

PRD project – case study

Building effective practice in partnership working to support young adults (18- 24) to progress to employment, including apprenticeships



Project title - Partnership working – together we will achieve more

Worth reading if you are interested in:

- Improving IAG against the revised Matrix standards
- Strategies for engaging with NEETS
- Developing Partnerships

Contact information

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Name of Peer Review and Development (PRD) group: Protocol Group

Participating organisation(s): Protocol Consultancy Services, Gordon Franks training, Inspire Futures Group (Bellis Training at the start)

What the PRD group set out to do and why:

The focus of this project was to develop stronger partnerships between the participating apprenticeship WBL providers to support each other in developing strategies to address the 18+ NEET cohorts in the West Midlands area. As this cohort is a new area for three organisations, there was benefit in joint research activities as to why this client group does not engage in learning from a third organisation whose main focus was the very hard to reach NEET group.

We wanted to develop a realistic policy to be communicated to our teams in order to give all staff a better understanding of why it is imperative that we support this group of individuals by liaising with other community stakeholders who work with NEETS.

We wanted to collectively share and review our IAG documents against the revised Matrix standards that two of the organisations hold, and ensure all organisations have effective policies and practices that support this client group in both the short and the long term.

We also wanted to plan and jointly support open events collaboratively enhancing the different sector opportunities across the participating organisations.

What has been achieved so far:

- improved IAG Strategy for all organisations to use and adapt;
- checklist produced and Observation Criteria across learner journey including all IAG interventions;
- checklist for staff understanding of revised Matrix standards;
- flyers produced for Access2Apprenticeships and JCP Stencils Templates;
- Group Workshop to discuss and review actions so far and plan an Open event;
- a well organised combined Open Event to attract NEETS in city centre location Star City;
- professional looking A1 posters produced and displayed in Star City Foyer;
- meetings arranged and Information sent to all JCP Advisers and Connexions advisers in the Birmingham & Solihull area;
- focus group of learners reviewing IAG with positive feedback;
- Case Study Template for success stories;
- NEET engagement increased for all organisations;
- data supplied by Protocol reviewing activity from March – July whilst focussing on this project. From 43 new starts on Access to Apprenticeships and through JCP 20 of the learners are now employed and the rest are still on the programmes. Almost 50% success rate in finding unemployed jobs and apprenticeship training at Protocol. Only two learners have had to be referred back to JCP.
- Good working relationships were developed with senior staff and business development staff of organisations.
- A team of four, two from Protocol, one from G Franks and one observer from Kingshurst CTC undertook a peer review of Reflections Hair Academy on 20 July and focussed on their IAG strategy, processes and staff understanding in preparation for their Matrix re-accreditation. Positive feedback and actions for improvement appreciated by Reflections.

What still needs to be done:

- Revise strategy and templates against the new Common Inspection Framework.
- Focus on Employers to take on NEETS and produce marketing materials and information.
- Sharing of good practice with Birmingham Network PRD – December 2012 plenary meeting
- Check information and revise against the updated funding requirements of SFA.
- Widen the group to include more providers.
- Pass the information to the Birmingham Careers Network website creators to be shared with all providers when their intranet facility is developed.
- Produce programme of engagement activities including JCP monthly updates.
- Attendance at Jobcentre / Careers hubs, attendance at youth clubs and community centres to engage NEETs through learning appointments and information sessions.
- Develop schools partnerships and engage with learners with learning difficulties.
- Complete PRD review on Gordon Franks in preparation for their Matrix re-

accreditation in 2013.

- Prepare phase 2 of the follow on action plan template.
- Data to be supplied by 2 organisations.

Resources to be shared with the sector:

- IAG Strategy Document;
- section for inclusion in Application Form;
- observation of IAG Interview V2;
- self-assessment criteria incorporating NEETS;
- action plan template;
- template designs for advertising events;
- template for learner success case study.

Key learning points:

- Understanding hard to reach NEETS and reasons why they do not engage including gang, drug and social/background culture and the need for specialist counselling staff to deal with the hard to reach cohorts.
- Understanding learner fears of engagement and importance of maintaining their interest and building their self-esteem.
- Developing strategies to engage NEETS, good to have different company perspectives.
- Importance of effective continuous communication with other stakeholders including first points of contact ie JCP and Connexions to raise provider profile.
- Better links for signposting between the organisations and their specialisms.
- Ensuring a good understanding by all provider staff of the IAG processes and checking knowledge fully embedded and practiced.
- Commitment at a senior level to drive the implementations is essential and both development of partnerships and NEET engagement to be part of key performance indicators or sub indicators.
- Forward Planning to keep focused on project objectives and time for the development and reviews for staff to participate in.
- Different degrees of commitment from organisations depending on the level of buy in. The lead organisation really has to drive the initiative and ensure documents, templates etc. are produced. (Bad time of year with pressures to achieve last contract quarter figures, staff summer holidays and many other initiatives happening).
- Rethink where learners are engaged from best, as whilst there was volume of public at Star City they were focused on the activities they had come to participate in ie cinema/bowling etc. and were difficult to engage to discuss options. It was a good location being central to all three organisations and an impartial venue though.

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 is able to meet national standards and requirements.

STRATEGIC AIM

To enable potential clients on (Company Name) government funded 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 company training solutions and development.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To provide impartial, unbiased IAG in a form that is easily understood by the recipient.
2. To ensure IAG is treated confidentially as per the Data Protection Act.
3. To ensure IAG promotes and embeds equality and diversity throughout all of the provision.
4. To systematically monitor, review, evaluate and continually improve our IAG and measure distance travelled.
5. To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision in delivering the Every Child Matters outcomes.
6. 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.

Measurement of progress towards achievement of these strategic objectives will be via the business/development plan

Clients

AIM

To provide NEETS, 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 ILP and program of learning, identifying individual learning needs and additional learning support where required, personal and social skills and Skills for Life 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, NEETS 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 (Name of Company) Business/development plan
 - Learner responsiveness as evidenced in individual learner retention, success and 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 Every Child Matters 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 effective learning and training solutions for individuals.

Employers

AIM

To provide employers 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 considering of and implementing training solutions. Our policy is to help employers develop their own business further by providing IAG on training solutions that meet individual employer needs.

OBJECTIVES

1. To offer and deliver government funded programs in specified vocational areas free of charge to individuals who meet the Government Funding Body eligibility criteria or at a cost for those who do not.
2. To evaluate and continuously 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 in the identified learning needs
 - Measurement of distance travelled against the key performance indicators mapped to the company business/development plan
3. To offer to carry out Organisational Needs Analyses for employers and identify, deliver or appropriately signpost employers to organisations who can provide effective training solutions including the engagement of NEETS.

Staff

AIM

To provide all 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 (Name of Company) .

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 company CPD and staff training calendar of events as identified in the Training Needs Analyses.

3. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance measuring distance travelled against:
 - Investors In People standard
 - Staff retention
 - Staff Continuous Personal Development (meeting IfL (Institute for Learning), Awarding Organisations and company requirements).
 - Staff Appraisals and Training Needs Analyses
 - Key Performance Indicators
 - LLUK (Lifelong Learning United Kingdom) National Teacher Training Standard requirements
4. To continue to develop effective strategies and take effective action to improve the company performance through our employees.

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

Partners and Contractors

AIM

To foster and maintain positive working relationships with partners and sub contractors via effective embedded communications strategies.

OBJECTIVES

1. To collaborate with partners involved in the delivery of the 14-19 national agenda and 18-24 NEETS
2. To collaborate with Young Peoples Service, National Apprenticeship Services, JCP, 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.
3. To collaborate with funding bodies (e.g. Skills Funding Agency, EFA) and Sector Skills Councils to contribute towards their strategic plans.

Measurements of success of the IAG policy

- Measurement against the national, regional and local economic and demographic targets for learner retention, success and achievement of qualifications and pathways
- Review of the three year plans annually to respond to the changing financial and economic climate and NEET clients

- Employer and learner voice and feedback
Business/development Plan targets met

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

- Promotional materials are circulated to main referral bases and organisations
- Staff attendance at promotional shows and events
- The marketing team ensures that information supplied on promotional materials is reviewed regularly and kept up to date
- A marketing calendar is produced which ensures the circulation of promotional materials to a diverse range of society

Responsibilities

- (Company information) are responsible for providing information advice and guidance to prospective applicants on recruitment to Programs. Assessors and tutors, provide learners with on program support to retain learners and enable them to successfully complete their qualifications / program frameworks. Assessors and recruitment advisers provide learners with guidance on exit from programs in relation to employment opportunities and career advancement.

The (Company) has responsibility for line managing 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. (Company info) are responsible for monitoring the front line delivery, including the observation of the IAG service, and identifying areas for continuous improvement.

Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed whenever there is a significant relevant change required and in any case at least every year.

Managing Director

Date: