

**Commercial in Confidence**



**matrix Assessment Report**

**For**

**EMD UK LIMITED**

**By Alison Chubb**

**On behalf of ENTO LTD**

**Assessment Date: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

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## 1. Assessment Outcome

Having undertaken the Assessment in accordance with the guidelines provided, EMD UK Limited has demonstrated that it meets the **matrix quality standard for information advice and guidance services**. Accreditation to the **matrix** Standard is granted for the external services provided by EMD UK Limited (also referred to as EMD UK Ltd, or EMD, in this Report).

## 2. Introduction

EMD UK Limited was established in 2003 by one of its current Directors. A former employee of the Department for Work and Pensions, he experienced a spell of unemployment and, through Business Link support, established the company. EMD UK Ltd was intended to meet a clear need to support people from other countries who were in the UK seeking employment. The main focus was to provide English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). He worked with a colleague with complementary experience, and a second business focus was established – to deal with issues of immigration.

EMD is a company limited by shares. Based in West Yorkshire (operating from Leeds, and with the Registered office in Skipton) it delivers services both from its own premises and on employers' premises. Individuals meet staff, or attend courses, at the Leeds office, in the community, or in venues according to contract or individual need. The company moved to Leeds in 2009 from Keighley, to more accessible, modern premises. Its 13 contracted staff work mainly out of the Leeds office, although several are part-time or hourly-paid based from home, and additional associate staff can be brought in for contracts as required.

EMD UK Ltd also works in other UK areas where there are large numbers of immigrants - including Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton and Eastbourne. Internationally it has established links with various countries including Bangladesh, Dubai, India, Kuala Lumpur, Nepal, Thailand and others. Much of this has been through networking and word of mouth. The organisation has expanded rapidly since its formation. The founding Director is aware of how fast the company has grown and is keen to keep it manageable:

*“Big enough to do the job properly and small enough to care.”*

The company's website and marketing information summarise the variety of activities it has become involved in since its inception, which are mainly related to language training and vocational training:

- Immigration Advice is delivered by specifically qualified staff, of whom there are currently two within EMD. Home Office regulations are specific and tightly controlled with regular reviews and amendments, and all staff know they cannot offer advice if they are not qualified to do so.
- The support service for the Points Based System relates to nationals outside of the European Economic Area and enables people to access support and tests for some levels or 'tiers' to work in the UK. For example, a highly qualified migrant would be Tier 1; or, a student would apply for a Tier 4 visa. EMD provides testing centres in the UK and other

countries and oversees the issue of Home Office certificates. EMD UK Ltd is an Awarding Body for this service, accredited by the Home Office.

- EMD has also developed business-specific services, so that companies working in activities such as facilities management, hospitality or healthcare can access a context relevant to their sector for staff training.
- EMD supports individuals with ESOL and Citizenship applications. Staff review applications and provide tuition in English language skills.
- Specific projects are delivered under contract. For example, the LSC contracts for such provision as Train to Gain and Train to Gain Plus were awarded to EMD. The company is also currently completing a contract to deliver ESOL Level 5 teacher qualifications across West Yorkshire.

EMD UK Ltd sought Accreditation against the **matrix** Standard originally due to a contractual requirement, but importantly was also interested in an independent Assessment of its services. It has requested an OFSTED inspection to help with its eligibility to seek certain authority to deliver, but (at the time of this report being produced) there is no imminent date agreed for this.

EMD specifically asked the **matrix** Assessor for advice on its website, on how to incorporate information, advice and guidance and the **matrix** Standard. The Assessor explained that advice cannot be provided in Assessment, but the guidelines provided by ENTO, about the use of the **matrix** logo on Accreditation, together with the section in the main body of this Report relating to element 1, should be helpful in this respect.

Whilst information, advice and guidance was not conceived as being of primary importance to EMD's services originally, it was quickly apparent to staff that the support they provided in addition to the direct tuition and immigration queries were of key value to service users.

End users of EMD's services include a variety of overseas personnel. They range from professional footballers with work permits to play for UK clubs, to eastern Europeans exercising their right to trade in England, to wives of African employees seeking 'indefinite leave to remain' in Britain and a variety of others. A range of intermediate organisations also work with EMD - such as immigration lawyers and solicitors, whose clients similarly include migrants.

### 3. Methodology

The originally allocated **matrix** Assessor had visited the organisation to clarify the Assessment. However due to her illness at the planned date, another Assessor was appointed by ENTO to complete the Assessment.

After email exchanges and an initial onsite briefing meeting with one of the Directors, a programme with revised timings and slight logistical amendments to the original schedule was followed. The Assessor used a range of methods to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard;

One to one interviews (Face to Face) (4 staff/ 1client/partners)

Telephone interviews	(3 clients/ 3 partners)
Group interviews	(6 staff in 3 pairs; 11 clients in 2 groups)
Observation	(part of a review with an established service user; phone interactions; support of service user to make best use of a loaned laptop)
Document review	(various, including: marketing information; Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan; 3 client records including initial assessment and review; intranet including learning materials and policies; internet including company background)
Feedback	(discussion with staff, clients and partners; review of questionnaires)

#### 4. Strengths

During the Assessment a number of strengths were identified. These are outlined below. The numbers and letters in brackets refer to the relevant elements and criteria in the **matrix** Standard.

- EMD provides excellent immigration support (4). This is a complex area with constantly changing Home Office requirements and many clients are vulnerable and confused on arrival, often with limited command of the English language. EMD staff consistently provide reassurance and practical help with the flexibility to accommodate clients' varying needs. One ESOL client was so delighted with the service, having tried a more local organisation without success, that she reported she had learnt how to take three buses to access EMD's help. Another rated his immigration support very highly:

*"I am so satisfied I cannot explain it."*

- Strong ethics at EMD mark out the immigration and ESOL support it provides (5e). From the founding aim of trying to help vulnerable people fairly, staff, partners and clients alike acknowledge the honest approach taken by the company. This is especially valued, in an area of operation where fraud and exploitation has been exposed to be rife. It was explained that some clients' cases had been accepted without charge where individuals were especially needy or where it was felt they could make a useful addition to case law in the sector. In the case of highly paid people such as Premier League footballers, higher fees and travel costs might be charged – always with advance agreement.
- EMD demonstrates an ethos of continuous quality improvement that drives the company (8). Staff are constantly encouraged to develop ideas, such as revising learner documentation – for instance, the individual learning plan has now undertaken several reincarnations. Learner, staff and partner feedback is always taken on board in such revisions.

- EMD enjoys strong leadership at Director level (5b). The two Directors have their respective ESOL and immigration specialisms but are in constant dialogue about the focus of the company. As a client observed about EMD:

*“They are professional yet relaxed”*

and this permeates right through the organisation. The company is alert to developments; it has expanded immigration services in response to demand and a recent addition is to provide ESOL Level 5 teacher training.

- EMD is at the forefront of its field and has an increasingly good record of producing bespoke information and materials (3). Accredited as a national awarding body by the Home Office for Points Based programmes, it has designed learning materials for that area of work. It has also produced bespoke, industry specific materials for functional skills in ESOL (accredited by Ascentis, the national awarding body) such as catering examples in numeracy for staff working in that environment, or context specific examples about time spent training for footballers.
- Support for staff is very strong, in order that clients receive good quality support for learning and work (6). Senior staff are vigilant to spot and cultivate relevant skills – to such an extent that during the **matrix** Assessment the Assessor queried why the organisation had not sought Accreditation for internal as well as external services. The organisation may wish to review this for the matrix Accreditation Review in three years’ time (see report discussion on element 6, page 12 below). Several staff are undertaking training to be able to deliver immigration advice. Another has started the NVQ in Advice and Guidance. Mindful of its expertise in supporting speakers of languages other than English, EMD actively encourages staff to speak these and recruits accordingly.

## 5. Areas for Continuous Improvement

The Assessor identified the following areas where further development may improve the quality of service. The numbers and letters in brackets refer to the relevant elements and criteria in the **matrix** Standard.

- The Leeds premises provide the sound-proofed room required by the Home Office to conduct citizenship tests. Apart from this, any service user unable to access the first floor can be seen downstairs. EMD UK Ltd may wish to consider how people with restricted mobility would be able to access the full range of its services. (5e)
- Although the production of bespoke information and learning materials is acknowledged as one of EMD’s strengths (see above), it is not always easy to tell if the information in use is current. For example, basic skills information from 2004 is currently under government review but none of the materials in use indicate this. EMD relies on its staff being up-to-date through staff

discussions, using the internet and personal networks - whether employed full or part time or on hourly paid contracts. The organisation may wish to consider whether printing issue dates or version numbers could facilitate the easy monitoring of information to ensure current versions are in use. (3b)

## 6. Detailed Findings against the matrix Standard

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

### 1.

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

Undoubtedly, EMD's most effective current marketing tool is its founding Director who proactively engages with organisations to promote the services available. These include law firms that have immigration clients; colleges and other learning providers which might have students with ESOL functional skills needs.

Individuals, (such as the eastern European painter and decorator who was engaged to work on one of the Directors' homes) are also invited to partake in support programmes at EMD. Others such as priests and imams are contacted directly to see if they have volunteers in their church or mosque who might be interested in an information technology qualification. The founding Director is aware that many such groups would use funding for parishioners so church wardens, and their like, might slip through the net of funded provision.

The recently produced marketing brochure encapsulates the ethics of the organisation in a resume of the immigration support service:

*"When you instruct us to take your case, we will take you through the application process, giving you honest advice and keeping you updated with all developments and decisions."*

Some individuals and organisations, such as immigration consultancies, found EMD via its website. This provides a comprehensive list of its services incorporating Immigration Services, the Points Based System, ESOL and TEFL Teaching. It includes attractive scrolling opening screens indicating that success in business and careers comes from making the right decisions. Thus potential customers quickly start to get an impression of the culture and values of EMD. Several of the service description pages refer to the advice and guidance available in that context (such as immigration advice) and a list of areas where additional support is available.

The Points Based page gives clear, factual information about the tests, levels and requirements. Although it is less clear on advice and guidance (a deficiency which should be reviewed by EMD) there is a link to Frequently Asked Questions with clear and comprehensive responses.

The website is currently under review and more consistent references to the support available across all the services - more explicit references to the information, advice and guidance that underpins all of EMD's activities - could go a long way to help people understand the nature of the organisation. Staff are proud of the "extra mile" they go to support clients in ESOL and immigration matters. The website provides a

suitable medium in which to promote this selling point, and even more could be made of it.

## 2.

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

In Train to Gain contexts, employers are the first port of call for EMD staff. The service is outlined to them and they secure support services as relevant to their employees, who become the end users of the service. For example, this may be ESOL training for kitchen staff in a hotel in Train to Gain, or Information Technology tuition for volunteers in a church or mosque in the community. In immigration, solicitors often act as intermediaries and mutual referral of clients can occur. Organisations such as migration services check immigration issues with EMD as well as using their Points Based tests.

Individuals may also take advantage of EMD's support in their own right rather than through an employer or a facilitating organisation. Typically, they will hear about EMD from their solicitor. Others have found EMD through the internet; others through personal knowledge of a company Director. For example, an Eastern European painter and decorator that was working on the home of one of the directors has now started ESOL learning with EMD. Another came to EMD on recommendation from her sister who had found her experience with the company helpful.

After an initial exploration of an individual's circumstances, people are left in no doubt as to whether EMD can help – immigration clients are told if staff believe there is 'no chance' of winning the case. In some cases solicitors or other organisations are suggested as being more appropriate to an individual's needs. If the case is deemed to be one for EMD, more detailed requirements are discussed and agreed between adviser and client. One client, feeling he had been passed from 'pillar to post', was at pains to establish at the outset what support was available:

*"The good thing that I found out was [EMD] will follow me through the whole process."*

In some cases, such as one referred internally from ESOL to Immigration services, clients can be referred on again. In this internal case the ESOL client's concerns related to the oil industry, and EMD's Immigration Adviser recognised his needs could be better met by oil industry specialist law firms in Aberdeen.

For ESOL clients, an initial assessment of each individual's level of English helps to determine the nature of the support required and further one-to-one discussion, including exploration of additional needs and career aspirations, forms the basis of an Individual Learning Plan.

Some clients meeting the **matrix** Assessor described a variety of issues that had been discussed with EMD staff. One had sought advice on setting up a business; another needed learning materials to be adapted to help him cope with dyslexia. Another benefitted from access to a laptop; a further client needed help to complete official forms.

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

As discussed in Strengths (Section 4 of this report above), EMD wrote its own materials for clients accessing the Points Based and ESOL functional skills programmes. The materials for both of these areas are now nationally accredited (by the Home Office and the national awarding body, Ascentis, respectively).

A key aspect of this work is EMD having considered who their target audience is for the programmes and developing relevant learning materials. It was decided, for example, that football players would learn more quickly and easily if number work related to time spent training, or how many seconds certain coaching moves took. Likewise in catering, weighing ingredients and dealing with menu prices made more obvious sense to learners than tackling more generic and apparently mundane topics like fictitious bus timetables.

Similar strategies were adopted in language training to ensure words and phrases were context specific. To EMD staff this seemed an obvious development. To many new staff and partners having experienced learning programmes for similar students in other providers, the use of context specific materials is a distinctive and positive feature of EMD.

EMD is developing 'Moodle' materials, mainly for staff access initially, where materials available via the internet are to be stored. This is led by an information technology specialist with input from the team.

An example of information resources that EMD provides for clients is one from the level 5 teaching course. A range of choices for leaflets was presented on PowerPoint, and many relevant leaflets (as judged by the learners) were sourced.

Staff are aware that some books can be out of date and they tend to rely on the internet to source more current information. One of the team is charged with ensuring information of general interest is obtained and circulated to staff.

Although at a rudimentary stage, there is a display board with, for example, leaflets from the 'Frank' drug awareness campaign. There is information about employability advice and access to multilingual interpreters. Telephone numbers of key partner or referral agencies are displayed.

**4.****People are supported in exploring options and making choices**

One of the acknowledged Strengths of EMD (see Section 4 above), is that the organisation is committed to supporting individuals and organisations dealing with ESOL and immigration issues. EMD's staff skills and services are greatly appreciated by individuals:

*"if it hadn't have been for their support I'd have quit"*

*"they go out of their way to help"*

Intermediaries (such as employers and law firms) and the like are similarly enthusiastic about EMD's support for people:

*"clients want realistic advice and they're not disappointed"*

*“when [name] deals with it it’s very quick; professional and personable”.*

EMD provides learners with initial information, advice and guidance at the start of their programme when the individual learning plan is agreed. Discussions include career aspirations and learning preferences as well as personal issues or barriers to learning. Realistic career plans are noted on the individual learning plan and discussed in subsequent reviews – or earlier if a learner requests help.

One learner described how, as a new arrival to Leeds, he was given transport to the course venue from the station until he got his bearings.

At initial review, support systems are clarified and checked. For example, a ‘Tier 1’ Points Based client from China was directed for additional Chinese specialist support. Reviews are also conducted mid programme and on completion. One learner who reported having received only minimal support from her employer and as a result EMD served as facilitator at the midpoint review. Staff secured an additional EMD laptop to enable the client could continue learning out of work time, as she wished.

Learners can access support via email if this is preferred – some find it is valuable as it is cheaper than constantly making the journey to see someone face to face. A key focus for all clients at the final stage is to explore how an individual may progress – whether to continued or new learning, or into other avenues.

Train to Gain businesses are given clear impartial advice as to how EMD can support employees. For example, one firm dealing with highly confidential banking information sought an information technology qualification. Initial discussions with EMD staff clarified that the information was so sensitive that assessors would not be able to see and assess staff using it. On the other hand, general administrative tasks were found to be less sensitive so the business is considering pursuing qualifications in Business Administration for its staff, or a Team Leader qualification.

Clients speak of how all staff are helpful - whoever picks up any query, and whether it is dealt with by telephone or personal visit. In a group discussion with the **matrix** Assessor, all clients positively agreed that staff

*“can relate to you... are down to earth... not judgmental”.*

One individual ‘sang the praises’ of EMD. Having discovered them through the website, he was effusive about the help he had received from EMD after several abortive and costly attempts to use lawyers to help him change his visa.

It is noticeable that many of EMD’s clients feel confused and vulnerable in a foreign land and the company’s support is immensely reassuring to them, whether for urgent asylum and immigration issues or for longer term language concerns.

## 5.

### **Service delivery is planned and maintained**

EMD specialises in immigration and ESOL services. It always seeks to provide as relevant and helpful information as possible while protecting confidentiality.

Directors see the main aim of EMD in an altruistic way:

*“The whole thing about teaching [people] skills is teaching them to be free.”*

They recognise that new arrivals to the UK rarely need only to develop language skills and it was a conscious decision of the Directors to incorporate immigration issues into EMD.

The development of the business is pursued with the sensitivity and strong ethics that complement the fundamental aims of EMD - to help people fulfil their ambitions - and these are evidently very close to the founding Director's heart.

Design of the marketing booklet, for example, had careful consideration. The colours of the stripes, around the company name in its logo, were carefully selected to reflect the colours of clothing typically preferred by certain minority ethnic groups. The telephone number that was deliberately chosen for the new Leeds premises is a key number in the Muslim faith so potential clients from that sector of the community have an immediate unspoken identification with EMD UK Ltd.

The Directors of the company recognise the need to involve staff at all levels and have ensured that ready access exists to respected colleagues for strategic support. One of the senior partners of a law firm is referred to and (tongue in cheek) is known as an 'uncle', as is the chief executive of one of the awarding bodies that EMD works with.

The company also accesses LSIS consultants, Members of Parliament and KPMG according to which aspect of the company their support needs are in at the time. Partner organisations confirm that EMD takes its commitment to deliver quality services seriously and is open to suggestions.

The Directors carefully monitor staff workloads. The recently introduced 'taskette' system encourages staff physically to record what jobs they need to do at work. This both facilitates standardisation discussions across the team and makes it easier for managers to see, at a glance, who may need additional support and who may be able to take on additional work. For example, when a member of staff became free in one contract, she was able to teach on the information technology qualification, which enabled more learners to take advantage of the support.

Various colleagues are involved in aspects of the business as befits his or her role and Directors look to staff for developing the business. For example, the two Directors deal with LSC contracts. One worked with the Points Based manager and the immigration lead in the OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) audit. The Senior Manager took the lead on ESOL developments; another team member is leading on the information, advice and guidance. All staff meeting the **matrix** Assessor felt that their views are welcomed and easy to offer.

EMD displays appropriate health and safety and public liability insurance certificates and due to its focus on immigrants has a high proportion of non-English speakers on its books in terms of staff as well as clients. EMD actively seeks speakers of other languages; currently staff can speak several languages including French, Polish, Lithuanian, Georgian and Mandarin. This is a useful complement to staff ESOL teaching skills. The organisation is responsive to learners' additional needs and will accommodate people with sensory impairments on individual requirement. EMD has a strong tradition of interacting in multifaith settings.

The company has clear policies and procedures for handling such issues as immigration queries, Points Based issues and staff recruitment. There are strict guidelines that are followed from the Home Office UK Borders Agency, OISC and awarding bodies as relevant. It has to be noted that these change often and staff are

aware they need to remain vigilant to keep up to date with almost daily changes. Although there is no named information, advice and guidance policy (the review and progression policy is deemed to incorporate the process, covering progress review and tracking learners on progression). Staff may wish to review if there needs to have an explicit policy if the company supports more colleagues to focus on this aspect of their role.

EMD staff have consciously developed extensive professional networks with a variety of organisations and this has proved to be an effective marketing tool. For example, other West Yorkshire Learning Providers that were also involved in Train to Gain contracts formed a ready pool of recruits when EMD launched its ESOL Teacher Training provision. Partners value the organisation's support highly, and several praised EMD's speed of response in, for example, securing a visa for a foreign national's wife. Partners appreciate EMD staff's ability to relate to clients, to be able to identify with them and establish a rapport whilst 'translating' a complex technical area like immigration into layman's terms.

## 6.

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

EMD is proactive about ensuring that its staff are trained and equipped to the job required of them. Staff members claim that development is a two way process – one had asked about a level 5 teaching specialism at recruitment interview, when it was to have been stipulated as a staff requirement to meet government requirements anyway. On induction staff are introduced to the organisation's policies and procedures on the intranet and gain much information and standardisation support from the weekly staff meetings.

As described in the Strengths in Section 4 above (page 6), staff support is strong – to the point of the **matrix** Assessor querying why the organisation had not pursued internal **matrix** Accreditation as well as external. The short answer offered was that it not been suggested; the organisation had not enlisted the support of a Registered **matrix** Adviser and LSC support had focussed only on the external services.

Two staff are qualified to OISC requirements to give immigration advice. All are acutely aware that it is illegal to give advice in this area without the recognised qualifications and are adept at referring people on. Two colleagues are about to embark on the OISC training. Another has been nominated to work towards the NVQ3 in Advice and Guidance, with a view to others following suit if it is deemed relevant.

It has been suggested to some that they may like to become magistrates. Whilst such developments are relevant to the business, the potential for individual gain and growth is significant. Support for staff includes ensuring that colleagues are happy in their personal lives, which clearly will have an impact on how well they perform for the business. One whose wife, is currently in their native country has been asked whether he wants support for her to come to England, or to help him return home ultimately.

Staff are trained in using technology - including digital voice recorders, Skype and Moodle in addition to the use of client information forms and standard company

documentation and procedures. Staff also received training on equality of opportunity from an external provider.

Although there is no formal appraisal system, staff are closely monitored through standardisation meetings for NVQ delivery, and weekly Friday team meetings which also enable discussion of any issues of general interest. Most of the staff work in an open plan office, so peer observation is unstructured yet commonplace. Any meeting notes are held on the staff intranet for associates and others not present at the meeting to be able to access what has been discussed.

## 7.

### **Feedback on the quality of the service is obtained**

Individuals accessing EMD for immigration advice usually have highly specific needs and are more concerned initially about having those urgently met than having explanations about feedback. However, the well-established clients are mainly enthusiastic about how the organisation welcomes views and seeks feedback. Most were aware of being invited to feed back general comments and suggestions as well as being confident of making a complaint should they need to. One or two were aware of EMD's mention of feedback in the client induction pack. Another was at pains to describe how feedback was sought via email, not simply through end of programme questionnaires. Another referred to the "*constant contact*" from his tutor during assessment and review meetings, and a group member cited that one of the best things about EMD is

*"I really think they use the comments for improvement".*

The majority of learners meeting the **matrix** Assessor believed that EMD welcomes feedback and that learner views are sought in order to improve the quality of the service.

EMD's own evaluation forms check that learners completing their programmes are aware that

*"advice is available on what I may do at the end of the qualification".*

The organisation uses its own forms unless contractors demand the use of others.

The Self Assessment Report refers to feedback gathered on what employers and learners want from programmes – respectively more vocational courses and involvement in accessing funding; and more social events and quicker certificates. Staff confirmed that these are being pursued.

Partners were similarly clear on the organisation's interest in gathering feedback for improvement purposes:

*"he's always asking for feedback"*

and one praised the EMD tutor for actively engaging his views about how best to ensure end users' aftercare. Another described how EMD had put some of their tests on the website after a direct request and another commented that feedback was gathered via friendly discussions rather than formal evaluation processes.

Staff were actively involved in recent developments to feed back on the student booklet for the information technology qualification, and revise it. Their views are regularly reported to be sought through team meetings and individual discussions

with colleagues. The development of the Moodle came as a result of staff suggestions.

## 8.

### **Continuous quality improvement is ensured through monitoring, evaluation and action**

This report has been punctuated with examples of how EMD evidently regularly reviews its services and updates procedures to improve them.

One clear example of how EMD has improved its support is the amendment of an Individual Learning Plan originally provided by a contractor. EMD staff identified the need for more space to record discussions concerning an individual's learning goals and career aspirations and with permission amended the form accordingly. Although it has not been possible to continue with the amended form with some larger college contracts, EMD staff still value their learning experience and still discuss the same areas with learners.

A review of policies and procedures in 2009 led to a revised learner induction and new health and safety policy. The Quality Improvement Plan at the end of the Self Assessment Report gives clear dated action points to follow across the business – such as immigration and citizenship support for ESOL and citizenship learners to be improved by July 2010, by the production new information leaflets in community languages. Another positive example is to investigate the possibility of e-portfolios for NVQ candidates between April and December 2010.

An external review of equality of the ethnic breakdown of EMD's clients suggested it had an under-representation of white British people. The level 5 teaching course has redressed this a little, and although the declared ESOL and immigration aims of the business suggest that there will be a non-English focus, EMD is keen to ensure its services appeal to everyone eligible for them.

A recent improvement was the move of premises from Keighley to Leeds. Staff felt that a more professional looking base would appeal to a wider range of clients. There was also a clear need for better internet access and, as the business was growing, more space. The new base has met all of these needs.

The 'taskette' system (discussed in element 5 above) is a recent example of how a small development is improving management of staff workloads, through the introduction of a simple yet more tangible tool.

The organisation is also clearly flexible enough to revise programmes at short notice. For example, when a tutor became ill in the middle of a course, an EMD colleague stepped in. She partly taught it herself and partly negotiated a range of guest speakers which were very well received by the learners.

EMD is also responsive to learners, as when, for example, a learner requested more input on the theory of language acquisition in one of the courses. This was promptly sourced and delivered to the delight of the learner:

*"it was really good. And I said so [to EMD]!"*

Course materials have been altered to be more user friendly after one of the staff had mentioned

*“my client just didn't understand”*

a certain course booklet. The revised booklet has been deemed to be much better.

A partner representative explained how he fed back a request for something geared to his industry, and he was happy with the resulting context specific test that was available from the website.

This is evidently now standard practice for EMD as the organisation always seeks to understand the needs of the customer and adapt or create materials accordingly.

## 7. Conclusion

EMD UK Ltd clearly operates in line with the requirements of the **matrix** Standard, in terms of the information advice and guidance provided alongside its professional training and immigration services for individuals and businesses.

Its challenge going forward is to balance its projected growth and increasing demand for its services with its aim to retain its highly esteemed personal touch, with the service remaining small enough for all clients to be known to the leaders of EMD UK Ltd.