

Commercial in Confidence



matrix Accreditation Review Report

For

SOMALI DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

By Philippa White

On behalf of ENTO LTD

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1. Executive Summary

Having carried out the Accreditation Review in accordance with the guidelines provided Somali Development Services 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 external services provided by Somali Development Services Ltd.

This Accreditation Review Report details the services provided by Somali Development Services Ltd and includes a brief description of the organisation, the Assessment methodology and an overview of how Somali Development Services Ltd demonstrated that it continues to meet the **matrix** Standard.

2. Introduction

Somali Development Services have continued to be assessed against the external services delivered to the Somali Community in Leicester. However since the last Assessment the organisation has developed further services and now supports a number of people in the Asian Community as well as many of the Eastern European Communities new to Leicester. As a result of this the organisation has decided to re-brand to reflect the services that are available to everyone within the Community.

The organisation has further developed the Child Care service and is now a fully registered Child Care facility that is subject to Ofsted inspections. In addition Cultural Awareness Training has been introduced to support partners and professional agency staff to understand the Somali Community and its cultural background. Other services developed are the Muslim Women's Support Service, Adult Learning Services and the Drop in Facility has increased the provision through additional opening hours as a result of user feedback.

The staff are even more multi cultural with people from Asia now being employed in the nursery. This is encouraging people from outside the Somali Community to use the Centre.

The Centre remains vibrant welcoming and colourful. The levels of support are extremely high and all the users spoken to were very positive in their feedback. The users spoke of the importance of trust and confidentiality of the staff that is important to the Somali Community and the other new Communities within Leicester. Word of mouth recommendation and respect of users and leaders within the Community continues to be extremely high.

The organisation has achieved a number of Awards since the last assessment not least being the Justice Award for the work they have undertaken in improving relationships between the Somali Community and the Justice Sector.

The organisation takes external Assessment extremely seriously and acted on all the recommendations made in the previous report.

Web site development was recommended to include case studies as a promotional approach. The web has been developed however during the Assessment the Web site was under review and further development. This will be vital as the organisation re-brands to reflect the services they deliver to all Communities within the Leicester area.

The organisation was recommended to introduce more explicit IAG objectives for each service to identify what impact effective IAG has on service outcomes. The Business plan has been developed to include this aspect and the impact is measured during the management and full staff meetings.

It was recommended that the organisation consider using IAG NVQs and this has been introduced with one member of staff about to complete IAG NVQ 3 and another member of staff about to start.

It was also recommended that the organisation introduce a dedicated notice board for user feedback and suggestions. This has been created and located in the reception area for all users to see.

The review objectives remained the same as identified in the Assessment Plan:

- To establish whether your organisation meets all the elements of the revised version of matrix Standard for both internal and external delivery;
- To identify the strengths of the organisation.
- To recommend continuous development opportunities.
- To assess the impact of the childcare services on the clients.
- To look at the impact that the Cultural Awareness Training has had on the client group.

3. Methodology

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

The initial meeting with the Managing Director covered the strengths and recommended developments made in the last report and all the changes that the organisation has experienced.

Four members of staff were interviewed and covered the complete standard.

Three partners were contacted by telephone.

Five users who speak English were contacted by telephone and 11 users in three groups were seen face to face. The organisation provided an impartial translator for the meetings.

One period of Document review took place on site.

Feedback to the Managing Director took place after a period of reflection and analysis.

4. Strengths

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

- (1b, 1c, 2c, 3d, 4a,) The organisation continues to recruit staff that reflect the make up of the target groups. They have recruited new staff from different cultures to reflect the diverse groups now being supported. The number of languages spoken by the staff is impressive, all staff speak more than one language and many considerably more. The languages include African, Asian and East and West European.
- (1b, 7c) The organisation is using their experiences of coming to a new country and supporting the new wave of people from Eastern European countries now living in Leicester. The MD realises that to promote the services to all new communities that they have to re-brand the organisation. They have encouraged people from all communities, staff and users to suggest a new name for the organisation.
- (1b) The organisation continues to encourage role models from the community to promote the services. Word of mouth continues to be the most effective promotional tool. This is vital for the organisation; they maintain the trust of the Community without which they would not be as effective as they are.
- (2b, 5e) The organisation continues to maintain the culture supported by effective policies and procedures that are regularly updated. As updates are completed they are presented to the staff at the regular meetings.
- (2a, 4e) To meet the needs of the community staff continue to make home visits. They also accompany users to referral agencies if need be.
- (5a,b,g, 7c,) The organisation continues to maintain effective relationships with local partners. They create their business plan using a fully consultative approach. When creating new services the MD and staff research the local community through consultation with partner organisations and residents. The work with the Criminal Justice Service is an excellent example of how the organisation impacts on the Community. After listening to the community through the Muslim Women's Support Service regarding issues with the police the MD worked closely with the Criminal Justice Service to create a

programme that brings together the Community the Police Force, the Prison Service and Victim Support in order to share issues and for all groups to gain an improved understanding. The feedback from both the community and the Police Force has been excellent.

- (5g, 7c, 8b,c) In addition to the organisation supporting partners to create leaflets in Somali they have created a commercial programme that supports professionals to increase their understanding of Somali Culture. The written feedback from these courses is extremely positive and resulting in further courses being developed and delivered.
- (7c,8b,c) The commitment to continuously improve remains fundamental to the ethos of the organisation. Steering Groups of users and partners play an important role in monitoring and developing the services. The board consists of community members and now includes two volunteers from the Youth Committee.

5. Areas for Continuous Improvement

The Assessor identified four 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.

- (2e, 3b,c) To support new staff it may be beneficial to create an electronic contact list that includes all partner organisations identifying the issues for which they offer support.
- (5b,6e) As the organisation grows the MD should consider developing a deputy to undertake some of the people management and support activities. It is difficult for one person to undertake all appraisals and one to ones and by sharing these responsibilities more time will be available to address strategic issues.
- (5g) With changes in contracting approaches the organisation will benefit from working more formally with partnerships to work consultatively to create consortium bids for government funded services.
- (7b,c) To gain more effective feedback from service users consider creating more specific questions regarding the IAG offered within the questionnaires. It may be useful and more effective to use telephone/text and emails to gain feedback on your services.

6. Detailed Findings against the matrix Standard

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

1.

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

Although the organisation continues to promote their services through leaflets and posters that are circulated throughout the Community using Community Centres, Mosques, local shops and services as well as through the website the most effective promotional approach continues to be word of mouth.

This is not only within the Somali Community but also other communities new to Leicester. The introduction of the Child Care services and through recruiting staff from the Asian Communities has encouraged a broader range of people using the services. One of the most noticeable changes at the Centre is the increased usage by the Eastern European Community new to Leicester. The staff have used their experiences of being new to Leicester to share with and support people new to the country. This has been truly valued by new Communities. One of the influences is that a member of staff speaks Russian often a common language through which to communicate. All staff continue to implement empathetic approaches that are valued by users who continue to refer other people who they know the staff will support.

Staff promote the services through leaders within the Communities and have built valuable relationships with all the Communities. The MD sits on a number of Boards of other local agencies such as Sure Start and is well known and respected in Leicester. Her efforts to promote the services of SDS are invaluable.

SDS is recognised to be at the centre of the Somali Community and often other agencies use the services of SDS to gain access to the Community and influence them often during difficult times.

"I admire the drive that (MD) and the staff have to support the community, it makes them well respected." Partner

"The police use SDS to approach the Somali Community."

The average number of languages spoken by the staff and volunteers is five each this has increased since the last Assessment and now includes African, Arabic, Asian and European languages. Staff support individuals who cannot speak English to access other Community services and often act as their supporters to ensure that other organisations use the services of an interpreter when speaking to the individuals.

"If I have a problem with anything I just come here and I know they will help me."

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

Although the organisation continues to identify the information and advice support they can offer within leaflets about each service face to face meetings continue to be the preferred way of explaining the services. Staff and users confirmed this.

All the users explained that they knew how the staff could help them. They identified the Drop In support as very helpful and often the way in which they found out about further services available. For example a number of users had attended a drop in session for support with household bill issues or because of difficulties with legal and/or immigration issues, they had then gone on to attend ESOL sessions or received other SDS services after learning what other support is available.

It is during the initial meetings that confidentiality and diversity is explained, however this will be in language that the user can understand.

'I know that they will keep my secrets.'

'We trust the people here and that's important.'

"If the services weren't confidential people in the community would stop referring to us."

The organisation has continued to develop the confidentiality and equality policies through regular review. Any changes are shared with staff at the regular meetings.

Existing and new staff, as well as volunteers, continue to be very responsive to user needs. The staff on reception are very experienced in identifying user's needs and are quick to refer to other members of staff or other relevant agencies if needs be.

"They help everybody in every way they know where to send us to get help. They take us if we want them to."

The new groups of users being supported have found SDS through word of mouth and the knowledge that the staff are very supportive is spreading quickly. The staff are finding that the need for ESOL is increasingly required and this is offered to people who need to improve their English to be able to function effectively. During the interviews users confirmed in their own way that during the initial meetings all the relevant services available at SDS were fully explained.

All users continued to be positive about the approaches made by the staff they felt that the service is empathetic, as the staff have experienced many of the issues being presented by users. Partners were also very complimentary about the individual nature of the support offered by SDS staff.

"It is noticeable how client centred the SDS approach is." Partner

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

There continues to be a full range of information both written and electronic held on the site. The information is well presented and easily accessed within the reception area and also in the dedicated rooms available for each service. The organisation has increased the number of computers for users to use for information search although this will normally be supported by a member of staff. The organisation continues to maintain the policy ensuring that information is

accurate and up to date and the reception staff take the responsibility for the accuracy of the information on notice boards. Any other information held by the specialists is maintained by the individual member of staff. The MD continues to check all SDS materials for accuracy and equal opportunities before production.

All the written and electronic information is also accessed during the individual advice sessions and during training and support sessions. The organisation continues to offer a wide range of support and where relevant information is accessed during the meetings. The outreach workers and the family support staff continue to ensure that the information they carry with them when meeting clients outside the Centre is accurate and up to date, they use the relevant agency materials and the Internet. The nature of the family support role continues to be very personal and the staff are accomplished at gaining the people's trust to be able to advise and guide them effectively.

The service continues to hold information that is relevant to the local area such as newspapers and periodicals identifying opportunities and also recommends web sites that show vacancies relevant to the target groups.

"It helps that a lot of the information on the walls is in Somali." User

Much of the information required by users is relevant to partner agencies and accessed via the telephone by the staff. The staff always make sure that they inform the agency if the user requires support to understand the information due to language difficulties. The staff are adept at ensuring that the agencies understand their obligations regarding supporting the users to be able to understand the issues in their own or a common language.

"Because they can speak to me in Somali and English helps me a lot."

"They helped me to get help in my language, they told them on the telephone."

4.

People are supported in exploring options and making choices

As during the last Assessment the users who have received the IAG service within the projects were very complimentary regarding the support they received from all the staff. They were all able to explain in their own words, often through the interpreter, how the information, advice and guidance was impartial and objective. They spoke very positively about the fact that they were given choices and that they were supported to make their own decisions. Staff have continued to maintain good relationships with partners and relevant agencies and by ensuring that they have a clear understanding of the services offered they are able to support users to make decisions and access other services available across Leicester. As already mentioned SDS continue to support users and ensure that the partner organisations understand the issues if language barriers exist. SDS either rings the partner first to explain the issues and in some cases accompany the user to their appointment.

Staff continue to ensure that all users fully understand the services to be accessed and what would happen during the initial interviews and if the user accesses an additional service. Due to the changed nature of the Nextstep

contract an additional service has been created where further support can be accessed after the limits on Nextstep interviews have been reached. The issues experienced by SDS users usually require more time and support than funded by the Nextstep contract.

During all programmes and services advice and guidance is accompanied by support and encouragement to access various opportunities. Options are offered to users ensuring that they fully understand the issues and are able to make their own decisions. Users continued to confirm that they were given effective information at the first point of contact. They were very positive about the reception staff and confirmed that the drop in sessions are very helpful. Users who have received support to progress onto further education opportunities or employment were very positive in their feedback about the services; they felt that the service was individually tailored to meet their needs. For all services/project staff continue to create an action plan this includes a summary of the issues discussed and the agreed actions and is signed by the user and the relevant adviser. The organisation continues to implement processes to regularly review the action plans with each user when advice is available, in fact this is available through out the duration of all projects. As many of the users have numerous difficulties there still remains a need to address these issues before the user can move on to learning and/or employment.

“Without them I wouldn’t be going to College.”

“They are so helpful, we just have to come here.”

The Child Care opportunities also support individuals to access the support knowing that their children will be well looked after.

‘They looked after my children while they helped me.’

It was identified by some of the users interviewed that the support received by their families is paramount to them; they want their children to succeed and feel that the services available at SDS are extremely helpful. The support people have received from SDS during the meetings about the Criminal Justice system has also supported the whole community.

“The childrens get a lot of help- we want them to be successful in school.”

‘I’m really, really happy with what they did for me.’

5.

Service delivery is planned and maintained

The organisation continues to take a fully consultative approach to business planning. All services new and existing are subject to review by people in the Community.

The organisation has created more explicit objectives for the IAG element of the services and reviews performance during the regular staff meetings and again during the formal review presented to the Board and the Community.

The research and input from the Community remains an integral aspect of the business plan. No service is introduced without identifying the need within the Community.

'SDS involve the whole Community and as the Community changes they are changing their services.' Partner

Partners are also consulted; the organisation has gained a great deal of support from partner agencies to further develop their Business Plan. They have become involved with a funding agency through a partner who are supporting them to develop the business further.

"I'm a big supporter of SDS because of the excellent services they deliver."

The plans are changing to include more Communities and the business is being developed accordingly. This is reflected in the plans to change the name of the organisation to reflect the diverse nature of the services. Not only are the Board being involved in the new branding staff and users are also being asked to contribute ideas and suggestions.

"We are using the suggestions box for ideas for the new name; we can't wait to open it up to find out the ideas."

The organisation continues to review all practices and policies and when changes are made staff are up dated during meetings. Although the policies are visible in the reception area staff identified that they are also available electronically.

As already identified in this report the levels of partnership are very high. The MD maintains relationships with organisations throughout Leicester. Every quarter the MD lists the partners she has visited and the meetings she has attended this takes over two A4 sheets of paper evidencing her true commitment to partnership working. She has been rewarded for this by receiving a personal Award from the local Council.

6.

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

The organisation continues to recruit staff through the volunteer process except where specific skills and qualification are required. It was confirmed that the organisation continues to introduce volunteers and staff through effective induction programmes.

'The induction was very good and covered everything I needed to know to be able to be effective quickly. I've received considerable amounts of support to develop here.'

SDS continues to follow the formal annual employee review process for all staff everyone also receives regular one to ones usually on a monthly basis. Both processes allow individuals to discuss issues and developments that arise. All staff confirmed that the process is developmental and supportive. At present the MD undertakes all appraisals and one to ones, she continues to be very hands on managing everything both strategic and operational. It is identified in the recommendations that receiving support for the people managing issues will ensure that she has more time to address the strategic issues. Staff continued to confirm that appraisal and review is effective and supportive. Staff value feedback and actively encourage users to comment by completing the questionnaires. The organisation asks for feedback from clients after each IAG intervention.

The senior staff continue to use their experience in their specialisms the Operations Manager, now IAG qualified is particularly involved in training and job search issues concerning the community. An additional member of staff who is at present undertaking NVQ level three in IAG now supports him. Advice is also delivered during the drop in sessions undertaken by the reception staff who also refer users to staff who deliver specific projects. All staff continue to keep themselves up to date with issues impacting on the users such as legislation and benefits. The reception staff are fully aware of their limitations and sign post clients accordingly. Staff continue to be able to explain the course of action they take if they are unable to fulfil the user's requirements due to lack of qualification, competence or experience for example legal issues are referred to the relevant advice centre.

7.

Feedback on the quality of the service is obtained

The organisation continues to display the Complaints procedure on the noticeboard in reception and throughout the Centre. The Suggestion Box is also placed in the reception area and is often used. The hours of the Drop In facility have been increased as a result of user feedback.

Users are encouraged to feedback on all services the Nextstep service is evaluated through the questionnaires completed by all users. All the users interviewed confirmed that they were aware of the complaints process and that they are expected to feedback on the services they have received. All were very positive about their experiences.

The organisation continues to make best use of the positive feedback they have received and use case studies throughout the Centre to promote the services to potential users.

Partners also confirmed that they are encouraged to offer feedback to the organisation. The feedback examined from partners attending the Cultural Awareness sessions was very positive.

Partners again identified that the organisation is very responsive to feedback and have implemented developments as a result.

8.

Continuous quality improvement is ensured through monitoring, evaluation and action

The organisation continues to implement the review and evaluation processes adopted previously. The staff present a review of performance for each of the services delivered and this then creates the written review presented to the Board. The annual review report is a positive document identifying the continuous developments the organisation has introduced.

The MD and staff value feedback from all sources and implements developments accordingly. The organisation reacted very positively to the previous **matrix** report and implemented the recommendations immediately where resources would allow. The only recommendation not fully implemented was the development of the web site due to lack of financial resource. However they have now accessed support to implement improved IT throughout the organisation.

Partners were very complimentary about SDS response to feedback. They confirmed the very effective partnerships that the organisation has created.

“SDS are very responsive to feedback and any recommendations we make.”

Additional Objectives

To assess the impact of the Child Care services on the clients.

All users interviewed were pleased with the Child Care facilities available for the Community. Although the users tended to use the facilities when they are attending a specific support session at the Centre they were aware of the facilities available on a more regular basis.

It was identified that the promotion of the service throughout the communities could be increased to ensure that everyone is made aware of the facilities.

Everyone confirmed that the effective mix of cultures within the Child Care staff will encourage parents from all cultures to use the facility.

Partners also confirmed that the development of the Child Care facilities is an asset to the organisation.

To look at the impact that the Cultural Awareness Training has had on the client group.

Although a limited number of partners who have experienced the Cultural Awareness programme were interviewed they were all very positive about the learning they had received.

They felt that the increased understanding of the cultural issues of the Somali Community helped them in their own roles. They also identified that further learning about the culture would be helpful and that it is worthwhile promoting the opportunity to even more organisations and partners.

It was noticed that a number of the feedback questionnaires identified that further learning would be valued and support the candidates in their dealings with Somali people.