

Information, Advice & Guidance Policy

Positive Smiles C.I.C.

Document control

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2.4	Annual review, Positive Smiles rebrand and realignment to adult services	01/08/2026	31/07/2027	Shabir Siddiq

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) that Positive Smiles C.I.C. provides to potential and current participants, staff and partners. It is designed to ensure consistent, effective and fair treatment for all. This policy has been impact assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect anyone on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, race, nationality, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or age. It should be read with our other policies, including the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy.

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (IAG)

Definitions:

- Information means factual, unbiased information about learning, wellbeing, work and community opportunities. It can be given verbally, in printed material or online.
- Advice involves more in-depth conversation. It includes explaining information and how to access and use it. When giving advice we will always suggest, or encourage you to explore, different ways of achieving your goals.
- Guidance involves an in-depth session or series of sessions in which a member of staff helps a participant make decisions about learning, work and wellbeing. This may include support in accessing and using online resources.

OBJECTIVES

We measure the effectiveness of our IAG service against these objectives (specific targets may vary from year to year):

To provide impartial, unbiased IAG in a form that is easily understood by the recipient.

1. To ensure IAG is treated confidentially as per the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
2. To ensure IAG promotes and embeds equality and diversity throughout all the provision.
3. To systematically monitor, review, evaluate and continually improve our IAG and measure performance.
4. To signpost participants to other organisations and services where a query or concern is outside our scope or competence.
5. Keeping participants engaged and reducing early withdrawal.
6. Participants achieving the goals they set with us.
7. Participant satisfaction levels.

SPECIFIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

Objectives - Participants

1. To help participants understand the range of opportunities available, through clear information in a variety of formats, so they can make informed and realistic decisions about their personal, learning and work goals.
2. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance and measure through:
 - Key Performance Indicators mapped to the Operational Plan.
 - Participant engagement, retention and progress towards their goals, which informs the choice of the most suitable activity, initial assessment and goal setting.
 - Embedding equality, diversity, safeguarding, and English, maths and digital skills into all aspects of IAG.
3. To provide our IAG services free of charge to participants.
4. To help participants overcome barriers to learning, wellbeing and progression, encouraging an ethos of lifelong learning.

Staff - Aim

To give all staff effective IAG so they can keep developing their knowledge and skills, perform their role well and contribute to the culture of Positive Smiles.

Objectives

1. To enable our staff to identify their own competencies and to direct them to the most appropriate internal and/or external sources who can address individual CPD (Continuous Professional Development) needs.
 2. To train all staff involved in IAG to a level that meets their job role and responsibilities.
 3. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance measuring performance against:
 - Staff retention
 - Staff CPD against funder and role requirements
 - Staff Appraisals
 - Key Performance Indicators
 - Business needs
 4. To keep developing effective ways of improving our performance through our staff.
- Up-to-date contact details for other local services and organisations are kept by the team and shared with participants when needed.

Partners and Contractors - Aim

To foster and maintain positive working relationships with partners and sub-contractors via effective embedded communications strategies.

Objectives

1. To work with the National Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus, local employers, community organisations and referral agencies to offer the most effective support (within our scope) to meet the needs and aspirations of the adults we support.
2. To work with our funders and commissioners and contribute towards their plans and priorities.

Measurements of success of the IAG policy:

- Participant engagement, retention, progression and achievement of personal, learning and work goals.
- Annual review of our plans to respond to the changing financial and economic climate and participants' needs.
- Participant and partner feedback.
- Organisational Operational Plan targets met.

IAG Promotion - Being aware of the service and engaging with it

- Promotional materials are shared with referral agencies and community organisations.
- Staff attend community events and information days.
- Staff make sure information in promotional materials is reviewed regularly and kept up to date.

Responsibilities

- Staff are responsible for giving information, advice and guidance to people who enquire about joining Positive Smiles activities.
- Tutors and support staff give participants initial and ongoing support to help them stay engaged and achieve their goals.
- Staff give participants guidance when they leave our activities about next steps, including further learning, volunteering and employment.
- The Directors are responsible for overseeing front-line IAG services against business objectives.

Quality Assurance & Evaluation

- Our IAG services are quality assured through participant feedback and analysis of participant engagement, retention and progression. Line managers monitor front-line delivery, including observation of IAG, and identify areas for improvement.
- Participant feedback and quality monitoring findings are discussed at monthly management and team meetings, and reviewed quarterly.

IAG STATEMENT OF SERVICE

AIMS

1. To give all participants and potential participants information, advice and guidance that helps them make the best choices about wellbeing, learning and work.

2. To help participants choose suitable activities, build self-confidence, complete their programmes, develop realistic plans and make progress in their lives, learning and work.

OUTCOMES OF OUR IAG SERVICE

We aim for our IAG support to benefit participants. We will monitor these outcomes:

- Participants completing their chosen activities
- Participants achieving their personal, learning and work goals
- Participants progressing to further learning or volunteering
- Participants progressing into employment, or into more responsibility or better pay at work

IMPLEMENTATION

We make sure participants get clear, accurate and timely information to help them overcome barriers and achieve their goals. Impartial information, advice and guidance helps them make informed choices about their activities and next steps. Our IAG service is accessible and visible from the start and throughout each participant's time with us.

IAG is available at community events, at our hub and at any time while a person is with us. Where Positive Smiles does not have the information requested, we will find it for the person or give them the name and contact details of an organisation that does.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that any enquiry they receive for IAG is passed to the appropriate member of staff and that the individual requesting information receives a response within three days of their request.

Staff who deliver IAG receive training appropriate to their role, and Positive Smiles holds in-house sessions to share good practice and keep staff up to date.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Participants can be helped in many ways, for example with study skills, digital skills, and English and maths. Whatever the need, we can help or we know someone who can.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

All participants are offered an initial assessment so that Positive Smiles can respond to individual needs. Where relevant, this includes English, maths and digital skills, and additional support is offered where needed. Participants who are concerned about their English, maths or digital skills can ask for help at any time.

Before you start, we may also use the following to support your learning:

- Cognassist Assessment – this tells us whether you need additional learning support, based on several cognitive assessments.
- Learning Styles Questionnaire – helps to understand how you learn

- Starting-point check – this records your current skills, confidence and goals so we can track your progress.

SUPPORT DURING YOUR STUDIES

We will provide on-going advice and guidance throughout your time with us to assist your learning and your personal development. This will include:

- Support from your tutor or a support staff member
- Guidance on how your progress will be reviewed
- Information, advice and guidance to help you plan your learning, work and personal development
- Reasonable adjustments and support if you have a disability or additional needs.

On wider issues, including relationships, health, and drug or alcohol support, we will signpost you to specialist agencies.

HELP WITH MOVING ON

We will provide help and support to enable you to choose what you will do next. This may include:

- Support from staff with information about your options, whether that is another course, volunteering, employment or further and higher education.

Information, advice and guidance about looking for work, including CVs, application forms, interview preparation and finding vacancies.

We will not always be the best source of IAG, and in these cases we will signpost or refer you to a better-placed agency or resource. Where we do, we will ask for feedback on how suitable and useful it was. We also use the National Careers Service website.

All referrals are in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and our Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM US?

Accurate and impartial information, advice, and guidance

We offer information and advice on the activities and courses available at Positive Smiles. If another organisation is more suitable, we will suggest alternatives where possible.

A service that meets our own quality standards and our funders' requirements.

This means that our service will be:

- Accessible and visible
- Professional and knowledgeable
- Impartial
- Responsive to your needs

- Friendly and welcoming

EQUALITY OF TREATMENT

We aim to ensure everyone has equal access to IAG, regardless of sex, colour, ethnicity, age, socio-economic background, disability, religion or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant distinction.

Positive Smiles recognises the right of all participants to equal access to opportunities. Participants should discuss any individual needs, including a disability such as dyslexia, with their tutor or a support staff member, who will know who to contact and how to help. Our staff team can offer support in a range of languages, as we know language can be a barrier. Please ask if you need language support.

Please see our full Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy on the Positive Smiles website for more information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

To provide the best possible service, we keep a record of your details, your progress and your contacts with us. Only authorised Positive Smiles staff who need this information for their work can access it. We take all appropriate physical, technical and contractual measures to keep your information secure.

- We will discuss your needs and circumstances and give you details of other organisations or agencies should we feel that they would more effectively meet your needs and signpost you to these.
- We will discuss the referral with you and any sharing of information will be agreed prior to disclosure to any other organisation or agency.
- If you are not satisfied and would prefer another organisation or agency, we can make an appointment for you if you wish.
- To ensure continuous quality improvement, we will ask your permission to contact you at a later date to discuss the quality of service you have received.

Please see our Privacy Policy and our Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy on our website for further details.

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM YOU?

As much relevant information as you can give us so that we can answer your enquiry fully; for example, disclosing a disability or additional requirement to enable us to provide extra support if applicable.

If you have any questions or concerns about your enquiry, your activity or your progress, please contact us as soon as possible so we can resolve them.

In return we ask you to be open with us – for example, please tell us:

- If you do not want to go to another organisation or agency.

- If you do accept the referral, you will be expected to attend the interview as arranged. If you are unable to attend, please inform the organisation as soon as you are able.

FEEDBACK, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We are committed to improving our services and regularly ask participants how satisfied they are with the activities and support provided by Positive Smiles.

We welcome any comments that may help us improve. If you are a participant, you can pass comments to your tutor, a Director or any member of staff.

If you are not yet a participant, you can contact us through our website (www.positivesmiles.co.uk) or on 01254 946444. We hope you are happy with the service you receive, but if

you are not, we will look into it. Complaints are treated in confidence and we will do our best to resolve them fairly and quickly under the Positive Smiles Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available on 01254 946444 or by email: info@positivesmiles.co.uk

HOW TO CONTACT US:

You can access our information service through:

- Course and activity enquiries: 01254 946444
- General enquiries: 01254 946444
- Email: info@positivesmiles.co.uk
- Website: www.positivesmiles.co.uk
- In person: at our Haslingden community hub (please contact us first to arrange a visit).

Signed by the Director



01/08/2026