

Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults

Towards a National Policy Framework:

Discussion Document

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This document sets out proposals towards a national policy framework for the future development of IAG services to adults aged 20 or over in England. It invites comments from stakeholders on the principles of a proposed way forward. Implementation of the proposals in this discussion document will depend on wider Government decisions about the priorities and resources for the skills strategy and associated delivery plan, which the Government intends to publish in June 2003.
- 1.2 The key elements of the framework, set out below, will form the basis of discussion at the roadshow events. We welcome written comments on these key questions, and on questions related to the wider issues in this document. Please submit your comments on the feedback form, following guidance in the “Next Steps” section at the back of this document.

Availability of IAG Services for Adults

- 1.3 This would build on the current policy to make information and advice available to all. The emphasis would be on engaging the individual as an active agent within the IAG process, and supporting them to make independent and informed decisions. Individuals would have consistent access, throughout England, to a wide range of high quality self help information materials, available through a variety of media. High quality advice would be available to support individuals to make effective use of the information. Guidance and personal support might also be available, as part of the Government’s skills strategy, to help individuals overcome the barriers to successful entry and progression in learning and work.

Key Question 1: How should we target IAG services for adults, and on whom, to maximise the contribution of IAG to the skills strategy, and make best use of available public funding?

An Integrated National and Local IAG Service

- 1.4 An integrated IAG service would harmonise and build on the services currently available through the national telephone advice line/website and the local services delivered by IAG partnerships. The service would deliver IAG and would promote the benefits of accessing opportunities in learning and work. The service would be accessible and visible, and could include a national IAG entry point and a common overarching national identity. The service would be delivered to a consistent, national quality standard within a national framework of continuous quality improvement. There might also be a National IAG Development Centre to promote continuous professional development and the development of leading edge information materials and delivery methods.

Key Question 2: What features of an integrated IAG service would be critical in improving people’s access to and progress in learning and work?

2. Background and Policy Rationale

- 2.1 The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE - now the Department for Education and Skills) Adult Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) Programme began in 1999 as a response to recommendations in the *Learning to Succeed* White Paper. The aim of the programme was to make available, to all adults aged 20 or over, accessible information and advice services of consistent quality on opportunities in learning and work.
- 2.2 The IAG programme was developed and implemented through Learning Partnerships bringing together local providers of IAG into local IAG partnerships. IAG partnerships cover all areas of England and full members include Connexions Services, FE, HE, Jobcentre Plus, Voluntary and Community sector bodies, Trades Unions and others.
- 2.3 The Learning & Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for securing delivery of local IAG services through contracts with lead bodies of local IAG partnerships. DfES and the LSC work closely together to develop and implement national IAG policy. Through a National IAG Board, DfES also works closely with DWP, Jobcentre Plus and DTI to ensure coherence on cross Departmental IAG issues.
- 2.4 The *Learning to Succeed* White Paper recommended that **learndirect** should complement and reinforce at a national level the local services provided through IAG partnerships. It also recommended that **learndirect** act as an entry point to IAG.
- 2.5 The Strategy Unit report, *In Demand – Adult Skills in the 21st Century* and its follow up report, focus on development of a national and local IAG service that is integrated for the customer and which exploits the potential of worktrain. The reports concluded that an integrated service should deliver:
- visible, accessible and joined up IAG services from the customer's perspective;
 - improved referral arrangements to make better use of the existing channels for the delivery of IAG services;
 - a national entitlement to IAG for adults;
 - IAG services of consistently high quality; and
 - clear demonstration of IAG impact.
- 2.6 An integrated IAG service would promote the value and benefits of learning and work to adults of all ages, and would deliver impartial and client-centred information, advice and guidance about learning and work. The principles and possible delivery elements of an integrated service are at sections 4 and 5 of this document.

2.7 The overall aims of the national IAG policy for adults are to:

- promote understanding of the value of lifelong learning and skills development to individual adults;
- make IAG services accessible to adults to enable and motivate them to plan their careers and to go on making informed choices about learning and work throughout their lives; and
- provide support for adults to identify and address barriers to entry, completion, attainment and progression in learning and work.

3. Towards a National Policy Framework for Adult IAG

a) Availability of IAG Services for Adults

3.1 Within the context of developing its overall skills strategy, the Government is considering greater national consistency in the range and quality of IAG services for adults. This might mean:

- extending the range of information (see annex 1 for a definition of key terms) available nationally;
- introducing new methods and media of accessing and using the information;
- refocusing the role of advice (see annex 1) towards supporting clients to be ongoing, independent users of information;
- introducing guidance services (see annex 1) for people with basic skills needs, people without an NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualification and young adults up to age 30 not in Higher Education, who would benefit from them; and
- introducing personal support (see annex 1) to low skilled adults (those without NVQ level 2 or equivalent) who would benefit from it.

3.2 At national and local levels, a co-ordinated approach to IAG service planning would be essential to ensure adequate capacity within the sector to deliver the range, volume and quality of services to meet demand. Co-ordinated planning would also ensure that service provision was appropriately targeted to meet both national priorities and the needs of local communities.

Q1 *How should we target IAG services for adults, and on whom, to maximise the contribution of IAG to the skills strategy, and make best use of available public funding?*

Q2 *In what circumstances might clients need guidance and/or personal support?*

Q3 *What are the implications for delivery and in particular for managing demand and supply?*

b) Customer Awareness of IAG Services for Adults

3.3 As part of a strategy to improve customer awareness of IAG services for adults, we are considering the development of a common national identity to:

- promote the benefits of learning and work;
- promote national recognition of IAG services for adults;

- improve access to IAG services for adults;
 - promote national recognition of consistency in the quality and range of IAG services; and
 - complement local brands where they exist.
- 3.4 To achieve these aims we think there would need to be a national marketing strategy to market the whole range of IAG services to individuals. This would also involve marketing IAG services to employers as part of the strategy for workforce development, so that they know how, when and where to refer their employees for IAG about learning and work.
- 3.5 Effective marketing at local levels would communicate a clear statement of the range and type of services on offer to individual users. Whilst the national message would be consistent and fairly general, local strategies could be tailored at priority groups within the local areas to promote local events / campaigns.
- 3.6 A marketing strategy would:
- promote national awareness of the existence and benefits of IAG, and the integrated IAG service;
 - reinforce recognition of IAG through the national common identity;
 - indicate where adults could go for the IAG services they need; and
 - provide a clear statement of the IAG services that adults could expect to receive and how to access them.
- 3.7 The message would be communicated through national and local media and would be consistent in encouraging users either to ring a helpline, visit a website, or drop in where they see the “[xxx]” sign. Marketing would be customer focused and would aim to maximise the accessibility of information, advice and guidance to members of the public through the medium which they choose eg – face to face, phone or web.

Q4 What are the key messages needing marketing at national and local levels?

Q5 Should the marketing be targeted in any way?

c) Access to IAG Services for Adults

- 3.8 A MORI survey (2001) of demand for IAG services shows a socio-economic divide in access to services. People who are unemployed, disabled or over the age of 45 express the greatest difficulty in accessing IAG and show the greatest dissatisfaction with the services they receive and their outcomes. An adult IAG policy framework should include policies to widen access and address barriers to IAG services.

3.9 The main access barriers we think need tackling would be:-

Physical barriers such as

- IT access;
- transport;
- access for people with disabilities; and
- access for prisoners.

Attitudinal barriers such as

- lack of self confidence;
- lack of self esteem; and
- lack of trust.

Communication barriers such as

- understanding the relevance of IAG;
- English language barriers;
- basic skills difficulties; and
- appropriateness of language and media.

Structural barriers such as

- knowing where IAG services are; and
- knowing how to use IAG services.

3.10 Proposals to widen access to IAG services among currently under represented groups could include:-

- providing access through a variety of sources such as outreach services, the internet, national and local telephone help-lines, local information points and local face to face services;
- actively promoting access to learning to those groups who have traditionally been 'non learners';
- looking at the language used to promote and deliver the service so it is clear, unambiguous and universally accessible; and
- providing a clear national first point of entry to IAG backed up by clear signposting with appropriate help and advice to navigate through the system.

Q6 *In what ways can IAG be of most help in addressing the main barriers to learning and work?*

Q7 *Do these proposals adequately reflect the range of barriers to IAG services?*

d) Ensuring High Quality IAG

3.11 To ensure consistency, we believe that IAG services should be delivered to a national standard which reflects the principles of service delivery (see Section 4), within a national framework of continuous quality improvement. We believe that consistency in the quality of IAG service provision should be across:-

- geographical areas throughout England;
- the range and format of IAG service provision;
- individual IAG service providers; and
- IAG staff and practitioners.

3.12 We think this could be achieved by:

- Reinforced emphasis on quality frameworks, for instance by requiring all IAG providers in receipt of DfES & LSC funding to be accredited against the **matrix** Standard;
- continuing to work with EmpNTO and the Guidance Accreditation Board to ensure that the **matrix** Standard remains relevant, robust and fit for purpose both to maintain and improve the quality of IAG service provision;
- reviewing the current IAG qualifications and competency frameworks, and their appropriateness to the proposed range and quality of IAG services to be delivered;
- recognising the wide range of practitioners involved at different stages in the IAG process and providing better support to them to enable them to refer clients on to a range of specialist or mainstream IAG; and
- undertaking a detailed mapping of the IAG sector to determine capacity to deliver consistently the range and quality of IAG services.

Q8 *What are the key competences required to deliver the proposed range and quality of IAG services?*

Q9 *How can we support IAG practitioners to achieve, and improve on, the competences required to deliver the range and quality of IAG services?*

Q10 *How should we ensure a consistent approach to maintaining and improving high quality IAG service delivery?*

e) Measuring the Impact and Effectiveness of IAG Services for Adults

3.13 The following is a list of possible general indicators to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of national IAG policy in achieving its aims, and thereby contributing to the skills strategy. At an operational level, the indicators might also serve to evaluate effective implementation of the national IAG policy. The proposed indicators are:

Client Awareness of IAG Services

- clients are aware of the range and quality of IAG services available;
- clients are aware of any charges for IAG services;
- clients are aware of the relevance and benefits of accessing IAG services;
- clients are aware of how to access IAG services.

Client Access to IAG Services

- clients have physical access to IAG services;
- clients can access support to enable independent use of information;
- IAG services reach out to target client groups;
- clients recognise and trust IAG services;
- clients can identify the IAG services that meet their needs; and
- IAG is communicated in language(s) that clients understand.

Quality of IAG Services

- the range and quality of IAG services meet clients' needs;
- information is accurate;
- IAG front line staff are competent to deliver IAG services;
- IAG services are impartial and responsive to the needs of clients; and
- clients are satisfied with the quality of IAG services they receive.

Impact of IAG Services on Client Behaviour

- successful entry into learning and/or work;
- successful completion of learning choice;
- successful attainment of qualification(s);
- progression into further learning;
- improved job retention rates; and
- career advancement.

Q11 *Are these the key indicators of an effective IAG policy for adults?*

4. Principles of IAG Service Delivery

4.1 We propose that IAG services for adults should be delivered in line with the principles of coherent IAG Service delivery developed by the National Information, Advice and Guidance Board. These are:

Accessible and Visible – IAG services that are recognised and trusted by clients, have convenient entry points from which clients may be signposted or referred to the services which most closely meet their needs, and are open at times and in places which suit clients' needs;

Professional and Knowledgeable – IAG frontline staff will have the skills and knowledge to identify quickly and effectively the client's needs. They will have the skills and knowledge either to address the client's needs or to signpost or to refer them to suitable alternative provision;

Links - between IAG services are clear from the client's perspective and, where necessary, clients are supported in their transition between services;

Availability, Quality and Delivery of IAG services – should be targeted at the needs of clients, and be informed by social and economic priorities at local, regional and national levels;

Diversity – in the range of IAG services will reflect the diversity of clients' needs;

Impartial – IAG services which support clients to make informed decisions about learning and work based on the client's needs and circumstances;

Responsive – to present and future needs of clients;

Friendly – and welcoming IAG services which encourage clients to engage successfully with the service;

Enabling – services which encourage and support clients to become lifelong learners by enabling them to access and use information to plan their careers;

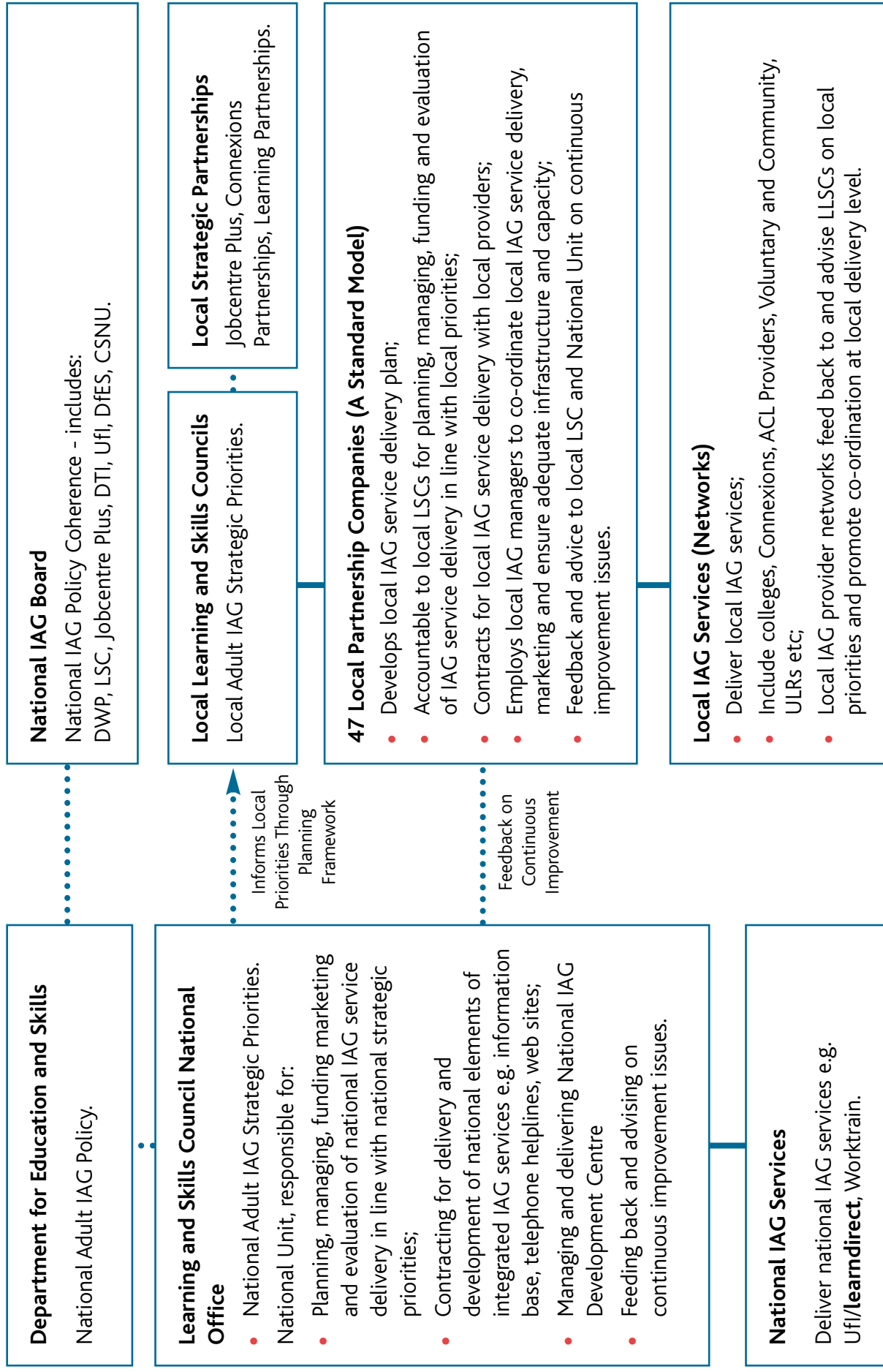
Learning and Work – IAG services will support clients to explore the implications for both learning and work in their future career plans;

Awareness - adults will be aware of the IAG services that are relevant to them, and will have well informed expectations of those services.

Q12 *Do these principles reflect the full range of client requirements for delivery of an integrated IAG service?*

5. Elements of an Integrated IAG Service

- 5.1 We consider that the main infrastructure elements of an integrated IAG service for adults would be:-
- a national common identity;
 - a clear national point of entry, from which clients can easily locate the IAG service which most closely meets their needs;
 - probably a National Development Centre to advise and promote continuous professional development of IAG practitioners, and to develop innovative approaches to IAG service delivery;
 - a flexible approach to IAG service delivery, informed by the needs of national priority client groups and the needs of local communities;
 - delivery of IAG services by competent practitioners, committed to continuous professional development;
 - delivery of IAG services to a consistent, national quality standard, within a national framework of continuous quality improvement;
 - delivery of IAG services through a range of appropriate media including national and local telephone help-lines, on line and paper based information resources and face to face services; and
 - planning arrangements at national and local level which ensure coherence with Connexions, Jobcentre Plus, HE and other key stakeholders.
- 5.2 The attached diagram sets out one possible model of how we might develop this in practice. In this model, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would be responsible for securing and funding the integrated IAG service. At the national level, the LSC would develop a framework of national strategic priorities based on the national IAG policy of the Department for Education and Skills. The national strategic priorities would inform the development of local strategic priorities by local LSCs. Local strategic partnerships, chaired by the local LSC, would also advise the local LSC on the development of coherent local strategic priorities. We expect there would need to be some form of national co-ordinating unit, accountable to the LSC National Office, which would secure those elements of the overall service that are best secured at national level e.g. national helplines, national marketing, material development and CPD. Delivery at the local level might be through Local Partnership Companies, accountable to the local LSCs.
- Q13 *What elements of an integrated IAG service are the critical ones to enable people to access and progress in learning and work?***
- Q14 *What are the advantages and disadvantages of the attached model, and would it work in practice?***



Department for Education and Skills

National Adult IAG Policy.

Learning and Skills Council National Office

- National Adult IAG Strategic Priorities. National Unit, responsible for:
- Planning, managing, funding marketing and evaluation of national IAG service delivery in line with national strategic priorities;
- Contracting for delivery and development of national elements of integrated IAG services e.g. information base, telephone helplines, web sites;
- Managing and delivering National IAG Development Centre
- Feeding back and advising on continuous improvement issues.

National IAG Board

National IAG Policy Coherence - includes:
DWP, LSC, Jobcentre Plus, DTI, Ufi, DfES, CSNU.

Local Learning and Skills Councils

Local Adult IAG Strategic Priorities.

Local Strategic Partnerships

Jobcentre Plus, Connexions Partnerships, Learning Partnerships.

47 Local Partnership Companies (A Standard Model)

- Develops local IAG service delivery plan;
- Accountable to local LSCs for planning, managing, funding and evaluation of IAG service delivery in line with local priorities;
- Contracts for local IAG service delivery with local providers;
- Employs local IAG managers to co-ordinate local IAG service delivery, marketing and ensure adequate infrastructure and capacity;
- Feedback and advice to local LSC and National Unit on continuous improvement issues.

Local IAG Services (Networks)

- Deliver local IAG services;
- Include colleges, Connexions, ACL Providers, Voluntary and Community, ULRs etc;
- Local IAG provider networks feed back to and advise LSCs on local priorities and promote co-ordination at local delivery level.

National IAG Services

Deliver national IAG services e.g. Ufi/learnirect, Worktrain.

Informs Local Priorities Through Planning Framework

Feedback on Continuous Improvement

Annex 1 – Definition of Terms Used

1. Information

Information about access to opportunities

- Learning and work opportunities, inc. learning opportunities in FE, HE, ACL, **learndirect**, local learning providers; work placements; national and local job vacancies; voluntary opportunities; opportunities in self employment;
- Qualifications and equivalence in UK of qualifications gained overseas;
- Routes to learning and work;
- Childcare opportunities;
- Raising individuals' awareness of financial support for learning;
- Information about further sources of national and local IAG – inc. IAG about self employment;
- Information about national and local sources of non learning and work IAG – e.g. housing, debt, benefits, health, services for asylum seekers/refugees, ESOL;

Supporting information

- National and local labour market information;
- Career/occupational/sector profiles;

Enabling information

- Skills/occupational profiles;
- Aptitude profiles;
- Learning & career planning/management tools;
- CV writers;
- Information about applying for jobs;
- Basic skills assessments;

2. Advice

- Promoting the benefits to individuals of engaging in learning and work;
- Raising awareness and motivation of users and potential users to access information on learning and work;
- Providing clients with IT support to access the information;
- Helping clients to navigate the information sources to find what they need;
- Enabling clients to understand the information in relation to their needs;
- Teaching clients the skills to use the information effectively to manage their careers;
- Identifying barriers to effective information use and, where appropriate, signposting/referring to relevant support;

3. Guidance

- Helping clients to understand their own needs relating to learning and work;
- Helping clients to set and review goals/objectives for learning and work;
- Helping clients to understand their barriers to learning and work;
- Helping clients to overcome barriers/obstacles to learning and work;
- Helping clients to produce learning and career action plans;

4. Personal support

- Aimed at clients who reveal severe or multiple barriers to successful entry/progression in learning and work;
- Characterised by intensive, one to one, continuity of support such as mentoring, counselling, advocacy;
- Working on behalf of clients to access specialist information and support relating to the needs of clients.

Next Steps

RESPONSES ARE REQUESTED BY MONDAY 12TH MAY 2003

Please use the attached feedback form to submit further comments. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

If you require further clarification of our proposals please contact our enquiry point at:

future.iag@dfes.gsi.gov.uk (This address can also be used for submitting responses)

or telephone 0114 2594384

Findings from this discussion exercise will feed into the National Skills Strategy and Delivery Plan and will form the basis of a National Adult IAG Policy Framework.

Feedback Form

Availability of IAG Services for Adults

1. How should we target IAG services for adults, and on whom, to maximise the contribution of IAG to the skills strategy, and make best use of available public funding?
2. In what circumstances might clients need guidance and / or personal support?
3. What are the implications for delivery and in particular for managing demand and supply?

Customer Awareness of IAG services for Adults

4. What are the key messages needing marketing at national and local levels?
5. Should the marketing be targeted in any way?

Access to IAG Services for Adults

6. In what ways can IAG be of most help in addressing the main barriers to learning and work?
7. Do these proposals adequately reflect the range of barriers to IAG services?

Ensuring High Quality IAG

8. What are the key competences required to deliver the proposed range and quality of IAG services?
9. How can we support IAG practitioners to achieve, and improve on, the competences required to deliver the range and quality of IAG services?
10. How should we ensure a consistent approach to maintaining and improving high quality IAG service delivery?

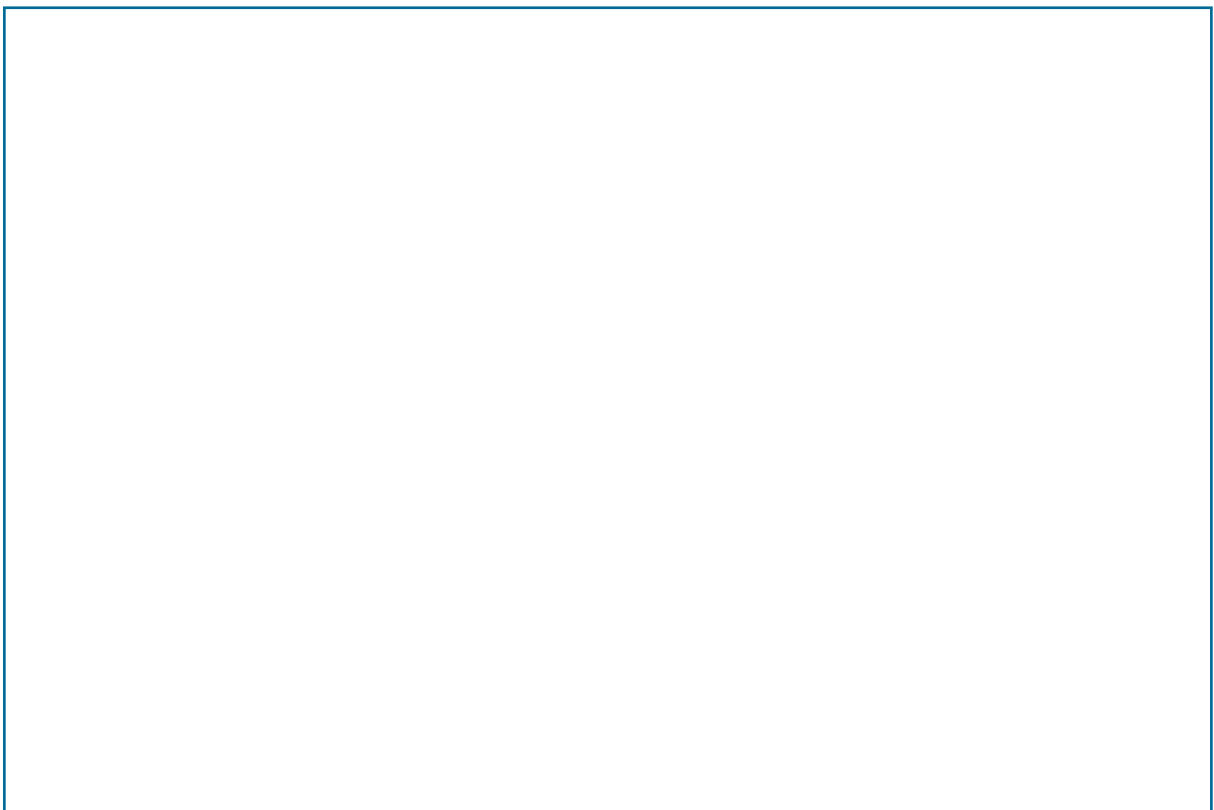
Measuring the Impact and Effectiveness of IAG Services for Adults

11. Are these the key indicators of an effective IAG policy for adults?



Principles of IAG Service Delivery

12. Do these principles reflect the full range of client requirements for delivery of an integrated IAG service?



Elements of an Integrated IAG Service

13. What elements of an integrated IAG service are the critical ones to enable people to access learning and work?
14. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the attached model, and would it work in practice?

RESPONSES ARE REQUESTED BY MONDAY 12TH MAY TO:

e-mail future.iag@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Post to: Policy Framework Responses
 Department for Education & Skills
 Adult Guidance Policy Team
 Room W8a, Moorfoot
 Sheffield
 S1 4PQ

NameContact Details