

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Policy 2026-27

NextStep Training Ltd (NST)

Document control

This is Version 6.0 of the policy for 2026-27. It replaces Version 5.4 (February 2025). It has been updated to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the apprenticeship funding rules 2026 to 2027, with out-of-date references removed: traineeships (which ended in 2023), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (whose work moved to the Department for Education in April 2025), the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (whose work moved to Skills England in 2025) and local enterprise partnerships.

Version	Date	Author	Authorised by	Next review
6.0	21 October 2026	Ahmed Khan (Managing Director)	Ahmed Khan, Managing Director	21 October 2027
5.4	19 February 2025	Ahmed Khan	Ahmed Khan, Managing Director	February 2026

Next review date: 21/10/2027

Approval: This policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Name: AHMED KHAN

Title: Managing Director

Signature: 

Date: 21/10/2026

1. Strategy

To deliver a robust, impartial and effective IAG service to apprentices, prospective learners, employers, staff and partners that responds to their needs and meets national standards and requirements.

Strategic aim

To help prospective apprentices and employers make well-informed, realistic decisions about training and development that support career progression, help people choose progression routes (such as further training, higher-level apprenticeships or employment), and meet employers' workforce needs.

Strategic objectives

- to give impartial, unbiased IAG in a form that is easy to understand
- to treat IAG confidentially in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, except where safeguarding requires information to be shared
- to promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our provision
- to monitor, review, evaluate and continually improve our IAG
- to monitor how well our provision supports safeguarding, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Prevent and British values
- to signpost people to other organisations where their query is outside our expertise
- to measure progress against these objectives through NST's business plan, self-assessment report (SAR), quality improvement plan (QIP) and key performance indicators

2. Building capacity

NST was awarded the matrix Standard for IAG in 2013 and has self-assessed against the standard since. [Confirm current matrix accreditation status.] NST revisits the IAG principles every year, and strengths and areas for improvement are built into the business plan, SAR and QIP. NST's self-assessment follows Ofsted's further education and skills inspection framework.

NST provides IAG to all clients: prospective and current apprentices and their parents or carers, employers, staff and partners.

3. Apprentices and prospective learners

Aim

To give apprentices, applicants, and parents or carers of apprentices under 18 access to IAG that is current, reliable, easy to understand and answers the questions they may have about learning and skills. IAG helps people become more self-reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development. It includes personalising learning through the individual learning plan and training plan, identifying additional learning support needs and special educational needs, English and maths requirements, the right occupational standard and level, and employability skills.

Objectives

1. To help people understand the opportunities available, through clear information in a range of formats, so they can make informed, realistic decisions.

2. To evaluate and improve our performance against key performance indicators in the business plan; apprentice retention, achievement and progression data, used to check that IAG led to the right programme; and how well equality and diversity, English and maths, safeguarding, Prevent and British values are embedded in IAG.
3. To provide IAG free of charge to all applicants and apprentices.
4. To help people overcome barriers to learning and progression, encouraging lifelong learning.

4. Employers

Aim

To give employers IAG that is current, reliable and easy to understand, answering the questions they may have when considering and delivering apprenticeships, and helping them develop their business through training that meets their needs.

Objectives

1. To advise employers on government-funded apprenticeships in NST's occupational areas, explaining eligibility and the funding available under the Department for Education's apprenticeship funding rules for the current year, including when training is fully funded and when the employer must co-invest, and any incentives available.
2. To evaluate and improve our performance against employer responsiveness and engagement, apprentice achievement and completion, and key performance indicators in the business plan.
3. To offer training needs analysis for employers, and to deliver or signpost suitable training solutions.
4. To review training needs analyses at least every 6 months and discuss progression opportunities.
5. To help employers understand government initiatives and register where needed, for example on the apprenticeship service.
6. To make sure employers understand their responsibilities for apprentices' safeguarding, health and safety and off-the-job training.

5. Staff

Aim

To give all NST staff effective IAG so they keep developing their knowledge and skills, perform their roles well and contribute to NST's culture.

Objectives

1. To help staff recognise the extent of their own competence and direct them to the right internal or external continuing professional development (CPD).
2. To train all staff in IAG to the level their role needs, through NST's CPD and training calendar and training needs analysis.
3. To measure improvement through staff retention, CPD (including Education and Training Foundation and awarding organisation training), appraisals, induction plans and key performance indicators.
4. To improve NST's performance through its staff, in a way that supports apprentices.

5. To maintain NST's team ethos and values.
6. To make sure delivery staff keep their professional registrations and CPD up to date.

A flow chart shows staff who give first-point-of-contact IAG which colleagues specialise in which areas. Contact details of other providers and support organisations are kept in the main office to help with signposting.

6. Partners

Aim

To build and maintain positive working relationships with partners through effective communication.

Objectives

1. To work with partners involved in delivering apprenticeships, including employers, awarding organisations and end-point assessment organisations.
2. To work with the National Careers Service, Skills England, the apprenticeship service (www.apprenticeships.gov.uk), Jobcentre Plus, the Department for Work and Pensions and other referral and support agencies to meet the needs of young people, adults and employers.
3. To work with the Department for Education as NST's funding body.
4. To measure our work against national, regional and local priorities for retention, achievement and progression.
5. To review annual and three-year plans in response to changes in the funding and economic climate.
6. To make sure employer and apprentice voice is heard and acted on.
7. To meet the key performance indicators in the business plan.

7. Promoting IAG

- Promotional materials are shared with referral organisations.
- NST staff attend promotional shows and events.
- Information on NST's website and promotional materials is reviewed regularly and kept up to date.

8. Responsibilities

- Recruitment and business development advisers, and tutors and assessors, give IAG to prospective apprentices during recruitment; give on-programme support to help apprentices stay on and complete their apprenticeship; and give guidance at the end of the programme on employment and career progression.
- The Managing Director and senior leadership team, including the Head of Quality, line-manage and quality-assure IAG services.

9. Quality assurance and evaluation

IAG is quality-assured through participant feedback and analysis of retention, achievement and progression data. The senior leadership team monitors front-line delivery, including observing IAG, and

identifies improvements. Findings are discussed at management meetings and reported to the Board of Governors.

10. In summary

Entitlement

All prospective apprentices and enquirers are entitled to appropriate, current IAG and help with choosing a programme, planning their career and moving into or progressing in work.

Enquirers

Enquiries may come from careers services, schools, young people, parents, employers, awarding organisations, Jobcentre Plus advisers, NST's website and the apprenticeship service, as well as from current apprentices and staff.

What you can expect from NST staff

- to treat you with respect
- to be occupationally competent, trained and up to date on qualifications and routes
- to give you current information on training
- to keep your information confidential, except where we must share it to keep you or others safe

NST will

- maintain the quality of its IAG against the matrix Standard
- keep improving its services
- signpost effectively to other services
- embed quality improvement in line with Ofsted's inspection framework and DfE requirements
- provide effective staff training and CPD

Helping us improve

- we welcome suggestions for improvement
- we ask for your views on our IAG and provision
- we tell you who to contact and what to do if you are not happy, under our Complaints Handling Policy
- we analyse feedback from apprentice and employer voice surveys, focus groups and forums

11. The apprentice journey and IAG

Stage	IAG provided	Resources
Recruitment	NST promotes programmes to apprentices and employers; the website gives information on what is offered; individual briefings check suitability and eligibility; applicants who do not meet requirements are referred to other agencies	NST website, marketing materials, referral letters, guide to finding employment, interview preparation guide

Stage	IAG provided	Resources
Initial assessment	Recruitment and business development staff assess the applicant's skills and prior learning; a one-to-one session explains NST, the programmes and sectors; unsuccessful applicants are signposted; successful applicants get guidance on finding employment where needed	Initial assessment, skills scan, guide to finding employment, interview preparation guide, referral notes
Start and induction	Initial assessment results inform the training plan and individual learning plan, with SMART targets and a schedule; induction includes a safeguarding and Prevent session	Learner handbook (including health and safety, equality and diversity, safeguarding and Prevent), training plan, individual learning plan
Teaching, assessment and review	Tutors review progress at least every 12 weeks (and never more than 6 months apart, as the funding rules require), give IAG and agree actions	Progress review document, including health and safety, equality, safeguarding, Prevent and British values
Support and retention	Mentoring for all apprentices; retention and intervention for anyone at risk of leaving or making slow progress; complaints and compliments process	Referral agency list, retention and intervention process, review document, complaints procedure
Achievement and progression	Guidance on gateway, end-point assessment and next steps, including higher-level apprenticeships and career progression	Progression plan, end-point assessment guidance, final IAG review