



'Well Informed - Well Ahead'

So what is the matrix Standard for information advice and guidance services?

matrix is the national quality Standard which sets a level of good practice for the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in England. The Standard¹ was developed during 2001 by the Department for Education and Skills, in partnership with the Guidance Sector, other key stakeholders such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trades Union Congress and through extensive consultation. It was introduced by Government Ministers as a key component in the strategy to raise standards and quality of delivery to people accessing guidance services.

matrix was launched in February 2002 to much acclaim from organisations, large and small. The Standard became generally available in September 2002. In less than 9 months, some 200 organisations from all sectors of the economy have achieved the **matrix** Quality Mark and a further 1,200 are working with Registered **matrix**

Advisers for accreditation later this year.

Purpose

The Standard

- exists to assist organisations to identify and follow best
- practice in the delivery of IAG services
- defines the outcomes of a quality service
- takes an individual-focused approach to the quality of the service
- promotes the principle of participation, equality and transparency
- provides a framework to encourage continuous quality improvement

Structure

The **matrix** Standard is a powerful framework based on best practice and enables organisations to:

- ensure consistency and clarity in their provision of IAG provision so everyone understands what the organisation is trying to achieve.
- assess, check performance

¹ The matrix Standard is the property of the UK Secretary of State for Education and Skills and has been registered with the European Trades Mark Registry.

and measure against other established quality benchmarks such as the EFQM Excellence Model and Investors in People

- manage the process more effectively and make more use of training and development resources
- fast track the matching of skills with needs, increasing efficiency and speed of response
- improve recruitment and retention, boost morale and motivation and encourage loyalty
- gain the confidence of staff as a responsible employer committed to its people
- gain valuable national recognition through a rigorous accreditation process

The Standard is structured in two parts with ten Elements:

- five elements that focus upon service delivery; and
- five elements focusing on the management of the service.

It covers practical, everyday occurring issues such as the way in which IAG services are managed and communicated; how they are marketed and promoted; how staff are trained and supported; and how systems ensure continuous quality improvement.

Impact

Feedback from accredited organisations has been most encouraging. Irrespective of the

sector the overwhelming message is that **matrix** is making a difference. Indeed, experiences of some of the UK's most successful employers (including British Sky Broadcasting, Barclays University, Rolls Royce, and BMW (GB) Ltd) which volunteered to participate in a 9 month Employer trial have strengthened the Standard's universal credibility.

"We want to feel confident that we are providing a high quality service that really meets our employees' needs. The matrix Standard does just that" - Lever Faberge

The **matrix** Standard is extremely complementary to the EFQM Excellence Model, ISO 9000 and Investors in People - *"The matrix Standard cements other quality marks such as Investors in People and ISO9001 and takes them a stage further"* (Rolls Royce) - and in the coming months, the intention is to embed successfully the Standard as a platform to achieve other national and international quality standards.

The reputation of the **matrix** Standard precedes it with increasing international interest in the Standard now being shown, particularly within Europe. To date, Finland, Ireland, Italy and Sweden have requested information on the Standard. In July, a pilot project is due to commence in Northern Ireland.

For more information on **matrix**:

www.matrix-quality-standard.com

This summary paper has been prepared for the Department for

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