



Information Advice and Guidance within Children's Centres

Agender Project LSC Report (September – December 2007)

Written by Alene Stone



Foreword

The LSC recognises the importance of the delivery of Information Advice & Guidance (IAG) within Children's Centres (CC). The provision is part of the core requirement of the CC. Partnership working with **nextstep** and Agender in the identification and or provision of qualified Advisers to work with the CC would be a financial advantage to the CC. Also providing the CC access to resources previously unavailable perhaps due to lack of manpower.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to;

- All staff members and managers of the CC that have started working with **nextstep** contractors
- The contractors who have persevered in making contact with the centres, and started delivery
- The LSC who has funded the project
- **nextstep** who will be mainstreaming the project as from 1st January 2007

Introduction

After the initial investigation, the purpose of which was to identify if and at what level IAG had been delivered in the CC.

The outcome helped **nextstep** to identify that the responding CC wanted help to deliver the IAG service. External contractors, contracted to **nextstep** can provide this service at no cost to the CC.

Recommendations from the *Information Advice and Guidance within Children's Centres report dated 27th September 2007*. were to;

- ♦ Raise awareness of the availability of trained Advisers from Matrix accredited organisations, monitored by the **nextstep** team with the remit to work within the guidelines of the CC
- ♦ Develop effective partnership working which is part of the CC, Agender and **nextstep**'s remit
- ♦ Aid the delivery of IAG by a very diverse group of organisations reflecting the make up of the communities in Birmingham and Solihull
- ♦ Record accurately each session enabling the delivers and receivers of the service to know the effectiveness of the service
- ♦ Create a more joined up approach to the effective support of the service user by where possible linking the Job Centre Plus provision with **nextstep**'s. This should provide a service where the service user through Job Centre Plus can find out about benefits, local jobs etc and related information through the **nextstep** sub contractors provide the training and or employment advice
- ♦ Provide a matching of sub contractors and CC
- ♦ Introduce sub contractors to relevant CC and visa versa



- ◆ Encourage a sharing of good practices between CC, sub contractors and main providers of IAG type services within the CC
- ◆ Ensure the sharing of IAG information and resources

Methodology

Communicate the project through, letters, emails, telephone calls and site visits where required.

	Reason	Date	
Letter to contractors	Stating nextstep intension to provide IAG delivery in centres	27.07.2007	Appendix 1
Form to contractors	To inform us of previous contact with centres	27.07.2007	Appendix 2
Newsletter	Article to go in centre's newsletter to introduce project & way forward	05.09.2007	Appendix 3
Letter & forms	To CC to find out if IAG provision is required	14.09.2007	Appendix 4
Letter to contractors & centres	Match according to previous contact and geographical area	14.09.2007	
Letter & forms	Informing centre of contractor allocated	14.09.2007	
Letter & email	Informing contractors response from centres	25.09.2007 onwards	
Emails & phone calls	Introduction on LSC forms;	29.08.2007	
	• Partner Information	27.09.2007	
	• Salary declaration	08.10.2007	
	• Time sheets	03.12.5007	
Letter, phone, email	Following up of delivery & contact with the centres	On going	

Outcome to date

The outcome to date has been varied. The list below shows the category in which the responses or actions fall.

The CC were contacted by letter informing of next**step**'s intention to (if required by the centre) enable delivery of IAG in the CC. The contractors was matched to the CC as stated in the methodology and each sent details of CC name, address, telephone and name of contact person.

The contact process is monitored & followed up by next**step** to ensure the centres requiring the service has access to the contractors.

Some of our contractors due to unforeseen staffing issues or increased work was unable to follow up the contact as required leaving us with 8 centres to reallocate to other existing contractors.

next**step** currently have 3 specialist contractors who due to capacity and the type of work cannot take on board site visits to the centres but will accept referrals from either the CC or the contractor, these contractors are;



- BID Services with deaf People
- RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)
- Birmingham Disability Resources Centre

Centres to be re allocated	8
Delivery of IAG started in centre	22
Contact/appointment made to visit centre	22
Further contact after refurbishment (IAG delivery delayed due to building works)	2
Centres delivering IAG in house	2
No longer a centre/or amalgamated	2
Centre not yet responded to contractors contact	6
Yet to be contacted by contractor	7
Centre not interested	1
Total centres	72
Contractors working on project	15

nextstep will continue to mainstream, encouraging and supporting the delivery of IAG into CC.



Appendix 1

Working within Children Centres

Friday, 27 July 2007

Dear

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all contractors for the new contract year 2007-2008.

As part of the bidding process you were asked if you were either currently working with or would be able to work with Children Centres. **nextstep** working in partnership with the Agender project has a remit to ensure that each Children Centre has access to Information Advice & Guidance for their clients if they require it. Working with our contractors will ensure that accredited and trained professionals deliver the service to a high standard.

On your tender document you either stated that you were willing to deliver in the centres or were already doing so.

It is important now for me to organise who is delivering where and, arrange contacts between the contractors and the centres that require this service.

I would like you to complete the attached form and return to me as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Alene Stone
Development Worker



Appendix 2

Name and address of contractor

Working within Children Centres

Please complete this form and return to me as soon as possible

Would like to work with	Centres you are aware of	No preference

Currently working with

If you are already working with a children centre then please state:

Name of centre/s	Contact name	Contact number

Name of the advisor working with the centre/s:

Please sign:
Signature:



Appendix 3

Article for the CC journal

Alene Stone, **nextstep** Development Worker at Birmingham & Solihull Connexions spent the summer looking at the best ways to establish Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in Children's Centres.

Managers at 12 Children's Centres were interviewed and the focus was standard questions followed by open discussion. A number of themes were explored:

- Related activity at the Children's Centre
- Premises
- Staffing and resource capacity
- What level of IAG was already on offer
- Current ability to deliver IAG
- Partnership working and with whom
- What sort of help or support the centre needed
- Would the centre wish to work with **nextstep** sub contractors

At the end of the discussion, it was explained how **nextstep** could add value to the services provided.

nextstep is the national brand name for adult (aged 20+) IAG delivered locally. In Birmingham and Solihull this is a partnership of organisations providing support on learning, work, careers or training through a range of centres including:

- Voluntary and community organisations
- Connexions Centres
- Birmingham and Solihull main libraries
- Job preparation and training providers

The recommendations for mainstreaming IAG in Children's Centres are set out below:

- ◆ Raise awareness of the availability of trained Advisers from Matrix accredited organisations, monitored by the **nextstep** team with the remit to work within the guidelines of the Children's Centre
- ◆ Develop effective partnership working between Children's Centres and **nextstep**
- ◆ Deliver IAG by a diverse group of organisations reflecting the make up of the communities in Birmingham and Solihull
- ◆ Create a more joined up approach to provide effective support for the service user e.g. Jobcentre Plus provision and **nextstep**
- ◆ Match **nextstep** sub-contractors to Children's Centres as far as possible based on geographical location
- ◆ Introduce **nextstep** providers to relevant Children's Centres and visa versa



Appendix 4

Please complete and return to me

Name of centre:

Contact name:

Name of sub contractor:

Contact name:

Contact number:

Do you deliver Information Advice Guidance in your Centre? YES / NO

If yes who does the delivery?

- Staff member (NVQ 3 Advice & Guidance qualified) YES / NO
- Other provider
- nextstep provider

Do you wish to work with the nextstep subcontractor allocated to your centre? YES / NO

Will this centre be using the nextstep subcontractor to deliver IAG? YES / NO

Resources

Do you have a public area within the Children's Centre? YES / NO

What facilities does this area have (e.g. chairs, tables, computers/computer points, books)?

What information about work, training, learning is currently being provided in your Children's Centre?

Do you have any private rooms that could be used for confidential interviews? YES / NO
 If so, how many?

What facilities do these rooms have (e.g. chairs, tables, computers/computer points, books)?



If you have any other comments /ideas, please give details below.