

Policy Statement

The Write Time aims to provide high quality information, advice and guidance services. This will enable learners, volunteers and other stakeholders to make informed choices about ways in which they can meet their individual training and development needs to reach their full potential.

The Write Time's Key Strategic Targets for IAG Services:

The Write Time has identified seven key strategic targets for the delivery of a comprehensive IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) service. These are to:

Objective One

Provide accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance that meets the needs of existing and potential learners, volunteers and other stakeholders about the courses, qualifications and additional services we or other providers offer. To benefit from the service is not dependant upon enrolment to, or future attendance of any of The Write Time's provision or services.

Objective Two

Provide accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance that meet the needs of employees about their rights, entitlements and responsibilities as employees, about staff development opportunities, about performance management and grievance procedures.

Objective Three

To achieve an integrated IAG service to ensure a 'joined up' approach to the provision, making sure that any user can be confident they will benefit from internal and external referral and signposting.

Objective Four

Provide a service that conforms to the standards laid down by the National Information, Advice and Guidance Board, and which also meets the standards required for quality marks.

Objective Five

The Write Time will staff the service with professionally qualified and experienced practitioners. It is identified as essential that service users understand and can interpret the Information, Advice and Guidance conveyed to them. Additional assistance will be available to meet this commitment.

Objective Six

Provide a service which is trusted, confidential (subject to The Write Time's confidentiality policy) and which meets the highest standards of equality of opportunity. In accordance with The Write Time's Equality and Diversity Policy there is a commitment to providing equality of opportunity by ensuring that advice and guidance services are available to all regardless of age, disability, gender or gender identity, race, (ethnic origin), religious belief or sexual orientation.

Objective Seven

Raise the quality and effectiveness of The Write Time's IAG services; this is to be achieved by the continuous monitoring of the service, seeking feedback and opinions from the users of the service and to use this to plan any improvements or necessary changes to the service.

10 Information, Advice and Guidance Services for Adults

Supporting these objectives are the following statements:

- 1 IAG – statement of external service
- 2 IAG – statement of internal service

NB. These documents are available upon request in alternative formats

Statement of External Service

This statement sets out the details of The Write Time's IAG service as it applies to external clients, Learners and other stakeholders. The purpose of this statement is to clarify what is on offer, and what someone can expect when using the service.

Who can use our services?

- **Current Learners** who are enrolled on a course, at The Write Time projects can access the service and can request an enhanced / follow up IAG interview.
- **Enquirers and prospective learners** who do not yet study with The Write Time but are considering us as an option.

What can you expect from us?

- **Accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance** on the full range of services we offer, as detailed below. We offer information and advice on courses and qualifications available at The Write Time and other external providers. If study elsewhere is more appropriate then we will, suggest alternatives to ensure the client's best interests are considered.
- **A service that conforms to national standards.** We aim to meet the Principles for Coherent Service Delivery laid down by The National Information, Advice and Guidance Board. This means that our service will be:
 - Accessible and Visible
 - Professional and Knowledgeable
 - Impartial
 - Responsive to individual need
 - Friendly and welcoming
- **Equality of Treatment.** We aim to treat all our students solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, Race (ethnicity), religious beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, or any other distinction.
- **Confidentiality.** In order to provide the best possible service, we need to ask question about your personal details and circumstances. This information will be kept confidential. (subject to The Write Time's confidentiality policy and Data protection policy) Individual records of clients can only be accessed by authorised The Write Time employees who need to see this information as part of their work. We take all appropriate physical, technical and contractual measures to ensure that your information will not be used by anyone outside The Write Time. Should The Write Time need to pass your data to a third party organisation, this will only be done with your full consent.

What do we expect from you?

- As much relevant and honest information as you can give us, so that we can answer your enquiry fully. E.g. disclosing a disability or an additional requirement to enable us to provide extra support if applicable.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your application, your enquiry, your course or your progress, we expect you to contact us as soon as possible in order to resolve the issue.

Feedback, comments and complaints

- We are committed to developing the quality of our services and we regularly seek the views of our students to find out how far they are satisfied with the courses and support provided by The Write Time.
- We welcome any comments you may have which could help us to improve our services. If you are a learner with us you can pass your comments directly to your tutor or to your elected learning representative. If you are not yet a learner you can contact us by emailing sammurray@thewritetime.org including 'IAG Request' in the email subject.
- We hope that you are happy with the service you receive but if you are not then we will investigate and deal with any difficulties you experience. If you have a complaint then we will treat it in confidence and will do our best to resolve it fairly and quickly in accordance with The Write Time's complaints procedure, a copy of which can be obtained from our website.

THE SERVICES WE OFFER

1. Help with choosing the right course of study and/or qualification

- Printed information will be available detailing The Write Time's provision and services. This information is also available on the web site. It also includes details about learning at The Write Time and the additional integrated services available to learners. This information is comprehensive and regularly updated.
- Access to The Write Time's expert IAG team, who can provide you with more information about the study and employability options open to you.
- For courses, a personal interview with a member of our frontline staff, who will discuss your educational background and needs, your career aspirations, and the options open to you.
- Course information, information, advice and guidance is also available through affiliated centres, outreach events, open days, and at various local shows and events throughout the year.

2. Help with starting your studies

- We will provide you with written information about the enrolment process, about transport arrangements for enrolment, and attendance.
- We will provide you with a induction programme which will include information about:
 - Your specific course, and how it will be assessed
 - Learning support available to you
 - The IAG team
 - Welfare and Counselling services available to you

3. Support during your programme

- We will provide on-going advice and guidance throughout your time with us in order to assist your learning and your personal development. This will include:
 - Course-based support from your tutor or employment services broker.
 - A three stage Information, advice, and guidance service, to enable you to plan your personal, educational and career development. Every Learner at The Write Time will receive an initial, mid-point and Exit IAG interaction.
 - Reasonable adjustment and study support to facilitate your studies if you have a disability or additional requirements.

4. Help with Moving on

- We will provide help and support to enable you to choose what you will do next. This may include:
- Support from teaching staff who can provide you with more information about options beyond your present study, whether it's progression to another course of study, progression to further / Higher education or progression to employment
- Information, advice and guidance about the job-seeking process including CVs and completing application forms, preparing for interviews, and looking for job vacancies.
- NB. Access to the enhanced level service is subject to funding eligibility.

Statement of Internal Service

This statement sets out the details of The Write Time's IAG service as it applies to employees, volunteers and additional stakeholders. The purpose of this statement is to clarify the aims of the internal service, what can actually be provided, and what someone can expect when using the internal IAG service.

Who can use our services?

- **Current employees and volunteers** who are employed by The Write Time on either a full time, part time or sessional contract and are seeking advice & guidance.

What can you expect from us?

- **Accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance** on the full range of services and opportunities that the organisation offers. This could be for reasons of staff development, career advancement, gaining additional experience, and assistance preparing for a change of career direction.

- **How to access this service?**

All staff can and already accesses the service in a number of ways, directly through induction, a 1-2-1 or an employee appraisal. Direct access to an IAG practitioner can be arranged if required by contacting one of the advisors via a centre.

- **A service that conforms to national standards.** We aim to meet the Principles for Coherent Service Delivery laid down by The National Information, Advice and Guidance Board. This means that our internal service will be of the same standard and quality as outlined above for the external service.

Internal Service Objectives:

OBJECTIVES

1. IAG provision is at the heart of our external provision and so it is too for the internal provision. The main function of the internal IAG provision is for the purposes of internal communication, and as a tool for the continued development of the organisation's performance and individual employees.
2. To enable our employees to identify and recognise the extent of their own competencies and to direct them to the most appropriate internal and/or external sources for personal and professional development. This will include addressing individual CPD (Continuous Professional Development) needs.
3. The Write Time has committed to training and equipping all frontline employees in IAG to a level that meets their job role requirements and responsibilities. This will ensure all employees have a sufficient knowledgeable and professional approach to their work and the ability to continuously develop the professional development of the organisation and its clients and stakeholders.
4. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance, measuring distance travelled against:
 - National Quality Marks, (Investors In People, etc)
 - Staff retention and turnover statistics
 - Requests for additional training.
 - Staff Continuous Personal Development (meeting Institute for Learning, Awarding Body and other related requirements).
 - 1-2-1s, Appraisals and Performance Management meetings
5. To continue to develop effective strategies and take effective action to improve the company performance through the up-skilling and development of our employees and volunteers.
6. To use the Internal IAG Policy to ensure the continued reinforcement of The Write Time's values and operating practices.

The Write Time Performance Management *Guidance for Line Managers and Team Leaders*

The Write Time has developed a new system for team leaders and managers to evidence the use of the internal IAG service with their employees. Each team leaders or manager has been issued a Performance Management file to keep track of employees 1-2-1s and appraisals.

HR has written procedural guidance fro team leaders and managers which should be referred to implement the Internal IAG service. Listed below is a summary of the areas covered within the procedure.

Guidance Objectives:

- What is Performance Management?
- Benefits of Performance Management...

Main features of the process

- Preparing a Performance Plan (Inc. Use of Smart Objectives)
- Competencies
- The Development Plan (inc prep of a Development Opportunities)
- An Action Plan
- The Performance Review

The Write Time *All Employees*

The Write Time has developed a new system for all employees to record use of the internal IAG service. The CPD file will allow every employee to keep copies of their CV, applicable qualification certificates, 1-2-1s, annual appraisals and completed CPD together in one place. This file will allow all employees to track their role related performance targets, personal and professional development targets and CPD activities.

Appendix 1

The 3 stages of the IAG Process

Initial IAG

- A discussion and the recording of the client's current circumstances.
- A current skills / qualifications audit.
- A discussion and the recording of the options that is available to the client, both internally and externally.
- An exploration of the eligibility and any possible barriers to entry of the options discussed with the client.
- An explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen course of action decided upon by the client.
- An explanation of the purpose and function of the initial assessment and or skills scan and how the outcomes are used to support and develop the ILP.
- The creation of a personalised ILP (individual learning plan)
- An explanation of the additional support that is available.
- Giving contact details to the client of the practitioner and the centre if applicable.

Mid stage IAG

- A discussion about the client's progress against their own learning and assessment targets.
- A review of the appropriateness of the client's ILP and a discussion to decide whether changes are required.
- A review of whether the client requires additional services as part of their learner's journey, this may include referral / signposting to additional internal or external services.
- A discussion about the client's post programme opportunities, this will include a review of the client's employability and eligibility to continued learning.

Exit stage IAG

- Benefits gained from participating in the programme / course of learning.
- A discussion to review the clients next steps in their learner's journey, this will include: future opportunities, what is available and funding opportunities.
- Collection of feedback from the client on their reflection on the learning experience, and the level of service they received.
- A discussion of possible career progression, if the client is employed the employer ideally should be encouraged to participate in exit IAG.

Appendix 2

How to ensure we provide an effective IAG Session

This is a guide which is to be considered as the Minimum Level of Standard that any The Write Time IAG Practitioner will deliver to any beneficiary. (NB. This is not an exhaustive list but is to be considered as a guide of practice).

- Make sure that you introduce yourself?
- Manage the environment? Complete the Housekeeping... toilets/ fire exit, H&S procedures, consider if a private space is required? Is there a gender situation that necessitates a semi private space to protect the client and practitioner?
- Explain the Confidentiality Policy and its Limits... also mention how Data Protection legislation fits and The Write Time's policy applies to IAGs.
- There are exceptions, to confidentiality, explain these are in the interest of the clients or clients family and confidentiality is only breached in exceptional circumstances, if there is a possibility of a risk of immediate harm.
- Explain the session plan; give details of timing and the expectation of the session 30, 45 or 60 mins etc. When would I need to use a private room?
- Gathering of information (what they need and where they are)
 - Personal and contact details
 - Current situation
 - Aims and aspirations
- Identify realistic requirements according to their skills and challenge those that are unrealistic.
- Ensure that we provide client support: use relevant information leaflets, when signposting make sure the details are up to date and accurate.
- If you don't know an answer, be honest and state when you can get that information to the client. (Make arrangements to investigate and research it)
- Action plan
 - Discuss suitable options and barriers to entry and these can be removed
 - Use smart targets and prioritise the client's course of action.
 - Make sure the client understands and agrees with the plan.
- Summarise the conversation:
 - Record the session and provide a copy to the client.
 - Double Check client's satisfaction and understanding of the session and the information given.

How is an effective session completed?

1: Effective questioning / basic skills

Questioning skills – the ability to ask appropriate questions that encourage the client to tell their story. These include:

- Use open questions that do not allow a yes / no answer.
- Only use closed questions when appropriate.
- Use probing / exploratory questions to gain a greater understanding of the client's needs.
- Only use challenging questions when appropriate.

2: What's going on: - Clarification of the key issues

Help clients tell their story: Clients need to talk about their problems and concerns. This may be something that is done with ease or something which a client struggles to discuss.

Help clients' challenge their blind spots and develop new perspectives: Clients are enabled to see their concerns objectively. Problems and missed opportunities are discussed, as well as ways in which they want their life to be different.

Help clients focus on issues that will make a difference: Clients are helped to identify their most important concerns and prioritise.

3: How do we help the client to get what they need?

Help clients brainstorm a range of activities to accomplish their goals: Clients will need a range of options to help them make a decision, consider a number of possible solutions to allow a client to achieve their goal.

Help clients choose action strategies that best fit their needs and resources: The client is helped to pick the best solution from the ones brainstormed.

Help client draw up a plan: A step by step process is discussed for achieving goals, with goals prioritised:

Skills required:

Paraphrasing: putting into words briefly what the speaker has said, without interpreting or adding anything

Summarising: drawing the main points from the information the speaker has said

Empathy: being able to hear beyond the words that have been spoken, note the tone of voice, and the emphasis of certain words that may be expressing the unspoken feeling.