

COMMUNITY TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED T/A CTS TRAINING



Table of Contents

Assessment Information.....	3
Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes.....	4
Strengths	8
Areas for Development	9
Methodology	10
Conditions of Accreditation	111

Assessment Information

Assessment Type	Accreditation Review
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Bob Moffat
Visit Date	05/10 & 06/10/2021
Client ID	C10204
Assessment Reference	PN200797
Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by	21/09/2022
Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by	21/09/2023
Accreditation Review onsite visit to be conducted by	21/09/2024

Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

Community Training Services Limited trading as CTS Training (CTS for the purposes of this report) were formed in 1999 where, at that time, their provision was linked to government funded programmes of support and a number of contracts covering skills and employability activity. CTS were first accredited as a **matrix** organisation in 2015, and at that time, they employed approximately 150 staff across 3 sites in Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley delivering a range of Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Education Funding Agency (EFA) and European Social Fund (ESF) programmes to approximately 1900 learners.

In the 3 years between CTS's initial Assessment and the first Review of their **matrix** accreditation in 2018, they had a challenging period where the leadership and management of the organisation changed and the structure of the business was adjusted returning to the core business which was originally in place. An apprenticeship programme contract was 'handed back' to the funding body and consequently staff reduced to a capacity of approximately 40. The business then concentrated on the delivery of the Study and Adult Programmes, reducing its total number of learners to less than half and premises to 2 sites in Sheffield and Rotherham.

Since their last **matrix** Review in 2018, CTS have had a further period of change and challenge, particularly in the last 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the sale of the business and the establishment of a new management team. Unfortunately, during this period, CTS's Adult Education Budget (AEB) contract was not continued and they have been left with one funded Study Programme contract in this current year.

Over the last year, CTS have restructured resulting in redundancies and a reduction of staff to the current number of 20. They now operate from one site in Sheffield with a range of managers, tutors, learning mentors and administrative staff.

There are currently 82 learners undertaking the Study Programme (16-19) with CTS which has broadly two core aims of developing employability skills and personal and social skills. This is provided alongside Maths and English and there is a separate ESOL provision. Learners are supported in vocational pathways including customer service, hospitality, business administration and care.

The overall purpose of CTS was described as *"have to make sure that learners are provided with a platform within a smaller environment to help them achieve what they want to achieve – giving people the opportunity to make the change"*. This is aligned with a Vision 'to provide outstanding experiences to all of our customers'. The current Vision is something that is under consideration by the new management of the organisation.

IAG continues to be an integral part of the overall purpose and provision of CTS, and since their last **matrix** Review, this has extended and become more embedded in the service as a whole. An IAG Policy is in place which underpins the IAG provided and complements the training, education and learning which takes place. Throughout the 'learner journey', there is a range of opportunities and 'touch points' for interaction and dialogue with learners, from the first point of contact and initial assessment and continuously for the duration of the Study Programme.

CTS's well-structured and embedded processes allow for dedicated time to be provided to identify the needs, interests and goals of individual learners associated with the four vocational areas of hospitality, customer service, business administration and care. This ensures they are provided with the appropriate IAG to enable them to progress to, and realise their aspirations. In practice, this means Learning Mentors undertaking, with new and potential learners, an initial assessment and diagnostic exercise to determine their suitability for the Study Programme and their particular individual needs. An explanation of options available is also provided in order that learners can make appropriate decisions for themselves about the way forward without being pressurised to opt for anything in particular.

From this point, learning agreements and plans are created leading to regular reviews with learners which include opportunities for providing further IAG at 'touch points' as learners move towards their identified objectives and positive outcomes. Should CTS not be able to provide what learners require, they have close links with other providers such as Sheffield College and NACRO for catering or motor vehicle programmes and courses. CTS also have a range of contacts with organisations such as CAMS and Depaul UK if learners have particular personal challenges such as mental health or housing issues.

When discussing IAG with staff from CTS, it was clear that this is provided by an enthusiastic and experienced group of professionals. Their learner centred approach ensures each individual's personal needs and requirements are considered. All the time learners are with CTS, their development and progress is being facilitated by a focused team in a highly supportive and enthusiastic manner.

The style of leadership and management in CTS has become increasingly team based and participative where, under the new management, IAG is discussed and developed collectively during meetings, standardisation, updates and regular interaction. Established systems and processes used to support the positive progress of learners have been developed and progressed in line with the expectations of the needs of learners, partners and funding bodies. This has had the effect of not only engendering consistency and continuity in the service, but it has also supported the achievement of learner objectives and positive outcomes.

CTS have generally been effective and successful in achieving their targets and outcomes over the last 3 years. For example, they have had an achievement target of 80%+ and, in the last 3 years have had 95%, 84% and 90% achievement for those learners in the 'Award' category. Overall, achievement rates have seen a decline to 84%, 69% and 67%. However, in 2019/20, the data is not a like for like year due to Covid-19 and not all grades were calculated. They now feel there is an upward trend since the Covid year. CTS also have targets of 80%+ for learner retention and attendance and they are currently above this, having lost only 1 learner to date.

It was clear, through speaking with staff and reviewing documentation, that IAG provides a significant contribution to the achievement of the overall purpose of the organisation and its measurable targets and outcomes. For example, the clarity and accuracy of IAG has, in conjunction with teaching and learning, enabled high numbers of learners gain qualifications and progress to higher levels, go on to university or another college, achieve and sustain part time and full-time employment and gain a greater insight and experience into the vocation they have opted for as a career. IAG is also delivered in a facilitative, supportive and focused manner which has contributed to the achievement of a high proportion of learners who have realised their goals and objectives.

CTS have continued to regularly monitor and evaluate their overall provision, and within this. the IAG provided. Continued and regular focus and attention on the achievement against targets is undertaken through meetings, standardisation and updates, as well as through regular 1 to 1s and team forums and ongoing discussion about learners' progress. Management and staff have a good appreciation of the way the service is expected to operate and how IAG is delivered. In conjunction with this, all those involved are strongly motivated towards the realisation of positive learner outcomes and organisational success without loss of individualised learner support.

Changes and improvements have taken place continuously and progressively where, for example, with the introduction of the new organisation, work has been undertaken to capture more information on enrolment. Tutors are also receiving more information about learners to enable them to provide appropriate IAG linked more to individual requirements. In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, induction was changed from a group to an individual basis. Coming out of this, group induction has been remodelled to provide a stronger platform for the delivery of a successful Study Programme including IAG.

Another significant change has been CTS's move to provide the Study Programme focused on vocational areas and having integral to this 'pathways' developed for learners which they can understand and relate to as they undertake their employability programmes.

Overall the changes and improvements that have taken place have helped increase the ongoing support for learners as they continue towards their goals and aspirations. Improvements to the delivery of IAG have also helped achieve a stronger link between goal and objective setting and the achievement of positive outcomes.

Learning Mentors discuss aspirations and goals with learners during the beginning of their relationship with CTS alongside initial assessment and diagnosis and onboarding processes. As part of learners embarking on programmes, learning agreements are completed including plans which identify the objectives of each learner and inform the ongoing training, learning and support required. Regular reviews between learners and mentors and tutors provide the opportunity to revisit progress against plans and provide additional IAG to the point of achieving the goals and objectives initially identified. Short term learner objectives can include getting a CV or being able to speak in front of a group of people, and long-term goals can include getting into an apprenticeship or job, going to university or continuing with studies at college. The approach taken by staff to help learners identify and pursue their goals and objectives is very much learner centred and progressive where options are provided and revisited linked to each individual's circumstances and the programme they are following.

Monitoring the progress of the achievement of learner outcomes is undertaken regularly and through complementary processes. For example, CTS utilises their PICS database system and there is a regular cycle of reviews providing the opportunity to focus on learner progress. Monitoring and review has become more robust where, now, delivering and reporting on the IAG provided is more detailed and comprehensive. In addition, tutors have been encouraged to be involved more in the progress of learners where a more holistic approach to learners' education, development and progression is now in place. The combination of planning set review points, regular opportunity for group and 1 to 1 interaction, complemented by tracking progress ensures learners receive comprehensive IAG in order that they progress towards their stated goals and objectives and successful outcomes.

Distance travelled tools are also utilised within the process of support for learners in order to provide further focus for consideration of progress and ongoing assistance. For example, tools included are reviews at the halfway stage of 6 month programmes, and for longer programmes, quarterly reviews. Distance travelled is also measured where learners rate themselves on a scale at the beginning of the 'learner journey' within the learner agreement. This scale is revisited during learner reviews and progress can be discussed and measured. In addition, reflections on progress and behavioural development and updated objectives are logged at each learner review and this process contributes highly to ensuring that learners are progressing positively in order to achieve their required goals and successful outcomes.

Evaluation of learner outcomes, in order to support and improve the IAG provided, takes place through a combination of structured processes. These include, for example, regular meetings, standardisation and consideration of documentation, processes and practices, analysis of feedback and undertaking the Self-Assessment Review (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). In recent years, changes and improvements as a result of evaluation have included capturing more information at enrolment providing a more comprehensive profile of learners before they begin their programme. Also, there is now more in-depth discussion with learners ensuring that they embark on the right programmes to suit their individual requirements. The Employability Programme is now also more career focused with clear pathways available to them to understand how what they are doing can lead to a particular outcome. All the changes as a result of evaluation have led to closer working with individual learners and an upward trend in achievement rates and positive outcomes. The process of continuous development of systems and documentation to increase the profile of the IAG service is an ongoing aspect of CTS as an organisation which embraces continuous improvement and development.

CTS is an organisation which is learner focused where staff are highly enthusiastic and passionate about their provision and that learners achieve their goals, aspirations and positive outcomes. Over the last 3 years, CTS have had to contend with considerable challenge and change. However, they have come through this and have successfully developed their IAG service infrastructure to become more comprehensive and robust. Consequently, a high proportion of their learners are progressing positively and successfully towards achieving their goals and positive outcomes.

Strengths

Strengths were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- CTS have developed increasingly strong links with their partner organisations where, over the last 3 years, they have extended and strengthened these to a point where a seamless training, learning and support provision for learners has been created. This has had the effect of ensuring high numbers of learners are catered for on an individual basis, not only in their qualification but also towards achieving a job (1.8)
- CTS have developed into an organisation which has become very much learner centred. All staff consistently support individual learners in a non-judgemental manner which is free from bias and is focused on individual needs. This has had the effect of motivating high proportions of learners towards meeting their goals and objectives resulting in an upward trend in achievement rates and progression towards their desired aspirations and positive outcomes. Staff from CTS not only present the options that learners have available to them, they facilitate learners' thinking and decision making to enable them to make appropriate individual choices. This approach encourages learners to make decisions for themselves without being pressurised to opt for anything in particular. It also ensures that ownership for choices made is engendered for all learners creating greater motivation leading to higher proportions of learners progressing to the achievement of their goals and objectives (3.3, 3.4)

Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality, development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is, or to give insight into practices seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in any way lacking. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- Whilst CTS have had, for a number of years, a clear Mission and Values, changes to the organisation and its focus may mean it would be valuable to follow through with considerations to 're-look' at this area. By re-clarifying and restating the purpose and wider organisational strategic aims, this may provide a clearer platform for creating additional measurable KPIs which can be used for the purposes of organisational review, individual staff PMR reviews and continuous organisational and staff professional development (CPD) (1.1)
- There is in place a range of promotional activity regarding what CTS do and provide for potential and existing learners. There may, however, be benefit in making more explicit the IAG service which is provided in order that learners and referral partners understand the individual and learner centred approach to the IAG which is provided and the extent to which IAG can support learners' aspirations and positive outcomes (1.6)
- There is a good understanding of IAG and how this is expected to be delivered in CTS. However, as the profile and range of IAG activity develops in the organisation, there may be scope to 'build' IAG into regular CPD activity. This could be during, for example, standardisation where an appointed IAG 'champion' initiates opportunities for staff to share best practice related to emerging IAG related themes such as mental health (2.4)
- There are existing processes in place to generate feedback from learners and these help the organisation consider and continuously develop the overall service and, within this, the IAG provided. However, there may be scope to undertake a deeper analysis of the IAG provided by re-engaging the learner survey including more specific IAG related questioning linking to the 'ambassador' activity and undertaking trend analyses from this to help inform any ongoing improvements and changes to the management and delivery of IAG (4.3)
- A range of quality assurance processes are in place in CTS. However, with reference to that part of quality assurance which focuses on observation, there may be benefit in drawing on the IAG Policy as a basis for the development of prompts for observers to utilise within observation and feedback. These prompts could be utilised from initial and diagnostic assessment to final learner reviews providing feedback information to inform developing staff performance and ongoing continuous professional development (4.5)

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals. These may include the Areas for Development above. <https://matrixstandard.com/assessment-journey/continuous-improvement-checks/>.

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation, please see the section Assessment Information for dates.

Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- Client Contact: The Review was undertaken remotely over 2 days, utilising Zoom, email and telephone.
- Staff: 10 staff interviews via Zoom
- Partners: 5 partners via telephone
- Learners: 21 learners via Zoom
- Documentation: Strategic Business Plans, SAR 2019/20, QIP 2020/21, appraisal form, 1 to 1 performance review, appraisal guide, Behaviour and Positive Engagement Policy, Complaints, and Signposting Policy, Covid Risk Assessment, CPD log, disability and access arrangements, Study Programme Learner Handbook, EILP, enrolment form, enrolment process, Equality and Diversity Policy, E Safety and Social Media Policy, Health and Safety Policy, IAG Policy and Guidance, induction planner, initial and diagnostic assessment, internal Quality Assurance Policy, team meeting agenda and information, marketing leaflets, OTLA process and guidance, positive outcomes (16-19) 20/21, Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, standardisation agenda, Study Programme learning agreement, Study Programme review process

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
2. Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy The Growth Company that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
3. Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
4. Inform The Growth Company or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
5. Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
6. Inform The Growth Company of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrixStandard@growthco.uk.
7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
8. Inform The Growth Company of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
9. Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause The Growth Company and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
10. Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
11. Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by The Growth Company and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to be a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
12. Be aware that The Growth Company reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.