

Commercial in Confidence



matrix Accreditation Review Report

For

Llite

By Janice Grey

On behalf of emqc LTD

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1. Executive Summary

Having carried out the Accreditation Review in accordance with the guidelines provided Llite Ltd. has demonstrated that it continues **to meet the matrix quality standard for information advice and guidance services**. Continued accreditation to the **matrix Standard** is granted for the internal and external services provided by Llite Ltd.

This Accreditation Review Report covers the services provided by Llite Ltd. and includes a brief description of the company, the Assessment methodology and an overview of how Llite Ltd. continues to demonstrate that it meets the **matrix Standard**.

2. Introduction

Llite Ltd. was established in 2001 and provides training and learning opportunities for people within the construction sector. Over the last three years the provision has been extended to include warehousing and manufacturing. Since the last assessment the company has expanded into Scunthorpe, extending the number of sites to three.

Recently the company has undergone a period of restructuring and reshaping as changes to contracts and withdrawal of funding took effect. This has led the company to review how it works and what it delivers and it is starting to focus on expanding its private training as well as delivering through sub contractual arrangements with other providers rather than holding main contracts.

The company is accredited for **matrix** and Investors in People. These quality standards are used as a best practice benchmark and feedback from them is taken forward as quality improvements.

Information, advice and guidance is integrated into the delivery across all areas. It is an essential element in helping clients to make initial choices, part of the presentation to employers to get them involved in the GROW programme or through the apprenticeship process. These aspects of the external IAG were reviewed.

IAG is also central to the support staff receive. This commences at recruitment and continues throughout employment. These aspects of the internal IAG were reviewed.

The company employs 38 people working across 3 sites.

Developments since the last assessment

The points raised as development areas as part of the previous assessment have been considered. The following actions have been taken after reviewing the suggestions: -

- Client Forums continue to be developed and used to inform the delivery. (See development areas)
- A revised appraisal process has been introduced. A 360-degree process is still being considered and may be followed up once the existing appraisal process becomes established.
- Information for new staff as part of the pre interview/recruitment process remains an area for development.
- Effective relationships have been established with partners and stakeholders through ongoing informal contact and more formal reviews. The development/introduction of an annual questionnaire/feedback process is being considered.

- Feedback is given to clients in the centres following feedback through the 'You said ..we did' process.
- Feedback continues to be gathered from staff on the induction process. No progress has been made on an annual survey for staff on all aspects of the support. However a working group with staff representation has been established and has been consulted regarding staff development and planning with input into the appraisal process.

3. Methodology

The Assessor used a range of methods to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard;

One to one interviews (27) including staff from three sites and partners

Group interviews (4) with 20 clients covering several vocational areas, programmes and all sites.

Document review (Client documentation, promotional literature, policies, appraisal, planning, evaluation documents, web site, CPD activities, staff and client handbooks, meeting notes)

4. Strengths

During the Accreditation Review the following strengths were identified. These are outlined below. The numbers and letters in brackets refer to the relevant elements and criteria in the **matrix** Standard.

- Increased opportunities to be involved in the direction and planning of the company through the open culture. More formally the introduction of the Way Forward Group has created opportunities to be consulted and listened to and this has increased the sense of ownership and value. (5c, 7c,)
- Effective leadership and management, helping to create an environment where staff feel valued for the work they do and trusted to take decisions. This is helping individuals to develop and increase their skills. (5b, 6b)
- Internal staff and external clients commented on the level and degree of coaching, mentoring, shadowing and ongoing support. For staff this process starts at induction and continues, enabling them to understand the company and their roles and responsibilities. For external users (clients including employers) this process starts at initial point of contact through interview where needs and levels of support are discussed and determined and continues through reviews and on going contact. (3b, 6a, 6b)
- Users of the service, both internal and external, feel colleagues and staff to be approachable and supportive and committed to providing the most appropriate choices. Clients feel the decision to take a particular route or to become involved is their decision with no inappropriate pressure linked to targets or requirement to go at a particular pace. This approach has enabled clients to feel confident about referring the company to friends. For the internal service the company 'plays to peoples strengths' increasing individual job satisfaction and effectiveness and where possible supporting succession planning. (4d, 6b)

- Committed staff who are keen to support clients to progress and achieve. This is recognised and valued by clients who expressed satisfaction with the level of support and encouragement they receive. Staff also demonstrate the same commitment when supporting colleagues through shadowing, observations and sharing of good practice and information. (4a-f)
- Clients feel staff are non judgemental and provide a service that is relevant to their needs, helping them to make the best of their skills. This approach is valued. (4a-f)
- Accessible and approachable managers who provide support and encouragement for staff through the formal processes and informal daily contact and involvement. Clients and staff feel the support is available for them through the planned reviews and appraisals and informally. Clients have contact numbers for staff and feel they respond in a timely manner when necessary to queries and requests for help and advice. (4a, 4c, 6e)

5. Areas for Continuous Improvement

The Assessor identified the following areas where further development may improve the quality of service. The numbers and letters in brackets refer to the relevant elements and criteria in the **matrix** Standard.

- Performance Agreements have been introduced for staff. This process includes the identification of a mission statement and values for each role and the setting of objectives by individual staff. This process could be strengthened and simplified and provide increased cohesion if the linkages to the business plan were extended. This would enable staff to understand how they contribute directly to the company objectives, values and mission. (5c, 6b,)
- Promotional literature was seen as part of the review. Consider coding or dating leaflets etc. This would help to ensure the most current is in circulation and would also ease the management of the resources. (1b, 3a,3b)
- A review of literature and the website is taking place following a re-branding. This could be used as an opportunity to increase the information regarding the IAG and support that is provided. This could also be included in the employer pack that is being developed. This area could also be developed for the internal service relating to the information that is sent to potential staff prior to interview regarding the support. (3c)
- Awareness of the support in relation to IAG has been increased through input at introduction and induction. Little mention is made of this however in the publicity material and the Client Handbook and Charter. Inclusion in the written publicity material will provide a point of reference for clients, supporting the verbal input. (1a)
- Learner Forums are held at the Hull Site. Less formally managers talk to clients at other sites and ask for their views, which are taken forward. Consider introducing more information about these in the Client Handbook and as part of the induction process across all sites. Whilst the meetings are held in Hull, publicising when they are taking place in advance to all clients at all sites may provide them with opportunities to input. Consider also refocusing the meetings to consider particular aspects of the delivery at appropriate points rather than the specific questions regarding overall satisfaction, which is used at the present time. This different approach may help to gather more qualitative feedback. (7c)

- A revised appraisal process has been introduced following consultation. A 360-degree process may have a place for managers to receive feedback from all different levels of the company. Consider a trial of this and evaluate the effectiveness. Involve the Way Forward Group in agreeing the format and content to ensure everyone is happy with the process and the content. (6b)
- Effective relationships have been established with partners. A more reflective annual process to include a questionnaire and subsequent meeting may add value and provide feedback on any areas for improvements. This process could be of significant value as new partnerships and ways of working are being developed. (7c)
- Whilst feedback is sought from new staff and some input is gathered through the Way Forward Group, an annual survey of staff to gather feedback relating to the satisfaction they feel with the support they receive would be useful and help to ensure any areas of concern are addressed. This feedback could also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and processes that are in place and management competencies in delivering the support. (7c)
- Whilst communications were generally felt to be effective there were some occasions where some staff received more information in a timelier manner than others. A Team Briefing process where key messages are passed on at a specific time and signed, as delivered could be useful in working towards consistency and ensuring messages and information are passed on effectively. (5c)
- Whilst clients were generally aware of how to complain and give feedback, it may be worth including the policy in the Client Handbook. This will provide a reference point for clients at a later date. (7c)

6. Detailed Findings against the used on the objectives matrix Standard

The following information is a summary of the findings against each element and should be read in conjunction with the previous sections.

1. People are made aware of the service and how to engage with it

The purpose and expected users of the external service continue to be defined by contracts or needs of the clients. It continues to be part of the initial interview process and is integrated into the induction. In some cases tasters and initial assessment take place dependant on the needs and length of contracts with support provided throughout the period and at the end by the Liaison Officers. Clients continuing needs and wants in relation to the service are assessed and supported as part of the ongoing reviews. The company continues to be clear about the link between IAG and retention, attainment and progressions levels of clients and satisfaction levels of employers.

Some mention of the service continues to be part of the promotional literature, however it is noted that this area could be developed. The company continues to use leaflets, networking, attendance at events and some cold calling for employers to promote what is on offer. The website is being re-launched following extensive development as part of a company re-branding. Reference to the support is also made in the Client Agreement and included in the Client Handbook. A new leaflet is being developed to explain what is available to employers, following feedback. Staff also continue to work closely with referral agencies and contractors to ensure they are aware of what is on offer and refer accordingly. Repeat business and word of mouth continue to be effective tools in attracting new clients and employers.

'My mate had been here and he told me about them'

'Sent by Jobcentre...thought it would be the same as all the rest...but seem interested in me here....'

Information relating to the company's Equality and Diversity Policy and how it applies continues to be discussed with clients as part of the induction process and employers at first point of contact. Health and Safety is also a key item, introduced at induction and discussed throughout via risk assessments and reviews.

The company continues to be aware of the purpose and importance of effective support in terms of IAG for staff. Managers in the company continue to be aware of the need to motivate and support staff through appraisals and reviews and training and learning in order that they maintain job satisfaction in sometimes challenging situations and with challenging groups of clients and deliver a quality service for the clients. The company continues to understand the cost of recruiting new staff and spends time and effort developing the skills of its staff and encouraging them to take on new responsibilities. This is having an impact on succession planning within the company, with staff being promoted and/or taking on new responsibilities. This has been particularly apparent through the restructuring and re-focusing necessitated through changes in contracts and delivery.

Information about the support and opportunities to progress continues to be explained to applicants for positions prior to interview with more details included at interview and on appointment through induction. A Staff Handbook continues to be issued to new staff. Since the last assessment the company has established a relationship with an external specialist agency to provide support for them in relation to HR issues. This has resulted in a review of the policies and practices and the development of a more coherent staff handbook, which is available for all staff on site.

The policies and practices relating to Equality and Diversity, Staff Development and terms and conditions are also summarised in a company Staff Handbook that everyone receives.

2. People's use of the service is defined and understood

Clients and employers continue to be aware of what they can expect from the service. This continues to be explained to them at interview, through presentations, in literature or by word of mouth from family, friends, contacts and referral agencies.

Recruitment Officer and Liaison Officers continue to be given information about potential clients from the referral agencies where applicable. This provides the starting point for the discussions regarding what is on offer and the interests and experiences of clients. Some potential clients continue to be invited for tasters and initial assessment if it is part of the contract. All information is reviewed by the Recruitment Officer in discussion with the client to determine whether what is on offer is relevant to the needs. Staff continue to have the best interests of clients in mind and referrals to other providers, colleges or referral agencies take place, where it is deemed to be appropriate.

Confidentiality and usage and storage of information within the company continues to be explained and is also reiterated as part of the ongoing support and reviews. Data Protection is also covered and clients sign to say they understand and agree to their data being shared where necessary. It is also mentioned in the Client Handbook. Some of the client documentation includes a confidentiality clause, which continues to be explained

'I remember them telling us about everything being between them and us....'

'It is great to be able to talk to someone who can help.'

'Never had so much interest shown in me before.'

Although the company has targets, staff continue to respond to client need, consequently clients continue to feel under no pressure to start or stay on programmes if not relevant.

'I wasn't sure which area I wanted to work in, so they arranged for me to have some time in different bits.'

Staff continue to be aware of support available for them. Induction, performance agreements, reviews and appraisals are all used as formal processes to look at support and learning and development. Policies and practices within the company continue to be reviewed to ensure they reflect the support and staff are given opportunities to be involved in this process. This has developed since the last review with the introduction of the Way Forward Group increasing formal consultation opportunities.

Potential recruits continue to have information about the support and the company given to them at interview and induction, however little information is provided prior to interview.

Staff continue to be aware of the confidentiality policy and how information relating to them is shared. New staff are supported through coaching, shadowing and mentoring from within the company and where applicable through the external support.

The sharing of learning and experiences through observations, mentoring, shadowing and meetings continues.

'Everyone is willing to share their knowledge and experiences with each other...

3. People are provided with access to information and support in using it

The company continues to provide clients with information and support at a level that is appropriate to their needs and wants. Information continues to be sought and used to meet these needs. Clients continue to value the information and feel staff are keen to provide them with whatever support they need and are willing to expand and develop the support to meet the needs.

Staff confirm they continue to work together to ensure information is current. Networking, meetings, emails and minutes supports this. Standardisation meetings, IV interventions, observations and quality assurance meetings and input as well as feedback from partners is used to disseminate information and ensure everyone is up to date to benefit the client. Meetings continue to be held at regular intervals, however there were some instances where information had not been passed on.

Literature was seen as part of the review, but it was not possible to check its currency as they were not dated or coded. No one has overall responsibility for the accuracy and currency of information. This is very much a shared effort although a Marketing Executive is in place with a remit to update and expand the marketing sources.

Information continues to be available appropriate to needs using a range of formats. Facebook is in place for clients and the website has been redeveloped following the re-branding process.

Information for staff continues to be provided through the meetings and the recently introduced performance agreement and review and appraisal process. Information on qualifications and their value and relevancy is available.

The open culture, which staff commented on, enables them to speak to managers and the Directors about any aspects of their development and staff feel comfortable to do this. Learning opportunities are circulated through team meetings, e-mails and face-to-face contact.

4. People are supported in exploring options and making choices

Impartial information, advice and guidance continue to be available to meet the needs of the clients. The needs of clients are gathered from the first point of contact where initial discussions take place to determine whether what is on offer is relevant. Information is added to during any tasters or initial assessment period to establish the options for clients and agree appropriate levels of support. Any additional support is also identified and the Employer Liaison Officer who works closely with them at the start of some programmes and is available on request. Relationships between the client and the Liaison Officers and tutors

are important and were seen to be effective, with staff delivering much of the service. Assessors also provide information and support and feedback and encouragement.

The company continues to have targets but clients continue to be happy with the support and feel the decisions are made after consultation and involvement.

Staff feel they are provided with the information and support they need to develop in their roles. Impartial information, advice and guidance continues through line managers and the reviews, appraisals culminating in a personal plan.

There are options to develop through taking on more responsibilities. Much of the development for staff is linked to the aims of the company, however there is support for some personal development beyond this.

'Supportive culture...can speak to anyone ...strong team... a good place.'

5. Service delivery is planned and maintained

The company has a Mission Statement supported by Core Values and delivered through a business plan. The Plan continues to be developed with opportunities both formal and informal for input from across the company.

'The plan is drafted and then the draft is shared with us through meetings

The mission statement continues to describe the ethos of the company. The company continues to demonstrate its commitment to developing its staff, seeking out opportunities for them to progress and develop through networking and the extending of responsibilities and job descriptions, recognising the value in growing people across the company.

A Self Assessment Review (SAR) is completed annually, with input from staff, partners and clients through feedback processes. Targets are set and these are used as a basis for future planning and delivery.

The Directors continue to provide leadership and direction. Staff continue to feel the service is managed well. The culture of the company is one of empowerment and trust and as such staff feel able to contribute ideas and suggestions and feel trusted to make decisions knowing they will be supported. Senior staff continue to be involved in observations of practice and aspects of quality assurance.

'Senior managers are great...support you and lead by example...'

Quality meetings with representation from across the company take place to review different aspects of the delivery and focus on continuous improvement as well as providing a 'voice'. The Way Forward group has also had a role in planning and reviewing performance and this is valued.

'There are regular meetings and we also get emails and phone calls when we are away from the office...very open culture...family....'

The principles established by the National IAG Board continue to be apparent in the way the company works and are taken into account in the policies and practices and are reinforced through training, sharing of good practice, feedback and observation.

Partnerships continue to be developed and sought with other companies. Constant dialogue is maintained with opportunities to inform the planning through contract reviews and the daily contact. This has been of particular value as changes to funding have necessitated a different approach with sub contracting with other providers being the preferred option. Activity in the network at many levels is used to gather information and ideas to inform future plans.

'Excellent partners...so accommodating and willing to provide what clients want...'

6. Staff competence and support they are given are sufficient to deliver the service

An induction process is in place and continues to be effective. New staff confirm this, feeling that the process provides information and support through mentoring, coaching and shadowing to enable them to feel part of the team and become an effective member at an early point. Details of the support in terms of IAG and CPD continue to be given to new recruits at interview with more in depth information on induction and as necessary.

A two-week schedule of meetings and talks with key members of staff continues as part of the induction. Staff value this as it helps them to understand who does what and start to build effective relationships. A Staff Handbook continues to be issued and is a useful reference tool.

'Told so much. Most things are explained but it is good to have a copy of all the policies to look at...'

New starters undertake a three-month probationary period. There was some evidence of regular formal reviews during this period with discussion at the end as well informal ongoing dialogue and feedback.

On the job coaching and development continue, starting at induction with managers and colleagues acting as mentors, providing encouragement and support through observations and sharing of experiences and good practice. The change of role and responsibilities support process through shadowing and coaching continues and is valued by staff.

'..has supported me and we have talked through how to do various aspects of my role...really supportive and encouraging'

Observations continue to be used as a development tool and are undertaken by senior staff and colleagues. Staff continue to be happy with the process and feel feedback is supportive, with suggestions being made to improve if needed.

The company recognises the importance of competent, well-trained and supported staff and provides appropriate CPD in line with job roles and responsibilities and business direction. Learning and development continues to be discussed informally as appropriate and also as part of performance agreement, review and appraisals. The commitment to the service is apparent through the progression of staff through NVQs in IAG.

Formal development opportunities through networking and courses continue to be supported to meet identified needs. The company continues to be active in the network and staff continue to be encouraged to bring new ideas back and develop and share good practice.

Opportunities continue to be sought for developing staff across the company through taking on new responsibilities to learn new skills. This has been particularly apparent since the restructuring with staff taking on new roles and additional responsibilities. This continues to be recognised as necessary in order to increase job satisfaction and motivation where few opportunities for promotion occur.

Communications continue to be mostly effective ensuring staff have the information they need. Meetings take place at a frequency relevant to the work area, standardisation meetings are used to moderate and share good practice, Quality assurance meetings reflect on audits and review processes and feedback and whole staff meetings also take place.

'Its like a family...the way we support each other...'

7. Feedback on the quality of the service is obtained

Clients continue to be aware of how to give compliments and how to complain. This is discussed at first point of contact and is mentioned as part of the interview and ongoing support. Consequently clients feel able to give feedback and feel it would be dealt with positively. Where it is a sensitive issue, clients are confident that the matter would be dealt with in confidence.

'They are all so helpful. ...interested in you ..don't think I would need to complain formally...would just speak to them...'

The company gains continuous feedback through the client reviews, questionnaires, evaluation forms, Learner Forums and informal day-to-day contact.

'The clients we get are quite vocal and would be quite open with their comments'

'We build good relationships with the clients and they are open with their comments...sometimes more than we would like!'

There are few complaints, however they are dealt with seriously and reviewed by the Operations Director through the quality systems. Where comments come from clients through questionnaires, they are followed up individually and resolved. Clients continue to be happy with the process.

Staff feedback on the internal service continues to be given informally although more formal feedback is sought from new staff through the induction questionnaires. Management are seen to be open and fair and staff feel confident in approaching any member of the senior team if they have any comments or complaints. The development of the Way Forward Group has increased opportunities for staff input, involvement and feedback.

Feedback from external inspections, contract reviews and standardisation, internal reviews and audits as part of quality assurance is used to improve and develop the service for internal and external users.

'Very open and responsive partner.... listen to feedback and act ...easy to deal with....'

Continuing reviewing of policies, processes and procedures takes place to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are in line with legal requirements and best practice.

8. Continuous quality improvement is ensured through monitoring, evaluation and action

The quality, effectiveness and impact of the service delivery is continually monitored. External inspection visits and reports, audit feedback, questionnaires, SAR completion and ongoing negotiation and discussion with funding partners, sub contractors and referral agencies as well as extensive networking are used to continually review and reflect on the quality of delivery and its relevance. The company also continues to work towards appropriate quality standards and uses this third party feedback from the assessment and review processes to provide a focus for continuous development.

'We are continually reviewing what we do through meetings and day to day conversations....cant afford to stay still...'

Ideas, initiatives, funding opportunities and service development are reflected upon and continue to be discussed as part of future planning. There is evidence of action being taken following feedback:-

- Induction process has been reviewed to make it more interactive. Learners who did not like classroom environment appreciate this.
- Shadowing for new staff has been formalised and is built into the induction programme ensuring it happens as planned. New staff value this process.
- Induction for learners has been reviewed relating to the volume of paperwork.
- The appraisal process has been reviewed and representatives of staff have been consulted in determining and agreeing a new process. This has been rolled out and is to be evaluated.

7. Conclusion

Llite Ltd. demonstrates its continued commitment to providing impartial and relevant support through its IAG service to potential and existing clients and staff. The company continues to be active in the network, working with partners to provide the most appropriate and up to date service to the clients and staff based on their respective needs.

Staff are passionate and committed to the support. This is a real strength. Clients recognise and appreciate the efforts staff put in to supporting them.