

The *matrix* Standard

Guidance for National Careers Service Providers

ELEMENT 1 - LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

This element is about the way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service

Criteria	What this might mean	What this might mean in practice
<p>1.1 The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims</p>	<p>Management and staff are able to describe and give examples of measurable aims and objectives of the service and how they link to the wider organisational strategic aims. Managers and staff can describe how they are involved in developing the aims and objectives of the service.</p>	<p>You need to be clear about the contribution IAG makes to the achievement of your organisational aims and how this is supporting the priorities of the National Careers Service as a whole: Social Mobility, Driving Cost, Driving Ambition.</p> <p>Your Assessor will want to speak to a senior person within your organisation to confirm the overall strategic aims and how the IAG service fits with these, the National Careers Service national priorities and any locally agreed measures with, for example, LEPs and Mayoral Combined Authorities. Useful documents may include Vision, Mission and planning documents.</p> <p>Milestones or targets for the IAG service need to be clear, for example, the percentage of job or learning outcomes.</p> <p>This criterion links closely to criteria 3.2 and 4.1.</p>
<p>1.2 The service is provided with clear leadership and direction</p>	<p>Managers can describe how they lead and direct people in the delivery of the service. Staff can describe how well managers lead them to deliver the service.</p>	<p>Your leadership team will have effectively communicated what the organisation is striving to achieve, as an organisation and as a deliverer of the National Careers Service and how this relates to the service/s being delivered. Staff will be able to clearly describe this and have a clear understanding of the 'direction of travel' of the organisation.</p>

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<p>1.3 The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe and give examples of how the systems and processes in place promote equality, diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity.</p>	<p>Managers and staff will be able to provide examples of how the IAG service demonstrates your equality and diversity policy in practice. This could be demonstrated by providing materials in a range of formats or having access to translation or interpreting services. You may be using monitoring data to target specific groups; for example you may have found through monitoring that there is a progression gap between different types of client and so you implement new approaches to address this. You could give examples of outcomes for specific groups, which help to demonstrate these policies in practice.</p> <p>You may wish to consider questions such as: Do you monitor the steps you have taken to ensure your workforce reflects the communities they serve? Can you give examples of how you identify and provide appropriate support for with additional barriers? What have you done to break down career stereotypes? How do you ensure that all of the Priority Groups are given equal access to support to enable them to make progress, including the hardest to help?</p> <p>You could give examples of how you refer clients to other providers to demonstrate impartiality. Where you also deliver other services, can you demonstrate that internal signposting to your own provision is in the best interests of clients?</p> <p>Confidentiality can be demonstrated in a number of ways, for example: access to confidential meeting rooms/spaces, by staff explaining how they cover it at the start of an interview, by being described in client materials, how data is managed or by clients confirming their understanding of how the service is confidential.</p> <p>You can also describe how you uphold any professional codes of practice in your work with clients.</p>

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<p>1.4 The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe and give examples of legislation including how it impacts on the service.</p>	<p>Appropriate legislation is likely to vary depending upon the nature of the service/s being delivered and the client group/s. However, it is likely to include areas such as health and safety including lone working, equality and diversity, data protection/data privacy and employment legislation as a minimum. It is important that all staff can provide examples of appropriate legislation and how they are updated with any changes.</p> <p>For example, staff should be able to describe how the organisation has ensured rigorous safeguarding, and/or how health and safety legislation is an integral part of day-to-day activities. Compliance with data processing and record keeping should include staff understanding their role and processes if a customer requests access to their data or for it to be removed.</p>
<p>1.5 The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service</p>	<p>Examples of definitions of client outcomes are provided. Managers can describe how they are set and who is involved. They can describe how they are reviewed.</p>	<p>You can describe how, as part of your planning process, you have identified the impacts/outcomes you expect your service/s to achieve for your clients. These could include knowledge of options and what to do next, increased confidence/motivation, improved communication skills, making progress, development of career management skills, achievement of action plan targets, progression towards career goals.</p> <p>Careers and Skills Action Plans should detail tailored goals and actions that are agreed with the client using SMART approaches. At each intervention, actions should be reviewed and provide a 'distance travelled' log of progress (see 4.2). The action plans should reflect the standards set in the Customer Charter.</p> <p>The intended client outcomes should be in the context of the aims and objectives you have established for your organisation and your service/s.</p> <p>This criterion is linked closely to criteria 3.1 and 4.2.</p>

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<p>1.6 The organisation promotes the service in ways which are accessible to all those eligible to use it</p>	<p>Managers and staff can explain different methods of how the service is promoted - what works well, and why, in relation to the eligible client group.</p>	<p>Consider how your service/s is promoted including how different methods of marketing and promotion have been used to ensure that information about the service/s is accessible to all potential clients. You should be able to describe which promotional activity works best, and why, in relation to the eligible client group/s. Examples could include your website, leaflets, social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, attendance at events, managed referral activity or presence at outreach venues.</p> <p>The monitoring of the effectiveness of your promotional activity should consider whether you are reaching all of the Priority Groups, or whether there are some Priority Groups where additional/different promotional activities are needed.</p> <p>If referral from another organisation/s is a key feature, consider how you keep them up to date with your current service offer.</p>
<p>1.7 Clients and staff influence the design and development of the service</p>	<p>Service design and delivery reflects the views and experiences of staff and clients. Staff and clients are able to describe how they are involved in the design and development of the service and give examples of how they have influenced both.</p>	<p>This is about the opportunities you provide for clients and staff to influence the service. For example, you may have a client involvement strategy which outlines the different ways in which clients are involved in developing the service, and your staff may input their ideas at staff / team meetings. You will need to give examples to demonstrate changes as a result of this involvement and show how this feedback has helped shape the current service.</p>

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<p>1.8 The organisation establishes effective links with other appropriate partnerships and networks to enhance the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they establish links with other partnerships and networks and measure the effectiveness of the relationship. Representatives from partnerships and networks are able to give examples of how well their relationship is working with the service.</p>	<p>You can describe the partnerships and networks you are involved with and how these benefit your service/s. This could be organisations with whom you have a contractual relationship, those that you network with in order to provide wider support to your clients, or information sharing to inform your own practice. This can also include internal partnerships and networks formed to support / enhance the service, along with the different National Careers Service channels.</p> <p>Consider: How can you demonstrate that you know your local area? How are you capturing local Labour Market Information through networking/partnership activity? With whom are your key networking/partnership arrangements at strategic and service delivery level? How is the work of the JCP, LEPs, Mayoral Combined Authorities, Opportunity Areas, Skills Advisory Panels, influencing your work? What do you know about the local skills environment in your area?</p> <p>This criterion links closely to criterion 4.4 so you will need to describe how you evaluate the effectiveness of the relationships.</p>

ELEMENT 2 - Resources

This element describes the assets invested and applied in providing an effective service

Criteria	What this means	What this might mean in practice
<p>2.1 The organisation uses its resources effectively to deliver the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain what resources – including human, physical and financial are needed to deliver the service/s. Managers and staff are able to explain how the level of resource, in relation to client needs, are established and can give examples of how effectively resources are used.</p>	<p>You need to demonstrate how when planning service delivery, you ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver the service/s effectively. Resources may include delivery premises, your staff, equipment/technology engaged, career management resources for all delivery channels including how you share your LMI strategy or disseminate LMI information to staff eg via in-house intranet or other internal systems.</p> <p>Consider: How are you using technology to deliver your service efficiently? How are you using technology to ensure geographical reach across your area? How is data helping you to manage your performance e.g. fail to attend rates? Are staff placed in geographical areas to ensure uptake of the service? How are you ensuring that you have sufficiently qualified staff and that you retain them in the service?</p>
<p>2.2 Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive</p>	<p>Clients and staff are able to describe and give examples of the types of information they were able to access and explain how appropriate it was to their needs. Managers and staff are able to describe what quality assurance systems are in place to ensure information is current, accurate and is written in plain language, free from bias and takes account of diversity. Managers and staff delivering the service are able to explain how they support clients and how the resources they use are quality assured</p>	<p>You need to describe the resources you use, (both paper based and electronic) for example: current labour market information, occupational job profiles and training/provider prospectuses, job search websites, information about other local agencies/providers, other online resources and also the systems used to maintain them. Where you are using online resources you should be able to demonstrate how you know they are reputable and quality assured.</p> <p>You could outline how you utilise resources on the National Careers Service website, and how you pass on feedback about the content.</p> <p>You could review resources as part of team meetings or a staff member could have responsibility for reviewing new and existing resources periodically, ensuring that the review of resources is part of the quality assurance approaches.</p>

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Criteria	What this means	What this might mean in practice
<p>2.3 The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service</p>	<p>Managers can describe and give examples of how they identify and define the skills, knowledge and competencies of staff roles linked to achieving the aims and objectives of the service/s including being aware of the boundaries of their role. Managers and staff can describe the qualifications and frameworks which are appropriate to their role in delivering the aims and objectives of the service/s. For careers guidance staff in England this should include professional standards and qualifications determined by the Career Development Institute or other representative bodies.</p>	<p>You need to describe the skills, knowledge, competencies and / or qualifications needed for each job role.</p> <p>For staff delivering careers advice, staff need to be qualified to a minimum of Level 4 in Advice and Guidance. For other staff, qualifications do not necessarily have to be IAG qualifications; for example, Customer Service qualifications for reception staff who deal with enquiries may be appropriate.</p> <p>You could also show examples of job descriptions to demonstrate how you have defined the skills, knowledge and competencies; or you may be using a competency based performance review framework which defines what is required for each job role.</p>
<p>2.4 Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development and provided with opportunities for career progression</p>	<p>Managers and staff can explain and give examples of how they are supported in continually developing their skills, knowledge and competence including any appropriate qualifications for their role. Managers and staff are able to describe how they are involved in the process of identifying their needs and appropriate learning and development activities, including career progression opportunities.</p>	<p>Examples here could include the National Careers Service Best Practice programme, action learning sets, short courses (such as motivational interviewing techniques, using career aptitude tests with client groups, safeguarding), shadowing, development activities during team meetings, informal training, reading, contribution to professional journals, sharing best practice, attending conferences, use of National Careers Service COACH online resource, peer observation of service delivery as well as formal qualifications. You may consider how you support staff to progress in their careers, for example through increasing the level of their qualification from Level 4 to 6. What plans or strategies are in place to upskill your adviser workforce?</p>

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Criteria	What this means	What this might mean in practice
2.5 Effective induction processes are in place for all staff	Managers are able to describe the induction process for all roles including staff employed by the organisation and any volunteers. Newly recruited staff and those who have recently changed roles can describe the induction process and how this has helped them perform effectively.	Anyone who has recently joined your organisation should be able to outline the effectiveness of their induction, this will include mandatory modules from the COACH programme. They will need to be able to discuss how the knowledge and skills required to do the job were made available to them and whether they had been introduced to the organisation in an effective way. Also, anyone changing role within your organisation or who has returned from long term absence will be able to confirm that they have been given the support and development necessary to enable them to understand their role and carry it out.

ELEMENT 3 - Service Delivery

This element describes the way in which the service is delivered effectively

Criteria	What this means	What this might mean in practice
<p>3.1 The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to define the service/s offering, in relation to their client group including prospective / potential clients and give examples how they ensure clients understand the service/s offering. Clients can describe and give examples of how they know what to expect from the service/s.</p> <p>The Customer Charter is a customer-facing document that is required to be explained and shared with the customer.</p>	<p>Clients can describe and give examples of how they know what to expect from the service/s as explained to them at the beginning of their journey; this may include the different ways in which they can gain support such as, face to face, telephone and by digital means. Clients will also be able to explain the expectations upon them as a recipient of the service offer.</p> <p>Your staff can provide examples of how they ensure clients understand possible outcomes that can be achieved by the service/s delivered in line with the current National Careers Service Customer Charter.</p> <p>This criterion is linked closely to criteria 1.5 and 4.2.</p>
<p>3.2 The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe and give examples of the service/s delivery in place which supports the delivery of the aims and objectives.</p>	<p>Staff can describe how service/s that have been provided were delivered in ways that meet the aims and objectives as described within criterion 1.1. In considering whether the service delivery is undertaken effectively you may consider any service standards you have set, such as response times or timeliness of follow up activity, and engagement with a range of client groups.</p> <p>This criterion is linked closely with criteria 1.1 and 4.1.</p>
<p>3.3 The service provided is impartial and objective</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they ensure the service/s is impartial, free from bias and objective. Clients can describe how they are made aware of any potential conflicts of interest in the advice provided and understand the limitations of the service/s.</p>	<p>Consider how you would explain to an Assessor that the service delivery is centred upon the individual and their needs and goals and how your service/s is free from bias.</p> <p>You may wish to show examples of client outcomes and destination data to emphasise the breadth of progression pathways and / or impartiality.</p> <p>Where a service is part of an organisation that directly provides other services, e.g. learning opportunities, you will need to demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest and that options presented are in the best interests of the client.</p>

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<p>3.4 Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions</p>	<p>Clients are able to describe and give examples of how they have benefited from support process and how they were able to explore different options that met their expectations. Clients are able to describe what support they were given to understand and make appropriate choices. Clients are able to describe how they came to their decisions</p>	<p>Staff delivering your service should be able to describe how they check that clients have understood the options open to them and the consequences of alternative courses of action. Clients should also be able to describe their experience and how they made an informed decision without influence or pressure. They should describe the agreed actions in their Careers and Skills Action Plan and how the actions support their goals.</p>
<p>3.5 When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including access to technology</p>	<p>Clients are able to describe and give examples of what resources were made available when exploring different and appropriate options.</p>	<p>Staff and clients can give examples of the resources used, for example, researching useful websites for information such as the National Careers Service, or other relevant sites such as National Apprenticeship Service, job search and education/training provider websites, or using software packages to help people make choices. Other examples could include Apps for smart phones and hardcopy resources such as prospectuses and job vacancies. This links to criterion 2.2</p>
<p>3.6 Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate agencies or organisations</p>	<p>Clients are able to describe the benefits they received by being referred to other appropriate agencies or organisations. Representatives from partnerships and networks are able to explain what benefits and services clients referred to them have received.</p>	<p>Staff should describe examples of when they have referred clients and how they know that clients have benefited from this. They should be able to describe how they have ensured that the signposting/referral has been relevant to the client's needs taking into account factors such as the personal circumstances that may affect the ability to attend other provision at particular times. Staff will be able to describe how signposting/referral across the different channels for the National Careers Service has supported client progression. Clients and partners can also describe how effective such referrals have been.</p>

ELEMENT 4 - Continuous Quality Improvement

This element describes the way in which the service provided is reviewed and performance improves as a result.

Criteria	What this means	What this might mean in practice
<p>4.1 The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives and identifies improvements</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain and give measurable examples of the extent to which the aims and objectives have been met. Managers and staff can describe how all aspects of the service/s are reviewed against the measurable aims and objectives including promotion/engagement, service delivery, resources, leadership/management.</p>	<p>There are strong linkages between this criterion, 1.1 and 3.2. Linked together, the criteria help to demonstrate the ‘plan, do, review’ cycle.</p> <p>You need to provide information on the measurement of the aims and objectives you set in criterion 1.1 and, knowing the results, what improvements you have put in place.</p> <p>The emphasis here is on knowing what you have achieved against the objectives you set and implementing changes as a result. You may have this information in Management Information statistics, funder’s reports, annual reports, self-assessment reports etc.</p> <p>Your staff should be able to explain how monitoring and evaluation has identified improvements and informed the future planning and review processes.</p>
<p>4.2 The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery</p>	<p>Managers, staff and where appropriate clients are able to describe and give examples of how client outcomes are used to improve the service.</p>	<p>There are strong linkages between this criterion, 1.5 and 3.1. The linkage of the criteria helps to demonstrate the client’s journey and the outcomes realised.</p> <p>You need to provide information on how your clients have achieved the outcomes you defined in criterion 1.5 and what improvements you have implemented as a result.</p> <p>A key document will be the Careers and Skills Action Plans that will show that they are progressive and build upon previous interventions. You will monitor client progress, for example through the completion of action plan goals and you may also complete distance travelled tools, or other monitoring processes, and describe how customer follow up and review has helped to improve the service.</p> <p>The emphasis is on knowing the impact of your interventions upon clients and what improvements you have implemented as a result of knowing these.</p>

ELEMENT 4 - Continuous Quality Improvement

This element describes the way in which the service provided is reviewed and performance improves as a result.

Criteria	What this means	What this might mean in practice
<p>4.3 The organisation evaluates feedback on the service to build upon its strengths and addresses any areas for improvement</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain how all forms of feedback and evaluation information are used to establish areas of strength and areas for improvement. Clients are aware of who to contact with a compliment, comment or complaint and the process the organisation will follow in dealing with them. Managers and staff are able to explain how complaints are recorded, investigated and what action is taken.</p>	<p>There are strong linkages between this criterion, 1.1, 1.5 and 1.7. You will need to describe how you collect feedback and give examples of how it has been used to improve the service/s firstly from in-house satisfaction surveys but also from external sources such as ESFA's Ipsos Mori and Mystery Shopping surveys.</p> <p>Clients and staff can also help by describing things that have changed as a result of their feedback.</p> <p>Consider: What feedback activity have you undertaken yourselves? What external feedback mechanisms do you have access to? What are the themes/trends and what are you doing differently as a result of knowing these? How are you using Customer Satisfaction surveys and Mystery Shopping results to improve your service delivery?</p>
<p>4.4 The organisation evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships and networks to improve the service</p>	<p>Clients, staff and other stakeholders are able to describe the evaluation process and give examples of how the information is used to improve the service. Examples should show measurable outcomes and link to improvements.</p>	<p>This criterion links to criterion 1.8. You will need to describe how you review the effectiveness of your partnership working; how you know that the relationships benefit both parties and your clients. Where you work with a supply chain, how effective is this?</p> <p>Evidence can also consist of Service Level Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding you may have in place with partners.</p> <p>You will also need to share any changes you have made as a result of this evaluation.</p>

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<p>4.5 The organisation defines quality assurance approaches which are used to improve the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how the service is quality assured and what plans, policies, procedures and/or processes are in place and how they are implemented.</p>	<p>You will need to describe the systems you have in place to monitor the quality of service delivery and how these processes help you to improve your information, advice and/or guidance. For example observations of staff, action plan audits, bringing together the range of feedback methodologies both internal and external etc.</p> <p>Key documents will be your Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan, observation records and client documentation audits.</p>
<p>4.6 Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, is reviewed and evaluated to improve the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe the process for evaluating performance in relation to roles, aims and objectives of the service. Managers are able to give measurable examples of how effective staff performance has been in relation to service aims and objectives.</p>	<p>Staff will need to describe the process used for performance review such as appraisal, and give examples of the objectives they agreed/were set as a result. They will also need to explain how these link to the service/s aims and objectives.</p>
<p>4.7 Effective use is made of technology to improve the service</p>	<p>Clients, managers and staff are able to describe and give examples of how technology has enhanced the way they deliver the service.</p>	<p>Staff should describe the technology used to support service delivery and give examples of how things have improved as a result. This may include access to digital services, use of CRM systems, access to online products, electronic communication systems etc.</p>
<p>4.8 The organisation continually reviews improvements to help inform the future aims and objectives of the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to provide examples of actions which have been taken to improve the service on an on-going basis.</p>	<p>This criterion is the overarching review cycle that closely relates to criteria 1.1, 1.5, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.</p> <p>You will need to describe how your processes enable you to 'plan, do and review' in order to improve your service/s to clients. You will need to describe examples of how such reviews have influenced planning and led to further changes.</p>