

Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

August 2024

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope of the Policy	3
3. Definitions	4
4. Arrangements	4
5. Responsibilities	5
6. Training	5
7. The Guidance Interview	6
8. Expectations	6
9. Feedback, Comments and Complaints	7
10. Monitoring and Evaluation	8
11. Relationship to other Policies and Legislation	8

Reference	Classification	Author	Approved By	File Location	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
	IL0	Siân Breese	SLT	T Drive POLICIES & PROCEDURES	08/22	08/24	08/25

1. Introduction

SAFL aims to provide high quality, timely and impartial, information, advice and guidance services which promote the value of learning to both potential and current learners.

SAFL is committed to providing information, advice and guidance to enable learners to make an informed choice and succeed on a course most suitable to their needs.

It is SAFL's policy to provide the information, advice and guidance service in accordance with the Matrix quality standard. The organisation adheres to the principles of the standard, has achieved the standard and is committed to maintaining ongoing accreditation.

2. Scope of the Policy

The service will be provided at key stages of the learning journey, including the following:

- Initial contact.
- Recruitment.
- Initial assessment.
- Agreement of learning plans.
- Whilst participating in learning throughout the learner journey.
- In preparation for assessment.
- Upon completion of the programme.
- On request by current or potential learners.

Reference	Classification	Author	Approved By	File Location	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
	ILO	Sian Breese	SLT	T Drive POLICIES & PROCEDURES	08/22	08/24	08/25

3. Definitions

Information - refers to the provision of factual information relating to learning and careers, but without exploring the relative merits of different options. Information can be imparted verbally by face to face contact, via written or printed material, telephone helplines or through websites.

Advice - requires more in-depth interaction with the learner. It includes the explanation of information and how to access and use the information.

Guidance - involves an in-depth session or series of sessions between the learner and advisor, in which the advisor helps the learner through the process of making decisions about learning and careers. It can offer information on potential careers in various occupational sectors as well as signposting to other IAG service providers.

4. Arrangements

The statement of service is included in the Learner Handbook and on the Student Information page of the SAFL website and covers the following:

- Information on the service we can provide.
- How to contact us.
- How to access our service.
- Expectations of the service.

Reference	Classification	Author	Approved By	File Location	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
	ILO	Sian Breese	SLT	T Drive POLICIES & PROCEDURES	08/22	08/24	08/25

5. Responsibilities

All frontline staff have responsibility for providing information, advice and/or guidance, including:

- **Administration / Reception staff**
Face to face and telephone enquiries from potential and current learners, referring enquiries to other staff or departments where required.
- **Staff undertaking recruitment and marketing roles**
As part of initial contact with potential learners.
- **Staff undertaking initial and diagnostic assessments**
To potential and existing learners.
- **Teaching staff**
As part of induction, the agreement of learning plans, delivery of learning programmes, review of progress, assessment activities and end point review / next steps activities.
- **Safeguarding Team**
In the provision of targeted pastoral and safeguarding support for learners.
- **Managers**
In the provision of an adequately resourced guidance service for learners.

6. Training

As part of its ambition to provide high quality information, advice and guidance to current and potential learners, SAFL is committed to developing a well-trained and qualified workforce.

All forward facing staff will be offered a minimum of Level 2 Information, Advice and Guidance training in a phased approach.

Additionally, ongoing CPD activities will support the development of key IAG skills within the staff team.

Reference	Classification	Author	Approved By	File Location	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
	ILO	Siân Breese	SLT	T Drive POLICIES & PROCEDURES	08/22	08/24	08/25

7. The Guidance Interview

SAFL, in partnership with Sandwell Connexions service will provide guidance interviews for learners and potential learners on request. Guidance interviews will be facilitated by a Level 6 IAG qualified Careers Guidance Practitioner.

Initial sessions will be thirty minutes in length and follow up sessions can be booked as needed.

The guidance interview will provide;

- Information, advice and guidance on learning and training opportunities.
- Support on choosing the most appropriate learning / training route.
- Information on how to apply for a course and the entry requirements needed.
- Guidance to help learners identify career goals and interests.
- Information on course fees and other costs associated with the course.
- Guidance on the opportunities available to them after completing the current learning programme, including further employment and higher education.
- A brief written summary of the guidance interview, outlining the action points agreed.

8. Expectations

Learners can expect;

- Friendly, courteous staff who listen to their needs.
- To be treated with respect, with consistency and fairness.
- Up to date, accurate and accessible information.
- Information on courses available to them.
- Access to individual, impartial, unbiased advice and guidance.
- Highly qualified and experienced guidance staff.

Reference	Classification	Author	Approved By	File Location	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
	ILO	Siân Breese	SLT	T Drive POLICIES & PROCEDURES	08/22	08/24	08/25

In accessing the service learners are expected to;

- Treat SAFL premises, staff and other users of the service with respect.
- To fully engage in the service, providing as much relevant information as they can to enable us to provide a service responsive to their needs and wishes.
- If an appointment has been requested and they are unable to attend, that they notify us to rearrange or cancel.

9. Feedback, Comments and Complaints

We are committed to developing the quality of our services and we regularly seek the views of our learners to find out whether they are satisfied with the courses and support provided.

We welcome any comments learners may have to help us improve our services. Learners can engage with;

- Learner satisfaction feedback forms.
- Attend learner forums.
- Approach any member of staff.
- Use the feedback boxes in the reception areas of SAFL centres.
- Alternatively, comments can be emailed to contactsafl@sandwell.gov.uk .

A complaints procedure is published in the learner handbook and on the SAFL website.

Reference	Classification	Author	Approved By	File Location	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
	ILO	Sian Breese	SLT	T Drive POLICIES & PROCEDURES	08/22	08/24	08/25

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure a high quality of IAG service, SAFL will evaluate its provision to ensure that;

- The information, advice and guidance services are delivered in accordance with this IAG policy.
- The IAG standards are delivered in accordance with this IAG policy and as contained within the Matrix Quality Standard.

Monitoring activities will include;

- Review of learner satisfaction responses.
- Observations of teaching (QTLA).
- Observations of information, advice and guidance interactions.
- Audit review of curriculum learner records.
- Service level agreement reviews with IAG providers.

11. Relationships to other Policies and Legislation

The following policies and legislation are relevant to staff delivering information, advice and guidance and as such they are expected to have a working knowledge of all of them.

Legislation

Data Protection Act (1998)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

Equalities Act (2010)

SAFL Policies

Safeguarding policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

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