



Information, advice and guidance

A survey of the role played by independent learning providers in London

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1. Introduction

At the end of April, Graham Stuart MP sent a letter to the then Education secretary Nicky Morgan calling for a change to statutory guidance for schools on careers advice. The existing statutory guidance recommends that schools should work towards satisfying an approved standard but the letter states that this is too weak and is ignored by too many schools. Prominent business groups co-signed this letter.

At an All Party Parliamentary Group for Skills and Employment meeting at Westminster, information, advice and guidance (IAG) was discussed. This group has long campaigned for improved IAG as a means of strengthening industry, facilitating social mobility and enabling individuals to find fulfilment in the labour market. The panellists were Graham Stuart MP, former chair of the Education Select Committee; Beth Jones, Programme Manager from the Gatsby Foundation; Claudia Harris, Chief Executive of the Careers and Enterprise Company and Joe Billington, Deputy Director of Consumer Services at the SFA and BIS.

The discussion at the event focused on schools and their links with employers and one mention was made of colleges. However, no mention was made of independent learning providers until it was raised as a question. It was pointed out that in some cases, schools did not welcome independent learning providers into their careers events and pupils did not have impartial careers advice about all the opportunities post-16. Independent learning providers are heavily involved in delivering IAG and Ofsted inspects and reports on it.

This report arises from a survey of LWBLA members to identify how they deliver IAG, what qualifications their staff have and the working relationship they have with their local schools. A list of the 10 providers who responded can be found in Appendix One. The report highlights the innovative methods used by the providers and underlines the important role they play in delivering IAG to young people both while they are at school and during their training programmes, as well as working with adults and employers. The section on The London Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Network outlines the important work that takes place in London to share information on the apprenticeship programme. Ofsted inspects IAG as part of the Common Inspection Framework and judgements from Ofsted inspection reports can be found on page 9.

In July 2016, the 'Careers education, information, advice and guidance' report was published as the First Joint Report of the Business Innovation and Skills and Education Committees of Session 2016-17.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmese/205/205.pdf>



2. Main Findings:

- Providers are proactive in working successfully with local schools although there are some challenges.
- The London Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Network is particularly successful in promoting apprenticeships both within schools and Jobcentre Plus, with employers and across London.
- Providers successfully embed IAG at all stages of their training programmes from recruitment to exit.
- All but one provider has achieved the Matrix Standard.
- Providers' staff are appropriately qualified for their IAG roles.
- Ofsted Further Education and Skills inspection reports recognise the good IAG that providers deliver.

3. The London Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Network

The London Work Based Learning Alliance (LWBLA) manages this innovative and successful Network. The Network delivers free quality assured information on apprenticeships at a variety of settings across London. These include schools' career days, sixth form events, Pupil Referral Units, Job Fairs, Job Centre Plus and youth clubs. The Network was originally established by the National Apprenticeship Service, and funded by the Mayor of London. The main aim of the network is to champion apprenticeships to young people through the delivery of impartial information sessions using real life case studies and examples of the benefits of apprenticeships via a quality assured service. More information can be found at www.apprentices.london. Four of the providers who responded to the survey are part of the Network; The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd, Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited, Outsource Training and Development Ltd and Seetec.

In March 2013, under the Coalition Government, two Members of Parliament were appointed as government apprenticeship ambassadors - an Apprenticeship Ambassador to Business and an Apprenticeship Ambassador to Parliament - with the aim of increasing the number, quality and impact of apprenticeships in England. These appointments were for a year. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-ambassadors-created-to-promote-apprenticeships>.

The Network has held two high profile events at City Hall in 2016. The first, in January, was to award the Ambassadors with their certificates for the year. Local Authorities, the Association of Colleges (AoC), and Careers Officers from secondary schools across London attended. Speakers included apprentices, and employers. See an overview of the event at <https://vimeo.com/153368125>



In March, the Network held an event for the Job Centre Plus Apprenticeship Champions in London. Each London Office has a designated Apprenticeship Champion who will receive up to date information on Apprenticeships from the Skills Funding Agency, and also a direct link to the Ambassador Network. You can see an overview of the event at <https://vimeo.com/166198019> and an interview with an apprentice and her parent at <https://vimeo.com/166175038>

There is also a short film called A Parents' Guide to Apprenticeships: <https://vimeo.com/159387016>

There are several interviews available with learning providers involved in the Ambassador Network. Here is the link to access them: <https://vimeo.com/165337058>. There are other videos too, and you can view them via the LWBLA vimeo channel: <https://vimeo.com/lwbla>

4. Working with schools:

Four of the providers are part of the London Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Network and are therefore regularly in contact with schools promoting apprenticeships.

All but one of the providers work with schools with varying degrees of success. They try hard to find innovative ways to make contact with the schools but the reception is mixed. Some schools restrict access to specific groups of students so not all are informed of the range of possibilities post-16.

Examples of work with schools include:

- The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd uses 'speed networking' in local schools where short one-to-one appointments are given to gauge the interest of young people to the opportunities provided. These are often followed up by longer one-to-one sessions. They also have an involvement with Heads and Deputy Heads meetings within their Borough.
- Several providers had taken part in ad-hoc events and run one-to-one sessions for pupils and parents.
- One national provider, QA Limited, started with a network of Apprentice Ambassadors, co-ordinated centrally, who contacted their own old schools, set up engagements and shared contacts and relationships with the provider. This has led to an 'Every Apprentice an Ambassador' campaign in which they aim to reach all schools linked to their areas of operation. There are multiple benefits to this approach:
 - Learners gain additional skills in relationship building, preparing and presenting and managing events supported by their assessor/skills coach
 - Using the peer group to reach young people with the apprenticeship message



- Demonstrating to school staff the values and benefits of an apprenticeship for young people through the presentation from a former pupil with new skills and confidence.
- QA Limited also has a network of School Liaison Officers based in different regions across the country. They are a dedicated resource, which engages with local schools running careers workshops, parents evening and drop-in CV clinics.
- One national provider, Outsource Training and Development Ltd, is a very active member of the London Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Network. It delivers continuing professional development to careers staff in schools; this includes training on the 'Find an Apprenticeship system'; how to work effectively with independent learning providers and other websites/tools that may be useful for schools/students. In London West, it has been working with the 14-19 Careers Service to produce a menu of options for schools covering a variety of activities to include students, parents/guardians and teaching staff. The activities for the students are tailored to the different year groups from year 7-13. Outsource Training and Development Ltd is working with other independent learning providers to deliver these services but they have all agreed to be impartial so the best support is provided to the schools and students. As part of the activities, they use existing apprentices, who have received public speaking training, and employers to deliver the different sessions along with the Provider. They are hoping to roll this out across London with the aim of having an apprentice champion in every school.

However, there are examples of challenges in working with schools:

- In one provider, the business development team works with schools at events but the relationship could be better if the 'stigma' of apprenticeships was not still in some schools.
- Another provider attends careers fairs and also gives talks on apprenticeships but feels that they receive very little support from the school.
- One provider delivered some training for careers staff from various schools but they did not appear to have any passion or enthusiasm for IAG. The provider believes that a people specification is critical and that only people who have the right attitude, are enthusiastic, motivated, passionate about IAG and are knowledgeable and confident when seeking out information should be involved

5. Working with adults

Where the providers also work with adults, the IAG process is similar to that for 16 to 18 year olds and often includes a close working relationship with Jobcentre Plus.

Outsource Training and Development Ltd has worked with Jobcentre Plus work coaches to support them to become Champions for Apprentices in schools.



Information on this work can be found on page 4, The London Apprenticeship Information Ambassador Network.

The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd has also worked with local Housing Associations and Jobcentre Plus to provide support to adults. This can involve “market stall” scenarios, one-to-one interviews and group presentations. The added value of working with partners is that they can signpost for benefit support. Further IAG advice and support is also provided at Business events. They are heavily involved with local Chambers of Commerce and have delivered a variety of presentations concerning the local labour market and how apprenticeships may support the local business community. Once again, they signpost to relevant support agencies if and when appropriate.

6. Delivering information, advice and guidance

All the providers take great care to ensure that individuals are on the correct career route and training programme to meet their needs and aspirations. If the training they offer is not appropriate for the individual, then they signpost them to more appropriate opportunities. They all carry out extensive IAG as part of the recruitment process. This process often starts in the schools.

Specific examples are:

- The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd delivers IAG to a wide range of people of all ages, mostly in the London Boroughs of Sutton and Merton. Their strategy in involving parents/carers is that feedback from young people suggests that their parents are the ‘biggest’ influence in career choices.
- The JGA Group contacts the individual and has an initial discussion with them over the telephone to find out if the programme is an appropriate opportunity for them. This will often include career aspirations, commuting times and capabilities. More IAG is delivered as part of the interview process and also included in the induction period. This always focuses on whether this training programme is the most appropriate journey for the individual to take to meet their aspirations and needs. The After Care contact email updates the individual on their application, gives reasons if it has been unsuccessful and signposts to other relevant opportunities. IAG is ongoing as appropriate during the programme.
- Creative Pioneers London gives initial IAG pre-recruitment and then during the enrolment session. Career planning is part of the introduction to apprenticeships’ sessions and is continued during assessor/trainer visits to the apprentice and during progress reviews. The final exit review helps the apprentice to plan their next steps.



- KEITS Training Service Ltd has an Apprenticeship Vacancy Consultant who delivers IAG as well as IAG being embedded in all the staff job roles.
 - KEITS Business Development Consultants also give comprehensive IAG prior to learners joining the programme to ensure the qualifications and training are right for the individual
 - Once learners are on programme, IAG is delivered throughout the programme and is recorded and discussed at their progress reviews
 - KEITS gives IAG at exit from the programme and ensures that all learners are contacted after they have left to record their current destination/progression. At this point, further IAG can also be given.
- The Key Training Group, a national provider, embeds IAG within its programmes and it is delivered over three stages:
 - As part of the application process in order to assist applicants in making the right choices of suitable training programmes and referring applicants who do not currently meet eligibility and/or entry requirements
 - At the commencement of programmes through comprehensive information at induction and during the period of training to provide appropriate and ongoing guidance that gives learners the best opportunity to complete the agreed qualifications/framework
 - On exit from programmes to support learners to progress into relevant employment, higher education, or to further advance their chosen career prospects.
- The Key Training Group has recently set up a new Schools Academy and delivers to all types of schools across England, upskilling staff and delivering qualifications through government-funded programmes. They also offer schools free careers advice sessions. Find out more at <http://www.keyschoolsacademy.co.uk/free-careers-advice-sessions/>
- The London Borough of Tower Hamlets provides IAG throughout the apprenticeship programme and delivers extensive IAG at the end of the programme to support appropriate progression to further education and employment.
- The Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited website outlines their main offers and also states their commitment of giving unbiased IAG at any point of enquiry.
 - At initial assessment, individuals are reminded about the outcomes of the programme and the purpose of the assessment. If an individual is unsuccessful at the assessment for their preferred choice, they are given information on other routes available to them. They are also given advice on acceptable levels for their original choice and how to achieve the required level by revision of certain weak areas and also to discuss about resitting the assessment.



- If successful, the individual is invited to sit a one-hour informal discussion interview with an occupationally competent member of staff. This determines whether the individual is prepared enough for work and investigates how the individual could become employed.
- Once employed, the eight-weekly learner review process includes IAG to enable the learner to progress successfully through their programme.
- The IAG processes also include employers from the initial enquiry, their recruitment needs, sign up and by keeping them informed of their learner's progress once recruited.

The Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited now has a new Trustee who is a teacher with career responsibilities at a local secondary school.

7. The Matrix Standard

All but one of the providers has achieved the Matrix Standard. This is the quality framework for organisations to measure and assess their information, advice and/or guidance services that support individuals in their choice of career, learning or work and life goals. The Standard consists of three elements:

- Leadership and Management: This element is about the way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service.
- Resources: This element describes the assets invested and applied in providing an effective service.
- Service Delivery: This element describes the way in which the service is delivered effectively.

Find out more about the Matrix Standard at www.matrixstandard.com

8. Information, advice and guidance qualifications

Having staff with the correct qualifications is important to ensure that they are fully competent to deliver IAG. All providers have staff who are appropriately qualified or who are working towards appropriate qualifications. The level of qualification is based on the role of the individual in IAG. A brief outline of the qualification levels is below:

- Level 2 This is the basic introductory qualification which focuses on good practice and building confidence
- Level 3 This is appropriate for those who have a responsibility for IAG as part of their core work and also those involved in general signposting.
- Level 4 For experienced practitioners who work directly with clients giving specialist careers advice especially within the adult welfare to work sector such as the National Careers Service



Level 6 This is for those delivering expert career guidance to clients and networking with associated services. It is a usual requirement for delivering specialist careers advice in schools.

Level 7 (Post Graduate Diploma) This is the next stage on from Level 6 and usually leads to school or university-based career guidance roles.

The providers' staff hold the following qualifications:

Creative Pioneers London	1 qualified at Level 3
KEITS	2 qualified at Level 2
Key Training Group	Approximately 10 staff with a mixture of Levels 2, 3 and 4. This is approximately 7% of all staff.
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	4 qualified at Level 3 2 working towards Level 4
Outsource Training and Development Ltd	All staff qualified at Level 4 and all go through Ambassador training with the LWBLA. All staff also undergo training on how Outsource works with schools, students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders.
QA Limited	1 qualified at Level 4 and enrolling for Level 6 1 enrolling for Level 4
Seetec	In process of rolling out Level 3 qualification for all staff with specialists working towards Level 4.
The JGA Group	1 qualified at Level 3 focused on apprenticeships 15 working towards Level 4 focused on National Careers Service 10 qualified at Level 4 or Level 6 focused on National Careers Service
The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd	1 qualified at Level 3 3 qualified at Level 4 and working towards Level 6 Currently working with the London Boroughs of Merton and Sutton in developing an offer for providing Levels 3,4 and 6 for teachers in local schools. Also delivering training to another independent learning provider to ensure their staff are qualified to deliver IAG.
Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited	9 staff qualified at Level 3 (90%)



9. Ofsted inspection reports – judgements on information, advice and guidance

Ofsted inspects IAG under the Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare section of the Common Inspection Framework.

'Staff coordinate information and careers guidance for learners and for those who leave for employment well. Staff and employers plan well for learners' next step in training and employment. As a result, the majority of learners have a good understanding of the career options available to them and a high number gain employment.'

(Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited)

'Staff provide comprehensive guidance to learners to help them select the most appropriate programme to suit their career plans and most apprentices stay to the end of their programme. Staff provide good ongoing guidance to help learners plan their next steps on completing their qualifications. Apprentices are well-informed about their future training options and the range of employment pathways open to them when they complete their programmes.'

(The JGA Group)

'Very good information, advice and guidance arrangements help employability learners to consider their future options. Excellent links with local employers in the various regions enable Seetec to support learners' transition into employment or their progress towards employment. Job entry rates are good and improving across the regions. Seetec supports learners well in their first weeks of employment.'

(Seetec)

'Learners on all programmes receive effective guidance to place them on appropriate programmes and the proportion of learners who stay to the end of their course is high. Learners also receive good information about their options on completing their programmes, and in many subjects a good proportion move on to the next level of learning.'

(The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd)

'Excellent information, advice and guidance help, guide and support apprentices to engage, enjoy, and progress from the very first contact to the end of their programme and beyond. Many apprentices have chosen apprenticeships in preference to university education, knowing that they have the option to use these skills as a stepping stone to university education. Apprentices receive excellent advice and guidance. Staff work exceptionally well with apprentices and employers to match and place apprentices with the right employer. Apprentices develop highly effective curriculum vitae and first rate interview skills that help them succeed in securing employment with their selected employer and a very confident start to their working life. Staff support all



apprentices exceptionally well to gain additional qualifications that enhance their performance in work and equip them to quickly secure promoted roles with their employers.'

(QA Limited)

'Information, advice and guidance are good throughout. Employability learners receive good career advice, including input from employer guest speakers who enliven sessions and set high expectations for learners. OVL's contact centre offers relevant and timely initial information. Trainers carrying out exit interviews and provide appropriate information about progression opportunities.'

(Outsource Training and Development Ltd. Report on Ofsted website under Outsource Vocational Learning Ltd)

'Recruitment and initial advice and guidance are very thorough. The chief executive personally facilitates recruitment events for employers and ensures potential recruits receive clear and objective guidance on opportunities within the sector and how the apprenticeship works in practice.'

(Creative Pioneers London. Report on Ofsted website under Creative Processes)

'Learners receive comprehensive advice and guidance, which is particularly good in preparing them to start their programme. Specialist recruitment staff support them well into their first job, through telephone coaching, recruitment training days and mock interviews. Learners on study programmes and traineeships have a particularly good awareness of progression opportunities and their future careers.'

(Key Training Group)

There is no quote for KEITS Training Services Ltd. as their recent Ofsted inspection was a short inspection and IAG was not part of that inspection.



Appendix One: Providers involved in the survey.

We would like to thank the following providers for taking part in this survey and contributing to the report.

Creative Pioneers, London

KEITS Training Service Ltd.

Key Training Group

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Outsource Training and Development Ltd

QA Limited

Seetec

The JGA Group

The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd

Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited

Appendix Two: London Work based Learning Alliance (LWBLA)

The Work Based Learning Alliance was originally established over a decade ago, in January 2003, as a membership organisation and representative body of work based learning providers in Central London, funded by the Learning & Skills Council.

The London Work Based Learning Alliance (LWBLA) was established as the regional network in 2007 when the five sub-regional networks across London merged to form a unified representative body for training providers. LWBLA is the network for training providers delivering government funded training provision. This includes Study Programmes, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, and Job Centre Plus provision. In addition, many of our members also offer commercially funded training tailored to meet the specific needs of employers.

Work based learning provision is vital to contributing to our country's skills needs, now and in the future and our members are key to delivering the national skills strategies. They deliver vocational and work based learning to young people and adults living and working in London as well as working with a range of employers from small to national commercial companies as well as public employers such as Local Authorities and the NHS.

You can find out more about our work and our members via our website www.lwbla.com.

Membership: Independent Training Providers and Colleges who deliver work based learning in London are eligible to become members of the LWBLA. We work to provide a responsive service to members and to provide support for members' continuing development and improvement. This includes: training and development,



information and advice, networking opportunities and a strategic response to issues important to providers.

Partnership: LWBLA aims to act as a focus for partnership working within the sector and to bring different stakeholders together to discuss relevant issues and work towards a stronger and more flexible work based learning sector in London.

Representation: LWBLA is focused on promoting and influencing the work of members in delivering training and skills to people living and working in London. We work with a range of specialists and partners in areas of importance to members. These include 14-19 curriculum development and partnerships, engaging with employers, adult training, professional development, quality improvement, quality standards and fundraising.

Members are encouraged to become involved in and drive the work of LWBLA and to keep it relevant. There are a variety of ways in which members contribute from being ambassadors representing member's interests, formulating policy, representative groups, attending events and workshops.

Policy response: LWBLA produces a regular e-bulletin to keep members and partners informed and up to date with the latest news and policy developments affecting delivery. LWBLA provides responses to areas of policy of interest to members.

The LWBLA Board: The board is elected annually. Members in each of the five sub-regional networks elect a Chair and vice-Chair, each of whom then becomes a Board Director of the LWBLA. In addition to the ten elected Directors and the Chair, the National Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) is represented as an Observer on the Board.