

IAG Gold Standard assessment – East Riding Training Services, Bridlington and Goole

External Assessment carried out on 24.04.08

Assessor – Brenda Hardy

Overview

East Riding Training Services (ERTS) is a vocationally-focused learning service for young people and adults aged 16-25. It is based within the Planning and Economic Regeneration Directorate of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) and its overall aim is to provide high quality training leading to sustained long-term employment.

Situated in both Bridlington and Goole, ERTS offers workplace experience and qualifications ranging from Skills for Life to Apprenticeships at Level 3 - designed to match labour market demand across the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Assessment

In order to assess the range and quality of IAG provision, it was necessary to start with the underpinning institutional procedures. A comprehensive portfolio of evidence, containing documentation detailing IAG policies, protocols and processes was provided to the assessor prior to the date of assessment.

The assessment procedure took two half days. During the assessment, observation of guidance practice was carried out and visual inspection of the available facilities for learners to access information, advice and guidance confirmed that these were in place and accessible. Interviews were conducted with managers, staff, learners and Connexions PAs. The relevant evidence demonstrating each Element and Component of the East Riding Gold Standard for Information, Advice and Guidance was provided and matched to the required standard as described below.

Element 1 – Accessible and Visible Information

Component 1: There will be one or more information areas, open at clearly displayed times, accessible to all learners and providing a range of appropriate, current and impartial information which meets all needs

Information is provided mainly via web-based resources and PCs are available to all learners for this purpose. Adult Directions is on the desktop of each computer and forms part of the induction process for apprentices. This is renewed yearly. Other relevant websites e.g. www.connexions-direct.com, www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u, www.lmihumber.co.uk and www.learneastriding are on a 'favourites' link, are signposted throughout both centres and there are information stands in both centres with leaflets on various aspects of personal well-being. Learners have created information posters and these are displayed in the social areas of the centres.

There are notice boards displaying regularly updated information ranging from local LMI to sexual health issues. Supplies of leaflets on a range of young people's concerns are kept up to date and learners can access these and all other information at any time. Dates of local college open days are prominently displayed. I was able to view all available information at both centres and talk to staff and learners.

Component 2: All staff involved in providing information will be familiar with its content and purpose

All tutors are aware of the range of available information as described above and support learners in accessing information appropriate to their needs.

Element 2 – Accessible Advice and Guidance

Component 1: Internal and external advice and guidance practitioners will collectively possess the necessary skills, knowledge, training and qualifications to identify and respond to each learner's needs.

Tutors work closely with Connexions to ensure that all learners have regular access to a qualified Generic or Careers Personal Adviser. Learners are signposted to the Connexions centres in Bridlington and Goole. Connexions PAs visit ERTS centres every week and have access to private interview space.

Component 2: Advice and guidance practitioners will know about the work of other IAG providers who may be better placed to meet learner's needs

This is a small organisation and communication between staff is mostly informal, however staff do have a regular formal meeting, which is minuted. There is no specific IAG meeting but Connexions PAs have access to staff for additional information or discussion if needed, as do personnel from other relevant external organisations. ERTS is part of the East Riding local authority and referrals are made to the council's youth service and to the homelessness co-ordinator. The Job Centre provides advice on benefits and Connexions on sexual health. Some learners have used the Wheels to Work project.

Element 3 – Linked IAG Provision

Component 1: The provision of linked IAG will be part of the remit of a senior manager within the organisation or service

Two senior instructors are responsible for liaison with Connexions PAs and personnel from other external IAG agencies as required. They also write and deliver the scheme of work for economic and personal well-being. These responsibilities are not written into the instructor's job description but there is an Operational Guide that identifies the instructors' involvement in the provision of IAG.

Component 2: Practitioners will make clear to learners the links between IAG services and where necessary support learners in their transition between these services

The Partnership Agreement with Connexions Humber defines agreed procedures and practitioner and learner surveys have been carried out to check the effectiveness of provision. Learner reviews and referrals demonstrate effective links with other services and agencies.

Component 3: Practitioners will recognise professional boundaries and know which alternative provision is appropriate for signposting or referral to meet each learner's guidance needs

ERTS has an internal quality assurance process that includes interviewing skills. ERTS abides by the Data Protection Act and has defined child protection procedures. These are introduced to apprentices as part of the 'Safe Learner' induction. There are E2E practitioner meetings attended by ERTS staff and Connexions PAs over and above case study meetings.

There is an IAG Record completed for each learner at interview. Careers guidance and other relevant support is mentioned in the Statement of Learner Support and Entitlement (SLSE).

Element 4 Quality and Delivery of IAG

Component 1: IAG will be targeted at the needs of learners and informed by social and economic priorities at local regional and national levels

On entry, all learners complete a basic skills assessment and work is done on identifying learning styles and personal development needs. This feeds into the training programme agreed with the learner and helps develop understanding of how they can each maximise their learning potential.

All apprentices work through Adult Directions on entry to help clarify their chosen course. The personal social and career development activities below are covered with all learners. Additional personal skills work is undertaken with E2E learners. Continual discussion around learner aspirations, willingness to travel and long term aspirations is central to all teaching which, by the nature of the organisation, is designed to work towards successful progression for all.

Component 2: A planned personal development programme based upon DfES/DCSF national recommendations will underpin IAG

All learners have a Section 140 assessment and/or statement of educational need, which are used to inform the personal development programme and individual guidance on progression.

The content of personal, social and career development activities is based upon recommendations contained in the Operational Guide. Learners receive:

- on-going individual progress reviews
- support and referral for specialist advice and guidance
- careers education and personal development activities to promote job search including CVs, application forms and interviews
- sexual health seminars
- access to available financial support e.g. EMA
- mentoring support

Element 5 - Diversity of IAG Provision

Component 1: IAG provision will recognise and reflect the diversity of learners' needs and promote equality of opportunity and access

ERTS caters for a wide diversity of learners and addresses each individual's requirements via:

- learners' initial individual assessment and regular reviews
- additional one to one support for E2E learners.
- a seminar for all staff and learners on understanding other cultures

Component 2: IAG will be available in other more neutral premises whenever appropriate

Connexions centres are signposted as alternative sources of IAG and learners are made aware of the Connexions Centres in both Bridlington and Goole.

Element 6 - Impartiality of IAG Provision

Component 1: IAG will promote equally all options available and open to learners based on the defined needs and circumstances of each individual to ensure as far as possible, accurate matching of stated need to help and support

Staff are equal opportunities trained. All learners are helped and supported on to the progression route that suits them best. ERTS promotes positive progression for all learners and does not promote or favour any groups of learners or any progression route.

Component 2: IAG will support learners in making informed decisions and will not favour any particular learner or groups of learners in order to address institutional targets or goals

At induction, learners receive a pack of information that includes an entitlement statement. Learners' choice of progression route is clarified at initial interview through discussion about all options. As stated above, the organisation has no vested interest in steering learners in a particular direction. Outcomes demonstrate the success of guidance into successful next destinations: 86% of apprentices complete their course and of these, 90% progress into full-time employment. All E2E learners are supported into either further learning or, where appropriate, employment.

ERTS learners are tracked on 'Frame up' – a software program that holds progress reports and is shared with Connexions PAs.

Element 7 – IAG for Learning and Work

Component 1: IAG for learning and work will support learners in exploring the implications of possible career choices when planning their futures

Implications and consequences of all life choices are woven into the learning programmes of all learners. Career planning is seen as central to the function of the organisation.

Component 2: IAG practitioners with a career focus will work closely with local employers to ascertain up-to-date LMI

All apprentices are placed with local employers and receive advice about job opportunities and applications for employment – not all apprentices are kept on at their placements and these learners are helped to plan alternative routes. E2E learners have a work experience placement when they are ready and cover the range of options post E2E, including college courses.

Component 3: IAG provision will ensure that all learners have access to a common 14-19 prospectus from the end of key stage 3 in order that they are made aware of opportunities and qualification requirements for study and training from the age of 14 and for further study, training or employment from the age of 16.

Most learners attending ERTS are either aiming for employment at the end of their programmes or guided transition into further appropriate learning. Consequently, they do not require regular access to the full range of learning opportunities contained within the East Riding and Hull Area Prospectus. There is, however, access to this facility to support choices made by those learners who wish to explore progression routes open to them.

Element 8 – IAG responsiveness to the needs of clients

Component 1: IAG practitioners will liaise with each other and all external agencies and services that provide support for learners

Weekly referrals are made between Connexions PAs and senior tutors. New staff are made aware of policies on, for example, child protection and data protection, on induction but there are no written policies specifically regarding IAG or referrals to the Connexions PA in the company guidelines. However, the Operational Guide and mission statement make these clear.

Component 2: IAG provision will ensure that available information is acknowledged and incorporated into advice and guidance sessions

Connexions PAs and ERTS feel that communication between the two agencies is good. Information about learners is held securely by Connexions on Trakrekord and by ERTS on Frame Up. Learners have a presentation on induction in which Connexions PAs are included. Connexions Action Notes are kept in the Learner file.

Element 9 – Evaluation of IAG

Component 1: All IAG practitioners and learners are able to feed back their views on the provision within the organisation

Regular learner meetings take place where a variety of subjects are discussed as a learner group with the tutor. The manager has conducted a number of surveys with learners and staff – QMOL – Quality Monitoring On-Line. Connexions PAs are able to advocate for the learner if necessary. Staff and management meetings promote discussion between staff regarding the help and support available to learners and adjustments are then made as necessary.

Recommendation

From the portfolio of evidence presented prior to the assessment visit, potential gaps in IAG practice were noted and at the start of the day these were discussed with Mick Thompson, Senior Instructor, who was able to provide further evidence. I then spent the rest of the first morning with various members of staff and learners. I was given free access to talk to any staff and learners. I asked them a series of questions about their own experiences at ERTS. All responses were very positive. The second morning was spent at the Bridlington centre where I was given the same freedom of access, with similar outcomes – which are documented in this report.

Brenda Hardy 24/4/08

Date of Award: 16th May 2008

Date for re-assessment: April 2011