



**matrix**<sup>®</sup>  
quality standard for information  
advice and guidance services

# Assessment Report

Lionheart in the Community (LITC)



The matrix Standard is delivered by The Growth Company on  
behalf of the Department for Education  
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ASSESSMENT INFORMATION	
Assessment Type	Accreditation Review
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Sue Harding
Evidence Gathering/Assessment Date/s	9/10/2023 – 10/10/2023
Client ID and Assessment Reference	C16625 PN202052
Accreditation Review to be conducted by	25/11/2026

METHODOLOGY	
Evidence gathering	1.5 days – 1 day on site, .5 day remote using Google Meet and individual telephone calls
Staff interviews	11 including CEO and members of SLT, delivery and administration staff
Recipient interviews	12 recipients from across a range of LITC programmes
Partner interviews	4 community partners
Document review	2021 – 2022 impact report 2023-24 Business plan Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement plan Outcomes Data analysis Feedback survey example IAG policy

## About the organisation

Lionheart in the Community, known as and referred to in this report as LITC, is a community based social enterprise located in Brixton, South London, with a staff of between 40 and 50, including some freelance assessors, and currently circa 400 learners on home programmes and 50 on international projects. At LITC's heart is the engagement with key partners to maximise opportunities for young people, to develop their skills, potential and career plans. This aligns with the organisation's mission of - 'engaging young people in various interactive ways, helping them unlock their potential, and supporting them in bringing meaningful change to their local communities'.

LITC commenced as a sports based organisation, offering young people in the local community, and internationally the opportunity to engage through sport, and then on to education, towards a positive future. It has maintained **matrix** accreditation for more than ten years, and in that time has made some changes in direction, expanded its staffing, its premises and the type of programmes offered. For example, there is a limited involvement in sport now, and an increased focus on sustainability and the environment. There is currently a senior management team (SMT) of five, who report to an Advisory Board, with a schedule of quarterly board meetings and weekly SMT meetings, as well as regular staff team and standardisation meetings.

The strategy of LITC sets out UK and International aims and objectives, all based around three strategic pillars of – ‘Deepen Our Impact; Nurture Sustainable Growth; Cultivate Collaboration; to empower individuals and transform communities’. The UK aims include to ‘assist individuals to develop skills, gain qualifications and to move into sustained employment’; and to ‘motivate young people to participate in sport and physical activities’. The main focus for LITC’s information, advice and guidance continues to centre on educational programmes in the UK, and the international Reach programme referred to below. How LITC works with community partners on projects including Girl Power, was also included within this **matrix** assessment.

LITC’s client base now consists of a majority of learners aged 19 plus, engaged in vocational programmes and short courses funded individually or through the Student Loan Company. Key areas of delivery include Health and Social Care, Early Years Care, Accounting Technician (AAT), Business Administration and management across Levels 3 to 6. For younger groups (16 – 19), projects such as Girl Power provide community-based support to help young girls transition towards adulthood and to overcome barriers and challenges experienced along the way. In addition, among its overseas work, LITC has an international community programme – Reach, funded through Turing, that has defined general goals, and offers underprivileged young people of 18 plus in the UK an opportunity to volunteer on projects abroad, Kenya and Cameroon being two examples, for 3 weeks initially, or for 3 months as an intern if returning as a team leader. The programme goals for participants include ‘to gain knowledge and an understanding of ecosystems, ecology and conservation efforts in the area; personal development of communication skills, public speaking and self-confidence operating in a foreign environment; and contribution to the local organisation’. These projects align with LITC’s international aims and objectives, one objective being to ‘deliver humanitarian projects in the global south, to address hunger, provide lifelong educational and skills opportunities, and empower communities to alleviate poverty within their societies’. During 2022/23 number of participants for the year on Reach increased by 53, 4 new countries were involved and 6 new partnerships were created.

A strong commitment to quality and continuous improvement continues at LITC, with ongoing monitoring and evaluation that informs the annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) findings. This in turn feeds into an annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which is monitored by the Director of Quality, used as a working document within the Quality team, with progress reports to the Board twice a year. One recent improvement has

been the introduction of an onscreen meeting with the host organisation to participants on the Reach programme. This gives them a visual tour of their accommodation and surroundings, an opportunity to ask questions, and provides a clearer idea of what to expect before proceeding. Participants interviewed described the Zoom meeting, along with information provided by the Partnerships Head at LITC, and the schedule as, “*very important. I could see the whole programme, what it would look like and who I was going with, it helped put me at ease*”. One development pending is the commencement of Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded programmes available from January 2024 through Gloucestershire College, which will widen opportunities for potential learners.

## The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Information, advice and guidance is wrapped within the overall supportive framework that enables recipients to consider options to help them progress towards their goals. The purpose of IAG was summed up by a member of the SMT as “*client centred for learners and staff – where they are, where they want to be, and support to reach their goals*”. There is a clear IAG process for learners that was described by one member of staff as “*a linear path of support on what they are embarking on and supporting them on it to ensure it is the right pathway*”. From initial assessment the journey and progression is mapped out according to individual goals. Support may include help with CVs, interview techniques, and other support needed, as well as signposting for financial advice for example, for job referrals, and other specific requirements. The Head of Partnerships who is IAG qualified and has many years’ experience, oversees IAG delivery. Initial information and signposting is provided by administration staff, initial assessment more specific vocational assessment and advice, together with ongoing support is provided by a member of the Quality team, assessors and IQAs. Some staff have a Level 2 or Level 3 advice and guidance qualification, and it is intended to widen this opportunity out to more staff. For example, there is an objective for all 4 members of the Quality team to complete their Level 2. The wide range of partner contacts enables LITC to refer and signpost to other organisations, as well as reciprocal arrangements back in to LITC, which all contribute to the over-riding community ethos.

The IAG policy sets out LITC’s vision and values for IAG, with an aim to ‘provide high quality, impartial, information, advice and guidance services which promote the value of learning and development within the community, as well as organisations working in partnership with LITC’. Objectives include those to increase the numbers of applications that lead to enrolments, increase client satisfaction with IAG received, and to improve retention, success and achievement rates, and the percentage of learners that progress on to positive destinations – including Higher Education, further training or employment. Values of equality, impartiality and integrity are both promoted and well demonstrated in information provided and services delivered.

## The difference the IAG makes to recipients and the overall impact

LITC demonstrated throughout the assessment, what it seeks to achieve by providing individual IAG tailored to each client’s circumstances – both learners, and

organisations worked with. The underlying thread is about improving the prospects of people from disadvantaged areas, by providing opportunities to help them progress. That, in turn then impacts on their communities. LITC evaluates its services, in which IAG is a key component, and includes the outcomes in an annual report. For example in 2022/23 over 1100 people received free IAG, and over 820 moved into sustained employment, education or training, with 47% of level 3 learners moving on to Higher Education programmes. The Self-Assessment Report and data analysis appendix, also records the key outcomes from IAG, as well as those for teaching and learning, although the IAG outcomes could be made clearer, as noted in the Development Suggestions in this report. Results show that 78% of learners strongly agreed, 22% agreed, that they had received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to their qualification, and the same number that good and useful advice was available when they needed to make study choices for their course. Confidence, communication skills and problem solving were also highly rated as benefits gained, along with improved career prospects (88%) and good advice for career choices and further study opportunities (100%).

## What is working particularly well

A number of strengths/areas that are working particularly well were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- LITC is an organisation that has Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at its core, with a community based ethos, and staff members, learners and participants from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and experiences. EDI is particularly well demonstrated through the range of community partners LITC works with, who together work to ensure no one is excluded or treated unfairly due to their circumstances. One example is the link between LITC and Suited and Booted, to ensure learners can access clothes for interviews and employment if needed; others include LITC's partnerships with organisations that support small enterprise set-ups, provide food for the vulnerable, and link with LITC to maximise resources, and widen access for participants through two-way signposting and referrals. Partners commented: *"together we are doing great work, we just need to keep it going"*; *"LITC are amazing, partnering with them has been a dream"*. The opportunity to participate as a volunteer on a Reach programme, also provides young people with an opportunity to travel and learn, that many could never otherwise afford. Comments from those participants interviewed included – *"It broadened my horizons and opportunities for the future, it's given me a starting point and different opportunities to explore"*; *"Reach gave me the opportunity to learn more than I ever would have. Now thinking about how I can use the skills that I've gained from it"*. (1.2, 2.7)
- LITC are committed to the wellbeing of their staff, with mental health described as *"at the core of the annual strategy"* A partnership with MIND did not work as



well as hoped, and two different options are now being considered as part of continuous improvement. Flexibility has been extended to staff in ways of working, with 2 days at home and 3 in the office, and now office hours being extended to enable staff to take advantage of cheaper train tickets. Friday lunches take place monthly for all staff to engage in. Staff interviewed appreciated the flexibility, as well as support via one to ones, and staff meetings both online and face to face. Participants on the Reach programme described the comprehensive information provided in advance, in relation to their wellbeing, including vaccinations required and costs, as well as malaria tablets. *“Amazing support”* was noted as provided by the LITC staff accompanying them, with one adding *“X made me feel really comfortable when I had ‘a wobble’. Felt I could voice any concerns if I needed to”*. Another said, *“I have a great impression of LITC now, the work they’re doing and how they take care of people”*. Signposting to relevant community organisations takes place for services LITC cannot provide. (1.4)

- One of LITC’s values is a client-centred provision, tailored to individual needs and goals. The IAG and particularly the support provided to learners and programme participants to meet their individual needs, was described with examples by staff, and was highly valued by those interviewed, who described the impact for them. Their comments included – *“the support has been fantastic. I was made aware of past participants and how the programme helped them – where they are now, and how it could help my career”*; *“LITC do an amazing job helping young people. I’m very grateful to them, they always made sure I could turn to them for support. Gave me ideas for different courses to expand my skills, now set up my own business”*; *“LITC were very transparent and open about cost of course, I really appreciated that. I’m very happy with their services and support is always available”*; *“I Googled providers and looked at LITC’s reviews on TrustPilot. I haven’t been disappointed. The 1:1 support has been brilliant. The courses will help me progress my career”*. (4.2, 4.5)
- Strong safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, with a designated Safeguarding lead and deputy leads, and mandatory training for staff, together with regular updates. Prevent and British Values feature in initial training provided to learners, who also receive information on safeguarding, as well as GDPR and how their information is stored, from the start. One participant from the Reach programme noted that *“Safeguarding was well covered at the pre-meeting with the Project programme, and by LITC. I had no concerns”*. (1.3)
- Commitment to continuous improvement and to ongoing development is well evidenced in the journey of LITC since it was first accredited to the **matrix** Standard. The organisation was quick to develop its online services during Covid-19 and has now moved into a hybrid working model for staff, and both online and face to face delivery for learners. A new website is currently in progress, and new programmes have been added for learners – AAT qualifications one example, another Hair and Beauty, including Barbering,

offered through a partnership in the West Midlands. Developments both promote and extend the provision of IAG, to support people towards their goals. Feedback from stakeholders, alongside a community presence and quality assurance activities, inform developments planned. Young people's anxiety about the environment, along with LITC's own focus on environmental sustainability, has resulted in LITC partnering with 50 Shades Greener who developed an online course for stakeholders, and changes have been made such as reviewing the team's carbon footprint. Further developments include the ability to offer AEB funded courses from 2024. Evaluation of progress in ongoing developments will be reviewed at the first annual CIC. (7.1, 7.2)

## Development suggestions

Development suggestions 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 development suggestions. 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.

- Alongside LITC's vision and mission, it could be helpful to promote LITC's values more widely, so that stakeholders know and understand what LITC's values are, and how these apply to its provision. Staff could participate in sharing ideas for what LITC stands for, to gain their involvement and identify the values they share with the organisation. (1.1)
- LITC's current vision is 'to harness the power of sport and education to inspire young people and impact communities around the world'. As the scope and focus of provision continues to change slightly, LITC could consider reviewing this vision statement to see whether an amendment to indicate the ratio of education to sport is now more appropriate in promoting LITC's overall vision to stakeholders, along with the element of sustainability. (1.1, 7.1)
- Feedback is obtained and analysed from recipients to inform on their experience and outcomes, as well as what works well and any potential areas for continuous improvement. It is suggested that LITC reviews how more specific feedback could be sought from learners on the value of IAG received as part of their learner journey, and any resulting outcomes from this, rather than as at present, including this under teaching and learning overall. Such

feedback could then be analysed and promoted – in the impact report and on the new website, to promote the value of the IAG that LITC provides, and the outcomes achieved. One or two questions could be linked to objectives included in the IAG policy. (7.1)

- Linked to the area above, the new website is almost complete, and includes more information that is accessible and easy to locate. However, further improvement could be made by including a section on IAG, to make clear to learners what they can expect from LITC, how to access it, and what is available throughout their learner journey. This could clarify expectations at the outset and include potential outcomes that could result from the IAG available. Consideration could also be given to adapting the internal learner journey process flowchart into an outward facing learner journey flowchart, to provide learners with a visual journey document from enrolment through to completion, including IAG touch points at each stage. This could be added to a dedicated IAG section on the website. (3.1)
- On International programmes such as Reach, while participants feedback is monitored through 'before and after' reports on their experience, the impact for partner organisations from LITC's participants' input is not measured. One suggestion could be a 1 – 5 scale of how impactful the programme was to the organisation, included in the survey, accompanied by a question of what the key impact was for them. A scale measure could also be adopted on participants final survey to demonstrate whether and how well their planned outcome from participating in the programme was achieved. (7.1, 7.2)
- Some delivery staff and a senior manager hold advice and guidance qualifications, and there is an objective for all the Quality team to undertake one. As part of staff development, and continuous improvement, LITC could encourage more tutors and IQAs to undertake an advice and guidance qualification to ensure consistency in understanding of their role in IAG provision. (2.5)
- Marketing is currently undertaken by one person who also has other areas of responsibility. The new website is in the final stages prior to launch, and to ensure this remains current, and that social media is updated on a regular basis, LITC could consider how more staffing resources are dedicated to a marketing role, to ensure that LITC's name continues to be promoted and recognised for the work it does, the services it provides, and the impact it can make through its community links. (2.8, 3.2)
- Staff have the opportunity to provide feedback at team meetings, at their regular one to ones with line managers, and informally. However, it may be useful to consider sending out a staff and associate survey at an appropriate point each year, to gain formal feedback on what is working well and what staff think could be improved on. Results could then be analysed for any emerging trends, and to inform areas for continuous improvement. (7.1)



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