



merlin standard

2018

INSPIRA

COMPACT REPORT

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1. KEY INFORMATION

Assessment Type	ACCREDITATION REVIEW
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Anniversary Date	17/07/2020
Assessment Dates	16/07/2018 – 17/07/2018
Lead Assessor's Name	LORNA BAINBRIDGE
Customer ID	C12309
Assessment Reference	PN103738

2. ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

OVERALL OUTCOME	84% Good
1. Design	83% Good
2. Procure	93% Excellent
3. Contract	90% Excellent
4. Fund	87% Excellent
5. Develop	80% Good
6. Performance Manage	83% Good
7. Quality Assurance and Compliance	80% Good
8. Review and Close	76% Good

3. METHODOLOGY

Inspira continues to come forward on a voluntary basis to be assessed against the Merlin Standard to contribute to continuously improving its approach to supply chain management. Organisations are required to be re-accredited every two-years, and consequently, Inspira opted to come forward for an accreditation review.

The assessment team comprised of Lorna Bainbridge (Lead Assessor) and Andy Richardson (Team Assessor) supported by a coordinator from within Inspira. The Lead Assessor started to work with the coordinator in May 2018 to establish the scope and discuss the logistics of the assessment. The dates for the on-site 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 delivering a range of services funded by the different commissioners, for example, National Citizen Service Trust (NCST) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) / European Social Funding (ESF). The list indicated past, present and potential Supply Chain Partners delivering an end-to-end (tier 2) service or specialist training service (tier 3).

In advance of the Assessment a survey was carried out of the Supply Chain Partners, all 17 were invited to participate. 47% of Supply Chain Partners responded. The results of the survey and the information within the Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) 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 prior to the on-site activity to review the schedule and logistics. All documentation required for the assessment; SAQ, Pre-Assessment Notes (PAN) and schedule were shared in line with the agreed timescales to enable the assessment to take place as planned.

The assessment team spent a total of 1.25 days each reviewing documentary evidence and undertaking interviews with Inspira staff involved in the strategic and day-to-day management of the supply chains. 71% of the end-to-end (tier 2) Supply Chain Partners were interviewed as well as 44% of tier 3 organisations. Consideration was made to all Supply Chain Partners that were past, present and potential, and irrespective of the contract.

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

Inspira (referred to as Inspira or the Organisation throughout the report) is based in Cumbria and provides services for clients and communities in Cumbria and the North West. Its mission is *'to empower young people and adults with the skills and confidence they need to reach their potential in life and work'*.

It was created in 2001 as a national social enterprise, and it has built a business based on the core ethos of inspiring people through professional and structured career management and innovative personal development programmes.

The services provided factor across a range of different dimensions of people's lives – family, health services, schools, friends, leisure activities, housing, careers, further education and specific needs relating to social and community issues, criminal justice and homelessness. It aims to *'achieve the most effective outcome for its service users and seeks to build inspired innovative solutions that will set people firmly on the path to a secure fulfilling future'*.

In order to provide the services Inspira seek to gain funding from national, regional or local commissioner's. For the purpose of this accreditation review, the contracts whereby a supply chain has been designed and utilised include the National Citizen Service (NCS) funded by the NCST and the ESFA NEET (not in employment, education or training) and Support for the Unemployed.

The delivery model for the NCS is that all Supply Chain Partners (referred to as Partners throughout the report) deliver an end to end service (referred to as tier 2) across the region known as NW3. This includes all the County Council areas of Lancashire and Cumbria and the two Unitary Authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. Whilst there is a crossover of Partners in some areas, all have been allocated a percentage of the market share within the area which is defined through a schools allocation list.

The Partners for the SFA NEET and Support for the Unemployed contracts only deliver specialist regulated (accredited) learning to customers of those programmes. Inspira provides the non-regulated learning elements and supports customers to progress. These Partners are referred to as tier 3.

In addition to these subcontracted services, Inspira also holds contracts to directly deliver National Careers Service provision through one of the national prime contractors and Careers Information, Advice and Guidance under contract to Cumbria County Council, as well as several other contracts.

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:

Inspira recognise the value of working with organisations from the private, public and third sectors in order to achieve the commissioner's objectives and contractual requirements. At the time of the accreditation review, 56% were of a charitable status, 33% private and 11% public. In addition, consideration is made to the size of the organisation in order to procure services at local and regional levels. For example, two national organisations; The Challenge Network (TCN) and English Football League Trust (EFLT) can provide services at a regional and local level through their respective delivery model, whilst other Partners are smaller and provide a service in a specific area. (1.1)

The make-up of the respective supply chains is reviewed to ensure the changing needs of both the customers and commissioners are addressed. This tends to be ongoing especially in the case of the ESFA NEET and Support for the Unemployed contracts whereby customers are seeking specific skills and knowledge. This was evidenced through the recent introduction of two local training providers to deliver security accredited training activities. Similarly, the NCS supply chain is reviewed to meet the current performance targets and future growth plans, which was evidenced by three new Partners entering the supply chain to address specific areas of NW3. (1.6)

A robust approach to procuring the services of Partners has been designed from the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage through to the completion of due diligence. The process seeks to establish whether potential Partners are fit for purpose and meet Inspira's expectations, as well as the requirements of the commissioners. The communication activities are designed to ensure all Partners have access to the information required, and feel supported throughout the different stages with the aim of providing them with every opportunity to be successful. Subsequently, Partners confirmed that the procurement processes were straight-forward and underpinned by open and clear communications, resulting in a fair and transparent approach. (2.1)

Inspira is proactive in its approach to negotiating volumes, funding / finance and performance expectations. Prior to Partners submitting the EOI such information released by the commissioner will be shared and as a result potential Partners are encouraged to indicate their requirements at this stage. Subsequently, upon contract award further discussions are undertaken whereby Inspira actively negotiate and agree on the volume, funding / finance and performance expectations. In addition, throughout the life of the contract Partners are confident to renegotiate in line with their performance, which has resulted in changes. (2.4)

As indicated above, performance expectations are discussed and agreed at an early stage, and as a result Partners clearly understand what is expected of them. Requirements are formally recognised within the contract and subsequently reviewed throughout the performance review processes. Partners confirmed that at every stage of the contract they were very clear regarding the performance expectations. (3.2)

Inspira discuss and agree a management fee with each Partner at the start of the relationship, which is based on the level of service / support required. Throughout the life of the contract as the service / support reduces the management fee also reduces. This was evident as new Partners cited a fee of 30% whilst some experienced Partners spoke of 12 - 15%. Partners clearly understood what they received in exchange for the management fee and felt this was value for money. (4.3)

All Partners are assigned a key contact to work with on a day-to-day basis and also have named contacts to address other requirements, for example, finance, quality and compliance. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and as a result, Partners know whom to contact to address any requirements. Partners confirmed that Inspira staff are professional and consistently available and approachable, as well as responsive, and as a result, doing business with them is 'easy'. Similarly, Partners spoke highly of the open and honest communications and felt confident to discuss successes, as well as the issues and challenges they face in order to deliver a high-quality service, meet the targets and address the requirements of the respective commissioner. (6.1, 6.2)

Inspira has embedded a robust approach to ensuring compliance and monitoring of the quality of the delivery, including the customer experience. This is detailed in a wide range of policies, and undertaken through processes and activities which starts with the due diligence activities in the first instance through to reviewing risk assessments, the programme plan and activity timetable, undertaking observations of practice and gaining customer feedback. These are all used to identify improvements to the delivery of the service to ensure the customer experience is a safe and positive one. (7.2)

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:

Inspira has a set of core values which indicate the way it operates on a day-to-day basis, subsequently when considering a potential Partner their values / principles are reviewed to ensure they are aligned. Whilst Partners believe there is a common approach to working together, in the future, Inspira is encouraged to consult with Partners regarding the values / principles that will govern the way in which the supply chain will operate. This could be in the form of a Supply Chain Charter, which is reviewed periodically to ensure all parties, including specialists are behaving in line with the agreed expectations. (1.5)

At the start of the relationship Partners are supported to design and implement policies and procedures to ensure the minimum legislative and regulatory requirements are met. In addition, extensive support is provided to set up and execute the practices needed to deliver the service, for example, documentation requirements, compliance and quality systems, etc. In the future, consideration could be made to introducing an annual business health check, which reviews the strategy and plans of the Partner, including marketing, finance, etc. and subsequently Inspira can provide business development support, advice and guidance as required. (5.1)

A range of training activities are identified and accessible to Partner's delivery staff, for example, safeguarding and Prevent, mental health awareness, critical incident reporting, etc. Whilst this is valued by Partners, consideration could be made to undertaking a formal training needs analysis to identify specific development requirements, which are subsequently sourced, provided and evaluated to establish the impact on performance as a result. (5.3)

At the close of each season for the NCS programme a review takes place to establish what went well; number of signups, turns ups, no shows, withdrawals, etc. and areas identified for further improvement in preparation for the next season. This tends to be completed at Partner level. In future, consideration could be made to bringing Partners and direct delivery together to identify common themes to contribute to a collective improvement plan. (6.7)

Inspira communicate any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements to Partners, as well as contractual changes through a range of methods, for example, email, newsletter, telephone call, etc. Whilst checks are made to ensure Partners are in receipt of the information, in the future, consideration could be given to how the Contract Manager can check understanding and implementation of the changes with an agreed timeframe. (7.1)

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) are provided to Partners to support the delivery of the service and address the implementation of policies and procedures. A high proportion of Partners confirmed that this was effective, however, some Partners; predominantly EFLT failed to recognise that this was taking place. In the future, consideration could be made to the Contract Manager ensuring the IAG is cascaded through the supply chain, and encourage these Partners to seek clarification from Inspira to alleviate any uncertainty. (7.3)

The policies and procedures relating to health and safety, safeguarding and information security are evaluated throughout due diligence, and subsequently, in the case of the NCS programme, these are reviewed in preparation for the start of each season and throughout the delivery. Whilst the environmental sustainability policy is addressed at due diligence, Partners failed to recollect any further reference or review. In the future, consideration could be made to discussing and agreeing environmental sustainability targets, annually as a minimum, which are monitored and evaluated to establish performance levels. (7.4)

Inspira has addressed the minimum requirements to ensure they and their Partner organisations adhere to the principles, or if meeting the relevant criteria, fully comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In the future, consideration could be made to providing Partner's delivery staff with further information relating to what this means in practice when working with customers. (7.5)

Feedback is gained from Partners which influences the way that Inspira operates, including some of its practices relating to the management of the supply chain. However, Partners fail to recognise the action taken by Inspira as a result of them providing feedback. Consequently, in the future consideration could be made to informing Partners of the action to be taken through a 'you said, we did' approach. The Organisation also values feedback from external audits and assessments, for example, **matrix**, Investors in People, Merlin, as well as those audits carried out by the NCST, etc. and uses this to inform continuous improvement. In the future, consideration could be made to sharing the planned actions as a result of this feedback with Partners and how this may impact on the partnership. (8.1)

The activities of each Partner are recognised as having a positive impact on the intended customer groups, external stakeholders and the wider community, and many examples were cited. In the future, consideration could be made to reviewing the impact at a supply chain level, for example, NCS NW3, ESFA NEET, etc. (8.3)

Inspira has designed and implemented effective strategies to work with and manage Partners, and these apply to both tiers 2 and 3. The approach taken with the tier 2 Partners is robust, and whilst similar approaches are adopted for the tier 3 Partners they tend to be less formal. Consequently, consideration could be made to consulting with these Partners (tier 3) and establishing whether further support could be provided, including but not limited to performance reviews, quality and compliance checks, as well as evaluating the full impact on customers and the respective supply chain. This may support them to further build capacity and develop comprehensive services. (Principles 5, 6, 7 and 8)

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>Inspira gain a good understanding of the commissioner’s aims and objectives and establish whether they aligned with their own vision and mission. Subsequently, extensive research is undertaken to determine the customer groups, indicative numbers and the link to the priorities of the Local Authorities (LAs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Subject to the timescale, consultation with potential Partners also takes place to gain their views and opinions based on their local knowledge and area of expertise.</p> <p>In addition, the viability of the contract is evaluated in terms of the financial implications and resources required to deliver the service. These are all contributing factors to enable Inspira to make an informed decision regarding the opportunity to tender. A recent example was when the opportunity arose to bid for the National Careers Service, whereby extensive research was undertaken, along with an analysis of the contract, and as a result, Inspira decided not to bid as a Prime, but continue as a Partner to others.</p> <p>If a supply chain is required, consideration is made to organisations from the different sectors, of different legal entities, of varying sizes and whether they are national, regional or local. There was evidence of a good mix of organisations, appropriate to the contract being delivered. Partners confirmed that the range of organisations that make up the supply chain have different attributes which cover the geographical area and address the customer demographics. In the case of the ESFA NEET and Skills to Support the Unemployed, Partners tend to be niche providers with a relevant area of expertise.</p> <p>The make-up of the respective supply chains are under constant review to ensure they are fit for purpose and evolve to meet the needs of customers and the commissioner, as well as local employers. In addition, performance against targets has resulted in Partners opting to leave the supply chain, and Inspira has implemented contingency plans. These have included expanding the direct delivery, increasing an existing Partner’s market share and volumes and / or procuring a new Partner. One Partner comment included: <i>“Initially, they were not interested in bringing our services in, as they didn’t see the identified need and we were a new company. We were able to demonstrate the need for a wider service than just the security training many other providers were offering. We build safeguarding, conflict management and medical training into our provision to create multi-skilled operatives. They accepted this and we won a contract 18 month ago.”</i></p>

The opportunity to Partner with Inspira is promoted using a range of methods, including but not limited to their website, email, bulletins, national portals / agencies and direct approach by a representative of Inspira. In the event of seeking specific Partners, the EOI is designed and tailored to gain sufficient and relevant information from a potential Partner to ascertain the match to the requirements of the contract, including their area of expertise, geographical coverage, previous experience and performance, etc.

Communications take place at different stages of the procurement, and if appropriate Further Questions and Answers (FOAs) are released and made available to all interested Partners, as well as responses to individual questions or queries, which may also be shared with the wider group. If requested, clarification and support are available throughout the procurement activities.

Partners that had recently experienced the EOI and due diligence confirmed that communications were clear and timely, and Inspira was responsive to questions posed. They felt that the process was fair and transparent.

A TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) strategy, supported by clear processes have been designed to transfer employees in and out of Inspira. In the event of contract changes and new contracts being awarded the TUPE implications would be thoroughly reviewed, and the strategy mobilised, if required. Over the past three years there has been no TUPE activity as a result, this criterion was not fully assessed in terms of the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategy and relevant processes.

There is a clear rationale for the market share allocation for the NCS which Partners understood, and a high proportion of Partners confirmed that it was fair. One Partner spoke about the allocation of schools being disproportionate and not in the catchment area. However, they had been confident to discuss this with Inspira, and as a result, changes are to be made. Some Partner comments included:

"The market share is based on location and area of expertise."

"It's based on the number of schools, we have X% currently, but it can change."

Recently, the NCST changed the guidelines in relation to the market share, and as a result, individual Partners are to have a maximum of 40%. Consequently, Inspira is going to review the current break down of the market share to reduce one Partner's allocation in line with the new guidelines.

Performance expectations are clearly defined, and as a result, Partners understand what is expected of them from the start of the partnership and throughout the life of the relationship. The performance review process ensures that Partners continue to understand the expectations and have every opportunity to review them if it is felt that they become unachievable, or they wish to increase the service provision. Some Partner comments included:

"The contracts have always been clear on targets and standards expected."

"We of course discuss during performance meetings weekly and have always found the targets to be achievable, they've a really good set up at Inspira."

Inspira make every effort to ensure that the funding and payment arrangements are fair, proportionate and do not cause undue financial risk for Partners. Inspira engage with Partners in open dialogue and subsequently agree the funding arrangements. There was evidence of various unit prices dependent upon different factors. In addition, there were examples whereby Inspira had been flexible in their approach, for example, providing a pump-priming fee to support set-up costs, while two Partners referred to moving payments from 30 days (standard) to one week to enable them to meet wages and other costs.

DO

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

Partners made reference to the support gained from Inspira throughout the initial set-up stage of the contract to ensure there was a clear understanding in relation to the customer journey, documentation requirements, as well as quality and compliance practices. Subsequently, Inspira provides additional support throughout the life of the contract to ensure the contractual obligations continue to be met, and the contract is viable. Some Partner comments included:

"We had never delivered a ESFA contract before so needed support to understand the documentation and all the requirements."

"The contract set up was good and covered all the requirements; programme plan, activities timetable, risk assessments and Salesforce."

Some key strengths of Inspira include the fact that there are clear communication channels to ensure there is clarity regarding the business relationships. In addition, communication is timely, open, honest and without unreasonable constraint, and as a result Partners are confident to discuss anything regarding the contract and express their views and opinions openly. Partners confirmed that their respective Contract Manager and other Inspira staff are positive and supportive and seek ways of working together to ensure the success of the contract. Some Partner comments included:

"I feel clear on business relationships. I know who to approach for the various aspects of day to day business and if I have any specific issues, for example related to payments, safeguarding and the like."

"I've always found Inspira to be very supportive – they've even helped us to get some of our initiatives through Trust approval and they're helping us to get into more schools."

"The relationship we've quickly built with Inspira is excellent. I've always found people to be approachable and accessible and very supportive."

"Communications with the Contract Manager are good, positive, open and honest."

"Communications are excellent, very supportive, honest and talk about anything."

"Absolutely fantastic, able to talk to all the managers, it's very good."

Clear, two-way channels are in place to review the performance of Partners against targets and expectations, which is proportionate to the delivery. For example, the larger Partners delivering the NCS experience weekly calls to reflect upon performance and discuss plans for the forthcoming week and also have a monthly face-to-face performance review. The smaller Partners have a monthly face-to-face performance review, however, as and when required they can facilitate a telephone call to discuss challenges and successes. Whilst Partners made reference to sharing innovative ideas which are subsequently recognised; they were unable to cite examples. Some Partner comments included:

"We have weekly meetings to discuss current performance and then we have monthly meetings that look more strategically at things. That helps us to identify and discuss any emerging trends, or potential problems and agree an approach."

"We've had a couple of times where we've gone over targets and we've agreed a stretch target for a short period. This meant that we could get paid for what we delivered."

*"We have a weekly call which focuses on recruitment and different approaches."
"They're very supportive, if we are not performing we can talk about it openly."*

The NCST utilise Salesforce to capture the information required to deliver the programme at a national level. Partners referred to the development of the system over the life of the contract and as a result, currently have access to a broad range of management information. This enables them to drive and monitor performance against key targets and requirements, including the social mix of customers. Some Partner comments included:

"Salesforce is better now, and staff can monitor their performance."

"We have our own system (MIS) which we agreed with Inspira and the Trust. It does require us to download things from our system and upload to theirs but it all works well enough."

The Partners delivering the ESFA NEET and Skills to Support the Unemployed explained that there were minimal requirements for management information as customers were signposted to them for a specific purpose. As a result, they maintained their own database to register customers and track progression. Throughout the accreditation review, Inspira shared a new app which had recently been designed and implemented internally to contribute to measuring the distance travelled by customers. In the future, this may prove to be a valuable resource for Partners.

A robust approach to monitoring quality and compliance requirements has been implemented through a wide range of practices. For example, for the NCS this starts with due diligence complemented by an ongoing review of risk assessments, the programme plan and the activity timetable. In addition, different observations take place while the Partners are delivering the service, which incorporates feedback from customers and staff. External standards and frameworks including **matrix** and Pharos (safety and security audit and consultancy providers), also contribute to monitoring the delivery of the service. The Rant and Rave introduced by the NCST encourages both parents and participants to provide feedback about their experience and quality of delivery. In addition, the weekly and monthly performance reviews address quality and compliance issues. All these approaches identify what is working well and areas for improvement in order to meet the contractual requirements and ensure the participant has a safe and positive experience. Some Partner comments included:

"We've fairly regular monitoring visits to our various events to check on quality and the weekly and monthly performance visits also look at any quality issues coming from observations, or from feedback on the programmes."

"Inspira did come and visit us during the expedition week (Phase 1) to ensure all the certificates and approvals were in place from the various licensing bodies."

"We send in our risk assessments, programme plans and activity timetable before each season, and get feedback if we need to address anything."

Partners delivering the ESFA NEET and Skills to Support the Unemployed spoke of the compliance and quality checks, which include due diligence, observation of practice, file audits (if appropriate) and the performance review. The latter provides the opportunity to examine policies and procedures relating to health and safety, safeguarding and information security and performance against targets. Once again, these practices identify what is working well and inform areas for improvement. Some Partner comments included:

"We have an annual due diligence, review policies and procedures and feedback from customers, and evidence in the form of certificates to address quality and compliance."

"The feedback from customers is reviewed at every performance review."

REVIEW

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

Partners cited examples of having a measurable impact on the wider social objectives and / or policy intent of the commissioner, as well as the positive impact on the different stakeholders and broader community. Some Partner comments included:

"It's all about social integration for us. We typically see increased levels of trust in participants and the impact surveys we run through Oxford University are showing an increased level of volunteering by participants once they've left the programme."

"We do a lot to give back to the community – we help to give our students their identity and a reason for being. This impacts on unemployment and on Universal Credits. We take photos of the students on their first day and again on their last day – it's amazing what difference you see in people – just in terms of their personal presentation and self-confidence."

"There's an impact report produced that looks at the community, e.g. cost savings as a result of reduced prank emergency service call outs. The report then also shows what the actual cost savings are for each service. The areas of high crime and deprivation are targeted by us, though we're not in a position just yet to be able to say what our impact contributions are in a longitudinal sense."

"The whole programme contributes to the ethos and objectives of the NCS Trust."

"It has a great impact on the young people, it is the sense of achievement, and then the amount of volunteering that goes on, including the amount of money raised for charity."

"Customers increase their level of self-confidence, gain new knowledge and skills and better prepared for the workplace."

"NCS Graduates can move into a job with us, if it is right for them."

8. CONCLUSION AND CONDITIONS OF ACCREDITATION

In conclusion, this accreditation review provided the opportunity to evaluate the practices of Inspira 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 Merlin Mediation Service / 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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