

ESF CIAG policy		Effective date: 10/2025
Authorised owner: Henry Mead		Last revision: 02/2026
Classification: Public	Issue: 02	Next review: 02/2027



# Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Policy

## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out ESF Apprenticeships' commitment to providing a high-quality, personalised, and impartial Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) programme for all apprentices.

Our CIAG vision is to inspire, inform, and equip every apprentice for successful transitions into their next steps, such as further education, higher-level apprenticeships, or sustained employment. This commitment is grounded in our organisation's core mission - to promote opportunity and raise aspirations. Our CIAG programme is delivered through a framework that specifically references the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, embodying our values of Inclusivity, Integrity, Positivity, Curiosity, Growth, and Sustainability.

## 2. Commitment

Our CIAG vision is to inspire, inform, and equip every apprentice with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to make well-informed decisions and successful transitions into their next steps, which may include further education, higher-level apprenticeships, or sustained employment.

## 3. Our CIAG programme and the Gatsby Benchmarks

### Gatsby Benchmark 1: A Stable Careers Programme

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

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- **Strategic planning:** The CIAG programme is embedded within our core organisational goals and is backed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.
- **Policy publication:** This CIAG policy and programme summary are published on the ESF Apprenticeships website, making it easily accessible for apprentices, employers, and other stakeholders.
- **Named lead: Henry Mead** is the nominated Careers Lead, responsible for the effective leadership, management, and coordination of the provision. The role includes strategic oversight, implementation, and evaluation of the CIAG programme. ESF apprenticeships will support the Careers Lead to access fully funded Level 6/7 Careers Leader training to accelerate progress towards the benchmarks.
- **Evaluation:** The programme is regularly evaluated using feedback from apprentices, employers, and tracking of destination data (see BM 3), ensuring a process of continuous quality improvement.

## **Gatsby Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information (LMI)**

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **Apprenticeship initial assessments:** These assessments capture the learner's ambitions and link the apprenticeship to a clear career path, ensuring information is personalised and relevant.
- **The ESF CPD and Careers Hub online:** This central online resources site is maintained with accurate, current and reputable information on:
  - Careers Pathways (e.g University applications, apprenticeships, working abroad, transferable skills, job preparation and employability skills)
  - CPD both in and outside school (e.g. Action research groups, Instructional coaching and MOOCs)
  - Health and wellbeing (e.g. healthy eating, sleep and productivity)
  - Wider world issues (e.g. British values, knife crime, sexual harassment, substance abuse and neurodiversity)

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- Using technology (e.g. using AI, staying safe online and using social media)
- School specific training (e.g. Safeguarding awareness, KCSIE and cyberbullying)
- See appendix 1 for overview of areas of content in the online ESF CPD and Careers Hub site, and appendix 1 for screenshots of the site.
- **CIAG training events:** These live virtual events incorporate LMI to contextualise next steps, helping apprentices use the information to inform well-rounded decisions on educational pathways and training options. These events include Labour Market Trends (**Employer industry insights**).

### **Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each learner**

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **Personalisation:** The ESF CPD & Careers site outlines suggested content for learners in different stages of a career, to provide adapted pathways through the materials. Whilst the ESF CPD & Careers site suggests specific tailored pathways based on an apprentice's career stage, the entire suite of learning remains open to ensure complete learner autonomy and flexibility.
- **1-1 careers support:** To deliver personalisation 1:1 careers support, ESF will ensure advice dependent on the unique needs, interests, aspirations, and prior attainment of each apprentice. We actively ensure our resources and guidance promote equality of opportunity, challenge stereotypical thinking, and raise aspirations for all learners.
- **Apprenticeship Progress Reviews:** Reviews address the needs of each apprentice at different stages, ensuring the curriculum remains linked to their individual career goals.
- **Record keeping:** We keep systematic records of the individual advice and guidance interventions provided during Initial Assessments and Progress Reviews, including agreed next steps, which apprentices can access.

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- **Destination data:** We collect and maintain data on each apprentice's education, training, or employment destination to evaluate impact and tailor future support.

## Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **Curriculum integration:** The apprenticeship model ensures the curriculum (on-the-job training and off-the-job learning) is inherently linked to careers, by definition of the qualification.
- **Apprenticeship Progress Reviews:** These reviews explicitly link progress in vocational competence, functional skills (e.g., English and maths, if applicable), to the apprentice's future career requirements.
- **Soft skills** (e.g., teamwork, communication, problem-solving) are reviewed through learner evaluations that are self assessed and discussed in the feedback process.
- **ESF CPD and Careers Hub Online:** The career pathway information ensures apprentices understand how their qualification acts as a stepping stone, preparing them for the next stage of learning or work. See appendix 1 for overview of areas of content in the online ESF CPD and Careers Hub site, and appendix 1 for screenshots of the site.

## Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **Continuous engagement:** Apprenticeships provide a **continuous, high-quality, meaningful encounter** with their primary employer and multiple employees as part of their daily training.
- **Measuring skills:** In progress reviews and personalised 1-1 sessions, Apprentices are encouraged to reflect on their learning from the workplace, and the skills and behaviours valued by the employer.

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- **External encounters (Development area):** We will work to provide additional, varied encounters with *external* employers/employees—for instance, through speakers or virtual industry panels at CIAG Training Events—to broaden networks and perspectives beyond the training employer.

## 2.6 Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **First-hand experience:** The apprenticeship provides the mandated, long-term, **first-hand experience of a workplace** for the full duration of the programme.
- **Reflection:** Apprentices are supported through their Progress Reviews to reflect on their experience of the workplace, developing self-awareness, networks, and career management skills.
- **Work-related learning:** Apprentices engage in career-related learning activities, such as completing employer-set projects, which reinforces the skills required for the job market.

## 2.7 Gatsby Benchmark 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **Full range of options:** We ensure every apprentice understands the full range of post-apprenticeship pathways available, including both academic routes and technical education. (ESF Connect)
- **CIAG training events:** These virtual events are scheduled to provide **meaningful encounters** and guidance on progression options:
  - Follow-on Higher or Degree Apprenticeships.
  - Higher Education (HE) opportunities.
  - Other development options (e.g., Camp America).
- **Impartiality:** All advice is impartial, including information on a range of training providers, and considers the best interests of the apprentice.

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## 2.8 Gatsby Benchmark 8: Personal Guidance

ESF apprenticeships meets this commitment through:

- **Apprenticeship Initial assessments:** These act as the first point of contact for personal guidance, helping apprentices set initial career and educational goals.
- **Guidance interviews:** The **Apprenticeship Progress Reviews** serve as a mechanism for **personal guidance**, providing at least one dedicated career discussion per year.
- **Qualified Guidance:** Each apprentice aged 16–18 is offered two individual sessions with a qualified advisor, trained to an appropriate level, with the aim of helping apprentices explore and understand the options available to align with their career goals and develop strategies to achieve their potential.
- **Accessibility:** Apprentices know how to access further guidance, either through one-to-one discussions with staff, or external services like the National Careers Service <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>.

## 3. Policy Development Areas

To achieve and maintain a thorough careers provision, ESF Apprenticeships has identified the following priorities for development:

Benchmark	Development Area	Rationale (Gatsby Guidance)
<b>BM 1 &amp; BM 8</b>	<b>Careers Leader Training</b>	The Careers Lead, Henry Mead, will complete the fully funded Careers Leader training (Level 6/7 equivalent) to ensure the programme is strategically led and managed effectively. ESF is eligible for a £1,000 bursary on completion, to be used for furthering the careers programme.

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<b>BM 5 &amp; BM 6</b>	<b>External Employer Engagement</b>	While the apprenticeship meets the core workplace requirement, the programme needs to provide varied encounters and experiences outside the apprentice’s current workplace (eg links with local sports partnership networks and community sports events, where applicable) to broaden their understanding of job market trends and alternative career paths. ESF will continue to develop the existing information in ‘Alternative career pathways & transferable skills’ area of the CPD and Careers Hub site.
<b>BM 3</b>	<b>Systematic Stakeholder Feedback</b>	Implement a formal mechanism to gather and use feedback from <b>employers, parents/carers</b> , and apprentices systematically to continuously improve the careers provision and ensure it addresses individual needs.
<b>BM 3</b>	<b>Destination Data for Evaluation</b>	Formalise the collection and tracking of <b>sustained destination data</b> for all leavers for at least six months post-programme to rigorously evaluate the long-term impact of the CIAG provision.

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## 4. Review, Monitoring, and Evaluation

- **Review Cycle:** This policy will be formally reviewed annually by the Careers Lead, in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team.
- **Monitoring:** Progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks will be continuously monitored using internal tools and external quality markers.
- **CIAG staff CPD:** All staff involved in delivering CIAG (including progress reviewers and the Careers Lead) will have opportunities to engage through ESF Core Team Meetings and external professional development to stay informed of LMI, careers theory, and best practice.

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## 5. Further information

ESF apprenticeships reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the content of this policy, and introduce new policies and procedures from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the organisation and new legislation and regulations.

## 6. Related documents

ESF Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## 7. Document history

Issue 1 - Initial release Oct 2025

Issue 2 - Feb 2026

## 8. Appendices

### Appendix 1 Index of online CPD & Careers content

<p><b>Career Pathways in Education</b></p> <p><b>Careers in education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles in schools</li> <li>• Getting into teaching</li> <li>• Pathways into leadership</li> <li>• Flexible working</li> <li>• Working overseas</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>	<p><b>CPD Opportunities in School</b></p> <p><b>CPD opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD in school</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Other opportunities</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>
<p><b>Degree &amp; University Options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying to University</li> <li>• Deciding on a University</li> <li>• UCAS applications</li> <li>• Preparing to study</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>	<p><b>Lifelong learner</b></p> <p><b>Money management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Affects my Credit Score?</li> <li>• Saving money</li> <li>• Pensions</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating at work</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict Management</li> <li>• Handling complaints</li> <li>• Tough conversations</li> <li>• Resources and Links</li> </ul> <p><b>Professional Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth Mindset</li> <li>• Professional feedback</li> <li>• Strategic Thinking</li> <li>• Time Management</li> <li>• Employer Disciplinaries</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health and wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Healthy Eating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The power of nutrition</li> <li>• Time-Saving Strategies</li> <li>• Favourite recipes, tips and techniques</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Sleep</li> <li>• Dealing With Stress</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Allergy awareness</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Professional &amp; Environmental Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace Mental Health</li> <li>• Personal Productivity</li> <li>• Home office</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School specific training</b></p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding awareness</li> <li>• Keeping Children Safe in Education</li> <li>• Prevent Duty</li> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> <li>• Cyberbullying</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Administration and Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental issues</li> <li>• GDPR</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Job preparation, Promotion and Employability skills</b></p> <p><b>Finding a job</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a job</li> <li>• Using LinkedIn</li> <li>• Employability skills</li> <li>• Safer recruitment</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Applying for a job</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Utilising Technology</b></p> <p><b>AI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is AI?</li> <li>• Using AI ethically</li> <li>• AI and Sustainability</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Online Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying safe online</li> <li>• Social Media</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job application process</li> <li>• Interview skills</li> <li>• Preparing your CV</li> <li>• Cover letters and personal statements</li> <li>• Negotiating a promotion</li> <li>• Interviewing others</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Image online</li> <li>• Digital Scams</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wider world</b></p> <p><b>Modern Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile phones and driving</li> <li>• British Values</li> <li>• Knife Crime and Gangs</li> <li>• Modern Slavery</li> <li>• Sexual Harassment</li> <li>• Sexting</li> <li>• Staying Safe on Nights Out</li> <li>• Travelling Safely</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Inclusion in the workplace</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising privilege</li> <li>• Tolerance</li> <li>• Disability in the Workplace</li> <li>• Religious and Ethical Inclusion</li> <li>• Neurodiversity Awareness</li> <li>• Being an Ally</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p><b>Drugs and alcohol</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug Abuse Awareness</li> <li>• Drugs and alcohol regulations</li> <li>• Abuse and Hate Crimes</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Alternative Career Pathways &amp; Transferable Skills</b></p> <p><b>Alternative pathways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferable skills</li> <li>• Careers outside education</li> <li>• Changing Careers</li> <li>• Resources and links</li> </ul> <p>Certificate</p>
<p>ESF Apprenticeship SEND specialists and experts have partnered with Whole School SEND to create a series of award winning free SEND CPD units which Apprentices also have access to. Each of the units can be completed under an hour and are completely free for apprentices and comes with its own certificate of completion.</p>	

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## Appendix 2 Screenshots of the ESF Learn CPD & Careers:

### Careers Information, Advice and Guidance



Alternative Career Pathways & Transferable Skills



Career Pathways in Education



CPD Opportunities in School



Degree & University Options



Job Preparation, Promotion & Employability Skills

### Continued Professional Development



Health & Wellbeing



Lifelong Learner



School Specific Training



Using Technology



Wider World

**Health and wellbeing**

- Introduction
- Healthy Eating 
  - The power of nutrition
  - Time-Saving Strategies
  - Resource recipes, tips and techniques
  - Resources and links
- Personal Health
- Professional & Environmental Health
- Certificate

**The power of nutrition**

Your brain is your most valuable tool. You need sustained concentration for lesson planning, emotional regulation for student interactions, and consistent energy to last through a long school day. Eating a healthy, balanced diet is not just about physical health; it's a critical strategy for enhancing your cognitive function and professional resilience.

Select each of the icons below to find out why healthy eating is so important.

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Investing time in healthy eating is a form of professional development. It reduces the likelihood of mood swings, boosts your resilience to stress, and gives you the sustained mental sharpness needed to be an outstanding practitioner, whether you are managing a class, leading a team, or supporting a child with high needs.

**The non-negotiable lunchbreak**

For education professionals, skipping lunch might feel like a necessary time-saver, but it is actually a significant professional risk. Lunch is not merely a social break; it is a vital mechanism for refuelling your body and resetting your mind.

Consider the following question. Choose one or more options and then select Check.

Which of the following are benefits from taking a lunch break?

- Avoids a mid-day crash in blood glucose levels
- Improved ability to process information and clear short-term memory
- Decreased risk of snappy communication and burnout
- It gives you a good opportunity to tidy your classroom before the afternoon lessons

**Job preparation, Promotion and Employability skills**

- Introduction
- Finding a job
- Applying for a job
- The job application process
- Interview skills
- Preparing your CV
- Cover letters and personal statements
- Negotiating a promotion
- Interviewing others
- Resources and links
- Certificate

**Cover letters and personal statements**

Your cover letter or personal statement is the bridge between your experience and the specific job requirements. It is your opportunity to persuade the hiring panel to shortlist you. This document must be highly tailored to the job description and the school's ethos.

Start by expressing your genuine enthusiasm for the role and the particular school, referencing something specific you admire about them. The personal statement needs to function as a demonstration of how your skills and experience from your apprenticeship directly address the school's needs. We need to focus on structure, evidence, and compliance to make this document professional, impactful, and easily scorable by the recruitment panel.

The core function of your personal statement is to provide specific, quantifiable evidence of your competence, avoiding general, unsupported claims. By structuring your points and using the STAR method, you transform abstract skills (like 'good communication') into proof of impact on pupil progress and school operations. Remember, every claim you make about your practice and experience must be defensible with an example from your work experience.

Finally, your personal statement must ensure the school has confidence in your professional integrity. This is achieved by closing the statement with a professional summary of your commitment, assuring the school of your full compliance with all necessary checks. Always reiterate your commitment to the UK safeguarding framework and mention your current DBS status. Proofread meticulously, as attention to detail in this document reflects the professional diligence required from all staff in the education sector.

Select each of the headings below to help you structure your personal statement.

- > The Introduction (The Hook)
- > The Body (Evidence & Impact)
- > The Safeguarding Statement
- > The Conclusion (Professional Close)

Below is an example of a personal statement that you can use for inspiration.

**Wider world**

- Introduction
- Mobile phones and driving
- Modern Issues
- British Values
- Knife Crime and Gangs
- Modern Slavery
- Sexual Harassment
- Staying
- Staying Safe on Nights Out
- Travelling Safely
- Resources and links
- Inclusion in the workplace
- Drugs and alcohol
- Certificate

**British Values**

The Education Inspection Framework requires you to promote fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance), its important to know these values and how they apply not just to your teaching, but to your professional behaviour and personal life. Understanding these principles is essential for your role as a civic role model within your school and wider community.

"British Values" are defined by the government as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. While the term "British" is used, these are universal values important for any cohesive and respectful society.

Select each of the areas of the diagram below to find out how British Values are often demonstrated in the school environment.

**Wider world**

- Introduction
- Modern Issues
- Mobile phones and driving
- British Values
- Knife Crime and Gangs
- Modern Slavery
- Sexual Harassment
- Staying
- Staying Safe on Nights Out
- Travelling Safely
- Resources and links
- Inclusion in the workplace
- Drugs and alcohol
- Certificate

**Sexual Harassment**

A safe, respectful workplace is a legal and ethical requirement. It is important that you understand what sexual harassment is, that you know your rights, and that you are aware of your professional boundaries and reporting procedures. Understanding sexual harassment is essential for ensuring your personal safety, respecting your colleagues, and fostering a professional culture of dignity and equality in any environment.

**ESF Episode**

This learning episode is about sexual harassment in the workplace. By completing it, you should be able to:

- Define sexual harassment in legal and practical terms to ensure you know what you are looking for in your workplace
- Identify red flags in your workplace that may indicate cases of sexual harassment, so you can step in and support your employees
- Understand the potential business and personal impacts of sexual harassment to ensure the topic remains a priority
- Understand the importance of reporting all suspected or reported cases of sexual harassment to ensure you are advocating for the well-being of your team and not being a bystander

Select the image below to get started.

I have completed this learning