

# STEP SKILLS

PREPARE FOR SUCCESS IN HERTS

## Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

V7.0 May 2024

### Contents

1. Purpose.....	2
2. Scope.....	2
3. Policy statement.....	2
3.1. What is IAG?.....	2
4. The Learners' and participants' Journey with Step2Skills.....	3
4.1. Before Entry to the service:.....	3
4.2. During Learning or project participation:.....	4
4.3. On Exit from the service:.....	4
5. Step2Skills Commitment.....	4
6. Review.....	5

## 1. Purpose

Step2Skills provides education and employment support to people over the age of 18 across Hertfordshire. All learners or participants of a course or programme undertaken with Step2Skills have an entitlement to impartial information, advice, and guidance (IAG) at every stage of their journey. This IAG will support them whilst with Step2Skills and beyond. The intended impact is that learners and participants will gain employment; enter further learning; volunteering; improve their wellbeing and improve their personal circumstances. This policy outlines the commitment of Step2Skills to provide support and guidance and describes the IAG service.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to Step2Skills learners, project participants and potential service users.

## 3. Policy statement

### 3.1. What is IAG?

**Information** means the provision of materials on learning, training, and employment. This is provided at Step2Skills through:

- printed materials such as leaflets and posters.
- audio-visual materials via Step2Skills website and social media channels.
- verbal information on a face-to-face basis through local centres or via telephone or live online events from Step2Skills staff.
- verbal and audio-visual information via online learning platforms.

**Advice** requires more interaction with the learner or participant, usually on a one-to-one basis. It may require explanation of some of the information provided, how to access and use information, and a recognition of when more in-depth services may be required by the user. Step2Skills offers some advice via:

- Identifying appropriate courses.
- Giving advice about financial support available including eligibility for a concessionary fee, learner support fund.
- progression pathways into further learning, volunteering and employment.
- Helping to link learners' personal interests and skills to their job or career.
- ways to search and apply for jobs including interview skills, support with CV writing, completing application forms and basic IT skills via our employability courses.
- Identifying the skills learners may need and refer them to other support if necessary.

**Guidance** requires a trained advisor. Step2Skills does not currently provide a full guidance service but does employ a qualified IAG Lead. Where applicable, Step2Skills will refer learners and participants to other services we work collaboratively with, such as:

- **Futures for You** - an organisation providing impartial advice and support to help people reach their goals and enjoy a fulfilled career and life. They are rated Ofsted Outstanding.
- **National Careers Service** offer free and impartial information, advice, and guidance to help learners with your decisions about careers, courses, and work. The service is

supported by qualified careers advisers. The National Careers Service website helps learners explore careers with over 800 job descriptions. In addition, there are online Skills Assessment tools to support career planning.

Step2Skills aims to support learners and participants to make informed choices by giving IAG that is:

**Impartial:**

We will look at courses and employment projects offered by Step2Skills and their partners to help signpost learners and participants to relevant courses or programmes

**Confidential:**

All discussions will be confidential and only shared with the learner's permission.

**Fair:**

We will ensure that IAG services are accessible to all learners and participants, promoting equal opportunities and addressing any barriers. Learners and participants will be treated fairly and with equity.

**Transparent:**

Learners and participants will be told what will happen at every stage of the -IAG. If, at any time, they do not understand any aspect, they will be encouraged to ask the teacher or IAG adviser to explain.

**Accessible:**

We will do all we can to help learners and participants access our service and support them in using it. If they have any concerns or worries about being able to use our service, they will be encouraged to let us know. IAG can be face-to-face in a range of settings (for example, libraries, community centres, in class), or remote via email, phone or video chat.

## 4. The Learners' and participants' Journey with Step2Skills

IAG may occur:

### 4.1. Before Entry to the service:

- Learners and participants are enabled to choose a programme with any provider, that is most suited to them in terms of location, content, level, delivery style, costs, qualification, entry requirements, support available.
- Publicity is targeted at the relevant audience and is accessible to that audience.
- Our Community Development Practitioners will promote the relevant parts of the service to prospective learners and participants at events in the community.
- We support enquiries through telephone, online and face to face.
- At enrolment, learners complete assessments and, in discussion with teachers and staff, embark on the correct course at the right level with the right support.
- Participants on employment support projects are offered the most appropriate route for their needs
- Participants on the supported employment programme undertake vocational profiling to ensure they are receiving the right support and guidance

- Course outlines are designed so that learners have clear information on course content, time commitment, expected outcomes and progression steps.

#### 4.2. During Learning or project participation:

- During induction, learners are informed of the information and advice services available to them - key information and advice related to course, contact details, what is expected of the learner and what learners are entitled to, complaints procedure, included in the learner information leaflet.
- An Individual Learning Plan is agreed with the learner.
- An action plan is agreed with the employment project participant.
- If the course or programme is not appropriate for the learner, they will be given advice regarding suitable alternative courses or referred to appropriate external services. This is also discussed with the Apprentices in the Fire Service during their training period.
- Discussions around next steps are recorded in the learner profile, individual learning plan, vocational profile or equivalent. This information is used to provide personalised information, advice and guidance.
- Learners and participants have the opportunity to attend employability workshops which provide relevant information on career options, skills development, and job market trends.

#### 4.3. On Exit from the service:

- Upon finishing their course or programme, learners and participants are aware of potential pathways in terms of learning, employment, and life ahead.
- Feedback relating to their experience of Information, advice and guidance services is gathered through completion of an exit questionnaire.
- Step2Skills monitors, supports, and tracks learner's and participant's progress.
- All learners and participants are contacted 6 months after exiting the service to check progress and provide information, advice, guidance and signposting where appropriate.

## 5. Step2Skills Commitment

### To ensure that IAG services are accessible to all and are of high quality, Step2Skills will:

1. Continue to work within the Matrix IAG quality mark and ensure that IAG services meet the standards within this framework.
2. Ensure that marketing, promotional and information materials are comprehensive, accessible and available in a range of formats as requested.
3. Maintain effective communication with learners, participants and potential service users so that all service users have the same entitlement to easy to access, reliable IAG.
4. Monitor effectiveness and improve the quality of IAG via:
  - a. Learner and participant feedback
  - b. Staff feedback
  - c. Annual renewal/update of information materials
  - d. Partner feedback
5. Develop and review partnerships and networks to support provision of impartial IAG and referral to appropriate partners.
6. Embed IAG in quality assurance, staff development and training and appraisal processes.
7. Supply information materials to learners, participants and potential users of the service.

8. Maintain and improve information materials.
9. Assist learners, participants and potential service users to clarify their requirements.
10. Provide access to curriculum specialist information and as required. Advice is available from front line business support staff, trained IAG staff, curriculum staff, teachers, and senior managers. Careers advice will be provided by experienced and qualified staff, where it is available and necessary for that learner or participant. Other trained staff in the service will also provide a level of IAG, as appropriate to their skills and knowledge.
11. IAG will be given in a variety of ways, and this can depend on the type and length of course or programme and the learners and participants attending.

On a learning course, this might be:

- a. As part of the recording of progress and achievement by the teacher (ILPs/RARPA)
- b. By self-referral or teacher referral to IAG specialist staff, within and external to Step2Skills
- c. By offering group careers advice for the class, from an externally funded provider of careers advice, where learning covers 20 hours or more. .
- d. By offering access to a video from Futures for You explaining the IAG on offer.
- e. By offering the opportunity to have a free confidential 1-1 careers guidance appointment with a qualified adviser. Sessions can last up to an hour and are designed to give learners or participants the opportunity to move forward with their employment, education, and training.

On an employment programme, this might be:

- a. As part of the vocational profiling assessment completed on commencement of the programme
  - b. Through discussions with an employment advisor about career aspirations
  - c. By offering the opportunity to have a free confidential 1-1 careers guidance appointment with a qualified adviser. Sessions can last up to an hour and are designed to give learners or participants the opportunity to move forward with their employment, education, and training.
12. All staff will receive training and be aware of:
    - a. Their own role, limitations and when to refer learners and participants within Step2Skills.
    - b. When and where to refer learners who need -IAG beyond the limitations of the Service offered by Step2Skills.
  13. Identify a range of options for learner and participant progression pathways, relevant to the course or programme they are taking.
  14. Refer enquirers or users of the service to other providers if they need IAG that is outside the limitations of the service available from Step2Skills and its partners.
  15. The Service's quality improvement procedures will ensure IAG is monitored and is of high quality.

## 6. Review

**Policy managed by:** IAG Lead

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