



## INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE POLICY

To deliver a robust, impartial, unbiased, and effective IAG service to internal and external clients, organisations, and key stakeholders, that is responsive and meets their needs, providing a comprehensive service that can meet national standards and requirements.



Department  
for Education



# PROTOCOL INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (IAG) POLICY

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## STRATEGY

To deliver a robust, impartial, unbiased, and effective IAG service to internal and external clients, organisations, and key stakeholders, that is responsive and meets their needs, providing a comprehensive service that can meet national standards and requirements.

## STRATEGIC AIM

To enable potential clients on PROTOCOL government funded or commercial training programs and employers to make well informed and realistic decisions about training and development needs, which will aid career progression, help them select progression pathways (e.g., training, employment, further education) and support company training solutions and development).

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- a) To provide impartial, unbiased IAG in a form that is easily understood by the recipient.
- b) To ensure IAG is treated confidentially as per the Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- c) To ensure IAG promotes and embeds equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout all of the provision.
- d) To systematically monitor, review, evaluate and continually improve our IAG
- e) To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision in delivering KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025), Safeguarding, Prevent and British Values outcomes of key learning.
- f) To signpost clients to other competent organisations/services where the nature of the query, interest or concern is out of scope of our capability/competence.
- g) To ensure all learners are fully aware of progression opportunities available to them.
- h) To support all learners to develop effective behaviours and personal development skills to achieve their goals and ambitions in life.
- i) To ensure we have appropriate resources for all IAG interventions across the learner journey.
- j) To ensure the staff are suitably qualified to deliver effective IAG

Measurement of progress towards achievement of these strategic objectives will be via the business/development plan and monthly KPI's.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

**PROTOCOL** was awarded the Matrix Standard in 2008 and was self-assessed against the revised standards in 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021 and 2024 and annually revisits the IAG principles. Key strengths and any areas for improvement are embedded into the rolling three-year business/development plan and annual SAR & QIP.

**PROTOCOL** adopts a robust approach to self-assessment, in line with Ofsted Education Inspection Framework requirements and effective quality improvement strategy.

**PROTOCOL** provides IAG support for all clients (potential & existing learners & parents), employers, staff, and partners.

## Clients

### AIM

To provide learners, parents, guardians, support colleagues and applicants access to IAG, which is current, updated, reliable, easy to understand, fit for purpose and addresses the wide range of questions and concerns that might develop when considering engaging in learning and skills. Our policy is to ensure IAG covers a range of activities and interventions that will help individuals to become more self-reliant and better positioned to manage their personal and career development, including training and learning. This includes embedding personalisation of learning into the ITP and program of learning, identifying individual learning needs and additional learning support where required, personal and social skills and Maths & English requirements, identification of vocational areas of learning for clients to embark on and development of employability skills, knowledge and understanding.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To facilitate clients and learners to understand the range of opportunities available via provision of clear information in a wide variety of contexts and formats which enables them to make informed and realistic decisions about their current and potential future vocational or personal needs based on accurate information.
2. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance and measure distance travelled against:
  - Key Performance Indicators mapped to the Protocol Business/development plan
  - Learner responsiveness as evidenced in individual learner retention, qualification achievement data, which is mapped back to the IAG outcomes and is part of the process that informs the identification of the most appropriate program of learning, initial assessment processes and target setting for learners
  - Process of embedding Equality and Diversity, Functional Skills and KCSiE and British Values into all aspects of IAG for the full cohort of clients
3. To provide our IAG services completely free of charge to applicants/learners.
4. To overcome any learner perceived barriers and challenges to learning, development, and progression, encouraging an ethos of lifelong learning and finding learning and training solutions for all individuals, supported by effective curriculum plans/course schedules.

## Employers

### AIM

To provide employers with full access to IAG which is fit for purpose, current, updated, reliable, easy to understand and addresses the wide range of questions and challenges, issues and concerns that may develop during consideration of and implementation of training solutions. Our policy is to help employers develop their own business further by providing IAG with training in solutions that meet individual employers' needs.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To offer and deliver government funded programs in specified vocational areas fully funded where possible to individuals who meet the Government Funding Body eligibility criteria primarily for SME's taking on 16-18 Apprentices or at a co-investment for those upskilling 19+ or pay the Levy or use the Levy Transfer.
2. To evaluate and continuously maintain and improve the quality of our performance and delivery and measure distance travelled against the following criteria:
  - Employer responsiveness, employer engagement and employer organisational requirements
  - Success in employee achievement or completion of courses and any identified additional learning needs e.g., higher level functional skills, Mental Health & Well Being, TAQA or additional units.
  - Measurement of distance travelled against the key performance indicators mapped to the Protocol business/development plan
3. To offer to carry out Organisational Needs Analyses and Training needs analysis for employers and identify, deliver, or appropriately signpost employers to organisations who can provide effective training solutions.
4. To review ONA's and measure impact on a 6 monthly basis and discuss progression opportunities.
5. To advise and support employers to understand any government initiatives and help them to register where necessary such as the Apprentice Service.
6. To ensure employers and mentors fully understand the requirements of the End Point Assessment (EPA)

## Staff

### AIM

To provide all PROTOCOL staff with effective IAG to enable them to continually develop their knowledge, understanding and expertise in specific areas, perform their own job role effectively and become an asset within the culture of PROTOCOL.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To enable our staff to recognise the extent of their own competencies and to direct them to the most appropriate internal and/or external sources who can address individual CPD (Continuous Professional Development) needs.
2. To train all staff in IAG to a level that meets their job role and responsibilities ensuring continued professional development takes place within the PROTOCOL CPD and staff training calendar of events as identified in the Training Needs Analysis.
3. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance measuring distance travelled against:
  - Staff retention
  - Staff Continuous Personal Development, including ETF (Education and Training Foundation), Skills Network, Awarding Organisations and PROTOCOL requirements).
  - Staff Appraisals and PROTOCOL Training Needs Analysis
  - Induction training plans and six-monthly action plans
  - Key Performance Indicators linked to business plans
4. To continue to develop effective strategies and take effective action to improve the company performance through our employees that is in turn supportive of leaners
5. To maintain our team ethos and Protocol Values
6. To ensure all delivery staff are annually registered with any current professional Bodies and keep up to date CPD

A flow chart is available for those members of staff who are engaging in first point of contact and delivery of IAG, the chart shows which members of staff specialise in certain areas and can give accurate and specific information.

The names, locations and up to date contact details of other providers is available in the main office to assist with sign posting (using Spotty Grids - GBSTPN).

## Partners and Sub-Contractors

### AIM

To foster and maintain positive working relationships with partners and sub-contractors (where applicable) via effective embedded communications strategies.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To collaborate with partners involved in the delivery of the 14-19 national agenda and NEETS.
2. To collaborate with partners involved in delivery of the Apprenticeship Reforms
3. To collaborate with National Careers Services, BCC, National Apprenticeship Services, JCP, DWP and other referral and support agencies, to deliver the most effective provision (within our scope of delivery) meeting the needs and aspirations of young people, adults, and employers.
4. To collaborate with funding bodies (e.g., DFE, Local Authorities, and WMCA and the LSIP to contribute towards their strategic plans including LSIP's)
5. To measure against the national, regional, WMCA and local economic and demographic targets for learner retention, achievement of qualifications and pathways
6. Review of the annual and three-year strategic plans to respond to the changing financial and economic climate.
7. To support and sign post to members of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Training provider network and Black Country (BCTG)
8. To ensure Employer and learner voice is heard and improvements made as a result of their feedback
9. To ensure Business/development Plan KPI targets are met
10. To fully comply with sub-contractor standards and quality compliance
11. To support GBSTP with their Careers events
12. To comply where possible with the Provider Access Legislation from January 2023 and revised Gatsby Benchmarks

## IAG Promotion - Being aware of the service and engaging with it -

- Promotional materials are circulated to main referral bases and organisations
- PROTOCOL staff attend promotional shows and events
- The marketing team ensures that information supplied on promotional materials is reviewed regularly and kept up to date

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Protocol Recruitment Advisors, Business Development Advisors and Protocol Training Advisors are responsible for providing information advice and guidance to prospective applicants on recruitment to Protocol programs.
  - a) To provide learners with on-program support to retain learners and enable them to successfully complete their qualifications / program curriculum standards.
  - b) To provide learners with guidance on exit from Protocol programs in relation to employment opportunities and career advancement.
- The Protocol MD and members of the Senior Management Team have responsibility for line managing and quality assuring the front line IAG services.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE & EVALUATION

- The provision of IAG services is quality assured via the collection and analysis of participant feedback, and analysis of key performance data in respect of learner retention achievement and progression. Protocol SMT are responsible for monitoring the front-line delivery, including the observation of the IAG service, and identifying areas for continuous improvement.
- The outcomes from feedback and from the SMT will be subject to discussion at routine Management Meetings and quarterly MEX meetings.

## IAG KPI's

1. To deliver a minimum of 3/5 formal IAG interventions to all learners in addition to the informal IAG given throughout the qualification and the EPA Final IAG on Apprenticeships and to sell the benefits of career/ qualification progression to all learners and employers on at least three interventions or more.
2. To ensure 100% of learners are on the correct program within 6 weeks of enrolment
3. To measure distance travelled and ensure learners have on average reached 80% improvements in skills, knowledge and behaviours from start to end of qualification (scoring 1 -10 )
4. To ensure customer satisfaction is maintained at 95% or above for good, very good and excellent, for training workshops
5. To ensure QAR (qualification achievement rates) are 70% or above
6. To ensure Functional Skills QAR / first time pass rates is 80% or above
7. To secure a minimum of 50% of NEETS to progress into FE, Employment or Apprenticeships
8. To follow up 100% of signposted referrals to partners

## In Summary:

PROTOCOL aims to provide all its clients with high quality, impartial and professional Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). This should meet clients' expectations and where possible exceed their expectations. PROTOCOL seeks to have an excellent reputation for IAG, together with high retention and achievement rates on courses and programs.

### Entitlement-

All prospective learners and enquirers are entitled to appropriate current IAG and/or assistance with course choice, career planning and transition into work.

### The Enquirers-

Externally may come from a broad range of sources e.g., careers service, schools, young people, parents, employers and awarding organisations, network members, JCP advisors, via the web site and. Gov website.

Internally may come from any of our existing learners or staff.

What IAG recipients can expect

Our Protocol team:-

- to treat you with respect
- to have developed current occupational competence, undertaken specific training, and are qualified with current and updated knowledge and understanding of qualifications and routes
- to be able to access up to date information on training and tell you about it
- will ensure confidentiality (exception being in cases of safeguarding discloses where confidentiality cannot be maintained for legal reasons)

Protocol as a company will:-

- work towards achieving accreditation to national IAG quality standards
- continue with external accreditation of our IAG via Matrix assessment
- continue to improve the service we provide
- provide you with effective signposting to other services
- embed quality initiatives through the DFE
- continue to provide effective and robust staff training and CPD

How you can help us to improve our services

Protocol will:-

- welcome suggestions for improvement
- offer you the chance to say what you think about the IAG and provision you were offered/given
- tell you who to contact and what to do if you're not happy with any of our services
- collate and analyse feedback from the learner and employer voice, focus groups and forums

## Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed whenever there is a significant relevant change required and, in any case, at least annually, with the website reviewed and updated also annually as a minimum.

# Learner Journey & Related IAG Service

## Recruitment

Protocol promotes programs to learners and employers. Protocol website and VLE provides IAG on the services on offer, parent and mentor guides available for download.

Individual briefings carried out to ensure suitability and eligibility.

Applicants who do not meet entry / eligibility requirements are provided with details of referral agencies. Applicants who meet criteria are invited to complete an Initial Assessment.

## Learner Start & Process Induction

Results of the Initial assessment are analysed and ITP created.

Learner issued with information and Moodle log in containing IAG and Course Schedule / Curriculum Plan.

Learner Handbook and Mentor guides issued.

## Pastoral Support, Retention, & Intervention Process

Mentors are provided for all learners on program. A minimum of every 8/12 week reviews are carried out to provide support and IAG.

Retention and Intervention process is applied to any learner at risk of leaving the program or whose progression is slow. Action Plans drawn up.

Complaints and compliments process in place to address any learner/employer concerns.



## Initial Assessment

Recruitment consultants & Business development carry out initial assessment of learner's skills and technical ability. A presentation is delivered to learners to provide further information about Protocol, the programs and the sectors offered.

Applicants who do not meet entry requirements are provided with details of referral agencies. Successful applicants are provided further with guidance on finding employment and interview preparation.

## Assessment & Review, Teaching & Learning

At a minimum of every 8/12 weeks, Training Advisors will review learners' progress, provide IAG and agree action plans to ensure learner progress is maintained.

## Achievement & Progression

Assessors will provide progression routes to learners and employers towards the end of their program.

Certificate presentations will be organised.

### IAG Resources

Protocol Websites  
Marketing Materials  
Parent & Mentor Guides  
Guide to Finding Employment  
Interview Preparation Guide  
Careers Guidance Videos  
Referral Letters

### IAG Resources

Referral Letters  
Initial Assessments Tests  
Recruitment Presentations  
Guide to Finding Employment  
Interview Preparation Guide  
Parent & Mentor Guides

### IAG Resources

Health & Safety  
Course Schedule  
Equality & Diversity  
Individual Training Plan  
Induction Weeks 1 to 4  
Learner Handbook  
Mentor Guides

### IAG Resources

Health & Safety  
Equality & Diversity  
British Values Questions  
Learner Review Document

### IAG Resources

Health & Safety  
Equality & Diversity  
List of Referral Agencies  
Complaints/Compliments Process  
Retention & Intervention Process  
Learner Review Document  
Mid IAG Action Plans

### IAG Resources

End Point Assessment IAG  
Individual Training Plan for Progression  
Gateway & EPA  
Final IAG

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Policy published date                                             | August 2010 |
| Date of last review                                               | Oct 2025    |
| Next review due                                                   | Oct 2026    |
| Person responsible for policy and review<br><i>Susan A Tipton</i> | Sue Tipton  |