Mapping Staff Competence and Capacity to Plan and Deliver IAG to Adults in LSC-funded Provision

Research Report

April 2007

Of interest to staff and managers in the learning and skills sector who are involved in the provision of information, advice and guidance.
This report presents the findings from research undertaken by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) into how staff competence is currently assured and to assess the extent to which existing staffing capacity is sufficient to plan and deliver services across LSC-funded IAG provision.
1: Introduction

What the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education was Asked to Do

Evidence from both the current national review of adult information, advice and guidance (IAG) and other studies indicates that a substantial gap in knowledge exists in relation to levels of competence, service planning and delivery capacity among staff delivering IAG to adults. The issue is complicated because the diverse nature of service delivery across the sector means that a wide range of approaches has been developed towards initial training, qualification and continuing professional development (CPD).

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) therefore commissioned the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) to undertake research into how staff competence is currently assured, and to assess the extent to which existing staffing capacity is sufficient to plan and deliver services, across LSC-funded IAG provision, that is, nextstep, learndirect Advice, further education (FE), local authority and voluntary sector adult and community learning (ACL) and work-based learning (WBL). The project aims to produce a statistical picture of existing practice; to identify examples of good and effective practice; and to underpin recommendations to the LSC, the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and other stakeholders on:

- a future CPD strategy to support providers across the IAG sector to improve the competence and capacity of their staff
- the competencies necessary for future IAG service providers.

Our Approach

This project explores current approaches and anticipated future need in relation to the development of skills, knowledge and understanding (or competence) among staff delivering IAG to adults. As such, it encompasses initial training and CPD, and formally qualified and ‘unqualified’ staff. The delivery of IAG may take the form of discrete services or be embedded in a range of other activities. This results in a wide range of staff being involved in the delivery of different aspects of IAG to adults, working in a multiplicity of settings. For further details of the complex picture that exists in terms of different work areas and qualifications, see Annexes B and C.

The research methodology consists of five principal strands:

- desk research to scope the findings of relevant recent studies (both national and international) into adult IAG provision, paying particular attention to issues relating to training, CPD and competence
- a survey of providers in nextstep, FE, ACL and WBL, to explore current approaches to ensuring staff competence and to identify competency needs
- telephone interviews with representatives of key organisations involved in supplying training and qualifications to IAG practitioners, including the Institute of Career Guidance; the Employment National Training Organisation; and Skillset (for the sector skills councils)
- a series of 10 good practice case studies (see Annex D)
- a project reference group, convened to comment on the findings from the other strands of research.

A telephone interview has been conducted with learntdirect Advice, and it has been asked to complete the survey. In addition, it will form one of the case studies.

The following approaches were used to distribute the survey questionnaire:

- a survey of providers in nextstep, FE, ACL and WBL, to explore current approaches to ensuring staff competence and to identify competency needs
- telephone interviews with representatives of key organisations involved in supplying training and qualifications to IAG practitioners, including the Institute of Career Guidance; the Employment National Training Organisation; and Skillset (for the sector skills councils)
- a series of 10 good practice case studies (see Annex D)
- a project reference group, convened to comment on the findings from the other strands of research.

Responses were received as follows:

- 45 from ACL
- 37 from FE
- 31 from nextstep contractors
- 11 from WBL.
It was hoped to secure a response rate of 25 per cent from each sector and this was achieved in the case both of nextstep contractors (66 per cent) and ACL (28 per cent) so that the findings from these two sectors may be treated as valid. However, the response rates from both FE and WBL are very low, at under 10 per cent in both cases, and are disappointing in the light of the range of approaches that were adopted to encourage completion of the survey, especially in the FE sector. At this stage, therefore, the findings from these two sectors must be regarded as indicative.

During the course of the research, a further category of responses emerged. Some of the nextstep contractors circulated the survey to their delivery networks, and this resulted in responses being received from organisations that hold subcontracts but do not fall into the provider categories that form the focus of this project. nextstep managing agency providers are currently required to deliver a minimum of 60 per cent of their work through subcontractors. These respondents include voluntary sector organisations, private companies providing bespoke IAG services, library services and probation services. In all, 33 responses were received from such organisations, and for the time being they have been grouped together as ‘specialist’ providers.

As at August 2005, there were just under 600 nextstep subcontractors nationwide, so the sample discussed here is a small fraction of the total. Yet they are in receipt of LSC funding and play a role in delivering IAG to adults, so the completed questionnaires provide a relevant snapshot of staffing within wider nextstep delivery networks. There is likely to be much less consistency across this class of responses than in the other sectors, since services are delivered by a range of staff depending on the employing organisation. Some have career guidance backgrounds; others, particularly those employed by the voluntary and community sector, are specialists in understanding the needs of particular client groups. In some organisations, volunteers also deliver services.

The methodologies used in this research mean that both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected. The quantitative material provides baseline data for the sector, within ACL and nextstep at least, although it should be acknowledged that a degree of error will be present as the findings are based on a sample. Meanwhile the telephone interviews and parts of the survey have gathered qualitative material which reflect the opinions, attitudes and perspectives of the individual interviewees and respondents. Whilst this subjectivity inevitably contributes a degree of bias, the data can be approached with confidence; a range of sources have been used, and attention paid to drawing out messages that are supported by a variety of data. Professional opinions from those working in the field about current and future concerns in relation to qualification and training for IAG work with adults, and about the ways in which the evolving wider context is shaping the needs of the IAG workforce, enable more sophisticated analysis and understanding and produce a level of detail which it is not possible to obtain from other sources. They are particularly valuable as a means of exploring issues in relation to areas such as competency needs, CPD requirements and the influence of emerging policy agendas over IAG work on the ground.

It is essential to stress that, although this research was commissioned to inform understanding of, and planning for, LSC-funded provision, the LSC is only part of the total funded picture that is explored. The providers surveyed draw on a range of sources of funding to deliver IAG services to adults, and respondents are unlikely to have distinguished – even if they were able to do so – the LSC-funded elements within their provision. By the same token, the findings and recommendations in this report have implications for service delivery beyond that currently funded by the LSC.
The headline findings were as follows.

a. Around a third of survey respondents reported areas of need in staff skills, knowledge or understanding. Both the desk research and survey suggest that the two principal areas in relation to which training needs exist are:
   - Knowledge of sources of, and competence in using, labour market information (to support this, local, accessible and up-to-date labour market information needs to be available, as well as training in the skills both to interpret it and to support clients to make informed decisions)
   - Working with specific groups, including learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties; adults with mental health difficulties; offenders and ex-offenders; Skills for Life learners; refugees and asylum seekers; migrant workers, and others identified within policy as priority groups for support into learning and work.

These were both areas where respondents also identified likely substantial future demands on IAG services. Working with employers; keeping up to date with legislation; and understanding and addressing the IAG implications of Train to Gain emerge as further areas of need future staff training and development.

b. A minority of providers responding to the survey do not consider their current staffing levels adequate to deliver IAG services to adults. The problem may be particularly acute among ACL providers. Respondents from all sectors stated that they perceive the need to raise both the volume and level of formally qualified staff within their organisation. Funding to train more staff to National Vocational Qualification Levels 3 and 4 in IAG was identified as particularly desirable.

c. Staff may not be prepared by initial training to deliver IAG specifically to adults. Furthermore, contractual arrangements mean that CPD often does not address this area, in favour of preparing practitioners for work with young people.

d. The generic nature of occupational standards raises questions about how adequately staff are trained and prepared to deliver IAG in the specific context of learning and work. Much training and development takes place on the job.

Although most providers offer at least some form of CPD on a regular basis, many are not currently drawing on the full range of possible approaches. Some approaches, such as in-house training and attendance at external events, are frequently used, whilst there are others – notably coaching and e-learning and distance learning – that have the potential to be more widely applied.

g. There do not appear to be any sources of CPD that are routinely or systematically used across any of the sectors surveyed. Local networks and partnerships are the most important sources of CPD cited by respondents. These are valued, and respondents indicated that they would like to see greater support for the development of local networks, to enhance the opportunities for the sharing knowledge and information between providers.

h. Providers report a range of barriers to accessing CPD for IAG staff. Lack of appropriate training and staff time are cited as the chief obstacles to accessing formal training, whilst cost and lack of local provision are also reported. Suggested approaches to address these barriers that are not currently being adequately exploited include: local, affordable training; accredited modular training; specific training related to initiatives; policy updates; and access to electronic training resources.

i. Although there is no formal common requirement for staff delivering IAG to adults to undertake CPD, there are a number of developments taking place that should promote a more systematic approach. The matrix Standard, Investors in People and the Adult Learning Inspectorate all focus attention on the need for adequate levels of staff competence and capacity to deliver services.
3: Background Issues Arising from Desk Research and Telephone Interviews

Competence

The notion of competence implies that practitioners have access not only to adequate initial training, but also to a range of CPD activities, such as training, coaching, mentoring and networking, which ensure that their skills, knowledge and understanding are maintained and enhanced to keep them up to date. Delivery of IAG takes place within, and must respond to, a range of changing contexts. Changes to policy relating to learning and work can have major implications for IAG service providers and the competencies needed by IAG staff. At a general level, the lifelong learning and skills agenda has increased the need for staff to work with adults. More specifically, there are a number of areas, highlighted particularly through the qualitative comments from telephone interviews, where policy developments appear to be leading to competency needs within the IAG workforce that have yet to be met. Two such areas are listed below.

- Accessing and interpreting labour market information is a major concern. Historically, there may have been a prevailing expectation that practitioners could access and use labour market information, but the LSC’s agenda for change and other policy agendas relating to adult skills, raising levels of participation in the workforce, and regional and sectoral skills development have re-focused attention squarely on this issue. The Institute of Career Guidance reported in its telephone interview that evidence from members suggests that knowledge of sources of labour market information is perceived to be inadequate, especially to support the provision of IAG to mid-career changers, and competence in using labour market information, especially at Level 3, tends to be low. National Open College Network qualifications include units on labour market information, and the Qualification in Career Guidance contains learning outcomes on labour market information; however labour market information is not currently covered in National Vocational Qualifications.

- Greater attention needs to be paid to providing training and support to equip staff to work with specific client groups who have complex IAG needs, and are more likely to be accessing IAG services in larger numbers due to policy initiatives such as Welfare to Work and New Deal. Groups cited include ex-offenders, adults with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, people with mental health difficulties, refugees and asylum seekers, and migrant workers. Work with groups of users who have complex needs often brings a requirement for more extensive and additional knowledge and skills. For example, work with refugees and asylum seekers may result in competency needs encompassing legislation; cultural diversity and equivalence of qualifications (Mulcahy and Mulvey, 2002).

In terms of formal qualification, no single route exists for staff delivering IAG to adults. As yet, there is no specific, accredited training for practitioners who previously worked with young people and are now embarking on work with adults at Level 4 of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), although practitioners report that they are expected to be effective immediately. Neither is there a current accredited module at this level for working with adult clients, although learners seeking to achieve the Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) may gain some experience of work with adults, for example, whilst on placement. The awards of the National Open College Network (NOCN) are more tailored towards work with adult clients. Some evidence suggests that training for the advice role can leave practitioners unsure about the boundaries of their role.

Whilst NVQs measure competence against a national standard, feedback from managers suggests there are concerns that specific areas of the IAG for learning and work context may not currently be adequately covered by the standards. These include:

- the full range of approaches to service delivery
- the nature of the client group being served
- labour market information (although unit AGA23 at NVQ Level 4 relating to ‘undertaking research’ can be used to some extent). The QCG has learning outcomes relating to labour market information.

Further evidence of the need for training relating to labour market information (LMI) is found in the evaluation of the training delivered in 2005/06 to support the LSC’s CPD strategy (Brooking, 2006), which reports that:
A lot of people have requested further events to support the use of labour market information and management information.

This training was designed to support planning for service delivery, however, rather than direct work with clients.

Undertaking CPD has not, historically, been a formal common requirement for staff delivering IAG to adults. However, The National Policy Framework and Action Plan for Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults issued by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2003) included a commitment to develop a strategy for the continuing professional development of IAG practitioners and managers. Contractors in receipt of LSC programme funds to deliver information and advice services are required to ensure that staff in network organisations are trained to the required levels of competence (LSC, 2005), and the need for a programme of support was identified as an important tool for quality improvement in the LSC’s strategy for coherent IAG services.

In relation to embedded IAG, as part of the Government’s Skills Strategy, a pilot scheme to enable college lecturers to spend up to a term working in industry to update their skills was announced in June 2006. The pilot, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), will begin in September 2007 and will focus on placements in science, engineering and manufacturing firms with an expectation that if successful, will be extended and could become part of lecturers’ CPD (The Times Educational Supplement, 23 June 2006).

Quality standards such as matrix and Investors in People (iIP) should be promoting a more systematic approach to the delivery and evaluation of CPD, as more provision in the sector is accredited. The LSC (2005), in its strategy for a co-ordinated and quality-controlled CPD programme across its IAG provision, noted that:

all organisations in receipt of LSC programme funds to deliver [information and advice] services are contractually required to quality assure their services by achieving matrix Accreditation.

Element 6 of the matrix Standard requires that:

Staff competence and support they are given are sufficient to deliver the service.

It includes a requirement to undertake appropriate CPD to ensure that ‘The competence of staff is maintained and developed to meet service demands.’ However, matrix does not define what competencies are required.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) commenced inspection of nextstep partnerships in 2006, and by the end of September 2006, 15 organisations had been inspected and 12 reports published.

A small-scale study carried out by the ALI (2004) into the quality of IAG services delivered through nextstep found that:

The focus on each client in terms of establishing their starting points, carrying out detailed action-planning and steering a successful path through the IAG maze remains hazy.
Development work in Australia led in 2006 to the publication by the Career Industry Council of Australia of professional standards for Australian career development practitioners (www.cica.org.au), which have been adopted by the Career Industry Council of Australia and its member organisations, and will be considered a minimum requirement for practitioners from 2012. These encompass the following sections:

- terminology
- definition of standards
- statement on the purpose of the standards
- definition of membership of the profession (to identify to whom the standards apply)
- code of ethics
- Entry-level qualifications and the minimum standard, with recognition of prior learning
- CPD
- competency guidelines.

In relation to the requirement for CPD, practitioners are required to:

- engage in CPD
- record and retain evidence of this, and produce the evidence if requested
- confirm that they have complied with the CPD requirements of their professional association when renewing membership.

One difficulty of using this approach to ensuring the continued competence of practitioners through CPD is that there is no requirement to belong to a professional association.

Feedback from members of professional associations in the UK – the ICG and the National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults (NAEGA) – indicates that these associations consider that practitioners are not able to undertake adequate CPD. Anecdotal evidence from ICG members, who are more likely to be working in specialist and discrete, rather than embedded, services (for example, nextstep) suggests the following.

- The ways in which contracts are structured, and the need to meet targets, are preventing staff from being released to attend training and CPD.
- Where practitioners are working with both young people and adults, priority is likely to be given to training for work with young people, particularly where this relates to legislation and meeting targets.
- Apart from occasional nextstep and ICG conferences, access to CPD is minimal and rarely addresses practice.

Members of NAEGA have reported a reduction in CPD opportunities available within organisations and an increased reluctance in organisations to release staff from delivery to attend externally organised CPD events. In its annual report, NAEGA has described this change; it has also produced a draft CPD strategy with a self-assessment questionnaire based on a simple competency framework to support individual practitioners.

Yet meeting the IAG needs of adults requires that staff develop a range of specific competencies. In the 2005 study undertaken by MORI (MORI, 2005) for the Guidance Council into adults' demand for, and perceptions of IAG, service users identified the following elements as those that they particularly valued in a service:

- opportunities for help on a one-to-one basis
- help to identify their job-related skills
- specialist advice about jobs and careers
- help with interview techniques
- support in completing CVs and application forms
- financial advice.

These priorities suggest that adults want specific advice and services to develop career management skills tailored to their own needs. Such provision is most likely to be delivered as part of a range of additional services.

However, where services rely on sources of public funding that focus on the provision of information and advice, and are not able to access additional funding for the provision of in-depth services, it is reported by members of the ICG that:

- staff trained at Level 4 are effectively being deskill because they cannot undertake in-depth work with learners
- new advisors are unable to develop and practise in-depth working.

Concern was also expressed about the quality of provision delivered by nextstep subcontractors which are not IAG specialists, where staff turnover may be high and the requirement is only that staff are ‘working towards a qualification’.

Nine universities in England deliver the QCG, and approximately 250 learners graduate annually from the course. Students on the programmes will have received some preparation for work with adults, for example, through the generic skills developed and the range of clients they assist on placement. However, in 2005, only 4 per cent of the 220 graduates
who found employment in a guidance field entered roles specifically designated as working with adults. A further 4 per cent entered FE and 2 per cent entered the voluntary sector, so may have been working with adults in roles funded through the LSC. In addition, 53 per cent of students entered Connexions services. Since funding has a significant impact on the take-up of places on QCG courses, the restriction of DfES bursaries to training to work for Connexions partnerships inevitably affects learners’ destinations.

42 Data supplied to the Employment National Training Organisation (ENTO) by the awarding bodies indicates the number of students who completed NVQs at each level in 2004/05 (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of students completing NVQs at Levels 2–4, 2004/05.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>1,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43 It should be noted that these figures relate to all NVQs in Advice and Guidance that were completed. Data on qualifications based specifically on a learning and work context, or relating to work with adults, is not collated. Destination data is not collected and is unlikely to be collated by the awarding bodies.

44 The National Open College Network (NOCN) has supplied data on learner numbers for each of its IAG units delivered in 2005 (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of NOCN learners studying IAG units, 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>NOCN learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Award in Developing Information, Advice and Guidance Skills</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Award in Information, Advice and Guidance Awareness</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificate in Information, Advice and Guidance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45 Where IAG services are resourced substantially through public funding, the roles of staff and associated competencies will be influenced by policy priorities and targets. This may lead to a need for new competencies to be developed, such as the brokerage skills required within the Train to Gain programme, or those required by learning champions, union learning representatives and other para-professionals, which are of value to the sector. Similarly, if existing competencies are not required, they are less likely to be maintained or developed if there is no demand to do so. Hence staff working in the sector have reported that the focus within the learning and skills sector on supporting learners qualified below Level 2 is reducing the capacity of IAG staff in receipt of public funding for IAG to deliver to a broad range of clients.

46 In addition, ICG members report that funding targeted solely at providing information and advice is having a negative impact upon the supply of practitioners at Level 4 because there is no business incentive to train or retain these advisors. Advisors who are competent to a Level 4 standard are equipped to work more holistically with end users and help them address the range of issues often required to enable effective transition into learning or work. There are indications that, consequently, they may be either leaving the profession or seeking work in other parts of the IAG sector, notably services funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the European Social Fund (ESF). Meanwhile, skills shortages at Level 4 are reported by learndirect as a consequence of the introduction by the DfES of the telephone guidance trial. Over a period of six months, this pilot increased by a factor of five the number of advisors qualified to Level 4 needed by learndirect. It is also reported that low pay levels mean that services are struggling to attract high-quality staff, especially working at Level 3. Tensions are apparent between increasing competition for a diminishing resource base, the accreditation of competence and training, and the need to retain adequate capacity in the learning and skills sector to deliver IAG to adults. In the longer term, this range of factors may impact on capacity to meet needs, particularly if priorities change, and, for example, if the nature of the guidance process changes to give greater emphasis to career management.

47 Where short-term funding and contracting arrangements found in parts of the sector are not encouraging investment in staff training and CPD, this is also likely to impact on capacity in the longer term.

48 More generally, the generic nature of the occupational standards may mean that those holding NVQs in IAG at all levels may require significant additional training if moving to a new provider – particularly where the focus is less specifically on IAG for learning and work.
Management

49 One of the omissions highlighted by the Merlin Minds quality development fund project in 2003 (Merlin Minds, 2003) was the lack of development opportunities for IAG managers and co-ordinators. Ongoing analysis of delivery plans for information and advice contractors had also highlighted the need to develop business-planning skills.

50 In February 2005, as part of its aim to provide a ‘co-ordinated and quality-controlled CPD programme across the whole LSC [information and advice] programme’, the LSC published Competence and Capacity: Enhancing Information and Advice Delivery Potential. The three priorities underpinning the CPD strategy were:

- the strategic development of information and advice services
- using business acumen to enhance service delivery
- improving coherence in service delivery.

51 These priorities were to be met through a series of events, supplemented by courses and written materials.

52 Six events delivered between 2005 and 2006 by the LSC were evaluated externally: the topics selected were regarded as relevant and important with events related to leadership development and preparation for inspection of nextstep proving particularly successful. Approaches such as peer review; benchmarking; and coaching may assist in embedding new practices (Brooking, 2006).

53 Members of the ICG reported that outside nextstep, specific training for those entering management roles in IAG is rarely provided. They are more generally expected to learn on the job.

54 For many in management positions, the IAG workload may only be a small part of a larger role. For example, IAG may be provided within a wider service aimed at addressing a range of needs for a particular learner group. It cannot therefore be assumed that managers have a background in IAG for learning and work, and they may not have the time or motivation to develop higher levels of competence in this area.
4: Results from the Survey of Providers

About the Service

Respondents were asked to state what services they offered to users. As Figure 1 shows, the sector which offers the greatest range across the greatest number of providers is nextstep.

All providers responding to the survey offer information. Advice is offered by almost all, apart from a small percentage of ACL providers. Guidance interviews are offered by the great majority of respondents from nextstep, WBL and specialist providers, but by less than half of ACL providers. The data suggests that less than three-quarters of FE colleges offer one-to-one interviews, and this figure is unexpectedly low. Help with job searching is offered by more than three-quarters of nextstep and specialist providers, and a similar proportion of nextstep providers also offer redundancy counselling. Few other services are offered by more than half the providers within any sector.

Figure 2 shows data on accreditation to service standards of responding organisations.

The vast majority of responding organisations are matrix-accredited, including all nextstep contractors (as would be expected) and specialist providers. Overall, levels of accreditation to IiP were lower, although 90 per cent of WBL respondents are accredited and three-quarters of FE colleges. Among ACL, nextstep and specialist providers in the sample, just over half have Investors in People status.

Staffing

Staffing analysis

Specialist IAG advisors are the category of staff most frequently cited by respondents as responsible for service delivery. As Figure 3 shows, they deliver services in over 80 per cent of responding organisations across nextstep, specialist and WBL provision. Tutors also play a significant role in WBL and ACL. Information, advice and guidance managers are involved in delivery in around 40 per cent of responding nextstep, ACL and FE organisations, rising to over half of WBL providers. Administrative and frontline staff also play a key role in providing information, especially in ACL. It is vital that providers do not overlook the importance of tutors and frontline staff in delivering IAG, and ensure that appropriate systems are in place to review their role and related development needs.

Staff qualifications

Data provided in response to questions about staff qualifications is set out in Tables 3–7. These suggest that, overall, the most commonly held qualifications among IAG advisors are NVQ Levels 3 and 4 in Advice and Guidance. As would be expected, within all sectors, IAG advisors
are the staff who are most likely to be formally qualified, in most cases holding either Level 3 or 4 qualifications, the Diploma in Career Guidance (DCG) or the QCG. 61 Within the provider sample for ACL, NVQ Level 3 is the most frequently held qualification among IAG advisors, which may reflect the historic support given to providers through the IAG partnerships to train staff to this level. Over 40 per cent of administrative and support staff hold the NOCN intermediate qualification, and more than half hold some form of IAG qualification, which suggests a general commitment within the sector to the training of frontline staff. Around a quarter of frontline staff hold professional qualifications not related to IAG.
Within FE, IAG advisors most frequently hold NVQ Level 3 or 4. A notable feature of the qualification landscape in this sector is the high proportion of IAG managers who are well qualified, with nearly two-thirds holding either the DCG or QCG or NVQ Level 4.

IAG advisors in the sample of nextstep providers are most likely to be qualified to NVQ Level 3 or 4, with a third holding one of these qualifications. Evidence from the desk research and telephone interviews cited earlier in this report suggests that staff qualified to Level 4 may be at risk of deskilling within the nextstep environment, and if this were the case, it would have implications for a large number of IAG advisors. Around 16 per cent hold an NOCN qualification. In a figure that is surprisingly high, 12 per cent of IAG advisors have no IAG qualifications: presumably these staff are working towards qualifications.

Among the small number of organisations responding from the WBL sector, there are no staff without formal qualifications delivering IAG to adults. The proportion of well-qualified IAG managers is also high, suggesting that responses were received from those providers which have an IAG specialism.

### Table 3: Qualifications of IAG staff in each role in ACL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff role</th>
<th>DCG/ QCG</th>
<th>NVQ Level 4</th>
<th>NVQ Level 3</th>
<th>NVQ Level 2</th>
<th>MA/MSc</th>
<th>NOCN Intermediate</th>
<th>NOCN Advanced</th>
<th>No IAG qualifications</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAG advisor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG manager</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin./Support staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Qualifications of IAG staff in each role in FE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff role</th>
<th>DCG/ QCG</th>
<th>NVQ Level 4</th>
<th>NVQ Level 3</th>
<th>NVQ Level 2</th>
<th>MA/MSc</th>
<th>NOCN Intermediate</th>
<th>NOCN Advanced</th>
<th>No IAG qualifications</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAG advisor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach worker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG manager</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin./Support staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among nextstep organisations, a significant number of advisors also hold relevant NOCN qualifications, but there is also a sizeable minority who have no IAG qualifications. In accordance with the rules governing the awarding of nextstep contracts, these unqualified staff must be ‘competent’ and working towards qualifications.

As was noted above, administrative and support staff are responsible for a considerable amount of frontline delivery of IAG, especially in ACL and FE. Within ACL, most are formally qualified, with a large number holding an NOCN intermediate certificate, although around 17 per cent are not. Among FE providers, around half of these staff are unqualified.

However, data in relation to staffing and staff qualifications in FE need to be approached with great caution, because they do not reflect the significant extent to which personal and subject tutors, without formal qualifications, are responsible for delivering IAG to adult learners in this sector, as revealed in research into on-programme IAG carried out by NIACE (2006) for the LSC. Only around a third of FE respondents stated that tutors deliver IAG, and that figure is much lower than the earlier research suggests. Those findings, based on a sample of 38 per cent of FE colleges, are simply not reflected in the present evidence.

Table 5: Qualifications of IAG staff in each role in nextstep.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff role</th>
<th>DCG/ QCG</th>
<th>NVQ Level 4</th>
<th>NVQ Level 3</th>
<th>NVQ Level 2</th>
<th>MA/MSc</th>
<th>NOCN Intermediate</th>
<th>NOCN Advanced</th>
<th>No IAG qualifications</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAG advisor</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG manager</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin./Support staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Qualifications of IAG staff in each role in WBL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff role</th>
<th>DCG/ QCG</th>
<th>NVQ Level 4</th>
<th>NVQ Level 3</th>
<th>NVQ Level 2</th>
<th>MA/MSc</th>
<th>NOCN Intermediate</th>
<th>NOCN Advanced</th>
<th>No IAG qualifications</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAG advisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach worker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG manager</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin./Support staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mapping Staff Competence and Capacity to Plan and Deliver IAG to Adults in LSC-funded Provision

Adequacy

68

Over half the respondents in each category of provider stated that their existing staffing levels are adequate, as Figure 4 shows. Among nextstep providers, more than 80 per cent indicated that this is the case. But at the same time, with the exception of WBL respondents, over 10 per cent in each category stated that levels are inadequate, and this figure rises to nearly 40 per cent in ACL. There may be value in undertaking further research and analysis to try and illuminate more clearly the correspondence between the type of service offered and the skills of staff. Clearly, the critical question is whether providers have a level of staffing adequate to enable them to plan and deliver a service which meets the anticipated needs of users, or whether service provision is being determined by staff skills.

Table 7: Qualifications of IAG staff in each role in specialist provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff role</th>
<th>DCG/QCG</th>
<th>NVQ Level 4</th>
<th>NVQ Level 3</th>
<th>NVQ Level 2</th>
<th>MA/MSc</th>
<th>NOCN Intermediate</th>
<th>NOCN Advanced</th>
<th>No IAG qualifications</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAG advisor</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach worker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG manager</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin./Support staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Percentage of staff in each sector indicating that their current level of staffing is adequate to deliver IAG to adults.
Figure 5: Proportion of ACL providers using a range of approaches to, and sources of, CPD for staff delivering IAG to adults.

Approaches to CPD delivery

- Inhouse
- External training
- Coaching
- Mentoring/peer support
- Written materials
- E-/distance learning
- Visits to providers
- Other

Sources of CPD

- Professional association
- Inhouse delivery
- Local network/partnership
- External training provider
- Regional training body
- Other

Figure 6: Proportion of FE providers using a range of approaches to, and sources of, CPD for staff delivering IAG to adults.
Figure 7: Proportion of nextstep providers using a range of approaches to, and sources of, CPD for staff delivering IAG to adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to CPD delivery</th>
<th>Sources of CPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhouse</td>
<td>Inhouse delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External training</td>
<td>External training provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/peer support</td>
<td>Mentoring/peer support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written materials</td>
<td>Written materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-/distance learning</td>
<td>E-/distance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to providers</td>
<td>Visits to providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional association</td>
<td>Professional association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhouse delivery</td>
<td>Inhouse delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local network/partnership</td>
<td>Local network/partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External training provider</td>
<td>External training provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional training body</td>
<td>Regional training body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Proportion of specialist providers using a range of approaches to, and sources of, CPD for staff delivering IAG to adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches to CPD delivery</th>
<th>Sources of CPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhouse</td>
<td>Inhouse delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External training</td>
<td>External training provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/peer support</td>
<td>Mentoring/peer support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written materials</td>
<td>Written materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-/distance learning</td>
<td>E-/distance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to providers</td>
<td>Visits to providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional association</td>
<td>Professional association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhouse delivery</td>
<td>Inhouse delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local network/partnership</td>
<td>Local network/partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External training provider</td>
<td>External training provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional training body</td>
<td>Regional training body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuing Professional Development for Staff Delivering Information, Advice and Guidance to Adults

Current approaches to, and sources of, continuing professional development

69 Respondents were asked about the approaches and sources that are used to deliver CPD to staff involved in the delivery of IAG to adults. The results are set out in Figures 5–9.

70 In terms of approaches, in-house training and attendance at external events are the most popular across provision as a whole, being used often or occasionally by 80–100 per cent of providers in each category. More than 60 per cent also cited mentoring, whilst over 50 per cent used written materials and visits. Relatively little use is being made of coaching or of e-learning or distance learning opportunities.

71 The only instance of any single approach that could be described as widely and frequently adopted is in-house training among nextstep providers (71 per cent). Overall, as Table 8 indicates, most providers in each sector offer frequent opportunities for their staff to undertake at least one form of CPD. Around three-quarters of ACL and nextstep providers do so, rising to around 90 per cent FE and specialist provision. However, the proportions that provide a range of regular opportunities is much lower, and this, together with the low levels of use made of some potential approaches, suggests that there is scope for providers to be encouraged to think more broadly about the range of ways that they offer CPD to IAG staff.

**Table 8: Percentage of providers offering opportunities for staff to undertake CPD, by sector.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACL</th>
<th>FE</th>
<th>nextstep</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
<th>WBL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one approach to CPD often used (%)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more approaches to CPD often used (%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10: The degree of focus placed on different aspects of CPD for IAG staff within ACL.

Figure 11: The degree of focus placed on different aspects of CPD for IAG staff within FE.
Figure 12: The degree of focus placed on different aspects of CPD for IAG staff within nextstep.

Figure 13: The degree of focus placed on different aspects of CPD for IAG staff within specialist provision.
As Figures 5–9 also show, a variety of sources are used to access CPD for adult IAG. Local networks or partnerships are cited as the most important source by respondents from all categories of provider, with the exception of WBL. This emphasis is especially apparent among nextstep contractors and FE colleges, with over 60 per cent of respondents from both categories stating that they often use this source. External training providers and in-house training are also used by many responding organisations, although often only occasionally. Regional training bodies are not widely used.

Overall, the impression gained is that there are no sources of CPD that are routinely or systematically used, with relatively small proportions of providers in any category stating that they ‘often’ use a particular source.

**Focus of continuing professional development**

Figures 10–14 illustrate the degree of focus that respondents stated is placed on a range of aspects of CPD for IAG staff across their organisation.

The two areas most consistently addressed across all categories of provider in CPD for IAG with adults, are equal opportunities and learning opportunities. More than 80 per cent of respondents stated that these areas attract ‘some’ or ‘a lot of’ attention. The focus given to equal opportunities reflects its legislative basis, but the emerging findings from the ALI inspection reports referred to in Section 3 suggest that training in equality of opportunity is an area of weakness, particularly in terms of the assessment of the literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) need. Equal opportunities is a broad category, and it is not possible to tell from the data whether the training undertaken relates to equal opportunities in terms of access to IAG services, to learning and work opportunities, or both. There may be potential to broaden the scope of CPD in this area.

The high degree of attention paid to CPD in relation to learning opportunities may derive from the importance attached by providers to delivering effective IAG to learners at the pre-entry stage, with staff being equipped to ensure that potential learners make the right choice of learning programme, and thereby guarding against subsequent difficulties with learner retention. Preparing staff with knowledge about support networks was also frequently cited, although less so within ACL. Within FE, training staff in use of the Internet to deliver IAG was a major focus for over 90 per cent of responding organisations.
Fairly consistently across sectors, the two areas that are least likely to be addressed are the use of labour market information (LMI), and the development of specific skills among staff, such as skills coaching. Around 45 per cent of providers in ACL and WBL have no focus on LMI, along with nearly a quarter of nextstep and specialist providers. Given the importance of IAG for supporting entry to the labour market, the lack of training in the use of LMI gives cause for concern. More attention may also need to be paid to the development by staff of specific skills such as coaching to ensure that IAG is delivered in a way which is appropriate to meet future needs.

Staff competency needs

Asked whether they were aware of any needs in the skills, knowledge or understanding of IAG staff, at least a third of respondents in each category reported that they were. As Figure 15 shows, the greatest levels of unmet need were reported by respondents from ACL and WBL, with over half stating that they have experienced competency needs.

Across all categories of provider, two particular areas stand out as presenting the greatest levels of need in terms of staff competency, and these echo the findings from the desk research. First is use of LMI, although respondents did not state whether they would like to use the data for service planning, delivery, or both. This need was cited repeatedly across all sectors. Second is work with specific client groups, including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, migrant workers (especially from new accession EU countries), students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, learners with mental health difficulties and offenders. Although cited by respondents from all sectors, the latter need was especially pronounced among ACL, nextstep and specialist providers.

Other competency needs reported relate to: legislation (especially age and disability rights legislation); IAG in the workplace; psychometric testing; and (among specialist providers) knowledge of other organisations for referral purposes.

Providers of ACL appear to experience greater difficulties than others in overcoming obstacles to meeting training needs.

Barriers to accessing continuing professional development

Respondents identified a range of barriers that prevent them from accessing training or CPD to address the competency needs they currently experience. These findings are set out in Figure 16.

Across all sectors, respondents stated that they are aware of the need to increase both the numbers of qualified staff in their organisation and the level to which they are qualified. This was especially so in relation to frontline staff.

Figure 15: Percentage of providers in each category reporting competency needs among IAG staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ACL</th>
<th>FE</th>
<th>nextstep</th>
<th>specialist</th>
<th>WBL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>per cent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nextstep</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialist</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most consistently reported barriers were the lack of appropriate training and lack of staff time, cited by over 40 per cent of respondents in almost all cases. Insufficient staff time was cited as a particular problem by specialist providers, reflecting the fact that many organisations in this category are small voluntary or community agencies. Cost, and lack of local provision, are also perceived as significant barriers, with over 60 per cent of ACL and WBL respondents citing the former and all WBL providers reporting that latter. These are significant barriers, and may be exacerbated by existing funding and contracting arrangements. However, it was noted earlier in this report that relatively little use is currently made of e-learning and distance learning approaches to CPD, and these offer considerable potential to help providers address some of the barriers noted here.

As Figure 17 illustrates, almost all respondents stated that they formally review training needs on a regular basis. The lowest proportion was among nextstep providers, where nearly a fifth do not. In reviewing training needs, a range of factors are taken into consideration. Between 75 per cent and 90 per cent of respondents across almost all categories reported that the business needs of the organisation, the needs of adult learners, the staff monitoring and review process and observations of staff performance inform this review. At the same time, over a quarter of nextstep providers and nearly half of WBL respondents reported that the needs of learners were not taken into account. Training to meet anticipated need was cited as a concern by only around half of providers, although greater attention is paid to this in ACL and FE. The competency framework (DfES and LSC, 2005) does not appear to be widely considered by providers in the survey sample, especially those outside the nextstep networks. It would appear that this potentially valuable resource is not currently widely used by providers, suggesting that there may be a need for more effective dissemination and support for its use.
Figure 17: Percentage of providers in each sector that formally review training needs on a regular basis, and the factors that inform their reviews.
5: Trends and Future Continuing Professional Development Needs

87 As well as providing information about existing provision, respondents to the survey were asked to share their views on the wider issues and policy trends shaping the services they offer, and to reflect upon the likely implications of these developments in terms of the competencies required by IAG staff in the future.

88 A number of policy trends affecting the delivery of IAG to adults were consistently identified by respondents across all categories of provider. In particular, they drew attention to the following:

• The focus is on supporting learners to achieve qualification at Level 2.
• There is a need to develop the appropriate competencies to address the diverse and sometimes complex needs of specific client groups, for example, learners with disabilities, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers and offenders. This could include closer work with relevant agencies to increase understanding and the capacity to refer on. As a result of policy initiatives such as Welfare to Work and New Deal, IAG services have acquired particular and increased responsibilities, but funding streams often do not support the kind of intensive support that these users need.
• Changes are taking place in Jobcentre Plus which are impacting upon the workload of other agencies (especially nextstep and ACL). A nextstep respondent commented:

We receive many referrals from Jobcentre Plus for relevantly qualified clients who need to find work as soon as possible. They are also identified as having major need in terms of skills deficiencies or accredited learning.

• There is a need to engage with employers, as demonstrated by the introduction of Train to Gain. Learning providers working with employers should seek to develop mechanisms for the transfer of occupational information and intelligence to IAG workers, who can make use of it in their services.
• There is a need to understand LMI.

89 Several respondents also pointed out that staff delivering IAG often only do so as part of a wider role, and the increasing pressure on IAG services has distinctive implications for them, for example, in terms of the need to develop competencies to enable them to refer service users to other sources of information and support. Two respondents from the ACL sector commented:

As a small organisation we must limit ourselves to what we can do, but partnership working requires time and resources.

Our staff are exceptionally well trained as part of their general duties, but we do not specifically target training in IAG as it is such a small part of the role.

90 Respondents from all categories of provider anticipate needing greater numbers of staff who are formally qualified to deliver IAG, and more staff who have IAG qualifications at more advanced levels. The need to raise the qualifications levels of IAG staff was consistently reported, and some respondents noted that they are taking steps to address this. Several respondents singled out for comment the need to raise the qualifications levels of frontline staff, whilst others pointed to the need to improve the skills of staff who are qualified to higher levels to be able to deliver enhanced services. In a number of cases, respondents indicated that they perceive gaps to exist in current provision that prevents their training needs from being met. For example, a respondent from the FE sector argued the need for:

Expert training in guidance theory and interviewing skills (there is a clear lack of appropriate training within the NVQ structure in some instances).

91 In both the short- and medium term, CPD to develop a range of specific competencies was anticipated, in particular:

• sources and use of LMI
• working with specific client groups, for example, migrant workers and Skills for Life learners
• working with employers
• training for IAG management
• legislation.

92 Asked about any CPD needs that they expected to arise from the New Measures of Success programme launched by the Government in 2005, and agenda for change, respondents gave few answers and many were apparently baffled by the question. Some gave answers that did not seem to relate to it, and others openly stated that they did not know what it meant. (For further details of these two initiatives see http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/the+hand+book and www.lsc.gov.uk/whatwedo/afc.htm.)

93 Respondents across all categories of provider consistently cited funding as the main form of support that would enable them to pursue a more systematic approach to CPD. For example, an ACL provider stated a need for advice and support on how to develop the skills of their staff and:

funding [for CPD], because as a voluntary sector organisation we do not have enough monies to pay for any future training courses.
Another commented:

_We now have no staff development funding in our block grant, so any training needs will have to be met to the detriment of course delivery._

Funding to help train staff to NVQ Levels 3 and 4 is especially desired.

Local IAG networks, to share knowledge and information, also emerge as a source of training support that would be highly valued across provision. As evidence presented in Section 2 of this report shows, local networks and partnerships are already valued as a source of CPD, and the potential exists to encourage and develop these. In particular, local networks would facilitate the dissemination of skills and knowledge in relation to work with specific user groups. A respondent from ACL stated:

_Since the introduction of nextstep and its very limited client group, our local IAG partnership has ceased to be relevant. This is a great pity, because we have lost the learning continuum and contact between IAG advisors dealing with different client groups._

Other support that providers suggested would be valuable included:

- locally available and affordable training
- support to gain matrix accreditation
- local, accessible and up-to-date LMI
- accredited, modular training provision based on existing full qualifications
- regular national policy updates
- development work relating to the IAG implications of Train to Gain (FE)
- electronic training resources (FE).
6: Conclusions

98 This report focuses on staff competence and capacity requirements in LSC-funded IAG provision, and the arrangements that currently exist for the initial training and continuing professional development of IAG staff. Competence and capacity needs are profoundly influenced by government policies and priorities, which determine both the nature of the publicly funded IAG services provided and the users at whom these are targeted.

99 Changes in policy direction were consistently cited by respondents as factors affecting the competencies required by IAG staff in the future. Changes in service priorities require the development of new competencies – and sometimes the honing of existing competencies. Other factors, such as the generic nature of the occupational standards and NVQs, require the provision of adequate additional training and support to enable practitioners to work effectively in their particular context. Such factors would indicate that providers need to make a significant investment in training and development if staff are to be, and remain, competent in the roles they occupy. Continuing professional development has a particular role to play in ensuring not only that staff knowledge remains current, but also that staff retain and develop the skills they need in order to apply that knowledge in supporting clients. Funding and contracting arrangements need to encourage this investment.
However, evidence presented in this report suggests that, even as some policy developments have led to changes in competency needs, others have been contributing to a narrowing of the scope of services and skills available.

100 Findings from this research suggest that the existing structure of initial training and CPD opportunities may be neither comprehensive nor flexible enough to maintain and develop competence in the IAG workforce. Some development needs can be met internally, but around a third of survey respondents reported training needs in relation to staff skills, knowledge or understanding that they have been unable to address. Working with specific groups was identified as a principal unmet need, with providers from all sectors repeatedly citing training to support groups including people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers and Skills for Life learners as an area in need of support. A second competency need related to knowledge of sources of, and competence in using, LMI. Although consistently identified as an unmet need, LMI is also one of the areas that is least likely to be addressed across all sectors in current CPD activities. These two areas, together with ‘working with employers’ and ‘keeping up to date with legislation’ emerge as key requirements for future staff training and development. These emerging competency needs can be closely related to developments within the wider social and economic policy environment, for example, in the impact of initiatives such as Welfare to Work in shaping the client groups whom IAG services must be able to support.

101 The range of barriers cited by providers to accessing training and CPD suggests the need for a wider range of approaches to developing and maintaining competence to be adopted than is currently the case. Lack of staff time and the absence of appropriate training were cited by over 40 per cent of respondents in each sector, and cost and lack of local provision were also significant barriers. Whilst current funding and contracting arrangements may serve to inhibit providers’ ability to overcome these barriers, it is also the case that greater use could be made of alternative approaches to accessing CPD that are under-used, such as e-learning and distance learning. Local networks are an important source of CPD to develop knowledge, and providers indicate that they would welcome greater opportunities in this area.

102 Many staff are delivering IAG as part of a wider role, for example, frontline staff, administrative staff and tutors. A minority of providers do not consider their current staffing levels adequate to deliver IAG services to adults, and this problem may be particularly acute within ACL. A significant proportion of staff delivering IAG do not hold formal IAG qualifications, including 12 per cent of IAG advisors within nextstep. Respondents to the survey from all categories of provider anticipate needing greater numbers both of staff who are formally qualified to deliver IAG – in particular frontline staff – and staff who have higher levels of IAG qualifications. The diversity of the backgrounds of IAG staff in terms of qualifications and training is both a strength and a weakness. It suggests the need for providers to have effective and systematic processes in place to identify and meet training needs, and that external inspection and assessment need to be sufficiently robust to identify any weaknesses in these. A step in the right direction would be the inclusion of a module on IAG in the benchmark qualification, Qualified Teacher, Tutor or Trainer in the Learning and Skills Sector.

103 The fragmented nature of adult IAG services is reflected in the current policies and practices relating to professional training and development. In particular, the sector suffers from a lack of any overarching body with specific responsibility for the strategic planning of initial training and professional development for the IAG workforce.
7: Recommendations

Infrastructure

104 The evidence and trends referred to in this research report lead to a series of general recommendations. Findings from the report suggest that in order to maintain adequate capacity and enhance the competence of staff delivering IAG to adults, there is a need for greater direction and steer to be given by policymakers and funders at national level. The current national review of adult IAG provides an opportunity for this, and recommendations are set out below.

a Ensure that a competent and appropriate body (for example, a sector skills council) is allocated responsibility for the future strategic planning of initial training and professional development for the IAG workforce both in discrete and embedded provision.

b Ensure that contracting and funding arrangements to deliver IAG services for adults take account of the need to ensure that providers invest in maintaining and developing staff competence in the sector.

c Review ways in which matrix assessment and Ofsted inspection of the learner experience is supported by sufficiently robust mechanisms for developing staff competence in IAG.

d Increase the penetration of matrix accreditation to cover all IAG provision delivered by specialist and non-specialist staff in the sector in discrete and embedded provision.

e In the light of the barriers to accessing CPD reported by providers, to:
   • increase awareness among providers of IAG services of existing sources of relevant information, particularly Internet-based, which will enable staff to keep their knowledge current.
   • Ensure that future delivery models take account of the value placed on effective local IAG networks and partnerships in delivering staff training and development activities and in maintaining knowledge.

f Given the lack of accredited training to prepare staff for work with adults, support the development of flexibly delivered, accredited training modules to prepare IAG workers to deliver IAG services specifically to adults.

g In view of the reported gaps in skills and knowledge, support the development of short, flexible awards (for example, professional development awards) to address identified skill and knowledge gaps in IAG (for example, in relation to work with specific client groups and accessing and interpreting LMI).

h In order to address the concern expressed by providers about the lack of staff ability to access and interpret LMI, to:
   • explore ways in which sector skills councils can support the IAG community, particularly in the provision of: localised, up-to-date LMI, suitable for use with clients; occupational knowledge; and, as appropriate, training to support the interpretation of these
   • consider how this support may be funded.

i Promote the sharing and transfer of good practice between providers of IAG services in the learning and skills sector.

j k In the light of the reported gaps in the skills and knowledge of IAG workers, to review the availability of programmes and awards, and to consider:
   • the development of flexibly delivered, accredited training modules to prepare IAG workers to deliver IAG services to adults
   • whether existing units from existing qualifications can usefully be developed as short accredited modular awards
   • the development of a range of flexibly delivered, specialist awards, focusing particularly on areas where gaps in competencies and related training provision have been identified.

l Ensure that providers are made aware of existing tools such as the IAG for adults competency framework, which may assist in the identification of skills gaps and training needs.

m Include a module on IAG in the benchmark qualification, Qualified Teacher, Tutor or Trainer in the Learning and Skills Sector.

Delivery

105 However, there are actions that providers of IAG can also take to enhance their services, and these are set out below.

a With particular reference to ACL, to review the adequacy of staffing levels available to deliver IAG services (including all levels, frontline and specialist).

b Given the importance of administrative and support staff in delivering information and advice to adults, to review the development needs of frontline staff with reference to their role and responsibilities, and provide adequate support to meet these.
c Ensure that learner needs are taken into account when reviewing staff training and development provision for IAG workers.

d Given the reported barriers to accessing training, and reliance on a relatively small range of sources of CPD, to explore a more differentiated approach to providing CPD including peer support; sharing good practice and using online, e-learning and blended learning approaches.

e Ensure that staff delivering IAG can access relevant LMI and occupational knowledge being collected through Employer Engagement and similar initiatives, in a cost-effective way.

f In light of the apparent lack of understanding among respondents regarding the impact of agenda for change and New Measures for Success on the delivery of IAG in the sector, to:

- identify what this impact might be
- raise awareness of this among staff delivering IAG
- assist them in preparing to meet new challenges arising from these.
Annex A: Bibliography


DFES and LSC (2005), Information, Advice and Guidance Competency Framework, Coventry: LSC.


Merlin Minds (2003) A national staff development model for LSC, IAG and Partnership staff, Coventry: LSC.


NIACE (2006) Embedding Information, Advice and Guidance in Learning Provision for Adults: A Report by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education for the LSC, Coventry, LSC.


## Annex B: Work Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work area</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example job roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Frontline                        | May include responsibilities for some or all of the following:  
• acting as first point of contact for service users  
• identifying service users needs  
• referring or signposting to other individuals or organisations  
• helping service users with appointments  
• providing basic information. | • receptionist  
• volunteer (for example, Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) branch secretary)  
• library assistant  
• telephone helpline staff  
• outreach worker |
| Information                      | As for frontline, plus:  
• providing data for service users on learning and work through printed matter, audiovisual or computer software. | As above, plus:  
• information officer  
• tutor or lecturer  
• learndirect advisor |
| Information and advice           | As for frontline and information, plus:  
• providing an intermediate response to service users’ needs  
• helping with interpretation of information  
• helping service users to identify their needs  
• meeting needs already clearly understood by the service user  
• signposting or referral for more in-depth help  
• showing service users around an information library  
• explaining how to use the equipment  
• using LMI. | As above, plus:  
• employment advisor  
• advice worker  
• personal job search advisor  
• employment and training advisor  
• community development worker  
• personnel advisor  
• youth worker  
• learning disability advisor  
• outreach worker  
• caseworker  
• union learning representative  
• health worker  
• disability support officer  
• probation officer  
• army recruitment officer |
| Information, advice and guidance | As above, plus:  
• providing in-depth help to service users  
• helping service users to identify complex and multiple needs  
• exploring a range of options  
• relating information to service users’ needs and circumstances  
• assessing skills, abilities, interests and values  
• helping service users to make decisions about their career and progression  
• providing psychometric and other forms of assessment. | As above, plus:  
• guidance worker  
• careers guidance worker  
• specialist guidance worker  
• recruitment consultant  
• senior jobsearch advisor |
## Annex C: Qualifications Related to Work Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Area</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Frontline                      | NOCN Level 1 Award in IAG Awareness  
                                           Call Handling NVQ Level 2  
                                           Advice and Guidance NVQ Level 2  
                                           NOCN Intermediate Award in Developing IAG Skills |
| Information                    | NOCN Advanced Award to Trade Union Learning Representatives  
                                           Advice and Guidance NVQ Level 3  
                                           NOCN Advanced Certificate in IAG |
| Information and advice         | Advice and Guidance NVQ Level 4  
                                           Diploma in Careers Guidance Qualification (DCG) |
| Information, advice and guidance|                                                                                   |
Annex D: Case Studies

1: Bedford College: Developing and Supporting Tutors to Deliver Information, Advice and Guidance

Introduction

Bedford College is located in a mixed urban and rural area. It enrolls approximately 17,000 students each year, of whom some 2,500 are on full-time programmes. Those on part-time programmes are mostly over 19, although numbers of part-time 16–18 year olds are increasing. The college has a strong commitment to promoting social inclusion and personal advancement within the local communities it serves, and has successfully recruited learners from local minority ethnic communities and under-represented groups. It seeks to be the leading advocate for learning within the local community. Providing high-quality IAG is included as an aim within the college’s three-year development plan: In particular we wish to be recognised as a provider of expert and individual guidance, advice and other student support services including first-class learning environments.

2

The student services department, which is primarily resourced by top-slicing the college’s LSC funding, delivers IAG in collaboration with other internal and external partners. The importance of tutors’ involvement in the delivery of IAG is recognised in the college’s strategic plan: Student services could not be effective in its role without working in partnership, both with tutors – focusing on achievement by embedding support through a coherent tutorial system – and with a network of external agencies.

3

This leads to a focus on developing a cross-college framework for tutorials and ensuring all tutors have received relevant training to increase consistency in the delivery of IAG.

4

Student services is composed of six teams. Together, the careers team and the enquiries and guidance team include:

- one half-time and two full-time career advisors who are employed by the college (of these, one specialises in Aimhigher initiatives and the half-time advisor works on an outreach basis, including on employers’ premises)
- two Connexions advisors, who visit the college four days a week to deliver guidance to young people under 19, plus an additional contribution from a special needs specialist as required.

5

IAG provision is delivered through:

- one-to-one interventions, including evening appointments by arrangement (important for adult learners)
- drop-in sessions
- email
- group sessions
- enrichment activities
- open days and school post-16 events.

6

Underpinning the work of the student services staff at the college is an ethos that includes the principles described below.

Integrating an ‘adult’ perspective

The college aims to equip young people to learn and work in an adult environment and so welcomes the benefits of those from different age ranges learning together in mixed groups. Student services has integrated this philosophy with the support it offers tutors by integrating an ‘adult’ perspective into their work, and equipping tutors to work effectively with all ages. For example, where a mixed age group on a full-time painting and decorating course was interested in self-employment, student services staff arranged for speakers from both the Prince’s Trust and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to ensure all needs were addressed.

Supporting other staff

The student services department sees its role as supporting other members of staff as much as delivering directly to learners by:

- working flexibly with them as necessary
- recognising and valuing their vocational expertise
- respecting individual differences.

Recognising the importance of frontline staff

Significant investment has being made in the development of the frontline enquiries and guidance staff. All three enquiries and guidance advisors have achieved NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance. This reflects a recognition of the importance of the role in ensuring a welcoming and professional response to all enquiries and in accurate and empathetic referral. It is also of particular importance for part-time learners, who often attend in the evening when careers advisors may not be immediately available. Frontline staff are equipped to ensure that guidance needs are identified correctly, an appointment made and the enquiry progressed. The college is a member of its local IAG network. In the past, staff have attended an NOCN-accredited course for frontline workers, which was free of charge and very successful. College staff were also part of the delivery team. There are currently moves to reintroduce this training in order to build capacity to deliver IAG in the area.
The role of tutors in delivering information, advice and guidance

10 Tutors play an important role in the delivery of IAG at the college:

- at entry: interviewing for full-time programmes as part of the college’s centralised admissions process
- on programme: the main delivery being through tutors, including undertaking a pre-exit interview with learners.

11 At each stage, tutors are supported by the student services team through the provision of:

- handbooks and materials (for example, applicant packs targeted separately at those under and over 19 respectively, including information on subjects such as Education Maintenance Allowance, Adult Learning Grant, student support funds, childcare facilities and the college’s code of conduct and equality and diversity policy)
- staff development activities
- group work with learners
- one-to-one advice interventions and guidance interviews with learners where appropriate (for example, if career goals do not match programmes chosen by applicants, learners are referred to the careers team).

12 An entitlement for learners is enshrined in the tutor policy and entitlement, which states:

All students at Bedford College are entitled to accessible and informed guidance and support to address their needs in terms of personal development, career development and academic progress.

The first line of support for students will lie with the tutor.

At the beginning of every programme all students will be introduced to their tutor and will be made aware of the nature of the help, information and advice that the tutors can provide.

13 The college makes a distinction between full-time and substantive part-time programmes (those with 210 or more guided learning hours (glh)), and other part-time courses. Many of those on substantive part-time programmes are over 19. Those on full-time and substantive part-time programmes have access to:

- a planned programme of activities covering personal development, career development and academic progress
- four one-to-one tutorials built into their programme per year
- an exit tutorial with each student to record achievements and anticipated destination
- a group tutorial every half term.

14 The group tutorial programme is co-ordinated through student services. Student services has also developed a flexible tutorial framework to help tutors devise a scheme of work comprising activities that can be delivered to different groups either by the tutors themselves or by guidance specialists. The delivery of induction, equality and diversity and career development as a minimum is specified. The group tutorial framework covers the key elements linked to learning outcomes, resources and additional information.

15 Tutors can discuss the appropriateness of exercises for their groups with guidance specialists. Guidance specialists also help tutors develop exercises in job skills, CV writing, and self-awareness. A confidence-building session has been developed which can be adapted for any group and helps to support progression.

16 Where IAG specialists deliver sessions on career-related topics, tutors often sit in and offer a vocational perspective. This process, which is akin to team teaching, serves to enhance the knowledge of both members of staff.

17 Details of individual tutorials have to be recorded and the documentation (for example, an action plan) agreed with the learner.

18 Part-time tutors teaching on programmes of fewer than 210 glh are expected to:

- deliver integrated tutorial support as part of their learning provision
- introduce all their learners to student services and the services the department offers.

19 The college faces a major challenge to ensure that all adult learners on programmes of fewer than 210 glh who need IAG to support their progression are either being identified by staff or are self-referring.

The tutorial framework and supporting tutors to deliver information, advice and guidance

20 More than 100 teaching staff work on full-time programmes at the college, and most of these also act as personal tutors. By ensuring that tutors are adequately trained to deliver IAG, the skills of most of the teaching force are effectively upgraded. At the same time, the numbers involved mean that ensuring all staff are both delivering IAG effectively and taking up the opportunities to update or improve their skills poses a significant challenge. Inevitably, tutors have to balance the need to develop competencies in IAG with other work pressures and involvement in other development activities, such as the
Certificate in Education (Cert. Ed.), and they sometimes lack the confidence and need to be encouraged to participate.

Staff induction

All new staff are inducted into the college. Line managers work through an induction checklist with their staff. New teaching staff also meet the director of student services, either individually or in groups. These meetings cover policies and procedures, referral, and the support available for tutors. Cross-college staff induction events take place three or four times a year and include a short presentation on student services. A mentoring scheme is in place for new teaching staff.

Tutor training

Four staff development days are held annually for all college staff. Student services staff deliver a range of sessions on tutoring skills including:

- pre-entry guidance
- motivational interviewing
- UCAS: the online UCAS system, references and personal statements
- one-to-one tutorial skills.

The college is currently developing a modular programme for tutors that will link more explicitly to development needs identified in observations and be mapped against the new teaching standards where possible.

The director of student services also regularly delivers a session on tutoring with the in-house Cert. Ed. students (that is, staff working towards the Cert. Ed.), and thus has access to new staff.

Materials

Student services produces two tutor handbooks annually, covering:

- student induction: a comprehensive list of what needs to be included, including a checklist of when elements need to be covered and how this can be done (for the topics covered, see Appendix 1 to this case study)
- the tutorial programme: a tutor guide covering the policy and entitlement reminds tutors about boundaries and confidentiality and making referrals, and gives tips for delivery (for the table of contents, see Appendix 2 to this case study).

Tutor materials are also accessible via a staff intranet.

The range of the written materials and the support given to tutors were identified as areas of good practice during the matrix assessment in May 2004. The following comment was also included in the annual assessment visit in 2006:

A useful Tutor Guide has been produced that provides clear guidance to tutors on their roles and responsibilities. The guide includes the key activities to be included within tutorials and is cross-referenced to Every Child Matters themes. A structured scheme of work has been produced centrally for use in individual and group tutorials and this is supported by detailed notes and guidance about resources.

Feedback on performance and quality assurance

A sample of tutorials delivered by the teaching staff is formally observed and assessed as part of the college’s observation of teaching and learning, within the quality assurance process. This process covers all groups of learners. Group tutorial observations are graded (one-to-one observations are not) and feedback is given to the member of staff being observed. When additional staff support needs are identified through the observation process, these are addressed as necessary.

Adopting this approach helps to identify any instances where the advice given is partial or where the tutor is concentrating only on teaching their subject and giving insufficient time or effort to facilitating progression.

Student services staff also sample documents and records to identify any support or training needs. For example, one of the careers advisors undertook a survey of tutor references.
The approach taken by the college aims to increase quality and consistency in the delivery of IAG to learners by:

- requiring all new tutors to be inducted and covering the essential elements of their IAG role with them
- specifying a core of tutorial activities and a planned programme with a minimum which has to be delivered (but allowing flexibility in how this is achieved)
- providing regularly reviewed, and therefore current, materials for tutors to use
- college processes encompassing IAG-related activities being covered by a written policy and set of procedures
- the observation of tutorials

Results from a survey of teaching managers in autumn 2005 indicated that there is a high level of awareness of student services and the support it offers.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Lesley Ferguson, Director of Student Services, and Louise Woodworth, Course Tutor, Centre for the Arts.
Appendix 1 to Case Study 1

Bedford College: Topics covered in the student services induction

- How to access the service
- Careers guidance
- Counselling
- Financial and welfare guidance, including student support funds, Adult Learning Grant, Education Maintenance Allowance, travel subsidies
- Enrichment
- Student Council
- Student personal advisors and attendance monitoring (where applicable).

Appendix 2 to Case Study 1

Bedford College: Tutor guide 2006/07 contents

Introduction

Part 1: Who and why?
- Purpose of individual tutorials
- The role of the tutor
- Tutorial policy and entitlement
- Every Child Matters
- Action-planning and target-setting

Part 2: What and when?

Individual tutorials:
- Tutorial schemes of work
- SMART targets
- Planning learning and recording achievement
- Action-planning guidance for tutors
- How to complete a tutorial action plan
- Action-planning guidance for subject teachers
- How to complete a subject action plan
- Value added
- Learning styles
- Individual tutorial observation form

Group tutorials:
- Group tutorial frameworks
- Group tutorial observation form

Part 3: How?
- How to be an effective tutor
- Characteristics of a good tutorial
- Suggested questions
- Question styles
- Barriers to effective listening
- Boundaries and confidentiality
- Key policies and procedures
- Making referrals
2: Bolton Community College: Supporting and Developing New Managers through Training and Mentoring

Introduction

35 In 2002, Bolton College and the Community Education Service in the borough were merged to form Bolton Community College (BCC). BCC offers vocational education and training, and holds the sole contract to provide ACL for Bolton Council. It has centres of vocational excellence (CoVES) in construction, and health and social care. BCC’s provision is delivered through a ‘hub-and-spoke’ model, based on local learning centres and operating through six hubs throughout the metropolitan borough, including the main site at Manchester Road. The catchment area covers some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country: 42 per cent of those attending the college are from these districts. In 2004-05, 20 per cent of learners were aged over 65.

36 The BCC ethos particularly recognises the importance of guidance, support and respect for learners to encourage their progression in learning. The ALI and Ofsted report from the 2005 inspection noted that ‘learners receive good guidance and support’. All learning programmes of six or more guided learning hours (glh) a week include a tutorial programme. Effective targeting of learners and good promotion of equality and diversity facilitate learner progression.

37 The IAG team comprises:

- administrative and frontline staff, some of whom hold IAG qualifications at Level 2 or 3, located at hubs in the community
- and managed by the administration and communications manager
- an admissions officer qualified in IAG at Level 3 managed by the student services manager
- two careers advisors employed by the college and qualified at Level 4, and an information officer qualified at Level 3, all of whom are managed by the student services manager.

38 Staff from nextstep Bolton and Careerlinks visit the BCC’s sites to offer information and advice to adults within the target groups and to take referrals, and BCC’s IAG staff work with a network of voluntary and community groups. All the specialist IAG staff visit BCC’s other sites and are linked to curriculum areas. Each site holds matrix accreditation, thereby covering the entire college.

39 The 2006 ALI inspection report of BCC’s ACL provision for Bolton Council included the following comments:

Many learners progress to more structured courses and eventually to further study or accredited courses.

After attending courses, community development learners develop the confidence to progress to further education courses and employment.

Support for community development learners is particularly good: informed IAG is available.

40 Of particular note is the success and progress of former learning ambassadors who, as role models, have supported the development of learning within their communities. Eight have moved on to work as learning support assistants, and six as facilitators or tutors.

41 The 2006 ALI inspection report also noted that:

Quality improvement measures are successful. Managers make good use of timely management information to introduce necessary improvements.

42 For example, to ensure that appropriate improvements are made to the IAG provision, additional measures have been put in place to collect more in-depth feedback from learners about both their needs and their experiences of using the services available.

43 The ALI inspection report concluded that:

There are many signs of a continuously improving service. All partners and learners contribute actively to development and improvement.

44 The quality of the support and development of managers in the college is seen as an important contribution to the institution’s overall performance and capacity to improve. The particularly effective leadership and management’ of the college was identified as a strength by the ALI.

Training and support to deliver information, advice and guidance services

45 The BCC ethos supports recruitment with integrity, and stresses the importance of impartiality when giving advice. These values are transmitted through staff training and development processes, which are delivered in a number of ways.

- All new staff attend a corporate induction process, which includes an introduction to the role of student
services. This is supplemented with an induction in the curriculum area or department. Training needs are identified through ongoing monitoring and observation and discussed at regular performance reviews.

- Specialist IAG staff are observed in the process of delivering IAG to learners by the student services manager, who uses a checklist as an aide-mémoire. At the end of an observation, the learner is asked for feedback on how useful he or she found the interview and whether it met their needs. The student services manager then works with the staff member to identify areas for development and completes the documentation.

- Dedicated staff development days are organised, when BCC closes to enable all staff to attend. Specific programmes are provided for tutors and frontline staff with a focus on some compulsory elements, such as the requirements of new legislation.

- ‘Be Inspired’ twilight sessions run between 4pm and 5pm. These sessions may be led by internal staff or an external facilitator or trainer. The programme includes elements relating to IAG, some of which are led by the IAG specialists, and have been used to support matrix accreditation across BCC. Topics have included: the principles of IAG; interviewing skills; understanding the psychology and managing expectations of the 14–16 year-cohorts; working with vulnerable adults; and external organisations supporting young people.

46
The tutorial handbook is another source of support for tutors, and includes materials suitable for photocopying to help them deliver IAG-related topics and processes such as ‘right course review’ to learners.

47
Staff also attend external training that is appropriate to their role. All training in which staff participate, whether internal or external, is evaluated by the staff development officer through the completion of a satisfaction questionnaire which includes a question on whether or not the training has helped them to do their job. These are scanned by the staff development officer to ensure that any issues are noted and addressed.

48
Specific training for the IAG team is organised by the student services manager with sessions delivered for all staff, both those based at the main site and those in the hubs. Staff are asked to identify training needs and feed these back to their manager, so that relevant topics can be addressed. Recent training sessions have covered ‘IAG resources and how to access these’ and ‘Confidentiality’. Sessions have also been delivered dealing with, for example, the boundaries of different staff roles, and the distinction between advice and guidance. For those involved in the delivery of IAG, cross-college training brings a range of benefits, including improved referral channels and better communication. In addition, closer working relationships and increased understanding of roles has also led to greater informal peer support.

Supporting and developing managers

49
When Bolton College and the Community Education Service were merged in 2002, an internal management development programme was devised. All the managers from the two organisations undertook the training, not least as a means of bringing staff together to develop a common understanding and culture. The staff development manager at Bolton College drafted a specification for the programme, which was scrutinised and endorsed by the Association of Colleges (AoC). Building on this work, a programme was devised for both new management appointees and staff promoted internally to management positions.

50
All managers who are new to BCC attend half-day weekly sessions for 12 weeks. The sessions are facilitated by senior managers, and part of the initial introduction is led by the principal, which lends more weight to the training. The programme focuses on ensuring that expectations and the BCC ethos are transmitted to new staff, as well as covering systems and procedures. Staff develop a portfolio, which is assessed, covering areas such as human resources, finance and equality and diversity.

51
At the end of the 12 weeks, staff are allocated a buddy and a mentor by the staff development manager. Buddies are usually chosen from others on the programme and colleagues are matched on an inter-disciplinary basis, helping to develop social links and friendships across departments. Mentors are selected from the pool of existing senior managers at BCC, all of whom will have undertaken the initial management training and have well-developed inter-personal skills. The criteria for allocation are that the mentor is:

- not line managing the new manager
- working in a different area of the institution
- as senior as possible to the new manager.

52
From 2007, greater account will also be taken of the previous occupational experience and expertise of mentors in the matching process to try to achieve the optimal fit. The aim of the mentoring programme is to:

- support new staff through active interventions, so that they complete their learning curve quickly; and thus
- produce effective managers in as short a time as possible.
There is no formal requirement for mentor and mentee to meet with a specific regularity. However, it is usual for the latter to make contact from time to time for a chat or to discuss a particular issue that has arisen. If the mentee has not been in touch for a period of time, the mentor may make contact to see how she or he is progressing. In any case, there is little evidence of contact between the two parties, the staff development manager may step in to find out if there is a problem and help to resolve it. For example, the pairing may be inappropriate, or one party may not have ‘bought into’ the scheme. The mentoring relationship continues whilst both staff remain employed at the college.

The advantages of having mentors in place are as follows.

- Mentors are not part of the probationary reporting process, so that any difficult or controversial issues and potential solutions or strategies can be explored openly outside the line management process.
- Mentors have an understanding of the ethos and ways of working as well as informal cultures present in an organisation and can thus help new staff navigate these successfully, for example, by helping them to obtain co-operation from staff whom they do not line manage.
- The mentor can give an objective view and different perspective with a focus on what is reasonable and realistic.
- Potential problems can often be nipped in the bud.
- Expertise and good practice can be shared.
- The interdisciplinary approach helps to improve cross-college relationships and encourages team working.
- Encouraging managers to reflect on their work contributes to self-assessment and quality improvement.

The student services manager observed:

*It’s useful to have someone who can give an honest view and fill you in with the background to help keep you on track.*

At the Ofsted and ALI inspection in 2005, the college was awarded grade 1 for its capacity to improve, which was deemed ‘outstanding’.

Managers monitor and develop actions to improve college performance particularly effectively.

The contribution of staff development in enhancing BCC’s effectiveness to support improvement was acknowledged:

*Well-managed staff development supports college priorities and helps raise standards to a high level.*

*Staff development is good with effective sharing of practice.*

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Eileen Nicholson, Student Services Manager, and Peter Clegg, Director of Teaching, Quality and Learning Resources.

3: Essex Adult and Community Learning Service: Supporting and Developing Frontline Staff

Introduction

The Essex adult and community learning (Essex ACL) service is part of Essex County Council and serves the whole of the county of Essex excluding the unitary authority areas of Thurrock and Southend. The service has recently been restructured from nine semi-autonomous adult colleges to four areas locally managed but within a framework of service-wide policies and strategies. A further review will take place before the end of 2007.

The information, advice and guidance service

Essex ACL offers IAG across the whole of the county council area. Services offered include: IAG, jobsearch, mentoring, workforce development and redundancy counselling. The responsibility for IAG contracting, delivery and training rests with the service vice-principal planning and resources, whilst the responsibility for quality assurance lies with a different service vice-principal.

The service is funded via a core contract with nextstep for 1,500 episodes (a reduction from the previous year). Nextstep also offers the option of funding for further activity through its ‘advice plus’ programme, which involves the delivery of IAG to particular target groups identified by the provider. So far, the service has made only limited use of this facility. There are also other smaller contracts from Investing in Communities (the East of England Development Agency regeneration budget) and the Schools Service (for the delivery of a School Support Certificate). Finally there are other contracts of which IAG forms an element, some of these being...
The IAG service is actively involved in the county nextstep networks, which include a quality group, a marketing group and general network meetings. Overall the support offered by nextstep is highly valued. The quality group in particular is regarded as adopting a collaborative rather than a top-down approach at the same time as ensuring consistent processes across all contractors.

The clientele is mainly composed of potential learners rather than those seeking advice in relation to employment, so there is more focus on the provision of information and advice in relation to learning vocational skills rather than to immediate employment opportunities. However, the service is attempting to redress this imbalance. The emphasis on learning partly relates to the locations in which the service is offered and the way in which it is promoted. In addition, even when the service operates in an employment environment such as in Jobcentre Plus offices, there are shared responsibilities, with the IAG service focusing on learning and Jobcentre Plus advisors on employment. Finally, although frontline administrative and support staff are confident in offering advice in relation to learning, they are less experienced in the use of labour market intelligence and in supporting the preparation of CVs. This is an area for development.

Information, advice and guidance staff

Staff involved in the delivery of IAG include: two IAG co-ordinators for whom this work constitutes their whole job, 31 teaching and curriculum management staff for whom IAG constitutes part of their job and over 100 administrative and support frontline staff for whom information and advice responsibilities similarly constitute a part of their job description. Line management of staff involved in the delivery of IAG is dispersed throughout the service and depends on the geographical area in which they work. Line managers will often not themselves have IAG qualifications, knowledge or experience, which can cause difficulties in relation to the effective professional development of IAG staff. This issue will be considered as part of the current restructuring process.

Frontline staff mostly offer only information and not advice episodes. The decision to use frontline staff in an IAG capacity was taken in the light of Essex County Council’s policies in relation to customer care. However, due to the service’s limited staff capacity for the provision of advice episodes, frontline staff are being encouraged to take on the data input in relation to these episodes. Data input usually takes place after the advice episode, except when Internet access is available at the point of advice. Telephone episodes are usually recorded online at the time of the episode.

Staff joining the service to undertake a teaching or curriculum management post where IAG constitutes a part of the role are required to either hold or be working towards NVQ Level 3 in IAG in addition to holding or working towards a Level 4 teaching qualification. They are also required to have IT competence to at least Level 2. Frontline staff who will be required to undertake an IAG role are required to demonstrate an awareness of customer care as well as having Level 2 competence in IT. In the past, the NOCN Level 2 qualification in IAG was offered to all frontline staff. However, this is no longer the case as a result of cost implications and also the loss of a number of staff with IAG expertise as a result of the recent review of the ACL service.

Staff qualifications

One of the two IAG co-ordinators is qualified at NVQ Level 4 and the other one is working towards this qualification. One other staff member is qualified to this level but is no longer active in this area of work. Other Level 4 staff are occasionally
employed on a sessional basis. In total, 30 members of staff hold NVQ Level 3 in IAG, 12 of whom are administrative and support staff. Also, 37 administrative and support staff hold the NOCN Intermediate Certificate in IAG and a further 23 hold City and Guilds 9295, delivered through the Link Up programme. Although the number of qualified staff would appear to be adequate, there remains a capacity issue due to competing demands eroding the time available for advice episodes and qualified staff no longer having IAG responsibilities following the review. Furthermore, there are structural barriers to advisors working across the service.

Staff induction

69 All staff participate in the Essex County Council induction process which includes health and safety, equality and diversity and other generic issues. Staff who will be involved in IAG also receive the IAG service handbook. Staff competence in IAG is evaluated by line managers as part of the performance review and appraisal process.

70 Frontline staff are made aware from the start of the expectation of their involvement in IAG and of the limitations of their role. They are given guidance on when to refer clients to IAG advisors and on the necessity to ensure that the information they provide is relevant and up to date. Staff competence in relation to their IAG role is considered and monitored during recruitment, induction and ongoing support and appraisal.

Quality assurance

71 The service holds matrix and Investors in People (IiP) accreditation. In the recent ALI inspection of the whole ACL service, IAG was not covered as a separate area. However inspectors did identify that learners thought that the service could improve the initial advice and guidance available. nextstep Essex anticipates undergoing an ALI inspection some time during the coming year. Information, advice and guidance, covering both delivery and related training and support, forms a separate section in the ACL service’s self-assessment report and an associated development plan is produced on an annual basis. The 2005-06 plan includes the following objectives:

- co-ordinate IAG processes across the service and provide support
- have a consistent approach to client feedback across the service
- produce service-wide policies and a description of service for IAG
- continue staff development opportunities for frontline staff
- increase the number of staff qualified to offer enhanced services.

72 In addition, the service produces an annual action plan in relation to the various elements of the matrix Standard. An IAG policy is in place and also a customer care policy. An IAG service handbook is in preparation which will be aimed at all IAG staff including frontline staff.

73 The service had hoped to introduce formal observation of IAG sessions but has not yet managed to put this in place as a result of the barriers presented by geographical distances and other practical issues. All staff undergo annual appraisal as part of the Essex County Council performance review and appraisal system. This is designed to be a continuous and responsive process in which the member of staff and the line manager are fully engaged at all times. The aim therefore is that the timely identification and meeting of training needs are fully embedded in the process. The process includes reference to a checklist linked to Essex County Council’s 27 key priorities and the contribution which the staff member can potentially make to each of these.

74 Clients are asked to evaluate the IAG service they receive, and the results are evaluated by nextstep, which undertakes further sampling after several months, on the outcomes of IAG interventions. Areas of weakness that have been identified include availability of resources such as Internet access during interviews. This has led to a related health and safety issue due to the weight of the reference materials IAG staff are required to transport in cases where Internet access is not available for reference purposes.

Continuing professional development

75 For IAG staff, CPD is mainly delivered via in-house training and includes mentoring and peer support, coaching and the provision of written materials. In-house trainers in two parts of the county currently deliver NVQ Level 3, and there are plans for this to take place in a third area. Mentoring and peer support are offered by the two full-time IAG advisors in the areas in which they are located. In a third area this responsibility falls to a member of staff qualified to Level 3 and having part-time IAG duties. An IAG element is included in all tutor training courses and both frontline and curriculum staff are encouraged to attend Link Up Skills for Life awareness training. In most instances staff undertake training in paid time, although homework may have to be undertaken in their own time. The support needs of frontline staff in relation to customer care are currently being assessed with a view to addressing these.

76 The fact that line managers of IAG staff do not always themselves have IAG experience and the sheer size of the county both present barriers to effective mentoring and support in some cases. Team meetings for staff involved in IAG are an effective way of delivering peer support and will often involve developmental exercises such as confidence building.
However, the frequency of these can be variable. With the assistance of nextstep, the vice-principal planning and resources recently delivered a series of IAG roadshows across the county, which included the development of strategies for peer support; 78 members of staff attended these events. The roadshows were preceded by a training needs analysis for all staff designed to inform both the content of the roadshows and also the content of the induction process for new staff, particularly those who would be managed by line managers lacking IAG expertise. nextstep is also very active in the delivery of CPD, and regularly organises training in response to demand. The service also occasionally uses external training offered by professional bodies and external trainers.

77 The CPD offered by the service includes considerable emphasis on equal opportunities, learning opportunities, awareness of other support agencies and networks, government priorities and use of the Internet. There is somewhat less emphasis on employment opportunities, legislation, interviewing skills and service development. Currently there is little emphasis on the use of labour market intelligence, specific skills such as coaching, and service management. Effective use of labour market intelligence is regarded as a clear gap as regards staff skills, knowledge and understanding. There is also a huge need across the ACL service as a whole in relation to disclosure under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2005). In addition, in order to make the service more inclusive, there is a need for more refined impact assessment in relation to any changes in service delivery. This is a particular issue for the provision of IAG, as part of the nextstep contract involves working with specific target groups that include people with disabilities. Although IAG staff are able to access information on overseas qualifications, it is not otherwise clear whether there is any specific expertise in relation to the needs of black and minority ethnic groups or of refugees and asylum seekers. The service does however have links with translation and interpreting services, and reference to these facilities is included in training programmes. There is some experience of working with offenders on the part of staff who have been involved in the delivery of IAG to clients of the Probation Service. However, there is a need for improved risk assessment for staff working with offenders as, within the service as a whole, risk assessment procedures for staff involved in outreach work may be insufficiently robust. Some, but not all, staff have experience of operating in a workplace environment, particularly in relation to redundancy and pre-redundancy counselling. Funding has recently been obtained for working in libraries with clients aged over 50 likely to be in danger of redundancy. This will involve building the capacity of library staff to work effectively with such clients. Some staff lack confidence in working in a group environment and have concerns in relation to lack of confidentiality and the difficulty of establishing individual action plans. This issue is being addressed by arranging workshadowing opportunities.

78 Individual training needs are formally reviewed and addressed on a regular basis via the Essex County Council performance review and appraisal system. The effectiveness of CPD is evaluated via review and appraisal and also on an individual training course basis. Sometimes the training itself can be regarded as excellent but there are other, unrelated barriers to the effective delivery of IAG, such as lack of Internet access or other demands reducing the priority placed on the delivery of IAG and the time available to staff for undertaking this work. The staff response to the roadshows was very positive, with reports of an increased awareness of a wide range of topics relevant to IAG. The number of episodes delivered saw an increase immediately after the roadshows took place, although the causal relationship may be tenuous.

79 The current priorities that most affect the delivery of IAG within the service are the development of employability skills and quality improvement. The most urgent short-term needs are for upskilling of staff in relation to the use of labour market intelligence and in developing action plans for clients. In the medium term, there is a need to increase the numbers of staff holding NVQ Level 3 qualifications. With the current focus of the core nextstep contract being on the provision of information and advice for clients with qualifications below Level 2, and funding no longer being available for enhanced episodes, there is no incentive to work towards more staff gaining NVQ Level 4 qualifications. In addition there is considerable encouragement for the service to work with partners such as Jobcentre Plus, which employ highly qualified careers advisors, thus further reducing the need for high-level qualifications among the service’s IAG staff.

80 Support required from within the service itself in meeting future staff training needs includes an adequate amount of staff time devoted to IAG and the prioritisation of IAG within the service’s staff development plan. The continued high level of support from nextstep is also expected to make a positive contribution. At a regional level, briefings on labour market intelligence would be beneficial. Finally, guidance and support on requirements for matrix re- accreditation and the national occupational standards will be required at national level.

81 Accredited training for IAG staff, including NVQ Level 3, is funded via the ACL service’s core FE allocation from the LSC. Further income is obtained by opening the training to staff from local voluntary and community organisations that receive funding for bursaries as part of an ESF project. The contract with the Schools
Service for the delivery of the School Support Certificate is relatively generously funded and includes provision for the service’s staff to undertake IAG training. The roadshows, supervision and informal support are all funded as part of the service’s overall financial allocation to support staff development.

Issues specific to meeting the development needs of frontline staff

82 The most effective ways of meeting the development needs of frontline staff are to:

- adopt a person-centred approach
- build on the existing strengths of individuals
- plan on the basis of identified need
- address the barriers faced by individuals
- identify mechanisms for ongoing support
- encourage a collaborative approach to problem-solving in partnership with the rest of the local team so that the team can come up with its own solutions
- make links between IAG and other aspects of the operation of the service.

83 Some competencies have been identified as being more difficult to develop in frontline staff. These include:

- impartiality (frontline staff often find it difficult to see the bigger picture beyond the local context in which they are working)
- information handling in terms of both volume and currency
- using labour market intelligence (frontline staff mainly see themselves as receptionists in learning organisations and find it difficult to see themselves as having a responsibility for providing advice in relation to employment)
- developing an awareness of the barriers faced by particular groups in relation to, for example, disability, language and mental health issues (it is difficult to root such awareness in practical experience when staff have limited contact with clients facing such barriers and hence, without practice, tend to forget the theoretical issues about which they have been informed).

84 In the context of Essex, IAG developmental activity alone has not been sufficient to address some of the structural barriers faced locally. These need to be addressed by other means, although information arising from staff development can inform any strategy to overcome structural barriers. These perceived barriers include:

- competing demands on the time of staff for whom IAG does not constitute all their role
- the large geographical area served and in some cases the consequent isolation in a professional sense in relation to IAG
- line managers who lack the confidence to support professional IAG needs
- low morale and uncertainty, which has been attributed by some in the service to the ongoing restructuring of the service.

85 However, the approach adopted to the development of frontline staff provides evidence that:

- being positive and recognising the contribution of each individual can have a positive impact on staff delivery
- one-off learning is not sufficient on its own, it needs constant reinforcement in other arenas, for instance in team meetings.

86 The benefits of the approach adopted have been evidenced by positive feedback from clients and from staff. Staff have particularly welcomed the opportunity to share expertise, to develop informal networks and to feel that they are an important part of the larger county-wide service. For the ACL service as a whole, CPD activity has helped promote a coherent service to users.

87 The approach adopted by Essex County Council’s ACL service is eminently transferable to similar contexts elsewhere. If frontline staff are seen as having a role in customer care, then there are clear benefits in embedding IAG in their job roles, or at least in identifying the IAG parameters of that role.

Acknowledgements

88 Thanks are due to Wendy Aston, Service Vice-principal Planning and Resources.
4: Godalming College: Developing Staff to Deliver Information, Advice and Guidance in a Business Context

Introduction

Godalming College’s Business Training Services (BTS) provides training and assessment services for business skills. It works with over 400 employers to support their business needs on a demand-led basis. Unemployment in the area is low, so the chief focus of Business Training Services is on workforce development and raising attainment amongst those already in work. Whilst being part of Godalming College, BTS has a separate brand, logo and location, and its modus operandi is more akin to that of a WBL provider or a small- or medium-sized enterprise (SME). For example, the BTS centre is open all year around, and works to service standards which include response times.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) make up 80 per cent of the provision delivered, and the training and assessment delivered are always expected to contribute to improved work performance. The BTS centre has centre has centre has a centre has of vocational excellence (CoVE) status in health and social care, and this area represents a significant proportion of the training delivered. Legislation has proved a key lever in encouraging employers in the health and social care sector to engage in training and development; for example, the Care Standards Act 2000 requires employers to meet minimum Level 2 training targets for their staff. Funding from CoVE status has been used to develop a virtual learning environment (VLE) to enhance access to learning, and electronic NVQ portfolios have been developed.

Business Training Services also delivers NVQs in business administration, customer service, leadership and management, teaching assistants and the learning and development suite of qualifications as well as embedded Skills for Life. The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)-accredited Introductory Certificate in First Line Management, for example, is proving to be increasingly popular with employers across a variety of sectors. Customised skills workshops provide organisations with a CPD service.

Flexibility and responsiveness have been crucial in engaging employers. Employers often do not know which training and development options might be available, nor what would best suit their needs, so that training needs analyses have to be undertaken for each new employer client. BTS staff have consulted intensively with employers over the past five years to identify the key requirements of a good training provider. Findings from this research show that provision needs to be delivered on the client’s site (that is, in-house) and at a time to fit around business needs. Less than 10 per cent of clients come to the BTS centre. Thus all provision is customised, even the delivery for NVQs, and can be delivered in-house with learners as a group or on a one-to-one basis. The provider’s responsiveness to employers has been recognised as an example of good practice by Ofsted and the ALI (see The Responsiveness of Colleges to the Needs of Employers, 2004). Finally, 60 per cent of BTS business is repeat business.

A demand for training in mentoring and coaching arose from work in the health and social care sector. Mentoring has been identified as a factor in retaining trainees, and since it is not usually appropriate for this to be undertaken by assessors or line managers, companies expressed an interest in building internal capacity to deliver this type of support. A Certificate in Mentoring in the Workplace is offered, which includes units on mentoring colleagues, and evaluating one’s own practice and reviewing progress of others. Similarly awards in Coaching Learners in the Workplace, and Training and Presenting in the Workplace, which focus on individual and group support, are available.

BTS staff are encouraged to undertake networking activities, in order to develop new contacts and collaborative work and help ensure appropriate referrals. The intelligence gained from these makes a significant contribution to keeping staff well-informed about relevant developments. BTS is an active member of Surrey Skills Network, which provides an opportunity for training providers and brokers from Skills South East and Business Link to meet and exchange information about employers’ skills needs and matching training provision. It can thus offer business development opportunities through a more informed brokerage service. Business Link brokers and employers are members of the CoVE stakeholder forum and are vital sources of LMI for BTS, working in a dynamic and collaborative way to meet training needs in the county. The director and programme managers also attend brokers’ meetings for Skills South East, Train to Gain and Surrey Care Association.

Delivering information, advice and guidance in a business context

The centre holds matrix accreditation, gained in 2004, and links to the nextstep network. There is a strong commitment to ensuring potential learners access the provision most appropriate to their needs, with a key value of the service being that ‘The client’s interests are paramount.’ A manual of providers is available to ensure appropriate referrals are made. The mission statement includes the following:
Initial information, advice and guidance is provided at this centre. In circumstances whereby information is sought beyond our expertise, clients will be referred to alternative and appropriate services.

96 The IAG process and the client journey through this are described in BTS documentation. Where learners are in work, the employer will have an input into the selection of appropriate provision and support for the candidate as she or he progresses. In some cases, the initial contact will be from the employer, who receives records of meetings and copies of course evaluations. Referrals may also be received from brokers and other agencies.

97 Information, advice and guidance are delivered mainly by the office manager and IAG co-ordinator, and a team of four administrative staff, supported by IAG specialists. Learners receive IAG at the point of entry onto a programme. An initial discussion undertaken with the applicant identifies the provision BTS is offering is not appropriate for the enquirer, the enquirer is referred elsewhere.

98 Applicants are asked to bring a copy of their job description to facilitate identification of the appropriate NVQ level. Current LMI from a variety of sources, including local networks, is used to inform the advice given. The process also covers an assessment of the literacy, language, numeracy and ICT skills required to complete successfully, including the potential to complete an electronic portfolio. Confidentiality in relation to the roles of the provider, employer and candidate has to be addressed, particularly ensuring that all parties are clear about the information each will receive.

99 A learning agreement and pre-course discussion record is completed and signed by the interviewer and applicant after initial IAG has been given, which includes summaries of:

- the applicant’s aims, needs and preferred method of learning
- the options discussed and the implications.

100 User satisfaction with the handling of their initial enquiry and the IAG given in response to it are assessed through feedback questionnaires, which includes consideration of:

- whether the applicant had sufficient opportunity to explain his or her needs
- the quality of the information and advice given
- response times.

101 In 2005, 99 per cent of service users reported that their initial enquiry was dealt with promptly, and 97 per cent said that they were given sufficient and appropriate advice.

102 Once the learner is on programme, IAG is delivered mainly by assessors and is intertwined with development of the competencies. As learners are generally already in employment, less IAG relating to jobsearch is likely to be required than may be the case in other contexts. There may, however, be interest in exploring opportunities for employment progression. For example, in the care sector, realistic advice needs to be given to supervisors who are interested in entering management, but for whom the opportunities may not be immediately available. The final meeting with the assessor, which is documented, focuses on progression. In the programme evaluation, candidates are also asked if they wish to undertake further learning.

Staff selection, training and development

103 Most staff employed by BTS have expertise from the business world, rather than a teaching background: employers want to know about the business expertise and experience of staff delivering the services. Moreover, in order to ensure that staff have up-to-date knowledge of developments in their industry, it is the policy of the centre to employ staff who wish to remain working in their occupational sector. This also means that candidates feel that staff are up to date with latest developments, and so have confidence in the advice and support they receive. BTS staff are in a position to link into their own industry networks, and can bring valuable LMI and other industry knowledge to their role. In effect, they act both as brokers and as valuable ambassadors for Godalming College.

104 As part of Godalming College, BTS holds Investors in People (IiP) status and has been re-accredited against the revised standards. Staff joining the organisation go through an induction process, which focuses on meeting the needs of the client. Those staff dealing with initial enquiries also receive an induction on the matrix Standard, which covers the underpinning principles of good practice in IAG.

105 Development needs are identified on an ongoing basis and formally discussed at the annual appraisal. Each member of staff holds and updates a CPD file. An extensive CPD programme is available to staff through lunchtime workshops, INSET days, and attendance at training offered by both the college and external
organisations. Whilst there is currently a strong focus on IT skills to support electronic delivery, workshops also cover a wide range of topics designed to develop staff in their role of supporting and advising learners, for example, developing individual learning plans; negotiating SMART targets; cultural awareness; and equality and diversity.

106
Team meetings are used proactively to develop staff. For example, they provide a forum to share information about how certain situations or clients have been dealt with, thus expanding the expertise of the staff in general. The IAG co-ordinator attends matrix-sponsored courses, and knowledge gained there is shared with colleagues to help keep them up to date. Similarly, LMI is disseminated promptly, particularly where it has been brought back by staff from networking activities, thus ensuring the information is timely and live. Indeed, LMI is a standing agenda item.

107
All staff are encouraged to gain qualifications offered through BTS, both for their own development and to sample the provision being offered. This means that staff have access to the internal expertise being used to deliver provision such as management, coaching and mentoring. Staff dealing with initial enquiries are trained in IT, customer care and customer responsiveness. Two staff have undertaken brokerage training with Business Link advisors.

Competencies needed by staff delivering information, advice and guidance in the workplace

108
The following skills, knowledge and personal qualities are deemed by BTS to be important for staff involved in the workplace delivery of IAG:

- skills: communication, including listening, interpretation and probing; responsiveness (required to explore needs and consider options); working as part of a team; and problem-solving and analytical skills, including lateral thinking, which are especially important at the point of initial enquiry
- knowledge: LMI; the matrix Standard; funding opportunities; course information, including costs and entry requirements; delivery approaches; assessment methodology; sector skills council requirements; learning and career progression pathways; and referral agencies
- personal qualities: integrity and honesty; tact and diplomacy, including the ability to work within a three-way relationship with employer and learner; and the ability to be responsible and accountable
- a commitment to quality customer standards and the BTS standards and principles such as objectivity; impartiality; willingness to learn; and a commitment to continuous self-improvement.

Acknowledgements

109
Thanks are due to: Sheila Vinson, Director; Viv Micklefield, Marketing Officer; and Vanessa Fairall, Office Manager and IAG co-ordinator in the preparation of this case study.

5: learndirect: Contextualising Initial Training and Continuing Professional Development

Introduction

110
learndirect is operated by Ufi, a charitable trust with an operating company, Ufi Ltd. learndirect offers free, impartial and confidential telephone- and web-based IAG services for people over the age of 19, and is accessed through the freephone number 0800 100 900 (or via the Internet on www.learndirect-advice.co.uk). The call centre operation and the delivery of the provision are subcontracted to Broadcasting Support Services (BSS), which operates two call centres in Manchester and Leicester: approximately 200 staff are employed. (Centres also operate in Scotland and Wales.) Those accessing the website can view job profiles, search for courses or match their skills and interests to job opportunities. They can also email a learndirect advisor. In addition to English, the service operates eight ethnic minority language lines, which are Punjabi, Urdu, Sylheti, Somali, Gujarati, Farsi, French and Polish. A small amount of information in community languages is also available on the website.

111
The three levels of advisor employed by learndirect are information advisors, learning advisors and career coaches. The staffing is split as follows.

- **Information advisors** form 20 per cent of staff. They are qualified to NVQ Level 2 in Service Support, or gain this qualification within 12 months of starting work with learndirect. Information advisors are the first point of contact for clients and deal only with simple enquiries.

  - **Learning advisors** account for 40 per cent of staff, and are qualified to NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance, or gain this qualification within 12 months of starting.
Staff competence required in the delivery of distance and online services

115

leardirect advisors need to be able to communicate effectively with callers from a wide range of backgrounds and with different levels of fluency in language, without being able to rely on the normal non-verbal clues picked up during face-to-face communication. Staff therefore need to develop call handling skills, including exceptionally good listening skills, and also be able to encourage callers who may be lacking in confidence.

Induction

119

All leardirect advisors undertake a customised, comprehensive induction programme including some generic elements, such as an introduction to the service, call handling and geography training, together with some training specific to their role.

120

Information advisors are recruited externally. Candidates usually have experience of offering information, and often come from a customer service background where they have developed telephone and IT skills.

121

New entrants receive an in-depth briefing on the different types of marketing used by leardirect (such as campaign activity) and training in basic verbal communication skills to enhance understanding of the different types of speech. Induction is delivered in-house by leardirect’s own staff.

122

Mentoring support is provided for staff for two to three months after the induction. Initially the mentor sits with the staff member and assists them with the calls as necessary. Listening to how calls are handled by the mentor is another way of supporting new members of staff.
Progression

learndirect advisors can advance through the service, and career progression routes are clear until staff are qualified at Level 4. Advisors have an e-portfolio, which follows them throughout the service, and line managers check that activities have been undertaken and documented. Thus after the introductory period, staff begin working towards their NVQ and subsequently, if they wish, moving through the three staffing levels. Thus, learning advisors are recruited both externally and from within learndirect by a process of progression from the role of information advisor.

Modularised progression training has been developed over a number of years, which is evaluated and updated after each programme. These programmes each last about two weeks and enable employees to move up to the next level, as staffing needs require. An information or learning advisor who has completed the NVQ and who meets the specified criteria can apply. Attendance, time-keeping and overall performance are taken into account, and a reference is required from the line manager. Once staff achieve Level 4 they are allocated a certain amount of time for CPD activities, which are discussed with their line manager. learndirect is seeking to develop a more systematic approach to Level 4 CPD.

The learning advisor training programme

This is adapted for delivery to both externally recruited learning advisors and internal advisors who are progressing from the position of information advisor. Modules from the information advisor programme are included as necessary for external recruits, as is further training in areas such as call handling. It is expected that those who have previously worked as information advisors are already highly trained and competent in call handling, customer service and education and campaign information. Consequently, the in-house training for learning advisors, allowing extra time for external candidates, can be completed in two weeks of full-time training, along with a requirement to complete an NVQ in Advice and Guidance at Level 3.

The progression programme to career coaches needed to be enhanced in 2006 once the guidance trial was launched to ensure staff were competent to work effectively delivering more in-depth guidance by telephone.

Ongoing support and development

Continuing development and support is provided for advisors through mentoring and peer and online support, as well as through more formalised training. The service operates a call monitoring system known as Optimise to maintain the quality of the interactions and ensure that information given is accurate. Every call is recorded and a sample from each advisor’s caseload is checked monthly. As part of an approach to encourage self-assessment, staff also listen to and evaluate their own calls.

Advisors have regular one-to-one discussions with their line manager, who can also listen in to their calls and look at what was recorded on the screen. Additional training and support needs are identified through these processes.

Mentoring and peer support

Staff are encouraged to develop skills to mentor and support others. Each team consists of advisors at the three levels, and the layout of offices encourages interaction and informal peer support. Advisors can listen to colleagues’ calls, which help, for example, to identify how others approach more difficult issues raised by callers.

Mentors are recruited and trained in the role, for example, on how to give feedback, on the learndirect mentoring programme. Mentors help to identify training needs, and the information can be fed back to inform the training programme. Online approaches to peer support are also encouraged, as described below.

Providing support online

Online support is playing an increasing role in professional development at learndirect. Online quizzes (for example, on the subject of marketing campaigns) allow staff to self-assess, and can highlight any areas where they might need additional training or briefing.

The organisation’s information portal provides access to an intranet with extensive written materials which can be accessed by staff at any time, including whilst they are talking to callers. This resource includes information on, for example, job profiles and working practices. Relevant data is added on an ongoing basis. For instance, general trends from labour market intelligence, gleaned from visits by sector skills councils (SSCs), are noted and added to the materials in a format that can be easily accessed and quickly interpreted by staff.

The intranet has been developed as an interactive tool, with a ‘share point’ being set up which can be used as a discussion chat room. This forum enables advisors to post messages to colleagues if they come across issues with which they are less familiar, thus functioning as a form of peer support. Similarly, advisors also email each other for help. Using the discussion board
and email in this way facilitates peer support across sites, so enabling staff in the organisation to draw on a wider range of expertise and knowledge. Data, such as the information included in the job profiles, is amended based on feedback from advisors. The information portal is easy to navigate, and offers users the opportunity to suggest improvements.

134

Irdirect is in the early stages of giving some consideration to developing the concept of an e-portfolio whereby advisors might have their own portal to record information about their own development and then have an online discussion to share this with others. This should support the development of consistent competencies across the career coach team.

135

Membership of professional bodies (for example, NAEGA and the ICG) gives members access to online discussion forums, email updates and other publications and also allows staff to contact practitioners in the wider IAG world and keep up to date with current practice.

136

The benefits of providing support and training online include the following.

• A trainer is not required.
• They can be undertaken at any time.
• They allow practitioners to share experience and more broadly and with larger groups, both within the company itself and within the world of IAG.

Training

137

Ongoing training sessions are organised to develop competencies not covered by the NVQ and to help staff keep their knowledge current. An important part of this is to develop understanding of the needs of different users and to know to where they can be referred for further assistance. The service has referral procedures with nextstep and also invites a range of referral agencies to its open days to improve understanding of its client groups.

138

Additional training is delivered as necessary, which tends to relate to issues such as:

• changes in procedures and the working environment
• meeting the needs of specific client groups (for example, mental health awareness).

139

Recently, advisors have wanted more support with helping callers to develop CVs (callers can email their CVs to advisors to ask for help). New legislation, particularly relating to equality and diversity, frequently affects IAG work, meaning advisors need updating on specific aspects of this (for example, the impact of age discrimination legislation on the content of CVs). After receiving training, advisors are asked for feedback and to identify any remaining gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

140

Evaluation of a training programme is carried out throughout the period of training. As well as the overall training session objectives, candidates are encouraged to share their specific personal objectives, which are then reviewed daily to ensure that everyone’s needs are addressed. In addition, evaluation forms are completed after each training session so that future sessions can be tailored where necessary to suit the needs of future candidates.

Customising training for career coaches

141

The guidance trial is running from January 2006 to July 2007. Callers can contact the service for additional assistance, possibly involving more than one staff member. The trial is resulting in the emergence of new development and support needs, including an understanding of guidance theory to enable practitioners to evaluate and improve their practice. In particular, training has been developed to meet the two skills needs: advanced interviewing skills and action-planning.

Advanced interviewing skills

142

These include techniques such as contracting, probing, challenging, focusing and summarising, to help advisors really get behind the issues presented by clients, and are especially difficult to achieve on the telephone. A programme of enhanced interviewing skills, contextualised to the unique service provided by BSS and Irdirect, was prepared with the Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby, in order to deliver a programme of training in autumn and winter 2006. All participants completing the programme received a certificate of attendance.

Action-planning

143

The focus has been on: increasing consistency in the action-planning process and documentation; trying to ensure that advisors are not producing action plans that are too long and not sufficiently focused; and ensuring that action plans included SMART objectives.

Postgraduate Qualification in Telephone Guidance

144

Ufi has also contracted with the Centre for Guidance Studies to develop an accredited CPD programme for BSS career coaches. This will be delivered in two modules,
‘understanding guidance’ and ‘advanced professional practice’, and will lead to a certificate. The main aim of the qualification is to:

Enable practitioners to develop the conceptual and practical frameworks that support and inform guidance policy, theory and practice.

145 The enhanced interviewing skills programme will also contribute to this qualification.

Acknowledgements

146 Thanks are due to Gareth Dent, Director, Advice Services, Ufi; Lissa Davenport, Head of Service, BSS; and Bernie Jordan, Senior Operations Manager, BSS, in the preparation of this case study.

6: Lincolnshire Action Trust: Training and Supporting Staff to Deliver Information, Advice and Guidance to Ex-offenders

Introduction

147 Lincolnshire Action Trust aims to reduce rates of re-offending by improving the employability of offenders and prisoners. The trust was established in November 2000 and has been a charity since 2001. Initially, it employed two practitioners, one administrative worker and a trust manager. It has grown considerably over the last six years and now employs 35 staff, which includes 22 IAG staff. In common with many voluntary sector organisations, the trust draws on a variety of funding streams to offer a range of services to its client group. In 2005-06, the work of the trust was supported by 13 funding streams.

148 Current services include employment and resettlement programmes for adults on probation and in prisons; Skills for Life provision for adults and young people in probation and youth offending, which includes literacy and diagnostic assessment. This includes employer liaison work, guidance on employment legislation and coaching offenders, and liaison with statutory agencies. Time needs to be spent supporting clients to develop skills, understanding and self-awareness. If clients have spent a long time in prison they may have little knowledge of the local labour market.

149 Their career choices may be unrealistic and their expectations may need to be unpicked. They may have underdeveloped decision-making, problem-solving and communication skills related to searching for employment. Clients may face barriers to obtaining work such as health issues, parental responsibilities and attitudes of employers. Their expectations of work opportunities and conditioning may mean they have a longer journey to travel on the road to seeking employment. In addition, follow-up work related to clients’ action plans, which would normally be done by clients, may need to be supported by IAG advisors. For example, if clients need to contact a college to find out information about a course, they may not have ready access to telephones. Prisoners have PIN codes for key telephone contacts which may take up to three weeks to change.

150 The length of time required to support offenders into work has implications for funding, and the nature of the client group requires specialist skills to offer support and to challenge attitudes.

Assuring staff competence: staff selection

151 Staff are recruited primarily on their attitudes and motivation to work with offenders and their capacity to develop IAG skills. They then undertake a comprehensive training programme to develop the relevant competencies. Staff attitudes are important because ex-offenders are so used to experiencing hostile or apathetic attitudes, and they can easily disengage from the guidance process. It is important to the trust to employ staff who can motivate clients and sustain their engagement. Staff need to feel in tune with and at ease with the client group. Many of the trust’s IAG advisors are therefore ‘home-grown’.

152 Appropriate attitudes, values and beliefs are explored in depth at interview. The trust has a two-part interview process. Alongside a panel interview, the second part of the interview involves a role-play related to the job. Interviewees are set tasks to explore attitudes. Qualifications are dependent on the role, but an IAG qualification would not be a requirement
in the first instance for someone applying for an advisor post. Experience is seen as important. Skills for Life awareness qualifications or IT delivery qualifications would also be deemed important, alongside evidence of communication skills, literacy and numeracy.

153 Staff come from varied backgrounds, such as business, industry, administration, construction, criminal justice agencies, civil service, nursing and teaching. There is a spread of age ranges. This means that there is a wide choice of personnel to support different clients.

154 The IAG staff team comprises: frontline IAG delivery workers; team leaders who work approximately 80 per cent of their time in frontline delivery; and the operations manager, who is also an IAG-qualified practitioner and supports the team leaders.

Induction

155 Considerable importance is attached to the induction process, since there is a high risk that work with clients may go wrong here. Induction has several stages. The trust provides a two-week formal induction, following which staff work for about two months alongside experienced practitioners until they are assessed by the team leader as competent to deliver the service to offenders on their own. Support is reduced gradually. There is constant monitoring by team leaders to ensure staff members are comfortable with their work.

156 Induction for IAG staff includes:

- environmental awareness (probation, prison and young offenders service)
- guidance models
- disclosure
- interview skills
- action-planning
- motivational interviewing
- boundaries
- confidentiality
- contracting
- pro-social modelling
- public and child protection
- drugs awareness
- risk management
- role of criminal justice agencies and practitioner’s role and responsibilities.

Mentoring and supervision

157 The organisation adopts a rigorous mentoring system, both formal and informal. In a form of ‘befriending’ scheme, staff new to the organisation are paired with more experienced colleagues to offer informal help on professional or other issues.

158 More formally, all staff have monthly supervision to explore aspects of practice. Supervision takes place on a one-to-one basis, and is carried out with team leaders. The team leaders are all themselves practitioners, with 20 per cent of their time allocated to support and coaching their team. Each team leader typically supports four members of staff, and is trained to do so via external and internal training. Team leaders receive supervision themselves from the operations manager.

Observation

159 Over and above supervision, team leaders carry out observations on a bi-monthly basis. On occasion, observations may be unannounced, for example, where people are known to experience a high degree of stress in anticipating observation. Video observations are also used selectively where this could enhance performance. Observation is benchmarked against IAG competencies, Skills for Life competencies and National Probation Directorate competencies, depending on the areas of delivery being assessed. The organisation aspires to exceed the benchmark competencies outlined in the LSC’s competency framework.

Staff appraisal and review

160 Staff have an appraisal review interview twice a year. One of these interviews involves a 360-degree competency-based appraisal process. Competencies are identified following consultation with staff. Up to five respondents are chosen for feedback. Linear appraisal is more general, covering areas such as contribution to the team, training and development targets and strengths and weaknesses.

Training

161 The organisation does not adopt a minimal training approach. Benchmark training is provided but in addition as much training as possible is offered to support staff to develop a broad awareness. Much training is provided free through the local IAG partnership, through nextstep or through reciprocal arrangements with other organisations such as the Probation Service. Otherwise training is built into bids to ensure competency in meeting needs of offenders. Across the trust, staff have accessed over 40 different training programmes to support their initial training and CPD.

162 Benchmark training includes NVQ competencies. Staff access training at NVQ Levels 3 and 4 delivered by North Nottinghamshire College in Worksop. Lincolnshire Action Trust aims to support all staff who have the capacity to achieve at Level 4 to access the appropriate training. Currently 14 out of 22 IAG staff hold NVQs. The operations manager spent a lot of time before the start of the NVQ training advising the trainers and assessors about the client group. Training scenarios were changed to incorporate the offender context. There is an evaluation
meeting once a year between the trust and the North Nottinghamshire College to review how the course meets the needs of the trust. Close liaison has paid off, in that there is a good working relationship between the two organisations, and feedback about the value of NVQ training has been good. Any specific needs of the client group not covered by the NVQ training are sourced via other training which includes external training providers, training delivered within the criminal justice system and extensive internal training.

163 Basic mandatory training for all trust staff includes:

- prison craft (for example, keys)
- child protection
- risk management
- drugs awareness.

164 A training register is kept to ensure mandatory, basic training areas are covered. Some, for example, are required to be updated every two years.

165 The trust would argue that, in addition to the above four areas, the following training is essential for any IAG worker involved with this particular client group: pro-social modelling, contracting and disclosure training.

166 Pro-social modelling is seen as essential to be able to challenge certain offender behaviours and to support positive attitudes. Pro-social modelling is covered in internally provided training and in supervision and is looked for in observations.

167 Aspects of contracting are explored every couple of months with all staff members. Confidentiality and public protection are elements of contracting specifically relevant to working with offenders.

168 Both external and internal trainers are used. The organisation reciprocates training with other organisations, for example, it has provided the Probation Service with training in risk management in an employment setting. It has also provided training in disclosure to voluntary and community groups, as well as tools to support the engagement and social inclusion of offenders.

169 Some training has been difficult to access. In some areas of related work, for example, working with sex offenders, there are no courses available, so the trust has had to build up expertise internally.

170 The trust says that, since attitudes and experience in working with offenders and ex-offenders are key competencies, there is a case for specialist experienced practitioners to provide high-quality support for offender IAG. Generalist skills are valuable and certainly not inferior but the trust feels there is a place for recognising when specialist approaches are needed.

171 For the future, there are some local issues of ethnicity and cultural awareness as the client group and local demography changes, which need to be addressed in training.

Approach to training and development

172 The organisation has grown considerably over the last six years, and has had to keep re-evaluating its approach to training and development in response to staff feedback. So, for example, the 360-degree appraisal process used to involve feedback from external organisations, but now this has changed following feedback. Supervision used to take place less frequently, but staff requested more, and so this now happens monthly. Full staff meetings take place every six months, and team meetings take place monthly, with themed working groups taking place at different time intervals. There is ample opportunity to gain feedback on the adequacy of staff development processes.

Evaluating the impact of training

173 The trust is active in seeking feedback on training, and feels it has a good overview of CPD and which training works well. Formally, post-course feedback sheets evaluate training. However, the main impact of training is assessed through supervision and observation. Training and development are standard items within supervision. Staff are encouraged to give feedback on their training.

174 This thorough approach to training and staff support has reaped benefits in terms of staff retention. The trust has a very low turnover of staff. Those who do leave mainly go on to develop their careers working in the criminal justice system, for example, in probation or the Young Offenders Service.

Funding

175 Experience has shown that offenders and ex-offenders require a lot of support to move into employment. The criteria set out in the nextstep contract are only adequate to the needs of a minority of clients. The nextstep contract stipulates that clients qualified below Level 2 require one advice session each. There is a tension between the needs of offenders and the scope of the nextstep funding criteria, which the trust resolves by securing additional funding from a range of sources. ESF has been the main means of topping up finances. From a delivery point of view, because of the complex needs of this client group, there would be significant
advantages if the limit on qualification criteria and duration and number of interventions were removed.

176 The charitable ethos of the company and the prison environment itself mean that aspects of the nextstep contract are difficult to operate. The prison environment means that it is not possible to specify which category of client can be seen, according to the nextstep criteria. The work is made viable by mixing and matching funding streams to client needs. For example, if an advisor sees six clients in one day in prison, usually two of these will fit the nextstep criteria. Other funding streams can be used to support the other four clients, in this way covering costs. A nextstep contract on its own would not be financially viable.

Acknowledgements

177 Thanks are due to: Christina Hall, Operations Manager, and Alison Goddard, Chief Executive.

7: nextstep Berkshire: Building Information, Advice and Guidance Capacity in the Community and Workforce

Introduction

178 nextstep Berkshire, delivered by CfBT Education Trust, is available to adults over 19 working or living in the county. Berkshire covers both rural and urban areas, and is characterised by a low unemployment rate. The agency has a core staff of 17 and works with 3 associates. Staff delivering information or advice have to be qualified at Level 3 in IAG, and those delivering in-depth guidance must be either qualified or working towards Level 4 in IAG. The service has been financed from a number of sources, including funding from the LSC, Aimhigher, Slough Borough Council and ESF. ESF has been used to deliver guidance to adults who hold qualifications at Level 3, but ceased at the end of 2006.

179 nextstep Berkshire delivers the following range of services: information; advice (including advice plus); guidance interviews; job search; psychometric testing; workforce development; and redundancy counselling. In 2005-06, 44 per cent of clients were from non-white backgrounds and 10 per cent had a disability. Some 58 per cent of referrals come from Jobcentre Plus: approximately 36 per cent of unemployed people referred had been unemployed for at least 36 months. The comparatively high skills level in the county means that it is more challenging to find those adults below Level 2 needing assistance, but the service met 96 per cent of its target of 558 sessions in 2005-06. This was owing in part to the development of close working relationships with local agencies such as Resource, a charity working with people with mental health difficulties. Such co-

operation is in line with one of the service’s key objectives, namely to:

Enhance collaborative work by working in partnership with other agencies in order to reach a wider range of clients.

180 The organisation works with a network of 20 subcontractors, of which 16 deliver nextstep contracts. Staff giving information or advice in subcontracting organisations are expected either to hold or to be working towards the appropriate NOCN intermediate award or NVQ Level 3. Some 60 per cent of subcontractors are from the voluntary and community sector, and, whilst specialists in the understanding and meeting the needs of their client groups, tend not to have staff at a supervisory or management level qualified or competent in IAG. In some cases, those working in small local agencies may be less familiar with some computerised operations and have little or no access to IT specialists, as a result of which they are not in a position to develop their skills and understanding using online resources. Providers have been encouraged to access funding to purchase laptop computers on which relevant IT applications, such as Adult Directions, can be run to increase the effectiveness of outreach work.

181 In order to maintain and develop the competence of staff delivering IAG services across the county, nextstep Berkshire has developed an extensive support programme incorporating a range of approaches, which focuses both on NVQ- and NOCN-led training and development of practitioners’ skills.

Developing initial training and support for the network

182 nextstep Berkshire provides bespoke training for NVQs in IAG at Levels 2, 3 and 4. The NVQ is delivered through the Open University at Levels 3 and 4. Workshops to
build portfolios are arranged when at least five trainees have been identified.

183 For the last five years, nextstep Berkshire has undertaken a detailed annual assessment of the services provided, which includes the collection of feedback from subcontractors. The agency is, of course, responsible for the quality of the provision delivered by its subcontractors, and seeks to respond to their training and development needs. Feedback in 2004 indicated that the subcontractors wanted a broader choice of qualifications beyond the NVQ, as a result of which the agency registered as an NOCN centre. Intermediate and advanced IAG awards were introduced. Those interested in undertaking training in IAG were attracted by the modular structure of the NOCN awards, which has proved to be effective in maintaining motivation and increasing the likelihood of achievement.

184 Each NOCN award is delivered over an academic year, with trainees attending monthly workshops. Frontline staff are encouraged to study for the intermediate award. The programme is assessed using work-based assessments, case studies and an observed interview. The training is funded 50 per cent by the provider or employee and 50 per cent by nextstep. Each trainee has a learning agreement, signed by his or her line manager, which includes a commitment to release the staff member for the duration of the programme. The training is delivered county-wide and offered not only to nextstep subcontractors but also to the range of organisations delivering IAG in the county, including student services departments in FE colleges and other agencies holding LSC contracts.

185 The programmes have had the additional benefit of enabling IAG practitioners to enhance their understanding of the role of other agencies and hence of improving referral. Internal delivery also allows nextstep Berkshire to monitor and support the progress of contractors’ staff undertaking training, delivering nextstep services across the county, and thus makes a useful contribution to assuring the quality of the provision.

186 An important element in the achievement of the NVQ and NOCN awards in the network has been the thorough assessment of trainees prior to commencement of the programme. An assessment day is organised, covering learning styles, Skills for Life and an exploration of levels of motivation.

Maintaining and enhancing competence

187 nextstep Berkshire participated in a study of nextstep providers undertaken by the ALI in 2004, which highlighted the value of the Berkshire support programme. The agency subsequently worked on developing a self-assessment process relating to the ALI framework, of which self-assessment and peer assessment form a part. nextstep Berkshire has been developing an observation scheme that builds on the observation practice from the NOCN and aims to ensure that all those delivering IAG are observed once a year by a competent practitioner.

188 Training needs emerge through performance monitoring and review (such as sampling action plans), and are also identified during observations and assessment activities. For example, action-planning was identified as requiring some development, and a session was planned to increase competence in this skill. The business needs of the organisation and learners’ needs are also taken into account when planning training and support activities. For example, training was run to support the use of the IT applications being used on advisors’ laptop computers.

189 An audit of staff competence across the network is undertaken annually. Information on training needs is collated, and a programme is produced in July, which runs for 12 months. This programme is marketed through the network and the national training directory. Significant numbers of referrals for training events are via word of mouth. A range of topics is offered, with workshops covering areas such as key elements of the matrix Standard and readiness checks. The training is delivered by both nextstep staff and representatives of external bodies. For example, a practitioner session was held on careers in the media delivered by staff from Skillset, the sector skills council (SSC) for the media and audio-visual sector. Participation in, and attendance at, events is monitored. Participants complete an evaluation form after each event. This feedback is analysed and used in planning future courses.

190 Participation in the LSC Skills for Life Quality Initiative in 2003 enabled the organisation to work with an assessor to develop training in diagnostic screening for Skills for Life for IAG practitioners. This is based on one unit of the City and Guilds 9295 Skills for Life qualification, is offered at a local FE college and co-tutored by the nextstep co-ordinator for quality and training.

Developing a network of learner representatives

191 In 2004, nextstep Berkshire secured resources from the Quality Development Fund to develop IAG work with employers. Work was undertaken with Business Link to draft a workplace strategy for IAG, and a co-ordinator appointed to take forward the work. Between 50 and 60 referrals have been received from Business Link each year, and these have been an important way of accessing employers who wanted personal development for their employees.
These have generally been small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or larger employers making redundancies. Training in Myers-Briggs personality profiling has been useful in enabling nextstep staff to work effectively in the workplace. A CD entitled ‘The future in your hands’ was produced as part of an Employer Training Pilot (ETP, now Train to Gain), focusing on employee progression for workers with qualifications below Level 2. The CD won a 2004 ICG national career award.

This work has promoted an interest in IAG among employers in the county, particularly as a process that enables them to retain and re-deploy existing staff, since it encourages the latter to develop their skills to meet changes in business markets. This recognition of the potential value of IAG led to the development of an initiative to identify and train learner representatives, targeted at the non-unionised workplaces in the county and funded by the local LSC. Approaches have been made to human resource (HR) departments in a wide range of businesses, and success in engaging employers has been particularly apparent in the voluntary, care and hospitality sectors. In some cases, employer interest has been encouraged by new legislation requiring staff to retrain. By October 2006, 63 employers in Berkshire had learner representatives.

While training for their role, learner representatives attend a three-day NOCN-accredited course that is assessed and moderated internally and that focuses on:

- understanding what contributes to a good learning experience
- identifying learning needs and sources of learner support
- being able to explain information about learning to others.

During the training, candidates:

- build a portfolio
- conduct research and present the findings
- carry out a practice interview
- undertake training in diagnostic screening for Skills for Life.

Since 2004, 75 candidates have undertaken the learner representative course. Of these, all but one have completed the programme. nextstep Berkshire assesses the impact of the training received by sending out forms to monitor as far as possible the level of subsequent IAG-related activity being undertaken by the learner representatives. Any assessment of impact needs to be made with a light touch so that it is not perceived as unduly burdensome by either learner representatives or their line managers.

Factors enabling a proactive approach to developing competence and capacity

Developing and providing a range of initial training and CPD for staff delivering IAG services throughout the county has been made possible by:

- being able to pool funding sources
- delivering a range of guidance services, including enhanced services
- securing expertise in training and development, including the use of qualified trainers
- economies of scale from the identification and meeting of generic needs across agencies in the county
- understanding government priorities and identifying the development needed by staff to meet these
- having a strategic overview and vision of how competence in IAG can be developed and enhanced.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Chris Brear, Co-ordinator (Quality and Training) and Lesley Reilly (nextstep Manager) in the preparation of this case study.
8: Suffolk Adult and Community Learning Service: Development of Information, Advice and Guidance Staff in an Adult and Community Learning Service

Introduction

198
The Suffolk Adult and Community Learning service (Suffolk ACL) is part of Suffolk County Council and serves the whole of the county of Suffolk. The service has recently been restructured with the aim of putting in place a clear line management structure for curriculum areas including IAG. A further restructuring will take place shortly with the aim of removing one tier of management. Suffolk IAG (nextstep Suffolk), which holds the county’s nextstep contract, is also part of Suffolk County Council.

Information, advice and guidance service

199
Suffolk ACL offers IAG across the county. Services which can be offered include information, advice and guidance, jobsearch, coaching, mentoring, workforce development and redundancy counselling. All aspects of IAG provision are the responsibility of one of the service’s three community education development managers. For each of these staff, this responsibility formally constitutes 50 per cent of his or her duties.

200
The IAG service is funded via a contract, is also part of Suffolk County Council as Suffolk ACL. The IAG service is strongly encouraging all tutors to ensure that learners access those IAG services available to them.

201
Suffolk is a large and mainly rural county. This presents a challenge in terms of the economic efficiency of attempting to ensure a reasonable geographical spread of IAG services using levels of funding that appear more appropriate to the delivery of IAG by an organisation operating in a single location. During the period since IAG funding was introduced, the funding levels have reduced at the same time as costs have increased. The service is attempting to overcome this challenge by offering more telephone-based advice episodes. Suffolk experiences relatively low levels of unemployment, hence many IAG clients, rather than being unemployed, are in low-paid employment and seeking career enhancement.

202
The IAG clientele mainly consists of ACL learners, community members and those in workplaces where learning provision is delivered by the workplace learning arm of Suffolk ACL. The IAG service gained further experience in workplace delivery as part of a regional ESF project entitled ‘care about your skills’, which was managed by nextstep Hertfordshire. The project involved delivery in three care homes and plans were under way for work in the construction sector in collaboration with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). However, the project was terminated as a result of other providers involved having been unsuccessful in negotiating workplace venues for the delivery of IAG. One IAG session a week is offered to inmates of a local prison, although it is unclear whether this will continue under the new contract with the Offenders Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) for the provision of IAG to offenders across the region.

203
The ACL service has adopted a policy that all learners have the right to a one-to-one interview with an IAG worker. This is working well, although there is not 100 per cent penetration, particularly in classes where the majority of learners are qualified at Level 2 or above and hence would not be eligible as episodes. Nevertheless, the service is strongly encouraging all tutors to ensure that learners access those IAG services available to them.

Information, advice and guidance staff

204
The IAG team consists of 10 staff located across the county and line managed by the area development manager. Staffing levels are regarded as adequate for the IAG that the service is currently contracted to deliver. Four learndirect staff based in libraries also undertake an IAG role. They are managed from within the library service, which is in the same directorate of Suffolk County Council as Suffolk ACL. There has been consideration of joint meetings for these two teams of staff. All tutors have responsibilities for offering learners information and advice.

205
Qualifications in IAG are regarded as desirable but not essential for staff joining the IAG team, although an NVQ at Level 3 or 4 is a requirement for many IAG contracts. Involvement in adult learning is regarded as essential. Until now, experience in a guidance role has not been deemed essential but this may be reconsidered in the future.
Staff qualifications

206 In the IAG team, 10 members are either qualified at or close to achieving NVQ Level 4 in IAG. The final, and very experienced, member of the team holds a Diploma in Advanced Counselling and it is felt that it would serve neither her nor the service any useful benefit if she were to seek an NVQ at Level 4 in IAG. It is hoped that it might be possible to accredit her prior learning and experience against the IAG competency framework. The ACL area development manager holds a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work and NVQ Level 4 in Management. The learndirect staff working in libraries have no IAG qualifications although they are working towards City and Guilds 9295. Suffolk nextstep is attempting to standardise the qualification requirements for staff involved in IAG.

Staff induction

207 All new staff participate in generic Suffolk ACL induction activities and receive a general induction pack. Induction specific to their IAG role is provided by the adult and community learning development manager and by shadowing other team members.

Quality assurance

208 The service holds matrix and Investors in People (IiP) accreditation. Whilst IAG was covered in the last full ALI inspection of the whole ACL service, it was not specifically mentioned in the final report. However, IAG is included in Suffolk ACL’s self-assessment report. The most recent report awards IAG a grade 3 in respect of leadership and management and identifies its key strengths as:

- a good-quality service, accredited by matrix
  - effective support given to learners and communities who face multiple barriers.

209 At the same time, the following key weaknesses are identified.

- Systems for capturing IAG activity with ACL learners are underdeveloped.
- As yet, IAG is not part of a system of learner support to address issues of ACL learners’ needs.
- Insufficient technical support is available for ICT equipment.

210 Quality assurance systems are reported as being satisfactory. These include the development of a system of direct observation of IAG sessions.

211 However, so much of the quality assurance framework is set by nextstep that the IAG service finds it difficult to have its own quality improvement strategy. At the same time, the view is that nextstep sets the standards and monitors compliance with these and is now developing feedback mechanisms. In the case of other providers in the county, nextstep contracts external consultants to carry out observation of IAG episodes. However, the ACL area development manager carries out all observation of the IAG staff team. Nextstep dominates the quality agenda to such an extent that it would be easy to neglect the quality of IAG provision funded by other sources. Confusion can also arise, for example, where other funders have quality assurance requirements that differ from those of nextstep, and in understanding whether responsibility for the professional development of IAG staff lies with the provider or with nextstep.

212 Staff competence is assured via observation of IAG delivery, performance review and regular supervision sessions in addition to the monitoring of monthly returns and client action plans. In addition, colleagues offer peer support but not peer review. The ACL area development manager draws together issues arising from the observation of all staff for discussion in team meetings and to inform the annual self-assessment report. Areas of good practice arising from 2005-06 observations include:

- a welcoming and friendly approach
- data collected sensitively and efficiently
- the use of self-disclosure within professional boundaries
- working well within a classroom situation: liaison with tutors; explanation to the group; achieving reasonable confidentiality in a group setting
- the use of tools appropriate to the setting, for example, CVs with Jobcentre Plus
- exploration skills demonstrated even in short interviews
- impartiality of advice
- the introduction of an IAG service in workplace settings.

213 Areas identified for development include:

- an explanation of the service offered at the start of the interview, for example, the scope of the service and the time available and a leaflet to inform clients
- eliciting feedback at the end of interviews, for example, ‘Is that what you expected?’ and ‘How did you find that?’
- routine identification of barriers and possible solutions.

214 All observations are carried out by the ACL development manager. The fact that she is not herself a practising IAG professional appears to have caused no problems.

215 The service has received a copy of the ENTO IAG competency framework for IAG practitioners, although it has not yet put it into practice.
Continuing professional development

216 The delivery of CPD to the IAG team is through in-house training; attendance at both long and short external courses and events delivered by mainstream providers and professional bodies such as NEAGA and nextstep; visits to providers of learning or employment opportunities; and the provision of written materials. During the period when not all members of the IAG team held NVQs in IAG, a formal mentoring framework was in place. Now that all staff either hold or are close to holding NVQ Level 4, peer support is offered on a more informal and voluntary basis. Team meetings have always proved an invaluable opportunity for sharing good practice, informal mentoring and support and ensuring that generic IAG competencies are adequately contextualised to the needs of different client groups. In addition, one-off specialised training activities are organised as required. However, the increasing number of county meetings that IAG staff are required to attend by nextstep Suffolk plus funding pressures and the resulting difficulty in paying for staff to attend meetings mean that the number of in-house IAG team meetings has had to be reduced. nextstep meetings are a means of ensuring consistent quality assurance across providers. Other participants have very varying levels of experience and are often delivering IAG within a different context, but the ACL manager has been working with nextstep contractors to include professional development. The IAG service is participating in a skills coaching trial in partnership with Jobcentre Plus. This includes the right to two days of training for all IAG staff involved, although the first training day was not entirely successful.

217 Opportunities for CPD cover: equal opportunities; learning and employment opportunities; awareness of other support opportunities and networks; government priorities; developing and managing IAG services; and the use of the Internet. There is also limited coverage of relevant legislation and specific skills such as coaching and interviewing, although there is little need for training in these latter skills given the considerable experience of the staff team. In addition, LMI provided by the Chamber of Commerce is circulated to staff without any specific training on its analysis and use. This is recognised as an area for development.

218 Among the staff team there is expertise in meeting the IAG needs of a range of specific groups including refugees and asylum seekers, migrants, a number of different black and minority ethnic communities, adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (in relation to which a good practice guide is being developed), deaf clients, those suffering from mental health problems and offenders. All staff deliver IAG in the workplace and some of the team specialise in this area of work and also have considerable expertise with those at risk of redundancy. The reduction in the number of in-house team meetings is particularly regretted as a lost opportunity to share this valuable experience. It is felt that there can be no real substitute for the time to share experiences and offer peer support. The service is aware that there is need to develop greater expertise in relation to the needs of blind and deafblind clients.

219 The service formally reviews and addresses training needs regularly. This review is informed by the business needs of the organisation, the needs of clients and learners, staff performance including observation, government priorities and policies, funding priorities and anticipated future needs. It takes place as a result of the observation of IAG episodes, performance review and team meetings. These needs are met by the identification of suitable external courses, suitable projects to build up experience or by discussion at team meetings. The impact of CPD on individual staff is evaluated during the observation of IAG episodes and in performance review and supervision sessions.

220 The current developments that have been identified by the service as most affecting the delivery of IAG are:

- the need to provide outreach services to attract clients who have yet to achieve Level 2 qualifications
- the terms of nextstep contracts, which lead to one-off sessions of light-touch advice to a restricted client group and are felt to reduce professional development opportunities for staff (concerns have been expressed that IAG staff are not able to use their full range of knowledge and skills, in particular in relation to higher levels of learning, training and employment, and are concerned that it is becoming more difficult to maintain their all-round professionalism)
- the current funding restriction to one IAG episode per client is felt to compromise professional practice, certainly in relation to advice and guidance for people facing barriers to learning and work
- increased demands for IAG in the workplace
- increased demand for IAG for clients of social care services
- e-learning
- sector-specific initiatives such as encouraging more women into non-traditional occupations
- the national IAG review.

221 The above trends are likely to create a need for staff training in relation to:

- maintaining quality in the face of funding restrictions
- maintaining professional practice for all clients irrespective of their qualification level
• IAG in the workplace
• work with specific clients such as those with learning difficulties and deaf-blind people
• delivering IAG using ICT, including e-advice and telephone advice, as well as maximising the use of ICT in face-to-face settings
• diagnostic work and the analysis of skills gaps
• bringing about a greater focus on skills development in priority areas rather than meeting individual needs
• the outcomes of the national IAG review.

222
Two main barriers to effective training for the IAG team are perceived to exist. First, funding levels make it difficult to fund staff time for training. Second, there is limited availability of post-qualification training suitable for this experienced team. Neuro-linguistic programming is an exception here but this may not fully meet staff needs nor be suitable in all cases. The dearth of training opportunities could partially be overcome if this experienced staff team had more time to share the considerable expertise of its members. It is the view of the area development manager that, although adequate for the delivery of current nextstep contracts, the NVQ Level 4 in IAG alone can be insufficient for full professional training where the emphasis is on assessing practice.

223
In conclusion, the greatest strengths of the service’s arrangements for CPD are:
• the commitment to support all IAG workers to achieve an IAG qualification at Level 4
• support and supervision offered on an individual basis, including formal observation of IAG sessions
• access to information via nextstep and the local IAG network.

224
Those aspects most in need of improvement are:
• bringing about enhanced security in relation to future funding (it is difficult to sustain staff morale and improve arrangements for CPD when plans for how IAG will be funded in the future remain uncertain)
• the provision of post-qualification training opportunities
• time for the IAG team to undertake CPD and to offer peer support.

225
In the area development manager’s view, the most effective ways of meeting staff development needs in the case of an experienced team as is the case within Suffolk ACL is through team meetings which are cost effective, contextual and make the best use of the experience of each member of the team. However, as a non-practising IAG professional, it is somewhat difficult for her to judge what post-qualification training might be required for her staff team. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that there is no post-qualification training available and, even if there were, no funding for staff to undertake it.

226
There is no structured system of IAG training for tutors with the emphasis within the ACL service being on bringing qualified IAG staff to the learners rather than upskilling tutors. General staff training within the ACL service is becoming increasingly focused on the tutor role and hence of less relevance to IAG staff. They are consequently less likely to undertake such training, which has the unfortunate consequence of reducing their contact with tutors.

Observation of information, advice and guidance episodes

227
Direct observation was introduced into the IAG service partly as a result of a push to carry out observation on all aspects of the work of Suffolk ACL and partly to enable the area development manager to have comprehensive knowledge of activity in her area of responsibility. The process was developed in collaboration with a well-respected external IAG consultant. Members of the IAG team were not involved. The process was informed by the existing observation process in place for ACL tutors and by mapping to the matrix Standard. Observations of IAG staff are only carried out where they are in face-to-face contact with clients and not in other aspects of their duties. The emphasis has been placed on professional development rather than appraisal of performance. The system was introduced in September 2005 and all observations are carried out by the area development manager, who has been trained to carry out observations in an ACL setting. She also has considerable experience of carrying out observations in a social care setting. All IAG staff have been observed at least once. If the IAG team became any larger, there would be a necessity to train other staff to undertake observation. The learndirect staff working in libraries have not yet been observed and arrangements for this will be discussed with nextstep contractors.

228
The IAG observation system developed by the ACL service has also been adopted by nextstep, although it is not yet fully in place across all IAG providers in the county. The fact that the observation of IAG is not integrated with the wider observation activity within Suffolk ACL may constitute a weakness in the process. Cross-county moderation of IAG observations is carried out by nextstep but it is not entirely clear what moderation means in the absence of a grading process (IAG observations, unlike those in ACL, are
not currently graded). Since the moderation process involves scrutiny of reports of individual observations, it is possible that consideration should be given to anonymising reports before they are passed on to nextstep.

229
Before an observation, clients are asked if they are happy for their advice session to be observed but receive no other preparation. Feedback is given to staff immediately after the observation. This is followed up by a written report which is discussed at the next supervision session. On one occasion, an observation of a drop-in session was carried out. However, this was not felt to be entirely successful, so IAG staff are now able to select when they will be observed and with which client. Three observations of group work in classroom settings have been carried out, one of which took place in the workplace. This latter is the only workplace observation that has been carried out to date. Workplace observation can be difficult to arrange as it may be regarded as an imposition by the employer and in most instances will be in a group setting. The only instance where IAG is delivered on a one-to-one basis is in the care sector. As a result of the experience of conducting observations for the first year, the recording form used has been very slightly modified by the removal of one question.

230
Having been in place for a little over a year, the observation scheme has not yet been fully evaluated and decisions may need to be made as to who should most appropriately be involved in such evaluation. A deliberate decision has been made not to seek the views of clients on the observation process as this appears to be too much of an imposition. Any necessary improvements will be identified as part of the evaluation process. Nevertheless it is already clear that essential requirements include:

- adequate briefing for staff on what to expect from their first observation
- prompt and comprehensive feedback
- careful planning for any observations taking place in a workplace setting
- striking the right note between informality and formality
- clarifying the approach in advance with staff so they know what to expect.

231
It is also clear that observations do not work well in a drop-in context. Decisions also need to be made as to whether to adopt a policy of strict non-intervention, which can be difficult in a one-to-one IAG session, or to adopt a more flexible approach where the observer might participate in the session if required. Finally, the process appears to be more effective if it is not individualised too much but is used as a tool for service development by pulling together service-wide issues. Consideration may need to be given to whether the process should be mapped to the ENTO occupational standards and/or the Common Inspection Framework. In addition, any template for observation needs to be professionally rather than contract driven, and to be an IAG template rather than a nextstep template.

232
The benefits of the introduction of observation of IAG sessions are that observation can:

- develop the service to the benefit of the client and the organisation
- inform management strategy for staff development, deployment and support
- help staff identify areas for development
- produce a considerable quantity of evidence of different practices for discussion and evaluation within the IAG team
- emulate quality assurance practices in other employment areas.

233
The service feels that it has been better to develop its own observation system rather than wait for one to be imposed externally. The process developed would appear to be transferable to other IAG settings. Similar practices are already in place in other contexts such as adult learning and the training of social care staff.

Acknowledgements

234
Thanks are due to: Jean Driscoll, Area Development Manager and Amina Begum, IAG worker.
Between August 2003 and January 2005: those with qualifications below Level 2. County, and are specifically targeted at available to those living and working in the LSC under the nextstep contract. They are funded by the contract management team of Sussex Advice and Skills Ltd, and managed by the merger of the two IAG partnerships in the county. The IAG services are managed by the IAG services are managed by the nextstep Sussex was established by the 236 nextstep Sussex was established by the historically relatively homogeneous population, although migrant workers from a succession of European states have been attracted to work in horticulture, giving rise to a demand for ESOL provision. Migrant workers from Eastern Europe have recently been replacing Portuguese workers, leading to unemployment, particularly for those who have not acquired an adequate level of English.

9: VT Careers Management West Sussex: Developing Resources to Enhance the Competence of nextstep Subcontractors

Introduction

235 Sussex is divided into three separate administrative areas: East Sussex; West Sussex; and Brighton and Hove. The county is characterised by:

• relatively low levels of unemployment
• a two-tier labour market, reflected in a highly skilled population which commutes over large distances to work, together with a low-skilled population which travels much shorter distances
• relative affluence, but also pockets of disadvantage in towns such as Hastings, Worthing, Bognor and Selsey
• a historically relatively homogeneous population, although migrant workers from a succession of European states have been attracted to work in horticulture, giving rise to a demand for ESOL provision. Migrant workers from Eastern Europe have recently been replacing Portuguese workers, leading to unemployment, particularly for those who have not acquired an adequate level of English.

236 nextstep Sussex was established by the merger of the two IAG partnerships in the county. The IAG services are managed by the contract management team of Sussex Advice and Skills Ltd, and funded by the LSC under the nextstep contract. They are available to those living and working in the county, and are specifically targeted at those with qualifications below Level 2. Between August 2003 and January 2005:

• 51 per cent of clients in East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove were unemployed, whilst 28 per cent were employed
• the majority of users (78 per cent) were qualified at or below NVQ Level 1.

237 The direct-delivery team is made up of approximately 10 staff, all of whom are qualified at least to NOCN Level 3 in IAG. Information and advice is delivered by them through outreach bases in agencies such as Jobcentre Plus or Connexions centres. Services are focused on the county’s more disadvantaged areas, mainly along the coastal strip and in Crawley.

238 In preparation for their role, new nextstep direct-delivery staff undertake a four-week induction programme which includes a module on nextstep services. Customised ongoing training on specific topics is provided on a group basis (for example, focusing on equality), and is accessed through attending training organised for VT Careers Management West Sussex (VTCMWS) or Sussex Careers employees or for the nextstep network.

Supporting and developing the network of subcontractors

239 nextstep Sussex supports a network of 17 subcontractors and 107 advisors across the county. In order to work as nextstep subcontractors, agencies must either have already received or be working towards matrix accreditation. In addition, the requirement at the current time is that all subcontractors must have one member of staff qualified at NOCN Level 3 in IAG, and that any other staff working on the nextstep contract must have completed the information and advice knowledge base and the NOCN interview skills module. All staff involved in the delivery of the service must attend a half-day induction programme. The extensive network of subcontractors poses challenges in relation to staff training and quality assurance. In particular, the size and nature of the geographical area covered by the service discourages subcontractors from releasing staff to attend central training events.

240 When the West Sussex IAG partnership was established, an audit was undertaken of staff competencies among partners in the county, which was used to produce a modular in-house training programme. Subcontractors were initially supported by a team of three area co-ordinators.

241 nextstep Sussex has developed and maintains competence and capacity for IAG delivery by its subcontractors primarily through:

• running a Level 3 NOCN course based on face-to-face delivery (materials for delivering the course were written by Kent Guidance Consortium in association with the Centre for Career and Personal Development in 2002-03, and the organisation registered as an NOCN centre)
• delivering an annual training programme focusing on developing skills
• maintaining a resource (the information and advice knowledge base), which enables advisors to develop their knowledge and understanding.

242 The training and development provided by nextstep is informed by quality and performance issues identified from:

• sampling customer feedback forms and advice notes
• quarterly reports on each advisor’s performance
• mystery shopper exercises (which proved particularly useful in identifying where one-to-one skills needed to be enhanced)
• the results from observations of interviews.
243 Issues affecting individual performance are discussed during an annual mid-term review with the line manager. In addition, an annual training needs analysis is undertaken by nextstep for the whole network, based on:

- quarterly monitoring visits by nextstep staff
- a questionnaire sent to all advisors to identify their training and development needs.

244 Workshops delivered as part of the annual skills training programme are designed to address areas for development highlighted through these processes, and to enhance advisors’ existing competencies. For example, a session on interview skills in December 2006 focused on issues arising from observations. Other workshops were scheduled to:

- improve advisors’ production of SMART action-planning and action notes
- enable more experienced advisors to reflect on their current practice during a refresher session on advanced interview skills – a requirement for those who trained more than two years previously.

245 An observation process for subcontractors was piloted and evaluated externally in 2005. Each provider is now expected to have an observation process in place, whereby a number of practitioners are observed annually in rotation by a member of staff who has been trained to observe. Some providers, such as colleges and the Probation Service have practitioners qualified at Level 4, and nextstep staff may support any smaller providers as necessary. The results from this process should provide useful information to support self-assessment and improvement planning.

246 From August 2007, all advisors will be required to be qualified to NOCN Level 3. Renewed emphasis will also be placed on providing non-NOCN training and skills development to complement the knowledge development provided through the information and advice knowledge base resource. Subcontractors will also need to have a commitment to CPD with attendance required at a number of compulsory sessions, such as the interview skills update session and equality and diversity training.

Development of the information and advice knowledge base

247 Prior to the establishment of nextstep, each IAG partnership in Sussex undertook its own training. However, when the two partnerships merged, the challenge of engaging staff in training was heightened. For many staff, delivering IAG is only one part of a wider role, and they are spread across a large, mainly rural area with poor transport links. Experience had suggested that the NVQ Level 3 route was inappropriate for these staff, since the additional demands on them and motivation levels required for successful completion were too high. Additional funding was sought in 2002 to develop an alternative approach based on the modular training programme already being offered, but adapted as a resource that could be accessed by staff at a distance.

The agency put in a successful bid to LSC National Office for approximately £150,000 to fund a training project to develop the NOCN provision and the information and advice knowledge base. The resource was developed over six months in 2002 by a team of nextstep staff, including professional writers and experts in LMI. One difficulty encountered by the writers was to judge the right depth of information to include. The information and advice knowledge base (see Box 2) was launched in March 2003 at the Sussex IAG Partnership Training Conference.

Box 2: Information and advice knowledge base

The information in the information and advice knowledge base is presented as modules (see the Appendix to this case study). The materials are nationally applicable, with some local information and contacts, and make reference to relevant key notes, publications and websites. Each module includes self-appraisal exercises based on actual examples, and the option to undertake a local research project. These can be undertaken individually or on a group basis, for example, as part of a learning set. Tips on navigation are included, and there are introductory modules covering nextstep and using the web as a resource.

248 Initially, the aim was to provide the resources online, but technical difficulties were encountered in doing this and a hard copy of the materials was sent through the post to every provider. The materials are also available as a pdf to any subcontractor through a password-protected Internet link or via email. This approach enables updated versions to be made available without the costs of reprinting. Annual updating appears to be adequate to ensure currency of the material. It takes less than a week of an advisor’s time to do the updating and one module can be covered each month in turn, so ensuring a systematic approach. Internal funding has been used to cover these costs.

249 The information and advice knowledge base was devised principally as a customised resource to enable staff, particularly those from the voluntary and community sector who may be used to providing specialist advice in one area, to broaden and update their knowledge in a place and at a time convenient to themselves. The advantages of this approach are as follows.
The modular-based resources can be used flexibly, for example, as an initial introduction to those less familiar with this area of work, as part of a staff development programme or as an aide-mémoire when working with an individual client.

- It provides an overall introduction without being too detailed, and also signposts more in-depth sources of information.
- It can lead on to more formal IAG training (for example, NOCN or NVQ).
- Whilst providing a resource tailored to subcontractors, it can also be made available to all IAG staff as a back-up, and to help them maintain their knowledge base.
- It allows nextstep and subcontractors to track the progress of new advisors and to direct them to a tailored resource to enhance their knowledge as necessary and potentially to set benchmarks against which to assess staff competence.
- Training needs relating specifically to knowledge can be met quickly.
- It reduces the costs of attending training events, in terms of both staff time and travelling costs.

It should, however, be acknowledged that this approach will suit some learning styles more than others. As well as requiring basic IT skills, users need to be able to work independently and be sufficiently motivated to work through the sections of the resource.

Once they have been through the training materials, users are encouraged to complete a feedback questionnaire included as part of the PDF document, and return this to nextstep. The response rate to this approach has not proved adequate for analysis, so it is intended to ask users to complete forms as a basis for discussion at the next training conference. It is also intended to link the information and advice knowledge base more specifically into the training programme and ensure that it becomes more integral to this.

**Box 3: A user’s perspective**

A consultant working for a training and recruitment company has been working through the information and advice knowledge base for about four weeks. She fits this learning around her other tasks at work, taking her own notes on a pad by her desk to act as an aide-mémoire. Her progress is being supported by her line manager, with whom she can check anything that is unclear. She has completed the self-appraisal exercises, which have been useful to confirm her new knowledge and understanding. She has found it a useful approach to be able to work at her own speed and to be able to check back. As yet, she has not followed up on any suggested references for more in-depth information, but recognises the value of being able to do so should the need arise.

The agency assists mainly unemployed workers, many from EU countries. Clients are supported to improve their English through ESOL courses, and to find work (many obtain office-based positions in, for example, call centres). Many need help to find a direction, and with writing their CVs. So far, the recruitment consultant has found all sections of the information and advice knowledge base relevant to her role, and the information has helped her in referring and signposting clients. Having now worked her way through about nine modules, she thinks it would be useful to have the opportunity to discuss with others how they are using the information and advice knowledge base.

If resources were available, future possibilities to develop the information and advice knowledge base include:

- considering whether the specialist expertise of some subcontractors, such as those supporting specific client groups, could be drawn upon to expand the range of modules available
- expanding it to include items to address aspects of skills development, such as a video on interviewing
- developing the PDF documentation to become an online, interactive resource.

**Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to Ivan Shutak, West Sussex nextstep Manager, and Laura Hunter, Recruitment Consultant, Futures Recruitment, in the preparation of this case study.
Appendix to Case Study 9

Information and advice knowledge base: sources of help for those advising adults on work and learning, contains the following sections

Introduction

How to use the Information and Advice Knowledge Base

Modules

1. Induction to nextstep
2. Using the web as a resource
3. Career decision-making process
4. Qualifications: framework and terminology
5. Education for adult learners
6. Funding for learning
7. Higher education
8. Labour market
9. Jobcentre Plus
10. Job-seeking and applying for jobs
11. Self-employment – operating as a sole trader
12. Voluntary work
13. Working with clients who have additional needs
14. Legislation relevant to IAG

Appendices

A Connexions Careers Centre Addresses East Sussex, Brighton and Hove
B Connexions Centre Addresses West Sussex
C Other useful addresses
D FE colleges
E Connexions Resource Centre and Careers Library Index

10: Careers West Yorkshire: Developing a Broad-based Staff Development Programme to Support the Network of nextstep Subcontractors

Introduction

254 The West Yorkshire nextstep Partnership is one of the biggest in the country. Formerly known as the Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership, it is made up of organisations that support or provide IAG in the West Yorkshire area. The partnership promotes IAG in the sub-region, has a strategic role in the planning of IAG provision, and provides a forum for those who offer IAG. Through its nextstep contract with LSC West Yorkshire it funds delivery to clients through a range of 34 delivery subcontractors.

255 The partnership was formed after the LSC requirement for there to be a single legal entity to contract for adult IAG services in West Yorkshire. A new company, Careers West Yorkshire, was established from the existing lead bodies in the local contracting areas and was successful in achieving matrix accreditation for IAG services in July 2004.

256 There are four local networks within West Yorkshire: Leeds, Wakefield, Calderdale and Kirklees, and Bradford. Through these networks, Careers West Yorkshire can focus on the local issues that concern members, while at the same time keeping the national picture in view. The wider partnership is made up of over 400 member organisations from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors that support or provide IAG across the West Yorkshire area.

Broad-based staff development programme

257 Careers West Yorkshire views staff development as an important part of its role in maintaining and promoting a high-quality IAG service. Alongside the broader requirements of matrix accreditation, the assurance and development of individual staff competencies are considered to be key in securing high quality and effective IAG. A broad-based and systematic staff development programme has been developed to support an effective service.

258 For a network as large as the nextstep West Yorkshire Partnership, there are clear benefits to adopting a systematic approach to CPD. Quite simply, without such a coherent approach, Careers West Yorkshire would find it difficult to manage the staff development process. Staff development activity also helps promote nextstep: Careers West Yorkshire has also found that it strengthens the partnership by focusing attention on providing quality across the sub-region.

259 The broad-based staff development programme includes:

- induction
- database of staff development and qualifications
- observation
- training
- training evaluation, analysis and feedback.

260 Each element does not function separately but links to the others. So, for example, information about completed observations and training is fed into the database, which in turn is used to monitor quality assurance processes and training accessed.
Induction

One challenge facing Careers West Yorkshire has been that some delivery staff working for subcontractors have not always recognised what nextstep is. In order to address this issue, an induction checklist related to nextstep has been introduced for use by subcontractors with their staff. Use of the checklist was started as a trial, but is now a requirement for all subcontractors. In feedback, some subcontractors have asserted that it is hard to make time to complete the induction checklist in addition to their own induction; however, completion of the induction checklist is being monitored as part of the contract review process.

In addition to the induction checklist, Careers West Yorkshire tries to get the message across to all levels of staff involved in providing nextstep services – the core team, subcontractors and delivery staff – that they are not just delivering a contract. The quality assurance and strategic roles in ensuring a better position for IAG is also identified as important.

Database of staff development

Under nextstep contracts, all staff involved in the delivery of services have to hold or be working towards a formal IAG qualification. With over 30 subcontractors and an overall target to deliver 15,000 advice episodes, it has been a challenge to find out from subcontractors exactly which staff are working on the nextstep contract and what qualifications, training and development they have undergone. In order to manage this information, a database of staff development has been established. The Careers West Yorkshire staff development database has been in operation since the start of the nextstep contract, and builds on previous local practice. The database has developed over the last two years and now includes staff competencies and completed observations. For each member of staff, a database entry currently identifies: name; IAG qualifications; experience of IAG; completed observation; and internal training accessed. The database currently contains details of the training and qualifications of around 200 members of staff. The only issue in developing and maintaining the database has been the need for regular updating. A requirement to provide clear information about staff who are working on nextstep now forms part of the assessment process in applications to tender for contracts.

Every time a member of staff accesses a nextstep training course, this information is entered into the database. Processes are not currently in place to capture information about attendance on external training courses.

Information from the database is fed back to subcontractors and managers at the end of the year. It gives an indication of the amount of training staff have undertaken by subcontracting or member organisation. Contract monitoring of key training programmes, in particular NVQ Level 3, is therefore possible.

Observation

An observation process was set up partly in response to the ALL inspection that Careers West Yorkshire underwent in March 2005. The service was asked how the same quality of IAG interview could be ensured across providers, and observation was identified as one way of addressing this. Establishing a formal observation process was a considerable undertaking and so was phased in over a period of time.

Observation can be quite a complex process, and Careers West Yorkshire acknowledges that benchmarking and auditing across partners can be a challenge. Some organisations already had well-developed systems of observation in place and in such cases the implementation of the new system has been more straightforward. Others, however, did not.

Observation now applies to all staff. This has been the case since the LSC revised the minimum level of qualification to ‘working towards a Level 3 qualification’. Previously, observation was only offered to advisors who had experience in IAG but no qualifications.

The question of who conducts observation is one that has had to be addressed. If members’ existing observation processes meet the nextstep quality standards then they carry out their own observation. If this is not the case, however, then anyone with a Level 4 qualification in IAG can be appointed to undertake the task, and this could include an appropriately qualified person from the core Careers West Yorkshire team.

Leeds City Council provides a good example of an organisation within the Careers West Yorkshire partnership that has been supported to introduce observation. Its response to observation was initially wary, but after attending a training workshop and seeing the benefits both for staff who observed and for those observing, it revised this view. Observation is now valued as being ‘supportive’, ‘empowering’, ‘creative’ and as a valuable development opportunity. Indeed, the council is considering embedding this quality measure into its ongoing staff development.

Careers West Yorkshire is beginning to start peer support through the observation process, but nothing formal is yet in place.
Training

272 Careers West Yorkshire has seen an excellent take-up of training opportunities over the last two years. This demonstrates a positive commitment to staff development among partners. Training is largely focused at the sub-regional and local levels, although much of the training is actually delivered in Leeds because it is a central location. Initially people complained, because they were used to locally provided training, but they now appear to have accepted the sub-regional focus.

273 The extensive training programme has been devised largely in response to staff demand, and changes significantly from programme to programme as a result of feedback. Areas identified nationally and sub-regionally as being in need of development, such as the need for observation highlighted by the ALI, are also included in the programme.

274 The four Careers West Yorkshire contract managers have regular steering group meetings with their local networks. For some, local training is a way of strengthening the network. For example, the Leeds network uses the first half of its meetings as an advisory group for nextstep subcontractors, whilst the second half of the meeting covers issues of interest for the wider partnership. Delegates may be invited to contribute, and local knowledge or good practice may be shared. Some training, such as training in management information, takes place at local network level. Indeed, this kind of training may be more effective at the local level and can be used to emphasise wider West Yorkshire issues.

275 Marketing for the training programme is largely through electronic media. Details of training are available on the nextstep West Yorkshire website (www.nextstepwestyorkshire.org.uk). The training directory includes some external as well as internally commissioned training. A hard copy version as well as electronic copy goes to member organisations, and a weekly update is sent out electronically to all member organisations, and to some staff direct. Feedback from some practitioners has suggested that information sent to organisations does not always reach them, and so they prefer to receive the update direct.

276 A key area of training has been in response to the Skills for Life strategy. Learners with literacy, language and numeracy needs make up a large part of the client group. Skills for Life awareness-raising programmes at Level 2 have been run for IAG workers. For the coming year, assessment in the workplace has been identified as a new area that training should cover.

Low dropout rate

277 At NVQ Levels 3 and 4, most people complete the course. Out of 15 learners starting programmes it is rare to have more than 1 or 2 people dropping out. This is a high rate in the relatively unstable IAG job market, and failures to complete are largely due to redundancy or a change of job out of IAG. Support has been offered to those finding it difficult to continue courses. For example, support has been offered in the case of a worker being made redundant in that additional paid work has been found to enable the learner to continue with the course. However, if people leave the IAG workforce altogether there is little that can be done.

278 It is thought that the low dropout rate on accredited training courses is due in part to the thorough process for deciding who should deliver the training. Full competitive tenders are sought for accredited training. The tendering process is thorough. It does not seek to address the provision of qualifications in a perfunctory manner, and explores whether providers offer substance and address the spirit of the learning qualification, as well as requiring evidence that managers support training.

Cost

279 Staff pay for accredited training, but this is heavily subsidised by nextstep. The level of one-to-one support pushes up the cost when compared with some other NVQs. The full cost, for example, of an NVQ at Level 3 is in the region of £1,200 to £1,400, and it is offered to staff at £600, or £400 to voluntary and community sector organisations.

280 Non-accredited training is provided free and is often used to bring in new members, such as agencies from the voluntary and community sector or learning providers.

Impact

281 A key target for 2007 is to aim for an impact analysis of training, in order to measure how training, especially CPD activities, has improved client services by increasing skills and knowledge. An external consultant has been engaged to carry out this study and the results are expected in 2007.

Training evaluation, analysis and feedback

282 A thorough analysis of post-course evaluation from attendees and their managers informs future planning. An action plan is completed based on the feedback received. Evaluation of training is carried out at the end of every course and followed up with an end-of-year review of
The end-of-year evaluation has been found to supply a better assessment of impact in the workplace, and a more considered evaluation of course content. Managers themselves asked to be included in the evaluation process. However it is still more difficult to obtain managers’ responses.

Careers West Yorkshire provides quarterly reports to the management group and the LSC based on results of training evaluation. The business plan for the following year is also based closely on feedback obtained during the end of year training review.

One of the great advantages of the Level 4 training identified by practitioners in their feedback has been in meeting and sharing knowledge and experience with people working in different contexts.

Careers West Yorkshire ensures the competencies of its own staff through its selection and employment process. Job descriptions have clear breakdowns of roles and essential requirements. The company has an induction checklist, exactly the same as that issued to subcontracting staff and discussed above.

Careers West Yorkshire does not have an IAG delivery team. There are seven substantive posts in the team, comprising: an overall manager; four contract managers; and two posts with sub-regional responsibilities covering administration, marketing and management information.

The team’s CPD is complicated, since Careers West Yorkshire does not directly employ staff itself: most staff in the core management team are on secondment from local careers companies, and one is self-employed. The line manager of the employing company conducts the staff review, and consequently there is no integrated development plan for the core team.

Staff development needs of team members are included in the host company development plans. Opportunities to talk about staff development are secured through triumvirate arrangements whereby the overall manager from Careers West Yorkshire attends professional development review discussions between the host company and seconded staff member.

A number of staff have accessed the LSC leadership and management training course which has been delivered via open learning.

Key areas for staff development focus on quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation. For the future, it is difficult to know what will be in the national review of IAG, but the review’s findings can be expected to have implications for staff development. Project management could be one need.

In West Yorkshire, much IAG delivered through nextstep is with refugees and asylum seekers, and a significant proportion with people from black and minority ethnic communities. As a result, a certain expertise has developed in working with people from these communities. More recently there has also been an increase in the population of migrant workers, and so a training requirement has been identified in meeting the needs of European workers with ESOL needs.

Another local issue reflected in the staff training programme concerns the IAG needs of offenders and ex-offenders. There are three prisons in the area, and a number of organisations work with these client groups. Partners with expertise in these areas are drawn in to provide training; for example, the Probation Service has contributed training on substance misuse.

Thanks are due to: Alison Kinder, Contracts and Development Manager, Careers West Yorkshire; and Stacey Powell, Lead on Staff Development, Careers West Yorkshire.
## Annex E: Glossary of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>adult and community learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI</td>
<td>Adult Learning Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AoC</td>
<td>Association of Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Bolton Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSS</td>
<td>Broadcasting Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTS</td>
<td>Business Training Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cert. Ed.</td>
<td>Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITB</td>
<td>Construction Industry Training Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoVE</td>
<td>centre of vocational excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>continuing professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCG</td>
<td>Diploma in Career Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>Department for Work and Pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTO</td>
<td>Employment National Training Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETP</td>
<td>Employer Training Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>further education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glh</td>
<td>guided learning hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAG</td>
<td>information, advice and guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICG</td>
<td>Institute of Career Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>information and communications technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIP</td>
<td>Investors In People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILM</td>
<td>Institute of Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLN</td>
<td>literacy, language and numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMI</td>
<td>labour market information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSC</td>
<td>Learning and Skills Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEGA</td>
<td>National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOCN</td>
<td>National Open College Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
<td>National Vocational Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLASS</td>
<td>Offenders Learning and Skills Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCG</td>
<td>Qualification in Career Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QIA</td>
<td>Quality Improvement Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>sector skills council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>small- or medium-sized enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLE</td>
<td>virtual learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTCMWS</td>
<td>VT Careers Management West Sussex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBL</td>
<td>work-based learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>Workers’ Educational Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>