

Tool 7

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON LEARNING (IAG)

IAG is important if you are running any sort of course that is more than one session and promises to help people move on in some way. This is because...

- People should be able to question some one to check they have understood properly what the course is about
- People have different starting points, and you may need to be assured that these different points can all be accommodated in the group – or if not, what else can be done, e.g. a more advanced group to be run at a later date
- People may be interested in a range of opportunities, of which your course is but one
- People may want to use it as a stepping stone to something else, perhaps a new career or a new hobby.

IAG may be something you can do yourself, if you have been part of the community for some time and know where to find out about other agencies, colleges etc.

Or you could ask an IAG agency to send some one to join your enrolment session or first meeting. They will want to know something about your participants first, as this may affect whether you get their service free or not – often they only get government funding to work free of charge with people with a low level of previous qualifications, are out of work, etc etc.. They should have access to a confidential area if necessary. You will also have to accept they are independent, so if your course is not what some one really needs they will say so.

The IAG you provide should...

- Inform about this and other learning opportunities
- Advise people on making choices
- Listen to their views so that any issues they have are addressed
- Help assess the level they are at, and where they want to be
- Enable them to pursue further enquiries with other agencies
- Advocate for them if necessary
- Help you set up networks with other agencies
- Feed back to you any (non-confidential) needs for further provision

IAG agencies can be contacted via the Learndirect helpline 0800 100 900 or website learndirect-advice.co.uk, or your local Nextstep service, that you can find via direct.gov.uk/nextstep. Learndirect have a section called Advice-Resources that contains a wealth of labour market information, ability tests, funding information etc.

Tool 7

Colleges and training advisers often have a qualified adviser as well, who may be part of the Nextstep network. If you are using them to provide learning opportunities for you, they may be able to help with IAG too.

Anyone seeking advice may well have issues other than educational ones to be addressed, and may need to be referred for these to the Citizens Advice Bureau (initially you can consult adviceguide.org.uk), doctor's surgery (nhsdirect.nhs.uk), a job centre (jobcentreplus.gov.uk), advice on benefits (dwp.gov.uk), help for the over 50s (ageconcern.org.uk), legal advice (advicenow.org.uk), etc.

Refugees and migrant workers may well have further needs, and language is likely to be one of them. For more information about support in this area, contact your local authority who should have a Welcome Pack or similar publication – this may also be on the internet.