

Mapping Briefing

The **Approved Provider Standard** and the **matrix** Standard

Introduction to the **matrix** Standard

The **matrix** Standard is promoted as: '*the national quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work*'. The **matrix** Standard is available to organisations as a quality mark either for their '*external service*' in advice and guidance or as a benchmark for employers who are committed to developing their people. This is referred to as their '*internal service*'. Organisations can decide to achieve the **matrix** Standard for either or both. It can also be used for one area of service provision.

Assessment of the **matrix** Standard is managed by EMQC who are an independent not for profit organisation that specialises in the assessment of organisations against national standards. In addition, ENTO, who are a privately run body, are the standards setting body for the **matrix** Standard.

How well does **matrix** relate to the requirements for the **Approved Provider Standard**?

In terms of the variety of quality standards that relate to this area of work, **matrix** maps fairly well with the **APS** than some of the other quality standards. Although the **matrix** Standard makes no specific mention in relation to the involvement of volunteers in service delivery the references to staff can be taken to also include volunteers.

There are some clear areas of crossover in relation to the aims and objectives of service provision, development and support given to staff and volunteers, client involvement and feedback. Where **matrix** differs from **APS** is in its focus on providing people with access to information and helping them to make informed choices.

The **Approved Provider Standard**

The **APS** framework focuses on five key areas that form the basis of the assessment:

- ✓ Project aims and structure
- ✓ Client group
- ✓ Recruitment and selection of volunteers
- ✓ Volunteer preparation and training
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation

In assessing these, the standard requires organisations to answer 14 questions using MBF guidance to highlight their practice.

The **matrix** Standard

The **matrix** Standard consists of eight elements that form the basis for the assessment, four of which are focused on how services are delivered and four of which are focused on how the service is managed:

The service delivery areas are:

- ✓ People are made aware of the service and how to engage with it
- ✓ People's use of the service is defined and understood
- ✓ People are provided with access to information and support in using it
- ✓ People are supported in exploring options and making choices

The service management areas are:

- ✓ Service delivery is planned and maintained
- ✓ Staff competence and support they are given sufficient to deliver the service
- ✓ Feedback on the quality of the service is obtained
- ✓ Continuous quality improvement is ensured through monitoring, evaluation and action

What are the key similarities between the two Standards?

- ✓ The **APS** lasts for three years.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard can be reaccredited at any time but the longest an organisation can leave it is 3 years.

- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to self assess their practice.
- ✓ The initial stages of the **matrix** Standard require a period of self assessment by organisations against the standard.

- ✓ The **APS** is a national award.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard is a national award.

- ✓ The **APS** recommends that organisations have been involved in delivering mentoring or befriending for a minimum of 12 months prior to completing their application.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard has no time stipulation but due to the required structures it is unlikely that an organisation could have been operational for much less time than this and meet the requirements.

- ✓ The **APS** is focused on the provision of the mentoring or befriending service and will be awarded for that strand of an organisation's service delivery outside of other areas of service delivery.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard can be implemented for the external service delivery of information and advice or the internal service delivery of staff development outside of other areas of service delivery.

- ✓ Support is offered to organisations via workshop sessions that are run nationally and directly from MBF.
- ✓ Support is offered to organisations from a network of registered advisors, there are costs associated with this support which organisations do not have to take up unless they feel they will need it.

- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to complete an application based on MBF guidance answering 14 questions about their practice.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard requires organisation to complete a request for assessment form which is then submitted in order to request allocation of an assessor and accreditation.

- ✓ The **APS** is assessed by MBF and feedback will be received as a result of the portfolio submission from which recommendations may be made before successful achievement of the Standard.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard is assessed by an allocated assessor who undertakes a site visit subsequent to receipt of the request for assessment form. Where an organisation does not yet meet the requirements, a written report will be received highlighting areas for additional work. Organisations are then required to address these and to then request a second stage assessment.

- ✓ Successful **APS** applicants will receive a certificate highlighting their achievement.
- ✓ Successful organisations will receive a disc containing the **matrix** quality mark that can be used on materials. Organisations also receive a plaque and certificate and access to ongoing resources. The **matrix** excellence awards also take place every year to recognise the achievement of organisations.

What are the key differences between the two Standards?

- ✓ MBF do not charge for the **APS**.
- ✓ The charge for the **matrix** Standard will be incurred as a result of the assessment visit. Current costs for this are £550 per day and will be dependent on the number of days required for visits.

- ✓ The **APS** is essentially a desk top exercise that is undertaken by organisations in house which then complete and submit an application and portfolio of evidence.
- ✓ Once organisations have progressed through the initial 4 steps for accreditation for the **matrix** Standard, step 5 requires them to submit a 'request for assessment form', following which an assessor will be allocated to them who will arrange to conduct their assessment visit/s and interviews.

- ✓ The **APS** offers 'Working Towards' certification for mentoring and befriending providers for a period of 12 months prior to submission of an application.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard has no interim certification.

- ✓ Once a project has been running for the period recommended, the **APS** application can be submitted at any time and a response will usually be received within 4 weeks.

- ✓ The request for assessment form for the **matrix** Standard needs to be submitted ideally 6 weeks to 3 months prior to requesting the assessment visit/s.
- ✓ Reaccreditation for the **APS** consists of the completion of a questionnaire highlighting any key changes in practice together with supporting evidence, as appropriate.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard requires organisations to be involved in continuous performance improvement with a formal accreditation review taking place at a maximum of three years. The process for the review is the same as for the initial accreditation.

How would organisations benefit from having both standards?

- ✓ The **APS** has been developed with the specific objective of providing a national benchmark for organisations running mentoring and befriending projects.
- ✓ The **matrix** Standard has two strands to it in relation to assessing either the internal and/or external service.
- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to focus specifically on issues in relation to how they manage the relationship between volunteers and clients.
- ✓ The external service element of the **matrix** Standard allows organisations to focus in more detail on how advice and guidance is given to people.
- ✓ Both **APS** and the **matrix** Standard are likely to be attractive to funders and have been identified as desirable for different funding strands.

How do the two Standards compare?

For organisations considering implementing both standards or for those who have already achieved the **APS**, a mapping table has been compiled that highlights where the evidence for one would also meet the requirement for the other.

Further Information:

Information regarding the **matrix** Standard is available and downloadable from the website www.matrixstandard.com, which also contains details of the registered advisors who can support organisations with the process. EMQC who manage the Standard also have a website www.eqmc.co.uk.