

Review of the **matrix** Standard

It was good news for the **matrix** Standard when the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) commissioned the Tribal Group to review the present arrangements for quality assuring the delivery of information and advice. Tribal had to take into account the development of the adult advancement and careers service (aacs) and identify areas for improvement.

The clear messages from the widespread consultations were:

- the **matrix** Standard is valued and has many strengths. It is widely understood, provides a quality framework for which infrastructure exists and is used in a wide variety of settings;
- there are, however, areas where the **matrix** Standard could be strengthened; in particular around elements associated with marketing, defining staff competence & qualifications and continuous improvement; and
- there are some concerns over ways in which the Standard is implemented, including perceived inconsistencies in assessment, the costs to providers, and inadequate links to other quality standards.

The Tribal Report can be found in the news section on the **matrix** Standard website at www.matrixstandard.com

Following the Tribal Report Mary Davies Associates successfully tendered to undertake a major review of the **matrix** Standard on behalf of both BIS and the Skills Funding Agency. Mary has considerable experience of the IAG sector both as Chief Executive of two careers companies and as the previous External Verifier for the **matrix** Standard. She has brought together a project team which includes: Pat Hornsby, a recently retired

Ofsted HMI; Jackie Mather a Registered **matrix** Practitioner; and Patsy Smith, previously Quality Assurance Manager for the Department for Education and Skills.

The review started in April 2010 with the aim of creating a new **matrix** Standard to meet the needs of the adult advancement and careers service and the wider networks of agencies and organisations delivering information, advice and guidance across England.

The project team will be:

- building upon the findings of the Tribal Report, consulting with stakeholders, organisations and practitioners, and agreeing necessary changes to strengthen and improve the **matrix** Standard elements and criteria.
- considering how aspects of the **matrix** Standard can be used by the wider network of advice agencies and learning providers, to improve the quality of their service delivery.
- consulting with stakeholders, organisations and practitioners and agreeing necessary changes to bring about alignment, as far as possible, with the evidence requirements of Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework and the Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- preparing, testing and finalising the revised Standard; and
- preparing new guidance for practitioners reflecting agreed changes to the Standard and processes.

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Timescales are extremely tight. The revised Standard needs to be in place ready for October! However, please don't panic, as there will of course be a transition period to the revised **matrix** Standard. The plan for this is being developed by BIS at the moment but it will mean that anyone currently accredited with the Standard will retain accreditation until their due date for review. A draft timetable is included later in this newsletter.

Hopefully this should put everyone's mind at rest. It's business as usual for the time-being.

The project team has been given a blank canvas, with an opportunity to think differently, but has been asked to make sure the review builds upon the findings of the Tribal Report.

"We intend to consult as widely as possible within the IAG sector and beyond to ensure we listen to everyone's comments and build an even better standard for information, advice and guidance to meet all agencies' needs as well as users' needs" says Mary.

"To do this we will be circulating an electronic questionnaire in May to all the accredited and de-accredited organisations and those who have just started their **matrix** Journey. We will build on the questionnaire results and make recommendations to the project Steering Group. We will run workshops in June to explain the changes and hear your thoughts on the proposals before the final version of the revised Standard is signed off by the Government.

The questionnaire has been developed from consultations with four Focus Groups representing the following: the aacs; Learning Providers; the IAG Professional Bodies; and **matrix** Practitioners. The closing date for contributions to the survey is Friday 4th June. The questionnaire can be found at <http://matrixreview.speedsurvey.com>.

The Steering Group comprises representatives from nextstep, the voluntary sector, the National Association of Managers of Student Services (NAMSS), Ofsted, ENTO and Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), as well as a **matrix** Practitioner and representatives from BIS, DCSF and the Skills Funding Agency.

We are holding half day workshops so please do try and attend the consultation workshops as we would really welcome your views".

The half-day workshops are being held on the following days from 9.30 until 12.00:

- 7 June** Nottingham Racecourse, **Nottingham**
- 8 June** Manchester City Football Club, **Manchester**
- 9 June** Newcastle United, **Newcastle**
- 11 June** Leeds United, **Leeds**
- 14 June** The Exchange, **Bridgwater**
- 16 June** Aston Villa Football Club, **Birmingham**
- 17 June** Trinity Centre, **Cambridge**
- 18 June** Hellenic Centre, Marylebone, **London**

If you wish to attend one of the workshops please go to the **matrix** Standard website and register there.

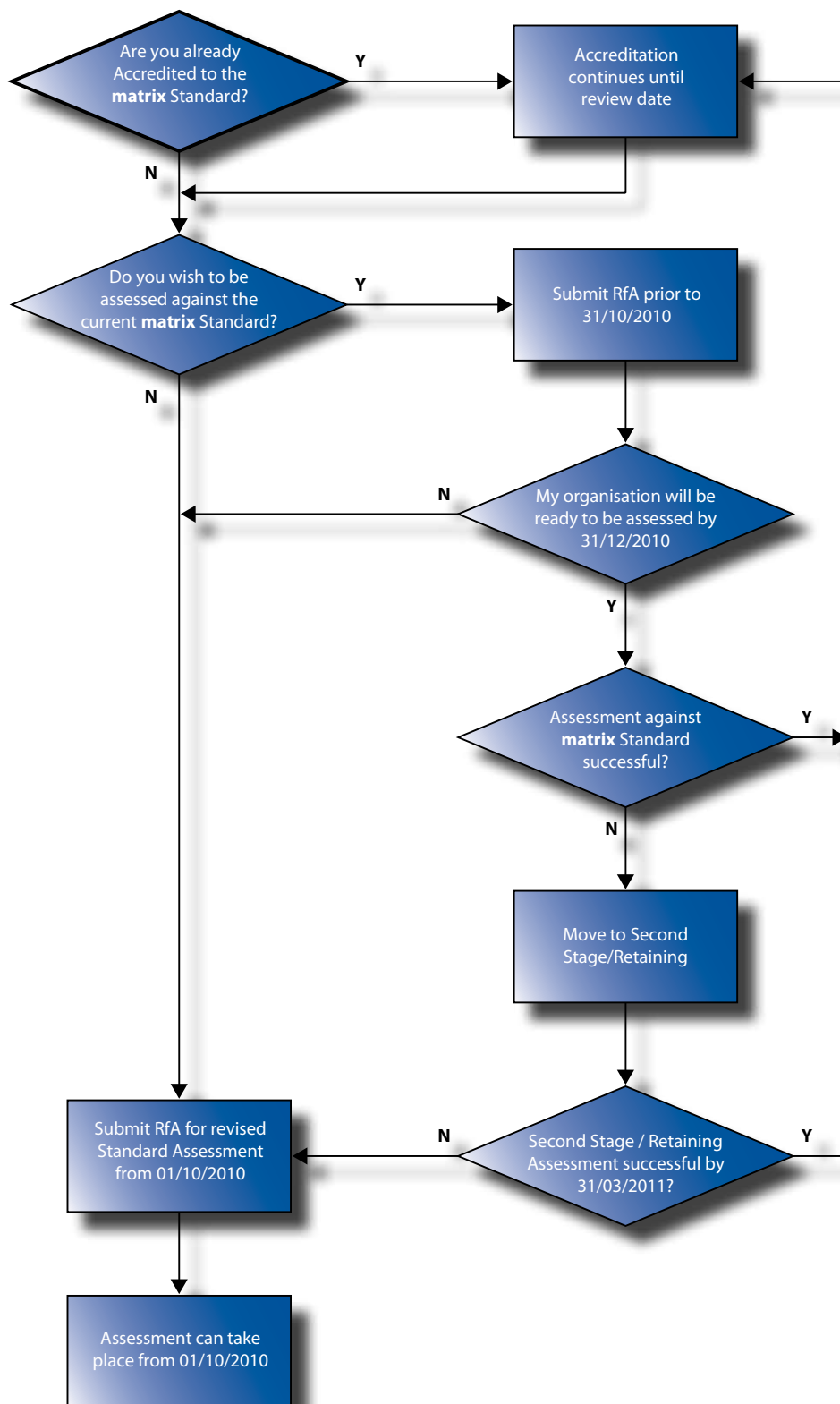
Please note that the number of places is restricted so it will be on a first come first served basis. If two people from the same organisation wish to attend then the second person will be put on a waiting list. If you are unable to attend but would like to make any comments please remember the electronic questionnaire at <http://matrixreview.speedsurvey.com>



Proposed timelines for the introduction of the Revised **matrix** Standard

For organisations working towards their initial **matrix** Accreditation or their Accreditation Review, the below flowchart gives an indication of the proposed timelines for the introduction of the Revised Standard.

At this stage, these dates can only be an indication, as the full consultation exercise is yet to be completed, however it is hoped that the following outline will help organisations in their planning for future assessments.



The **matrix** Standard enquiry line: 0870 770 2468 Email: info@matrixStandard.com

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