

## CAREERS PROGRAMME GUIDE

2025-2026



The Inspire and Achieve Foundation (IAF) understands that young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) often face significant challenges when making informed decisions about their future. These challenges may stem from a range of factors, including socioeconomic disadvantage, disrupted education, a lack of accessible career guidance, limited exposure to the workplace, and the overwhelming complexity of available education and training options.

IAF recognises that to effectively support young people who are NEET or at risk of being so, information, advice, and guidance (IAG) services must be delivered in ways that meet their individual needs. This includes the use of multi-channel delivery methods, such as web-based platforms, telephone support, face-to-face one to ones, and on line tools for those who are ready.

This tailored approach is particularly critical for at risk young people, who represent a diverse group with varying skill levels, personal circumstances, and levels of engagement. High-quality guidance must be:

- **Person-centred:** Focused on the unique strengths, challenges, and aspirations of each individual.
- **Accessible:** Available to all young people, regardless of their location, background, or ability.
- **Personalised:** Adapted to the specific situation and readiness of the young person.
- **Responsive:** Designed to evolve as the young person's needs and circumstances change.

By providing young people with personalised, timely, and effective guidance, IAF aims to empower them to make confident and informed decisions about their futures; helping them to re-engage with education, access meaningful training opportunities, and ultimately find fulfilling employment.

Due to IAF's **roll-on, roll-off provision**, our careers activities do not follow the traditional academic year of September to July. Instead, all careers education is delivered **in alignment with our ongoing programme**, ensuring that every young person—regardless of their start date—receives timely, relevant support.

We are committed to ensuring that **by the time each learner leaves IAF**, they will have had the opportunity to:

- Participate in at least **one high-quality, impartial careers guidance intervention**
- Engage in **meaningful encounters with employers and education providers**
- Take part in **workplace experiences** to explore different career paths
- Access **up-to-date labour market information** to inform their decisions
- Receive support in developing **career management, employability, and personal development skills**

This flexible and personalised approach ensures that every learner is well-prepared for their next steps, regardless of when they join our programme.

The IAF's Careers Programme is designed to meet each learner's individual needs by delivering personalised, high-quality support. To ensure consistency and effectiveness, all careers-related activities within the programme are aligned with the eight **Gatsby Benchmarks**, a nationally recognised framework for best practice in career guidance. This approach provides a robust system of **quality assurance**, helping to ensure that every young person receives the guidance and opportunities they need to make informed decisions about their future education, training, and employment pathways.



1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each young person
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experience of work places
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Gatsby Benchmarks	2025/2026 IAF Offer
1. A stable careers programme	<p>IAF has an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is tailored to meet the individual needs of our learners. This programme is underpinned by clearly defined learning outcomes, ensuring that all students receive targeted and meaningful support throughout their career journey.</p> <p>The careers programme is publicly available on the IAF website and is regularly evaluated using feedback from key stakeholders, including learners, staff, and employer partners.</p> <p>Our <b>Careers Leader</b> is responsible for managing the programme and assuring its quality through the use of the <b>Careers Impact System</b>, the <b>Gatsby Benchmarks</b>, <b>Compass Tool</b>, and by maintaining the <b>Matrix Standard</b> for excellence in information, advice, and guidance (IAG).</p> <p>IAF is also an active member of the <b>Careers and Enterprise Company's Community of Improvement</b>, demonstrating our commitment to continuous enhancement of careers education and employer engagement.</p> <p><b>Benchmark 1 is met through Kings Trust TEAM Weeks: 1,2,3,4</b></p>
2. Learning from career and labour market information	<p>IAF is committed to providing every young person with reliable, up-to-date careers and labour market information (LMI) to support informed and positive decisions about their future. This includes information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career pathways</li> <li>• Education, training, and employment options</li> <li>• Labour market opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>By the time a young person leaves IAF, they should be able to:</b></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the jobs and skills employers are looking for</li> <li>• Understand rates of pay for different roles</li> <li>• Recognise local and national skills gaps</li> <li>• Be aware of future employment trends</li> </ul> <p><b>How IAF supports young people to achieve this:</b></p> <p><b>1. Teaching and Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured learning activities that help students select, interpret, and evaluate careers information and understand its relevance to their goals</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Employer Encounters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful interactions including work experience (WEX), guest speakers, industry events, networking opportunities, and careers fairs</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Group LMI Sessions</b></p> <p>These sessions provide students with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current and high-quality information on education, training, and job opportunities</li> <li>• Insights into occupations and sectors, including salaries, workplaces, and career progression</li> <li>• Advice on future skills demands and evolving skillsets across industries</li> </ul> <p><b>4. One-to-One Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assessment tools to help students explore their suitability for various career pathways and better understand their preferences and strengths</li> <li>• Personal guidance sessions to help identify and pursue suitable opportunities aligned with individual interests and aspirations</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Benchmark 2 is met through KT TEAM delivery, weeks: 2-12</i></b></p>
3. Addressing the needs of each young person	<p>When a young person is referred to IAF, the <b>IAF Hub Manager</b> and <b>Careers Lead</b> work closely with the student's school and relevant local authority teams. This collaboration ensures that accurate records are maintained from the first point of contact or transition, allowing IAF to effectively understand and meet each learner's individual needs.</p>



	<p>IAF is committed to <b>breaking down barriers to opportunity</b>, offering additional support to help young people overcome challenges that may affect their progression in education, training, or employment.</p> <p>As part of the <b>transition and on boarding process</b>, IAF will encourage, arrange, and/or attend the following where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition meetings and site visits</li> <li>• Skills assessments (e.g., BKSb)</li> <li>• Needs assessments</li> <li>• Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review meetings</li> <li>• Looked After Child (LAC) review meetings and Personal Education Plan (PEP) discussions</li> <li>• Safeguarding meetings</li> </ul> <p>This comprehensive and person-centred approach ensures that every young person receives the tailored support they need to succeed from day one.</p> <p><b>Benchmark 3 is met through <i>Kings Trust TEAM delivery, weeks: 1-12</i></b></p>
4. Linking curriculum to careers	<p>As part of IAF's careers education programme, all young people are given opportunities to understand how the knowledge and skills they develop in the classroom are relevant to the world of work. Our goal is to help learners see how their education can support entry into, and success within, a wide variety of careers.</p> <p><b>IAF connects classroom learning to real-world careers through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employability workshops</b></li> <li>• <b>Corporate mentoring programmes</b></li> <li>• <b>Barclays Life Skills</b> sessions</li> <li>• <b>Guest speakers</b> from industry and the community</li> <li>• <b>Career planning</b> activities and resources</li> <li>• <b>Workplace preparation</b> guidance</li> <li>• <b>Personal development</b> programmes</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability education</b></li> <li>• <b>PSHE sessions</b> focused on life and career skills</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the <b>FSQ – Skills Builder Universal Framework</b> to develop essential skills</li> <li>• Embedding <b>literacy and numeracy</b> skills in work-relevant contexts</li> </ul> <p>To ensure high-quality delivery, <b>all IAF staff</b> participate in <b>annual staff development sessions</b> focused on careers education, guidance, and labour market insights. This commitment ensures our team remains informed and equipped to support young people effectively on their career journeys.</p> <p><b>Benchmark 4 is met through <i>Kings Trust TEAM delivery, weeks: 1-12</i></b></p>
5. Encounters with employers and employees	<p>Alongside their studies, IAF ensures that all young people have access to a wide range of opportunities to <b>meet with employers</b> and gain <b>insight into real workplace environments</b>. We actively encourage each learner to participate in <b>at least two meaningful employer encounters</b> during their time with us, helping to build confidence, awareness, and aspirations.</p> <p>These experiences are delivered through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Careers fairs</b> featuring local and national employers</li> <li>• <b>Enterprise activities</b> that develop entrepreneurial thinking and teamwork</li> <li>• <b>Mock interviews</b> to build confidence and interview skills</li> <li>• <b>Employer-led workshops</b> and <b>CV review sessions</b></li> <li>• <b>Research activities</b> involving real job vacancies and employer engagement</li> <li>• Participation in <b>Barclays Digital Skills</b> programmes</li> <li>• <b>Encounters with IAF alumni</b> who share their career journeys</li> <li>• Participation in <b>National Careers Week</b></li> <li>• Engagement in <b>National Apprenticeship Week</b></li> </ul> <p>These opportunities are designed to inspire and inform learners, enabling them to better understand the world of work and make confident, informed decisions about their futures.</p>



	<p><b>Benchmark 5 is met through <i>Kings Trust TEAM delivery, weeks: 2-12</i></b></p>
6. Experience of work places	<p>IAF encourages and supports all learners to engage in <b>multiple, meaningful, and varied workplace experiences</b>. These opportunities are designed to expose young people to a broad range of working environments, helping them make informed decisions about their future education, training, or employment pathways. Students aged <b>16–18</b> are supported, where appropriate to complete a <b>minimum of five days’ work experience</b>, which may be delivered through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community projects</b></li> <li>• <b>Work shadowing</b> opportunities</li> <li>• <b>Workplace visits</b> to observe different roles and sectors</li> <li>• <b>Volunteering</b>, providing valuable real-world experience while giving back to the community</li> </ul> <p>These experiences help learners build confidence, develop transferable skills, and gain a clearer understanding of the expectations and opportunities in the world of work.</p> <p><b>Benchmark 6 is met through <i>Kings Trust TEAM delivery, weeks 2-8, 10-11</i></b></p>
7. Encounters with further and higher education	<p>The Inspire and Achieve Foundation is committed to ensuring that all students are fully informed about the range of post-16 and post-18 learning opportunities available to them. We provide structured opportunities for young people to engage with local <b>further education (FE)</b> and <b>higher education (HE)</b> providers, supporting them in making confident and informed decisions about their next steps.</p> <p><b>By the end of their programme</b>, every learner will have had at least one <b>meaningful encounter</b> with a range of education providers to help guide their future choices.</p> <p>We achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inviting local FE providers to speak directly with learners</li> <li>• Organising group visits to FE colleges</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranging visits to local universities</li> <li>• Offering dedicated support with <b>UCAS applications</b> and <b>Student Finance</b></li> </ul> <p>This proactive approach helps learners explore a wide range of pathways and make informed decisions about their education and career progression.</p> <p><b>Benchmark 7 is met through Kings Trust TEAM delivery, weeks: 9</b></p>
8. Personal guidance	<p>IAF is committed to ensuring that <b>every student</b> has access to <b>at least one high-quality careers intervention per year</b>, particularly in the lead-up to key transition points in their education or career journey.</p> <p>These interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One-to-one careers guidance sessions</b> lasting a minimum of 45 minutes</li> <li>• <b>Person-centred and impartial advice</b>, tailored to each young person's individual needs, circumstances, and aspirations</li> <li>• Support that helps learners explore realistic options and take meaningful next steps</li> <li>• Guidance delivered by a <b>qualified Careers Adviser</b>, registered with the <b>UK Register of Career Development Professionals</b></li> </ul> <p>This approach ensures that all learners receive the support they need to make confident, informed decisions about their future pathways.</p> <p><b>Benchmark 8 is met through Kings Trust TEAM delivery, Weeks: 12</b></p>

