

# information, advice and guidance for young people

Local Government Education and Children's Services Research Programme

LG Group research report



# Available in the Local Government Education and Children's Services Research Programme

## **Implementing outcomes based accountability in children's services: an overview of the process and impact**

*Tamsin Chamberlain, Sarah Golden and Fiona Walker*

ISBN 978 1 906792 61 9, free download

## **Local authority approaches to the schools admissions process**

*Peter Rudd, Clare Gardiner and Helen Marson Smith*

ISBN 978 1 906792 64 0, free download

## **Children and young people's views on web 2.0 technologies**

*Peter Rudd and Matthew Walker*

ISBN 978 1 906792 60 2, free download

## **Local authorities' experiences of improving parental confidence in the special educational needs process**

*Richard White, Shona Macleod, Jennifer Jeffes and Mary Atkinson*

ISBN 978 1 906792 53 4, free download

## **The impact of the Baby Peter case on applications for care orders**

*Shona Macleod, Ruth Hart, Jennifer Jeffes and Anne Wilkin*

ISBN 978 1 906792 56 5, free download

## **Safeguarding post-Laming: initial scoping study**

*Mary Atkinson*

ISBN 978 1 906792 49 7, free download

## **Supporting local authorities to develop their research capacity**

*Clare Southcott and Claire Easton*

ISBN 978 1 906792 47 3, free download

## **The Sustainable Communities Act: analysis of proposals submitted by councils**

*Monica Hetherington, Gill Featherstone, Gill Bielby and Rowena Passy*

ISBN 978 1 906792 42 8, free download

## **Provision of mental health services for care leavers: transition to adult services**

*Emily Lamont, Jennie Harland, Mary Atkinson and Richard White*

ISBN 978 1 906792 38 1, free download

## **Collaborative good practice between LAs and the FE sector**

*Tami McCrone, Clare Southcott and Kelly Evans*

ISBN 978 1 906792 37 4, free download

## **Mapping the terrain: 16-19 funding transfer**

*Tami McCrone Gill Featherstone Tamsin Chamberlain*

ISBN 978 1 906792 34 3, free download

# information, advice and guidance for young people

Tamaris McCrone  
Clare Gardiner  
Clare Southcott  
Gill Featherstone

**How to cite this publication:**

McCrone, T., Gardiner, C., Southcott, C. and Featherstone, G. (2010). *Information, Advice and Guidance for Young People* (LG Group Research Report). Slough: NFER.

Published in August 2010  
by the National Foundation for Educational Research,  
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ  
[www.nfer.ac.uk](http://www.nfer.ac.uk)

Cover image supplied by [educationphotos.co.uk](http://educationphotos.co.uk)

© National Foundation for Educational Research 2010  
Registered Charity No. 313392

ISBN 978 1 906792 67 1



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Aims and objectives	1
1.3 Methodology	1
1.4 Structure of the report	3
<b>2 Recent developments in IAG provision</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Models of IAG provision	5
2.2 Improvements in IAG provision	7
<b>3 Current views on IAG provision</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 IAG service for learners	9
3.2 IAG provision by schools and colleges	12
3.3 IAG service for parents	14
3.4 IAG Quality Standards	14
3.5 Monitoring and evaluation	15
<b>4 Perceived 'good' IAG</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 Partnership working	18
4.2 Targeting vulnerable young people	19
4.3 Ownership of IAG strategy	21
4.4 IAG accreditation and standards	23
4.5 Staff qualifications and training	23
4.6 IAG events	25
4.7 Personalised IAG	25
4.8 Other aspects of IAG good practice	27
4.9 The importance of a joined-up, holistic approach	27
<b>5 IAG support needs</b>	<b>28</b>
5.1 Meeting the quality and effectiveness criteria for the 2011 review	28
5.2 Staff training	29

<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1	What does current IAG look like?	31
6.2	What does 'good' IAG look like?	31
6.3	What improvements are required?	32
	<b>Technical appendix</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>36</b>

# Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Local Government Association (LG Association) for providing sponsorship for this research, and in particular, Ian Keating who provided guidance and support throughout the study.

If the reader would like more information about any of the advocacy pieces, contact details are listed below the items.

# Executive summary

## Background

The responsibility for strategic planning and the provision of high-quality and impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) now lies with local authorities (LAs). Furthermore, recent statutory guidance (for example, Quality Choice and Aspiration, DCSF, 2009) recognises that LA performance indicators, such as young people's participation rates in education, employment or training are influenced by the quality of IAG.

This research project was commissioned by the LG Association (in February 2010) prior to the UK general election (in May 2010) and was intended to inform preparation for the review of IAG services that the Labour Government had planned to conduct in 2011. Priorities for the new Coalition Government are still under review. However, on 24 May 2010 they announced plans to cut the current year's Area Based Grant from which Connexions services are funded, which means councils are currently having to make difficult financial decisions about the future of Connexions services. The implications of this research may need to be re-considered as priorities are finalised. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of 'good' IAG identified by this research are applicable to any future provision arrangements.

The Local Government Association (LG Association) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake research to evaluate the current 'fitness for purpose' of the IAG services provided to young people in the 14–19 context and to identify improvement and support needs for LAs ahead of the forthcoming government IAG review. This executive summary presents key findings from an online questionnaire survey of Heads of Connexions and LA strategic managers with responsibility for IAG. A final response of 57 per cent of the 152 LAs was achieved. Additionally advocacy interviews, conducted with seven survey respondents, from areas with evidence of at least one aspect of IAG-related provision deemed to be good practice, provide examples of IAG provision that could be replicated. Data collection took place between April and June 2010.

## Key findings

### What does current IAG look like?

IAG services were widely perceived to contribute to raising learners' aspirations and learners were seen to be provided with support from a range of IAG providers and/or partners who understood their roles and responsibilities. It was clear that LA and/or Connexions' respondents felt confident that young people are currently informed about how services can help them and how they can access support. Furthermore, IAG services were said to be regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated and actions taken to improve services. Additionally, there were high levels of confidence that there was appropriate IAG support for those at risk of becoming young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), including learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD).

However, lower levels of confidence were reported in terms of school and college IAG provision in contrast to external provision. Fewer than half of LA and/or Connexions respondents believed that learners were provided with a high-quality programme of careers education or that IAG was delivered consistently in schools and colleges across the curriculum. On balance, not all senior Connexions and LA managers felt confident that current IAG provision was meeting all learners' needs or that learners were receiving personalised IAG to help them make informed decisions. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that this lack of universal provision might be impeded by the tension between providing universal service and the need to focus on vulnerable groups and lack of resources. In terms of meeting the Quality Standards, there was also least confidence reported that parents/carers know how IAG services can help their children and how these services are accessed and that young people are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of IAG.



Two-thirds of respondents expressed confidence that, since the transfer of Connexions services to LAs in 2008, LA managers currently possess the knowledge and understanding to commission quality IAG services that meet local needs (although, not surprisingly, more confidence was apparent amongst LA strategic managers in contrast to senior managers of Connexions services).

### What does 'good' IAG look like?

Over half of respondents reported having a form of partnership agreement in place to deliver IAG and, where an agreement was in place, the majority of respondents felt that schools were implementing the strategy in the agreed way. This, along with views of what 'good' IAG should look like, suggest that partnership working, where all partners understand their roles and 'buy in' to an overall local strategy is key to effective delivery of IAG. Linked to this was the need to have not only clear strategic direction, filtered down to all stakeholders, but also ownership of that strategy by all stakeholders. Furthermore, a fully collaborative approach to IAG provision would highlight the need for clear delineation of accountability by all partners.

Full engagement in IAG provision by schools and colleges, and consistency of provision across and within schools would facilitate 'good' IAG. Agreed strategies which made clear, for example, the emphasis on targeting young people such as LLDDs and NEETs and the provision of universal, personalised IAG for all learners, especially in light of the recent Raising Participation Age (RPA) policy (where respondents clearly wanted further guidance) would assist consistent provision. Schools and colleges might also benefit from more extensive future use of monitoring data to further enhance their contribution to IAG services and meeting the Quality Standards.

'Good' IAG was also characterised by delivery being carried out by fully trained and qualified staff. This extended from the need for LA managers and staff, and Connexions PAs to be fully conversant and knowledgeable about IAG to the need for senior leaders in schools, careers coordinators, form tutors and other staff to be trained in current IAG policy and how it relates, in particular, to the 14–19 pathways.

### What improvements are required?

It is recommended that in order to bring about improvements in the provision of IAG, stakeholders need to consider:

- Working more collaboratively to ensure that learners receive IAG that is timely, comprehensive and personalised to their needs. The full engagement in partnership agreements would appear to be an effective way forward to achieve this goal. Such agreements would facilitate clarity with regard to expectations, ownership and accountability of all stakeholders.
- Achieving further transparency in terms of responsibility so that all partners understand their roles in IAG provision. This would also serve to enhance accountability so that all concerned parties would fully appreciate stakeholders' duties.
- Gaining further engagement of schools, in terms of senior leadership endorsement and support of the importance of IAG to learners. Additionally, increased awareness and knowledge of 14–19 pathways by parents would further increase the effectiveness of IAG.
- Acknowledging that schools would benefit from further support from LAs so that they can fully embrace a more extensive role in the provision of IAG and work with their partners within the LA. A key part of further improvements require addressing the training needs within schools in order for staff, including senior leaders, careers coordinators, form tutors and other staff delivering elements of IAG, to be fully conversant with current IAG strategies and 14–19 pathways.

These improvements are unlikely to be effective unless a strategic and holistic approach is taken to ensure that all key aspects of IAG are delivered. Furthermore, IAG should be considered within the broader context of both careers education (CE) and IAG and its place in the wider curriculum.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In recent years there have been a number of reforms to the pathways young people can take through their educational journeys to adulthood, for example, the government's introduction of Diplomas and the development of Apprenticeships. In addition, there has been some restructuring of the information, advice and guidance (IAG) mechanisms available to support young people, such as the transfer of Connexions services to local authorities (LAs) in April 2008 and the introduction of the 14–19 prospectuses.

Recent statutory guidance (DCSF, 2009), has emphasised the importance of raising young people's aspirations, challenging stereotypes and encouraging young people to make use of independent, external sources of help. The responsibility for strategic planning and the provision of high-quality and impartial IAG now lies with LAs. Furthermore, the statutory guidance document recognises that LA performance indicators, such as young people's participation rates in education, employment or training are influenced by the quality of IAG. This is particularly significant as planned participation rates for 17 year olds are currently due to increase in 2013 and for 18 year olds in 2015. Additionally, on 24 May 2010 the new Coalition Government announced plans to cut the current year's Area Based Grant from which Connexions services are funded, which means councils are having to make difficult financial decisions about the future of Connexions services.

Before the 2010 general election, a government review of IAG services, including an assessment of whether or not LAs are meeting the 12 IAG Quality Standards, and most importantly if IAG services are meeting young people's needs, was planned for 2011. Priorities for the Coalition Government are still under review and the implications for this research may need to be considered as those priorities are clarified.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives

The Local Government Association (LG Association) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake research to identify improvement and support needs for LAs ahead of the planned government IAG review.

The key objectives of our research were to evaluate the current 'fitness for purpose' of the IAG services provided to young people in the 14–19 context and to identify areas where a programme of support and improvement may be necessary.

## 1.3 Methodology

In order to meet the aims of the research, a mixed methodology was adopted, including the following elements.

- **Exploratory interviews** – Telephone interviews were conducted in March 2010 with four Heads of Connexions and one strategic LA manager with responsibility for IAG. The main purpose of these interviews was to inform the design of an online survey.
- **An online questionnaire survey of Heads of Connexions and LA strategic managers with responsibility for IAG** – The survey was emailed to 211 contacts (supplied by the National Connexions Network and NFER's information service, EMIE) on 12 April 2010. In some LAs and Connexions services more than one contact was identified and, in these cases, an invitation to participate was sent to each individual contact. In eight LAs which did not have a contact person, the email was sent to the NFER LA liaison contact to circulate to the relevant person with strategic management responsibility for IAG. The survey period closed on 10 May 2010.

- **Advocacy interviews** – In order to gain greater insight into IAG best practice, interviews were conducted in June 2010 with seven strategic managers in LAs and/or Connexions (selected from respondents to the online survey, on the basis of their stated evidence of provision deemed to be good practice). These were written up as advocacy pieces.

### 1.3.1 Survey sample

The target survey response rate required by LG Association was 50 per cent of the 152 local authorities. A final response of 88 completed surveys (by LA or Connexions senior managers and other staff) was achieved; of which 87 were unique responses from LAs areas. This yielded coverage of 57 per cent of the 152 LAs.

Since the integration of Connexions into LAs, different models of provision have emerged. For example, in some authorities, IAG services are entirely in-house, while in others, although Connexions companies are owned by the LAs, they are still integrated into wider service partnerships. These models are explored in more detail in Section 2.1. The online survey was aimed at those with strategic responsibility for IAG provision (senior managers within LAs who have responsibility for IAG and Heads/Chief Executives of Connexions services). Table 1.1 below outlines the roles of survey respondents.

**Table 1.1 Role of respondent**

Model	%
Senior manager of a Connexions service	39
LA strategic manager with responsibility for IAG	36
Other	24
No response to this question	1
<b>N = 88</b>	<b>100</b>

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

Other roles included:

- Other managers (seven respondents)
- Connexions staff (five respondents)
- LA and Connexions managers (four respondents)
- In 14–19 department (three respondents)
- Children's Services (two respondents)
- Consultant (two respondents)
- Executive head (one respondent).

### 1.3.2 Advocacy sample

Survey respondents were asked if they would like to contribute further to the research by acting as advocacy case studies. Data analysis of LAs offering to participate was conducted with the following two sources in order to gain a broad independent view on the effectiveness of IAG in those localities:

- Ofsted Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) grades of children's services.
- The National Indicators Set performance indicators. We examined progress in terms of a) percentage of 16–18 year old young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and b) participation of 17 year olds in education and training.

Seven areas with evidence of at least one aspect of IAG-related provision deemed to be 'good', and providing a broad representation in terms of geography, LA types and including Connexions and LA interviewees, were selected to provide examples of IAG provision that could be replicated.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

**Chapter 2** outlines recent developments in IAG provision. It describes current models of IAG provision and presents recent improvements in IAG services.

**Chapter 3** explores current views on IAG services for learners and parents and considers IAG provision by schools and colleges including perceptions of the main barriers to schools and colleges implementing effective IAG. It also considers the IAG Quality Standards and the extent to which they are viewed as currently being met and barriers to full implementation. The use of data for monitoring and evaluation is also considered in this chapter.

**Chapter 4** outlines IAG practice deemed to be ‘good’ by survey respondents. This chapter is further enhanced with seven advocacy pieces which provide more in-depth insight into best practice in IAG.

**Chapter 5** identifies and prioritises the main concerns with regard to IAG services and the training and support needs.

**Chapter 6** draws together the main findings with regard to the current ‘fitness for purpose’ of IAG provided to young people. It also identifies and offers recommendations, with regard to support needs and areas of improvement, which will contribute to meeting the IAG Quality Standards.

### Case study

#### **Manchester Connexions (Better Choices Ltd): Common IAG standards across partnership institutions.**

##### **What is the context?**

Better Choices is contracted by four of the ten LAs in Greater Manchester to manage and deliver Connexions. The largest of these LAs is the City of Manchester in which the Connexions service has the strategic lead for the development of careers education information advice and guidance (CEIAG). This has included working with a multi-agency group of senior managers to design an IAG Strategy for the City, based on the national strategy: *Quality, Choice and Aspiration* (DCSF, 2009).

##### **What is the approach?**

The imperative in the city is to improve IAG provision by implementing the national Quality Standards for Young People’s IAG. Any organisation or individual providing IAG – schools, colleges, youth support

services, voluntary and community agencies, parents and carers and young people themselves – is within the scope of the Manchester IAG Strategy.

One key element is the development of a quality award for excellence in IAG. This award, Inspiring IAG, has been designed by representatives from across Greater Manchester and is based on the national Quality Standards. It is open to any IAG provider although the structure of the award reflects the statutory obligations placed on schools for CEIAG. The Manchester IAG Strategy sets targets for participation in Inspiring IAG, and so far a diverse range of organisations have become involved, including schools in all areas of the city, children’s homes and Manchester Royal Hospital. The scheme encourages participants to work towards bronze, silver and gold levels in order to establish commitment and fuller engagement with the IAG standards. A mentor from Connexions is allocated to each organisation participating in Inspiring IAG. Bronze and silver levels are moderated by Connexions staff, while schools applying for a gold award are externally assessed.

Better Choices has also developed a training course in IAG which is available to school staff, community organisations, parents and young people. The course, Young People and Decision Making, is accredited by the Open College Network. The training course was originally driven by a need to establish IAG capacity beyond Connexions in light of the 14–19 curriculum changes (and more specifically, the introduction of the Diploma). However, the Inspiring IAG quality award stipulates that an organisation must show a commitment to training staff in IAG and this has continued to drive attendance. The length of the course (one day) is felt to have facilitated its success.

A third element of the strategy is the dissemination of a NEET Prevention Guide to all schools. This provides not only information and advice on the issue of NEET but also a checklist of straightforward preventative actions. Included in this list are the IAG Award and IAG Training described above.

Making explicit links to the national agenda and to the requirements of Ofsted has further facilitated the establishment of the quality award. The extent to which IAG is seen as a priority by the new Coalition Government will be important in terms of the future of the award, while the level of commitment demonstrated by LAs continues to have an impact. A further challenge to the future of the strategy is funding; Better Choices are considering charging for the participation in the Award when pilot funding expires. Despite mentoring being considered as critical to the success of Inspiring IAG, organisations may in future have the option to opt out in order to save resources.

### **What is the perceived impact?**

Currently 80 organisations (48 of which are schools) have signed up to the Inspiring IAG award scheme. The award is still in its pilot year so a full evaluation is yet to take place but anecdotal evidence suggests that

the award is held in high regard. Schools especially value the mentoring and training element. Following the dissemination of the NEET prevention guides, the five schools facing the greatest challenge in relation to NEET young people have all seen improvements in this aspect. Better Choices considers the menu of initiatives which they deliver to have contributed to this finding.

The proportion of school leavers identified as NEET in Manchester in November 2008 was 5.7 per cent. By 2009 this figure had decreased to four per cent. The proportion entering post-16 learning had risen from 82.1 per cent in 2008 to 87 per cent in 2009.

### **How transferable is this approach?**

The key elements of this approach considered to be transferable to other LAs are:

- a quality award for IAG
- a programme of training and mentoring to accompany the award process
- extending the training to parents and to young people themselves
- the NEET Prevention Guides for Schools.

Better Choices would like to see a quality award for excellence in IAG rolled out nationally to show encouragement for IAG, establish consistency, raise standards and to improve the cost-effectiveness of IAG initiatives.

For further information please contact: Steve Millward, Manager of Connexions in Manchester, [steve.millward@connexions-manchester.com](mailto:steve.millward@connexions-manchester.com).

## 2 Recent developments in IAG provision

### Key findings

- In terms of strategic models of IAG provision in place, three models existed:
  - a) LAs had integrated the pre-existing Connexions service within the authority.
  - b) LAs had taken over ownership of the pre-existing Connexions service and had maintained the service as a discrete entity.
  - c) LAs have commissioned new providers for IAG after competitive tendering.
- Where partnership agreements with schools were in place the majority of respondents felt that schools were implementing the strategy in the agreed way to at least some extent, emphasising the importance of reaching such agreements.
- Encouragingly, IAG services were reported to have improved, since the transfer of Connexions services to LA control in 2008, most notably in terms of communication and dialogue between Connexions and Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) and outcomes for young people who are NEETs.

In 2008, the responsibility for Connexions, and for IAG, was transferred to LA control. Respondents were asked about changes to strategic models of IAG provision and perceived improvements, if any, to IAG services.

### 2.1 Models of IAG provision

As suggested by the exploratory interviews, there were three main strategic models of IAG provision in place. Survey responses endorsed this view. A third of survey respondents (33 per cent) reported that the LA in their

area had integrated the pre-existing Connexions service within the authority. In the vast majority of these cases (93 per cent) the IAG provision was said not to cross LA boundaries.

In a further quarter (26 per cent) of cases, the LA had taken over ownership of the pre-existing Connexions service and had maintained the service as a discrete entity. The majority (70 per cent) of these respondents were unsure whether the Connexions service commissioned other providers of IAG, but 30 per cent said that although this was not currently happening, they believed it was an option considered for the future.

A third model of IAG provision, said to exist by a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents, was where the LA has commissioned new providers for IAG after competitive tendering. Interestingly, over three-quarters (77 per cent) of those who have adopted this model felt that IAG services have improved to a great or some extent since the transfer of Connexions services to LA control in 2008. A further one fifth (20 per cent) of respondents described other models of IAG provision. These included the models listed below (full details are available in the technical appendix).

- A mixed-economy model with some elements delivered in-house and some elements commissioned from external sources, for example, universal IAG provided through competitive tender (model 3) and targeted provision maintained within house (model 1) (seven respondents).
- The pre-existing Connexions service provides IAG and has won it through a competitive bid (seven respondents).
- The model of provision is based on a sub-regional arrangement (five respondents).
- Other (five respondents).

Over half (59 per cent) of respondents reported having a partnership agreement in place to deliver IAG (41 per cent in all areas and 18 per cent in some areas).

Approximately, a further quarter (23 per cent) are currently developing one, and 15 per cent said they had no partnership agreement in place.

Encouragingly, the majority (87 per cent) of those with a partnership agreement in place felt that schools are

implementing the strategy in the agreed way to some (62 per cent) or to a great (25 per cent) extent. Only a small proportion (four per cent) said schools were not implementing the strategy as agreed, while a further six per cent were unsure as to whether schools were implementing the strategy or not.

**Table 2.1 Improvements in IAG strategic model**

Improvements in...	IAG has improved to a great extent	IAG has improved to some extent	There has been no change to IAG provision	There has been a negative impact on IAG provision	Not sure	No response
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Outcomes for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	14	59	20	1	5	1
Outcomes from Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS)	5	47	34	7	7	1
Communication/dialogue between Connexions and IYSS	24	48	20	1	6	1
The provision of universal IAG	6	40	43	5	6	1
The provision of impartial IAG	3	41	48	1	6	1
Support for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD)	7	49	35	1	7	1
The commissioning of IAG services	9	42	35	5	7	2

**N = 88**

*A series of single response items*

*Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.*

*A total of 87 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

## 2.2 Improvements in IAG provision

IAG services were reported to have improved, since the transfer of Connexions services to LA control in 2008, most notably in terms of communication and dialogue between Connexions and IYSS and outcomes for young people who are NEET as can be seen in Table 2.1.

It is worth noting that over 40 per cent of respondents indicated that they perceived there had been no change, since the transfer of Connexions to LA control in 2008, in terms of the provision of universal IAG (43 per cent) and impartial IAG (48 per cent). It might well be that this reflects the fact that these aspects were seen to be in less need of improvement than other services.

Around two-thirds (68 per cent) of respondents expressed confidence (33 per cent 'very' and 35 per cent 'fairly' confident) that, since the transfer of Connexions services to LAs in 2008, LA managers possess the knowledge and understanding to commission quality IAG services that meet local needs. Not surprisingly, more confidence was displayed by LA strategic managers (50 per cent were 'very' and 38 per cent 'fairly' confident) in contrast to senior managers of Connexions services (21 per cent 'very' and 26 per cent 'fairly' confident)<sup>1</sup>. This disparity in confidence levels combined with the fact that overall almost one fifth (19 per cent) of respondents were 'not very' confident and almost one tenth (nine per cent) were 'not at all' confident that LA managers have the necessary knowledge to commission quality IAG services suggests an area for further development.

The new commissioning role of LAs was perceived to have created the potential for positive impact in the following main areas:

- improving the quality of IAG services, for example, a respondent explained that the impact of the new commissioning role will: 'improve the quality of service provision and the integration with wider service provision' (12 respondents)
- creating a more consistent approach via partnership relationships, for example, a respondent commented: 'there will be increased coherence across the

authority, better links with other LA managers and a more unified approach to IAG delivery' (11 respondents)

- increasing ownership and accountability amongst LAs, partners and schools (nine respondents)
- enabling a more locally responsive approach (seven respondents)
- 'smarter' commissioning by creating closer links between young people's needs and what is commissioned (six respondents).

However, there was also recognition by 11 respondents that there might be some negative impact connected with the new IAG commissioning role of LAs. For example:

*Resources will be depleted. The resource taken in-house has already been refocused and the main remit is not IAG. There are no public access points for young people to access the aspect of the service that has gone in house.*

*There can be a negative impact due to lack of knowledge, it can be easy for them [LA managers] to skew commissioning to things they feel more confident about or are local priorities but that often leaves IAG providers with not enough resource to deliver national requirements, for example, those listed in the draft directions currently being consulted on.*

Consideration of these concerns will also have to be reflected in the way in which LA managers carry out their new roles as commissioners of IAG services.

### Note

1 Throughout this report responses to questions have been analysed by senior managers of Connexions services (34 respondents) and LA strategic managers (32 respondents). Comparisons have been reported when differences of 20 per cent or more between senior managers of Connexions services and LA strategic managers have emerged. These do not represent statistically significant differences as the numbers are too small.



## Case study

### Derbyshire Connexions: Common IAG standards across partnership institutions

#### What is the context?

Derbyshire Connexions is commissioned by both Derby City and Derbyshire County Council to support schools in their delivery and understanding of IAG implementation, standards and strategy. Connexions also work in partnership with both LAs to determine 14–19 IAG strategy for the area.

#### What is the approach to common IAG standards across partnership institutions?

Connexions services and LAs in the East Midlands area have worked together to develop a 'career mark' award for careers education which cross-references the national IAG standards. Institutions in the Derbyshire area use an evaluation tool developed by Connexions to self-assess their progress towards locally set criteria. Fulfilment of the criteria results in attainment of the career mark. Institutions unable to fulfil all criteria receive support in developing improvement and action plans. The aim is to have all schools in the Derbyshire area achieve this 'kite mark' by 2011.

Drivers for change in terms of common IAG standards have come from:

- government emphasis on standards for IAG
- the revised 14–19 curriculum
- the gateway application process for Diplomas (which prompted renewed focus on IAG)
- seeking to improve take-up of Apprenticeships.

The national agenda is considered to have driven organisations to work much more collaboratively which has in turn facilitated change.

A challenge has been encouraging schools to sign up and take ownership of a Connexions and LA driven agenda, particularly in the context of multiple

curriculum changes. The strengthening of local 'learning communities' (or consortia) has helped to overcome this issue.

#### What is the perceived impact?

All schools in Derbyshire have made a commitment to work towards the career mark by 2011 and releasing staff for training on the common application system. In addition, schools and other providers have worked collaboratively to plan and deliver IAG events and activities.

NEET figures at city level amongst 17 year olds have reduced from 7.2 per cent in November 2007, to 6.8 in 2008 until 2009 where they remained static (from when the recession was felt to have had a strong impact). Participation has increased amongst 17 year olds from 88.2 per cent in November 2008 to 93.2 per cent in 2009.

#### How transferable is this approach?

The features of this strategy which are seen to be transferable to other LAs include:

- annually agreed plans which translate to learning communities (or consortia) and school plans
- setting common standards, criteria and awards which encourage schools to commit and achieve
- engaging schools by emphasising the benefits of measurable impact in relation to IAG, such as evidence for Ofsted.

The further support which is considered necessary in order to promote improvement in this area is recognition by LAs and the government of the impact that Connexions can have. A nationally recognised and accredited award for IAG standards would also help to promote advancement in schools.

For further information please contact: Simon Caines, Head of IAG and Development, Connexions Derbyshire, [simon.caines@connexions-derbyshire.org](mailto:simon.caines@connexions-derbyshire.org)

## 3 Current views on IAG provision

### Key findings

- IAG services were widely perceived to contribute to raising learners' aspirations and learners were seen to be provided with support from a range of IAG providers and/or partners. In contrast, and perhaps indicating lower levels of confidence in school and college provision than external IAG provision, fewer than half of respondents believed that learners are provided with a high-quality programme of careers education or that IAG is delivered in schools and colleges across the curriculum.
- The main barriers to schools/colleges implementing effective IAG were perceived to be that some careers coordinators are not adequately trained and IAG is not an inspection priority. These findings, along with the belief that some schools do not prioritise IAG, and in some cases, do not see meeting the IAG Standards as their responsibility, lack of resources and lack of senior managers' support were viewed as the key obstacles to meeting the IAG Quality Standards.
- Data for monitoring and evaluation purposes was seen to be available and widely used by Connexions, LAs and IYSS, but not used as widely by schools and colleges. This would appear to clearly indicate a need to support schools and colleges as to the benefits of their future use of such data to further enhance their contribution to IAG services and meeting the Quality Standards.
- It would appear that there is further capacity to improve communication with parents and young people in order to develop IAG services to best meet young people's needs.

This chapter presents views on the quality of the IAG provided to learners and the barriers schools face in implementing effective IAG. It reports the levels of confidence that the IAG Quality Standards are being met and parents' awareness and understanding of IAG services, options and pathways. It also draws out levels of confidence with current IAG provision for those young people at risk of becoming NEET.

### 3.1 IAG service for learners

As can be seen in Table 3.1 overleaf, approximately three-quarters of respondents felt that IAG helps to raise aspirations (six per cent 'strongly agreed' and 68 per cent 'agreed'), and that learners are provided with support from a range of IAG providers/partners (three per cent 'strongly agreed' and 68 per cent 'agreed').

In contrast, and perhaps indicating lower levels of confidence in school and college provision than external IAG provision, fewer than half of respondents believed that learners are provided with high-quality programmes of careers education (one per cent 'strongly agreed' and 42 per cent 'agreed') or that IAG is delivered in schools and colleges across the curriculum (32 per cent 'agreed').

**Table 3.1 IAG provision for learners**

Learners are provided with ....	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Not sure %	No response %
High-quality programmes of careers education	1	42	39	5	13	1
IAG in schools/colleges which is delivered across the wider curriculum	0	32	45	5	17	1
Personalised IAG in response to their individual needs	3	61	22	3	9	1
Support from a range of IAG providers/partners	3	68	17	2	8	1
Comprehensive information and advice to help them understand all options	3	65	19	2	9	1
Impartial IAG	9	56	17	2	15	1
IAG that helps to raise aspirations	6	68	13	2	10	1
IAG that actively promotes equality of opportunity and challenges stereotypes	2	61	16	1	18	1

**N = 88**

*A series of single response items*

*Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.*

*A total of 87 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

The perception that learners were provided with comprehensive information and advice to help them understand all options varied considerably between Connexions and LA senior managers. Overall, a greater proportion (six per cent 'strongly agreed' and 82 per cent 'agreed') of Connexions senior managers felt that comprehensive information and advice were provided

than did LA senior managers (three per cent 'strongly agreed' and 56 per cent 'agreed'). This might indicate a greater understanding of what 'comprehensive' information and advice entail or greater confidence in the provision amongst Connexions senior managers.

**Table 3.2 IAG Confidence in IAG strategies/support for young people**

Strategies and support in place	Very confident %	Fairly confident %	Not very confident %	Not at all confident %	Not sure %	No response %
Appropriate IAG strategies are in place to retain young people in education in response to the RPA	7	60	22	2	7	2
Appropriate support is in place for those at risk of becoming NEET	22	68	6	0	3	1
Appropriate IAG support is in place for LLDD who might be at risk of becoming NEET post-16	23	65	8	1	2	1
Appropriate learning provision is available for LLDD who might be at risk of becoming NEET post-16	5	38	43	10	3	1

**N = 88**

*A series of single response items*

*Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.*

*A total of 87 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

Table 3.2 above outlines levels of confidence exhibited in terms of strategies for the retention of young people in education or training in response to the Raising Participation Age (RPA) to 17 years old in 2013 and to 18 years old from 2015 and in terms of the prevention of young people (including those learners with LLDD) who are NEET.

Levels of confidence that there was appropriate IAG support for those young people at risk of becoming NEET, including LLDD, was high (90 per cent of respondents were 'very' or 'fairly' confident that IAG was appropriate for those at risk of becoming NEET and 88 per cent were 'very' or 'fairly' confident support

was available for LLDD who might be at risk of becoming NEET).

Where there appears to be scope for improvement is in the formulation of appropriate IAG strategies to retain young people in education in response to the RPA policy (22 per cent were 'not very' confident and two per cent 'not at all' confident in current provision). Additionally, there appears to be capacity to develop appropriate learning provision for LLDD who might be at risk of becoming NEET post-16 (43 were 'not very' confident and ten per cent were 'not at all' confident in current provision).

**Table 3.3 Universal IAG provision**

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Not sure %	No response %
I am confident that IAG responds to all learners' needs	0	45	41	1	11	1
There is a tension between providing a universal service and the need to focus on vulnerable groups (such as those at risk of becoming NEET)	26	51	19	0	2	1
IAG providers (such as Connexions PAs) have enough resource to meet the needs of all learners	0	9	63	22	6	1
All learners receive personalised IAG to help them make informed decisions	0	31	45	10	13	1
<b>N = 88</b>						

*A series of single response items*

*Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.*

*A total of 87 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

On balance, not all senior Connexions and LA managers felt confident that current IAG provision was meeting all learners' needs or that learners were receiving personalised IAG to help them make informed decisions. Table 3.3 above provides details.

Furthermore, the evidence suggests that this lack of universal provision might be impeded by:

- the tension between providing universal service and the need to focus on vulnerable groups (26 per cent 'strongly' agreed and 51 per cent 'agreed') and
- lack of resources (63 per cent 'disagreed' and 22 per cent 'strongly' disagreed that IAG providers have enough resources to meet all needs).

### 3.2 IAG provision by schools and colleges

According to Connexions and LA senior managers (and outlined in Table 3.4 opposite), the main barriers to schools/colleges implementing effective IAG were perceived to be that:

- school/college staff are not adequately trained (90 per cent 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that staff other than careers coordinators are not adequately trained and 57 per cent felt careers coordinators are not adequately trained) and
- IAG is not an inspection priority (73 per cent 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed').

**Table 3.4 Barriers for schools/colleges in implementing IAG**

Barriers	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Not sure %	No response %
IAG is a low priority for <b>schools/colleges</b>	10	48	31	6	2	3
<b>Schools/colleges</b> do not understand IAG/the strategy	7	41	41	5	2	5
Senior leaders in <b>schools/colleges</b> do not buy in to the strategy/IAG is given low status	3	50	30	6	8	3
IAG is not an inspection priority	26	47	17	2	3	5
IAG external providers do not have enough resources to give <b>schools/colleges</b> the support they need	13	44	30	5	6	3
IAG external providers are not adequately trained to provide the support <b>schools/colleges</b> need	1	20	41	30	5	3
LA managers are not confident to support <b>schools/colleges</b> in implementing IAG	3	13	50	23	7	5
Careers coordinators in <b>schools/colleges</b> are not adequately trained to deliver IAG	13	44	31	1	8	3
Other staff in <b>schools/colleges</b> are not adequately trained to deliver IAG	34	56	3	1	2	3
<b>N = 88</b>						

*A series of single response items*

*A total of 85 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

Other aspects of IAG perceived to be barriers by over half of Connexions and LA senior managers were that IAG was perceived to be a low priority by schools and colleges (58 per cent), that IAG external providers do not have enough resources (57 per cent) and senior school and college leaders do not give IAG high enough status (53 per cent). This suggests that increasing resources and the status attached to IAG would benefit the effective implementation of IAG.

### 3.3 IAG service for parents

A third of respondents felt confident (two per cent 'very' confident and 31 per cent 'fairly' confident) that parents/carers are currently aware of local IAG services and strategies. Two-thirds lacked confidence (56 per cent were 'not very' and eight per cent were 'not at all' confident) in parents' awareness.

Additionally, the majority of respondents lacked confidence (68 per cent were 'not very' and 15 per cent were 'not at all' confident) that parents/carers understood options/pathways and progression routes sufficiently to be able to advise their children. Only 13 per cent were 'fairly' confident that parents knew enough to advise their children.

These findings clearly reflect a need to not only provide the necessary information on qualifications and available IAG services for 14-to 19-year-old young people, but also to ensure that the information is accessible to parents so they can advise and guide their children when called upon. Recent research has shown that young people value, and are influenced by, careers advice from parents (McCrone *et al.*, 2009; Nicoletti and Berthoud, 2010).

### 3.4 IAG Quality Standards

All LAs are expected to meet the IAG Quality Standards, which were developed to reflect best practice. The review of IAG intended for 2011 was planned to assess IAG provision against these standards and provide LAs with the opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which they have met them.

The majority (70 per cent) of respondents reported that local IAG standards had been, or were being, developed in their locality; the minority (25 per cent)

said they had not been developed. Over a quarter (28 per cent) said they were developed in all areas that they were responsible for and a further 17 per cent felt they had emerged in some areas. A quarter (25 per cent) reported that they are currently being developed.

#### 3.4.1 Current Standards

Respondents were asked how confident they were that the IAG Standards were currently being met in their locality. Details of confidence levels with regard to all 12 Standards are available in the technical appendix. However, it was clear that Connexions and LA senior managers were most confident that:

- young people are informed about how services can help them and how to access the service (27 per cent 'very confident' and 66 per cent 'fairly confident') (Quality Standard 1).
- IAG services are regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated and actions are taken to improve services (25 per cent 'very confident' and 58 per cent 'fairly confident') (Quality Standard 11)
- IAG providers understand their roles and responsibilities (25 per cent 'very confident' and 57 per cent 'fairly confident') (Quality Standard 8).

Section 3.5 below explores the monitoring, availability and use of data in more detail. Although there is evidence of confidence in data systems demonstrated by senior LA and Connexions managers, there also appears to be scope for further support for schools and colleges in terms of the use of such data.

Connexions and LA senior managers were least confident that the following Quality Standards were currently being met.

- Parents/carers know how IAG services can help their children and know how these services are accessed (three per cent 'very confident' and 20 per cent 'fairly confident') (Quality Standard 7).
- Young people are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of IAG (14 per cent 'very confident' and 31 per cent 'fairly confident') (Quality Standard 6).

It would appear that there is further capacity to improve communication with parents and young people in order to continue developing IAG services to best meet young people's needs.

### 3.4.2 Perceived barriers to meeting Quality Standards

The main barrier to the Quality Standards being met, expressed by 20 respondents, was **the belief that schools are not currently taking responsibility for meeting or engaging with the Standards**. This was often felt to be because meeting the IAG Standards was not necessarily perceived to be the responsibility of schools (or other providers), as described by one Connexions senior manager:

*Connexions is the only service that embraces the Standards and takes a lead. Schools and other providers don't see it as their responsibility and schools in particular are not willing to invest in training staff to become skilled providers of IAG.*

Additionally, there was an **alleged need for school managers to prioritise and show commitment to meeting the IAG Standards**, expressed by 12 respondents and illustrated by the following comment: '[there is a need for] understanding by all providers including schools/colleges of their role in IAG, and their responsibilities'.

Furthermore, there was a perceived requirement for schools to recognise that **Connexions, LAs and providers need to work together in order to meet the IAG Standards**. One respondent, representative of a few, felt that developing collaborative IAG programmes was critical to meeting the Standards. He pointed out:

*Careers education and guidance (CEG) and personal and social development (PSD) are entirely reliant on schools' willingness to engage in dialogue and their agreement to prioritise this in a busy curriculum.*

**School staff's perceived lack of knowledge, experience and management of IAG was also felt to be a barrier to meeting the Standards**, expressed by 12 respondents. For example, one respondent felt concerned that the number of staff involved in delivering IAG might lead to a lack of a

consistent approach: '[there is a] worry that there is a confusing mix of staff in schools who are dabbling in IAG, it needs to be more coherent'. This inexperience was further illustrated by the following comments:

*[There is a] dearth of and [lack of] status of experienced careers coordinators in schools. [and] The variations in power, influence and training held by careers coordinators in different schools [is a barrier to the Quality Standards being met].*

In addition, in terms of meeting the Quality Standards, 14 respondents also felt that a **lack of resources was acting as a barrier to progress**. Comments with regard to resource barriers included:

*Resources [that is] staff time in school and within LA/Connexions, sufficient time and resources in the curriculum, diminishing resources [in response to the recession].*

This evidence suggests that in some schools there is a need for further support from senior leaders and additional engagement in progressing IAG to meet the Quality Standards further training and the resources to fund it, for careers coordinators. There is also a need for an enhanced role for LAs to provide support and facilitate more collaborative ways of working in order to meet the Quality Standards.

## 3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The effective use of IAG monitoring data by all parties is a key element in improving IAG services for learners.

### 3.5.1 Availability and use of data

Approximately two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents were reportedly 'very confident' that IAG monitoring data was readily available to all who need it and a further 26 per cent were 'fairly confident' that this was the case.

Table 3.5 shows survey responses regarding who uses IAG monitoring data. The majority of respondents indicated that in their locality IAG monitoring data is used by LA managers (99 per cent), staff in 14–19 partnerships (97 per cent) and Connexions (95 per cent).



**Table 3.5 Who uses the IAG monitoring data**

Personnel using data	%
No response	1
LA managers responsible for IAG	99
14–19 partnerships	97
Connexions	95
Integrated Youth Support Services	82
Schools/colleges	73
Other IAG provider	22
Quality assurance consultant	16
Other	9

**N = 88**

*More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.*

*A total of 87 respondents answered at least one item in this question.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

Use of monitoring data by IYSS (82 per cent) and schools (73 per cent) was also common in most areas. However, just over a quarter (27 per cent) of respondents reported that schools in their area do not use IAG monitoring data. This may relate to the challenge of securing sufficient 'buy-in' from schools that is discussed in Sections 3.2 and 3.4.2. Use of IAG data was reportedly used to a lesser extent by other providers of IAG (22 per cent) and quality assurance consultants (16 per cent), although this could relate to them not existing in some areas rather than data not being used.

### 3.5.2 Comprehensiveness of data

Respondents were asked to consider the extent to which they agreed that the data used to monitor patterns or outcomes was comprehensive enough to support IAG strategic planning.

**Table 3.6 Comprehensiveness of IAG monitoring data**

Extent of agreement that data is sufficiently comprehensive to support IAG strategic planning	%
Strongly agree	45
Agree	40
Not sure	8
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	0
No response	1

**N = 88**

*A single response item.*

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

As can be seen in Table 3.6, the majority of respondents (85 per cent) agreed to some extent that current data is sufficiently comprehensive to support IAG strategic planning, indicating that a minority felt that data could be improved in order to support further strategic planning of IAG.

Overall, this would indicate that the nature and availability of the data is adequate, but that there is scope to improve the use by certain sectors, as discussed in Section 3.5.1.

## Case study

### South West/Somerset: IAG Partnership working with schools

#### What is the context?

Connect South West Limited is responsible for implementing the careers advice element of IAG and have worked with local educational providers to strengthen the CEIAG partnership agreements. These agreements outline how partners will develop IAG provision and practice and help to ensure that there is a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to IAG. Connect South West has sought to strengthen and clarify these agreements by including greater detail on the role of each partner including evaluation. This move was considered important in order to make the agreements, which were previously seen as tacit in nature, more explicit with measurable outcomes.

#### What is the approach to IAG partnership?

The intention is that these 'service level agreements' will: a) enable Connexions CEIAG delivery to have improved access to learners b) receive more meaningful and timely feedback from schools on the impact of their work and c) ultimately develop better consistency and standardisation across schools in the area in relation to careers advice delivery and practice

Explaining and discussing the rationale for these more detailed service level agreements with schools was an important aspect in ensuring their success. Connect South West (and the LA) therefore commissioned the time of an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) in the area of careers advice to deliver a series of continuing professional development days for careers staff in schools. These incorporated an 'operational delivery model' which outlined the aims of the careers service, a menu of activities which Connect South West delivers in schools and colleges, a range of resources developed or acquired by the AST and introduced the new service level agreements.

Additionally, the National Standards for IAG have raised awareness and understanding and have further engaged schools in partnership working with the careers service. Localised standards have also been

introduced to help schools to commit to IAG excellence.

The need to raise the status and quality of careers education in schools/colleges and embed it across the curriculum is seen as a further area for partnership working with schools.

#### What is the perceived impact?

Although too early to evidence the impact of the IAG service level agreements, schools are considered now to be more aware of the standards required in relation to careers advice and there are now better channels for discussing these issues. Connect South West would like more clarity around the direction of the IAG agenda from the new Coalition Government.

Connect South West report that the proportion of 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training in the area in May 2010 was 4.4 per cent, in contrast to 4.5 per cent for 2009. The current participation rate of 17 year olds in education and training is 91 per cent in May 2010, up from 88 per cent in 2009.

#### How transferable is this approach?

Connect South West recognise that they are a small geographical area consisting of just one LA in the third most rural county in England and that their model may not be so transferable to a larger area made up of multiple LAs. They also feel that current and future budget restrictions/reductions may deter providers from working collaboratively with partners and taking on new concepts or ideas. However, the features of the model which are considered transferable include:

- a focus on consistency across partners
- working in partnership with schools/colleges to develop common and shared agendas
- better evidencing through improved destination reporting.

For further information please contact: Angie Gray, Contracts and Operations Manager, Connect South West, AGray@connectsw.co.uk

## 4 Perceived 'good' IAG

### Key findings

- Successful partnership working, the aspect of good practice mentioned most frequently, although useful in its own right, appears to underpin and facilitate good practice in other aspects of IAG provision as well.
  - Other areas of IAG 'good' practice cited included: work with vulnerable young people, achieving strategic clarity and ownership of IAG, IAG standards and accreditation, staff qualifications and training and IAG provision that is personalised and tailored to the needs of individual young people.
  - The evidence indicates that individual aspects of IAG delivery rarely take place in isolation, rather 'good' IAG practice was reported to often be the result of many aspects of provision successfully integrated with each other to achieve a holistic IAG programme fit for all young people's needs.
- staff qualifications and training (22 responses)
  - IAG events (22 responses)
  - IAG that is personalised and tailored to young people's needs (20 responses).

These areas are explored in detail below. It should be remembered that aspects of IAG provision which respondents now consider to be exemplar of good practice may well be those which have been most developed in recent years and that areas of development are likely to have reflected recent policy foci.

### 4.1 Partnership working

It is evident that partnership working is perceived to be a crucially important factor in the successful delivery of IAG as it was referred to in 81 of the examples of good IAG practice given by respondents; more than double the number of comments received in either of the subsequently most common categories.

Connexions senior managers cited partnership working as good practice slightly more frequently than other staff: half of the good practice examples that referred to partnership working (40 comments) were made by respondents who were Connexions senior managers whereas 25 of these comments were made by LA senior managers and the remaining comments were made by other staff.

A wide variety of organisations who are involved in IAG provision were mentioned in the examples of partnership working given. These included links with:

- **Key overarching educational organisations**, for example, Children's Services 14–19 partnerships, Aim Higher, Connexions, LA staff, schools and colleges, training providers and the police.

This chapter presents common good practice examples based on an open question in the survey. Respondents were able to provide up to three examples of IAG strategies or activities in response to the question, 'What does "good" IAG in your area(s) look like?'

Good practice examples offered by respondents most commonly made reference to the following categories<sup>1</sup>:

- partnership working (81 responses)
- targeting vulnerable young people (30 responses)
- ownership of IAG strategy (30 responses)
- IAG accreditation and standards (22 responses)

- **Employment specialists**, for example, Education Business Partnerships (EBPs), Job Centre Plus and local employers.
- **Other specialist services**, for example, drugs and alcohol teams, education attendance officers, Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS), Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) advisors, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, youth workers and youth offending teams.

This list demonstrates the breadth of the individuals and services involved in IAG provision through partnership working. The implicit value in such collaborative arrangements relates to all partners having a mutual understanding and support of the IAG provision in their local area and how this impacts on the efficient delivery of IAG provision to young people. There was also a sense that more can be achieved when working in partnership than could have been achieved by a number of individuals working separately. As a senior manager of a Connexions service explained, collaborative work can add value to the offer of services presented to schools as it can be more streamlined and easier to access:

*Joint working between a range of IAG providers and other support agencies for example, Connexions, EBPs, Aimhigher – so that the services they offer to schools can be complementary rather than duplicate and confuse/bombard schools.*

As seen in Section 2.1, the majority of respondents in areas where partnership agreements were in place felt that schools were implementing the agreed strategy to some extent. Not all examples of good practice that referred to collaborative working included mention of these agreements or any regular meetings, formally agreed protocols or action plans but other comments did cite the value of formal partnership agreements (with schools and with providers), for example:

*Effective partnership agreements with learning providers ... gives clear details of each partner's roles and responsibilities. The agreement also sets out the work plan for the year.*

## 4.2 Targeting vulnerable young people

The targeting of and provision for vulnerable young people was considered to demonstrate what good IAG looks like. The 30 comments in this category (12 made by senior LA managers, 13 by senior Connexions managers and the remainder by other staff) referred to the importance of targeting young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET or 'difficult to reach'. The large number of comments demonstrating good practice in relation to the provision of IAG for NEET young people is perhaps unsurprising in light of the high level of confidence (90 per cent) that respondents displayed in the appropriateness of IAG provision for NEETs that is discussed in Section 3.1.

Some good practice comments referred to early identification of such young people to enable targeted work to be implemented with those most in need of support. One respondent cited the use of 'predictive risk profiling' by schools and Connexions as an effective way of identifying such young people. Typically, such comments also referenced working in partnership (with schools and other agencies) to achieve, and act on, this early identification, for example:

*NEETs targets with schools [are] built into [the] partnership agreement. [Activities include:] post-Easter planning meetings for transition to review all students and prioritise support [for] young people with no firm destination [and an] annual review of progression of students aged 16 and 17.*

Examples of focused work with particular sub groups of vulnerable young people were also cited as good practice including work with young 'runaways', persistent absentees, young offenders, teenage parents, young people who are LLDD and children in or leaving care.

Some examples of good practice in IAG for vulnerable young people referred to ways of informing NEET young people of available training and employment opportunities and enabling them to pursue these; for example, mentoring schemes. Embedding IAG in positive activities to overcome disengagement was also cited by some respondents as good practice and was seen as a way of providing a holistic and personalised rather than simply an informative service to young people.

## Case study

### Kent County Council: IAG Partnership working with schools

#### What is the context?

The LA is responsible for planning and commissioning programmes of education, ensuring that curriculum entitlement targets are met and learner support through careers education and information advice and guidance (CEIAG) is provided. They commission Connexions to carry out the more operational role in schools.

A key part of the strategy for IAG focuses on developing a range of services to providers to enhance the delivery of CEIAG for learners, parents and careers professionals and making these accessible through an online portal, [www.kentchoices4u.com](http://www.kentchoices4u.com). This will become the brand for CEIAG for the county.

#### What is the approach?

In January 2009 the LA formed a CEIAG Steering group which consisted of the LA, highly skilled Connexions advisors, and Lead Careers Teachers from the area. Its objective was to act as a forum and to raise awareness around the National Standards for IAG in order to encourage schools to operate in a consistent way. It was also felt that developing a number of cross-county processes would facilitate sustainability of practice in case of staff turnover and provide schools with a central service which avoids duplication of activity across the county. The authority has:

- Set up a 20-point IAG health check for schools to enable them to rate their CEIAG processes and fulfilment of the standards.
- Developed a curriculum framework for CEIAG consisting of guidance and resources which was launched around the authority through workshops.
- Established a CEIAG network group in each of the nine planning forum areas to enable schools to contribute to the process.

- Set up the largest area-wide prospectus and common application process in the country ([kentchoices4u.com](http://kentchoices4u.com)) which hosts 10,000 courses.
- Set up an IAG portal to sit alongside the area-wide prospectus on-line to ensure accessibility for learners, parents and professionals.
- Encouraged schools to develop electronic individual learning plans with the aim of consistency in approach across the authority. From September 2010 the pilot will involve 4,000 learners.

The national agenda in relation to area prospectuses and the September guarantee, as well as funding in this area has acted as a real driver for change in Kent. The positive relationship between the LA and Connexions has also facilitated change. The key challenges are considered to be the lack of stability of role in relation to careers staff in schools and a perception that careers coordinators often feel isolated in their role. Involvement of senior management team (SMT) in careers education and guidance is felt to be crucial and the LA has worked on gaining buy-in from strategic school staff through briefings and partnership agreements.

#### What is the perceived impact?

This strategy for CEIAG has been in place for 18 months and Kent County Council feel it is too early to see evidence of impact. However, the wide usage of the area-wide prospectus and online application process (the majority (90 per cent) of year 11s have had access to this process while 72 per cent of the 2010 year 11 cohort have made an online application for a post-16 course) is considered to be some evidence of the positive impact that partnerships working has had.

NEET figures for the end of May 2010 were 5.2 per cent which shows a slight increase from the 2009 rate (4.9 per cent). The proportion of 17 year olds in education or training was 85.6 per cent in May 2009, and this has seen an increase to 88.6 per cent in 2010.

### How transferable is this approach?

The key elements of the measures taken by Kent County Council considered to be transferable include:

- providing a service to schools which they cannot fulfill themselves
- using briefings and network groups to ensure that schools feed into and see the benefits of the service
- ensuring the LA is proactive as partners and deliver all necessary supportive elements.

Kent County Council would like to see more funding and curriculum time dedicated to CEIAG or better guidance to schools on how they might build CEIAG into the existing curriculum.

For further information please contact: Martin Blincow, Learning Support Manager, 14–19 Entitlement Team, Kent County Council, martin.blincow@kent.gov.uk

### 4.3 Ownership of IAG strategy

Direction at strategic level and ownership and 'buy-in' by staff at all levels were identified as further characteristics of 'good' IAG. Comments suggest that this has been facilitated by effective partnership working. Slightly more of the 30 comments in this category were made by senior LA managers (14 comments) than by senior Connexions managers (eight comments) or other staff (eight comments).

Comments suggested that it is felt to be important for staff at all levels and within different institutions to receive clear strategic direction with regard to IAG provision. They generally related to two operational levels, firstly, the LA, area-wide level, for example:

*There is a strategic group looking at the development and delivery of IAG with a range of partners – 14–19 Director, IYSS Strategic Lead, AST, Careers Consultant etc. looking at entitlement and delivery.*

Secondly, strategic ownership and leadership of IAG within the school leadership team level was also

perceived to be an important characteristic of a 'good' IAG strategy. One respondent described 'good' IAG in their area to be:

*an IAG team in a school with clear leadership from a senior manager in the school and a planned CEG programme delivered by qualified staff and an integrated programme.*

How the delivery of IAG aligns with other strategies was also the focus of some comments, for example:

*IAG is seen by all key partners as a key strand in the delivery of RPA strategy.*

Note that although this comment is representative of how IAG aligns with other strategies, RPA specifically was mentioned by only three respondents. The lack of reported good practice with regard to RPA is perhaps to be expected considering that 24 per cent of respondents did not feel confident that their existing IAG provision responded sufficiently well to the RPA policy (see Section 3.1).

## Case study

### **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire: Development of an information, advice and guidance (IAG) strategy by all partners**

#### **What is the context?**

Nottinghamshire is made up of two LAs: Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County. Both LAs work collaboratively to develop the 14–19 curriculum including IAG. In each of the 14–19 partnerships there are a number of subordinate groups including an IAG sub-group. The IAG sub-groups comprise representatives from Connexions (Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures), schools and colleges who are responsible for implementing careers education and IAG changes that the government has suggested should be introduced either through the education and skills act or good practice documents.

Partners involved in the development of the IAG strategy include the LAs, Connexions, schools, colleges and work-based learning providers. Both 14–19 partnerships have made the commitment that all schools and colleges will achieve the career mark accreditation by September 2013. Career mark is a quality award for careers education and guidance. To achieve the award, schools and colleges have to meet a number of standards including, for example, management of careers education and provision of careers information. Institutions who have achieved the career mark award are deemed to be meeting the government's standards. The role of Connexions is to support every school and college to achieve the award.

#### **What is the approach?**

Careers education throughout Nottinghamshire was generally rated as satisfactory or in some cases poor. Moreover, Nottinghamshire has the lowest take-up of career mark schools in the East Midlands region. A quality audit on careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) was undertaken and confirmed that standards were low. This prompted the need to develop IAG. The fulfilment of the IAG strategy has proved difficult to achieve as; 'the hard work only starts once you have got that sign-up and when you have to do something practical to implement it'.

Key elements of the approach to securing full implementation of the IAG strategy were to:

- include representatives involved in implementing the strategy in its development
- ensure that the implementation plan is properly resourced
- identify the allocation of responsibility accordingly.

Every school has signed up to the career mark quality award. Three schools will achieve accredited status shortly, while other schools are working towards the process.

#### **What is the perceived impact?**

The strategy is not due for completion until 2013. However, it is hoped that it will impact positively in terms of, for example, increased aspirations, increased attainment and progression into post-18 learning.

In Nottingham City, the percentage of 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) in May 2010 was 5.4 per cent; representing a slight improvement of 0.8 per cent compared with the previous year (6.2 per cent). In Nottingham County, this figure was 4.8% in May 2010 compared with 5.1 per cent in May 2009.

Current participation rates of 17 year olds in education or training in Nottingham City and Nottingham County are 88.8 per cent and 88.7 per cent respectively. These figures are similar to the previous year.

#### **How transferable is this approach?**

Making use of facilities that were already in place was the key element of the strategy. This included the use of a national standard quality award for careers education, LA partnership structures and development structures that the government constructed through the Diploma process.

For further information contact Gary Longden, Deputy Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire Futures:  
[gary.longden@futuresnn.co.uk](mailto:gary.longden@futuresnn.co.uk)

## 4.4 IAG accreditation and standards

Good practice in relation to accreditation of existing IAG provision was mentioned in 22 comments, 11 of these were made by Connexions senior managers, seven by LA senior managers and four by other staff. Little explanation was offered as to why the existence of such standards constituted good practice but the implication is that they formalise expectations for those delivering the provision (both schools and other providers of IAG) and the potential of achieving accreditation offers a mark of success which is motivating to work towards. Some comments hinted that standards were used as a way of achieving 'buy-in' from schools.

Numerous standards were cited by respondents indicating inconsistency across different areas of the country in terms of which accreditation is particularly pursued or valued. National IAG standards/matrices, such as Quality Marks or Kite Marks, Investor in Careers or IAG Health Checks were cited, as well as standards included in the Ofsted inspection framework.

Additionally, there was some mention of locally devised careers education and guidance standards or agreements. Locally developed standards were cited as characteristics of good practice, and in some cases, for example, as ways of aiding adherence to national standards as explained by one respondent:

*Schools working towards locally devised careers education and guidance standards to evidence adherence to the national standards, matrix and inspection frameworks.*

## 4.5 Staff qualifications and training

Staff qualifications and training were mentioned in relation to good practice in 22 suggestions of what 'good' IAG practice looks like (seven comments by senior LA managers, eight by senior Connexions managers and seven by other staff). A number of these comments made reference to the 'specialist' or 'expert' nature of staff providing IAG for schools, for example, Connexions personal advisors.

In some cases good practice was related to the training of school-based staff delivering and managing IAG – this is particularly interesting considering the majority of respondents considered school staff to be inadequately trained and felt this was a main barrier to schools implementing effective IAG, as is discussed in Section 3.2. An example of effective practice relating to the training of school staff (and others) was described as:

*Our national award-winning Tutoring for Transition CPD programme means that all key staff in schools, colleges and training providers are appropriately trained and supported in their delivery of CEIAG (careers education and information, advice and guidance).*



## Case study

### County Durham: Training of school staff delivering IAG

#### What is the context?

The LA has developed an accredited IAG course that has been offered to school staff in County Durham and neighbouring authorities. The LA's rationale for developing an IAG course broad in content was to ensure that it was suitable for individuals working in a number of different roles who are involved in the delivery of IAG such as careers coordinators, learning mentors and admissions tutors.

The strategy was driven by:

- a gap in IAG professional development that was being offered at a local level
- changes to staff roles and responsibilities that resulted in a strategic decision to explore how IAG work could be further developed and delivered
- a lack of nationally accredited programmes that enable LAs to take ownership and deliver themselves.

#### What is the approach?

The course, which is staggered over five days, focuses on a range of topics including, for example, definitions of IAG, including roles and responsibilities; statutory requirements; IAG codes of practice; examples of good practice; information resources to support IAG; interviewing skills; also, learners are observed delivering IAG to learners. Course participants are set tasks to complete and have to undertake a reflective learning log. Assessment is undertaken throughout the course and quality reviewed by the Open College Network.

The main challenges have been the resources required to fulfil demand and further develop the programme, and the allocation of time to undertake the work alongside other requirements and priorities. The key lessons learnt are the need to be realistic about what can be achieved and constantly review and revise the

programme to ensure that it meets current requirements.

#### What is the perceived impact?

Evaluation feedback from practitioners who have undertaken the training has been very positive. Also, the LA has anecdotal evidence of individuals who obtained the accreditation and used it to further develop their careers. Furthermore, the number of participants that have enrolled on the programme over the past three years has been consistently high.

In June 2010, the percentage of 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 10.1 per cent; representing an improvement of about one per cent compared with the comparative figure for June 2009 (11 per cent). The participation rate of 17 year olds in education, employment or training on 1 May 2010 was 90.4 per cent, compared with 88.3 per cent on 1 May 2009.

#### How transferable is this approach?

The two key elements of the strategy of IAG good practice which are considered to be transferable to other LAs are:

- Working with neighbouring LAs – a reciprocal agreement is in place to offer places on training programmes that become available. This reduces the onus on each LA to deliver the same courses which can help reduce costs, particularly at a time when resources are scarce.
- Offering an accredited programme gives a course particular kudos and generates interest from providers.

Further support required by LAs (and Connexions) in order to improve IAG provision includes the roll-out of a nationally recognised accredited qualification for careers leaders, the need to examine the professional status of IAG practitioners and a review of entry routes into the profession.

For further information contact Stephen Crass, Service Improvement Manager:  
Stephen.Crass@connexions.durham.gov.uk

## 4.6 IAG events

Specific IAG events were offered as examples of good practice in 22 comments (seven from senior LA managers, six from senior Connexions managers and nine from other staff). These included events aimed at engaging staff (from a variety of places), young people, parents and training providers (and sometimes bringing together all of these). Types of events included supporting year 9 option choices, theatre education tours, mentoring projects, careers fairs and staff conferences. The implicit value in running IAG events seemed to be in raising awareness and the profile of IAG, improved accessibility of IAG and further strengthening strategic clarity and leadership.

## 4.7 Personalised IAG

Good practice with regard to providing IAG that is personalised and tailored to individual needs was cited in 20 comments (nine from LA senior managers, eight from Connexions senior managers and three from other staff). Some of these comments related to providing a tailored service to meet the needs of young people who had been identified as vulnerable at a young age.

Others referenced the use of a 'localised case-study approach' or similar to describe provision that was

organised into geographically determined teams to enable staff to build up local knowledge to support young people. A localised approach may also mean a multi-disciplinary approach, for example:

*Targeted support from specialist PAs [Personal Advisors] in YOTs [Youth Offending Teams] and CYPD locality teams where they work alongside youth workers and also education attendance officers.*

A few respondents cited 'one-stop shops'. These appeared to involve local centres bringing together a range of services for young people, as a good practice way of making IAG services for young people personalised but also accessible within a local area:

*The 'one-stop shop' was recently opened in November 2009. This has enabled the borough to develop a multiagency approach, with partners delivering out of the centre. This includes counselling, condom distribution, and volunteering opportunities. Training providers are also able to recruit directly from the centre.*

A third theme within comments relating to personalised provision was the one-to-one nature of support for individuals, for example, one respondent described, 'good personal tutorship and referral systems for young people'.

### Case study

#### Wolverhampton: Personalising information, advice and guidance (IAG)

##### What is the context?

Wolverhampton has a well-established infrastructure in place which underpins the 14–19 learning offer. The infrastructure is based on a city-wide curriculum framework and timetabling arrangements which enable young people to access learning opportunities from a range of providers across the city. This approach, which has been in operation for a number of years, helps to ensure that 14–19 year old learners are encouraged to undertake choices (such as A levels and work-based learning) in other institutions where

appropriate. More recently, the infrastructure has been applied to the delivery of Diplomas and Foundation Learning. This area-based personalised approach to learning further extends to IAG provision.

##### What is the approach to personalising IAG?

The infrastructure includes three key IAG tools which help provide access to learning opportunities:

- CARD (Choose A Real Deal) comprises two components – a promise of future progression into post-16 education, training, further or higher education and a process of city-wide engagement in activities and experiences. This enables learners' aspirations and ambitions to be tested, reviewed

and refined as they become more focused on a particular learning choice or progression route.

- An online individual learning plan (my-iPlan.com) owned by the learner, which enables them to record, discuss and review achievements and experiences and have validated interaction with trusted adults such as teachers and Connexions advisors.
- An area-based prospectus which provides access to all available learning opportunities including the traditional curriculum offer and one-off activities such as aspiration and awareness-raising events for higher education, further education or training opportunities.

There are three key elements which serve to personalise the IAG strategy:

- 1) The tools, including the way in which they are used and how professionals can interact with them with the young people.
- 2) Having a 14–19 learning strategy and charter which have been approved and endorsed by the council and its members which have guidance at its heart through the CARD promise.
- 3) Ongoing city-wide collaboration and partnership working to ensure a broad learning offer that can be personalised to the needs of learners and associated personalisation of IAG.

The main challenge encountered has been change management in terms of engaging providers in the strategy and encouraging them to work together to achieve a common goal. This is being achieved by promoting the benefits of the strategy for learners and providers and providing the support required to help staff deliver it effectively.

### **What is the perceived impact?**

The personalisation of IAG is believed to have contributed to the positive impact on key stage 4 outcomes (5 A\* to C grades) and post-16

participation rates which are above the national average and their statistical neighbours. The statistical release for 2008 indicated a five percentage point increase in the proportion of 17 year olds in education or training (89 per cent compared with 84 per cent in 2007). Moreover, in the first quarter of 2009/10, 7.3 per cent of young people aged between 16 and 18 years old were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This represented an improvement of 1.5 per cent compared with the comparative quarter (8.8 per cent).

### **How transferable is this approach?**

The three key elements of the personalisation strategy of IAG good practice which are transferable to other local authorities are:

- an area-based personalisation strategy that is endorsed, believed in and promoted by all stakeholders
- the tools that underpin the strategy and support individual learners
- ongoing support, engagement and promotion of the benefits.

Further support required by LAs (and Connexions) in order to improve IAG provision include acknowledgement of the importance and promotion of impartial IAG to learners and their parents, including how it sits with high-quality teaching and learning. This has clear resource implications in order to continue to make it happen which, at present, is under threat.

For further information contact Paul Bellamy, 14–19 Connexions and Access Strategy Manager:  
Paul.Bellamy@wolverhampton.gov.uk

## 4.8 Other aspects of IAG good practice

In addition to the categories described above which were most commonly cited by respondents as characteristics of 'good' IAG in their area, other examples included those listed below.

- **Quality information resources**, both paper and online (18 comments). A specific example given was: 'excellent locally produced online info. and self-help resources, for example, Passportfolio, Vacancies on-Line, Parentpoint'.
- **Impartial IAG provision** (12 comments), one respondent explained the need for: 'high-quality staff who are impartial of both schools and LA, [and] act as a champion for young people'.
- **Accessible IAG** for young people (10 comments), for example, one respondent outlined the need for 'adequate [IAG] coverage in school and community settings'.
- **Effective monitoring** of data to inform IAG (nine comments). One respondent described good practice as: 'developing processes to get the data we need, in the right format, from a range of existing databases, shared and analysed, then fed back into an agreed performance framework'.
- **Involvement of young people** in IAG provision (seven comments). One example given was where a young person was commissioned to: 'produce a series of short films about future career opportunities in "travel-to-learn" areas'.

## 4.9 The importance of a joined-up, holistic approach

Although examples of IAG 'good' practice discussed above reflect respondents' views on different aspects

of IAG provision, it is important to comprehend how the aspects interlink, relate and rely on each other. Most comments related to more than one aspect of IAG and the definitions of 'good' practice below provide a few illustrations of how good practice in one feature of IAG may facilitate or depend on another:

*Secondary school(s) with detailed CEIAG programme(s) running from year 7 to year 11 with incremental and differentiated programmes of learning to develop the right skill set for young people, led by a careers manager in the school and underpinned by partnership agreement with Connexions as providers of impartial and expert IAG.*

This emphasises the importance of partnership working and strategic leadership of IAG that underpins good practice with regard to the provision of a personalised IAG service to young people. Another respondent summed up the importance of a holistic approach to 'good' IAG provision in schools by outlining the necessary components:

*SMT (senior management team) support for IAG with good understanding of impartiality. Additionally well-resourced and trained careers coordinators. A programme of CEG across the curriculum at all key stages as the bedrock for more individualised careers guidance...and support from tutors to filter those young people with different needs. Intensive PA support in school with systems in place to identify NEETs and early leavers and good coordination around allocation of key workers in schools and liaison with other agencies.*

### Note

- 1 Each respondent was able to provide up to three examples, and often multiple categories were mentioned within one example, therefore multiple coding has been used.

## 5 IAG support needs

### Key findings

- Further support for developing IAG services would be beneficial given that just over one fifth of respondents were not confident or not sure that IAG provision in their locality would satisfy the quality and effectiveness criteria. Around three-quarters of respondents however were at least 'fairly' confident that provision would meet the criteria.
- Main concerns expressed were: insufficient engagement by schools, the variability of provision between schools and inadequately trained staff.
- Staff training was considered a high priority for all involved in IAG although senior school leaders, careers coordinators, form teachers and other school staff were identified as those most in need. Additional funding and resources as well as the publication of IAG statutory guidance and inclusion of IAG in school inspection criteria were also suggestions for support.

This chapter presents findings regarding respondents' confidence in how existing IAG provision in their areas would satisfy the criteria for the planned 2011 review. Areas of concern and the support needs identified to address these are discussed, including the perceived staff training need.

### 5.1 Meeting the quality and effectiveness criteria for the 2011 review

As shown in Table 5.1, just over three-quarters of respondents (78 per cent) were confident to some extent that if the review of IAG services happened in their locality today they would satisfy the quality and effectiveness criteria.

**Table 5.1 Confidence in quality and effectiveness of IAG, prior to review**

Level of confidence	%
Very confident	14
Fairly confident	64
Not very confident	15
Not at all confident	0
Not sure	7
No response	1

**N = 88**

*A single response item*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

However, it should be noted that a minority (14 per cent) were 'very' confident. Furthermore, just over a fifth (22 per cent) of respondents were either 'not very' confident or 'not sure', suggesting that there are some areas of concern, and that support to address these prior to the actual review would be beneficial.

Further analysis revealed variation in apparent confidence in how existing provision would meet the quality and effectiveness criteria. In contrast to other models of provision, all those using a pre-existing separate Connexions unit as the provider of IAG (see Chapter 2.1 for further explanation of models) felt confident to some extent ('fairly' or 'very' confident) that if the review of IAG services happened today in their area they would satisfy the quality and effectiveness criteria.

Respondents who had not indicated that they were 'very' confident provided reasons for their lack of confidence. Concerns in meeting the quality and effectiveness criteria included:

- insufficient engagement in IAG by schools – one respondent encapsulated this view: 'schools need to take CEIAG more seriously' (12 respondents)

- **variability and inconsistencies in provision between schools** – one respondent’s observation was typical: ‘the quality of careers education is variable and depends on the model developed by the school’ (12 respondents)
- **insufficiently trained staff** – there was unease expressed with regard to staff development in the wider IAG community: ‘staff in schools delivering CEG are not appropriately trained and [there is] little CPD in this area’ (nine respondents)
- **insufficient resources** – these concerns included mentions of time, money and LA capacity issues (seven respondents).

The most commonly cited **support needs** to address concerns and gaps in existing IAG provision are given below.

### Increased funding and resources

Additional funding and resources was mentioned in 13 comments (from LA senior managers, Connexions senior managers and other staff). This was often in the context of enabling more staff time for IAG and also in relation to developing training.

### Increased accountability of schools for IAG provision

There were two particular ways in which respondents felt a higher priority for IAG in schools could be enforced:

- making the IAG element of Ofsted inspections more rigorous (nine mentions) – despite receiving only a few mentions in response to this question, it can be seen in Section 3.2 that almost three-quarters of respondents (of all roles) agreed that IAG not being an inspection priority is a potential barrier to schools/colleges implementing effective IAG
- the Department for Education issuing statutory guidance providing descriptors of assessment measures (six mentions).

### Continuing professional development (CPD)

This was mentioned specifically in five comments in this open question, but was acknowledged by all as a necessary area of development (see Section 5.2).

## 5.2 Staff training

Respondents were asked to consider the IAG training and support needs for various staff ahead of the planned IAG review in 2011 and to indicate the level of priority that should be given to each. As Table 5.2 shows, staff in schools and colleges were identified by the majority of respondents as those most in need of training and support in relation to IAG. Senior leaders (99 per cent ranked high or medium priority) and careers coordinators (97 per cent) were those ranked highest priority, closely followed by form tutors (94 per cent) and other school staff delivering IAG (for example, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) teachers) (93 per cent).

Training for other staff involved in the commissioning and provision of IAG services was also considered a priority. Connexions PAs and LA managers with responsibility for IAG were each ranked high or medium priority by 88 per cent of respondents. The perception of the urgency of the training needs for LA managers with IAG responsibility varied between LA managers themselves and senior managers of Connexions services, as can be seen in Table 5.3.

Sixty-two per cent of Connexions managers felt that training for LA managers was high priority whilst only 38 per cent of LA managers felt this way. Fifty per cent of LA managers rated training for LA managers as medium priority, as did 26 per cent of Connexions managers.

**Table 5.2 Priority for IAG training and support**

Personnel involved in IAG	High priority %	Medium priority %	Low priority %	No response %
LA managers with responsibility for IAG	50	38	10	2
Heads of Connexions	31	36	30	3
Connexions Personal Advisors	44	44	10	1
Senior Leaders in schools/colleges	81	18	0	1
Careers coordinators in schools/colleges	78	19	1	1
Form tutors in schools/colleges	59	35	2	3
Other staff in schools/colleges delivering IAG (for example, PSHE teachers)	51	42	5	2
External providers IAG	25	47	23	6

**N = 88**

*A series of single response items*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

**Table 5.3 Priority for IAG training and support: LA managers**

Personnel involved in IAG	High priority %		Medium priority %		Low priority %		No response %	
	LA managers	Connexions managers	LA managers	Connexions managers	LA managers	Connexions managers	LA managers	Connexions managers
LA managers with responsibility for IAG	38	62	50	26	13	12	0	0

**N = 32 LA managers, 34 Connexions managers**

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010*

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

This research project was commissioned by the LG Association (in February 2010) prior to the UK general election (in May 2010) and was intended to inform preparation for the review of IAG services the Labour Government had planned to conduct in 2011. Priorities for the new Coalition Government are still under review, and the implications of this research may need to be re-considered as priorities are finalised.

### 6.1 What does current IAG look like?

IAG services were widely perceived to contribute to raising learners' aspirations and learners were seen to be provided with support from a range of IAG providers and/or partners who understood their roles and responsibilities. It was clear that respondents felt confident that young people are currently informed about how services can help them and how to access support. Furthermore, IAG services were said to be regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated and actions taken to improve services. Additionally, there were high levels of confidence that there was appropriate IAG support for those young people at risk of becoming NEET, including LLDD.

However, lower levels of confidence were reported in terms of school and college IAG provision than external provision. Fewer than half of respondents believed that learners are provided with a high-quality programme of careers education or that IAG is delivered consistently in schools and colleges across the curriculum. On balance, not all senior Connexions and LA managers felt confident that current IAG provision was meeting all learners' needs or that learners were receiving personalised IAG to help them make informed decisions. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that this lack of universal provision might be impeded by the tension between providing universal service and the need to focus on vulnerable groups and lack of resources. In terms of meeting the Quality Standards there was also least confidence reported that parents/carers know how IAG services can help their children and how these services are accessed and that

young people are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of IAG.

Respondents reported three main strategic models of IAG provision in place. These were:

- the integration of the pre-existing Connexions service within the LA
- where the LA had taken over ownership of the pre-existing Connexions service and had maintained the service as a discrete entity
- where the LA has commissioned new providers for IAG after competitive tendering.

Two-thirds of respondents expressed confidence that, since the transfer of Connexions services to LAs in 2008, LA managers currently possess the knowledge and understanding to commission quality IAG services that meet local needs (although not surprisingly more confidence was apparent amongst LA strategic managers in contrast to senior managers of Connexions services).

### 6.2 What does 'good' IAG look like?

Over a half of respondents reported having a form of partnership agreement in place to deliver IAG and, where an agreement was in place, the majority of respondents felt that schools were implementing the strategy in the agreed way. This, along with views of what 'good' IAG should look like, suggest that partnership working, where all partners understand their roles and 'buy in' to an overall local strategy is key to effective delivery of IAG. Linked to this was the need to have not only clear strategic direction, filtered down to all stakeholders, but also ownership of that strategy by all stakeholders. Furthermore, a fully collaborative approach to IAG provision would highlight the need for clear delineation of accountability by all partners.



Full engagement in IAG provision by schools and colleges, and consistency of provision across and within schools would facilitate 'good' IAG. Agreed strategies which made clear, for example, the emphasis on targeting young people such as LLDDs and NEETs and the provision of universal, personalised IAG for all learners, especially in light of the recent planned RPA policy (where respondents clearly wanted further guidance) would assist consistent provision. Schools and colleges might also benefit from more extensive future use of monitoring data to further enhance their contribution to IAG services and meeting the Quality Standards.

'Good' IAG was also characterised by delivery being carried out by fully trained and qualified staff. This extended from the need for LA managers and staff, and Connexions PAs to be fully conversant and knowledgeable about IAG to the need for senior leaders in schools, careers coordinators, form tutors and other staff to be trained in current IAG policy and how it relates, in particular, to the 14–19 pathways.

### **6.3 What improvements are required?**

It is recommended that in order to bring about improvements in the provision of IAG, stakeholders need to consider working more collaboratively to ensure that learners receive IAG that is timely, comprehensive and personalised to their needs.

The full engagement in partnership agreements would appear to be an effective way forward to achieve this goal. Such agreements would facilitate clarity with regard to expectations, ownership and accountability of all stakeholders.

Further engagement of schools, in terms of senior leadership endorsement and support of the importance of IAG to learners, and increased awareness and knowledge of 14–19 pathways by parents would further increase the effectiveness of IAG. Transparency in terms of responsibility so that all partners understand their roles in IAG provision would also serve to enhance accountability so that all concerned parties would fully appreciate stakeholders' duties.

It is also recommended that schools would benefit from further support from LAs so that they can fully embrace a more extensive role in the provision of IAG and work with their partners within the LA. A key part of further improvements requires addressing the training needs within schools in order for staff, including senior leaders, careers coordinators, form tutors and other staff delivering elements of IAG, to be fully conversant with current IAG strategies and 14–19 pathways.

These improvements are unlikely to be effective unless a strategic and holistic approach is taken to ensure that all key aspects of IAG are delivered. Furthermore, IAG should be considered within the broader context of both CE and IAG and its place in the wider curriculum.

# Technical appendix

This technical appendix presents survey data on the models of IAG provision and respondents' confidence that IAG Quality Standards are being met.

## Question 2 and Question 12

### Mixed economy models (seven respondents)

- A mixed economy model with elements delivered in-house and some Personal Advisor resources commissioned from an external organisation.
- CEIAG contract with pre-existing Connexions company until 2011. Targeted Support element and Connexions commissioning manager brought in house to LA via a Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) arrangement.
- Client-facing work taken in-house. Back office information and training functions jointly commissioned with four other LAs.
- In all seven Central London Connexions LAs, the LA delivers the Connexions service WITH a careers company – i.e. half each. In one LA they now deliver it entirely in-house.
- Subcontracted universal IAG provider, via competitive tender, and same provider appointed. In-house service for vulnerable groups.
- The LA commissions a careers company to deliver a universal IAG and careers guidance service while the LA delivers a targeted IAG service to vulnerable groups of young people.
- We are a separate careers company. The additional support role was taken in-house.

### The pre-existing Connexions service provides IAG and has won it through competitive bid (seven respondents)

- Have commissioned after competitive tendering, the existing provider was successful in winning the contract.
- This LA has a contractual model for IAG. The Connexions service transferred to local authority control prior 2008. The local authority has the same IAG provider after competitive tendering, in 2008.
- In this county we were the existing providers but won the contract following an open competitive tender process.
- Local authorities have commissioned existing provider for IAG after competitive tendering.
- The LA has commissioned a pre-existing Connexions service as a provider through competitive tendering.
- The LA has commissioned for IAG through competitive tendering which was won by the existing provider.
- Through a process of competitive dialogue provider appointed who turned out to be the previous provider.

### The model of provision is based on some kind of sub-regional arrangement (five respondents)

- In this county we have the delivery of Connexions provision jointly commissioned across all six of our local authorities.

- Pre-existing Connexions company now a local authority controlled company (covers four unitary authorities).
  - Sub Regional Unit/Consortium arrangement to commission provider across six local authorities for Connexions service.
  - The Connexions Partnership became a LA controlled company covering four unitary authorities. Recently this company has begun to host the shared commissioning service for the four unitary authorities
- and changed its name to Learning Partnership X. The company now has a commissioning arm and a delivery arm. It remains an LA controlled company.
- Six LAs have set up a shared service called the Sub Regional Unit. The role of the unit is to commission, lead and manage Connexions services across the region through one contract and one provider. The contract was competitively tendered in 2008 and is for three years. We are currently working on commissioning a new service from 2011 onwards.

### Question 12a Confidence that IAG Quality Standards are currently met

Quality Standards	Very confident %	Fairly confident %	Not very confident %	Not at all confident %	Not sure %	No response %
1. Young people are informed about how services can help them and how to access service	27	66	6	0	0	1
2. Young people receive IAG on personal wellbeing and financial capability that they need	3	53	32	1	9	1
3. Young people have the information they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and careers options	14	63	16	0	6	2
4. Young people have the advice and guidance to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and careers	10	68	18	0	2	1
5. IAG services promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes	13	65	15	2	5	1
6. Young people are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of IAG	14	31	42	6	7	1
7. Parents/carers know how IAG services can help their children and know how these services are accessed	3	20	58	10	6	2

**Other (five respondents)**

- This newly commissioned service only began operating on 1 April therefore answers to following questions may reflect earlier arrangements which followed Model 2.
- We are in the process of commissioning IAG and Targeted Youth Support (TYS) provision through competitive tendering.
- Connexions taken back under local authority control in 2004.
- Existing organisation developed into a new broader base in order to take on a wider range of 14–19 work including delivery of Connexions services.
- LA in-house provision delivered through Integrated Youth Support Service model.

**Question 12a Confidence that IAG Quality Standards are currently met**

Quality Standards	Very confident %	Fairly confident %	Not very confident %	Not at all confident %	Not sure %	No response %
<b>8.</b> IAG providers understand their roles and responsibilities	25	57	13	1	1	3
<b>9.</b> Programmes of careers and personal development for young people are planned and provided collaboratively	15	43	30	6	6	1
<b>10.</b> Staff providing IAG are appropriately qualified, work to relevant standards and receive CPD	22	55	16	5	1	2
<b>11.</b> IAG services are regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated and actions are taken to improve services	25	58	11	3	1	1
<b>12.</b> Processes for commissioning impartial IAG services are effective and result in services that meet the needs of parents/carers and young people	23	45	20	1	8	2

*A series of single response items*

*Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.*

*A total of 87 respondents gave at least one response to these questions.*

*Source: NFER online survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority managers responsible for Information, Advice and Guidance, April 2010.*

## References

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009). *Quality, Choice and Aspiration: A Strategy for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance*. London: DCSF. [online]. Available: <http://publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/IAG-Report-v2.pdf> [24 August, 2010].

McCrone, T., Marshall, H., White, K., Reed, F., Morris, M., Andrews, D. and Barnes, A. (2009). *Careers Coordinators in Schools* (DCSF Research Report 171). London: DCSF.

Nicoletti, C. and Berthoud, R. (2010). *The Role of Information, Advice and Guidance in Young People's Education and Employment Choices* (DFE Research Report 019). London: DFE [online]. Available: [http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DFE-RR019\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DFE-RR019_WEB.pdf) [24 August, 2010].

# Recently published reports

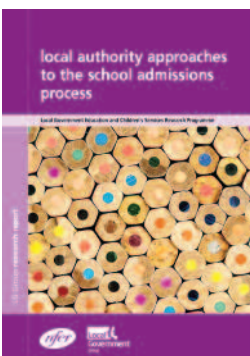
The Local Government Education and Children's Services Research Programme is carried out by the NFER. The research projects cover topics and perspectives that are of special interest to local authorities. All the reports are published and disseminated by the NFER, with separate executive summaries. The summaries, and more information about this series, are available free of charge at [www.nfer.ac.uk/research/local-government-association/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/local-government-association/)



## Implementing outcomes based accountability in children's services: an overview of the process and impact

NFER was commissioned to identify the impact of the OBA approach on LA practice in children's services through nine case studies (18 interviews with strategic and operational staff). The main findings are presented in a thematic report with further details as case studies.

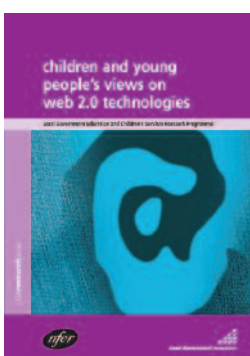
[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OBA02/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OBA02/)



## Local authority approaches to the school admissions process

This report gathers the views of local authority admissions officers on the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches, as well as the issues and challenges they face in this important area. Key findings show that, in most areas, the process was being implemented with fairness, efficiency and clarity.

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LAW01/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LAW01/)



## Children and young people's views on web 2.0 technologies

This research focused on how web 2.0 technologies allow users to share, collaborate and interact with one another. The project explored the potential of using these tools to collect the views of young people and to involve them in their local community.

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LWT01/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LWT01/)

For more information, or to buy any of these publications, please contact: The Publications Unit, National Foundation for Educational Research, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ, tel: +44 (0)1753 637002, fax: +44 (0)1753 637280, email: [book.sales@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:book.sales@nfer.ac.uk), web: [www.nfer.ac.uk/publications](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications).

The Local Government Association commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research to evaluate the current 'fitness for purpose' of the information, advice and guidance (IAG) services provided to young people aged 14–19, and to identify improvement and support needs for local authorities ahead of the forthcoming Government IAG review.

This report presents the findings from an online questionnaire survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority strategic managers with responsibility for IAG. It also provides examples of good practice that could be replicated. It covers:

- recent developments in IAG provision
- current views on IAG provision
- what is perceived as 'good' IAG
- support needs
- conclusions and recommendations.

It is important reading for those commissioning and delivering IAG services for young people aged 14–19.