

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S INFORMATION,
ADVICE AND GUIDANCE
(IAG)**

**Guidance on the “opt out” process and
maintaining high quality IAG services from
April 2008**

Introduction

1. This document outlines the circumstances under which schools and colleges have the opportunity to opt out of existing local information, advice and guidance arrangements from April 2008. This is restricted to where provision is poor and this can be properly evidenced. This document also makes clear that the accountability for a high quality IAG service in any local authority area remains that of the LA and looks at maintaining high quality IAG services in different delivery settings.

2. This guidance:

- sets out the key policy;
- provides an indicative timetable for the “opt out” process (Annex A);
- provides an indicative process flow chart for the “opt out” process (Annex B);
- provides a definition of IAG activities (Annex C).

3. Additional copies of this guidance can be downloaded from the Every Child Matters Website at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters.

4. For further information on the IAG opt out process, please contact Kate Bagshaw, Connexions Transition team, DfES, e-mail: kate.bagshaw@dfes.gsi.gov.uk, tel. 0114 259 4204.

5. For further information on the 14-19 Diploma Gateway process, please e-mail: ask.gateway@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Background

1. Youth Matters (YM) proposed a number of changes to services for young people designed to reflect the new local arrangements of children's trusts and the integrated approach of Every Child Matters. In particular, YM proposed that by April 2008, we would devolve responsibility for commissioning IAG and the funding that goes with it from Connexions to local authorities working through children's trusts, schools and colleges. This would give local authorities overall accountability for the quality of young people's information, advice and guidance within their areas. Local authorities would also have power of intervention within the boundaries of the normal inspection arrangements.

2. Youth Matters also said that, where schools and colleges believed existing provision was poor, they would have the right to "opt out" and commission services directly. We expect that most will remain within local arrangements and work in partnership to continue to deliver high quality IAG with minimum disruption to service delivery.

3. Youth Matters also expressed the Government's view that collaborative arrangements would be the best way to deliver effective, independent IAG. In particular, YM said we would look to local authorities to lead a genuinely collaborative approach to new arrangements for delivering IAG that meets the needs of young people in the area. We expect these arrangements to be planned and implemented in a way that supports the delivery of the 14-19 entitlement. Overall, our expectation is that in most areas, information, advice and guidance will continue to be planned, commissioned and delivered as part of children's trust arrangements, without institutions opting out.

4. Since Youth Matters: Next Steps, the Gateway process for delivery of the new 14-19 Diplomas has been developed. The specialised Diploma programme will begin in September 2008 and will be fully implemented by 2013. The Diploma Gateway includes collaborative delivery of IAG as one of its key criteria. In this context, the Government has taken the decision that schools and colleges who wish to opt out of local IAG arrangements will only be able to do so as part of a local consortium of schools, colleges and other providers which has successfully passed through the 14-19 Diploma Gateway. Linking the opt out and the Diploma Gateway in this way will give coherence to overall IAG delivery across the area and will build in a clear, high quality threshold for delivery of IAG to the new quality standards. Such arrangements should also alleviate concerns about the potential fragmentation of services that could occur.

Consortia Arrangements

5. In their self assessments for the Diploma Gateway, consortia are expected to demonstrate effective plans for delivery in five key areas: collaboration; facilities; workforce; information, advice and guidance; and employer engagement.

6. In their proposals for information, advice and guidance consortia must provide a range of information to demonstrate that they are able to deliver a high quality of IAG to the full range of learners, their parents and carers. Specifically, they must:

- demonstrate that arrangements are in place, or will be developed, to provide effective and timely provision of impartial IAG on curriculum choices and progression routes for young people of all backgrounds and abilities, integrated with the overall careers education programme;
- include evidence of how they will work to raise aspirations, encouraging future participation and attainment, and have plans in place which tackle stereotypes around race, gender, disability or socio-economic status;
- show how they will ensure that all young people and their parents and carers receive good quality IAG in relation to the Diplomas;
- show clear links to employers and to higher education opportunities, with links to the Aimhigher programme;
- include a range of approaches to help young people make effective choices e.g. taster courses.

N.B. From April 2008 the new IAG standards of quality and impartiality will also apply - as they will to all organisations delivering IAG services funded by the Connexions grant.

7. Consortia wishing to opt out of existing IAG arrangements must also consider undertaking a risk analysis which would cover such issues as:

- their responsibilities under TUPE legislation, including the implications for staff currently delivering IAG services in the event of the service being re-commissioned and any potential redundancy costs;
- financial issues such as the loss of any additional funding levered in from elsewhere (for example the Connexions partnership);
- the possibility of any legal challenge to the decision making process from existing IAG providers.

The Gateway Process

8. The Gateway process for the delivery of specialised Diplomas from September 2008 is currently underway. Diploma Gateway self assessments for 2008 have been scrutinised by Diploma Development Partnerships and local authorities in conjunction with the LSC before being assessed by a regional panel of experts. The results from the regional panels will go to a national moderation panel which will make final recommendations to Ministers. Final results from the regional panels are expected in March 2007.

9. These arrangements fit with proposals for local authority/Government Office involvement in the IAG opt out process, with the LA in the lead and retaining overall accountability and power of intervention for IAG within its boundaries; and the GO reviewing the level of proposed opt outs in the area to ensure the total service being offered is comprehensive, provides value for money and is likely to deliver good quality, impartial IAG for young people.

10. Current plans are for annual Gateway procedures for three years. A similar process will therefore apply beyond September 2008. Details of the next round of the Diploma Gateway (for delivering Specialised Diplomas from 2009-10) will be available later this year at www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19. Further rounds of the Gateway will be dependent on the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The Opt Out Process

11. Any IAG opt out should only be agreed where robust evidence of poor performance has been provided and can be validated (this could include inspection reports, survey results, NEET data, the skills and competence of staff providing IAG and the views of young people and their parents). The current provider must also be given the opportunity to respond to the evidence, address the concerns raised and improve their quality of service within a specified timetable.

12. Where existing IAG provision is demonstrated to be poor, schools and colleges wishing to opt out will only be able to do so as part of a local consortium which has successfully passed through the 14-19 Diploma Gateway.

13. The decision on whether to begin the opt out process, subject to local authority funding and approval from Government Office, rests with the consortium. Before opting out, we would expect the consortium to:

- consult with young people and parents and take account of their views;
- agree with the local authority (working through the children's trust) which aspects of the service it might deliver and the level of devolved funding;
- ensure it can deliver IAG that meets the new standards of quality and impartiality due to be published in April 2007 for implementation in April 2008 (the draft standards can be accessed at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations). The new quality standards will apply to all organisations delivering IAG services funded by the Connexions grant. They will cover a broad range of information, advice and guidance, not simply that directly associated with learning. The IAG Costs Study indicates that this should attract about 40% of the relevant proportion of the Connexions grant;

- commit to using the Connexions brand as a condition of receiving grant funding (DfES will issue further guidance on branding in March 2007).

14. As set out in Youth Matters: Next Steps, we expect services across the board (including IAG, targeted support and fulfilment of the new duty on positive activities) to be characterised by strong co-ordination and partnership at every level: planning, commissioning and delivery. We expect local authorities to set out arrangements for doing so in their Children and Young People's Plan. Where a consortium opts out, we would require it to play its full part in this integrated delivery. If we are to improve the chances and outcomes for the most disadvantaged young people, it is especially important that intensive targeted support co-ordinates seamlessly to provide each young person with the range of services from different agencies that he or she needs.

Timing

15. The end to end opt-out process is likely to take between nine and twelve months. It would not be practical for schools or colleges to opt out mid-way through a financial year. The first available opportunity to opt-out would therefore be from April 2008, which fits in with the timing for new arrangements to be in place nationwide.

16. An indicative timetable outlining the IAG opt out process is provided at **Annex A**. An indicative process flow chart is provided at **Annex B**. It is important that the local authority, working through the children's trust and with Government Office, considers:

- how much time is needed for the change of accountability to ensure services to young people are not disrupted;
- what, if any, structural, legal, contractual or other agreements may need to be negotiated and completed; whether there are issues for staff and the length of time needed to resolve them;
- developing an agreed detailed project plan with key milestones identified and;
- how the success, or failure, of Gateway applications and the gradual introduction of Specialised Diplomas over a number of years will impact across its area on the delivery of IAG services.

Funding

17. The decision on which aspects of the service the consortium might deliver and the level of devolved funding to be made available rests with the local authority. The IAG Costs Study (summary at **Annex C**) provides a basis for reaching agreement on an amount which is appropriate to the activities which the consortium wishes to commission or deliver independently.

How the consortium will be funded

18. Where agreement is reached and a consortium is delivering the service, DfES will top-slice the agreed amount from the Connexions grant in advance and pay it as a separate s14 grant to the local authority. The local authority will then pass the money on with a condition attached that the consortium delivers young people's IAG that meets the new quality standards and uses the Connexions brand. The remainder of the Connexions grant allocated for IAG services goes into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for the children's trust to commission. The local authority retains overall accountability for the quality of IAG within its boundaries - and for delivery of targeted support with the remainder of the Connexions budget.

19. There are already duties on the local authority and the Learning and Skills Council to ensure there will be adequate 14-19 provision once the national entitlement comes in and the Diploma Gateway process will help them to prepare for this. Aligning the IAG opt out with the Diploma Gateway will streamline processes and will reduce the number of local authority negotiations necessary by ruling out individual school or college opt outs.

Funding allocations to 2011

20. The move to three year finance settlements for Local Government from April 2008 will include Connexions funding. Provisional allocations for the three years 2008 to 2011 will be announced in November/December 2007 and final allocations for 2008-09 will be confirmed in March 2008, in line with existing arrangements for Local Government Finance settlements. We intend to announce notional Connexions allocations in May 2007, to give local authorities an early indication of what to expect from the new funding formula. At the same time, DfES will issue further guidance on how local authorities should make applications for funding consortia opting out of existing IAG arrangements.

Ensuring Quality of Provision

21. Some of those who responded to the Youth Matters consultation said that the "opt out" provision represented a risk of creating a fragmented service where it would be harder to guarantee good quality, impartial IAG. There will be measures in place to provide assurance about the IAG that is commissioned, including prior consultation with young people and their parents and ensuring delivery of IAG which meets the new standards of quality and impartiality.

22. Linking the IAG opt out to the 14-19 Diploma Gateway process will ensure a clear, high quality threshold for delivery of IAG across the local authority area. Quality assurance of consortia delivering the specialised Diplomas will be covered through the normal inspection arrangements carried out by ALI/Ofsted and Awarding Bodies. Awarding Bodies will make their first assessments when consortia apply for approval from September 2007. Inspection will start from September 2008 when consortia start to deliver

the Diplomas.

23. In addition, during 2007-08, we will ask Government Offices (via the 14-19 Gateway and Transition Planning Health Check processes) to review the level of proposed opt outs in each local authority area to ensure that the total service being offered is comprehensive, provides value for money and is likely to deliver good quality, impartial IAG for young people.

24. If there is evidence that the IAG quality standards are not being met under any new arrangement, the School Improvement Partner will work with the consortium to try to improve the quality of IAG and bring it up to the required standard. The local authority has the accountability for high quality IAG in its area and retains the option to withdraw the devolved funding from the consortium and take back the responsibility for commissioning the service if IAG quality is poor. We would expect the local authority to intervene based on robust evidence and within the boundaries of the normal inspection arrangements. We would also expect that any such change would take effect from the beginning of a financial year.

Next Steps

25. The DfES will issue further guidance in May 2007 on how local authorities should make applications for funding consortia opting out of existing IAG arrangements.

26. Local authorities, working through children's trusts where they are established, are required to assess and agree which aspects of IAG provision might be delivered through consortia arrangements and the devolved funding that may be required. This assessment needs to be completed by May 2007. Consortia intending to opt out should begin consultation with pupils and parents, taking full account of their views. These discussions should take place by September 2007 at the latest. Services will need to be commissioned by November 2007 to enable delivery of the new IAG arrangements from April 2008.

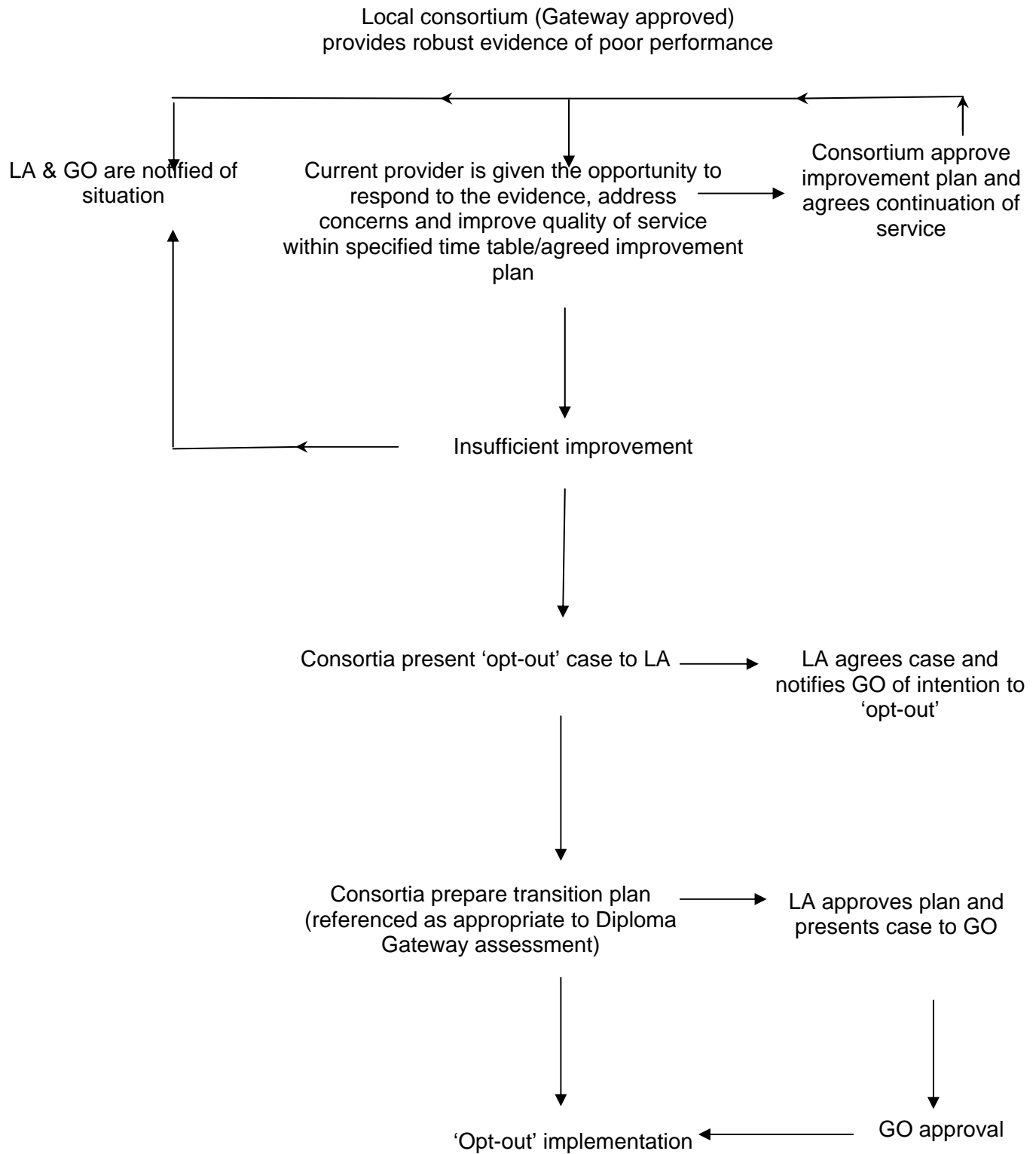
Annex A

Indicative Timetable for IAG Opt Out

IAG Quality Standards - consultation starts	December 2006
IAG Opt Out guidance issued	February 2007
IAG Costs Study published	February 2007
IAG Quality Standards - consultation ends	March 2007
IAG Quality Standards - publication	April 2007
LA/Children's Trusts begin discussion with schools, colleges and other providers over new arrangements	April 2007
Consortia intending to opt out begin consulting with pupils and parents	April 2007
Consortia intending to opt out agree notional funding and elements of the service they will deliver with the local authority	April 2007
Local authorities notified of Connexions notional allocations for 2008-09 and guidance on applications for "opt out" funding issued	May 2007
Consortia consultations complete	September 2007
Final funding allocation agreed, including opt outs and where relevant, amount split from LAA and paid direct to consortia	November 2007
Opted out consortia commission IAG arrangements for 2008-09	November 2007
Provisional allocations for the three years 2008-11 announced	Nov/Dec 2007
Final allocations for 2008-09 confirmed	March 2008
IAG Quality Standards - implementation	April 2008
New IAG delivery arrangements in place	April 2008

A similar process will apply for opt out beyond 2008. Details of the next round of the Diploma Gateway (for delivering Specialised Diplomas from 2009-10) will be available later this year at www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19.

Indicative Process Flow Chart for IAG Opt Out



IAG Costs Study - Summary

The IAG Costs Study was carried out by PriceWaterhouseCoopers between January and March 2006. Information was gathered from fourteen Connexions Partnerships through a cost card and supplemented by interviews with twelve of them. Costs from 2005-6 were used in order to have a complete year's figures.

The report's main conclusions were:

- there are wide variations in the costs of different elements of universal IAG but good reasons for this – differences in costs in different parts of the country, different levels of need, differences in the way CXPs operate;
- the greatest single component of universal IAG is practitioner interventions which comprise 56% of the total cost;
- there are also wide variations in the total CXP spend on universal IAG as opposed to targeted support. Again there are good reasons for this, as above plus difficulty in defining/separating out the two;
- nationwide the cost of universal IAG in 2005-6 was approx £230m i.e. 41.9% of total CXP expenditure (total £550m of which 82% is DfES Connexions grant);
- this national figure is in line with previous assumptions of a “60-40 split” between expenditure on targeted/universal which has never actually been tested before.

It is important to bear in mind that no such costing exercise has ever been undertaken previously. The data we were seeking was not always readily available in the format required, and consequently PwC had to rely heavily on the professional judgment of the Connexions Partnership in completing their returns. This means that there may be a certain amount of subjectivity and the findings should be read in the light of this.

The purpose of the Costs Study was not to come up with a definitive amount, but rather a range of costs of the different blocks of activities currently carried out by Connexions Partnerships (CXPs), under the broad heading of “universal” IAG. The activities are:

- practitioner interviews
- information resource
- quality assurance
- vacancy filling and placing
- curriculum support
- needs assessment

More detailed definitions of “universal IAG” and of each of the activities, which were agreed with Connexions Partnerships, are provided below.

Activities

Definition of “universal IAG”

General advice and support:

- at key periods in a young person’s life where information, advice and guidance will be necessary to help them make decisions about their future. This will include raising aspirations, challenging stereotypes, and ensuring that young people are aware of all the opportunities which are open to them
- at any time during their teenage years when they need help to deal with any issues they may be facing. For example, these might include health, smoking, drugs, relationships, etc

Signposting to specialist advice, and/or referral to more intensive support if necessary.

Blocks of activities

i) Practitioner interventions

Practitioner interventions with young people, both one to one and through group work, in schools, colleges and work based training, across the full range of factors described in the Connexions Framework for Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review (attached for reference) - education and employment, social and behavioural development, family and environment, and personal health. This will include time spent on:

- planning, preparation, assessment, reflection, information recording, information distribution;
- job placing
- brokerage
- advocacy
- contact time (including a variety of types and duration)
- referrals to other services (YOTs, DATs, social services etc)
- signposting to specialist advice

Within this block, a separate estimate should be made of the cost of Section 140 assessments. This is an assessment, resulting in a written report, of a person’s educational and training needs and the provision required to meet those needs. These are assessments specifically for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are receiving, or are likely to receive post-16 education or training or higher education. They are for young people who are in their last year of compulsory schooling or who are over compulsory school age but under 25.

ii) Information resources

Providing, supporting, maintaining and ensuring access to comprehensive and up to date information resources, in appropriate formats, at institutional and local area level for young people, parents and carers (including access to centrally produced resources) – both in schools and other locations. The range of information covers learning, careers, training, education, finance, sexual health, alcohol and substance misuse, relationships, housing, law, things to do, places to go, volunteering opportunities.

Includes:

- printed material
- IT resources
- special events e.g. careers fairs, parents evenings
- school/college resource centres
- curriculum materials
- “live” information - including from volunteers, e.g. peer mentors, graduate and apprenticeship ambassadors

Within this block, an estimate should be made of the cost of providing an open access IAG resource.

iii) Quality assurance

Training, professional development and supervision. This includes:

- accredited training for IAG professionals (initial training and CPD)
- professional development visits for practitioners including employer, education and training visits
- job and course investigation or job case study preparation
- writing up of case studies, reports
- support and supervision, observation of professional practice
- in service training days for PSHE/careers teachers.

Customer feedback. This includes:

- surveys at area and institutional level to establish whether pupils and parents are satisfied with the service
- active involvement of young people e.g. opportunities for young people to influence delivery through Schools Councils, surveys or focus groups
- feedback from other partners

iv) Vacancy filling and placing services

- maintaining a vacancy handling service which reflects local travel to

- work patterns
- relationships with Job Centre Plus and other vacancy filling agencies
- labour market intelligence
- canvassing for vacancies and matching to young people's needs to inform decision making
- checking of vacancies against legislative requirements
- marketing of the Right to Time off for Study and Training
- information resources
- careers conventions
- employer visits, talks
- report writing, planning , preparation, dissemination

v) Interventions, contributions and support for those elements of universal IAG provided by the institution.

- careers education
- enterprise education
- work related learning
- Personal, Social and Health Education
- Citizenship
- Curriculum review activity
- information sharing
- supporting School Self Assessment

vi) Needs assessment

- individual needs assessment
- accumulation of individual needs assessments to inform future planning and provision of IAG
- tracking and monitoring of young people's provision to ensure needs are being met.

**The full report of the 2006 IAG Costs Study can be accessed at:
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters**