



## **Adult Advancement and Careers Service**

### **Co location and joint working between nextstep and JobcentrePlus – service features to support success**

In preparation for the launch of AACS in Autumn 2010 there are planned to be a number of Advancement Network Trials with JCP to explore effective delivery and innovation of services for the public. The Institute of Career Guidance represents over four thousand career guidance professionals, many working in adult guidance and nextstep.

Drawing upon their expertise the following criteria are identified to support successful outcomes for the new service and JCP.

**Consultation** – an ongoing consultative process to agree best practice, both locally and nationally, should underpin developments. Best practice will include standards for both customer service delivery and CPD for staff.

**Collaborative working** – requires full understanding and respect for skills and expertise for individuals in each organisation including clarity of roles and relationships. Equal standing between JCP and nextstep in planning collaboration should be a feature of the Policy Prospectus for the AACS.

**Performance targets** – recognition through JCP national and local performance indicators that referral of individuals for guidance to support their progression is recognised as a positive activity. Common systems and processes will support this.

**Referral** – while JCP clearly operates within a mandatory framework referral to AACS services are more likely to be effective where signposting and voluntary referral are the basis of engagement. In particular access to services should be offered at an early stage in the job seeking and benefit process.

**Progression for the client** – clarity is needed on who manages the client and is accountable for their progression. The range of outcomes must be clear including the impact from the user perspective.

**Feedback** – a two way flow of successful outcomes should be encouraged, linked to individual caseloads.

**Joint training** – to support understanding of roles and relationships and share skills. A particular relevant feature of this would include sharing labour market intelligence training to keep up to date with developments in the local and national employment and training market.

**Infrastructure** – reasonable and accessible dedicated space, publicity and internet and telephone access.

**Flexibility of delivery** - recognition that off site and peripatetic delivery are features of a service responsive to individual needs.

**Quality assurance** – meeting customer needs should be underpinned by achievement of matrix and OFSTED standards by all delivery partners..

**Links to Connexions** – effective handovers to the AACS for young adults are established.

**Development funding**- the Advancement Network Trials are potentially a major development in public services requiring front end funding to encourage time and resource to support success.

### **Key concerns**

- All staff in the AACS must be competent for their job task with careers advisers qualified to NVQ 4 in guidance as a minimum.
- Delivery of the AACS will need to be monitored effectively to ensure high and consistent quality of service for all users.
- Adequate resources- human and financial –will need to be made available, including front loading.
- Ensure that all the partner agencies are fully committed to delivering successful partnership working

### **A way forward**

ICG welcomes the opportunity to actively engage in dialogue with DIUS, LSC and DWP to support the successful launch of the AACS. Reflecting this we will seek to engage with our members to give them the opportunity to feedback their ideas contributing to the enhancement and success of the AACS.

ICG also has a memorandum of understanding with Careers England (the trade association for employers in the career guidance business across England). Under this MOU the two parties from time to time resolve to endorse each other's strategic papers; this paper is fully supported by Careers England ([www.careersengland.org.uk](http://www.careersengland.org.uk))

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