effective and personalised IAG we should:

Think about what makes colleagues and learners feel welcome – the environment in which we deliver taught sessions, the arrangements for meeting for 1-1 support, the time that we allocate to discuss key issues and concerns and the range of options we can provide.

We should ask ourselves:

- What makes learners feel welcome and comfortable?
- How we might find out more about the individual’s needs for learning, support and development?
- What we can offer in the way of information, advice and guidance so that learners are successful and identify opportunities for future progression?

There are a number of opportunities for us to include IAG:

- 1) initial assessment with learners
- 2) on-going communications and assessment planning with learners
- 3) consultations during taught sessions
- 4) feedback from learners and associates about their experiences with CiP
- 5) learner progression
- 6) professional development for associates

What is your role in the IAG Service?

We do not currently have specialist IAG staff or associates, but we do offer a range of information, advice and guidance which supports learners to look at progression for example, initial assessment informs us of the individual's needs and preferred learning style, continuous assessment supports the learner through the process of gaining a unit and/or qualification and we also guide learners in thinking about what they would like to do next and to help them develop specific skills for example, preparing a CV and/or job application.

Giving information simply means providing facts or leaflets to someone. If you become involved in helping them understand or interpret the information, you are giving them advice. The key to good advice is always listening rather than speaking. Use open questions like "tell me a bit more" to unravel difficult or complicated situations or needs. If you can find out by listening to what someone really wants or needs, you will be halfway to solving their problems. You will at least know where else they might go for help.

Guidance for giving information and advice

1. Aim for a friendly manner, a welcoming and helpful response.
2. Listen carefully to the request. Respond by checking your understanding of that request and clarify if necessary.
3. Ensure that all information that you give is clear, accurate, up-to-date and relevant.
4. Avoid using jargon words and phrases or abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to the enquirer.
5. Know the procedures for enrolment, names of the trainers and tutors and the content of the courses. Have to hand the course outlines, details of any accreditation process and details of any facilities for learners who require additional support.
6. If you cannot meet the request, offer alternatives. Do not offer anything that you are unable to fulfil.
7. If you need to refer to the Centre Manager, for instance the enquirer requests advice about the appropriateness of a course or progression route within the CiP, take all of the relevant details and the contact number of the enquirer so that the CiP centre manager can get in touch with them.
8. If the enquirer seeks guidance on their career development, offer the contact details for local organisations and services; check the availability of these with the CiP centre manager

Everyone needs to be very clear about the scope and boundaries of their role in giving information and advice so be sure not to offer IAG that is beyond your area of expertise or which you do not feel fully confident in; it is better to be honest and say you don't know but will find out.

For further IAG contact the centre manager:

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