



# Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

department for  
children, schools and families

Creating Opportunity  
Releasing Potential  
Achieving Excellence

# Foreword



In a complex and changing world all young people need access to good quality, comprehensive and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). They need good IAG to help them make the right learning and career choices so that they can succeed in work, and they need it to help them find answers to the questions and issues that can arise in their personal lives. For individuals good quality IAG can make the difference between happiness and misery: between success and failure.

In 2004 the Government took the decision that Local Authorities should be handed the responsibility for commissioning and managing IAG services in their areas. This gives them the opportunity to integrate IAG with the wider youth support service which they manage. The new arrangements will be fully in place from April 2008.

The announcement to transfer responsibility and funding to Local Authorities was accompanied by a commitment to define, through a set of "quality standards", our expectations of the service that Local Authorities should make sure is available to young people.

We have taken considerable care in developing these standards. They have been subject to a lengthy consultation process and have been thoroughly "road-tested" in the North West. The result is a product that has been endorsed by a very wide range of different people concerned with supporting young people as well as young people themselves. The standards provide a benchmark that will not only help Directors of Children's Services to secure a first class IAG service; but that will also help IAG providers and others to assess the quality of local services and consider how they can be improved.

I am therefore very pleased to recommend the quality standards to all Local Authorities, Connexions providers, schools and other IAG and learning providers. I would ask them all to look very carefully at the standards and to measure themselves against them. If everyone pulls together to achieve the quality standards then I am confident that the impact on young people's participation in learning, and on their achievements in work and in life, will be far-reaching.

**Beverley Hughes**

# Introduction and Purpose

From April 2008 responsibility for commissioning information, advice and guidance services for young people<sup>1</sup>, and the funding that goes with that responsibility, will be devolved from the 47 Connexions partnerships to the 150 Local Authorities in England. These Quality Standards have been written to support the development of consistently high quality and impartial information, advice and guidance services across the country.

They do this by providing a framework for planning, managing and reviewing information, advice and guidance services in a locality, in a co-ordinated way. Taken together they define our expectations of the services that local authorities, through Children's Trusts, will commission and manage.

## They are also for use by:

- learning providers (including schools, colleges and work based training providers),
- external<sup>2</sup> information, advice and guidance providers (i.e. Connexions services, voluntary and community service organisations and all other private organisations working under contract to the local authority), and
- users of information advice and guidance services, to check that the expected standards are being achieved. The standards can also be used to support external assessments of the quality and impartiality of information, advice and guidance services.

<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this definition, young people are defined as those aged 11 to 19 (or 24 in the case of those young adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). The information, advice and guidance services defined above should be available to all young people throughout this period of their lives.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. "external" to the learning provider.



### Definition of information, advice and guidance

“Information, advice and guidance” is a key element of Local Authority integrated youth support services. It is an umbrella term. It covers a range of activities and interventions that help young people to become more self-reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development, including learning.

### It includes:

- the provision of accurate, up-to-date and objective information about personal and lifestyle issues, learning and career opportunities, progression routes, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it
- the provision of advice through activities that help young people to gather, understand and interpret information and apply it to their own situation
- the provision of impartial guidance and specialist support to help young people understand themselves and their needs, confront barriers, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress
- support for curriculum development<sup>3</sup>.

### Every Child Matters

Information, advice and guidance contributes directly to the achievement of the 5 Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. It helps young people to:

**Be healthy** – by helping young people to review and assess their decision making and goal setting in relation to health issues

**Stay safe** – by giving young people opportunities to reflect on risk and behaviour

**Enjoy and achieve** – by helping young people to set priorities for learning, work and leisure and to develop a work life balance

**Make a positive contribution** – by helping young people to be active citizens, who are actively involved in their communities

**Achieve economic well-being** – by challenging aspirations and helping young people to progress into further learning, training or employment and to realise their potential.

<sup>3</sup>The standards cover the support provided to schools, colleges, work-based training and other learning providers to review and develop their programmes of careers education and personal development in the curriculum, but they do not include standards for the quality of these programmes themselves.

# The Quality Standards

There are 12 quality standards, each with evidence indicators against which performance against the standards can be assessed. In short they set out our expectations that:

1. Young people are informed about how information, advice and guidance services can help them and how to access the services they need
2. Young people receive the information, advice and guidance on personal wellbeing and financial capability issues that they need
3. Young people have the information they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and career options
4. Young people have the advice and guidance that they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and careers
5. Information, advice and guidance services promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes
6. Young people (reflecting the make-up of their communities) are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of information, advice and guidance provision
7. Parents and carers know how information, advice and guidance services can help their children and know how these services are accessed
8. Information, advice and guidance providers understand their roles and responsibilities
9. Programmes of career and personal development for young people are planned and provided collaboratively
10. Staff providing information, advice and guidance are appropriately qualified, work to relevant professional standards and receive continuing professional development
11. Information, advice and guidance services are regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated, and actions are taken to improve services in response to the findings
12. Processes for commissioning impartial information, advice and guidance services are effective and result in services that meet the needs of parents/carers and young people.

Responsibility for the delivery of the standards falls to Local Authorities, learning providers and external information, advice and guidance providers working together collaboratively under the leadership of the Local Authority.

# Evidence Indicators

## 1. **Young people are informed about how information, advice and guidance services can help them and how to access the services they need**

1.1 young people understand:

- the service that they can expect from local information, advice and guidance providers
- their own responsibilities in relation to the usage of these services
- where they can go to for help if they are not getting the service that they can reasonably expect.

1.2 the benefits of information, advice and guidance services are promoted to all young people

1.3 up to date information (available in a range of formats and produced in collaboration with Children's Information Services) about where to obtain information, advice and guidance is signposted clearly through learning providers and in a wide range of other settings used by young people

1.4 young people understand the different roles and responsibilities of information, advice and guidance providers

1.5 young people are aware of, and know how to access, appropriate local and national prospectuses, websites and helplines, including Connexions Direct

## **2. Young people receive the information, advice and guidance on personal wellbeing and financial capability issues that they need**

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| <p>2.1 information about personal and economic wellbeing and financial capability issues is provided to all young people (including through parents/carers)</p> <p>2.2 initial advice and guidance is available at times and in places that are convenient for young people</p> <p>2.3 young people accessing initial advice and guidance on personal, social, health and financial issues are referred to impartial specialist services as appropriate</p> <p>2.4 young people at risk or who may need specialist support or help with personal development, confidence building and self-esteem are identified and given the help that they need</p> <p>2.5 information, advice and guidance is provided confidentially and in appropriate settings</p> <p>2.6 young people's needs are assessed as appropriate: (this is likely to be through the Common Assessment Framework if they are likely to need support from a range of agencies or their needs are unclear)</p> | <p>2.7 where assessment leads to the involvement of more than one agency providing specialist support a lead professional is identified to co-ordinate support and advise</p> <p>2.8 referrals to specialist services and/or multi-agency teams are monitored and followed up</p> <p>2.9 young people receive the specialist advice and guidance that they need at the time they need it</p> <p>2.10 an immediate referral for specialist assessment is undertaken as appropriate, for example where a young person is at risk of serious harm</p> <p>2.11 multi-agency action to help young people is supported by information, advice and guidance providers as appropriate.</p> <p>2.12 young people reaching the upper age limit for young people's information, advice and guidance services are supported in their transition to specialist services for adults</p> |
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**3. Young people have the information they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and careers**

3.1 high quality up to date and impartial information about:

- the full range of learning and career options
- the progression opportunities that they lead to, including pathways to higher education
- the labour market and opportunities within it (including pay rates across different sectors)
- community, voluntary and other developmental activities
- financial support, including the range of support available to higher education students is provided in a range of formats reflecting the different ages, needs and abilities of young people

3.2 all young people are aware of the guarantee of an offer of further learning on completion of Year 11

3.3 all young people are aware of the scheme to guarantee a minimum level of financial help if they are EMA recipients and progress into HE

3.4 careers information is always impartial (e.g. independent of the vested interests of the person/organisation providing the information). It is based on a young person's needs and on up to date labour market information and intelligence about opportunities available locally, nationally and internationally

3.5 all young people are aware of the local 14-19 on-line area prospectus and are able to access it as appropriate

3.6 all young people are aware of the Connexions Direct website and helpline and of local, external information, advice and guidance services and are accessing them as appropriate

3.7 young people are matched and successfully placed into training and employment opportunities



**4. Young people have the advice and guidance that they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and career options**

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| <p>4.1 careers advice and guidance is available to all young people in a variety of settings and at times that suit their needs</p> <p>4.2 all young people have access to advisers who are professionally qualified to provide confidential advice and guidance about careers and who are independent of local learning providers</p> <p>4.3 careers advice and guidance is always impartial (e.g. independent of the vested interests of the person/organisation providing the advice). It is based on a young person's needs and on up to date labour market information and intelligence about opportunities available locally, nationally and internationally</p> <p>4.4 advice and guidance is challenging and raises aspirations appropriately</p> <p>4.5 young people receive timely advice and guidance that supports key decisions that they need to make (for example in relation to the implications of future study), leading to action planning as appropriate</p> | <p>4.6 all young people who have not had an offer of learning on completion of Year 11 are given the advice and guidance they need to make applications to post-16 providers</p> <p>4.7 young people are made aware of, and helped to claim, sources of financial support for learning</p> <p>4.8 additional and sustained guidance and support is provided to those young people who have specific needs (e.g. those with special needs/learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Looked After Children, those with caring responsibilities)</p> <p>4.9 young people with special needs/learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided (where required by statute or desirable) with a Transition Plan from Year 9 and a section 140 assessment in Year 11 (or later if they need it)</p> <p>4.10 young people reaching the upper age limit for young people's information, advice and guidance services know about careers services for adults and how to access them and support is provided to facilitate a smooth transition</p> |
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**5 Information, advice and guidance services promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes**

- 5.1 services reach all young people in the local community, including disadvantaged and marginalised groups
- 5.2 information, advice and guidance services are personalised to meet the needs of individual young people
- 5.3 young people facing barriers to access to learning, training and employment are given the help that they need to overcome these barriers
- 5.4 services are sensitive to the faith, cultural, and family background that people come from
- 5.5 stereotypes and limited career aspirations are challenged, for example through the use of positive actions activities, taster sessions, the use of appropriate role models and work placements
- 5.6 communications with young people are adapted to reflect the different needs of recipients (e.g. in relation to basic skills needs or disabilities)
- 5.7 active efforts are made to ensure that the information, advice and guidance workforce reflects the diversity of the wider community

**6. Young people (reflecting the make-up of their communities) are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of information, advice and guidance provision**

6.1 young people from all backgrounds are engaged in:

- the design, planning, quality assurance and evaluation of information, advice and guidance services
- processes for commissioning information, advice and guidance services
- the delivery of information, advice and guidance services, for example, through peer mentoring and workshops



**7. Parents and carers know how information, advice and guidance services can help their children and know how these services are accessed**

- 7.1 the benefits of impartial information, advice and guidance services for young people are promoted to parents and carers
- 7.2 communications with parents and carers have regard to the needs of vulnerable/ disadvantaged parents and carers
- 7.3 parents and carers are encouraged and supported to help their children (through others as appropriate) to become more self-reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development
- 7.4 parents and carers are encouraged to support career aspirations and participation in education and training
- 7.5 up to date information (produced in collaboration with Children's Information Services as appropriate) about where young people can access information, advice and guidance is made available in a variety of formats to parents and carers
- 7.6 up to date information about the labour market is made available in a variety of formats to parents and carers

- 7.7 communications with parents and carers are adapted to reflect the different needs of recipients (e.g. in relation to basic skills needs, disabilities, English as second language)
- 7.8 parents and carers are aware of the different roles and responsibilities of learning providers and external information, advice and guidance providers in relation to the provision of services
- 7.9 parents and carers are aware of the Connexions Direct website and helpline and local prospectuses
- 7.10 information, advice and guidance services for young people are signposted clearly in a variety of settings used by parents and carers
- 7.11 parents and carers are supported and enabled to provide their children with impartial information, advice and guidance
- 7.12 parents and carers are aware of sources of financial support for their children's learning

## 8. Information, advice and guidance providers understand their roles and responsibilities

- 8.1 the Local Authority's requirements for the provision of information, advice and guidance services to young people are set out in written statements that make clear the need to meet these standards
- 8.2 local partnership agreements, between external information, advice and guidance providers and learning providers, set out clearly the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner
- 8.3 the Local Authority helps learning providers and external information, advice and guidance providers work together collaboratively
- 8.4 external information, advice and guidance providers feed information about gaps or weaknesses in local learning provision into area planning arrangements
- 8.5 all relevant statutory responsibilities (related to careers information, careers guidance and careers education) set out in the Education Act 1997, the Employment and Training Act 1973 as amended by the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993 and Section 140 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, are met
- 8.6 recruitment policies and practices comply with local and national safeguarding best practice standards
- 8.7 policies and practices encourage the recruitment of an information, advice and guidance workforce that reflects the wider community served
- 8.8 every learning provider and external information, advice and guidance provider has policies on:
- promoting equality (including age, gender, racial and disability equality)
  - impartiality
  - diagnosing and assessing the needs of individuals for information, for advice, and for guidance
  - engaging parents and carers
  - data sharing
  - the monitoring and evaluation of information, advice and guidance provision and the impact and implementation of these policies are reviewed annually with action taken to rectify weaknesses
- 8.9 providers of information, advice and guidance services record and track young people's progress with systems that comply with, or contribute to, Client Caseload Information System requirements
- 8.10 learning providers notify external providers of information, advice and guidance when a young person drops out of learning
- 8.11 external providers of information, advice and guidance take swift action to re-engage young people that have dropped out of learning to mitigate the risk of long term disengagement

**9. Programmes of career and personal development for young people are planned and provided collaboratively**

- 9.1 learning providers and external information, advice and guidance providers collaborate in the planning and provision of information, advice and guidance provision and in the delivery of the curriculum
- 9.2 learning providers receive training and support from external information, advice and guidance providers and others (e.g. Local Authority advisers) to help them to deliver effective programmes of career and personal development and of financial capability
- 9.3 learning providers are offered advice from external information, advice and guidance providers on resources available to support programmes of career and personal development and of financial capability
- 9.4 learning providers are offered support from external information, advice and guidance providers with reviewing and evaluating programmes of career and personal development and of financial capability
- 9.5 learning providers are helped by external information, advice and guidance providers to gather information on opportunities in learning and work and on other issues that impact on young people's participation, achievement and progression in learning and work
- 9.6 learning providers and external information, advice and guidance providers have strong links with local employers and understand their needs

**10. Staff providing information, advice and guidance services are appropriately qualified, work to relevant professional standards and receive continuing professional development**

10.1 all staff delivering information advice and guidance:

- have the skills, knowledge and qualifications to deliver a high quality service
- can deliver information, advice and guidance to diverse client groups and can challenge stereotyping and raise aspirations
- know where to access impartial specialist advice
- adhere to their relevant professional codes of conduct
- have access to a range of continuing professional development opportunities
- have structured opportunities for the evaluation of professional practice

10.2 multi-agency working and collaboration is underpinned by joint training when appropriate

10.3 annual audits of staff training needs are undertaken

10.4 the performance of practitioners is reviewed regularly

10.5 arrangements are made to share good practice

10.6 every learning provider and external information, advice and guidance provider has a policy on the training and development of staff providing information, advice and guidance and the impact and implementation of this policy is reviewed annually with action taken to rectify weaknesses



**11. Information, advice and guidance services are regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated and actions are taken to improve services in response to the findings**

- 11.1 the accessibility, take-up and effectiveness of provision is monitored, regularly reviewed and evaluated
- 11.2 performance indicators are set for learning providers and for external information, advice and guidance providers that enable commissioners of services to evaluate provision and support improvements where necessary
- 11.3 achievement of PSA targets and outcomes and local strategic objectives defined in Local Area Agreements and the Children and Young People's Plan is monitored
- 11.4 the effectiveness of referral systems is reviewed at least annually with providers of specialist services and action is taken to rectify weaknesses
- 11.5 information about gaps or weaknesses in the provision locally of external information, advice and guidance is collected systematically and fed into area planning arrangements
- 11.6 the development of information, advice and guidance services is informed by feedback from
- parents and carers
  - young people
  - learning providers
- 11.7 Local Authorities, learning providers and external providers of information, advice and guidance services have up to date improvement plans which are reviewed and evaluated
- 11.8 feedback is provided to young, people, parents and carers and learning providers on action being taken in response to feedback
- 11.9 employers are consulted about the effectiveness of local information advice and guidance services in meeting their needs and action is taken to rectify weaknesses



**12. Processes for commissioning impartial information, advice and guidance services are effective and result in services that will meet the needs of young people and their parents/carers**

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| <p>12.1 the Secretary of State's statutory duty to secure careers services for young people is met (ref. Education Act 1997 and Employment and Training Act 1973, as amended by the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993), is met</p> <p>12.2 PSA targets and outcomes and local strategic objectives defined in Local Area Agreements and the Children and Young People's Plan are met</p> <p>12.3 the commissioning of information advice and guidance services is informed by detailed assessment of the numbers, profile and needs of young people locally</p> <p>12.4 the information advice and guidance services commissioned locally are determined following consultations with learning providers, external information advice and guidance providers, young people, parents and carers, employers and others</p> | <p>12.5 the commissioning of information advice and guidance services is informed by systematic arrangements for identifying gaps and shortcomings in existing information advice and guidance provision</p> <p>12.6 information advice and guidance services are planned to meet the full range of the needs of young people's identified locally</p> <p>12.7 young people, parents/carers and learning providers are involved in the commissioning of information, advice and guidance services</p> <p>12.8 the procurement and contracting of information advice and guidance services is open and transparent and is conducted in line with good practice</p> <p>12.9 the commissioning of information advice and guidance services takes into account performance against these quality standards</p> |
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# User Guide/Good Practice Guidance

A User Guide and Good Practice materials are available to help organisations to deliver information, advice and guidance in line with these standards. They provide more detail about evidence indicators, and give examples of how the standards are being met in practice. They are available at [www.cegnet.co.uk](http://www.cegnet.co.uk)