

Careers in Healthcare

Using Information Advice and
Guidance in the
health sector

Introduction

This information leaflet has been produced by Skills for Health for those who advise people on career options relating to the health sector. It will be helpful to careers advisers, HR and line managers, supervisors, and anyone else who offers information, advice and guidance to prospective and existing employees, trainees and those seeking work.

In this guide you will find information on:

- Developing a strategic approach to Information, Advice and Guidance
- Integrating Information, Advice and Guidance into your organisation
- Developing Information Advice and Guidance skills
- Information, Advice and Guidance qualifications relevant to staff in the health sector.

The information leaflet is one of a series which are on the Skills for Health website. These cover topics such as qualifications, signposting and referral, supporting people in their learning, funding and much more.

Visit www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careersinformationandadvice to access them.

*Skills for Health does not claim responsibility for the content and workings of other websites.
The information and web links in this document are correct at the time of publication
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Information, Advice and Guidance - developing a strategic approach in your organisation

Some things to consider when developing a strategic approach to Information, advice and guidance (IAG) in your organisation:

- Integrating IAG into your organisation can build on existing systems and good practice.
- IAG can be linked to existing strategic objectives. Review your existing strategies and plans, such as HR, workforce and learning and development plans, and identify where it can support achievement of these objectives.
- IAG can support the Knowledge and Skills Framework and Personal Development Review process. Explore the related leaflet for further information.
- Explore the Skills for Health online [guide to literacy, language and numeracy](#)
- Consider how IAG processes can be supported through existing roles. For example, via Union Learning Representatives, mentors, learning and development, HR and clinical teams. Explore the related leaflet 'Roles that could support information, advice and guidance in the health sector'.
- Identify how your organisation can equip these staff with the new set of skills they will require to fulfil their role.
- Find out about the nationally recognised quality standard IAG, the [matrix quality standard](#)
- Identify potential partners who can support you by providing expertise and to support capacity building.
- Don't re-invent the wheel. Find out how other health sector organisations have introduced IAG into their organisation. Skills for Health has a wide range of case studies which highlight how organisations have used IAG to get the best out of their workforce. There is also much more information in the **matrix** booklets.

Case studies

[The Educational Guidance Service for Adults \(EGSA\)](#) and partners work to upskill staff in support roles within Northern Ireland's health sector

[Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust](#) use a cross organisational approach to support workforce development through IAG

[Choose Health](#) – health ambassadors in the East of England

[Learning for All with Union Learning Representatives](#)

[Nottinghamshire Health Ambassadors](#)

[Pre-employment programme helps release potential](#) – helping local people access programmes in the North West

[Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust](#) supports upskilling and aspiration amongst its employees – related to IAG and the **matrix** Standard

Integrating Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) into your organisation

IAG can support your organisation and your staff to:

- Implement your workforce plans effectively
- Improve recruitment, retention and induction processes
- Identify learning and development needs and trends. IAG highlights skill gaps (such as literacy, language and numeracy), making learning and development opportunities more accessible and boosting staff morale
- Implement a flexible career framework
- Improve and support career progression
- Spend funds for learning effectively by supporting staff into and through the learning process enabling them to make the most of their potential
- Improve existing systems and processes e.g. your learning and development quality and evaluation systems
- Make the most of funding opportunities
- Support employability and the ability to respond to the potential employment needs of your local community.

Developing IAG Skills

IAG Skills and Competences

Effective skills are needed to enable your organisation to deliver a high quality IAG service for staff. Many people may be involved in providing this service, either as a specialist or as part of a wider role, for example:

- a line manager who conducts personal development reviews or appraisals
- a trainer who offers advice to staff on further courses or learning opportunities
- a union learning representative.

It is important to recognise the unique set of skills required and to ensure that those delivering IAG can develop these skills. Some of these skills may already be developed in existing staff roles. Some organisations encourage those in a dedicated role to have a recognised qualification such as a QCF qualification in Information, Advice and Guidance. [Skills for Health](#) is developing an IAG e learning tool aimed at managers.

Where can I find out more?

There are relevant [NOS](#) in the health sector such as supporting individuals to develop and maintain their performance (M&LD13) and helping individuals to access learning, training and development opportunities (HSC0348); so existing roles may already use some of the competences required.

There are new NOS and associated materials for Information, Advice and Guidance, which were developed by Lifelong Learning UK (now [LSIS](#)). They are relevant to anyone using skills involving career, employability related advice or advice on learning within the workplace.

The [Career Development National Occupational Standards](#) (NOS) were published in March 2011 and cover career and educational information, advice and guidance and employability support. You can [download the NOS here](#)

There are many specialist organisations that offer information and advice on developing IAG skills. For example, [NAEGA](#) supports adult guidance for learning and work. The [Institute of Career Guidance](#) provides information on training, qualifications and CPD. Find out more in the [Signposting, referral and partnership] leaflet.

IAG qualifications relevant to staff in the health sector

There are three work-based Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) [qualifications](#). In the past some health staff worked towards the level 3 or level 4 qualifications depending on their job role and available funding. The knowledge and skills are common across the UK and the generic nature of the units mean that they could be used when working with young people or adults in a career information, advice and an employability support context.

For those interested, [further information](#) can be found on:

- Level 3 Award: Supporting Clients to Overcome Barriers to Learning & Work
- Level 4 Diploma: Career Information & Advice
- Level 6 Diploma: Career Guidance & Development

The main awarding bodies such as [OCR](#) , [Ed Excel](#) and [NOCN](#) offer qualifications in IAG.

Information on local provision can be found by contacting [Next Step](#), [Careers Wales](#), [Careers service in Northern Ireland](#) and [Skills Development Scotland](#). Users can also explore the [Ofqual](#) site to search for qualifications.

Trade Unions also support their union learning representatives with a range of courses including careers information and advice or support. Information is on the [Unionlearn](#) website. The health sector is currently working with the Trade unions to develop a climbing frame adapted for the health sector. It will be on the unionlearn [climbing frame](#) pages.

Professional/postgraduate training routes are available, such as the Qualification in Career Guidance and the Qualification in Career Guidance and Development. These qualifications indicate a substantial understanding of the theory and practice of guidance. Some courses allow part-time study so it could be feasible for someone like a learning and development manager to study for this qualification.

These qualifications are awarded by higher education institutions.

For more information, see: [Prospects website](#) and [Institute of Career Guidance](#)

Some organisations may be involved in a Work programme or Skills Funding Agency employability programmes. There is a QCF in [Employment Related Services](#) that may support staff dealing with this agenda.

For those who want to look into IAG in a more detailed way – to look at latest discussions and research – take a look at [iCeGS](#) – the International Centre for Guidance Studies; the National Guidance Research Forum - [NGRF](#); the Institute of Employment Research - [IER](#);

[Careers England](#) and the National Institute of Continuing Education [NIACE](#) in addition to the [Institute of Career Guidance](#) and [NAEGA](#).