



Review of the matrix Standard in response to the Tribal Review of 2009

Evaluation Report

**Carried out by emqc Ltd and Mary D
Associates Ltd on behalf of The Department
for Business, Innovation and Skills**

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Foreword: John Hayes

These days, when it comes to taking life's really big decisions, like choosing a career, our problem usually lies not so much in obtaining advice, but in deciding whose advice to trust. How are we to know which path will lead us onwards towards fulfilling our ambitions and which will turn out to be just a blind alley?



The **matrix** Standard was developed in 2002 to give us confidence that the advice we are given is good advice. There are now over 2,100 organisations accredited to the standard and it is even being adopted in other countries.

One of the aims of the **matrix** Standard is to ensure that advice and guidance organisations continually develop and review the way they deliver their services.

In the same way, the standard itself is reassessed from time to time in order to ensure that it remains relevant. For example, following a recent and wide-ranging review, the structure of the standard has been changed to make it more rigorous and to reflect the growing professionalisation of careers guidance staff.

The revised **matrix** Standard will prove challenging for organisations to achieve, as it should be. It will support and encourage the delivery of still higher-quality information, advice and guidance.

These are all reasons why I want people to recognise the **matrix** Standard as a guarantee that they can trust the advice they are being offered.

I want them to know that the service they will receive from any organisation which has achieved the **matrix** Standard will be delivered by qualified staff, who will help them make the right choices in their careers and in their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Executive Summary

Background

1. The **matrix** Standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Designed to promote continuous improvement amongst individuals and organisations, the Standard quality assures the delivery of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services. It was launched in February 2002 and revised in 2005. It is the intellectual property of the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is Crown Copyright.
2. The **matrix** Standard has been adopted by a range of organisations across the UK. These include those offering careers guidance, where the Standard has been a requirement of all organisations delivering the Government's Next Step service for adults and has been adopted by many of those delivering the Connexions Service to young people aged 13-18, as well as those offering services privately. It is also used by many others offering information and advice, either as their primary role, or as part of a portfolio of other activities; these include schools, HE and FE institutions, training providers, professional bodies and charitable, voluntary and community organisations. Over 2100 organisations are currently accredited under the **matrix** Standard in the UK. Recently there has been an emerging interest in the scope of the **matrix** Standard to be available internationally.
3. In May 2009 BIS commissioned a review¹ (Tribal Review) of the arrangements for quality assuring the delivery of information, advice and guidance services and make recommendations on the future arrangements for a quality assurance standard for publicly funded services. BIS accepted five of the Tribal review recommendations:
 - *The **matrix** Standard should remain as the quality assurance standard for the (information, advice and guidance) sector*
 - *Areas of the **matrix** Standard should be reviewed and perceived areas of weakness (for example; competence, qualifications, continuous improvement, marketing and branding) should be strengthened*
 - *Enhancements to the existing **matrix** Standard should be developed in the light of other quality assurance arrangements (particularly the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework)*
 - *There should be a continuum from young people's arrangements to adult provision*
 - *Work was needed to improve consistency in the assessment process, associated with assessor competence.*

¹ Quality Assurance Arrangements for the Adult Advancement and Careers Service, – Tribal Consultancy Group, 8th November 2009

4. BIS commissioned the review of the **matrix** Standard detailed here in response.

Review and Trials

5. The review and accompanying trials was undertaken with participation from the full range of organisations involved in providing IAG services, including those providing publicly funded or private sector services, and with a variety of corporate structures to reflect the diverse nature of the sector. The trials included those with prior experience of the **matrix** Standard and those for which it was new, so as to get the broadest view of the revised Standard, both in how it had changed and how attractive it was to potential new customers.

The Revised **matrix** Standard

6. Initial work using focus groups and a survey led to the development of three options for the revised Standard. Workshop consultations offered a clear mandate for one option which generated support from 95% of participants. The preferred option, Option 3, is based around four elements (previously eight) based on key business processes; Leadership and Management; Resources; Service Delivery and Continuous Quality Improvement. Each element includes several criteria against which an organisation is considered and has to achieve to meet the Standard. This option was then trialled to test and refine it further. Trials were undertaken with 23 organisations.

7. The trials have presented strong evidence that the revised **matrix** Standard shows several key strengths over the current version responding effectively to areas of concern identified by the Tribal Review 2009. This evidence has been provided through feedback from;

- organisations which have been assessed against the revised Standard or consulted on it;
- advisors supporting those organisations; and
- assessors.

8. Feedback confirms that revising the structure of the **matrix** Standard in this way has made it more accessible for a diverse range of organisations. Regardless of the nature of the service offered, organisations found the Standard through its increased focus on key business areas has the potential to support substantial business improvements. It has helped provide them with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound areas for them to consider in order to significantly improve their service delivery and as such the outcomes for their clients. There was also strong support from organisations that the Standard would make a positive impact on their particular organisation and that the clear criteria in each element would enable all staff to identify how they fit into the services policies, processes and procedures.

9. Whilst proving challenging in some areas where criteria mean organisations need to adopt more rigorous management and staff development approaches, the revised Standard can be successfully adopted with very different delivery approaches. The trials tested it with providers offering services face to face or online, in schools and prisons, with sole traders and the voluntary sector. All confirmed that the Standard could work for them

and supported the added value it could bring, regardless of their focus, size, delivery style, delivery approach or their client groups. The two Higher Education (HE) Institutions which took part thought the changes to the **matrix** Standard offered a significant improvement; that the Standard is of value and can be successfully adopted by the HE sector. Not all HE institutions currently embrace the current **matrix** Standard and the changes offer an opportunity to improve its credibility with this sector.

10. There were concerns raised that for some groups, such as sole traders assessors would need to recognise that some of the management and staff development criteria could not be tested as directly as in other organisations. In addition the importance of assessors adapting their approach to assessment for organisations that deliver online services was highlighted. However with appropriate guidance this can be managed. It is important that the Standard can be applied flexibly in this way as the careers market develops in response to changes in the expectations for schools and the increasing influence of new technology.

11. A key concern from the Tribal Review was the need to strengthen the Standard in some areas. The revised Standard contains new or better defined criteria which focus on linking organisational and service aims and objectives; defining the outcomes for clients; ensuring staff have the competences and skills to deliver those; supports a process of continuing improvement for the service and staff; and have arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate the service. These changes have been supported by strong interdependencies between criteria, some in different elements, which has introduced a greater coherence across the Standard, and while this has meant that not meeting one criterion effectively guarantees not meeting others, this gives greater clarity and focus on what is important, offering a set of more rigorous requirements. The outcome of these changes has been that where organisations were assessed as not yet meeting all the requirements of the Standard, including those accredited to the current **matrix** Standard, this was often against several related criteria. Nevertheless even those organisations which did not meet the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard, supported it and are looking at how they can achieve success in future. There was an acceptance across the board that the changes were beneficial and highlighted areas of good business practice which all providers of these services should be aspiring to deliver against if they were to meet the quality standards being set.

12. The wording of the criteria and structure of the revised Standard also look to tackle concerns about duplication and clarity. The reduction in the number of elements from eight to four has removed much of the duplication that is experienced in the current **matrix** Standard, helped by the new structure aligning with business processes which are common in the public, private and third sector and is therefore more readily understood by organisations. The improved clarity of the criteria was reflected in comments from all the participants. The use of plain English and the move away from IAG specific technical terminology has been well received and the evidence shows strongly that participants found the criteria much easier and clearer to understand.

13. A further consideration for the revised Standard has been to align it with other existing quality frameworks. The wording of the criteria and the evidence that is required against these takes into account evidence required for other quality frameworks and where these are testing the same or similar areas has been consciously aligned with those. Ofsted and other advisory service members of the Steering Group provided an internal challenge to ensure this aim was met and feedback during the trials from schools and other agencies confirms that evidence requirements are in line with those required for other quality marks

and inspection frameworks. This will allow evidence gathered for one assurance process to be used for the **matrix** accreditation and *vice versa*.

14. In common with other approaches to quality assurance the trials have also tested a self assessment approach. This has received overwhelming support from organisations, advisors and assessors who perceive benefits in preparing for accreditation. For the trials a working template was used and based on the positive feedback an online tool will now be developed.

The Assessment Process

15. To ensure greater consistency of approach by assessors to the assessment process a template for planning assessment activity and drawing up reports was developed and tested. This helped assessors consider the evidence in a more consistent way and recognise the increased interdependencies between different criteria and the evidence that supports them. This is especially important in view of the move to a more outcomes based assessment within the Standard. While the trials showed that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard provided significant opportunities for assessors and advisors to provide more in depth feedback to organisations, the quality assurance, analysis and review of assessment plans and reports identified further training needs for assessors and advisors.

16. All **matrix** Practitioners will be required to complete further mandatory training and will be supported, developed and quality assured by emqc Ltd, the **matrix** Standard Body, responsible for the management and delivery of the **matrix** Standard.

17. emqc Ltd. will also provide new guidance to support organisations looking for accreditation against the revised Standard. This will include in time a new costing model tested only by assessors during the trials, which demonstrates how costs have been allocated for the activities which support assessment and drive the charges made to organisations by the **matrix** Standard Body. The new model should provide a clearer and fairer allocation of costs to the assessment process, but has yet to be assessed by any organisations. It is important that the model provides sufficient flexibility to take into account the complexity of organisations, provides a clear detailed and transparent breakdown of costs, and demonstrates the value for money of the assessments to organisations paying for assessment. Only once this has been tested will the new model be adopted.

18. The impact of the help and support provided by advisors as part of the trials was not empirically tested because the timescale for the trials was too short to allow any direct impact on the outcomes to be seen. However, feedback from organisations that received advisor support, both those that went on to be assessed and those that did not, was supportive of the role that advisors played and they can be expected to be an important resource for those seeking accreditation in future.

Conclusion

19. The evidence from the trials supports the proposition that the revised Standard not only offers a robust replacement for the existing Standard but can be used by a wide range of

organisations engaged in offering information, advice and guidance services. In some cases such as HE and schools participants have suggested the Standard is more applicable to their sectors than previously and should be a more attractive proposition in future. While currently limited to use in the UK it was recognised that there is an emerging interest internationally in the current **matrix** Standard, and consideration was given in the shaping of the criteria to ensure that whilst meeting the needs of information, advice and guidance services in the UK, they do not constrain the potential use of the Standard in other countries.

Recommendations

20. Based on the outcomes of this review and the trials of the revised **matrix** Standard, the **matrix** review Steering Group recommends that:

- The revised matrix Standard as set out in Appendix 1 is confirmed as the replacement for the existing matrix Standard

21. In order for the revised Standard to be successfully adopted and delivered then the following recommendations should also be met:

- The current self assessment template is reviewed and further development undertaken to provide an accessible tool which can be used by organisations considering accreditation and by advisors and assessors to facilitate achievement of the **matrix** Standard and continuous improvement.
- The practitioner training programme is developed to respond to these new training needs emerging from the increased focus on outcomes and linkages between criteria and the benefits of this monitored through systems for monitoring practitioner performance and development.
- Further work is undertaken on the costing model, an online version is developed and it is then tested with organisations involved in the trials, before it is adopted.
- Guidance for **matrix** Practitioners is completed and put in place in time to support the adoption of the revised **matrix** Standard from 1 August 2011.

Introduction

- 1.1 The **matrix** Standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Designed to promote continuous improvement amongst individuals and organisations, the Standard quality assures the delivery of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services. It promotes the delivery of high quality information, advice and/or guidance by ensuring organisations plan, deliver, review, evaluate and develop their service; The **matrix** Standard was launched in February 2002 and is the intellectual property of the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is Crown Copyright. The current version of the **matrix** Standard was introduced in 2005.
- 1.2 Over 2,100 organisations in the UK are currently accredited to the **matrix** Standard, including but not limited to; Higher Education, Further Education, Community/Third Sector, Training Companies, Careers Companies, Next Step Providers, Trade Unions, Prisons and Professional Bodies. There are a further 300 others either working towards it or showing a strong interest in engaging with the Standard. The majority of these can be found in England with small numbers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, interest in the Standard is not confined to the UK. In recent months interest in adopting **matrix** as a national Standard has been shown elsewhere in Europe and as far afield as Australia.
- 1.3 In England the Next Step service, that is funded by Government and administered by the Skills Funding Agency, delivers careers information, advice and guidance to adults. All contractors managing and delivering the Next Step service are required to meet the **matrix** Standard. The Next Step service will from April 2012 be replaced by a new National Careers Service. It will provide high quality, professional careers information, advice and guidance to young people and adults. The National Careers Service will also be required to meet a national quality standard which will assure users that providers of careers guidance are delivering a high quality service.
- 1.4 As the body responsible for the **matrix** Standard, emqc Ltd has undertaken trials of a revised **matrix** Standard on behalf of BIS. The revised Standard was drawn up under the control of a Steering Group appointed by BIS in response to a review of quality standards for careers information advice and guidance carried out by Tribal in 2009². The trials are intended to test and evaluate whether the revisions will result in a Standard which provides Ministers with the necessary assurance about the quality of service that users will receive from the National Careers Service and other organisations who adopt the new Standard. This report with recommendations has been prepared and presented to the Steering Group as a detailed account of the review of the **matrix** Standard.

² Quality Assurance Arrangements for the Adult Advancement and Careers Service, 8th November 2009

Background

2.1 In May, 2009 Tribal Consultancy Group were commissioned by BIS to review the arrangements for quality assuring the delivery of information, advice and guidance services, including those which are publicly funded, and make recommendations on what quality assurance standard should be adopted for the proposed adult advancement and careers service that was being developed at that time. In the event an enhanced adult careers service – Next Step was introduced from August 2010, but broader policy proposals to introduce wider advancement networks, drawing together local voluntary and other information and advice organisations were not taken forward.

2.2 The Tribal Review (2009) made five main recommendations:

- i. *The **matrix** Standard should remain as the quality assurance standard for the (information, advice and guidance) sector*
- ii. *Areas of the **matrix** Standard should be reviewed and perceived areas of weakness (for example; competence, qualifications, continuous improvement, marketing and branding) should be strengthened*
- iii. *Enhancements to the existing **matrix** Standard should be developed in the light of other quality assurance arrangements (particularly the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework)*
- iv. *There should be a continuum from young people's arrangements to adult provision*
- v. *Differentiation according to level or type of provision should be considered*

2.3 The Tribal Review also recommended that:

- vi. *Work was needed to improve consistency in the assessment process, associated with assessor competence.*

2.4 BIS accepted the Tribal Review (2009) recommendations but concluded that recommendation (v) - Differentiation according to level and type of provision - would not add any value to the **matrix** Standard.

2.5 In April 2010 Mary D Associates Limited were commissioned by BIS to review and revise the **matrix** Standard in response to recommendations (i) – (iv), and to consider possible revisions to the assessment and accreditation processes in response to the further recommendation in 2.3 above. The trials undertaken by emqc Ltd. have tested the outcomes of this work.

Aims

- 3.1 The review led by Mary D Associates Ltd and following trials led by emqc Ltd. sought to revise the **matrix** Standard in response to the accepted recommendations of the Tribal Review, and in so doing create a quality standard that would be a world leader for the information, advice and guidance sector, reflecting the changing demands and priorities for Government, employers and customers. Key outcomes of the review of the Standard included:
- Re-structuring to help organisations which are part of a wider network of advice agencies, including learning providers, use aspects of the Standard to improve services - Tribal Recommendation (2.2i)
 - Ensuring that the Standard could be adopted by a range of organisational types, including schools, sole traders and the voluntary sector, with varying delivery approaches - Tribal Recommendation (2.2i)
 - Making it more rigorous regarding - Tribal Recommendation (2.2ii)
 - competence of staff;
 - commitment to continuous improvement of staff and service delivery;
 - service delivery links to outcomes; and
 - responding to Information Technology advances.
 - Removal of duplication between criteria within the elements of the current **matrix** Standard (2005 version) - Tribal Recommendation (2.2ii)
 - Clarifying the meaning of certain criteria using plain English (and in particular ensure terminology used within the Standard is understood by organisations with a non IAG background) - Tribal Recommendation (2.2ii)
 - Alignment as far as possible with the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and the Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (QSYPIAG) evidence needs, including developing a simple self-assessment tool to aid organisations in considering their readiness for assessment against the Standard - Tribal Recommendation (2.2iii) and (2.2iv)
 - Address perceived inconsistencies in assessment and issues relating to consistency of costs to organisations - Tribal Recommendation (2.3vi)
 - Prepare new guidance for practitioners reflecting agreed changes to the Standard and processes - Tribal Recommendation (2.3vi)

Methodology

- 4.1 The overall review has been overseen by a Steering Group, chaired by a representative from BIS. (See Annex 1 for membership).
- 4.2 The initial review of the **matrix** Standard was carried out through a series of consultations involving focus groups, questionnaires and workshops to develop a Draft Revised **matrix** Standard. This work was followed by trials of the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard.

Focus Groups

- 4.3 Four focus groups were held to identify in more detail those aspects of the current **matrix** Standard which would need to be reviewed, in response to the concerns raised by the Tribal Review. Focus group participants were drawn from;
 - Next Step Prime Contractors, the Careers Advice Service and Advancement Service prototypes
 - Registered **matrix** Practitioners
 - Learning Providers
 - Professional Bodies¹¹
- 4.4 The focus groups identified the content of an online questionnaire to be sent to all organisations accredited to the **matrix** Standard and to all **matrix** Practitioners. An online tool was felt to be most appropriate as it provided the opportunity to collect data and analyse the data easily with the capacity to slice and dice the information according to organisational type response to each question if necessary.
- 4.5 Rather than presenting the existing elements and criteria of the **matrix** Standard in the questionnaire, existing elements and criteria of the Standard were rephrased and added to. This gave everyone the chance to comment on the suitability of the suggestions. The content of the questionnaire was mapped against the existing **matrix** Standard and unmatched items agreed with the Steering Group. The questionnaire was then circulated to over 2,500 organisations. Details of the questionnaire can be found at [Annex 2].
- 4.6 Where 75% or more of respondents were definitely or probably in support of any statement the Steering Group agreed that it should be included in the revised Standard.

Workshops

- 4.7 Using the outputs from the questionnaire three options for a revised **matrix** Standard were developed and presented at eight regional workshops. Workshop delegates were drawn to be representative of the full range of organisations who use the Standard.

Annex 3 gives details of the three options. Delegates were asked to consider each option and advise which they preferred.

- 4.8 The preferred option was refined to reflect the views of delegates and presented to the Steering Group. A final version of the agreed option along with a supporting glossary of terms was agreed by the Steering Group and named the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard.
- 4.9 This copy was used (1) in the training of ten Registered **matrix** Practitioners who would deliver the support and assessment for the trials, and (2) as the Standard for the trials.

Mapping against other Standards

- 4.10 To establish any links the revised **matrix** Standard was mapped against Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the Quality Standard for Young People's Information Advice and Guidance (QYPIAG)

Trials

- 4.11 The trials ran between February and April 2011; they were overseen by a Project Board, chaired by Dave Allan of emqc Ltd. (See Annex 4 for membership). The Project Board was responsible for:
- Providing overall guidance for the trials;
 - Reviewing progress;
 - Identifying and resolving issues; and
 - Making final recommendations for changes to the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard to the Steering Group;
- 4.12 Trials activity was planned in consultation between emqc Ltd., BIS, the ten trained **matrix** Practitioners and Mary D Associates Limited.
- 4.13 A range of different organisations were approached by emqc Ltd. to volunteer for the trials. They were chosen to ensure the Standard was tested with all key types of agency that might adopt the Standard. Invitees were made aware of the constraints involved, including timing, process, their contribution to the trials and expected outcomes and benefits for participants. 23 organisations took part in the trials. All usual fees associated with the assessment process were waived for participants in the trial.
- 4.14 Organisations were asked how they wished to be involved in the trials. Options, which could be combined included;
- Being consulted on the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard and offering feedback on its appropriateness for the organisation and the service it delivers.
 - Undertaking a full assessment against the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard.
 - Using a new self assessment template intended to support achievement of the Standard.

- Having advisor support.
- 4.15 Where organisations were **consulted** they were given the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard to review, but were not assessed.
 - 4.16 Where organisations opted for an **assessment** the established assessment process was used. Assessments were carried out by the ten trained **matrix** Practitioners. In order to gain feedback on perceived inconsistencies in assessment and issues relating to consistency of costs to organisations all assessments that were conducted were completed using the standard templates specific to the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard for the assessment plan and the final report. This enabled easier and more detailed analysis of practice between assessors.
 - 4.17 Organisations which tested the **self assessment template** could choose to do this independently or with the help of an advisor.
 - 4.18 Each organisation that took part in any of the above activity also completed a detailed questionnaire to feed back on their thoughts/comments in terms of the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard, supporting documents and the process. Additional informal verbal and written comments were also captured throughout the trials.
 - 4.19 Where an **advisor** was engaged to support the organisation, the advisor also completed a questionnaire and a report. Advisory support was provided by the ten trained **matrix** Practitioners.
 - 4.20 All questionnaires were returned to emqc Ltd. for compilation and analysis. Evidence from the questionnaires was also supported by a workshop involving emqc Ltd., BIS, the ten Registered **matrix** Practitioners that supported the trials and Mary D Associates Limited. This allowed further informal evidence gathered by the assessors and advisors to be taken into consideration.
 - 4.21 Key findings from the trials were discussed and consequent further changes to the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard agreed by the Project Board.

Developing a new costing model for assessments

- 4.22 emqc Ltd. analysed the formulae underpinning the existing costing model against the concerns raised by the Tribal Review and against other models for similar activities. A draft new Costing Model was drawn up to be tested during the trial assessments.
- 4.23 Assessors for the trials were briefed on its use and the new model was applied by them to assess in advance likely costs for each assessment. Actual time taken for assessments was also recorded to (a) evaluate the accuracy of the pre-assessment cost estimate, and (b) to compare the planning assumptions for assessment times under the new model with the previous model.
- 4.24 The results were discussed at a follow up meeting with the assessors. Based on the assessors' comments on the suitability of the new model, and comparison with other models for similar activities, the model will be refined and organisations undergoing assessment given an opportunity to comment on it.

Table 1: Overview of trial organisations

Sector	Numbers				
	Engaged in trial	Accredited At time of trial	Used the Self assessment template	Received Advisor support	
School	CONSULTED	2	1	2	2
Higher Education Institution		2 ³	1	2	2
Independent Sole Trader		1	-	-	1
Total - consulted		5	2	4	5
Young Peoples Service / DWP Provider	ASSESSED	1	1	1	1
Academy (young people)		2	-	2	2
Further Education		3 ⁴	2	2	2
Training Provider		3	1	1	2
Community/ Third sector organisation		2	1	1	2
Unionlearn organisation		2	2	2	1
Next Step Provider		1	1	1	1
Health Sector Organisation		1	-	-	-
Apprenticeship Provider		1	1	1	1
Independent Charity		1	-	1	1
Prison		1	1	1	-
Total - assessed			18	10	13
GRAND TOTAL		23	12	17	18

4.25 Table 1 above summarises the organisations and what aspects of the trial they undertook. In total 23 organisations volunteered to be involved in trials. Of these five organisations received a day of advisor support to explore the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard and provide feedback only.

^{3 and 3} One organisation had previously been accredited, but no longer holds accreditation at the time of the trials

- 4.26 The organisations that took part in the trials cover different sectors, providing a range of services to adults and young people and geographically cover all regions of the country. They ranged from independent sole traders to large organisations, including one assessment that was undertaken by a lead assessor and supported by a team assessor (due to the size of the organisation).
- 4.27 Of the 23 organisations that were involved in the trials, 74% used the Self-Assessment template and 26% did not, of these organisations some are currently accredited to the **matrix** Standard and some are not. Those that did not use the Self-Assessment template included a variety of organisations that have previously been accredited (and also are no longer accredited) and those that are new to the **matrix** Standard.

Finalising the draft Standard

- 4.28 Following the completion of the trials the Project Board reviewed the evidence and comments that were presented and made further changes to the wording of the individual criteria. These changes are highlighted in Annex 5.

Outcomes

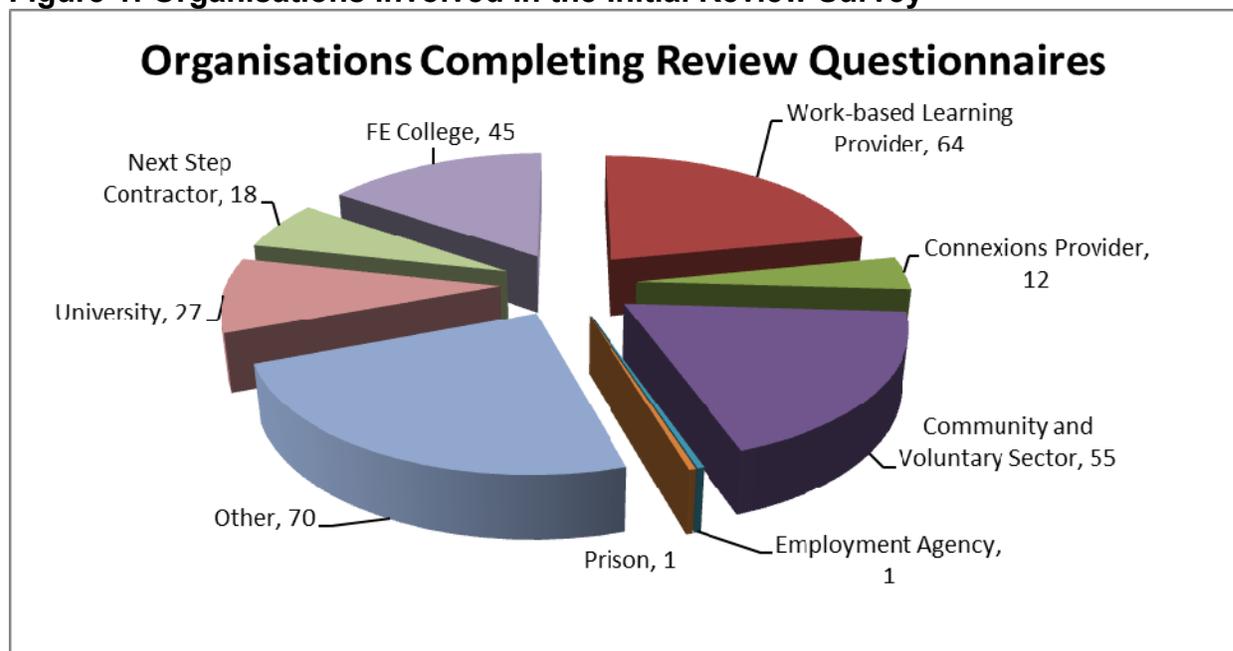
Initial Review Work

5.1 The focus groups identified several key areas for improvement, which as well as supporting the recommendations of the Tribal Review on duplication and confusion with some elements of the Standard, suggested that:

- A self assessment process would be helpful at the beginning of the assessment and an action plan produced post accreditation.
- Evidence requirements for the new Standard need to be mapped against other standards.
- Accreditation reviews need to ensure that a higher standard is achieved or the existing high standard is maintained.
- Qualifications and competence of all staff needs to be strengthened.
- Development of **matrix** Practitioners needs to take place focusing on the new Standard and ensuring consistency across all Practitioners.
- Some of the processes behind the Standard need to be amended.

5.2 Of the 2500 stakeholders that were approached to participate, replies were received from 293. Figure 1 below shows which types of organisation and the number of each that responded. Responses were received from across all the sectors which use the **matrix** Standard.

Figure 1: Organisations involved in the Initial Review Survey



- 5.3 Analysis of the responses showed that there were several areas where a significant number of respondents did not 'definitely' or 'probably' support the statement:
- Statement 4.13 - Clients are involved in design and development (19% unsure and 7% no)
 - Statement 5.1 -The advice and support service is clear about what client outcomes it uses as measures of its success in meeting its organisational aims and objectives (15% unsure and 3% no)
 - Statement 5.3 - Client outcomes are defined in terms of either soft and/or hard outcomes (19% not sure and 9% no)
 - Statement 6.12 - Work shadowing and peer reviews are part of established practices (50% were not in favour of this)
- 5.4 All these were reviewed by the Steering Group. This concluded that:
- Statements 5.1 and 5.3 should be retained because client outcomes were important to the integrity of the Standard.
 - Statement 4.13 - Client involvement in the design and development of the service was felt to reflect the good practice in the QSYPIAG and should be retained.
 - Statement 6.12 was clearly not supported by a majority of the respondents and should not be retained.
- 5.5 Respondents to the questionnaire also strongly supported the proposition that a simple self assessment should be submitted prior to an assessment (80% were in favour) and there was moderate support for an annual self assessment against the Standard to be undertaken (54% in favour). Additionally 67% were in favour of the introduction of a post accreditation action plan, responding to assessment feedback and identified areas for continuous improvement.
- 5.6 Once the proposed revised content of the Standard had been agreed by the Steering Group, Mary D Associates considered how it might be best presented in future to meet the concerns identified by the Tribal Review and drew up the three Options (see Annex 3) which were considered at the workshops, alongside proposals for self assessment, value added products, such as action plans, and changes to processes.

Mapping against other Standards

- 5.7 The Steering Group also considered how well the new proposed criteria would map against other quality frameworks. The mapping demonstrated strong links between the revised **matrix** criteria and the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF). Of the 27 **matrix** criteria, 24 linked to aspects of the CIF. In 22 of the criteria there were explicit links and in 2 of the criteria the links were implicit. In the remaining criteria no links between the **matrix** Standard and the CIF could be established.
- 5.8 Links with the Quality Standards for Young People's Information Advice and Guidance (QSYPIAG) are also strong with 24 **matrix** criteria being linked to the QSYPIAG standard. In 2 instances the link is implicit. In the remaining 2 **matrix** criteria there is no clear link with the Quality Standard for Young People's IAG.

- 5.9 250 representatives from the following sectors in England participated in the workshops: Higher Education; Further Education; Adult and Community; Careers Companies; nextstep Providers; Learning Providers; Voluntary; Sole Traders; and **matrix** Practitioners.
- 5.10 Of the 210 evaluation forms completed by delegates there was overwhelming support for Option 3 (95%); with 5% in favour of Option 2. They highlighted two strengths of Option 3:
- The terminology used was simpler for organisations whose core business was not IAG
 - The use of a business model approach made it more accessible to a wide range of organisations.
- 5.11 Delegates raised one concern that some small organisations might not have sufficient written evidence to support their bid for assessment, and a consequent small adjustment was made to the requirements to accommodate this concern. The Steering Group agreed also that ‘so what does this mean for an organisation’ notes should be added to help organisations to understand the terminology. This guidance could then be built upon for **matrix** Practitioners.
- 5.12 With these changes the Option 3 version (Appendix 1) was used as the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard to be tested in the trials, alongside a self-assessment document and some agreed alternative processes.

Trials

5.13 Ensuring the Standard Is Fit For Purpose for All Sectors

- 5.13.1 The range of organisations who took part in the trials covered all the sectors and types of organisation that offer information, advice and/or careers guidance and which might be expected to adopt the **matrix** Standard (see Table 1 and paragraphs 4.25 – 4.27).

Schools and Young People’s Services

- 5.13.2 The five organisations delivering young people’s services, including schools and academies agreed that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard is appropriate for their sector. The three organisations currently accredited to the Standard thought that transition from the current Standard would be achievable but the revised **matrix** Standard was more challenging. All commented that it had several strengths:-
- it complemented existing QA and CQI processes
 - reflected their corporate structures, systems, processes and modes of delivery and consequently helped to inform development plans, and
 - enhanced data analysis to inform continuous improvement and further supported their quality assurance procedures.

“I really like the Standard. It is less laborious than the local quality marks, I like its clarity. It is punchy, direct and all four elements give me

a sense that it is the tool I need to make a difference to the school's information, advice and guidance. I will now be using the framework"

Deputy Head, Academy School

- 5.13.3 Furthermore, they commented that all the elements and criteria were clear, although there remains a need for further consistency within some of the terms, for example 'clients' and 'services'. Further information relating to these outcomes is described in more detail later (see 5.15). Assessors identified that the four elements are written in a style that mirrors the school improvements plans and the impact opportunities that using the Standard can have on client outcomes by influencing the clear definition of aims and objectives.
- 5.13.4 The organisations found the advisory support they received valuable in shaping the focus and communication for staff, as well as helping them prepare effectively for the assessment and understanding the links within the Standard. It was also clear that they valued the external, informed and objective viewpoint from the assessor on how they are currently delivering their services. For one organisation this has led to them to evaluate how they define outcomes with the learner at the beginning of the journey, specifically soft outcomes and milestones.

"matrix takes what was careers education and makes it more inclusive for other areas of the school provision"

Manager, Academy

- 5.13.5 One of the academies, an internationally recognised virtual learning academy delivers all its services to clients **online**. Although this organisation had a very different delivery approach, none of the criteria proved a barrier to the assessment process. In common with other organisations, they found some of the criteria stretching but the issues they raised were no different from others with more conventional delivery approaches.

"Clear indications from the report have allowed our development plans and quality assurance procedures to be further enhanced, and our data more rigorously developed and interrogated"

Manager, Academy

Adult Services

- 5.13.6 This group of organisations provided the most feedback in terms of clarification of some of the criteria, in particular linking to Service Delivery (element 3) and Continuous Quality Improvement (element 4). More detail on this can be found in section 5.15.
- 5.13.7 The consensus from those within this group who were currently accredited to the **matrix** Standard aligned with that for schools and young people services. The new focus on outcomes made the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard more challenging in a positive way and moving from the current Standard was clearly achievable. The revised structure was found to be easier to navigate and a lot of the repetition had been removed.

“We now have a clearer understanding of the benefits of encompassing information, advice and guidance into the whole of the company and the actual value it can deliver for us and our customers and learners”

Manager, Training Provider

*“We believe that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard is an excellent tool that applies very well indeed in the context of the delivery and management of the Next Step service. It places client outcomes at the centre of the process and focuses on the key areas that have a bearing on them”*

Manager, Next Step Provider

5.13.8 Organisations valued the help and support the advisor provided in terms of preparation for the assessment and increasing their confidence, several organisations made reference to the advisor being an ‘excellent critical friend’.

Mixed Age Services

5.13.9 Five of the trial organisations provide services to both young people and adults, four of which deliver 50% or more of their services to young people. They felt that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard was very clear in terms of the elements, but further clarification would be beneficial within some of the criteria, highlighting Service Delivery (element 3) and Continuous Quality Improvement (element 4) for further improvement.

5.13.10 Organisations currently accredited to the **matrix** Standard supported the changes that had been made. These were seen as making it more explicit, concise and easier to use and understand. Nevertheless the changes had made it more challenging for organisations to achieve.

5.13.11 Organisations found that the advisory support was helpful; it provided them with an opportunity to discuss any concerns and helped them prepare and focus staff on the assessment process.

Sole Trader

5.13.12 One sole trader was consulted in the trials and provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. They felt that all the criteria could be met, although assessors would need to consider the particular circumstances of a sole trader for some of the criteria, for example criterion 4.6 (staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, is reviewed and evaluated). The advisor who worked with the sole trader agreed with this, however this could be managed by providing further guidance for assessors.

“It will not only be useful for the consortium that I work with, but it will also be beneficial to have the credibility of being accredited”

Sole Trader

5.13.13 The sole trader was just beginning to prepare for an assessment against the current **matrix** Standard, and found the opportunity to discuss the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard and the current Standard of significant benefit.

Assessors and Advisors

5.13.14 Assessors and advisors confirmed that for all types of organisation to adopt the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard should not prove difficult but the changes to the Standard had made it more challenging to achieve. The changes to the structure meant that organisations were able to see how it would work in their sectors and were able to link to their business models. The language had been made plainer and duplication removed.

5.13.15 While advisory support in understanding the impact of objective and outcome focused criteria 1.1 and 1.5 was welcomed by organisations in the trials the assessors were not always presented with the evidence to demonstrate the organisations achievement of these criteria. Assessors found they had to explain that outcomes were more than achieving the outputs required for contracts i.e. the 'impact' from the contract outputs. Some organisations also found it difficult to demonstrate the achievement of these criteria in relation to 'soft' outcomes e.g. clients success through changes in attitude.

"It's an excellent best practice model for delivery"

*Registered **matrix** Advisor*

5.14 Comparison of impact of revised Standard on accredited and non accredited organisations

5.14.1 It was important to consider whether the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard was suitable both for organisations that are already accredited and will be looking in future to reaccredit, and those which have not been accredited in the past. For the former they have been used to the current Standard and any changes need to set the standards required to meet the future needs of the sector, but remain within the reach of those already striving to provide a high quality service. They are also best placed to assess whether the proposed changes make a real difference. For new organisations it is important that the Standard appears relevant to their goals and ambitions, and is challenging but attainable.

Table 2: Success of organisations against draft revised matrix Standard

Accreditation status	Volume assessed in trial	Met the Draft Revised matrix Standard	Did not meet Draft Revised matrix Standard
Current accreditation	10	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
Not currently accredited	8	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Combined Total	18	9 (50%)	9 (50%)

5.14.2 Table 2 shows that of the eighteen organisations assessed ten were currently accredited to the **matrix** Standard. Seven of these were assessed as meeting all elements of the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard. In comparison, two of the eight organisations not currently accredited to the Standard met all the requirements. In total nine (50%) of all the organisations did not meet all elements of the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard. It can be seen that the majority of organisations already accredited were able to meet the revised Standard. Those that did not had difficulties mainly with the new and strengthened criteria. Those not previously accredited found it more difficult as is to be expected, although the success of two showed that even for new aspirants, the revised Standard is within their reach.

5.15 Rigour of the Standard

5.15.1 A key objective for revising the Standard was to test organisations' competence in areas which had previously not featured. These included ensuring that in delivering the service there are clear links from the service delivery activities and outcomes back to organisational intentions and priorities, including the competence and development of staff.

5.15.2 The revised **matrix** Standard (Appendix 1) contains several criteria within different elements which are closely related. The impact of these changes and the strength of links between elements and specific criteria, was reflected in the responses from all those involved in the trials: organisations, assessors and advisors. Frequently where an organisation was unable to provide sufficient evidence for one criterion they would not be able to meet other linked criteria.

5.15.3 Take for example criteria:

- 1.1 (The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims)
- 1.5 (The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service)
- 3.1 (The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect) and
- 4.2 (The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery);

These criteria focus on the requirement for the organisation to have clearly defined measurable aims and objectives, to define client outcomes and enable effective evaluation to improve service delivery. They provide a clear audit trail of the plans, actions and review activity for both assessors and organisations which has increased the strength of the Standard.

5.15.4 A further example is the link between:

- 1.1 (The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims)
- 2.3 (The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service) and
- 4.6 (Staff performance, linked to the aims and objectives of the service are reviewed and evaluated to improve the service).

These criteria require the organisation to consider the skills, competencies and performance of the staff delivering the service within the framework of organisational and service objectives.

5.15.5 Organisations believed that these revised criteria would prove challenging across all sectors. For example, it is clear that the revision of 'Leadership and Management' (element 1) encourages organisations to apply more rigour to their planning processes. Setting and agreeing objectives to ensure effective service delivery to their clients highlights the need for organisations to better define and monitor outcomes for their service.

"Criteria 1.1 and 1.5 are very challenging, but don't remove them, as the impact is overwhelmingly positive"

Manager, Training Provider

5.15.6 Feedback indicated that criterion 2.3 made managers think about what skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, their staff required and how these linked to the aims and objectives of the service. For careers guidance staff in England, this should include professional standards and qualifications determined by the Careers Profession Alliance, or other representative bodies.

5.15.7 Criterion 3.2 (relating to effective delivery to meet aims and objectives) was regarded as 'refreshing'. The majority of feedback from organisations did identify a potential overlap with criterion 4.1 (The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives) and suggested that it might be more appropriate placed as a criterion under element 4 (Continuous Quality Improvement). The Project Board considered this and concluded that the issue here was not about overlap or duplication, but the phrasing of criterion 4.1 needed to be changed to bring out its real intention and make a clear distinction from criterion 3.2. This has been done.

5.15.8 Criterion 4.4 (relating to effective use of appropriate partnerships and networks) was included to reflect the importance of partnership working and networks to improve service delivery to clients, many of whom might be expected to need the help of more than one organisation. While organisations value this new criterion they also felt that it

needed to be interpreted widely to include both internal and external partnerships and networks. The terminology and guidance have both been updated to reflect this. There were also concerns that there was duplication between this and criterion 1.8; and duplication between 4.1 & 4.3 (relating to continuous quality improvement). These concerns have been addressed by rewording the criteria to clarify the different intentions.

- 5.15.9 Several contributors raised concerns about the focus of criterion 4.7 on 'new technology'. While it was felt that this criterion can prove a useful catalyst for improvement in using technology, where in some organisations this aspect of service delivery may be weak, it was inappropriate to focus on this only when it is new and the criterion was amended to refer to technology in general.

Impact of different criteria in the draft revised Standard

- 5.15.10 Assessors provide added value by feeding back to the organisation on areas that are working well within their organisation (e.g. a Strength), or by providing areas that, although are currently meeting the criteria, could be further improved (AFCI – Areas for Continuous Improvement). Assessors may identify more than one area for improvement or strength against any one specific criterion. Areas for improvement do not represent a failure, but are aspects where the organisation should be seeking to make improvements over time. Assessors will consider these when they revisit an organisation later to assess what progress they have made. The more feedback that the assessor is able to provide, the more value an organisation gains from their assessment. An assessor may also identify that something is working particularly well within in an organisation (i.e. a Strength), and may also be able to suggest how this can be further strengthened (i.e. an AFCI).

Figure 2: Extent to which organisations have met criteria

Figure 3a: Extent to which organisations have met Leadership and Management criteria

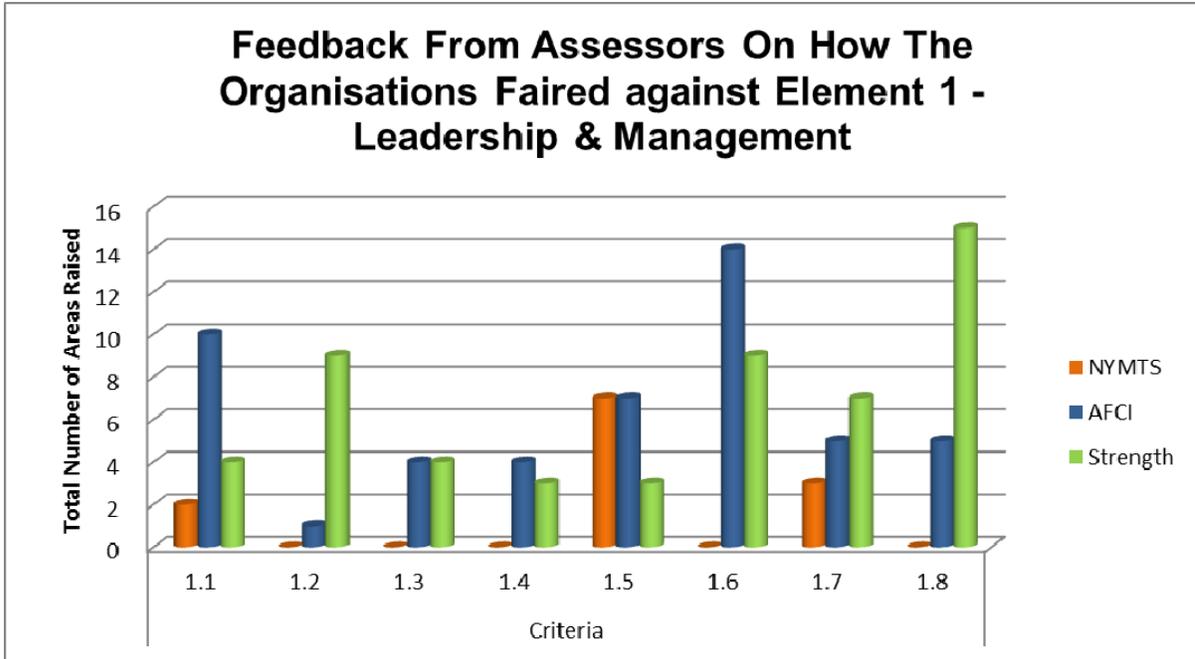
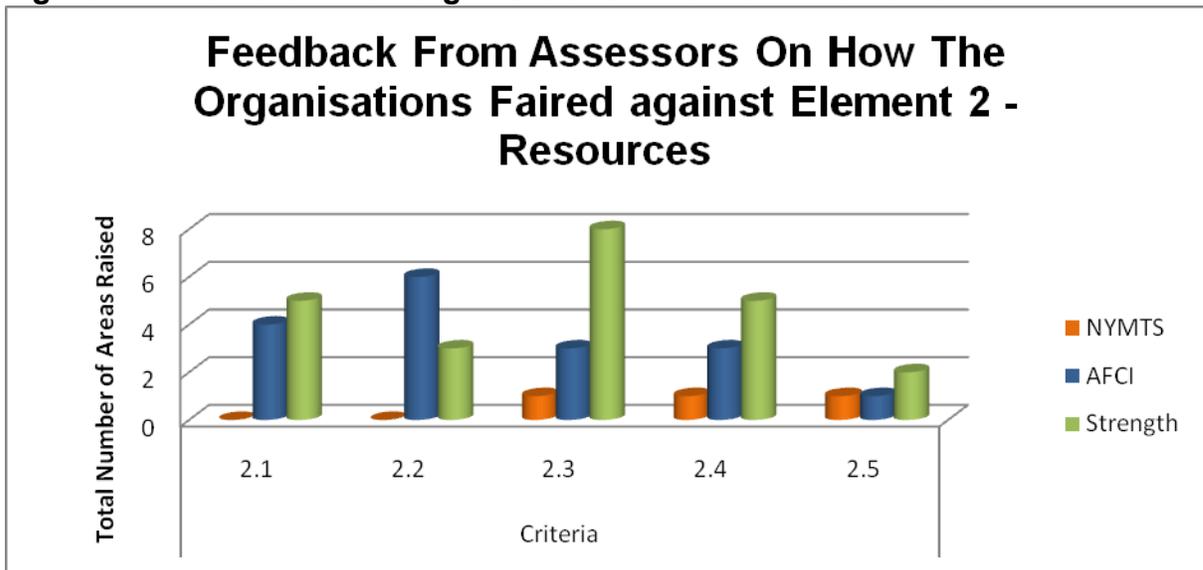


Figure 2b: Extent to which organisations have met Resource criteria



Key

- NYMTS – Not Yet Met the Standard
- AFCI – Area For Continuous Improvement
- Strength

Figure 2c: Extent to which organisations have met Service Delivery criteria

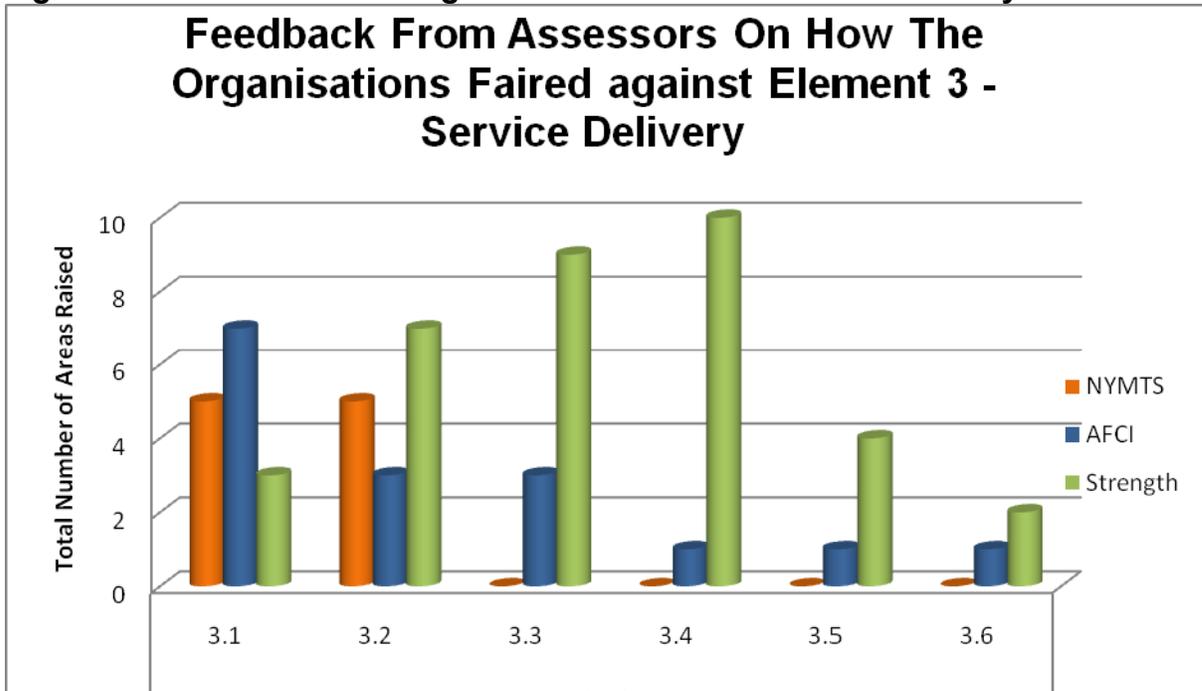
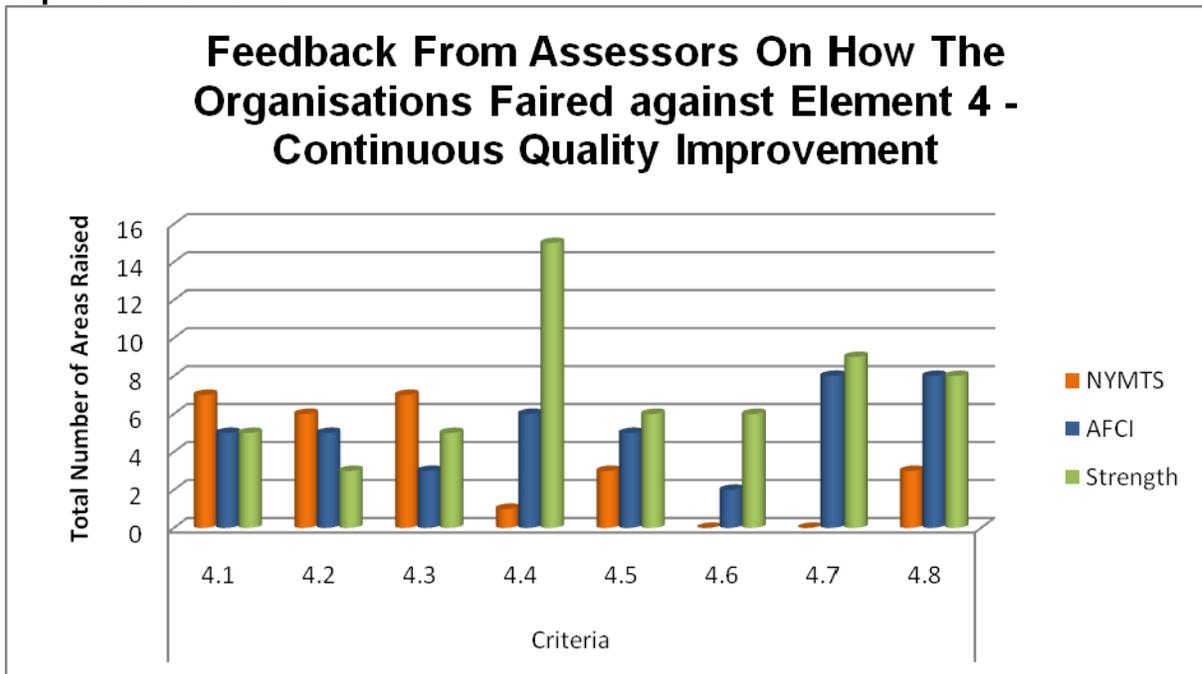


Figure 2d: Extent to which organisations have met Continuous Quality Improvement criteria



Key

- NYMETS – Not Yet Met the Standard
- AFCI – Area For Continuous Improvement
- Strength

5.15.11 Figures 2 a-d show the extent and nature of the feedback against each criterion that assessors gave to organisations that were assessed. Analysis of these results shows that the weaker areas, that is ones where an organisation failed to meet the required standard or there is room for improvement, are associated mostly with those aspects of the Standard which have been strengthened to reflect organisational and service aims and objectives, client outcomes and evaluation against those to promote continuous improvement (Criteria 1.1, 1.5, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 4.5 and 4.8). This demonstrates the increased potency of the Standard in areas which are seen as key to the delivery of a high quality effective service.

Table 3: Organisations unsuccessful in meeting the Standard: criteria not met

Number of Criteria Not Met	Number of Organisations
1	1
2	1
4	1
5	1
7	2
8	2
10	1

5.15.12 Table 3 shows that of the 9 organisations that did not meet the Standard the large majority fell short in several areas, in the main reflecting the inter relationship between several of the criteria both within and between elements.

5.15.13 Overall organisations, assessors and advisors all agreed that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard is easier to evidence than the current version and that the types of evidence used through showing, telling and letting the assessor see are in line with other quality marks and inspections frameworks. In addition joint assessments would also be possible against other quality standards for example Investors in People.

“It reflects the nature of contracts, services and a whole range of clients; it’s covered by Ofsted, so complementary”

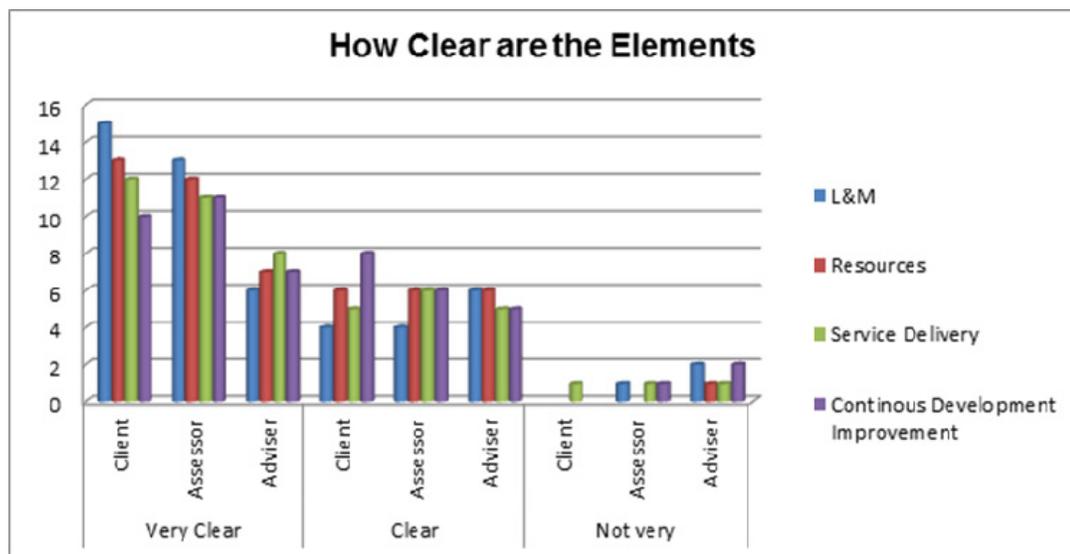
Manager, Training Provider

“Complements existing QA and CQI processes and reflects the corporate structure and value system, processes and modes of delivery”

Manager, Young Peoples Service

5.16 Clarity of Criteria and Terminology

Figure 3: Clarity of criteria



- 5.16.1 Figure 3 shows the feedback from organisations, advisors and assessors about the clarity of the four different elements that make up the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard. There is strong evidence here that the phrasing of the criteria within different elements has been successful in giving a good understanding to organisations and assessors about what the criteria are testing. Where there are concerns the majority of these have been raised by assessors and advisors. This is not unexpected as assessors have a deep familiarity with and understanding of the current Standard and what it is trying to achieve and are more likely to recognise areas which are not as clear as they might be. For advisors the need to explain specific criteria to organisations undertaking the assessment or preparing for it, was likely to expose those aspects which are harder to explain and need to be defined most clearly.
- 5.16.2 Overall there was feedback that the terminology within the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard is easy to understand, clear and more specific than the current version. Feedback highlighted the need for further clarification in supporting guidance and the glossary relating to terminology and in particular clearer definitions were needed for the terms 'outcomes', 'services', 'client' and 'effective' across all the elements.
- 5.16.3 These have been rectified within the Standard and the glossary (see section 7 and appendix 3 respectively). With the exception of this clarification the majority of feedback indicated that the glossary was "helpful" but that they "didn't need to use it."

5.17 Self-Assessment

- 5.17.1 As a result of the work undertaken by Mary D Associates Ltd a simple self-assessment template was also tested. 17 organisations trialled this document and 100% of those organisations found it 'very helpful' or 'helpful'. Organisations and advisors found it particularly useful in helping to determine evidence sources and highlighting potential gaps.

- 5.17.2 In terms of evidence gathering it was important to ensure that the trialling (and any future use) of a self assessment approach did not negatively impact on the rigour of the assessment and that we maintained the focus as identified in the aims; “to aid organisations in considering their readiness for assessment”.

“As a result of this tool, we were able to quickly assess how we are doing against each of the criteria under the four elements”

Manager, School

“I think that a good assessor might have dragged the evidence out of us, but it would have been hard work, and we would not have been so positive in our approach to the assessment”

Manager, Academy

- 5.17.3 emqc Ltd. are developing two online tools. One for organisations (and advisors) to use as a simple gap analysis tool before an assessment is undertaken, identifying areas where more work may be needed to demonstrate criteria are being met. The other, a reflection tool for organisations that are working with the Standard against an Action Plan agreed with an assessor. This will allow them to measure progress against the plan, responding to identified areas for improvement and the feedback received from their assessor. This reflection tool will also enable emqc Ltd. to generate additional benchmarking data for specific sectors, such as the Higher Education sector that have already asked for it.

5.18 Consistency of Assessment Approach

- 5.18.1 To ensure that organisations have total confidence in the **matrix** Standard assessment process it is essential that there is consistency of application of the process by assessors, as well as consistent advice from advisors. In the trials all assessments were conducted using standard templates specific to the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard for the assessment plan and the final report. This enabled easier and more detailed analysis of practice between assessors.
- 5.18.2 As the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard is now more outcomes based, the indications are that it will prove more challenging for organisations to demonstrate that they meet the Standard. The assessors will have to be satisfied that the outcomes are defined, how they are set and who is involved. This will require a more rigorous approach by assessors and they will need to understand the impact on other criteria i.e. if client outcomes are not clearly defined, then they cannot be effectively evaluated to inform the improvements to service delivery (4.2). In addition all assessors that took part in the trials agreed that with the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard it is necessary to undertake more effective planning with the organisations.

5.18.3 The result of all the above identified further training needs. These have all been captured within a mandatory training programme that will be delivered for all assessors and advisors in June 2011. This also links to a revised framework of skills, competencies, knowledge and behaviours that assessors and advisors will be monitored against by emqc Ltd, ensuring a consistency of approach through ongoing support in the form of observation, feedback via internal verification, Personal Development Plans (PDP's) and quality assurance, to inform Continuous Professional Development.

Costing Model

5.18.4 Feedback from organisations consulted during the Tribal Review highlighted concerns about the transparency and consistency of assessment costs and the resultant charges. There were specific concerns about the different assessment needs of large organisations versus small and medium sized enterprises and those with less complex organisational structures, and the costs associated with those assessments. The revised model tested during the trials was developed to meet these concerns.

5.18.5 The assessors then used this model to estimate the amount of time they would require with the organisations in order to undertake the trial assessments. In addition they also compared their estimated time against the current costing model to ensure that the time used during the trials ensured sufficient time for the assessments.

5.18.6 Assessors confirmed that the new model was effective in demonstrating a clearer and more transparent breakdown of costs for each organisation, specifically in relation to the separation of planning and report writing. It was better at reflecting differences between organisations which impacted on assessor resource requirements. They believed that when fully developed it will reduce the likelihood of inconsistencies, provide sufficient flexibility to take into account complexity of organisations, and provide a clear and transparent detailed breakdown of costs to organisations, whilst not increasing the cost of assessment or reducing rigour or value for money. This costing model is now being developed into an online tool and emqc Ltd will test to gain further feedback from organisations that have been involved in the trials prior to its launch.

5.19 benefits from using an Advisor

- 5.19.1 Of the 18 organisations that were assessed against the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard 13 received support from an advisor in applying the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard prior to the assessment. The trials were intended to test the added value that organisations gained when a trained advisor provided advice and support to them while they were preparing for assessment. In the event the limited time allowed for the trials constrained organisations which did not have sufficient time to implement and embed suggestions that were made by advisors.
- 5.19.2 In the trials no evidence emerged to show differences between organisations that received advisory support and those that did not. There was feedback from organisations of the value of advisors in explaining the links between different criteria and the evidence that was required to support assessment. See earlier findings under section 5.13. However, there is no empirical data available to make definitive judgements about the impact advisors may have had.
- 5.19.3 The ease of understanding the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard did enable some of the organisations that did not receive any support to be effectively assessed. Five organisations had no support and of these three were able to demonstrate they met all elements of the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard.

5.20 Other Advisory Support

- 5.20.1 There was a consensus that the lists of 'Possible Evidence' (Appendix 2) provided within the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard were very helpful, though some organisations felt that the detail of possible evidence varied unhelpfully.
- 5.20.2 Assessors all agreed that it must be made clear to organisations that the list is 'possible evidence' and that organisations may have other examples. Advisors suggested the need to populate the list with differing types of examples to reflect all sectors. This is being taken forward within the review of the current publications that are available for organisations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 The review of the **matrix** Standard was commissioned following a report by Tribal Consultancy Group into the appropriate quality assurance arrangements to support effective delivery of information, advice and guidance services in England. The report made several recommendations (see Section 2) leading with ‘the **matrix** Standard should be retained as the quality assurance standard for the information, advice and guidance sector’, but identified that there were areas of the Standard which needed strengthening and revising if it was to continue to reflect the high standards necessary for the future and be appropriate across the wide range of organisations which engage in this kind of service.
- 6.2 The initial work led by Mary D Associates Ltd using focus groups and workshops led to the development of three options for the revised Standard, which were narrowed to one, Option 3, based around four elements; Leadership and Management; Resources; Service Delivery and Continuous Quality Improvement. With 95% of workshop participants supporting this option, there was a clear mandate to refine and test this version in the field through trials.
- 6.3 The conclusions set out below reflect the evidence from the initial review and the trials (Section 5 - Outcomes) against the aims set out in Section 3 for this work. These aims are directly linked to the recommendations made by Tribal Consultancy Group and accepted by BIS.

Aim - Re-structuring to help organisations which are part of a wider network of advice agencies, including learning providers, use aspects of the Standard to improve services - Tribal Recommendation (2.2i)

- 6.4 Revising the structure of the **matrix** Standard from eight elements to four based on four key business processes has made it accessible for the broad range of organisations involved in providing information, advice and/or guidance services across the UK. The organisations chosen for the trials ensured that all those with a significant interest in delivering these services were represented. They covered all ages and settings including: schools and academies; further and higher education training and learning providers; Next Step careers guidance providers; unionlearn; third sector voluntary and community organisations.
- 6.5 The evidence shows that regardless of the nature of the service, they found the Standard not only accessible, but through its increased focus on key business areas, has the potential to support substantial business improvements. Feedback from the trials has highlighted how it helped provide organisations with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound areas for them to consider in order to significantly improve their service delivery and as such the outcomes for their clients.
- 6.6 There was also strong support from organisations that the Standard would make a positive impact on their particular organisation and that the clear criteria in each

element would enable all staff to identify how they fit into the services policies, processes and procedures.

Aim - Ensuring that the Standard could be adopted by a range of organisational types, including schools, sole traders and the voluntary sector, with varying delivery approaches - Tribal Recommendation (2.2i)

- 6.7 The organisations active in the IAG sector are diverse, extending from large commercial companies to sole traders, offering their services on a self-employed consultancy basis; from voluntary, charitable and community organisations offering advice on highly specific areas, such as debt management, legal, health and barriers to employment to more generally, such as Age UK; from private sector to public sector, both central Government and local Government funded; and education establishments from schools to FE colleges and universities. Many of these rely on face to face engagement with clients, but increasingly as technology develops through services delivered over the telephone or online.
- 6.8 Evidence from the trials has shown that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard, whilst proving challenging in some areas where criteria mean organisations need to adopt more rigorous management and staff development approaches, can be successfully adopted with very different delivery approaches. The trials tested the Standard with providers offering services face to face or online, in schools and prisons, with sole traders and the voluntary sector. None of these suggested that the Standard would not work for them, and all supported the added value it could bring, regardless of their focus, size, delivery style, delivery approach or their client groups.
- 6.9 There were some concerns raised that for some groups, such as sole traders assessors would need to recognise that some of the management and staff development criteria could not be tested as directly as in other organisations. In addition the importance of assessors adapting their approach to assessment for organisations that deliver online services was highlighted. However with appropriate guidance this can be managed. It is important that the Standard can be applied flexibly in this way as the careers market develops in response to changes in the expectations for schools and the increasing influence of new technology.
- 6.10 Another group of particular interest was Higher Education (HE) institutions. The two which took part in the trials thought the changes to the **matrix** Standard offered a significant improvement; that the Standard is of value and can be successfully adopted by the HE sector. Not all HE institutions currently embrace the current **matrix** Standard and there will need to be a strategy to increase take-up and importantly, retention of the Standard by Universities and other HE Institutions.

Aim - Making it more rigorous regarding competence of staff; commitment to continuous improvement of staff and service delivery; service delivery links to outcomes; and responding to Information Technology advances - Tribal Recommendation (2.2ii)

- 6.11 This is the area of the Standard into which the most effort has been put and which has had the most significant impact for organisations trying to meeting the Standard. In the trials several organisations currently accredited to the existing Standard were unable to meet the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard because of the additional requirements. Nevertheless there was an acceptance across the board that the changes were beneficial and highlighted areas of good business practice which all providers of these services should be aspiring to deliver against if they were to meet the quality standards being set.
- 6.12 Several specific areas have been strengthened:
- Criteria 2.3 to the **matrix** Standard will require organisations to define what skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications they require, in line with national recognised qualifications and frameworks. Criteria 4.6 will ensure staff performance is reviewed and evaluated.
 - The addition of criteria (1.1, 1.5, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.6) that requires organisations to have clearly defined measurable aims and objectives, clearly defined client outcomes and to evaluate and improve service delivery, will ensure that organisations are committed and can clearly demonstrate continuous improvement of staff and service delivery.
 - The inclusion of a criterion considering the use of technology within the **matrix** Standard reflects the advances in the use of technology in the sector and users. It will act as a catalyst for many organisations to focus further improvement within this growing area of service delivery and client use.
- 6.13 The close links between criteria, some in different elements, has introduced a greater coherence across the Standard, and while this has meant that not meeting one criterion effectively guarantees not meeting others, this gives greater clarity and focus on what is important, offering a set of more rigorous requirements. This was demonstrated by the number of organisations that did not meet all the requirements of the Standard, including those accredited to the current **matrix** Standard. Nevertheless even those organisations which did not meet the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard, supported it and are looking at how they can achieve success in future.

Aim - Removal of duplication between criteria within the elements of the current matrix Standard (2005 version) -Tribal Recommendation (2.2ii)

- 6.14 The reduction of the number of elements from eight to four has allowed much of the duplication that was experienced in the current **matrix** Standard to be removed. During the trials there were further areas for improvement identified, though in several cases these related to criteria which needed improved wording to distinguish different intended outcomes more clearly. Even without these changes, which have since been

implemented in the revised Standard at Appendix 1, participants in the trials were content that much duplication had been removed, helped by the new structure aligning with business processes which are common in the public, private and third sector and is therefore more readily understood by organisations.

Aim - Clarifying the meaning of certain criteria using plain English (and in particular ensure terminology used within the Standard is understood by organisations with a non IAG background) - Tribal Recommendation (2.2ii)

- 6.15 The use of plain English and the move away from IAG specific technical terminology has been well received and the evidence shows strongly that participants found the criteria much easier and clearer to understand. Only one organisation identified a problem with wording against one element of the Standard, an outstanding result. Even assessors and advisors who are much more familiar with the Standard had limited concerns in this area, and these have been addressed through further revisions to wording which have now been incorporated.

Aim - Alignment as far as possible with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (QSYPIAG) evidence needs, including developing a simple self-assessment tool to aid organisations in considering their readiness for assessment against the Standard - Tribal Recommendation (2.2iii) and (2.2iv)

- 6.16 In designing the three options for the revised Standard close consideration was given to other existing quality frameworks to ensure that as far as possible it aligned with those. The wording of the criteria and the evidence that is required against these takes into account evidence required for other quality frameworks and where these are testing the same or similar areas has been consciously aligned with those. The inclusion in the Steering Group of representatives from Ofsted and other advisory services provided an internal challenge to ensure this aim was met and feedback from schools and other agencies reflected that as far as possible this has been achieved, and that evidence requirements are in line with those required for other quality marks and inspection frameworks.
- 6.17 A self assessment template was drawn up and proved helpful to those organisations that used it and to advisors and assessors. While there is little evidence from the trials of the success that this may have had in an organisation's chances of successful accreditation, there is overwhelming support for such a tool to be developed.

Recommendation 1: The current self assessment document is reviewed and further development undertaken to provide an accessible tool which can be used by organisations considering accreditation and by advisors

and assessors to facilitate achievement of the matrix Standard and continuous improvement.

Aim- Address perceived inconsistencies in assessment and issues relating to consistency of costs to organisations - Tribal Recommendation (2.3vi)

6.18 As part of the trials of the assessment process, assessors were asked to use a template for planning assessment activity and drawing up reports. This was intended to ensure a more consistent approach by assessors and help them consider in a more structured way the evidence that they are being presented with and the extent to which it supports the criteria being considered. The increased linkages between criteria also mean that assessors need to follow through on those, cross referencing evidence between criteria to ensure that the integrity of the Standard is being maintained. This is especially important in view of the move to a more outcomes based assessment within the Standard. While the trials showed that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard provided significant opportunities for assessors and advisors to provide more in depth feedback to organisations, the quality assurance, analysis and review of assessment plans and reports identified further training needs for assessors and advisors..

Recommendation 2: The practitioner training programme is developed to respond to the new training needs emerging from the increased focus on outcomes and linkages between criteria and the benefits of this monitored through systems for monitoring practitioner performance and development.

6.19 Early indications from assessors from the use of the new costing model are that this can provide a clearer and fairer allocation of costs to the assessment process. The use of a standard model visible to all those being assessed will eliminate many of the concerns that have been raised. It is important that the model provides sufficient flexibility to take into account the complexity of organisations, provides a clear detailed and transparent breakdown of costs, and demonstrates the value for money of the assessments to organisations paying for assessment.

Recommendation 3: Further work is undertaken on the costing model, an online version is developed and it is then tested with organisations involved in the trials, before it is adopted.

Aim - Prepare new guidance for practitioners reflecting agreed changes to the Standard and processes - Tribal Recommendation (2.3vi)

6.20 This aim can only be met once the content of the reviewed Standard has been finalised. Work is in hand to produce new guidance, which supports the Standard. This will be made available to all **matrix** Practitioners, who will also be required to complete further mandatory training and will be supported, developed and quality assured by emqc Ltd. as part of their responsibilities for the management and delivery of the **matrix** Standard. This is overseen by an external quality assurance agency appointed by BIS who monitor and evaluate the work of **matrix** Standard Body.

Recommendation 4: Guidance for matrix Practitioners is completed and put in place in time to support the adoption of the revised matrix Standard from 1 August 2011.

6.21 In trialling the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard it was important to test out whether a more robust challenging Standard would be achievable by both existing accredited organisations seeking reaccreditation or those considering adopting the Standard for the first time. Currently accredited organisations also have the added benefit of being able to compare the current Standard with the revised one. All organisations engaged in the trials have recognised the more challenging nature of the revised Standard, but welcomed the changes. This acceptance of the revised Standard has been facilitated by the feedback and support from the enhanced advisory support and assessment process, which has far outweighed any concerns that organisations, assessors or advisor may have had initially that the changes would make the **matrix** Standard less accessible.

6.22 Through the trials there is strong evidence that the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard has been significantly strengthened in some areas. These changes have had an impact in the key areas identified by the Tribal Review, and the evidence supports the proposition that the Draft Revised Standard not only offers a robust replacement for the existing Standard but can be used by a wide range of organisations engaged in offering information, advice and guidance services. In some cases such as HE and schools participants have suggested the Standard is more applicable to their sectors than previously and should be a more attractive proposition in future.

6.23 With an emerging interest outside the UK in the current **matrix** Standard it was recognised that there would be value in ensuring that any changes, whilst meeting the needs of information, advice and guidance services in the UK, do not constrain the potential use of the Standard in other countries. The Project Board considered all the criteria and ensured that none were couched in terms which could do this, but still preserved the intent behind each for the sector in the UK.

- 6.24 Overall the evidence from the trials of the Draft Revised **matrix** Standard and the conclusions drawn out above strongly support the adoption of the version set out in Appendix 1 as the **matrix** Standard for the future, replacing the existing Standard supported by implementation of the other recommendations.

Recommendation 5: That the revised matrix Standard as set out in Appendix 1 is confirmed as the replacement for the existing matrix Standard.

Appendix 1 The matrix Standard



The **matrix** Standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. It promotes the delivery of high quality information, advice and/or guidance by ensuring organisations review, evaluate and develop their service; encourage the take up of professionally recognised qualifications and the continuous professional development of their staff.

The purpose of the **matrix** Standard is to provide a benchmark for organisations to assess/measure their advice and support services which ultimately support individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.

The following are key terms used throughout the **matrix** Standard

The Organisation

This refers to the body which manages, administers and delivers the service and has applied for initial accreditation or accreditation review against the **matrix** Standard.

The Service

This is the information, advice, support and/or guidance provided by the organisation to support individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.

Clients

This refers to people who access the "service" whether they are employees of the "organisation" or external users of the "service".

The **matrix** Standard is made up of four elements;

- Leadership and Management

This element is about the way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service.

- Resources

This element describes the assets invested and applied in providing an effective service.

- Service Delivery

This element describes the way in which the service is delivered effectively.

- Continuous Quality Improvement

This element describes the way in which the service provided is reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis.

Element 1 Leadership and Management

This element is about the way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service.

Criteria	What might this mean?
<p>1.1 The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims</p>	<p>Management and staff are able to describe and give examples of measurable aims and objectives of the service and how they link to the wider organisational strategic aims.</p> <p>Managers and staff can describe how they are involved in developing the aims and objectives.</p>
<p>1.2 The service is provided with clear leadership and direction</p>	<p>Managers can describe how they lead and direct people.</p> <p>Staff can describe how well managers lead them to deliver the service.</p>
<p>1.3 The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe and give examples of how they promote equality, diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity.</p>
<p>1.4 The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe and give examples of legislation including how it impacts on the service.</p>
<p>1.5 The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service</p>	<p>Examples of definitions of client outcomes are provided. Managers can describe how they are set and who is involved. They can describe how they are reviewed.</p>

<p>1.6 The organisation promotes the service in ways which are accessible to all those eligible to use it</p>	<p>Managers and staff can explain different methods of how the service is promoted - what works well and why in relation to the eligible client group.</p>
<p>1.7 Clients and staff influence the design and development of the service</p>	<p>Service design and delivery reflects the views and experiences of staff and clients.</p> <p>Staff and clients are able to describe how they are involved in the design and development of the service and give examples of how they have influenced both.</p>
<p>1.8 The organisation establishes effective links with other appropriate partnerships and networks to enhance the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they establish links with other partnerships and networks and measure the effectiveness of the relationship.</p> <p>Representatives from partnerships and networks are able to give examples of how well their relationship is working with the service.</p>

Element 2 Resources

This element describes the assets invested and applied in providing and effective service.

Criteria	What might this mean?
<p>2.1 The organisation uses its resources effectively to deliver the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able explain what resources – including human, physical and financial are needed to deliver the service.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to explain how the level of resource, in relation to client needs, is established and can give examples of how effectively resources are used.</p>
<p>2.2 Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive</p>	<p>Clients and staff are able to describe and give examples of the types of information they were able to access and explain how appropriate it was to their needs.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to describe what quality assurance systems are in place to ensure information is current, accurate and is written in plain language, free from bias and takes account of diversity.</p> <p>Managers and staff delivering the service are able to explain how they support clients and how the resources they use are quality assured.</p>
<p>2.3 The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional</p>	<p>Managers can describe and give examples of how they identify and define the skills, knowledge and competencies of staff roles linked to achieving the aims and objectives of the service</p>

<p>qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service</p>	<p>including being aware of the boundaries of their role.</p> <p>Managers and staff can describe the qualifications and frameworks which are appropriate to their role in delivering the aims and objectives of the service.</p> <p>For careers guidance staff in England this should include professional standards and qualifications determined by the Careers Profession Alliance or other representative bodies.</p>
<p>2.4 Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development and provided with opportunities for career progression</p>	<p>Managers and staff can explain and give examples of how they are supported in continually developing their skills, knowledge and competence including any appropriate qualifications for their role.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they are involved in the process of identifying their needs and appropriate learning and development activities.</p> <p>Career progression opportunities include those that are both internal and external to the organisation.</p>
<p>2.5 Effective induction processes are in place for all staff</p>	<p>Managers are able to describe the induction process for all roles including staff employed by the organisation and any volunteers.</p> <p>Newly recruited staff and those who have recently changed roles can describe the induction process and how induction has helped them perform effectively.</p>

Element 3 Service Delivery

This element describes the way in which the service is delivered effectively.

Criteria	What might this mean?
<p>3.1 The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to define the service offering, in relation to their client group including prospective/potential clients and give examples how they ensure clients understand the service offering.</p> <p>Clients can describe and give examples of how they know what to expect from the service.</p>
<p>3.2 The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe and give examples of how effective service delivery has been in meeting the aims and objectives.</p> <p>They are able explain what has worked well and why, with measurable examples linked to objectives.</p>
<p>3.3 The service provided is impartial and objective</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they ensure the service is impartial, free from bias and objective.</p> <p>Clients can describe how they are made aware of any potential conflicts of interest in the advice provided and understand the limitations of the service.</p>
<p>3.4 Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand</p>	<p>Clients are able to describe and give examples of how they have benefited from the support process and how they were able to</p>

<p>that they are responsible for making their own decisions</p>	<p>explore different options that met their expectations.</p> <p>Clients are able to describe what support they were given to understand and make appropriate choices.</p> <p>Clients are able to describe how they came to their decision</p>
<p>3.5 When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including access to technology</p>	<p>Clients are able to describe and give examples of what resources were made available when exploring different and appropriate options.</p>
<p>3.6 Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate agencies or organisations</p>	<p>Clients are able to describe the benefits they received by being referred to other appropriate agencies or organisations.</p> <p>Representatives from partnerships and networks are able to explain what benefits and services clients referred to them have received.</p>

Element 4 Continuous Quality Improvement

This element describes the way in which the service provided is reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis.

Criteria	What might this mean?
<p>4.1 The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives and identifies improvements</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain and give measurable examples of how the aims and objectives have been met.</p> <p>Managers and staff can describe how all aspects of the service are reviewed against the measurable aims and objectives including promotion/engagement, service delivery, resources, leadership /management.</p>
<p>4.2 The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery</p>	<p>Managers, staff and where appropriate clients are able to describe and give examples of how client outcomes are used to improve the service.</p>
<p>4.3 The organisation evaluates feedback on the service to build upon its strengths and addresses any areas for improvement</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain how all forms of feedback and evaluation information are used to establish areas of strength and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Clients are aware of who to contact with a compliment, comment or complaint and the process the organisation will follow in dealing with them.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to explain how complaints are recorded, investigated and what action is taken.</p>

<p>4.4 The organisation evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships and networks to improve the service</p>	<p>Clients, staff and other stakeholders are able to describe the evaluation process and give examples of how the information is used to improve the service.</p> <p>Examples should show measurable outcomes and link to improvements.</p>
<p>4.5 The organisation defines quality assurance approaches which are used to improve the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how the service is quality assured and what plans, policies, procedures and/or processes are in place and how they are implemented.</p>
<p>4.6 Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, are reviewed and evaluated to improve the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe the process for evaluating performance in relation to roles, aims and objectives of the service.</p> <p>Managers are able to give measurable examples of how effective staff performance has been in relation to service aims and objectives.</p>
<p>4.7 Effective use is made of technology to improve the service</p>	<p>Clients, managers and staff are able to describe and give examples of how technology has enhanced the way they deliver the service.</p>
<p>4.8 The organisation continually reviews improvements to help inform the future aims and objectives of the service</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to provide examples of actions which have been taken to improve the service on an ongoing basis.</p>

Appendix 2 Possible Evidence

It should be noted that assessors are more interested in hearing from managers, staff and clients about their experiences of what it is like to work in an organisation and what the service is like for the client. However, to support organisations in their **matrix Journey the following list of possible evidence may be helpful, but there is absolutely no requirement for this**. It is recognised that many small organisations may not have such documents.

Organisations should agree with their assessor prior to the visit what written evidence they may wish to see in advance of the site visit. Assessors will base their ultimate decision on whatever is provided, but more importantly upon the discussions which take place with managers, staff and clients which verifies the written evidence if available.

Element 1 Leadership and Management

(a) Discussions with managers, staff and clients

Plus

(b) Documents, where available, such as

- Strategic and/or business plans
- Monitoring reports showing progress against aims & objectives
- A statement of service
- Organisational reports, including those following other assessments/inspections
- Organisational chart
- Job descriptions and person specifications
- Staff & management meeting minutes
- Staff/team briefings
- Staff guidance, including that in relation to legislation, for example Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and Health and Safety
- Policies and procedures, including review arrangements
- Staff observation/peer review records
- Management information reports
- Client tracking systems
- Marketing strategy
- Promotional materials
- Website

Element 2 Resources

(a) Discussions with managers, staff and clients

Plus

(b) Further documents, where available, such as

- Staffing structure and numbers
- Records of Budget allocations
- Details of staff qualifications
- Induction programmes
- Training needs analyses
- CPD records
- Careers Professional Alliance and other professional frameworks and qualifications

Element 3 Service Delivery

(a) Discussions with managers, staff and clients

Plus

(b) Further documents, where available, such as

- Client outcomes/destination data
- Feedback from clients and referral agencies
- Client satisfaction surveys
- Examination of available resources
- Careers Professional Alliance and other professional frameworks and qualifications

Element 4 Continuous Quality Improvement

(a) Discussions with managers, staff and clients

Plus

(b) Further documents, where available, such as

- Service review reports
- Feedback systems
- Analysis of customer surveys
- Records of comments, compliments and complaints received
- Self-assessment reports
- Action and/or improvement plans
- Quality policies and procedures

Please note that evidence for Leadership and Management may also be used in the other Elements of the Standard.

Appendix 3 Glossary

Aims

The overall goals intended to be achieved by the service

Approach/es

The way in which something may be carried out

Clients

This refers to people who access the "service" whether they are employees of the "organisation" or external users of the "service"

Confidentiality

The act of keeping personal information about clients private and not disclosing it to others

Competence

The skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities of all those delivering the service who may do so as paid employees or volunteers

Conflict of Interest

A situation where a staff member can influence a client's options and has a vested interest in which choice he or she makes

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Training and development for staff to ensure they maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills throughout their careers

Current

The most recent, up-to-date and valid information

Defined

Precisely stated

Design and Development

For example; hours, premises, availability of staff, types of technology available

Direction

The leadership and management of a service in relation to priorities and changing external factors

Diversity

The presence in one population of different genders, and a wide variety of cultures, opinions, ethnic groups, disabilities, beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds

Effective

A productive and workable approach brought about for a purpose

Equality

Equal treatment of clients and staff irrespective of factors which might make them differ from one another

Impartial and Objective

The service is free from bias and options explored are realistic

Impartiality

The capacity to provide a service to people that is based solely on their needs and not any vested interest of the provider. In practice there may be factors which can influence the choices available to clients, including limitations of information or its inherent bias as well as restrictions on provision imposed from outside. In such cases best practice requires the service provider to make any such limitations clear to people and ensure they understand their implications

Inclusive

Enables, where possible, all to access the service irrespective of any physical/mental impediment, gender or race

Induction

A formal introduction on entry into a position within an organisation, including people new to the organisation or new to a role within it

Leadership

The provision of guidance and inspiration (see also direction)

Legislation

Laws which might impact on the service such as health and safety, safeguarding, equality, data protection, freedom of information

Measurable

Outcomes or results that demonstrate progress against objectives and can be used in the evaluation of service provision

Networks

A number of organisations working together

Objectives

Objectives are targets that the service sets itself in order to achieve its overall aim(s). Targets may be short, medium or long term. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART)

Organisation

This refers to the body which manages, administers and delivers the service and has applied for initial accreditation or accreditation review against the **matrix** Standard

Organisations or Agencies

Other service providers who offer complementary services for the benefit of clients

Outcomes

Outcomes are a measure of the impact that the service has on clients. Outcomes may include 'hard' measures such as clients progressing into further education/training or employment, and 'soft' measures such as improved confidence, time-keeping

Partners

Partners may refer clients or liaise with the service to support its delivery. The service may have a Service Level Agreement with its partners. Partners may support the service in other ways (e.g. signposting to/from)

Partnerships

Groups of partners and/or networks that come together to provide complementary services that enhance the overall provision to end-users

Plan/s

An outline (may be in writing) to achieve a particular outcome

Policy/ies

A general approach (may be in writing) taken to address the issue in question. A policy defines why a particular approach is taken

Procedure/s

A description (may be in writing) of how an activity will take place

Process/es

A description of related activities to achieve a certain outcome, usually in writing though may be observable

Professional Integrity

This refers to the maintenance of high professional standards and a determination to do what is right for the client

Promote

To advertise, raise awareness or inform people about the service

Quality Assurance

The process of systematically monitoring and evaluating the various aspects of the service to ensure that standards of quality are being met

Referral

This is the referral of a client to an alternative or complementary agency, which may be better able to meet their needs. There is usually some exploration of client needs and discussion about the kind of service required. There is also typically a follow up with the referral agency about the outcome of the referral process

Resources

The physical materials (for example, premises and equipment), finances and human skills used collectively

Service

This is the information, advice, support and/or guidance provided by the organisation to support individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals

Signposting

Providing information to a client about alternative and/or complementary services, organisations, or partners

Skills, Knowledge, Competences, Qualifications and Frameworks

The requirements defined as necessary for a specific role

Stakeholders

Individuals, groups and organisations that have a vested interest in the service

Strategic Aims

Long term goals or objectives defined by the organisation

Technology

The use of equipment such as computers and software packages to support the service delivery

Annex 1: Review of matrix Standard Steering Group

- Trevor Tucknutt * Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Mark Jarvis† Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Jenny Wallis Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Ray Plummer Skills Funding Agency
- Penny Horner Ofsted
- Pat Pugh Lifelong Learning UK Limited
- Carol Older Voluntary/Third Sector
- Liz Shore Next Step Prime Contractors
- Barry Hansford National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS)
- Kathy Leahy ** ENTO Limited Assessment and Accreditation Body for the **matrix** Standard
- Dave Allan‡ emqc Ltd. Assessment and Accreditation Body for the **matrix** Standard
- Jackie Mather Registered **matrix** Practitioners
- Mary Davies Mary D Associates Limited
- Pat Hornsby Mary D Associates Limited

* Until 31 October 2010

† From 1 November 2010

** Until July 2010

‡ From 1 January 2011

Annex 2: Survey Questionnaire for Initial Review Work



Background

The **matrix** Standard was launched in 2002 and last reviewed in 2004. A review of quality assurance arrangements in adult careers services by Tribal Group concluded that the **matrix** Standard, should be central to future adult careers services' developments, but that there were areas where the Standard could be improved and enhanced. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Skills Funding Agency have commissioned Mary Davies Associates to develop specific recommendations to strengthen the Standard.

This presents an opportunity to think differently and consider changes that will make the **matrix** Standard even more robust and rigorous. This is a strictly confidential survey. Under no circumstances will individual responses be made available to anyone within or outside your organisation. Information from the survey will be compiled by Mary Davies Associates into a report consisting of aggregated results from the contributors.

Please answer the following 25 questions as honestly and candidly as possible. We estimate it should take you approximately 10 minutes.

You and Your Organisation

*1. Which of the following statements best describes your involvement with the **matrix** Standard?*

- Working towards the **matrix** Standard
- Currently accredited to the **matrix** Standard

- De-accredited/lapsed
- Never worked with the **matrix** Standard
- matrix** Practitioner
- Professional Body
- Other (Please specify):

2. Which of the following best describes your organisation?

- nextstep** Contractor/Subcontractor
- College of Further Education
- University
- Work-Based Learning Provider
- Connexions Service
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Employment Agency
- Prison
- Other (Please specify):

The Purpose of the **matrix** Standard

3. The purpose of the matrix Standard is (please tick which statements you think are applicable):

- A way of providing end users with confidence that the service they are going to receive is of high quality
- A tool for development and a flexible framework by which organisations can review the performance of their service
- A benchmark for organisations to assess/measure their advice and support services which ultimately support individuals in their learning and work goals
- A tool for continuous improvement

Other (Please specify):

Leadership, Management and Organisational Development Aspects

4 Starting with a blank sheet of paper with none of the current matrix Standard

elements and criteria we would like you to consider whether the following statements about Leadership, Management and Organisational Development should be included in the new version of the matrix Standard:

	Definitely	Probably	Not sure	No
<i>4.1 Management and staff are clear about the aims and objectives of their advice and support services</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.2 Management are clear about the aims and objectives of the organisation and how the advice and support service fits into the organisation's overall strategic objectives</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.3 Service provision is monitored and evaluated against the stated aims and objectives and where possible data is used to inform continuous improvement</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.4 The service is provided with clear leadership and direction</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.5 Organisations build upon their strengths and address their weaknesses</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.6 Quality assurance policies and procedures are in place</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.7 Effective use is made of all resources whether human, physical or financial to maximise service delivery</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.8 Formal and informal partnerships are developed to enhance the service and the effectiveness of these partnerships is regularly monitored</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.9 Feedback from staff informs service development and improvement</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.10 Mechanisms exist to gather feedback/comments from clients of the service and feedback is acted upon as appropriate to develop and improve the service</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.11 Organisational policies and practices promote equality, diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>4.12 The organisation responds to existing and any new legislation which might impact upon service delivery, such as, safeguarding vulnerable adults and</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>children where appropriate</i>				
4.13 Clients are involved in the design and development of the service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5. If client outcomes were to form part of the matrix Standard, which of the following statements would be appropriate?

	Definitely	Probably	Not sure	No
5.1 The advice and support service is clear about what client outcomes it uses as measures of its success in meeting its organisational aims and objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2 The service monitors and analyses client outcomes to inform any service improvement plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.3 Client outcomes are defined in terms of either soft and/or hard outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6. Which of the following should form the basis of ensuring staff competence? (Please tick those you feel appropriate)

- 6.1 Defined skills exist for individual job roles linked to the aims of the service
- 6.2 Staff undertake qualifications appropriate to their job roles
- 6.3 Robust induction processes are in place
- 6.4 Training exists for staff in any new job role
- 6.5 Continuous professional development takes place
- 6.6 Systems are in place to observe delivery staff providing information, advice and support
- 6.7 One to one supervision regularly takes place
- 6.8 Client documentation completed by delivery staff forms part of the quality assurance procedures
- 6.9 Staff performance and individual development needs linked to the organisational aims and objectives are reviewed and acted upon
- 6.10 A range of feedback analyses is used to form part of the performance review and development process
- 6.11 Delivery staff are kept up to date with the tools and resources which are available and their knowledge base is updated regularly
- 6.12 Work shadowing and peer reviews are part of the established practices

The Service to the Individual Client

7. Again starting with a blank sheet of paper, should the following statements be included in the new matrix Standard to support clients of the service?

	Definitely	Probably	Not sure	Definitely not
7.1 All information provided is accurate and up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2 Clients are provided with adequate resources to meet their needs as appropriate to the stated aims of the service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3 All information is managed and evaluated to ensure it is fit for purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4 The information, advice and support service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.5 The service is promoted to all those eligible to receive it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.6 The information, advice and support provided is impartial and objective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.7 Clients are made aware of any potential conflicts of interest in the advice provided and understand the limitations of the service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.8 Clients understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions about the options presented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.9 Individuals are able to describe how they have benefited from exploring different options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.10 Clients benefit from referral to other appropriate agencies/organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.11 Maximum use is made of new resources including the internet where possible when exploring options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.12 Processes exist which ensure information is reviewed and updated regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.13 Ways of working are reviewed in light of developments in new technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.14 Quality processes and materials are in place to ensure accuracy of information,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>equality of opportunity, freedom from bias and in plain English</i>				
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The **matrix** Journey

8. Should the Accreditation Body provide a pre-assessment advice service as well as assessment?

- Yes
 No

8.1 If you answered yes, should this form part of an overall package of support, assessment and aftercare?

- Yes
 No

9. When requesting assessment, should the organisation submit a simple self-assessment against the matrix Standard?

- Yes
 No

10. Currently, the matrix Standard allows organisations to opt for internal and/or external assessment. Internal assessment covers advice and support for the organisation's own staff whereas external assessment covers the service to external clients. Should the revised standard continue to offer both options?

- Yes
 No

10.1 If you answered yes to the above question please indicate your reasons for this in the box below

11. Should the organisation have the chance to ask the assessor to focus on anything else whilst conducting the assessment? Currently organisations are asked if they have any additional objectives for the assessment.

- Yes
- No

12. Currently, at the end of the assessment visit the assessor usually decides whether or not the standard has been met, and communicates this decision to the organisation. Should this practice continue?

- Yes
- No

13. Should the assessor feed back at the end of each day on the emerging findings?

- Yes
- No

14. Once accredited, should the matrix Standard require organisations to undertake annual self-assessment?

- Yes
- No

15. Should there be a fixed charge for a tailor-made advice, assessment and post accreditation package?

- Yes
- No

15.1 If you answered yes to the above, what might the package include? (Please tick some or all of the following)

- Advice
- Assessment
- Adviser and assessor expenses
- Mystery shopping service
- Support materials
- Workshops
- Post-accreditation support as part of continuous quality improvement

15.2 *What, if anything else might be included in a package?*



15.3 *Currently charges are made up of a fixed fee for accreditation and variable expenses cost. Should organisations know the full cost up front?*

- Yes
- No

16. *Please describe below what would add value in your opinion to the matrix Journey?*



The matrix Report

17. *Should organisations have the option of either a full or summary report, which would be reflected in the cost?*

- Yes
- No

18. *Should organisations have the opportunity to check the report for factual accuracy before it is finalised?*

- Yes
- No

19. *Should the report include quotations gathered during the assessment?*

- Yes
- No
- Yes, but only where relevant to support the findings

20. *Please indicate whether you think the report should be confidential to the organisation or in the public domain*

- Remain confidential
- Be made public

21. Should the organisation, as part of being accredited to the matrix Standard, be required to prepare, implement and review a post-accreditation action plan based on assessment feedback and areas for continuous improvement?

- Yes
- No

Marketing the **matrix** Standard

22. The matrix logo will remain unchanged. However, should the matrix plaque be changed to enhance its visibility and impact?

- Yes
- No

23. What strapline might be used to capture the spirit of the matrix Standard? (Please indicate your ideas in the box below)

Links to other standards

24. Evidence submitted for matrix assessment could also be used for other assessments and inspections. Please indicate which of the following standards/frameworks your organisation is involved with.

- Common Inspection Framework (Ofsted inspection)
- Investors in People
- Customer Service Excellence (Chartermark)
- Careers Mark
- TQS
- Customer First
- Young Peoples Standard for IAG

Other (Please specify):

Any other comments

25. Please add any further comments you have about the matrix Standard in terms of the elements, criteria and the processes.

The results of the survey will be used to form the basis of the revision of the standard. Workshops on the proposals for the revised **matrix** Standard are being held across the country from Monday 7 June. For further details please look on the events section of the **matrix** Standard website at <http://www.matrixstandard.com/>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Mary Davies Associates

Finish Survey

Survey Preview Mode - close window or [click here](#) to return anytime

Annex 3: Options for revised matrix Standard

- Option One

This was laid out in a similar format to the 2005 version of the **matrix** Standard, however, the wording was changed to reflect the relevant wording from Option Three in Elements 5, 6 and 7 (which was combined with Element 8). Elements 1, 2, 3 and 4 remained as the 2005 version.

- Option Two

This option had all the new criteria as in Option Three but the whole Standard was set out using the existing Element headings but with elements 7 and 8 combined.

- Option Three

This option used different headings which relate more to standard business processes. The Elements/sections were reduced to four and possible evidence which may support assessments was set alongside the revised criteria. In addition a pictorial representation of the links with the four elements was provided to organisations.

Annex 4: Trials Project Board

- Dave Allan (emqc Ltd – Chair)
- Fiona Grant (emqc Ltd)
- Mark Jarvis (BIS)
- Jenny Wallis (BIS, Steering Group member)
- Eileen Neligan/Julie Hutton (Core Achievement Ltd, **matrix** Standard External Verifiers)
- Mary Davies (Independent Consultant, Steering Group member)
- Mark Wem (Registered **matrix** Practitioner)

Annex 5 Changes made to draft criteria in response to feedback from trials

Element 1 Leadership and Management

This element is about the way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean for an organisation?
1.1 The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims	1.1 The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims	No change	Management and staff are able to describe and give examples of measurable aims and objectives of the service and how they link to the wider organisational strategic aims. Managers and staff can describe how they are involved in developing the aims and objectives.
1.2 The service is provided with clear leadership and direction	1.2 The service is provided with clear leadership and direction	No change	Managers can describe how they lead and direct people. Staff can describe how well managers lead them to deliver the service.
1.3 The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality,	1.3 The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality,	No change	Managers and staff can describe and give examples of how they promote equality, diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean for an organisation?
confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery	confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery		integrity.
1.4 The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service	1.4 The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service	No change	Managers and staff can describe and give examples of legislation including how it impacts on the service.
1.5 The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service	1.5 The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service	No change	Examples of definitions of client outcomes are provided. Managers can describe how they are set and who is involved. They can describe how they are reviewed.
1.6 The organisation promotes the service to all those eligible to receive it	1.6 The organisation promotes the service in ways which are accessible to all those eligible to use it	Additional clarification added	Managers and staff can explain different methods of how the service is promoted - what works well and why in relation to the eligible client group.
1.7 Clients and staff are involved in the design and development of the service	1.7 Clients and staff influence the design and development of the service	The term 'involved' has been changed to 'influence' to avoid subjectivity and unnecessary constraints, whilst maintaining good practice	Service design and delivery reflects the views and experiences of staff and clients. Staff and clients are able to describe how they are involved in the design and development of the service and give examples of how they have influenced both.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean for an organisation?
<p>1.8 The organisation establishes and maintains effective links with other suitable agencies/organisations to enhance the service</p>	<p>1.8 The organisation establishes effective links with other appropriate partnerships and networks to enhance the service</p>	<p>The term 'agencies and other organisations' have been changed to 'partnerships and networks' to ensure consistency</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they establish links with other partnerships and networks and measure the effectiveness of the relationship.</p> <p>Representatives from partnerships and networks are able to give examples of how well their relationship is working with the service.</p>

Element 2 Resources

This element describes the assets invested and applied in providing and effective service.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
<p>2.1 The organisation effectively uses its resources to deliver the service</p>	<p>2.1 The organisation uses its resources effectively to deliver the service</p>	<p>The order of words has been changed to reflect a grammatically correct statement</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able explain what resources – including human, physical and financial are needed to deliver the service.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to explain how the level of resource, in relation to client needs, is established and can give examples of how effectively resources are used.</p>
<p>2.2 Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive</p>	<p>2.2 Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Clients and staff are able to describe and give examples of the types of information they were able to access and explain how appropriate it was to their needs.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to describe what quality assurance systems are in place to ensure information is current, accurate and is written in plain language,</p>

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
			<p>free from bias and takes account of diversity.</p> <p>Managers and staff delivering the service are able to explain how they support clients and how the resources they use are quality assured.</p>
<p>2.3 The organisation defines the skills, knowledge and competencies for individual staff roles, linked to the aims of the service</p>	<p>2.3 The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service</p>	<p>This criteria has been further strengthened in relation to qualifications specifically taking into account the work being undertaken by Workforce Development and the Careers Profession Alliance</p>	<p>Managers can describe and give examples of how they identify and define the skills, knowledge and competencies of staff roles linked to achieving the aims and objectives of the service including being aware of the boundaries of their role.</p> <p>Managers and staff can describe the qualifications and frameworks which are appropriate to their role in delivering the aims and objectives of the service.</p> <p>For careers guidance staff in England this should include professional standards and qualifications determined by the Careers Profession Alliance or other representative bodies.</p>

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
<p>2.4 Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development including where appropriate working towards qualifications for their role in delivering the aims and objectives of the service</p>	<p>2.4 Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development and provided with opportunities for career progression</p>	<p>This criteria has been strengthened to stress the importance of career progression</p>	<p>Managers and staff can explain and give examples of how they are supported in continually developing their skills, knowledge and competence including any appropriate qualifications for their role.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to describe how they are involved in the process of identifying their needs and appropriate learning and development activities.</p> <p>Career progression opportunities include those that are both internal and external to the organisation.</p>
<p>2.5 Effective induction processes are in place for all staff</p>	<p>2.5 Effective induction processes are in place for all staff</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Managers are able to describe the induction process for all roles including staff employed by the organisation and any volunteers.</p> <p>Newly recruited staff and those who have recently changed roles can describe the induction process and how induction has helped them perform effectively.</p>

Element 3 Service Delivery

This element describes the way in which the service is delivered effectively.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
3.1 The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect	3.1 The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect	No change	Managers and staff are able to define the service offering, in relation to their client group including prospective/potential clients and give examples how they ensure clients understand the service offering. Clients can describe and give examples of how they know what to expect from the service.
3.2 The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives	3.2 The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives	No change	Managers and staff can describe and give examples of how effective service delivery has been in meeting the aims and objectives. They are able explain what has worked well and why, with measurable examples linked to objectives.
3.3 The service provided is impartial and objective	3.3 The service provided is impartial and objective	No change	Managers and staff are able to describe how they ensure the service is impartial, free from bias and objective.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
			Clients can describe how they are made aware of any potential conflicts of interest in the advice provided and understand the limitations of the service.
<p>3.4 Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions</p>	<p>3.4 Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions</p>	No change	<p>Clients are able to describe and give examples of how they have benefited from the support process and how they were able to explore different options that met their expectations.</p> <p>Clients are able to describe what support they were given to understand and make appropriate choices.</p> <p>Clients are able to describe how they came to their decision</p>
<p>3.5 When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including the internet</p>	<p>3.5 When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including access to technology</p>	The direct term 'internet' has been removed and replaced with 'technology' to strengthen the criteria	Clients are able to describe and give examples of what resources were made available when exploring different and appropriate options.
<p>3.6 Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate</p>	<p>3.6 Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate agencies or organisations</p>	Addition of 'or' for ease of understanding and clear interpretation	Clients are able to describe the benefits they received by being referred to other appropriate agencies or organisations.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
agencies/organisations			Representatives from partnerships and networks are able to explain what benefits and services clients referred to them have received.

Element 4 Continuous Quality Improvement

This element describes the way in which the service provided is reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis.

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
<p>4.1 The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives</p>	<p>4.1 The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives and identifies improvements</p>	<p>Further strengthened to include 'identifying improvements'</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain and give measurable examples of how the aims and objectives have been met.</p> <p>Managers and staff can describe how all aspects of the service are reviewed against the measurable aims and objectives including promotion/engagement, service delivery, resources, leadership /management.</p>
<p>4.2 The service monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery</p>	<p>4.2 The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery</p>	<p>The term 'service' has been changed to 'organisation' to ensure a consistent audit trail throughout the Standard</p>	<p>Managers, staff and where appropriate clients are able to describe and give examples of how client outcomes are used to improve the service.</p>
<p>4.3 The organisation evaluates the service to build upon its strengths and address any areas for improvement</p>	<p>4.3 The organisation evaluates feedback on the service to build upon its strengths and addresses any areas for improvement</p>	<p>This criteria has been further strengthened to specify feedback and remove the duplication between 4.1 and 4.3</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to explain how all forms of feedback and evaluation information are used to establish areas of strength and areas for improvement.</p>

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
			<p>Clients are aware of who to contact with a compliment, comment or complaint and the process the organisation will follow in dealing with them.</p> <p>Managers and staff are able to explain how complaints are recorded, investigated and what action is taken.</p>
<p>4.4 The service makes effective use of appropriate partnerships and networks</p>	<p>4.4 The organisation evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships and networks to improve the service</p>	<p>This criteria has been changed to link back to organisational responsibilities. This has also removed the duplication between 1.8 and 4.4</p>	<p>Clients, staff and other stakeholders are able to describe the evaluation process and give examples of how the information is used to improve the service.</p> <p>Examples should show measurable outcomes and link to improvements.</p>
<p>4.5 The organisation uses quality assurance policies and procedures effectively to evaluate and improve the service</p>	<p>4.5 The organisation defines quality assurance approaches which are used to improve the service</p>	<p>The wording has been changed to focus on whether quality assurance activities are having an impact</p>	<p>Managers and staff are able to describe how the service is quality assured and what plans, policies, procedures and/or processes are in place and how they are implemented.</p>
<p>4.6 Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, is reviewed and evaluated</p>	<p>4.6 Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, are reviewed and evaluated to</p>	<p>To strengthen the criteria, the words 'to improve the service' have been added</p>	<p>Managers and staff can describe the process for evaluating performance in relation to roles, aims and objectives of the service.</p>

Trial Criteria	Recommended Criteria	Rationale for Change	What might this mean?
	improve the service		Managers are able to give measurable examples of how effective staff performance has been in relation to service aims and objectives.
4.7 Effective use is made of developments in new technology	4.7 Effective use is made of technology to improve the service	Reworded to strengthen and remove the subjective term of 'new'	Clients, managers and staff are able to describe and give examples of how technology has enhanced the way they deliver the service.
4.8 Improvements to the service are continually reviewed	4.8 The organisation continually reviews improvements to help inform the future aims and objectives of the service	Reworded to further strengthen the outcomes of continuous quality improvement	Managers and staff are able to provide examples of actions which have been taken to improve the service on an ongoing basis.

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