

PACE Northwest – Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Strategy & Policy

Approved by: Board of Directors

Policy owner: CEIAG Lead (Careers Leader)

Effective date: 29 August 2025

Next review due: Annually each August (or sooner if law/guidance changes)

1. Purpose and scope

PACE Northwest (“the Company”) provides impartial, high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) that helps all learners and prospective learners make informed decisions about learning, work and life. This policy and strategy:

- sets out our CEIAG aims, standards and procedures;
- aligns to government guidance for schools, colleges **and independent training providers** (ITPs);
- adopts the **Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance** (updated 2025) as our organising framework; and
- supports inspection expectations under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), ESFA funding rules and the matrix Standard for IAG quality.

Who it applies to: all PACE Northwest staff, subcontractors, delivery partners and associates; learners and prospective learners of all ages, including apprentices; and employers engaging with our provision. Where we operate in schools/colleges, we will comply with host-institution access policies and safeguarding procedures.

2. Policy statement

PACE Northwest will provide CEIAG that is **impartial, accessible, inclusive and learner-centred**, addressing each learner's needs (including those with SEND) and promoting equality of opportunity regardless of protected characteristic or background. We will:

- give every learner access to accurate, up-to-date **labour market information (LMI)** and to **personal guidance** from appropriately qualified advisers;
- ensure encounters with employers and meaningful experiences of workplaces are built into study programmes and apprenticeships;
- champion all pathways (apprenticeships, technical and vocational routes, higher education and employment with training), avoiding provider or route bias; and
- measure, evaluate and continuously improve CEIAG impact, including sustained **destinations**.

3. Legal and standards framework (England)

This strategy reflects and should be read alongside the following (as updated from time to time):

- Department for Education (DfE) **Careers guidance and access for education and training providers** (most recent update 2025).
- **Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance** (refreshed 2025) as the organising framework.
- **Education Inspection Framework** (Ofsted) and Further Education & Skills inspection handbook.
- **ESFA funding rules** for apprenticeships and adult skills (e.g., initial assessment, eligibility, learning support).
- **matrix Standard** for Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) quality.
- **Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice (0–25)**.
- **Safeguarding: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** for under-18s in colleges and training providers; **Prevent duty** guidance for FE & skills.
- **Data protection**: UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- **Board & CEO**: approve strategy, set tone, ensure resources, receive impact reports.
- **CEIAG Lead (Careers Leader)**: policy owner; leads strategy and annual plan; oversees Gatsby implementation and Compass-style self-assessment; maintains employer/provider networks; ensures personal guidance arrangements; oversees destinations tracking and reporting.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** ensures CEIAG activities comply with safeguarding, KCSIE and Prevent; approves risk assessments for trips/placements and visiting speakers; ensures safer recruitment for staff delivering personal guidance or working with under-18s.
- **Data Protection Officer (DPO):** ensures lawful processing of CEIAG data (consents, privacy notices, retention, subject rights).
- **Curriculum Leads/Trainers/Assessors:** embed careers into teaching, learning and assessment; signpost LMI; support reviews, progression planning and employer encounters; record CEIAG activity on ILPs/e-systems.
- **Employer Engagement Team:** broker quality encounters and workplace experiences; assure health & safety and safeguarding; brief employers on inclusive practice.
- **All staff:** provide impartial information, avoid route/provider bias, and refer learners for personal guidance or specialist support when needed.

5. Learner entitlement

Every PACE Northwest learner and applicant is entitled to:

1. **Accessible information** about programmes, funding, support and progression, presented clearly and free from jargon.
2. **Initial Advice & Guidance (IAG)** before enrolment, including impartial discussion of suitable routes and entry requirements, reasonable adjustments and support.
3. **Initial assessment** of prior learning/experience (RPL), English/maths and support needs; reasonable adjustments and learning support where eligible.
4. **A stable careers programme** mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks, visible on our website and shared at induction.
5. **Encounters with employers** and professional networks, including sector talks, projects and live briefs.
6. **Meaningful experience(s) of the workplace**, proportionate to programme and age.
7. **High-quality labour market information** and tools to explore opportunities locally and nationally.
8. **Personal guidance** from a **Level 6+ qualified** careers adviser (or supervised trainee), impartial and confidential, with follow-up actions recorded.
9. **Fair access** to all opportunities and reasonable adjustments for SEND; respect for equality, diversity and inclusion.
10. **Progress reviews** that include next-steps planning and preparation for progression or end-point assessment.
11. **Destinations support** and signposting for at least 6 months after completion where requested.

6. Strategy 2025–2027 (headline objectives & KPIs)

Objective A – Embed the updated Gatsby Benchmarks

- Publish an annual CEIAG plan and web statement; complete termly self-assessment; target ≥90% benchmark achievement by July 2027.

Objective B – Personal guidance access

- Guarantee at least **one** personal guidance interview per full-time learner (and on request for apprentices/adults); ≥95% satisfaction; ≥90% action-plan completion logged.

Objective C – Employer encounters & workplace experiences

- Minimum **two** employer encounters per year for full-time 16–19; at least **one** workplace experience per programme (incl. virtual where appropriate). Record and evaluate quality via learner reflection.

Objective D – Inclusive CEIAG

- Close participation gaps for learners with SEND or from disadvantaged groups; publish EDI-disaggregated CEIAG access/impact annually.

Objective E – Destinations

- Track 3-, 6- and 12-month destinations; set annual targets by programme; increase sustained positive destinations year-on-year.

Objective F – Quality assurance

- Maintain **matrix Standard** accreditation/readiness; internal audit of IAG each term; 100% CEIAG staff trained on policy annually.

7. Programme design aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks

PACE Northwest organises CEIAG around the eight benchmarks (2025 refresh). In summary we will:

1. **Stable careers programme** – publish aims, calendar and contacts; review termly; report to the Board annually.
2. **LMI** – teach learners to find, assess and use LMI (inc. growth sectors, green jobs, digital) and consider skills demands.
3. **Address individual needs** – maintain an at-risk list for additional careers support; personalise encounters; adapt for SEND.

4. **Link curriculum to careers** – embed employer projects and career learning outcomes within schemes of work and EPA prep.
5. **Employer encounters** – schedule talks, mentoring, fairs and projects with a diverse range of employers, including SMEs.
6. **Workplace experiences** – broker structured experiences proportionate to programme and age; risk assess and brief learners/employers; enable reflection.
7. **Encounters with further/higher education and training** – ensure exposure to a range of post-programme routes (HE, HTQs, professional courses, apprenticeships) and support applications.
8. **Personal guidance** – ensure access to Level 6+ careers advisers; triage referrals from tutors/assessors; record action plans.

8. Provider Access (schools/colleges)

When invited by a school or college (including through their Provider Access Policy), PACE Northwest will provide impartial information to pupils about apprenticeships, technical education and training. We will:

- respond promptly to requests;
- supply trained staff and/or apprentices/employers;
- tailor content to the audience and local labour market;
- comply with safeguarding, KCSIE and visiting-speaker protocols; and
- provide follow-up information and contact routes.

Contact for provider access: becs@pace-com.org

9. Personal guidance standards

- Delivered by a **Level 6+ qualified** careers adviser (QCD/L6 Diploma/L6 Higher Apprenticeship) or supervised trainee; impartial and learner-centred.
- Covers options, entry requirements, finance, support needs, reasonable adjustments, and progression planning; includes written action plan.
- Safeguarding concerns are escalated immediately to the DSL; emergency risks trigger immediate action.
- Advisers will uphold the **CDI Code of Ethics** and complete annual CPD.

10. Information quality and LMI

All published information will be **accurate, current and unbiased**, including entry requirements, costs/funding, delivery mode, assessment, support and realistic outcomes. LMI sources (e.g., National Careers Service, ONS, local skills plans) will be cited in learner materials. Marketing claims will comply with consumer protection law.

11. Equality, diversity, inclusion and SEND

CEIAG will challenge stereotypes and mitigate barriers. We will:

- provide accessible formats and reasonable adjustments;
- promote role models from under-represented groups;
- tailor advice for care-experienced learners, young carers and those with SEND;
- signpost to specialist services; and
- equality-impact assess CEIAG plans and report participation and outcomes by protected characteristic.

12. Safeguarding and Prevent

All CEIAG activity involving under-18s follows KCSIE; all staff complete safeguarding and Prevent training. External speakers/visits/work placements follow risk assessment and safeguarding checks. Concerns are recorded and escalated per the Safeguarding Policy.

13. Data protection and records

We process CEIAG data under UK GDPR/DPA 2018 with clear privacy notices and retention schedules. Records (IAG interactions, action plans, referrals, destinations) are stored securely on approved systems only. Learners can exercise their information rights through our DPO (becs@pace-com.org).

14. ESFA and funding-rule alignment (apprenticeships/adult skills)

- Provide **pre-enrolment IAG** so applicants can make informed choices.
- Conduct compliant **initial assessment** (including screening for learning support needs) and RPL to place learners on the right programme and support level.
- Record off-the-job training, reviews and progress; signpost English/maths requirements; support reasonable adjustments and learning support claims where eligible.

15. Quality assurance and evaluation

- **Self-assessment** against the Gatsby Benchmarks at least termly; use tools such as Compass/Compass+.
- **Learner and employer voice** collected after each key CEIAG activity; analyse by group to identify gaps.
- **Destinations** tracked at 3, 6 and 12 months; report sustained positive destinations to the Board.
- **Internal audit** (termly) of IAG records, advice quality and impartiality; remedial actions tracked.
- **matrix** readiness checks annually; external accreditation pursued when commissioned.

16. Complaints and appeals

Concerns about CEIAG should be raised with the CEIAG Lead in the first instance. If unresolved, follow the Company Complaints Policy. Learners can also access external routes (e.g., Awarding Organisations, ESFA complaints for funded provision).

17. Publication and contacts

This policy, CEIAG programme, provider-access contact details and key performance indicators will be published on our website.

Contacts:

- CEIAG Lead: becs@pace-com.org
- Outreach (schools/colleges): becs@pace-com.org
- Safeguarding (DSL): becs@pace-com.org

- Data Protection (DPO): becs@pace-com.org

Appendix A – Annual CEIAG Plan (example headings)

- Careers programme calendar mapped to Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Employer encounters & workplace experiences timetable.
- Personal guidance schedule and referral routes.
- Staff CPD plan (CEIAG, safeguarding, Prevent, SEND, LMI).
- LMI/resources plan; marketing information checks.
- Destinations tracking methodology and targets.
- Inclusion actions and adjustments (incl. SEND).

Appendix B – Personal Guidance Referral Pathway

1. Tutor/assessor or learner initiates referral (web form/email).
2. Triage by CEIAG Adviser within 5 working days (priority for safeguarding/SEND).
3. Guidance interview (30–60 mins) – action plan recorded in ILP.
4. Follow-up within 4 weeks; further referral to specialist or support services if needed.

Appendix C – Employer Encounters & Work Experience Minimum Standards

- Clear learning outcomes shared in advance; briefing for learners and employers.
- Safe, inclusive activities; risk assessments completed; visiting-speaker checks.
- Learner preparation and reflection tasks; evaluation collected and reviewed.

Appendix D – Destinations Tracking

- Data sources: ILR, learner surveys, employer/HEI feedback, social/professional platforms where appropriate and lawful.
- Checkpoints: 3, 6 and 12 months.
- Metrics: sustained education/training/employment; apprenticeship progression; level/sector alignment; wage progression where available.

Appendix E – Definitions

- **CEIAG** – a whole-organisation approach to careers education alongside information/advice/guidance services.
- **Personal guidance** – one-to-one careers guidance delivered by a Level 6+ qualified adviser, impartial and confidential.

- **Meaningful experience of the workplace** – structured encounters that involve two-way interaction and purposeful tasks, proportionate to programme and age.

Version control: v1.0 (29 Aug 2025).