



# Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

Version 8.0



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## Version Control

| VERSION | REVIEWER NAME | DATE     | NEXT REVIEW | COMMENTS                 |
|---------|---------------|----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2018 | Aug 2019    | First Policy.            |
| 2.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2019 | Aug 2020    | Updated.                 |
| 3.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2020 | Aug 2021    | Updated.                 |
| 4.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2021 | Aug 2022    | Updated.                 |
| 5.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2022 | Aug 2023    | Updated.                 |
| 6.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2023 | Aug 2024    | Updated.                 |
| 7.0     | Rena Panesar  | Aug 2024 | Aug 2025    | Updated.                 |
| 8.0     | Policy Pros   | Oct 2025 | Oct 2026    | Retemplated and updated. |



### Introduction

Pathways LDN is committed to providing high-quality, impartial, and learner-centred Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG).

We recognise that access to reliable IAG is fundamental to empowering individuals—whether they are prospective learners, current apprentices, or staff—to make informed decisions about their education, career pathways, and overall well-being.

Our approach reflects our values.

- Hope means we focus on strengths and realistic next steps so each person can see a way forward.
- Respect means we listen carefully, use plain English, and tailor support to individual needs and circumstances.
- Integrity means our guidance is impartial, evidence-based, and not steered by funding or sales targets.
- Commitment means we stay involved, track progress, and follow up after people move on. This policy explains the standards we follow, how we deliver IAG, and how we check that it makes a positive difference.

Our policy is designed to ensure that IAG is available to all, supports successful outcomes, and aligns with the standards set by funding and regulatory bodies.

### Who and what this policy applies to

This Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) Policy applies across all aspects of Pathways LDN's operations, covering every individual who needs support for their education, training, and employment decisions.

The policy provisions cover all service users (including learners, apprentices, employers, and candidates), all IAG activities (whether face-to-face or digital), and all funding streams (including DfE, ESFA, and Local and National Authorities).



### Definitions

**Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG)** is defined as a continuum of services designed to support individuals in making choices, managing transitions, and reaching their potential.

**Information:** Providing relevant and objective facts (data, figures, options, rules, and procedures) in an accessible format. This includes details about available courses, eligibility criteria, assessment methods, and funding rules.

**Advice:** Offering specific suggestions or recommendations based on an individual's personal circumstances, helping them to understand how different options might apply to them. This involves interpreting complex information and highlighting next steps.

**Guidance:** Providing in-depth, personalised support through skilled interaction. Guidance helps individuals explore and clarify their own goals, values, and aspirations. It supports them in overcoming barriers, developing decision-making skills, and planning their progression route.

In essence, IAG is the supportive process that enables an individual to move from **knowing their options** (Information) to **understanding their path** (Advice) to **taking confident control of their future** (Guidance).



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Directors**

The Directors will:

- Champion efforts to promote high-quality information, advice and guidance within and give their backing to the careers and training programmes offered.
- Ensure adequate resources are provided, enabling staff to provide the required information, advice and guidance.

### **Staff**

All staff involved in offering information, advice, and guidance will:

- Take steps to improve their knowledge and understanding of high-quality career and training information, advice and guidance within their speciality.
- Know their limitations and be aware of where to signpost learners as appropriate.
- Follow this policy and use such information to provide appropriate advice and guidance (as outlined in the Supporting Literature and Related Documents section).



### Policy

#### Principles of IAG Delivery

All IAG provided by Pathways LDN will adhere to the following principles:

**Impartiality:** All information and advice will be presented fairly, without bias towards a particular course, employer, or career route, always focusing on the individual's needs and best interests.

**Confidentiality:** All personal discussions and records related to IAG are treated with strict confidentiality in line with our Data Protection and Safeguarding policies.

**Accessibility:** IAG services and resources are designed to be accessible to all individuals, regardless of age, disability, background, or ability. We provide information in alternative formats upon request.

**Quality and Relevance:** All staff providing guidance are appropriately trained, up-to-date on career trends, and possess the necessary skills to deliver accurate, objective, and current information.

#### Aligning with Best Practice

Pathways LDN is firmly committed to ensuring that our Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) provision meets and exceeds national standards for excellence. Our framework for quality and continuous improvement is centred on two key external benchmarks: the **Gatsby Benchmarks** and the pursuit of **Matrix Accreditation**.

##### The Gatsby Benchmarks

We use the eight Gatsby Benchmarks as our core measure of quality for careers education, information, advice, and guidance. Embedding these benchmarks ensures our learners receive high-quality career guidance that prepares them for future success:

- We structure our IAG delivery to ensure every learner benefits from stable career programme foundations, encounters with employers and employees, exposure to the world of work, and personalised guidance sessions.
- Using these benchmarks allows the leadership team to regularly monitor the breadth and effectiveness of our careers-related IAG, driving sustained improvement.





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### **Matrix Accreditation**

Pathways LDN is actively working towards achieving the Matrix Standard accreditation. This is a nationally recognised quality standard for organisations that deliver IAG services.

Achieving Matrix will formally validate the high quality of our service delivery, ensuring that our IAG processes—including planning, resource management, service delivery, and continuous evaluation—meet an externally verified, demanding standard.

The pursuit of Matrix also reinforces our commitment to providing impartial, accessible, and high-impact guidance that truly empowers learners to make the best decisions about their training and employment futures.

### **Our IAG Offer**

Guidance covers career options, employability skills, qualifications and training routes, apprenticeship pathways, digital skills for work, and the practical steps needed to secure and keep a job.

Where individuals need help that sits outside our remit, for example, specialist debt advice, housing, drug and alcohol services, or mental health treatment, advisers signpost to appropriate local or national services and record the referral.

### **Delivery Model**

#### **Pre-Course IAG**

- Prospective learners receive IAG tailored to their prior attainment and goals to ensure they are placed on a suitable and achievable programme.
- Clear information is provided on funding eligibility criteria, commitment requirements, and necessary entry qualifications.

#### **In-Programme IAG**

- Tutors and mentors integrate career discussions and goal setting into regular reviews, ensuring the training remains relevant to the learner's career aspirations.
- Guidance is provided on next steps, such as progressing to a higher-level apprenticeship, further education, or permanent employment.



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### External Referral

Where a learner's needs exceed the professional scope of Pathways LDN staff, particularly relating to specialised career fields, complex welfare issues, or independent financial advice, staff will refer the individual to appropriate external expert services. This ensures the learner receives the most comprehensive support available.

### Staff Training, Development, and Competence

Pathways LDN is committed to ensuring that all staff providing Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) are professionally qualified, impartial, and up-to-date with current career and funding landscapes.

#### Core IAG Qualifications

We maintain a rigorous standard of professional competence based on nationally recognised qualifications:

**Advisers:** All individuals whose primary role involves direct, personalised advice and guidance to learners must achieve and maintain a minimum of a Level 3 qualification in Information, Advice, or Guidance.

**Team Leaders/Managers:** All Team Leaders and Managers with supervisory, strategic, or complex case management responsibilities will be expected to achieve and maintain a minimum of a Level 6 qualification in Guidance (or an equivalent qualification, such as a postgraduate certificate/diploma in Career Guidance). The specific level will be determined based on the complexity of their role and the needs of the service.

#### Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Staff are required to engage in regular CPD to ensure knowledge remains current, particularly regarding:

- ESFA/DfE funding rules and compliance requirements.
- Changes in occupational standards, career pathways, and the local labour market.
- Safeguarding and welfare referral procedures.



### **Access and Inclusion**

Pathways LDN aims to remove practical barriers to guidance. We use plain English and avoid jargon. Alternative formats are available on request, for example, large print, screen reader-friendly files and coloured overlays. We can arrange interpreting and translation. Venues are checked for accessibility. Reasonable adjustments are agreed in writing, reviewed during progress meetings, and applied across all touchpoints so that people do not have to repeat the same information.

### **Impartiality and Managing Influence**

Advice is based on an individual's goals, capability, and the current labour market. It is not influenced by funding streams, internal recruitment targets, employer preferences, or the personal preferences of staff.

Advisers disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest to their manager and the IAG Lead.

Conflicts are recorded, and the adviser steps back from affected decisions.

### **Labour Market Information**

Advisers use current labour market information to inform choices. This includes local vacancy trends, skills shortages, entry routes, qualification requirements and typical pay ranges. The source and date of the information are noted in the learner record so that advice is traceable and can be checked for currency during audit.

### **Employer and Partner Engagement**

Pathways LDN maintains relationships with employers, apprenticeship providers, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and third sector organisations, who are invited to help shape sessions and programs, offer workplace visits, and share realistic role requirements.

### **Quality Assurance and Improvement**

The Directors are responsible for overseeing the quality and effectiveness of this policy. We will monitor the IAG provision through:



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Collecting and reviewing learner feedback on the usefulness and impartiality of the guidance they received during and after their programme.

**Staff Training Records:** Ensuring all staff involved in guidance delivery maintain up-to-date knowledge and complete the required Continuous Professional Development (CPD) related to IAG standards.

**Compliance Audit:** Periodically reviewing IAG records and processes to ensure alignment with ESFA funding rules and quality requirements.

### Records and Evidence

Each learner has an IAG record that includes assessment notes, action plans, referrals, reviews, and a summary at exit.

Evidence is kept in a way that meets ESFA requirements and supports audit.

Only approved systems are used to store or transmit records.

### Complaints and Appeals

If a learner is unhappy with the guidance they have received, they can ask for a review by a team leader who has not been involved in the case. If the issue is not resolved, they can use the Pathways LDN Comments and Complaints Policy.

We welcome feedback and use it to improve the service.

### Reviewing

Pathways LDN Ltd. is committed to ensuring our policies are effective and up-to-date.

The Directors are responsible for this process and will review this policy at least once a year or more frequently if needed due to changes in laws, regulatory guidance, or best practice.

**This policy will be made available in other formats upon request, and all learners are encouraged to speak to any member of staff if they have any questions or require clarification.**