

**Commercial in Confidence**



**matrix Accreditation Review Report**

**For**

**NEW ERA ENTERPRISES (E LANCS) LTD**

**By Nigel Hunt**

**On behalf of ENTO LTD**

**Assessment Date: 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

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## 1. Executive Summary

Having carried out the Assessment in accordance with the guidelines provided New Era Enterprises (E Lancs.) Ltd has demonstrated that it continues to meet the **matrix quality standard for information advice and guidance services** for external and internal services. Accreditation to the **matrix** Standard is granted for the external and internal services provided by New Era Enterprises (E Lancs.) Ltd.

This Assessment Report covers the services provided by New Era Enterprises (E Lancs.) Ltd and includes a brief description of the organisation, the Assessment methodology and an overview of how New Era Enterprises (E Lancs.) Ltd demonstrated that it continues to meet the **matrix** Standard for the provision of external and internal services.

## 2. Introduction

The Accreditation Review was in respect of the external and internal provision of information, advice and guidance to clients accessing the external services provided by New Era Enterprises (E Lancs.) Ltd (hereafter referred to as New Era) and for internal services provided to New Era's staff.

New Era was established in 1987. It is a community business whose aims and objectives are to promote urban regeneration, job creation and job retention through the development of innovative entrepreneurial activity and to provide educational, training, advice and counselling.

There have been a number of changes since the previous Assessment. New Era has recently moved into a new building which has replaced an older building of character. The new building provides a more modern layout and improved facilities for delivery of activities such as job search and the delivery of training. It is equally accessible to clients located close both to its former premises and to the centre of Burnley. Whilst the core of New Era's services remain the same, there has been a number of changes over the last two years with the ending of funding through ESF and SRB projects. New Era currently delivers three main projects that provide information, advice and guidance.

First, the New Beginnings Project is a new project commenced in July 2008 which works with homeless people or people at risk of becoming homeless many of whom have other barriers, for example in relation to substance and alcohol misuse, mental health issues and unemployment. This project is funded through The Big Lottery. The project provides 'drop-in' facilities and access to support through basic IT training, employment searches and support through signposting. Second, New Era is sub-contracted to provide support to people as part of a thirteen week New Deal programme as sub-contractor to Bootstrap Enterprises, providing job search and other activities alongside work placements primarily in retail and administration.

The third main area is in relation to the provision of childcare training delivered through Train to Gain funded through the Learning Skills Council and a small ESF contract. New Era own and manage a Pre-School Play Centre and a childcare

agency providing seasonal, or longer term, support to childcare organisations across Pennine Lancashire. It has just been awarded a childcare contract in Blackburn and Darwin, its first development outside its main base in Burnley. The Training Centre is approved to accredit awards by NCFE and CACHE (Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education). New Era is also involved in promoting and developing social enterprise.

The funding changes have meant that the core staffing levels have decreased to fourteen. New Era is seeking to develop its training activities further and to seek other contracts providing information, advice and guidance, support and training in partnership with other agencies and through funding such as the forthcoming flexible New Deal provision.

New Era continues to be run and managed as a cooperative. The management framework has been streamlined over the last twelve months and now comprises solely of a Board of Management (that includes the Key Workers) that has overall responsibility for New Era's strategic direction and revised team meeting arrangements with Key Workers meeting as an Operations Group. The cooperative principles are clearly evident across all areas of New Era's activities and this remains one of its strengths.

The objectives of the Review were to confirm that both the external and internal Services continued to meet the standard. Re-accreditation to the **matrix quality standard for information advice and guidance services** provides continued recognition of the quality of external provision, for Train to Gain delivery and for internal services of the continued quality of support and commitment to staff.

### 3. Methodology

As part of the Assessment the Assessor met learners and clients across the three areas of service delivery as well as speaking to all Key Worker staff and Project Worker delivery staff within the office. The Assessor also met different staff within the office in relation to the provision of internal information, advice and guidance. The Assessor spoke to three partners in relation to the work in respect of the New Beginnings Project, the New Deal provision and in relation to Lancashire County Council's Help Direct Gateway community support service.

The Assessor used a range of methods to gather evidence against the **matrix Standard**;

- One to one interviews (twelve interviews with managers and staff).
- Informal group interviews (four group interviews with thirteen external clients in receipt of information, advice and guidance and five with staff in receipt of internal information, advice and guidance).
- Document review (a review of key documents including the Business Plan, equality information, resources, client feedback, policies and procedures, Board and team meeting minutes).

- Telephone interviews (with three partner organisations).
- Feedback - the Assessor provided feedback during and at the end of the Assessment.

## 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.

- The Individual Learning Plan which you have developed for your Train to Gain provision clearly highlights the IAG that has been provided and the outcomes of those discussions (4d).
- Project Workers have a good knowledge and understanding of the local community and labour market and make realistic suggestions about the options available to their clients (4e).
- The cooperative ethos means that all workers have a chance and opportunity to contribute and to inform service planning and delivery (5c).
- New Era is well connected in the local community and is particularly strong in terms of understanding the benefits of partnership working and in being active partners across the range of its work (5g).
- Project Workers often work across projects and often share information between projects. This sharing and cross fertilisation of knowledge is of benefit for its clients (6b).
- A number of staff are studying PTLLS and similar qualifications that are partly needed for current activities, but also to help develop other potential delivery streams (6b).
- The supervision and support arrangements across Key Workers and Project Workers for the internal provision of IAG are excellent with easy access to staff through both informal and formal arrangements (6e).

## 5. Areas for Continuous Improvement

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

- The Assessment demonstrates that New Era has a strong underlying ethos of providing added value for clients through its IAG provision. This is not generally reflected in New Era's promotional information. Key workers may wish to consider the benefit of reviewing its promotional information to better demonstrate and promote the 'added value' that it gives to clients (1b).
- Feedback from New Deal clients is very positive about the support they receive and the opportunities to move into jobs through New Era. There is scope to consider how it can better utilise these positive outcomes from the work that it does with clients, promoting role models, perhaps making use of the space in its new training and job search room (1b).
- Whilst all office based staff are provided with a handbook that contains information about the internal information, advice and guidance that is provided, this is not automatically available to all staff contracted to work within your childcare business. New Era may wish to consider the most appropriate method of providing this information to them so that they are aware of the range and extent of the support that is available (1c).
- The new web-site provides useful information about New Era. However, Key Workers may wish to review the information on the site in relation to what clients can expect from your services, particularly in relation to the childcare and Train to Gain provision and your New Deal activities (2a)
- You work with a number of volunteers, some of whom are in a position to provide information, advice and guidance through their front line work. Key Workers may wish to consider identifying any training and learning needs in this respect and to consider the introduction of some baseline training on IAG perhaps at OCN Level (6b).
- The Bootstrap Enterprises questionnaire which is currently used to seek feedback provides very limited information about the quality of the service provided. You may wish to seek to replace this with your own questionnaire that seeks better qualitative feedback, including whether clients have been offered choice and options and whether they consider the service has been impartial (7c).
- You work with many external clients whose culture is not one of form filling. You may wish, therefore, to consider alternative ways through which you can seek qualitative feedback, perhaps using small focus groups run by Project Workers or Key Workers not associated with the clients on a day-to-day basis (7c).

- In respect of feedback on the internal service provision, you last sought feedback some two years ago. You may wish to consider that following recent changes the time is appropriate for further feedback on this and to ensure that feedback continues on a regular basis, thereafter (7c).
- There is regular reporting to the Board of Management on performance against contract provision. However, Key Workers recognise the need to improve the Management Information Systems in place to ensure more effective monitoring systems are in place (8a).
- The changes to the business and the move to new premises over the last twelve months have caused a hiatus in the business planning process. Key Workers need to revisit this and to develop the business planning processes that reflect current business activities and opportunities (8d).

## 6. 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**

New Era's services to external clients are determined by the nature of the contracts which is delivering. Although these contracts have changed since the previous Assessment and the funding streams have changed the core client groups remain very similar. The services remain geared towards support for disadvantaged people living within Burnley both in respect of those with multiple barriers to employment and work and those seeking to overcome barriers to work. The introduction of Train to Gain funding has seen an expansion of activity in relation to its childcare activities. Across its services New Era provides support to a wide range of people. In respect of its internal service provision, all of the staff of New Era are eligible, including those employed through the childcare agency, and volunteers working with New Era.

Externally, clients find out about New Era from its promotional materials and through referral agencies. The New Beginnings project is well promoted within the community and receives referrals from ADS an agency working with people with alcohol and substance abuse, as well as receiving referrals from other New Era projects. The New Deal project receives referrals from Bootstraps Enterprises to whom it sub-contracts to provide the service via Job Centre Plus and TWL Training. For the Childcare provision learners come from a variety of sources, often through the providers who work with their childcare agency, or through Families Information Service, and through word of mouth as well as information leaflets and posters and through links with agencies such as Children's Centres. Since the previous Assessment New Era has improved the information available in respect of the

Employee Handbook which relates to the internal IAG support that is available. The Handbook reinforces the information that is provided as part of the induction process and reinforced through the one-to-one sessions and appraisal processes.

Information about the external service is accessible to potential users through a range of channels that are appropriate. For example, in respect of the New Deal project delivered in partnership with Bootstrap Enterprises, there is close working between the two agencies which helps the referral of appropriate clients to New Era, and which ensures they know something about New Era before they move onto job search and placements through them. New Era is aware of the ethnic mix across Burnley and is certainly successful in reaching out to those communities in respect of people either on New Deal provision or through Childcare learning. Internally, staff have easy access to the Staff Handbook which contains information about the support that is available.

## 2.

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

Across each of the external services information is available which provides potential users with information about the service. The New Beginnings leaflet, for example, sets out the support, information and guidance that is available as part of the programme. The Childcare leaflets also provide good information about what is available to them as learners. Staff will speak to potential childcare learners and meet with them as a prelude to identifying how best they can support their needs. For New Deal clients, the close working relationship with Bootstrap Enterprises means that users of that service knew what to expect when they were referred to New Era and had received a leaflet about New Era and its work.

The detail of the Service is set out during the initial induction session for New Deal clients that affords the opportunity for a more detailed discussion about New Era's ethos, how New Era can support clients, working through the Individual Learning Plan to identify any specific issues or needs and requirements and identifies any specific barriers to placement opportunities. These sessions seek to explore the suitability of New Era for the client, perhaps in respect of the type of placement, the identification of any barriers, or specific areas of job search activity, issues such as IT skills and support needed and in some cases the setting up of email addresses to assist with job applications on-line. External users of the Service are made aware of issues such as confidentiality, equality and complaints at the first session and a leaflet on these key policies is made available in the induction pack.

For internal services, users become aware of what support is available as a progression through interview, induction and initial supervision sessions. As well as these methods, the Staff Handbook contains an Appendix which sets out in more detail the elements where internal information, advice and guidance is available, for example, in respect of discussing job opportunities, performance and appraisal and issues such as advice on pensions. For internal users issues around confidentiality, equality and the complaints process are also discussed during the induction period.

Many of New Era's clients have barriers and can be challenging. It is clear that the external services are very much tailored to the needs of those individuals whether it is through New Beginnings or through the New Deal provision. Within New Beginnings, the service may be support with homelessness issues, or related to

other barriers, and may include referral to other agencies, for example, in relation to benefit provision. The interview process is geared to ensuring that those individual's needs are established from the outset. For the New Deal clients, discussions through the Individual Learning Plan highlights the areas of work in which they are interested and provides the backdrop for discussions about those placements and which they would prefer. In one instance, a New Deal client indicated that his Project Worker had arranged a different placement in response to his changed needs. Feedback from other New Deal clients was very positive about how well New Era had understood their needs, particularly in their type of placements. In other areas, for example, childcare provision, learners were very clear about what they wanted from the Service and New Era were able to meet their requirements. Discussions with the childcare learners indicated that there was a very healthy dialogue between them and their Assessor. The length of intervention with learners over a period of months reinforced the opportunity for candidates to identify what they want from New Era which often changed as they became more confident in their studies. Feedback from clients provided examples as to how they had been supported in accessing other support services.

Internally, the IAG provision is available through regular support sessions, the annual Review and through team and other staff meetings. In reality, the close working proximity means that much of the information, advice and guidance provided internally is through informal discussions, but also that they are able to seek support at times outside these structured arrangements and some had done so. Staff spoke about a range of subjects that had been discussed as part of the internal information, advice and guidance provision, and which had involved discussion about support available through outside agencies. The staff structure with Key Workers, meant that Project Workers, or other Key Workers could approach a number of individuals for support. Staff were also able to give examples of how they had used the service to deal with specific issues particularly, for example, support with learning opportunities, maternity provision, and a potential move to shorter working hours.

### 3.

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

New Era holds very little traditional based information, other than for its Childcare activities which is used for reference in terms of its underpinning knowledge workshops. Where Project Workers work with New Deal clients in respect of job search activities this is predominantly achieved through electronic access using internet job sites. The move to new premises has enabled New Era to provide significantly improved access to electronic information. Clients confirmed that the internet sites which they used provided them with suitable job opportunities. Staff had also helped them to set up email accounts to enable them to apply for jobs on line and to receive job search information by email. They also has access to traditional resources through the local paper as well as information about local Colleges and community based courses.

Since the previous Assessment New Era has developed an Information Strategy, which is the responsibility of the Administrator to implement and to ensure that information remains up-to-date, which it was at the time of the Assessment. The recent move to new premises also helped to ensure that information was up-to-date. Some information is useful only for specific projects and it is the responsibility of Key

Workers to ensure that information needed for their projects is appropriate to the needs of individuals. Where clients are vulnerable Project Workers support them in terms of accessing specific information needed to help them overcome barriers, for example, in respect of benefits and applications for housing. A majority of the staff have worked for New Era for a number of years and had good local connections and knew where to source any appropriate local information that might be required and how to access it. Workers often work across projects and often share information between projects. This sharing and cross fertilisation of knowledge is of benefit for its clients.

The Childcare NVQ and Train to Gain provision is based very much around support for individual candidates. Their needs, daily work activities, learning style, work aspirations and work environment are individual to them and this information is discussed with them in helping to inform, advice and guide. Information and advice is available to help support candidates through the NVQ process. This process is twofold. First, through one-to-one discussions and, second, through five taught, underpinning knowledge group sessions. Information provided might be through discussion with candidates, referral to organisational information, or other sources. Information is provided to candidates through the regular learning Review process and the underpinning knowledge sessions. Both provide the opportunity for information to be clarified as appropriate. The feedback from all learners was that the Assessors were exceptionally good at translating the detail and jargon of the NVQ criteria into an understandable and meaningful language and to explain what it meant in the context of the learner's work role.

For staff making use of internal information, advice and guidance, information is easily accessible through the Staff Handbook which is readily available to office based staff. The policies are updated regularly, although the recent move to new premises has meant that the review of policies has not been fully up-to-date. Policies and procedures have issue dates to reflect the need to ensure they are regularly reviewed. Information about learning opportunities are readily available and also emailed to staff, as appropriate, and staff have the opportunity to research their own needs through the internet. Information may be available through the Review process, the supervision meetings, or through team meetings or informally within the office. Different Project Workers or Key Workers have access to specialist knowledge that might be required in helping to provide specialist support or information, for example, on specific HR matters or on pensions, or employment issues. Staff seeking information, advice and guidance have access to this specialist knowledge either directly or through their Key Worker. The cooperative working of the organisation continues to foster a very open environment which encourages the exchange and transfer of information.

#### **4.**

#### **People are supported in exploring options and making choices**

New Era provides a very supportive environment for its New Deal clients, for clients on its New Beginnings programme and for learners who are working towards their NVQs. This supportive environment was clearly welcomed by the clients and candidates because it gave them confidence to make their own decisions. The Feedback from learners on the NVQ programme indicated that the support and environment was one which had helped them make a transition back into learning after a lengthy break or had helped them overcome barriers to learning. The

impartiality of the support and advice and guidance was clear from the outset where they discussed openly the optional units that were available to them. This had been done within the context of their job, work placement or volunteering. There is a general advice session about all the available options prior to learners making their choice. Learners welcomed the advice on which units were appropriate to their environment, but importantly took into account their potential longer term aims and objectives. They were aware of the limitations of the support their Assessors could offer. Learners were clear that at the end of the day, the decisions about options, about progression had been theirs. They were also clear that the advice given during the underpinning knowledge sessions was objective. Whilst options often related to the development onto NVQ Level Two to Level Three, Assessors were alive to the possibilities of horizontal progression, or onto other areas such as Foundation Courses.

Across the other areas of New Era's activities, the varied backgrounds of clients, their individual placements, skills and experience meant that the information, advice and guidance was clearly focused on their needs. In one instance, a client had chosen a placement option which they no longer wished to continue. In discussion with the Project Worker they identified other options and choices which were available one of which the client decided to pursue. Clients across the New Deal provision and New Beginnings project were all very positive about the support they had received and the confidence which working with New Era had helped to develop, which was enabling them to make informed choices about what they wanted to do.

Internal staff were also pleased with the support and guidance they have received through the one-to-one meetings and Reviews as well as the support that was available outside the formal framework. They were also very clear about the limitations of the information, advice and guidance and the need, on occasions, to pursue information, for example, on courses or professional development on their own initiative, but also in the knowledge that they could discuss options and choices with their Key Worker or with staff who had specialist knowledge. The openness of the work environment again provided staff with the confidence to discuss issues and to seek information, advice and guidance where appropriate. It was evident that the one-to-one meetings and the Reviews are two way processes enabling discussion and the opportunity to discuss options and choices, if appropriate. A particular example provided was in relation to the choice for further learning in respect of training qualifications. Staff at all levels provided examples where they had either sought or provided information, advice and guidance to other staff.

## 5.

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

Although the contracts under which New Era deliver its services have changed over the last three years, their aims and objectives have remained unchanged. These continue to relate to the promotion of employment prospects and training, primarily in Burnley, but also in the surrounding towns. Each of its three main projects have their clear aims and objectives which are dependent upon the funding requirements but which, in general terms, relate to improved employment opportunities and delivery of training outcomes. New Era is a cooperative and, as such, does not have a hierarchical management structure. It is managed through its Key Workers with the Board, which includes Key Workers, determining the strategic direction with the five Key Workers providing the leadership for the projects for which they are responsible.

The management structure has changed over the last three years, with a reduction in the number of formal meetings.

The cooperative principles work well for the staff and the organisation. As a result, there is a very open culture which means that all staff are engaged in putting forward ideas and the decision making processes. Staff may be engaged across more than one project and this helps to provide an added perspective to projects and identifying service improvements and good practice that can be utilised across the organisation. All staff had recently been involved in an Away Day considering the future development of the organisation. It also provides staff with the opportunity to become involved with a wider range of opportunities and to be part of managing the organisation. It also clearly aids the day-to-day efficient running of the organisation. As a voluntary organisation running a number of projects, and having made redundancies in the last twelve months, New Era is very conscious and aware of the need for effective management. Staff work to a variety of contracts, none of which is full time, but which provides the flexibility to move staff between projects and to meet peak demands as appropriate.

New Era has a number of detailed policies and procedures that cover current legislation, such as health and safety, diversity and areas of good practice that are relevant to both external and internal provision. These are reviewed regularly and available for staff. These, together with the good practices, the impartiality of advice and guidance, the welcoming and friendly atmosphere mean that the organisation clearly meets the National IAG Principles.

New Era understands the value of partnership working and works closely with partners across its three main projects. The New Deal project works closely with Bootstrap Enterprises and part delivers the project from their premises. The New Beginnings Project works closely with ADS and the local church community, whilst the Childcare provision works closely with childcare providers and organisations such as Family Information Services. New Era has also become involved with Lancashire County Council's Help Direct working with Calico Housing providing information, advice and guidance to referrals through those channels.

Internally, the aim of the Service is to provide opportunities for staff development and career progression, particularly in the context of the growth and development of New Era and the ever changing nature of services they are contracted to provide. For example, many of the staff are currently engaged in developing their teaching and learning skills, through PTLLS linking into considering new business opportunities. As with external services, the Service is based on co-operative principles with all staff having an input into the way it has been developed. Resources for development are limited but staff are conscious of the resource limitations, and are adept at seeking the most cost effective options and making use of available funding options. New Era is linked into Networks through which it is able to resource learning opportunities.

## 6.

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

Although there has only been one recent new appointment, New Era has in place a comprehensive induction framework which provides new staff with an overview of the organisation as well as an induction into their job. This included activities such as mentoring and job shadowing. A newly promoted Key Worker was also positive about the support that she had received through one-to-one meetings and supervision as she moved into and progressed in her new role. Although the organisation has changed its meetings structure since the previous Assessment, the co-operative nature of the business and wider discussion about issues as well as the proximity of staff adds to the support for new staff.

Staff were all very positive about the learning and training opportunities which were available. Staff are well qualified in their specific areas and activities both at NVQ Level and degree qualifications. Nearly all staff were undergoing some form of learning or development from an NVQ Level Three in IAG, to PTLLS, CTLLS and other training/teaching qualifications. Staff were undertaking these particular qualifications both in relation to their current activities, but also to provide wider opportunities for organisational development in the future. Staff, and volunteers, are very aware of the limitations of their roles, for example, the Administrator was aware of when to refer issues to other staff as were the volunteers working within the New Beginnings project. There were a number of examples where staff had sought advice from colleagues. There is a well ordered process of supervision meetings and Reviews which provide staff with the opportunity to discuss learning and development opportunities, but in reality much is discussed informally within the office and at team meetings. Staff involved in NVQs hold regular standardisation meetings and use these as well as external verification as learning opportunities. Where Project Workers work on new projects, any learning needs are identified and implemented. A system of peer review is in place which helps ensure the competency of staff is maintained and learning needs identified.

New Era's induction process for Key Workers addresses issues such as awareness and knowledge of staff management and their Review process specifically focuses on Key Workers' competence in delivering support. Discussions with the new Key Worker confirmed that she had identified a learning need and had also been mentored as part of the move into her new role, and learning new skills and developing competencies to be able to offer information, advice and guidance to staff. She had continued to provide external information, advice and guidance and had clearly retained competencies in relation to the overall provision of information, advice and guidance. She recognised her limitations in the early stage of her new post and had sought appropriate support. In some instances, Project Workers have specialist knowledge and Key Workers will utilise their knowledge as appropriate.

## 7.

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

New Era seek formal feedback from their customers across their services and has a formal complaints process. The open nature of the organisation means that there is plenty of informal comment and feedback between clients and Project and Key Workers. The New Deal clients are asked to complete a questionnaire, which has been developed by Bootstrap Enterprises. Feedback about New Era is positive. Team meetings and one-to-one discussions are used to discuss feedback, but the openness of the office and close working environment means that any issues are

discussed speedily and need not wait to use the formal mechanisms for taking forward a response to any adverse feedback. The Operations Group meeting receives reports from across all projects and provides an opportunity for projects to learn from feedback from others. Feedback is also sought from partner agencies both through regular meetings with them, for example, with Bootstrap Enterprises and from external verifiers. There have been no complaints about the service.

Internally there is a grievance procedure that acts as a mechanism for complaints. Project Workers may also seek support, supervision and Review through a different Key Worker should they wish. Workers are aware of this through the Staff Handbook and their induction that are mechanisms used to advise staff about how they may feedback. The openness within the office makes it easy to discuss issues and to approach Key Workers to provide feedback and to discuss improvements to the service they receive. Most recently discussions between staff led to the changes in the meeting structures which staff felt are effective and provides them with more times with their services. Staff very much like the cooperative working environment. Following the previous Assessment a robust feedback survey was conducted which led to improvements in awareness about internal IAG provision.

## 8.

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

New Era has in place processes that monitor their performance and achievements. There are regular staff meetings at which performance is discussed and projects are discussed at bi-monthly Board Meetings which reviews progress in respect of outputs and outcomes. For the New Deal contract there are regular meetings with the sub-contractor to monitor and measure progress. Similarly, there is regular monthly monitoring of the Train to Gain provision and its outcomes in respect of timeliness and delivery and it is performing well in these areas. There is also bi-monthly reporting of the New Beginnings project through The Big Lottery. New Era performs well against its targets, and although the New Deal project is below target, it is performing well in comparison to other similar projects. Feedback is reviewed regularly through team meetings and the Board. There is a clear culture of continuous improvement identified both in how feedback from clients and partners is used, but also in the development of new services to meet new and changing needs of its clients. At the time of the Assessment New Era was submitting bids for new areas of activity and further partnership working that would enable it to continue to develop the provision of information, advice and guidance in Burnley and surrounding areas. New Era is currently reviewing its business planning processes through the involvement of external consultancy through the KPMG 'World Class' programme and is also seeking to develop its performance management system.

Internally, the staff meetings and Operations meeting provide the mechanism for reviewing its internal service provision. This is discussed at Review meetings and any issues raised through discussion lead to changes in practices and policies and procedures. The Investors in People reaccreditation demonstrates continues improvement and good level of performance in that area of internal service delivery. The internal services have developed since the previous Assessment and following the staff feedback process. As a co-operative, Key Workers value staff involvement in the overall management of the organisation and all staff are very forthcoming in

suggesting improvements, which is fostered by the open environment within which staff work. Staff have also started to develop the provision of information, advice and guidance for staff on its childcare register visiting them in their workplaces to better understand their work environment when they are working for different providers.

## **7. Conclusion**

Since the previous Assessment New Era has changed and developed. Whilst it continues to work with similar disadvantaged groups across Burnley, the contracts within which it works have changed. There is a greater emphasis on childcare training through Train to Gain and there has been a skilling up of staff in training for PTTLS and CTLLS to develop this aspect of the business in the future. Although the projects with which New Era work have changed there is still an overriding commitment to deliver quality IAG to people in Burnley and neighbouring areas. The internal service delivery remains good aided by the cooperative working which provides good access to Key Workers and an openness which allows sharing of information. Since the previous Assessment New Era has moved to new, and better, open plan premises which has helped to lead to a better understanding of the wider business by Project Workers, has become more management focused has developed the use of volunteers and an organisation which recognises the benefits of good partnership working.