

Introduction to the Policy

Greatest Expectations is proud to offer exceptional Information, Advice and Guidance to learners at every stage of their journey. We ensure a high quality training and mentoring service to all users, which is underpinned by Level 2 qualifications for staff in IAG, and accreditation to the Matrix standard, held since 2015.

The provision of exceptional IAG services is essential in order to achieve our strategic objectives, ensuring that quality systems are in place to meet the needs of learners, employees and, as a registered charity, the local and wider communities.

Greatest Expectations recognises the pivotal role of clear, accurate and timely IAG in achieving these objectives. We have scrutinised our processes and will continue to do so.

IAG is especially critical at certain key stages:

Pre-entry

We provide information and advice to potential learners about our programmes and the eligibility criteria involved. We take referrals from the Department for Work and Pensions (Job Centres) and deliver contracts through New College Durham, Middlesbrough College and Good Things Foundation.

On programme

Learners gain a clear understanding of the commitment required, including attendance, work schedules, housekeeping and health and safety.

An ILP (Individual Learning Plan) is discussed and agreed on before training starts, providing structure to the course and identifying goals, and ensuring that the learner is fully on-board with their training.

Pastoral support helps with financial planning (i.e. travel costs and benefits) and we operate an “open door” policy, enabling learners to discuss concerns quickly. This can help the learner overcome perceived and potential barriers to their achievement, and enable access to external support where needed.

Before exit

We ensure learners are on track to achieve their qualification throughout their course, and have systems in place to do so.

Towards the end of the programme we will offer tailored and impartial IAG so the learner can plan further training, or employment opportunities/career pathway. This happens on both a 1-2-1 and group basis, and is recorded on the learner’s ILP.

Afterwards we maintain contact at 3 monthly intervals; learners are aware that they can approach us at any time for additional help and support.

Eligibility

Our IAG services are available to potential and actual learners. The aims of our information and advice are:

- To provide impartial and quality information and advice to learners and potential learners to enable effective decision making about their learning and aims
- To signpost alternative options elsewhere as appropriate
- To give potential learners the information they need to decide if we/our courses are right for them
- To give learners sufficient and appropriate IAG to agree on an achievable ILP (goals, aims etc.)
- To support learners through their course so that they can achieve their qualifications on time
- To help learners identify suitable next steps when their course ends

To achieve this Greatest Expectations will:

- Operate within the Matrix standard framework
- Ensure that the principles currently in place at Greatest Expectations allow the successful delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance
- Ensure our staff have the skills, knowledge and competences to provide information and advice
- Make sufficient resources available to ensure all potential and actual learners have the information and advice they need
- Build and maintain effective networks and partnerships to support this function
- Foster an open dialogue with learners at every stage through an open door policy

Implementation

In particular, Greatest Expectations management team will ensure that:

- Marketing literature, the Learner Handbook and Greatest Expectations website are up to date
- Twitter and Facebook are included in campaigns including via other agencies, i.e. DWP campaigns
- That all resources and sources of IAG are checked regularly
- Share relevant data, facts and figures at team meetings and display this in staff areas
- All staff engaged in IAG with learners are suitably qualified and maintain their competence with CPD

Delivery staff will ensure that:

- Learners understand every aspect of their programme including location, attendance and their aims
- Learners have access to exceptional and relevant guidance to enable them to plan the next stage of learning or find employment. This may include referral to external agencies or help creating a CV or with interview skills or providing a reference in certain cases

Limitations

We are specialists in our own provision and in-house support, though when appropriate we will refer people to other services.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Key Performance Indicators of the effectiveness of the IAG services are rates of retention and achievement, progression and user satisfaction. These are monitored using our own evaluation arrangements including:

- Collection of user feedback
- Internal documentation audits
- Yearly observations of staff carrying out initial interviews with potential learners and progress reviews with learners
- Yearly observations of staff carrying out exit/progression reviews with learners
- Twice yearly analysis of data for retention, achievement, progression and user satisfaction with information, advice and support
- Twice yearly evaluation of the effectiveness of IAG

Equality and Diversity

- Marketing literature, website information and learner and employer handbooks will be presented clearly and simply and illustrated with appropriate images to aid understanding.
- Information by phone and face-to-face will be available to accommodate different learning styles
- At any stage learners can be accompanied to meetings and interviews by a friend, family member or another representative

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