

Information, Advice and Guidance position statement

This position statement sets out current information and future planning about the status and practice of Information Advice and Guidance at People Matters.

The organisation People Matters is a charitable incorporated organisation. Established as a CIC in 2002 it changed into a charity in 2017. Its mission is to create opportunities for people with learning and other disabilities to be more independent and enjoy life in the same ways, and in the same places, as anybody else. The organisation places particular emphasis on how its values stated below are embedded which actively support how IAG is approached in the organisation.

All individuals accessing services become members of the organisation which has a wide membership model. The organisation has a board of trustees and is led on a day to day basis by a Chief Executive with two managers leading group activities and individual support. All service delivery types include the opportunity to access to IAG. There is an IAG officer and also IAG within aspects of managers, service co-ordinator, tutor and support worker roles. Staff are supported to develop themselves and the organisation holds Investors In People.

Services are funded by Leeds City Council Adult Social Services, Children's Services and also Employment and Skills departments. In addition, the organisation holds a Reaching Communities Grant from the Big Lottery. The first two make referrals to the organisation the latter expect us to market and recruit appropriately.

Partnership working includes our funders but also other organisations who make referrals to us and those we refer individuals to. These other partners include those in the third sector such as SLATE, Aspire, Hamara, HfT, UBU, St Anne's and Affinity Trust, education organisations such as Leeds City College and Swarthmore College as well as advice agencies such as Citizens Advice and Connect in the North, those supporting employment such as DWP, Pluss and Remploy or those offering health related services such as Health for All, Connect for Health, Zest and statutory NHS provision.

The IAG service; At referral, whether that is from a partner or via self-referral every potential new member of the organisation is offered the opportunity for support to complete an enrolment form and access to an IAG session. Many take this up and in Individual Support and Teens and Twenties this can include a home visit. In Adult Learning information is shared through an accessible prospectus produced on a termly basis. In each service information is collected to enable impartial IAG. The organisation has a theory of change, see below, which shows the services available and the potential pathways and benefits members can gain.

Sometimes a local authority social services assessment will mean that a referral to the individual support service is made directly. Individual support is person centred and aims to achieve agreed personalised outcomes supporting access into the community.

For all services evidence is collected about the individual, their needs, aspirations/goals and any risks in possible service delivery. This information informs the IAG to individuals about both suitable services available internally and those externally.

People Matters services are based from their offices and training rooms in Holbeck, Leeds (LS11). Some are delivered out in the community across the city or occasionally at partner locations on a temporary basis. Initial interviews are completed and IAG is offered by all the roles previously indicated. The IAG officer is developing her role with the goal to act as the source for current information for effective signposting between internal and external services according to the needs of the individual. This postholder also conducts the organisation's research into alternative external provision available and support progression by signposting to services that offer a path towards reaching identified goals.

The People Matters IAG service also provides opportunities for reviews to support progression. This could be conducted by any of the named post holders within the relevant service accessed that the member already has contact with. Reviews are conducted at the end of education short courses and 6 monthly in individual support with signposting offered where appropriate.

Service delivery of IAG is subject to external review. This can take the form of involvement of social workers at reviews to the audit of learner files in education provision. People Matters is included within the scope of Leeds City Council Ofsted inspection of Adult Learning and is CQC registered and hence subject to this inspection regime itself. All People Matters policies from those relating to Equality and Diversity to Confidentiality have been agreed through external audit at commissioning/contract review.

Clients

People Matters clients are its members. Members have learning or other disabilities such as being on the Autistic spectrum. They are adults and young people 11+ at high school and resident in Leeds. Many members have main carers who may be parents or professionals through supported living providers. These carers are frequently involved in supporting the decision making of members about the services they access. As previously stated members have the opportunity to access IAG both when they initially approach People Matters and throughout their time as a member.

Future Development

People Matters continues to progress and strengthen its aspiration to provide impartial IAG to its members. Its support for a member of staff to be qualified and hold an IAG post as it grows demonstrates this commitment. Its referral of members to access external services where beneficial demonstrates both its values and impartiality of IAG.

Future development identified is the commitment to gain recognition through the Matrix Standards during 2018. This will include a thorough self-assessment against the standards, action planning and improvement working. Emphasis will be placed upon

- raising awareness of staff particularly where IAG is part of their role
- further define through documenting the nature of the IAG service
- improving systems and raising quality assurance,
- securing and sharing resources especially through the use of technology

- providing enhanced member feedback opportunities to inform developments

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