

Information Advice and Guidance Policy

Document Owner: Head of Quality & Quality, Funding and Compliance Director		
Version No.	Date	Notes
1	August 2021	Creation and implementation of policy
2	January 2023	Policy update to reflect Gatsby benchmarks and Matrix
3	June 2024	Policy update to reflect roles and responsibilities
4	June 2025	Policy Annual review

1. Scope

This policy is to ensure that potential, current and former learners have access to high-quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in order to support them to enter and progress in both learning and work.

Cambridge Spark is Matrix Standard accredited, a unique quality framework for organisations to assess and measure their information, advice and/or guidance services, which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.

2. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) support will enable individuals to:

- Develop an awareness and understanding of the range of opportunities for learning, work and career development available to them.
- Gather, understand and interpret information and how to apply it to their own situation.
- Consider and explore a range of options, according to their own needs and circumstances.
- Provide employers with details of how different programmes are structured, for example requirements for apprenticeships, bootcamps and key information around funding, recruitment and off the job training.

Cambridge Spark will ensure that the IAG support is delivered in accordance with the 'Principles for Coherent Information Advice and Guidance' as contained within the Matrix Standard and the principles of the GATSBY Benchmarks.

3. Matrix Standard:

Accessibility and Visibility - We aim to provide recognised and trusted IAG support which are publicised, signposted and made available to all customers at times which suit their needs. Information can be supplied in various formats and a range of tools are used to support this.

Professional and Knowledgeable - Our staff have the ability to quickly and effectively identify customers' needs and if necessary, signpost or refer them to suitable alternative services. Staff are committed to training and development to continually update their skills and knowledge.

Effective Connections - Where customers are signposted to suitable alternative services we support them in that transition. Cambridge Spark builds strong partnerships with alternative providers and external agencies.

Availability, Quality and Delivery - Our IAG support is targeted to the needs of the individual. Interventions are recorded and audited to ensure quality and inform continuous service improvements.

Diversity - We recognise the individuality of our customers and provide a range of support to reflect this.

Impartial - Our IAG support to enable individuals to make informed choices, on programmes and progression routes, based on their needs, interests and circumstances.

Responsive - Our IAG services reflect present and future needs, and the local and regional labour market demands.

Friendly and Welcoming - We provide support which encourages individuals to successfully engage with us.

Enabling - Our IAG engages and supports customers in becoming lifelong learners, allowing them to explore and plan their careers through access to and use of information.

Awareness - We make customers aware of the relevant IAG support available to them and to have an informed expectation of those services. Staff will ensure that there is an appropriate combination of careers education, IAG activities incorporated into programmes. These will be appropriate to learners' needs and include a range of activities including EDUKATE self study modules, 'Next Step' discussions, events, encounters with employers, Apprenticeships, and Higher Education opportunities.

4. GATSBY Benchmarks

Cambridge Spark is committed to providing high quality IAG and the GATSBY benchmarks are an integral part of its delivery plan:

1. ***A stable careers programme*** - Embed a coherent programme of careers education and guidance throughout the learners journey. This plan is published on our website under the Sparking Potential section on the website.
2. ***Learning from career and labour market information*** - Provide access to good quality, up-to-date information about career paths and the labour/industry market to inform decisions about progression opportunities, which is supported by easily accessible well-trained and highly-qualified staff.
3. ***Addressing the needs of each learner*** - Provide opportunities for advice and support, which is tailored to the individual needs of learners and a careers programme that raises aspiration and challenges stereotypical thinking, embedding equality and diversity considerations throughout.
4. ***Linking curriculum learning to careers*** - All curriculum learning links into careers.
5. ***Encounters with employers and employees*** - Ensure all employer encounters are logged through a range of industry insights speakers, on the job learning, and real work activities through collaborative projects and hackathons.
6. ***Experiences of workplaces*** - Ensure a structured programme of experience of the workplace is offered on the job for apprentices that provides insights into wider employability skills, knowledge, technical skills and behaviours, and links to current career plans.
7. ***Encounters with Further and Higher Education*** - Provide opportunities for learners to explore a range of progression options which may form the next stage of their career. These will include further and higher education and apprenticeships options, and CS will provide opportunities to discuss the pros and cons of different pathways to allow learners to make informed decisions about their next steps.
8. ***Personal guidance*** - From coaches, mentors, trainers and employers to support individuals to develop realistic aspirations and support them to take ownership for their skills and knowledge they need to manage their own career transitions. This can include personalised support for CV writing, interview techniques and other employability skills.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

IAG responsibilities are embedded within job roles at Cambridge Spark, in accordance with the model that supports both our learners and employers to achieve their goals.

This ensures that support is provided throughout the each stage of the journey:

- Pre-enrolment
- Application and enrolment
- On-programme
- Post-programme

6. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Cambridge Spark will use a variety of quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate the impact of its provision of IAG:

- Learner feedback will be gathered through surveys.
- The quality of IAG, learning sessions, progress reviews, will be monitored through observations, deep dives and learning walks.
- The external matrix quality assurance process will be used to measure effectiveness of the IAG provided by Cambridge Spark.
- Destination data will be analysed to identify areas of improvement in IAG.

Senior Manager Sign-off

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Signature:

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