**What is Careers Guidance?** Career’s guidance is an impartial, one to one meeting for an individual with a professionally qualified careers advisor (RQF Level 6 qualified professional). It can help explore, plan and guide decision making for an individual to make career decisions and choices that will direct them to activities/learning based on individual interest, skills and values.

**What is Careers/Information, Advice and Guidance?**

Everyone has the ability and potential to develop and grow in their life and career, but sometimes things can get in the way and hold you back. Our Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) aims to support clients to review their skills and develop new goals that meet their long-term aspirations.

**Good information, advice and guidance** is critical if people are to raise their aspirations and be able to access the opportunities available to them. All Lifelong Learning and Skills learners have an entitlement to request IAG at every step or stage of their journey.

**Information** on courses is provided by a variety of staff including, IAG qualified officers, learning support officers, curriculum teams, teachers/tutors, business support staff, partner organisations, and many other professionals within the service.

All LLS staff should have the skills and knowledge to identify the client’s needs quickly and effectively. They should have the skills and knowledge either to address the client’s needs, to signpost or to refer them to someone who can.

**Advice and Guidance** is provided by trained, professional and knowledgeable staff. Potential and current learners can see an adviser and receive guidance face-to-face, via an online portal, telephone, e-mail or in writing. The advice and guidance remain confidential and promotes and supports equality of opportunity wherever possible to enable learners and potential learners to make informed choices as to the most appropriate route for their personal and career development.

All learners have the right to information, advice and guidance that is impartial, unbiased, and realistic. All IAG services should encourage clients to engage successfully with the service. Where appropriate, referrals will be made to external agencies.

All learners or potential learners will be made aware of our service offer via the service websites, marketing, induction, and throughout their learning activities.

**Aims of the Policy**

Our aim is to provide an appropriate and impartial Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) service to potential learners and current learners, that is timely and effective. This could be at initial contact, while learners are on programme and on completion of programmes as appropriate. We will ensure that IAG is timely and supports learners to make informed decisions about learning, employment issues and personal difficulties based on their needs and circumstances.

IAG will:

• Target disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and individuals

• Provide equality of opportunity

• Support people into work and progress in the workplace

• Contribute to positive health and well-being

• Help individuals to achieve their full potential

• Give people a first step back into learning

**Policy Objectives**

We will endeavour to make our IAG provision:

* Accessible, timely, visible and well defined, in an understandable format
* Provide accessible links to a range of specialist and supportive agencies
* To be able to meet the diverse needs of learners
* Provide confidentiality and needs focussed IAG
* To be responsive, friendly and enabling
* Current and appropriate suitable to learner support needs
* Able to explore opportunities for progression

The team of qualified and trained advisers as well as other professionals will:

* Discuss learners’ needs and aspirations
* Help plan the next steps into learning
* Support and review current skills
* Produce a quality Individual Action Plan where appropriate, that includes agreed specific needs, to support individual chosen learning goals
* Provide an opportunity for learners to review and revisit their chosen qualification, personal development goals and objectives
* Build confidence and self-belief

In line with our commitments above, LLS will also provide information relating to:

* Support available in classroom settings
* Discretionary support available through funding agencies/third parties
* Fees and financial charges related to a field of study
* Course or programme entry criteria
* Levels of qualification study, accreditation, and modes of study
* Goals, aspirations, and motivation to stay on course
* Guidance to maintain positive progression and destinations

**When will this happen?**

Prior to enrolment it may include:

* Information and advice on course options
* Marketing and advocating learning through social media, network events and partners
* Details of where and when the course will take place
* Help in choosing an appropriate course that meets a learner’s needs that could include, location, content, level, delivery style, accreditation, and other support available.

On programme with LLS:

* Guidance and assessment to inform choices
* Further advice on learner support
* Progression routes to further and higher education
* Employment opportunities and skill building to support aspirations
* Ongoing support to maintain attendance and ultimate achievement

At the end of a course with LLS, or exit:

* Appraisal of progress and what it can lead to
* Group, individual or intense IAG support that might include careers guidance
* Further learning opportunities with LLS
* Details of other agencies or providers
* Opportunities for apprenticeships or traineeships
* Employment opportunities
* Funded programmes that support all or any of the above

**Impact and Quality of IAG**

To ensure the high-quality provision of our IAG service, we will assess and evaluate the provision to ensure that the information, advice and guidance services are delivered in accordance with our published information and this IAG Policy.

Impact data for IAG is collected in a number of ways including:

* Learner voice through:
	+ Individual evaluation at the end of each period/course of learning
	+ Feedback gathered within Individual Learning Plans (ILP)
	+ Case studies and ‘My Story’ approaches that encourage learners to advocate their experiences (every curriculum each year)
	+ Learner focus groups – at least twice in every academic year across different groups of learners and key themes
* Programme data metrics, retention, achievement, and attendance
* Progression data both intended and actual
* Personal Goals that track distance travelled data
* Long-term destination data is gathered at least twice annually, assessing the impact on learners after they have completed all activity with the service.

The monitoring of the provision of IAG is undertaken by the quality team who will conduct at least one unannounced observation with each IAG Officer as part of the annual quality cycle.

Monitoring of the quality and impact of the provision is conducted quarterly at service Performance Management Reviews and co-ordinated partner performance management reviews as part of the subcontracting process.

IAG quality improvement will form part of the annual performance review and development cycle, including the Quality Improvement Plan.

**Matrix Standard**

The Matrix standard is the national quality standard for any organisation delivering

Information, Advice and Guidance on learning and work. The standard ensures that anyone thinking about entering publicly funded education receives high quality information, advice and guidance.

LLS holds the MATRIX standard kite mark for IAG and we review and evaluate our service annually to ensure we achieve the re-accreditation every 3 years.

The matrix standard is made up of four elements:

* Leadership and Management
* Resources
* Service Delivery
* Continuous Quality Improvement

Detailed information on each element can be found on the Matrix standard website: <http://matrixstandard.com/>

Whilst we recognise the eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance, we also appreciate this is very much linked to school careers advice however we apply the principals wherever appropriate.

Detailed information about the benchmarks can be found on the website:

<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>