



merlin standard

2018

MAXIMUS PEOPLE SERVICES LTD

COMPACT REPORT

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1. KEY INFORMATION

Assessment Type	ACCREDITATION REVIEW
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Anniversary Date	11/07/2020
Assessment Dates	09/07/2018 – 11/07/2018
Lead Assessor's Name	SUSAN SMITH
Customer ID	C11397
Assessment Reference	PN103702

2. ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

OVERALL OUTCOME	90% Excellent
1. Design	93% Excellent
2. Procure	90% Excellent
3. Contract	90% Excellent
4. Fund	87% Excellent
5. Develop	93% Excellent
6. Performance Manage	94% Excellent
7. Quality Assurance and Compliance	92% Excellent
8. Review and Close	84% Good

3. METHODOLOGY

MAXIMUS People Services Ltd (hereafter known as MAXIMUS) continues to be mandated by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to be accredited against the Merlin Standard due to being a Prime delivery partner for the Work Programme and more recently the new Work and Health Programme. MAXIMUS also has European Social Fund (ESF) contracts and these are included in the scope of the Merlin assessment as well. Organisations that hold the Merlin Standard are required to be re-accredited every two years and consequently, MAXIMUS came forward for re- accreditation in line with the anniversary date.

The assessment team comprised of Susan Smith (Lead Assessor) and Janette Russon (Team Assessor) supported by a coordinator from within MAXIMUS. The Lead Assessor started to work with the coordinator in June 2018 to establish the scope and discuss the logistics of the assessment. The dates for the on-site activities were identified, and a plan of action agreed.

A booking form was submitted to Assessment Services Limited along with a spread-sheet indicating a full list of Supply Chain Partners - past, present and potential - delivering an end-to-end service or specialist intervention activity.

In advance of the Assessment a survey was carried out of the Supply Chain Partners, with all 45 being invited to participate. Responses were received from present and potential Partners, which represented 48.64% of the total. The results of the survey informed the focus of interviews for the assessment team and contributed to the overall scoring.

The Lead Assessor was in regular contact with the coordinator before the on-site activity to review the schedule and logistics. All documentation required for the assessment - Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ), Pre-Assessment Notes (PAN) and interview schedule - were shared to enable the assessment to take place as planned.

The assessment team spent a total of two days each reviewing documentary evidence and undertaking interviews with MAXIMUS staff involved in the strategic and day-to-day management of the supply chains. Some 42% (19) of the Supply Chain Partners were interviewed in line with the published Merlin scoping framework. Interviews were conducted with a wide range of Partners - end-to-end, specialist intervention, as well as present and potential across all contracts. No past Supply Chain Partners in the last 12 months were interviewed as the one in scope had entered voluntary liquidation at the time of the assessment and documentary proof of this was supplied.

The following report provides an indication of the findings against key criteria within the Merlin Standard, which was evidenced across all the supply chains referenced below, as well as areas of strength and areas to consider for development over the forthcoming two years.

4. ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

MAXIMUS delivers a wide range of services which make a meaningful and sustainable impact on people's lives. As an organisation, it helps hundreds of people every day in supporting them to find sustainable employment, develop their skills, and gain independence. MAXIMUS has been successfully delivering employment programmes in the UK since 2008. It is a Work Programme Prime Contractor in three Contract Package Areas. It has a strategic partnership with Remploy, a leading provider of specialist employment services for disabled people; this has supported more than 125,000 people into lasting employment.

The aim of MAXIMUS is to transfer the knowledge and insight gathered from providing people-focused services around the world to make a wider impact on society in the UK. As part of the global MAXIMUS family, it draws upon a wide range of capabilities including occupational health and disability expertise. The organisation and its Supply Chain Partners support individuals by offering high-quality, high-performing and efficient solutions that maintain a person-centric approach to get the best results. There is a strong sense that long-lasting collaborative partnerships sit at the core of delivering high-quality services to the public.

The values of MAXIMUS are seen in the approach to supply chain management. This set of values drives the way the organisation and its Supply Chain Partners operate and underpins the processes followed, as follows:

- Quality - A high-quality approach to supply chain management, supplier selection and design and the quality of supply chain delivery.
- Performance - High performance expectations of the supply chain with the support provided to achieve this.
- Fairness - Clear transparent and consistent management and processes.
- Open and honest communication – Two-way open and honest communication and transparency in approach.
- Collaboration - Sharing best practice within the supply chain and stakeholders to achieve the best results.
- Commitment - Following through on promises.
- Professionalism - All undertakings done with a professional approach, treating Supply Chain Partners with due respect.

The split of delivery between MAXIMUS and Supply Chain Partners is as follows:

Work Programme

CPA 03 - 50% Supply Chain Partner delivery and 50% direct delivery

CPA 09 - 40% Supply Chain Partner delivery and 60% direct delivery

CPA 18 - 100% Supply Chain Partner delivery

ESF IntoWork

Humber Greater Lincolnshire - 50% Supply Chain Partner delivery and 50% direct delivery

SEM - 14% Supply Chain Partner delivery and 86% direct delivery

Local London Work & Health

45% Supply Chain Partner delivery and 55% direct delivery

5. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH

A number of significant strengths were identified during the Assessment and these are described below. The numbers in brackets refer to the criteria of the Standard:

The supply chain design incorporates effective use of a wide range of Supply Chain Partners of different sizes, sector and legal status. This ensures that customers have access to a network of support and that Supply Chain Partners feel confident in finding bespoke solutions to help customers reduce barriers to work. Due to effective networking of Supply Chain Partners at the design stage, there are effective collaborative arrangements developed and these assist in the co-production of the delivery model. Newer Supply Chain Partners confirmed that the approach was one of partnership and collaboration rather than simple consultation. Supply Chain Partners commented *"we are working with MAXIMUS as we have shared values"* and *"the customer is at the front of the process."* Latterly there has been more work to mutually agree core principles in the form of an Integration Charter. The review strategies are effective and are resulting in a changing supply chain that is meeting the needs of the Commissioner and customers by bringing on board more Tier 3 specialists that can support the health needs of customers. (1.1 / 1.2 / 1.4 /1.5 /1.6)

Procurement incorporates effective TUPE processes and during this accreditation review MAXIMUS was seen to demonstrate great empathy for staff transferring into the business from a challenging situation. Equally TUPE is well considered during supply chain design for potential contracts. (2.2)

Supply Chain Partners confirmed that there is clarity and transparency of market share, funding, volumes and performance expectations. Many cited that MAXIMUS lives up to its values in this regard being performance focused but honest and fair. This action occurs not only at the procurement stage but has been consistent throughout the life of the contracts. One Supply Chain Partner commented *"relationship building was excellent, effective and as inclusive as MPS could be leaving the door open for future opportunities to work together"* and another that *"MAXIMUS were quite open to negotiation around delivery areas and volumes."* (2.3 /2.4 / 3.2)

The vast majority of Supply Chain Partners in responding to the Merlin online survey and from those taking part in the assessment interviews confirmed that MAXIMUS implements effective strategies for managing funding and finance and operates in a fair and transparent manner. Supply Chain Partner comments included that: *"payments have always been prompt"*; *"payments are very efficient – never had a complaint"*; and *"always paid on time"*. Many cited that value for money was achieved through the services received for their management fee - *"management fee is money well spent – value for money."* (4.2 / 4.3)

Support for Supply Chain Partners is excellent in regard to assisting them to fulfil contractual obligations from the start and throughout the life of the contract. Newer Supply Chain Partners cited that support has been available to help develop business processes, practices and systems. The legacy and longer standing Supply Chain Partners confirm that support levels remain as strong in the wind down of the Work Programme with strategic alliances supporting ongoing viability. (5.1)

Supply Chain Managers are the first point of contact for Supply Chain Partners and there is strong and consistent testimony from all tiers of Supply Chain Partners about their effectiveness. MAXIMUS provides a good level of supply chain management resource and the culture of communications is cited by Supply Chain Partners as matching the values. Personal interactions between MAXIMUS staff and the vast majority of Supply Chain Partners is consistently positive and supportive. Performance review processes are proportionate and effective and strongly recognise innovation. Where there is underperformance, the Performance Improvement Process is managed sensitively, and Supply Chain Partners describe how MAXIMUS Supply Chain Manager work alongside them to bring their delivery back on track. MAXIMUS demonstrates that it works effectively and collaboratively with its supply chains to identify, document and share practices and processes which improve the overall performance of the contracts. (6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3 / 6.6)

The Change Alert process is well used and provides Supply Chain Partners with regular updates regarding legislative and regulatory requirement. It includes a mechanism for checking dissemination within Supply Chain Partners that is effective. Quality assurance processes are well documented and used by Supply Chain Partners to effect performance improvements, for example, in using new approaches to engaging and motivating customers. (7.1 / 7.2)

Whilst the context for monitoring equality and diversity is affected by the mandatory referral picture on the Work Programme, there are some excellent examples of analysis of the performance of different customer groups and this information is used to inform improvements. One examples is more men than women entering employment which matched the local unemployment profile, however MAXIMUS supported Supply Chain Partners to develop more partnerships with women-specific support organisations as part of its stakeholder development activities. Case studies are also encouraged to help Supply Chain Partners access new ideas on how the over 50s can be supported as they are less likely to gain employment. Different customer group performance is also considered, and innovative ideas used such as the Ability Profiler which MAXIMUS has invested in as a pilot. This is proving useful for the more challenging Work Programme customer groups and has increased attendance rates and created improved job focus. (8.4)

6. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

A number of areas where further development would be beneficial were identified during the Assessment. These are for the Organisation to consider as a contribution to continuous improvement. The numbers in brackets refer to the criteria of the Standard:

The due diligence process was felt by the vast majority of Supply Chain Partners as being robust and supportive. Help is at hand from Subject Matter Experts in the MAXIMUS business should support be required. MAXIMUS surveys of recent contract implementation has, however, identified issues in the timing related to Subject Matter Expert feedback to Supply Chain Partners and also with the timeliness of response in relation to corrective actions from Supply Chain Partners. MAXIMUS is therefore encouraged to develop a process in the due diligence phase that sets out clearer expectations in relation to timeliness and deadlines for response. This will ensure that the due diligence process runs as smoothly as possible. (2.1)

As above, it is clear that due diligence is carried out effectively; however, for the Tier 3 Specialist Supply Chain Partners there has been feedback that the process could be more proportionate for the level of service to be provided. MAXIMUS is again encouraged in its plans to review the due diligence process for its Tier 3 Supply Chain Partners (known internally as 'Menu Partners'). (2.1)

Whilst there have been no formal disputes raised by Supply Chain Partners over the last two years, MAXIMUS is encouraged to update the Delivery Partner Handbook with current details of the Merlin Mediation Service. At the moment the information is not fully correct, however this can be found on the Merlin Standard website. (3.3)

Performance is effectively managed and indeed one the core values of MAXIMUS is 'performance focus'. It is suggested that MAXIMUS might formalise the review process with Menu Partners. Pilots have been completed to establish an effective review process; these now need to be embedded in the business processes. (6.2)

Management Information (MI) is found to be generally consistent, accurate and user friendly. For Local London, a blended scorecard is in development with the MI team. The blended scorecard is a combination of quality metrics, performance numbers and customer feedback. This will look to mitigate risk and allow MAXIMUS to manage Supply Chain Partners with a more unified approach to quality, customer experience and performance data when reviewed monthly. It is too early to assess the implementation of this action and therefore it is considered an area for development. (6.4)

As the most recent contract commenced delivery in spring 2018, there has been a necessary focus on the implementation and successful initial delivery phase. It is therefore recognised that issues such as measuring the impact of service delivery in environmental sustainability has not necessarily been brought to the fore of activity. However, the introduction of processes to monitor environmental sustainability are recognised and MAXIMUS is encouraged with the planned actions in this regard. (7.4 / 8.4)

Compliance and awareness of the Modern Slavery Act is now embedded as part of the onboarding process for new partners. Whilst this has been raised within legacy contracts, work can still be done to communicate the MAXIMUS statement and raise awareness through the change alert process. (7.5)

Outside of the key contractual obligations, MAXIMUS is limited in recording additional impact of services. A board paper outlining the approach to partnership work and measuring wider impact is under way with a working group assigned to improving approach and data capture. Again, MAXIMUS is encouraged to develop work in this area. (8.3)

Whilst the exit process is developed, some Supply Chain Partners do not have a clear view of the full process and associated timelines. For the Work Programme Supply Chain Partners this has a nine months' time frame and some smaller Supply Chain Partners feel this could be visualised in the form of an action plan. MAXIMUS may therefore wish to develop its approach such that there is full visibility of the whole exit process and timescales for all tiers of Supply Chain Partner. (8.5)

7. FINDINGS

The feedback below is reported against key criteria of the Merlin Standard, aligned with the “Plan-Do-Review” business cycle.

PLAN
<p>Through planning an effective supply chain, the range of Partners and how they are engaged ensures there is a group of organisations that cover a diverse range of providers that all understand the requirements of the contract and their contributions to achieving the desired outcomes.</p>
<p>MAXIMUS considers the selection and composition of supply chains as a fundamental component of its solution design to achieve Commissioner objectives/requirements, acknowledging that customer/client needs are often best-addressed through a range of Supply Chain Partners. Extensive review is undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team to assess the Commissioner’s requirements/objectives, including market-engagement activities, stakeholder engagement and document review. Research and analysis is also conducted into demographics, through academic evidence, labour market information, and key statistics. Partnership Managers complement this through stakeholder engagement with public and third sector experts to gain local insights and test ideas. Supply chain design is informed by a specific geography, a specific customer cohort or a mixture of both. As such, the nature or type of Supply Chain Partner in each supply chain varies in terms of size and sector. Some 60% of current Supply Chain Partners are small to medium enterprises and 55% of Supply Chain Partners are from the public and voluntary sectors. Private sector organisations also play a crucial role particularly where strong performance and increased financial capacity for innovation can be demonstrated. Supply Chain Partner comments included <i>“there is the right mix of potential supply chain partners demonstrating good track records, knowledge and skills”</i> and <i>“partners have a variety of skills.”</i></p> <p>Review strategies enable MAXIMUS to drive improvement across current delivery in order to meet evolving requirements and customer needs. There are strong working relationships with key commissioners and through a monthly review process, key priorities are identified and adaptations to the changing needs of the contract are made. For example, across the life of the Work Programme, MAXIMUS and Supply Chain Partners have adapted and evolved delivery to meet the needs of the Commissioner and customers. Working groups have been established to tackle specific issues, such as improving engagement and performance with Employment Support Allowance customers, an issue the Commissioner identified in multiple Work Programme contracts. Through Partnership meetings and best practice sessions with Supply Chain Partners, MAXIMUS is able to facilitate the evolution of delivery models and also shape future programme design. For example the information captured influenced the approach to the solution design for the ESF provision, with a focus on identifying Supply Chain Partners who were locally embedded within the communities they serve with an ability to deliver services on an outreach basis.</p>

MAXIMUS has clear and effective strategies in place to manage the TUPE process. In any procurement that involves Supply Chain Partners, MAXIMUS assigns a TUPE specialist who is responsible for liaising with the Commissioner and Commercial Team to ascertain whether TUPE would or would not apply for each contract. They will in turn provide guidance to, and approve of, supply chain TUPE practices. For the last two major contract implementations (ESF/Local London Work & Health) TUPE has not applied and this information has been cascaded from the Commissioner to the Supply Chain Partners in a timely manner. The procurement of the National Careers Service (NCS) was in scope for TUPE and all potential Delivery Partners were aware of this; however, the bid was unsuccessful. MAXIMUS was found to have recently honoured TUPE commitments when a Supply Chain Partner entered voluntary liquidation. A recent transferee commented that *"the transfer was done with care and support for me and my circumstances."*

Performance expectations are reinforced by Supply Chain Managers and the performance review structure. Minimum service levels and performance expectations are clearly defined in the contract schedules. The performance expectations of the Commissioner are translated into the Standard Operational Procedures which outline the delivery approach. This is underpinned through robust and transparent MI reporting against the key contract deliverables. Performance expectations are reviewed in real time throughout contract delivery. At the beginning of each quarter, targets are re-calculated in line with actual customers engaged, thus ensuring that targets are reasonable and achievable based on actual potential performance. These targets are further broken down into monthly targets and progress tracked daily until the end of the month and quarter. Performance is formally managed over set quarterly periods. The actual performance is reviewed in the quarterly review with the Supply Chain Manager and Director and Supply Chain Partners. Performance improvement plans are put in place if required. Supply Chain Partners commented that *"we are aware of our own and other partner performance"* and *"we have been pleasantly surprised by the level of contact and scheduled meetings"*.

Funding arrangements mirror those of the Commissioner and fundamentally flow down to the supply chain minus the agreed management fee. During the procurement of new contracts, financial strategies are shared with Supply Chain Partners so that they are fully aware of any risk and performance obligations and can determine financial viability. To support value for money decision making, MAXIMUS ensures absolute clarity in relation to the management fee and the services that are provided as part of this. MAXIMUS has a Billing Integrity function to ensure all payments are fair, correct and allow accurate payments to Supply Chain Partners to eliminate risk of extrapolation. MAXIMUS has, where appropriate, helped to reduce unforeseen financial risk to Supply Chain Partners, for example by providing a partial upfront payment to reduce the potential impact on Supply Chain Partners as the Work Programme begins to slow down. Individual funding arrangements are discussed with Tier 3 Specialist Supply Chain Partners and agreed appropriate to the service delivered. These are captured on a Call off Agreement (CoA) and are brought on as per contract requirements. A quarterly review is carried out either face to face or over the phone to capture usage, discuss feedback and to update organisations on future partnership opportunities. Supply Chain Partners commented that *"MAXIMUS has accounted for our needs in terms of financial flexibility"* and *"we've had no issues as they are always open to conversations about any support needs, including financial"*.

DO

Supply Chain Partners are supported to develop their services to meet or exceed expected performance and quality assurance requirements.

MAXIMUS has a number of ways it supports, develops and encourages Supply Chain Partners to maximise performance and contractual obligations. From contract award, the Supply Chain Manager is the single point of contact and is the link to all other functions to ensure contractual obligations are met. For example, a wide range of Supply Chain Partner policy and process documents are reviewed by internal Subject Matter Experts and feedback is co-ordinated through the Supply Chain Manager. Throughout the contract implementation phase, joint meetings are held for all managers from both the Supply Chain Partners and MAXIMUS in order to ensure awareness of contractual obligations and the key deliverables. These sessions facilitate open dialogue and concerns to be raised. They allow managers to have input on the development of contractual documentation and operating procedures. Throughout the life cycle of the contract, the Supply Chain Manager works closely with Supply Chain Partner teams on all levels. For example, MAXIMUS and Supply Chain Partners developed a joint marketing campaign for the ESF contracts to support referral generation. There were many positive Supply Chain Partner comments as follows:

"values, commitment, transparency, open and honest all the way through"

"personable, customer focused and positive experience"

"MAXIMUS have been a really good support"

"you don't feel like they are managing you, they are working with you at all levels"

"humanity – this is what you remember the most – absolutely spot on"

"proper relationship – absolutely lovely"

"incredibly positive experience"

"communication is really good"

"definitely supported throughout the contract from caseloads being 200 to reducing to 50 the same level of support has been received"

"staff are always helping us"

"great Prime to work with"

Open and honest communication is evident in the MAXIMUS approach to supply chain management. The practices to support this culture are defined through the Standard Operating Processes and Performance Management documents developed for each contract. The documents clearly outline the operational procedures, business rules and performance expectations, all of which are underpinned by transparent reporting practices. Performance issues are therefore managed effectively and objectively by all parties and the frequency of formal reviews identifies and tracks progress against agreed expectations. Partnership meetings are a key method to develop the culture of open and transparent communication. MAXIMUS shares the views of the commissioner and takes on board feedback from Supply Chain Partners. For example, where ESF delivery has been challenging, MAXIMUS invited DWP to attend and have open discussions on the challenges being faced and share best practise from other regions that could be adopted into the local contract delivery. Two-way communication is further enhanced through the quarterly review process.

This enables senior managers in the Supply Chain Partner to review progress with the MAXIMUS Supply Chain Director who can receive direct feedback. Supply Chain Partner feedback was very positive as follows:

"very human approach"

"MAXIMUS are realists – if something isn't going well – open dialogue"

"SCM support has been invaluable they have been our advocate within MAXIMUS"

"very open culture – pretty solid experience"

"open and inclusive culture – it feels like we are doing things together"

"if MAXIMUS take decisions we are always included in that process"

"really supportive, transparent, helpful – I can pick up the phone and they are there – nothing is too much trouble"

"professional, responsive, open communications, pleasure to work with"

Supply Chain Partners have weekly set calls with their Supply Chain Manager, monthly face-to-face reviews and quarterly reviews that include the Supply Chain Director to ensure structures are in place to monitor performance. The performance review cycle starts at the beginning of a set quarter when the Supply Chain Partners are issued their quarterly targets. Formal performance management spans the period, targets are further broken down monthly and tracked daily throughout the month and quarter. Management Information (MI), which is published daily, can be thoroughly analysed enabling Supply Chain Partners to drill down to individual advisor level, supporting performance management of teams. Supply Chain Partners are required to complete and submit a Monthly Management Report (MMR) and Action Plan. This is reviewed at the monthly performance review with the Supply Chain Manager and appropriate Supply Chain Partner lead. The MMR forms the basis of performance reviews; it consolidates performance, quality and compliance information to give a comprehensive overview of current delivery and progress. Issues and concerns are raised by both parties, discussed and remedial actions agreed. Innovation and best practice is monitored through performance processes and audits. Examples of innovation and areas of improvement include an improved process for claiming job outcomes, introducing weekly calls to review unclaimed outcomes, introduction of new roles and structures including In Work Support and a Subsequent Job Only Advisor, and co-location between of various Supply Chain Partners. Comments from Supply Chain Partners included:

"MAXIMUS targets are very fair and so is the performance review process"

"it is a very open to 2-way conversation"

"I like the meetings they keep you in the loop"

The MAXIMUS MI systems can be accessed by all Supply Chain Partners and offer an up-to-date, comprehensive suite of operational reports. Dashboard reports are updated daily - an improvement made for the Local London Work and Health Programme was that the MI system is refreshed every two hours to provide more up-to-date information. Daily reporting is shared across the contract areas, ensuring transparency of reporting and managing performance expectations. A quality league report using MI has driven significant improvements to contract compliance. The quality league is an interactive report that can be accessed by all Supply Chain Partner staff and ranks each office based on their overall contractual compliance. The MAXIMUS MI team react to the individual contract needs and reports evolve as a result.

As an example, on the Work Programme, a focus was required to review and implement improvement to PG1 and PG6 customer cohorts.

The focus group met and identified the need to be able to drill down in to specific information. As a result, reports were built immediately to assist with performance delivery. A report was also recently built to display lengths of relationships with customers on the Work Programme to assist MAXIMUS and Supply Chain Partners with prioritisation of customers and head count needs. Supply Chain Partners commented that *"the reporting system is really good – we can pull our own data off – the best system I have worked on"* and *"The Adapt system was very frustrating at first – now we love it – you can drill down to individual key worker level"*.

The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) governs the processes, policies and activities used to monitor the quality of delivery in Supply Chain Partners. The Framework underpins the contractual requirements of commissioners and key stakeholders and has been designed to provide a clear set of qualitative and quantitative measures to support performance, quality of service delivery and participant satisfaction. Monthly file checks are completed by the Supply Chain Partners' managers which produce a risk score on the quality of each of the stages of the participant journey. The scores are monitored through the monthly management review process and areas of improvements are discussed on the weekly calls and any actions are documented through the MMR document and reviewed monthly. Key internal audit processes completed by the Quality and Compliance Team include the Internal Assurance Audit process which focuses on five key control areas: service delivery, governance, finance, operational contract requirements and information security. The audit awards each area an individual compliance score and an overall organisation compliance score. The findings from the report are reviewed each month and activities to support improvements are shared with the teams. The Quality and Compliance team produces a monthly report outlining key findings and recommendations for the MAXIMUS senior leadership team based on the audits completed. This monthly report also collates customer feedback and complaints, again producing a report highlighting trends or potential issues to be addressed. The reports inform decision making and areas of improvement. For example, site audits and compliance monitoring scores identified that there was non-compliance with retaining financial records on the ESF programme. A process was agreed and circulated to rectify the issue and monitored monthly going forward. An illustrative Supply Chain Partner quote was *"compliance is what I have learnt to expect, and I feel the checks are proportionate"*.

REVIEW

Review and evaluation is used to demonstrate the impact of the services delivered and continuously improve service delivery.

MAXIMUS and its Supply Chain Partners' key remit is to support those individuals who are disadvantaged from the labour market into sustainable employment. Achieving this has an inherent positive impact and many ancillary benefits to other social objectives, in particular poverty, social justice and welfare reform. More recently, commissioners have set objectives in procurement to attract voluntary referrals to employment programme with a focus towards the most disadvantaged groups. For example, the ESF provision aims to attract care leavers and so Supply Chain Partners have built relationships with care providers across the region to encourage referrals to the programme and provide support to these groups. MI is collected to support the Commissioner's objectives and policy intent. Supply Chain Managers interrogate the data to review the identified groups of disadvantaged people and the impact that their participation 'on programme' has had; good news stories are collected and shared to demonstrate the wider impact service delivery has with customers. In the most recent implementation of the Local London Health and Work Programme, assessing social values has been built into a framework of Non-Employment Outcomes, for example MAXIMUS has committed to ensuring that '80% of participants report an improved health and wellbeing outcome'. This has been built into the contractual objectives for Supply Chain Partners. Additionally, MAXIMUS looks for ways to engage customers beyond employability that align with the DWP's wider social objectives. For example, a relationship with uSwitch was developed to deliver information and impartial advice to customers and staff on household energy. These sessions had a positive impact on customers, with 67% of those who attended reporting that they had better awareness of energy usage around the home and would take action to minimise energy use and costs.

Through the robust MI processes, MAXIMUS and its Supply Chain Partners are able to assess and measure the positive impact service delivery has on the customer groups. Measuring the achievement of sustainable employment outcomes is a key measure. For example, action plans were developed which focused on engagement activity with PG1 cohorts to increase outcome rates in the Work Programme contract delivery. There have been positive wider objectives achieved such as qualification achievement rates as well as positive destination and progression rates. More recently for the Local London contract, wider Non-Employment Outcomes have been included in the service standards to ensure service delivery has a positive impact beyond securing employment. Supply Chain Partners commented that:

"we have helped individuals who have not worked for 25 years to gain employment"

"we have supported people 20+ years unemployed into employment"

"we have had an economic impact – improving peoples lives"

8. CONCLUSION AND CONDITIONS OF ACCREDITATION

In conclusion, this Assessment provided the opportunity to review the practices of MAXIMUS for the current contracts against the Merlin Standard. The senior leadership team should be mindful that any significant organisational or senior staff changes, and / or being awarded additional contracts using a significantly different supply chain may require a strategic review. Similarly, any decisions reached by the Independent Complaints Examiner may also result in a strategic review being required to ensure the Organisation continues to operate in line with the Merlin principles.

Holders of the Merlin Standard Accreditation must:

- Maintain and continually improve upon their approach to Supply Chain Management.
- Cooperate with annual Reviews as required by Assessment Services Ltd
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd (merlin@assessmentsservices.com) or their Lead Assessor if the key contact name or contact details change.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email:
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd immediately if they gain additional contracts.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received from Supply Chain Partners.
- Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause Assessment Services Ltd and/or the Merlin Standard to be brought into disrepute.
- Only use the Merlin Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines.
- Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for Accreditation Review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by Assessment Services Ltd and do not display the Merlin Standard Quality Mark, nor refer to being a former holder of the Merlin Standard.
- Be aware that Assessment Services Ltd reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.
- Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the Merlin Standard at least 4 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment, completion of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ), Pre-Assessment Notes (PAN) and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 2 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.

	
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