



merlin standard

**TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE  
OF MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
TRADING AS  
TAVISTOCK RELATIONSHIPS**

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## 1. KEY INFORMATION

Assessment Type	INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Anniversary Date	12/02/2022
Assessment Dates	11/02/2020 – 12/02/2020
Lead Assessor's Name	RUTH REGAN
Customer ID	C29225
Assessment Reference	PN104774

## 2. ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

<b>OVERALL OUTCOME</b>	<b>75% Good</b>
1. Design	77% Good
2. Procure	73% Good
3. Contract	80% Good
4. Fund	73% Good
5. Develop	73% Good
6. Performance Manage	77% Good
7. Quality Assurance and Compliance	76% Good
8. Review and Close	68% Satisfactory

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology who trade under the name of Tavistock Relationships (referred to as Tavistock or the Organisation throughout the report), sought to become accredited against the Merlin Standard due to holding a contract with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) pilot programme.

The Merlin assessment team included Ruth Regan (Lead Assessor) and Susan Smith (Team Assessor), supported by a Coordinator from within Tavistock. The Lead Assessor started to work with the Coordinator in July 2019 to establish the scope of, and discuss the logistics for, the assessment. The dates when the interview evidence gathering would take place were confirmed, and a plan of action agreed in November 2019.

A booking form and a spreadsheet declaring a list of Supply Chain Partners was submitted by Tavistock to Assessment Services Limited in November 2019. Subsequently, having reviewed the guidance notes relating to Supply Chain Partners, Tavistock confirmed that the list presented was accurate, and there was no potential Supply Chain Partners to engage in the assessment.

In advance of the interview evidence gathering, all nine present, and the one past Supply Chain Partner were invited to participate in an online survey, with responses being received from eight (80%). The results of the survey informed the focus of the interview evidence gathering and contributed to the overall scoring.

The Lead Assessor liaised with the Coordinator throughout the planning phase to review the proposed schedule and logistics. All documentation required for the assessment; Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ), Pre-Assessment Notes (PAN) and interview schedule were shared in line with the agreed timescales, enabling the assessment to take place as planned.

The assessment team spent one and a half days each reviewing documentary evidence and undertaking interviews with Tavistock staff involved in the strategic and day-to-day management of their supply chains. Also, eight of the declared Supply Chain Partners were engaged in the evidence gathering, with interviews conducted with relevant staff in each Supply Chain Partner.

The following report provides an overview of the findings against all the criteria within the Merlin Standard, evidenced across the supply chains. Areas of strength, areas to consider for development and areas requiring significant improvement to consider over the forthcoming two years are also highlighted.

## 4. ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Established in 1948, Tavistock is a charity delivering and developing advanced practice, training and research in therapeutic and psycho-educational approaches to supporting couples.

The Organisation researches, develops, pilots and raises awareness of best practice, providing clinical services to couples, parents and families, face-to-face in London (and often across the UK), as well as worldwide via online therapy and disseminating their learning through academic and policy activities.

The purpose of their work, as explained in their 2019 Annual Report, is to:

- Alleviate relationship difficulties and psychological distress,
- Help parents who are struggling with their relationship and, as a result, help the children whose developmental outcomes are hugely affected by this,
- Devise therapeutic relationship-focused services for people across the life course,
- Train the couple therapy workforce, to build the next generation of specialist couple psychotherapists and counsellors, and
- Support the wider workforce, particularly children's and family services, to help establish the capacity of our statutory services across the UK, to address parental and couple relationship problems.

Their vision is for *'a society in which accessible, effective and tailored relationship support services protect adults and children from the impact of relationship problems'*.

In 2018/2019 Tavistock delivered 21,000 clinical sessions, doubled the size of their online therapy service and became a Prime contractor for the DWP RPC pilot programme covering two of the four contract package areas (CPA).

At the time of this initial assessment, Tavistock was delivering the following programmes with the support of a supply chain:

- The DWP Reducing Parental Conflict pilot programme (RPC) in CPA<sub>1</sub> 'Westminster' and CPA<sub>3</sub> 'Hertfordshire' with 49% of the contract shared between five Supply Chain Partners,
- DWP Reducing Parental Conflict Challenge Fund shared with two Supply Chain Partner organisations,
- Children in Need Funding to deliver therapeutic support to separated parents whose ongoing conflict is affecting the mental health of their children supported by one Supply Chain Partner, and
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and DWP funded Innovation Grant – Children of Alcoholic Dependent Parents (CADEP) with 53% of the grant funding shared between two Supply Chain Partners.

## 5. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH

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

All of the Supply Chain Partners provided robust examples of how they believe the design of their supply chain involved a mutual agreement upon a set of core principles and behaviours. A commitment to equality and diversity is embedded in and governs the way supply chains are managed and work together. Examples shared from both Tavistock and Supply Chain Partners described senior leaders taking time to explore shared values, ethos, behaviours and operating principles before embarking on any formal working relationship, and certainly prior to contracting. Both Tavistock and Supply Chain Partners gave an example which demonstrated an active and real commitment to equality and diversity by Tavistock and all the members of the RPC supply chain. An example shared by all interviewees confirmed how Tavistock and its supply chain had taken a firm line on racist comments from parents. (1.5)

Through their open style and varied approaches to communications, Tavistock has ensured that Supply Chain Partners fully understand who is responsible for key aspects of communication and systems and processes including finance, quality assurance and performance management. Supply Chain Partners were consistent in their praise for the efforts made by Tavistock to communicate openly and honestly. They confirmed without hesitation that the underlying culture across their supply chain ensures that communication is a two-way process and they are more than able to openly and honestly express concerns and ideas to Tavistock, other members of the supply chain and commissioners. (6.1 & 6.2)

The effective communication processes adopted and embedded by Tavistock flow through into their methods of providing impartial, useful and timely information, advice and / or guidance. There is no 'scattergun' approach to sharing information as consideration is given to what needs to be shared and to whom. Follow up takes place to ensure understanding and remedial changes made as required. Through the supervision process, the quality of the information, advice and guidance provided to clients by the practitioners is assured. (7.3)

## 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 processes and procedures used by Tavistock during the procurement process led Supply Chain Partners to believe that procurement was fair. Relevant policies (information security, health and safety, safeguarding, environmental sustainability and modern slavery) were asked for, shared, and implementation confirmed. However, Tavistock is encouraged to consider the benefits of making the due diligence they undertake more overt. For example, by explaining to potential Supply Chain Partners, the full range of due diligence processes undertaken and providing them with feedback on their findings. Doing so could further enhance the open-book, honesty and transparency of the relationship from the outset. Developing an annual due diligence review of Supply Chain Partners' approach to policy development may also bring benefits by assuring commissioners that the supply chain/s remain compliant. If the annual due diligence were also to involve a financial review, any potential risk to a Supply Chain Partner's financial status might be identified, giving time for any potential corrective action to be introduced. (2.1, 7.4 & 7.5)

Supply Chain Partners receive payment for their work but are unable to fully explain the timelines by when they should expect monies to be transferred. Tavistock is asked to consider if the payment process timelines could be better described to Supply Chain Partners. For example, a schedule could be created and shared with the deadlines for when invoices need to be provided to Tavistock so they can then be included on the next submission to DWP, and when therefore payment is likely to be received. Details and examples within the Prompt Payment Code (PPC) may help identify best practice that can be adopted. (4.2)

There is historical evidence of how the work of Tavistock and its Supply Chain Partners has had a measurable impact on the wider social objectives of the commissioner/s. However, current contracts / grant projects, including RPC and CADEP, are at a stage where it is difficult for the quantifiable impact to be measured. Tavistock is encouraged to work proactively with the commissioners and their Supply Chain Partners as planned, to gather further evaluative data which can demonstrate the positive impact of the work. (8.2 & 8.3)

As part of the formal contract between Tavistock and its Supply Chain Partners, the end date of any contract / grant project is identified to provide clarity for business planning. However, Tavistock and Supply Chain Partners could benefit from openly discussing, and as a result confirming, the detailed approach they will each need to undertake at the end of the contractual relationship. The plans could be addressed generally during a Supply Chain Partner meeting and followed through on a one-to-one basis with each Supply Chain Partner. Doing so will ensure a clear and detailed 'end game' plan is in place in plenty of time ensuring Tavistock and Supply Chain Partners can effectively manage the contract close. (8.5)

## 7. AREAS REQUIRING SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT

The following areas were identified as needing improvement as there was limited or insufficient evidence found during the assessment (a score of less than 3). The numbers in brackets refer to the criteria of the Standard:

The work of the Tavistock Quality and Practice Committee is very positive as it oversees the approach to the quality of services provided, highlights good practice and makes recommendations for improvement. However, at the time of this initial assessment, Supply Chain Partners were unable to confirm their involvement in the generation of an annual quality improvement plan, (QIP) based on any self-assessment report (SAR). Consideration should be given to widening the brief of the Quality and Practice Committee, to include Supply Chain Partner engagement, allowing them to share their views on quality improvement, including how they self-assess and judge the quality of their own provision. Doing so will further ensure that the Committee, and therefore Tavistock, has an overarching view of quality across all the work in which they are engaged. (6.7)

## 8. FINDINGS

### PRINCIPLE 1: Design

Before embarking on any procurement activity, Tavistock undertakes extensive research to identify both commissioner and customer requirements. For the RPC contract, representatives from Tavistock attended workshops run by the DWP, which helped them shape their understanding of the commissioner's objectives and purpose of the contract. In defining the scope for the supply chain, Tavistock sought to identify organisations who; had an excellent local reach in the communities they operate; had outstanding reputations for providing a particular specialism or focus to their work; and if possible, had worked with them previously. As a result, there is an appropriate mix of Supply Chain Partners in the supply chains, which includes local and national third sector organisations. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...they approached us to be part of the bid as we are a specific type of charity needed for this project."*

*"...they researched us to find if we would be an ideal fit for this contract based on the type of work we do and the area we cover."*

Tavistock has a long history of working across London and has many partners both in Local Authorities and other third sector organisations who are seen as relevant stakeholders and partners. Each Supply Chain Partner also has its network of organisations with whom they work. Some are, for example, charity organisations, others are from within the Local Authority, which means that regardless of any additional support clients need the support is available. For instance, following the completion of an RPC intervention, the parenting practitioner can signpost the parents to services such as domestic abuse projects, mental health services (Mind), and housing support. Supply Chain Partners are encouraged to share their support network with members of their supply chain. Examples from Supply Chain Partners included:

*"...we have regular meetings where we meet or find out about other partners – as a result, we have started working with another partner in a geographic area, and we are now looking to doing some joint bids."*

*"...there is a wider partnership that has been built to help the project, for example, with schools and family support professionals."*

*"...we have our own local network however Tavistock provide a connection through the Local Authority gateway to others."*

*"...we use all our networks to support the programme – this was why Tavistock needed us."*

Consultation with potential Supply Chain Partners has been instrumental in developing the successful RPC, CADEP and Children in Need bids. Once potential Supply Chain Partners had been identified, meetings were held with the senior leadership of each organisation to discuss the proposed work and develop proposals. For example, the CADEP bid was written by Tavistock together with the two, then potential Supply Chain Partners, who described an open-book approach to consultation both pre and post contract award. In the post-award project planning phase, it is Tavistock's usual practice to arrange an initial project 'kick-off' meeting with Supply Chain Partners to go over all aspects of the contract and consult about processes and delivery requirements.

All Supply Chain Partners confirmed their engagement and that they have an ongoing opportunity to influence decisions through a range of meetings and ongoing dialogue with Tavistock staff. Examples shared by Supply Chain Partners included:

*"...we do feel we were really consulted and that liaison was very good."*

*"...they acknowledged our area of expertise and did learn from us and our way of doing things."*

*"...we influenced the bid – they led, but we contributed."*

*"...on the RPC contract we are limited as to what we can develop and improve as DWP have strict requirements."*

To encourage collaboration, openness and transparency across the RPC supply chains, Tavistock arranges monthly meetings with all members. A Supply Chain Partner described how *"...we share good practice at the monthly meetings."* Within the RPC supply chains, several examples were shared whereby clients had been referred where a parent would prefer to be seen in a geographical location covered by another Supply Chain Partner. Clients have also been made aware of complementary services delivered by members of the supply chain, such as group work or mentoring programmes. For CADEP Supply Chain Partners, collaboration post-contract award has been minimal due to the structure of the delivery model. Examples from Supply Chain Partners and Tavistock staff included:

*"...the supply chain suggested a day to share practice that we now call a Reflection Day – one Supply Chain Partner hosted it, and we will do so next time."* (Staff)

*"...the three organisations collaborated on the bid, since when we have just got on and delivered our part of the bid."* (Supply Chain Partner)

*"...they are receptive to suggestions, and this feels very collaborative."* (Supply Chain Partner)

All of the Supply Chain Partners are charities and not for profit organisations, and there are genuine common interests and shared values between them and Tavistock. Supply Chain Partners described how discussions had taken place before any formal agreement to join the supply chain to explore and ensure a mutual understanding of core principles, values, beliefs, purpose and working practices, including an active and real commitment to equality and diversity. All RPC Supply Chain Partners have signed up to, and demonstrate adherence to, the DWP Life Chances Policy, and this, as well as a copy of Tavistock's code of ethics, are embedded in contracts and demonstrated in practice. Supply Chain Partners explained:

*"...we have shared values of equality and respect."*

*"...we both have the same goals and believe in helping families."*

*"...from the beginning, we shared our ethos and approach to supporting families. We both use evidence-based practice."*

*"...we have different business models, but we have the same set of values."*

*"...there is a comfortable match."*

The RPC supply chains are still in their infancy; however, Tavistock has a proactive process in place to ensure the current supply chains remain fit for purpose. A six-month review meeting takes place with each Supply Chain Partner which includes discussing the future development and design of the supply chain required to meet any evolving needs of clients and the changing needs of DWP. Current feedback confirms that all supply chains remain fit for purpose.

## PRINCIPLE 2: Procure

Supply Chain Partners explained how Tavistock had approached them about the potential opportunities of forming a partnership to obtain funding. In all cases, Tavistock acted as the lead bidder and as such was responsible for undertaking the selection and subsequent due diligence of the potential Supply Chain Partners. While the procurement process was described by Tavistock as "...detailed and relevant", other than confirming effective communications during the process and supplying specific policies, copies of accounts and other relevant paperwork, the due diligence process was perceived by Supply Chain Partners as a relatively informal process. For example, no feedback was shared with Supply Chain Partners on Tavistock's view of the robustness, or not, of the information provided. Supply Chain Partner comments included:

*"...during this phase, there was lots of communications and questions on both sides, and our staff qualifications were checked."*

*"...I imagine they would have looked at our website, but we have been asked for key policies, and they shared their approach to monitoring and evaluation."*

*"...they checked our finances and policies. The information security checks were very robust."*

*"...they asked us to confirm we had a range of policies in place, but it wasn't a due diligence process as I would describe it – there was a lot of trust and things 'taken as read'."*

Tavistock is committed to observing guidance on Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations as and when it applies to any of their supply chain contracts. However, over the past twelve months, there has been no requirement for TUPE across the supply chains.

The rationale for the market share of the RPC contract was based on location and anticipated referrals / volumes as presented by DWP. All Supply Chain Partners were aware of their geographical area and that this represented the market share. As the Supply Chain Partners had been involved in developing the tender, they were fully aware that at the start of the programme they would be reliant on referrals from the Local Authority and that these were not guaranteed. With the Children in Need funded work, the 'market share' is split by the Supply Chain Partner delivering the intervention to the children and Tavistock providing the intervention to the parents. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...we know the share of cases we will get out the total for the area – so that is our market share."*

*"...the allocation was discussed right from the start."*

As Tavistock works closely with its potential Supply Chain Partners in the development of the tender / grant application, the discussions around volumes, funding, finance and performance expectations take place at the outset of the tender / grant application process. The nature of the RPC contract and grant applications did not necessarily allow for 'negotiations' in the traditional sense. However, all Supply Chain Partners confirmed they clearly understood and accepted the funding allocations before contracting, commenting:

*"...Tavistock had the highest turnover, so they took the lead – all of the discussions were shared – the breakdown of budget – who was getting what – all open book."*

*"...there were some conversations about this, and we were chosen because we are familiar with operating in government contracts."*

*"...the funding allocation was discussed openly right from when we joined the supply chain."*

### PRINCIPLE 3: Contract

Tavistock has written agreements in place with each Supply Chain Partner that outlines the delivery responsibilities and arrangements. Each agreement was individually tailored to the specific relationship and contract / grant being delivered. For example, for the RPC Supply Chain Partners, each contract has a breakdown of expected delivery requirements as well as the Customer Service Standards, which must be met as specified by the DWP. All Supply Chain Partners described how they had been provided with a draft contract to review and consider prior to signing, and how Tavistock staff had spent time and effort in helping them understand the obligations and performance measures / expectations. Examples from Supply Chain Partner and Tavistock staff included:

*"...there was lots of back and forth as the contract was massive. Tavistock changed terms – for example, the requirement for 5% of staff to be apprentices which just wouldn't work in our small organisation delivering this level and type of intervention." (Supply Chain Partner)*

*"...our Trustees went through it with a fine-tooth comb, and the Tavistock Programme Manager came to our board meeting to listen to the concerns and requests for clarity, changes and additional wording – this addressed all their issues." (Supply Chain Partner)*

*"...DWP contract was shared, but a number of aspects within it were not understood so we did a piece of work with Supply Chain Partners, including getting our own legal advice on what aspect of the contract could be removed to make it more appropriate to their needs." (Staff)*

Throughout tender / grant application and contracting activities, Supply Chain Partners gained a clear understanding of the performance expectations of their contract and how these could hopefully be achieved. For example, within the RPC contract, there are target numbers of referrals outlined monthly, together with the DWP Customer Service Standards, which form part of the performance expectations. All of which were clearly understood by Supply Chain Partners at contracting and are reaffirmed during contract / performance review discussions. All Supply Chain Partners spoken with were very clear about what they were required to achieve. RPC Supply Chain Partners acknowledged that *"..some assumptions given regarding potential numbers of parents coming forward in the area were only indicative and not realistic"* and *"...they (Tavistock) were very good at listening to and acting on our referral concerns, and the outcome is that we can work more collaboratively with other referrers."*

Tavistock has a clearly defined route that Supply Chain Partners may take when a dispute arises which is outlined in the contracts. However, Supply Chain Partners expressed the view that open and honest discussions were the most appropriate approaches to deal with any potential dispute of any nature. Tavistock confirmed that there are no disputes currently and none expected. Supply Chain Partners confirmed that:

*"...we have never had to use it, (dispute resolution process) but I know it is in my contract. If anything came up, we would try and resolve things in an open way with Tavistock."*

*"...it (dispute resolution process) is in our contract, and we do feel we could use it if needed; however, we have a really open and positive relationship."*

#### PRINCIPLE 4: Funding

Due to the 'open-book' approach taken by Tavistock to the development of any new tender / grant application, Supply Chain Partners have every opportunity to explore whether they believe the funding and payment arrangements are fair, proportionate and the financial risk involved. For example, one potential RPC Supply Chain Partner withdrew from the supply chain after exploring in great detail with Tavistock the implications of the DWP financial model. Supply Chain Partners explained:

*"...the funding model was agreed before the RPC bid was submitted."*

*"...all was very clear and open – there is no risk to us financially – it covers our costs."*

*"...we get a set figure negotiated as part of the grant bid submitted by Tavistock."*

In simple terms, a strategy to manage the transfer of funds / finance resulting in Supply Chain Partners being paid is in place, with Tavistock committing to paying Supply Chain Partners monthly in arrears following the submission of an invoice for work done. One Supply Chain Partner explained, *"...we send our report in on what has been delivered and then get paid – it's very simple."* RPC Supply Chain Partners are paid in arrears on a monthly basis within seven days of receipt of the DWP payment transfer. While all Supply Chain Partners believe they get paid in a timely manner, they are unaware of any real timelines. Consequently, as noted in the Areas for Improvement section of this report, Tavistock is encouraged to develop further communications about invoicing and associated pay-run dates. Examples provided by Supply Chain Partners and Tavistock staff included:

*"...we have weekly BACs payments and pay as soon as DWP pay us." (Staff)*

*"...there was just one delay where DWP payment to Tavistock was late, and I do remember a conversation where Tavistock offered flexibility on payment if we needed it." (Supply Chain Partner)*

*"...there was a point last summer where payments were delayed due to a DWP technicality, but there have been no other issues since." (Supply Chain Partner)*

Tavistock does not currently take a management fee as may be typical of other Prime organisations. The Organisation earn their 'fee' for managing a supply chain through the work they complete as part of any successful tender / grant. As explained by a Tavistock senior leader *"...we get our funding through the aspects we deliver in the contract."* That said, all Supply Chain Partners confirmed that they received support from Tavistock as the 'project lead' which included aspects of training, performance management and day-to-day guidance and support. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...they provide a lot of support to help us deliver the contract."*

*"...we get their ongoing support, and monthly reviews – what they do well is they pick up on issues and strike hard to resolve them, for example, the lack of referrals."*

*"...Tavistock gets a fee from the training and supervision they provide for us as part of the contract delivery."*

## PRINCIPLE 5: Develop

Tavistock aims to provide support to develop and encourages Supply Chain Partners to fulfil contractual obligations throughout the life of the contract. When a contract or grant is awarded, initial project 'kick-off' meetings are arranged with Supply Chain Partners to go over all aspects of the delivery including training requirements, clinical delivery and supervision arrangements, administration and IT processes. RPC Supply Chain Partners confirmed that they had received a range of support including a session with the administrator to look at aspects such as completing intervention plans, internal quality assurance documents and information security arrangements. Tavistock has also created an RPC process flow which provides a step-by-step guide for Supply Chain Partners to follow at the referral, contract and initial assessment and intervention and ending stages giving guidance on what needs to happen when. Due to the nature of the project, there was less opportunity for Tavistock to support CADEP Supply Chain Partners' development of the business processes, practices and systems required to deliver the contract. RPC Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...they helped us by jointly developing a risk assessment form as we didn't have one."*

*"...we had a very productive discussion about the processes needed to meet the needs of DWP."*

In addition to, for example, sharing information on new grants available, several Supply Chain Partners did confirm that through the work they are doing with, and the training they have received from Tavistock, their capacity to deliver a more diverse range of services had increased. Also, all clinical resources (e.g. workbooks) have been provided to the Supply Chain Partners for their use beyond their relationship with Tavistock, enabling them to obtain new / additional sources of revenue. One Supply Chain Partner commented, *"...we have been working with Tavistock in a different area, and this has led to a new funding opportunity for us."*

A range of learning and development needs have been identified and met across the supply chains via different learning modes. For example; face-to-face and online training for administration staff on the requirements of the RPC paperwork, training provided on Mentalisation Based Therapy for Couple Therapy (MBT-CT) modality which has enabled one Supply Chain Partner to deliver work on the Challenge Fund programme and Building Relationships for Strong Families. A Summary Guidance' document is a training / reference guide for Practitioners which provides a step-by-step guide through the engagement process and delivery sessions – setting out content, paperwork requirements etc. Examples shared by Supply Chain Partners included:

*"...the training needs analysis showed that everyone needed training as the interventions were new to us all. The Reflection Meetings are also really useful for personal reflection and development."*

*"...the training has helped us to build relationships with other Supply Chain Partners."*

*"...supervision provided by Tavistock is also ongoing development for staff."*

## PRINCIPLE 6: Performance Manage

There are clear communication channels which ensure there is clarity in the business relationships underpinning the supply chain arrangements. Allocation of a dedicated Programme Manager for each supply chain ensures that all Supply Chain Partners believe *"...there are clear business relationships – everyone is helpful and deals with even the nitty-gritty."* Named roles and responsibilities are made clear at 'kick-off' meetings so that *"...there is a lot of clarity about who to ask for what – the face-to-face meetings during project set up were helpful, and we met other providers too."* Other comments made by Supply Chain Partners included:

*"...there are named contact points in Tavistock."*

*"...very good communications from CEO level throughout – our staff know who does what in Tavistock and they know our staff too."*

*"...they are business-like and positive."*

*"...you never worry about asking anything – they always provide the help you need."*

Supply Chain Partners shared very consistent confirmative examples of open, honest, two-way communications between Tavistock and themselves. A member of staff at Tavistock explained that *"...it is Tavistock's culture to be open, honest, so we employ people with those values and behaviours."* Views, ideas and opinions are freely shared and, on occasion, difficult subjects including negotiation on the development of the initial bids, to issues with referrals and performance, have been discussed frankly and fairly, and appropriate resolutions reached. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...on the ball, positive and prompt."*

*"...they are really responsive."*

*"...if we want to change things, or things aren't going as planned – we have adult conversations about them."*

*"...communications are always open and honest, Tavistock has acted in good faith throughout."*

*"...a positive culture, particularly when the contract started and we experienced the difficulty of meeting very tight timelines."*

Performance expectations are set out within the individual contracts. A series of contract management meetings take place to ensure that there is the opportunity to regularly review performance as well as raise issues and discuss concerns. For the RPC supply chains, dates for the monthly Supply Chain Partner meetings were set in June 2019 for meetings every month through to December 2019. All these meetings had a written agenda and minutes were taken and circulated. Due to the wide geographical spread of the supply chains, Tavistock is increasing their ability to utilise Zoom video conferencing as a communication tool to ensure regular contact can be maintained regardless of location.

Examples shared by Supply Chain Partners include:

*"...there are regular performance review meetings – we are able to raise any concerns and Tavistock take action. For example, they negotiated additional funding to more outreach to address the lack of referrals."*

*"...six monthly review with Tavistock – had an agenda, very structured and methodical. Outcomes were agreed together with a review schedule of agreed actions."*

Tavistock records clinical data on a customer relationship management (CRM) system called Salesforce, which enables the production of accurate and reliable data on how a contract / grant project is being delivered. Different contracts have varying reporting arrangements and management information (MI) types. For example, for the RPC contract, MI performance data is produced by the DWP and also by the Local Authority Gateway concerning enquires and referrals produced. RPC Supply Chain Partners described using a 'case / referral tracker' to monitor where clients are in the process and provide the information needed to manage, for example, the Customer Services Standard required to meet contract expectations. Tavistock explained that there are plans to integrate their CRM with the 'case / referral tracker' so Supply Chain Partners can utilise the MI provided – and this is to be encouraged. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...there is a clear MI process using the Gateway – there were some teething problems, but Tavistock helped with that."*

*"...all the information is logged by Tavistock onto their portal – we have set up a range of spreadsheets with Tavistock which are used to upload the information for DWP. It is in all our interests that these are kept up to date and are accurate as timescales are very tight."*

Supply Chain Partners are measured, encouraged, and their performance supported to help direct improvements. Quarterly meetings with CADEP Supply Chain Partners, Tavistock and DHSC, review progress towards key performance indicators (KPIs), and the risks of underperforming discussed and solutions sought. Tavistock staff involved in the management of the RPC contract explained the relationship with the supply chains was one of encouragement and support to help performance improvements – and RPC Supply Chain Partners corroborated this. Meetings provide the opportunity to identify what is working well and where potential improvements could be made, and any solutions shared and implemented. Also, RPC Supply Chain Partners described how, through the supervision process, practice and cases are discussed, and learning shared. An RPC Supply Chain Partner commented, *"...we have come together with other Supply Chain Partners from the beginning, which supports performance."*

As a clinical training and delivery organisation, it is natural for Tavistock to actively promote the sharing of clinical practice across the supply chains. On the RPC Westminster contract, for example, Tavistock arranged a meeting across the Supply Chain Partners delivering the Triple P high-intensity intervention so that Practitioners could share best practice. Another RPC example shared was, *"...we know from DWP the importance of PRaP, and it was highlighted that we were not putting information on to the system quickly enough – we do now, and it's made things better for everyone."*

As highlighted in Section 7: Areas Requiring Significant Improvement, the work of the Quality and Practice Committee is very positive as it oversees the approach to the quality of service delivery by Tavistock. A member of Tavistock staff explained how *"...we use the information from the six-monthly contract review meetings to inform the issues that are brought to Quality and Practice Committee."* However, at the time of this initial assessment, Supply Chain Partners were not overtly involved in, or had an understanding of, the work of the Committee and were unable to confirm their involvement in any SAR or QIP related processes.

## PRINCIPLE 7: Quality Assurance and Compliance

Tavistock uses a range of communication methods to inform Supply Chain Partners of legislative and regulatory requirements and any subsequent changes. For example, Programme Managers review any updates they receive from the commissioner/s and share as appropriate, with, when perceived necessary, an explanation of what the update might mean in practice. All Supply Chain Partners confirmed that any update that requires a change to process or practice is followed up by the Programme Manager to ensure understanding and / or action taken as a result. A recent example shared which required communication to the RPC supply chains was the rule changes relating to programme referrals from members of the supply chain. This change was communicated immediately via email and then followed up at the next RPC supply chain meeting. A member of the Tavistock staff explained. *"...we forward any DWP notifications and then follow up with each Supply Chain Partner to ask what it means for them. Any other wider information is shared with Supply Chain Partners."*

Supervision of clinical practice is acknowledged as the primary quality assurance process. It supports all clinical practitioners working within the supply chains to ensure they are delivering the contract and the interventions to required clinical standards. It is a well-established and embedded approach used to monitor and subsequently improve performance. A member of Tavistock staff explained, *"...principle quality function is clinical supervision where guided feedback on how well the new technique being piloted is being delivered by individuals. Supervision is carried out by Tavistock – it happens weekly during the first case and bi-weekly once practice has been confirmed, and the staff member moves onto their second case."* Pre and post clinical delivery measures are used to evaluate the customer experience of the programme and the intervention. In support of the quality assurance of clinical interventions, compliance checks are also carried out on the paperwork submitted. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...we have file audits, and the supervision process assesses the quality of delivery."*

*"...we have only delivered one case so far; however, the paperwork was checked, and feedback given."*

*"...there could be the potential for observations, especially on the Parent Plus courses."*

Supply Chain Partners confirmed the information, advice and guidance provided by Tavistock is impartial, relevant, accurate and timely. Effective methods are also deployed to ensure that Supply Chain Partners are providing clients with appropriate information, advice and guidance. For example, Tavistock offered additional support to RPC Supply Chain Partners to enable them to complete the intervention plan correctly to ensure the parent understood the length of the programme and how the intervention would work. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...Tavistock does provide support, advice and guidance and are readily contactable and respond quickly."*

*"...they provide information, for example, if there is something a practitioner needs to know."*

Tavistock is committed to ensuring all Supply Chain Partners have relevant policies in place for Information Security, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Environmental Sustainability, and these are in line with regulatory and legislative requirements. RPC Supply Chain Partners confirmed that it is a requirement within their contracts that they will comply with Tavistock's policies on these areas. Other Supply Chain Partners confirmed being asked to submit relevant policies as part of the initial due diligence process, explaining "...we presented all our policies at the outset." However, as highlighted in Section 6, Areas for Development, there may be benefits to be had to further explain to Supply Chain Partners how these policies are used during the due diligence process and throughout the life of the contracts. Tavistock staff commented:

*"...we submit our policies annually to DWP so we will do the same with the Supply Chain Partners to confirm they are being maintained."*

*"...we try to lead by example on environmental sustainability."*

*"...if a Supply Chain Partner rings us with say a safeguarding concern; our response will be – what does your policy say – this enables us to check if their policy is sufficient and current."*

As with the other policies highlighted above, Supply Chain Partners confirmed that Tavistock shared a copy of their Modern Slavery policy where requested. Tavistock staff explained, "...safeguarding is a big component of the work we do. This can be sharing our policy and helping them to understand their Modern Slavery responsibilities." A statement is in all Supply Chain Partner contracts that makes it clear that Tavistock has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery within its business and supply chains. Supply Chain Partner confirmed:

*"...they (Tavistock) helped us develop our MSA policy."*

*"...we had to confirm we had a statement and understood the act as part of the bid."*

## PRINCIPLE 8: Review and Close

Tavistock seeks feedback from stakeholders through a variety of forums relevant to the contract. For example, for the Challenge Fund project, Tavistock has established an Expert Advisory Group with an external Chair and representatives from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Children's Services, researchers and specialist practitioners. The Group reviews progress and delivery and raises questions and ideas on practice. For example, asking for the CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) feedback form to include images/graphs to help clients with learning difficulties complete the feedback. For the RPC contract, Tavistock regularly attends Steering Groups with the Local Authorities as well as periodically sharing data with the Local Authority Gateway on programme performance. Tavistock and RPC Supply Chain Partners meet with DWP to review the progress of the pilot and make changes where possible, such as allowing direct referrals. Other forms of feedback obtained include client questionnaires to gauge their clinical progress including a specific questionnaire which will be used as part of the DWP evaluation strategy, the CORE outcomes measure questionnaire, Care Quality Commission surveys, etc. Tavistock staff explained:

*"...we try and use multiple approaches – verbally from parents, questionnaires at the end of interventions, during the regular Supply Chain Partner review meetings, feedback from the Commissioner and external audits."*

*"...we had a DWP soft test, and the results were good – informal scoring put us at xx%."*

There is research which conclusively demonstrates the negative impact which interparental conflict – whether overt or non-acrimonious – can have on children's mental health. Whilst the RPC supply chains are still in their infancy, the work of Tavistock and their supply chains have historically had a positive impact on the outcomes of children caught up in these kinds of circumstances. This has reduced the number of protracted disputes played out in the family court system, which is very often damaging to the children involved, as well as hugely costly to the taxpayer. Parents who attended joint sessions together showed significant improvements in their capacity to co-parent effectively, as measured on the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM). Mothers also reported a significant reduction in terms of global psychological distress as measured by the CORE Outcome Measure, which is another crucial factor for children's wellbeing. Another impact of the work of another supply chain is to reduce people's dependency on alcohol and improvements in health conditions and relationships. The feedback from those who attended the training aspect of the CADEP grant has been very positive – videos are available as headshot case studies on the impact their new knowledge will have on their practice and confidence. As highlighted in Section 6, Areas for Development, Tavistock and its Supply Chain Partners are actively encouraged to engage with all relevant evaluation processes to enable the quantifiable impact of their work to be highlighted and shared.

There are wider community benefits from the work of Tavistock and its supply chains, for example, by people moving into employment as a result of more stable relationships, improved children's outcomes including school attendance and attainment and reducing poverty. The intended impact for one grant project (Children in Need) include young people feeling more optimistic for the future, young people feeling less isolated and young people having increased confidence to communicate their feeling to trusted adults and peers.

Supply Chain Partners talked of how, through the training and supervision received while working on the contract / grant project, staff confidence levels had increased, resulting in greater job satisfaction. Again, as highlighted in Section 6, Areas for Development, Tavistock and its Supply Chain Partners are actively encouraged to engage with all relevant evaluation process to enable the qualitative impact of their work to be highlighted and shared.

Both Tavistock and all Supply Chain Partners have a positive culture of collecting, monitoring and promoting equality and diversity and actively deploying policies within their working practice and activities. Supply Chain Partners commented:

*"...we see a diverse range of families with different backgrounds."*

*"...there is a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion."*

*"...we collect EDI data to ensure we are meeting diverse needs."*

*"...EDI forms are completed for staff, and we also collect and can report of EDI characteristics of families, and this can be shared with Tavistock."*

*"...they've given us ideas if we need to consider using translators or interpreters."*

All Supply Chain Partners confirmed that they believe Tavistock will take the necessary steps to close their contracts in line with the any. agreed requirements. In terms of the current contracts, as highlighted in Section 6 of this report, Tavistock is encouraged to start raising the exit process with Supply Chain Partners during their next 6-month review. Supply Chain Partner comments included:

*"...we have received something about this recently and will look more closely when the contract close is nearer."*

*"...we have a clear end date, and the date of any final referrals – document and record retention were discussed early on."*

*"...if we pulled out – which we don't intend to - Tavistock would pick up our share as they can deliver the contract."*

*"...very clear end of contract process – just not had to put it into practice yet."*

## 9. CONCLUSION AND CONDITIONS OF ACCREDITATION

In conclusion, the Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology (trading as Tavistock Relationships) is to be accreditation against the Merlin Standard.

Tavistock may consider undertaking a health check in February 2021 whereby an Assessor could review actions taken throughout the year to establish the impact on the supply chain. This may also provide an indication of how embedded the practices have become. Alternatively, Tavistock could come forward for an accreditation review at any stage throughout the following two years.

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](mailto: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: ([merlin@assessmentsservices.com](mailto:merlin@assessmentsservices.com))
- 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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