



merlin

promoting supply chain excellence

Assessment Report
For

INTERSERVE WORKING FUTURES

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On behalf of emqc Ltd

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About the Organisation

Interserve Working Futures (IWF) was formerly known as Business Employment Services Training (BEST). On the 4th May 2012 BEST became part of Interserve Plc, the international support services and construction group and was re-branded as Interserve Working Futures (IWF). They have been established for 23 years with the aim of positively impacting on peoples' lives through training development and support. Now part of Interserve they are proud of their excellent reputation and proven record of services in the welfare to work arena.

IWF are one of the country's leading providers of innovative, government sponsored training programmes for the workplace and are proud to be delivering a range of employer and customer programmes including the Government's flagship Work Programme. Interserve Working Futures provide training programmes that give people the right skills to find the right job and work with employers from across Yorkshire to help them recruit and develop the very best staff.

The organisation shares a common purpose, to deliver effective training and recruitment solutions for individuals and business, providing a positive economic impact across local communities. As part of Interserve Plc, they continue to provide the same high quality, personal services, supported by the resources and expertise of a large, successful international company.

Assessment Methodology

It is a requirement, by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that all Prime contract holders of the Work Programme undertake an assessment against the Merlin Standard before 29th June 2012, which includes Interserve Working Futures. The assessment team comprised of Eyvonne Wood (Lead Assessor) and two Team Assessors: Sonia Renzo and Hayley Allen, supported by the assessment co-ordinator within the organisation.

The scope of the assessment concentrated on the Work Programme contract in CPA 16 West Yorkshire but also lightly touched on the Mandatory Work Activity (MWA) Programme.

The assessment team spent a total of 12 days on-site reviewing documentary evidence, IT systems and undertaking interviews internally with a mix of IWF staff at all levels and externally with 100% of Supply Chain Partners (SCP's) both Tier 2 and Tier 3 either face-to-face or via the telephone. A total of 37 interviews from strategic level to front line delivery staff were conducted including the ability to sit in on an Operational Meeting of the SCP's . A sample of those organisations that had been unsuccessful were contacted to give them the opportunity to feed into the assessment process. A formal feedback presentation was presented to the management team on the last day of the on-site assessment where the outcome of the assessment was delivered.

Assessment Outcome

Overall %	75%
Overall Outcome	Good
Supply Chain Design	Good
Commitment	Good
Conduct	Good
Review	Satisfactory

Strengths

- ▲ Design of the supply chain (SC) was made with clear rationale behind the strategic decision and the research undertaken to ensure it would meet the needs of the customers, commissioner and the communities in which they would deliver. (2a.1)
- ▲ The culture of IWF has ensured a level of openness and honesty that has been reflected in the enthusiasm of the Supply Chain Partners (SCP's) to work with IWF. There is a synergy between the partners and IWF that is entrenched in everything they do. (2a.1, 3a.1)
- ▲ Effective communications strategies have resulted in the whole of the SC being clear about expectations fostering good working relationships from the start. (2a.1, 2a.4, 2a.5)
- ▲ The SC are extensively consulted ensuring they are involved in informing decisions. There are many examples of improvements that have been made to the systems and procedures from SC feedback. (2a.2)
- ▲ IWF have clear and effective strategies to manage the TUPE process. (3a.2)
- ▲ The way in which IWF works with the SC can be identified as excellent, being truly supportive ensuring that they manage with a business head and a caring heart. (2a.5, 3a.1)
- ▲ Contracting and funding is a particular strength. IWF made a strategic decision to take on the financial risks to ensure they were able to have the SC they knew was needed within each geographical area. Negotiations were fully embraced and took full account of the different needs of all partners. (2c.1 – 2c.8)
- ▲ Equally IWF have realised the importance of environmental sustainability and have

undertaken a lot of work with their partners in raising awareness, delivering training and setting plans to ensure they support the whole chain.(2b.1, 3b.7)

- ▲ The SAR process is robust and the end to end SCP's have been fully involved in ensuring this truly reflects IWF strengths and weaknesses. IWF in the true spirit of openness and transparency also shared their SAQ and the PAN for their Merlin Assessment throughout their SC. (4a.2)
- ▲ A unique selling point of IWF is the Best Friend Directory (BDF) which is used to support the SC and the customers by ensuring access to specialist support agencies outside the formal SC network. (2a.3, 2b.3, 3d.1)
- ▲ Value for money (VFM) has been a regular focus for the SC. IWF decided right from the early stages of procurement to instil VFM by conducting joint road shows and events with DWP so as decrease the amount of events that potential SCP's were having to attend. (3d.5)
- ▲ The 7 steps to success training programme for staff both IWF staff and those of the SCP's which is being rolled out via the Academy from needs identified through review processes. (2b.3)
- ▲ IWF have realised the needs around IAG both with their SCP's and the customers and this is firmly embedded at all levels with staff having IAG qualifications and IWF hold **matrix** accreditation. (3b.3, 3d.6)

Areas for Improvement

- ▲ The provision of learning and development for staff is good. This could be further improved by identifying the preferred learning style of partners to ensure the activities are delivered using the most appropriate method. In addition, the organisation would benefit from a greater depth of evaluation of training and development activities to identify the impact on the performance of the SC, the individual member of staff and importantly service delivery to the customer. (2b.3)
- ▲ IWF have a strong ethos and culture with their SCP's however, it was recognised that this could be further supported by the introduction of a SC Charter or some form of SC Principles being developed by the SC. (3a.1)
- ▲ There are a number of pilots and initiatives that are being designed and implemented around developing the SCP's and their staff. Once these improvements have been embedded this will support the whole of the supply chain further. (2b.3, 3b.8, 3d.1)
- ▲ IWF have worked extensively with their SCP's and encourage collaborative working as a SC, one year into the contract there is now a need for the SC to be encouraged to work more collaboratively with each other. This has started to happen but IWF need to consider how they can further drive this. (2a.3, 3b.8, 3d.1)

- ▲ Quality is satisfactory at this time due to the team changes and the many improvements within quality that are taking place, once these have been implemented and embedded this will vastly support the quality team, the SCP's and positively impact upon service delivery. (3b.1, 3b.2)
- ▲ In order for IWF and their SC to be able to measure the wider objectives they first need to identify what they are going to measure, how and what they want to achieve from those measurements. (4a.3-6)
- ▲ Further development of the MI system will allow more detailed reports to be produced around diversity & equality, customer distance travelled and enable the measurement of wider policy and objectives. (3d.4)
- ▲ Diversity and Equality (D&E) data and information is collected and reports are available from the MI system YETI, however, due to the already identified issues with the MI system further improvements are required. (3e.2, 3e.3)
- ▲ There is a strategic approach to ensuring environmental sustainability is embedded and monitored across the entire SC network. This approach could be enhanced further to provide data, which will enable IWF and its SCP's to demonstrate the impact on the wider policy and objectives of the commissioner. (3b.7) (4a.3) (4a.6)
- ▲ IWF would benefit from clearly defining what 'excellent practice' looks like and feels like. Decide how this will be identified and look to include the SCP's extensively in this process, to be effective. How will it be documented, shared throughout the SC and how IWF can measure its effectiveness. (3b.8) (3d.2) (3d.5)
- ▲ The collection of stakeholder feedback is good but IWF have identified the need for a more structured formal process for gathering feedback from all stakeholders, including employers. (4a.1) (4a.2)
- ▲ IWF may wish to consider developing a central point for updates or changes to legislative, contractual and regulatory requirements to be communicated out and stored for future reference. (3a.4)

Areas Requiring Further Development

None identified throughout this assessment.

Assessment Findings

1 Supply Chain Design

1a) Supply chain design

IWF looked to see which CPA they could achieve the strongest offer of delivery and Supply Chain (SC) within. They had made the strategic decision not to have a SC of 30+ partners that then were never used as a partner so opted for a small but very specific SC to meet the needs of the customers and the commissioner. The key factors included success rates, customer groups, what was currently delivered and infrastructure.

They developed a database for their potential SC, started a consultancy process which included webinars of what the Work Programme (WP) was all about. There was a staged Expression of Interest (Eoi) process. IWF had realised that there were many different Eoi documents available but most were very complex and cumbersome to complete and that for some of the very small organisations this would be extremely time consuming and stressful for them to try to complete. They took the most user friendly Eoi document and amended it so that it only asked what they decided to be the minimum information they required at this stage and every Eoi was considered. All organisations that were unsuccessful during the procurement stages were contacted via e-mail and offered feedback either face-to-face or over the telephone and the IWF Business Development Director held discussions with those organisation who took up this offer.

IWF wanted local organisations that already had a presence, knew the labour market and had worked with similar groups of customers. There was opportunity for the SC to work on developing the design of the SC. SCP's were able to explain how the SC was selected to add value, scope and variety and how it meets the needs of the local customers. IWF have three layers to their SC, Tier 2 end-to-end partners, Tier 3 which they have called Prospectus Call Off partners and Tier 4 which are the partners that are included in the Best Friend Directory (BFD).

The Supplier Procurement Plan and Commissioning Strategy set out their aspirations to create a SC to add value to the delivery. This is underpinned by effective direction at MD and Board level. Regular meetings between departmental heads were conducted to inform the design of the delivery model and the design of the SC to most effectively meet the needs of the individual customer groups, the commissioner and the communities in which they would work.

For both WP and the Mandatory Work Activity (MWA) programmes IWF ensured the SC design was inclusive of supplier views. IWF have engaged with private, third and public sector organisations specifically local authorities and local enterprise partnerships which ensured the needs of regional and sub-regional key strategic partners were identified. IWF have recognised the need for more specifically targeted customer needs research and this work has already started.

IWF are a Prime and a SCP and therefore had a better understanding of the potential needs of their SC. The SC strategy included the development of the Prospectus Call Off contracts that are funded out of the management fees which supports the SC by providing partners with diverse expertise to meet the needs of their customers. Debt management, condition management, ex offender support along with many other services are in place.

The Best Friend Directory (BFD) is seen by the SCP's as a unique selling point. The BFD is a directory that ensures any gaps in the services of Tier 2 and Tier 3 partners can be supported by the BFD. All organisations on the BFD have a SLA in place and understand that no money will change hands for their services across the SC. The Tier 2 providers can add to the BFD if they are aware of other organisations in their communities that can add value and enhance service to the customers.

2 Commitment

2a) Collaboration, cooperation and communication

Throughout every stage of the procurement process the communications were effective and open. The Business Development Director (BDD) was involved in all negotiations including the workshops, webinars, e-zines, e-mails, 1-2-1 meetings, group meetings, telephone discussions and joint roadshows.

The understanding of the SCP's was assessed to ensure there was no ambiguity. IWF wanted to ensure the communications were truly open and transparent and the MD was involved throughout.

The effective communications have supported the culture that exists. Following contract award communications with the SCP's has continued to be strong. The personal and senior level commitment ensured access to all information regarding funding, expectations and time scales were discussed, with the Marketing Executive effectively supporting to escalate SC queries and communications quickly.

Those organisations who had been unsuccessful during procurement were effectively communicated with via telephone and face-to-face meetings with the BDD to offer guidance on where they could improve their submitted EoI's.

Since go live formal routes of communications have been embedded include monthly operations meetings chaired by the operations manager, group meetings and bi-monthly senior management steering group (SMSG) meetings which are chaired by the MD. There have been additions to the types of groups such as the introduction of the Quality group and a HR group, there is a web YETI forum, employer engagement forum meetings, task and finish groups and a quarterly performance review meeting.

The communication have resulted in a number of improvements and decisions being formed including the system web YETI, IWF are about to roll out version 3 and there have also been developments of the delivery model.

Collaborative working across the SC has been effective, supporting and implementing many of the forums and groups to ensure collaboration. There is a need however, for the SC to work more collaboratively with each other without first being instigated by IWF.

The Contractor Management Framework (CMF) supports the undertaking of expectations that underpin the SC arrangements. IWF continually ask for input into improvements. The task and finish groups enable staff at different levels within the SC to be involved in the development of systems, tools and paperwork this ensure the right people are engaged in improvement activities.

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined but all partners questioned stated that they could pick up the telephone and ask anyone within IWF for support, even the MD.

2b) Developing Supply Chain Partners

There have been many opportunities for SCP's to access, including, improvements around completing EoI's for other sources of funding. The Advice Zone is a tool that the SC staff can use to support customers. The Advice Zone is situated on their web page and is available to all delivery staff and customers to access. It provides information on in-work calculations and offers customers who are going to interviews or need to find out how to get to a new job the opportunity to access maps and directions.

There are good support mechanisms in place for the Prospectus Call Off partners including Provider Performance Review. Good support for SCP's is embedded through the regular meetings and reviews. The SC can access information regarding additional funding through the BFD which is seen by the SCP's as a good source of information regarding what potential funding is available or may become available to support capacity building and grow their businesses. Strategic intelligence at both regional and sub-regional levels is collected and shared within the SC via the SMSG meetings.

IWF have undertaken a significant piece of work due to the changes in the Skills Funding Agency and their partners to support funding for customers through skills provision as they want to ensure a really strong alliance between skills and employment. Due to the funding cuts across the third sector, the BDD attended meetings within the sector offering capacity building services free of charge to support them in these difficult times. IWF work closely with organisations within the communities to raise awareness of the SCP's but this could be further enhanced by getting the SCP's to work collaboratively together within their communities.

Training for staff has been varied covering safeguarding, H&S, in-work calculations and the YETI system. There has been an analysis of the delivery staff across the network via the quality assurance activities and it was highlighted that there were some issues that needed to be addressed. Rather than simply continue to conduct quality activities a strategic decision was made to put these on hold until suitable developments were implemented to ensure the right impact for both the delivery staff but more importantly the customer.

A specific training package has been devised and is presently being piloted called 7 steps to success, which will support staff to improve service delivery and improve performance across the SC. This will be rolled out via the Academy. The Tier 3 partners have been offering training to the work coaches to understand their delivery. SCP's can attend a training session then deliver the sessions in their own organisation or they can access the training materials via the SC Partner Portal and deliver it adjusting to their organisations needs or they can have it delivered completely via IWF. The SCP's have been trained on how to use the Advice Zone effectively. It may be supportive for staff if IWF consider conducting a learning styles analysis across the SC to ensure that all and future training packages take account of the different learning styles staff may have to ensure they are truly effective.

2c) Contracting and funding

The procurement processes were fair and this has been identified throughout the SC. Due to the strategies in place to keep the SC to a small and select group of organisations there was the opportunity to offer a range of funding and payment structures. To further improve the negotiations and funding support to end-to-end partners IWF need to consider how alternative funding models can be developed in collaboration with their end-to-end partners wherever viable.

During procurement ITT documentation was shared with the potential SCP's to ensure transparency to evaluate the funding model. End-to-end payments by profile responded effectively to organisations needs supporting their cash flows. There were some issues at the start with payments coming through late but this has been resolved.

The communications during procurement were fairly managed, proactive and included the senior managers to show the importance and a personal touch. The Prospectus Call Off partners have SLA's in place and as they are paid on a call off basis there is no financial risk. The end-to-end partners have robust contracts, however, this did cause some issues around understanding the legal content so they had to enlist a solicitor. Whilst this did incur some costs it should be noted that any contract would benefit from being overseen with the support of a legal representative.

The Eol's were jointly evaluated by the MD and BDD. The selection criteria, time scales for completion of scoring and regular updates were all set out in the potential partners' communications. Feedback to both successful and unsuccessful organisations was comprehensive and individual, which was led by the BDD. This supported organisations to learn how Eol's could be improved going forward and also supported the unsuccessful organisations to build capacity.

Due diligence checks were then undertaken with the successful organisations. With regard to the partners on the BFD, IWF annually check with these organisations that they wish to remain on the BFD and to continue to receiving referrals and that the information currently held is correct. IWF have recruited a dedicated member of staff to support and manage the BFD and there is a commitment to promote and encourage the utilisation of BFD organisations across the region.

IWF published payment rates at the offer stage, the SC understands what the management fee is and what is included within the fee, web YETI, bespoke report writing, Provider Assurance Monitoring (PAM) and importantly the Prospectus provision that all SCP's have access to. IWF pay for the services of the Prospectus partners out of the management fee.

The CMF provides a robust summary of obligations of both IWF and the SCP's. The CMF is seen by the SCP's as a good operational tool to support the understanding of minimum service standards levels and contractual obligations. The CMF covers both end-to-end and Prospectus Call Off partners at a level that is appropriate and proportionate to service delivery.

Volume modelling was undertaken by the finance team and fed into a contractual offer spreadsheet which was used to underpin the final offer made to potential partners. Potential SCP's could put their own models forward for consideration and negotiation. Visual mapping systems were used to provide a pictorial demonstration of SC delivery to aid selection and determine market share, this was facilitated by maps and analytics to filter down to towns, LA District, customer group, etc. Viability checks were made. Allocation was based on existing capacity and ability to evidence previous success.

There was a period for reflection and further negotiations, one SCP had their volumes adjusted during negotiations, another SCP requested additional funding to support extensive travel issues which was proactively responded to.

3 Conduct

3a) Demonstrating commercial and business integrity

The core principles of the organisations in the SC are aligned with those of IWF. Whilst it is recognised that each organisation has its own mission, values and ethos it was felt by the SCP's that this was a key factor in choosing IWF as their Prime. The term that emerged strongly throughout the assessment was that the culture within IWF is they have a business head but a caring heart. They want everyone to succeed. The one concern that the SC have is that there may be a shift in the culture and work activities of IWF now that they are part of a large organisation although, there have been communications from the MD and BDD to the contrary.

IWF have identified that throughout the SC the core values require further embedding and IWF may wish to consider encouraging the SC to develop a charter or code of practice that identifies the behaviours the SC believes should be displayed throughout the network.

TUPE was handled well and took account of each partner. In some instances IWF took on the TUPE liability for some partners. SCP's were kept informed of updates, changes and implications of TUPE. The MD and HR led on this. They agreed with the other Prime to take 50% each of the TUPE activities and people. A strategy was drawn up to encompass what would be best for all the staff involved and they tried to keep staff in the delivery areas they were already working in.

One SCP agreed that they wouldn't TUPE to each other but IWF asked the SCP to keep them informed if they had too many staff for WP and they would work with them to resolve this. IWF took the majority of another SCP's staff with the other Prime taking the remaining staff. IWF looked at the job roles and financially kept to the strategy commitments whilst taking geographical considerations into account. One SCP felt that more could have been done even though IWF had gone out to their organisation a number of times to talk to the staff. The SC were kept involved through the SMSG meetings around TUPE and staff said it had been done on a personal level and had felt fair and open.

All SCP's said that IWF staff at every level are quick to offer support. Nothing is ever too much trouble and they listen to us. One SCP said the IWF approach was refreshing. SCP's felt that IWF endeavoured to include everyone in wide range of activities and the support and guidance offered was very good.

Legislative and regulatory changes are identified and discussed during the SMSG meetings and understanding checked. It supports discussion around the nature and impact of changes during meetings, agreeing a set of actions. At this time there is no central point for these updates or changes to be communicated out, stored for future reference and IWF have identified that this will be developed using the Intranet, SC Portal and via the forum. This will ensure robust timely messaging regarding changes both during and outside of meeting time frames.

3b) Quality Assurance and Compliance

The Quality Framework identifies the audit activities that would be undertaken and it clearly notes the distinction between Tier 2 and Tier 3 SCP's requirements. There has been a considerable amount of review around the activities and IWF have taken the strategic decision to make the separation of Quality and Compliance by now having a specific lead for Quality and a specific lead for Compliance. Furthermore a Quality Group which includes SCP's has recently been set up. At the time of the assessment the majority of QA activities had been put on hold due to the findings of previous audits and reviews which highlighted issues that require revision across the SC. The 7 steps to success programme has been designed with input from the SC training and development departments to train staff to ensure improvements in service delivery and performance.

There have been improvements to the monthly auditing with ownership given to SCP's to self audit. IWF have yet to develop, implement and embed an effective method to collect customer feedback. Customer feedback is being collected but there is no formal process at this time. MI benchmarking activities have been completed which has been used to identify best practice and continuously improve the customer experience. Improvements are agreed by the SMSG in areas of delivery design, procedures and resources. IWF leads on a comprehensive moderation and validation process known as the Provider Assessment Management process (PAM) which is based upon the DWP Provider Assurance Testing (PAT) process. PAM evaluates the SC delivery in key areas of security, quality improvement, service delivery and claims and reconciliation.

The developments from QA activities have included improvements to the YETI system, the steps to success programmes, the restructure of the compliance departments to become two separate departments quality and compliance. There has been good, effective and timely access to IAG for SCP's from the start of procurement activities and this is promoted to the customers. The BFD is an excellent resource to support both the SCP's and the customers as is the Advice Zone. Staff have IAG qualifications and SCP's either have or are working towards the **matrix** Standard accreditation.

Security requirements have been clearly articulated throughout the SC at all levels. Initial checks were carried out during due diligence and security forms part of the QA Liaison role. IWF and it's SCP's work within the ISO27001 framework. Security checks are undertaken and are written into the CMF and are checked during the PAM audits.

All policies and procedures were checked during due diligence covering H&S, safeguarding and environmental sustainability and they are all regular agenda items during the many meetings held across the SC. All SCP's staff have undertaken a level 1 safeguarding training certificate. Safeguarding is regularly reviewed and checked and promoted during audits. Some SCP's have robust processes in place. Going forward IWF may wish to consider supporting the promotion and development of their SCP's by asking the SCP's to have a safeguarding representative in each SCP's site. It may be equally supportive to look at how to develop H&S within each SCP again potentially having a H&S representative in each SCP and offering training and support for these individuals.

There is an environmental sustainability group chaired by the Operations Manager and all SCP's have a relevant policy and plan in place and there are a number of initiatives that are taking place looking at the printing procedures, better use of resources within the SC. There are no targets set for environmental sustainability at this time. Environmental sustainability has been appointed to a dedicated member of staff who will lead on this and they are awaiting training so that they can then in turn deliver training across the SC where required. IWF should consider identifying how it will be part of staff and customers induction, how and what targets should be set, how it can support value for money and how it will be measured against wider policy and objectives.

Excellent practice has not been clearly defined and whilst there are many examples of sharing good practice across the SC particularly during the operations meetings one example is the shadowing of work coaches, the identifying and sharing of excellent practice requires more structure. IWF should consider how to work collaboratively with the whole of the SC to identify what excellent practice looks like, how to document this, share it and how to measure it for effectiveness.

3c) Honouring Commitments

The SC confirmed that the negotiations were fair, open and transparent and that there were many opportunities to sit down and discuss individual needs of the organisations. The amount of information they received even before contract award made it much easier to target specific queries to ensure they could make an informed decision on whether or not to become part of the SC with IWF.

A very personal approach was taken by IWF during negotiations which has resulted in a close working relationship across the SC. The different payment structures and models ensured that the post contractual negotiations were honoured. There have been some changes to the group of customers referred and the SCP's have been able to negotiate firstly whether or not they felt able to accommodate customers with very specific needs and then on the volumes and payments for these groups.

There is a clear embedded dispute resolution process which is contained in the Contracts, SLA's and the CMF and SCP's were aware of the process. The SCP's feel that they are listened to and that they didn't feel they would ever have to make a complaint or use the Merlin Mediation Service (MMS). IWF stated that they would be bound by all decisions from the MMS in the true spirit of the Merlin Standard.

Clear and robust contracts are in place to ensure that expectations underpinning business relationships are identified and understood. Contract summaries and the CMF provide additional assurance of expectations. There has been the introduction of the Performance Dashboard at monthly operational meetings to further enhance the awareness of all SCP's to know each other's expectations and current performance.

3d) Performance

The actual design of the SC was very well thought out and it has been extensively encouraged and supported to work collaboratively to support performance across the SC network. The SC now need to take more ownership for driving collaborative working between them. Highly effective meeting structures are in place which facilitate collaboration that is driven by IWF, the many groups and meetings give ample opportunities to encourage collaboration.

There is regular review of performance. The SMSG and operational groups provide robust and regular review of performance. There are monthly reviews chaired by the operation Director, quarterly provider performance reviews are undertaken and chaired by the MD. The monthly PR's and quarterly performance reviews are further strengthened through the PAM process.

There are regular opportunities to discuss numbers, referrals and outcomes of sessions at the quarterly operations meetings. The call off partners are managed appropriately. The MWA operations group is quarterly with quarterly performance reviews. The performance Dashboard supports programme review and there are very clear KPI's in place for performance. Feedback from all SCP's identifies that performance expectations are clearly understood.

There is a bespoke MI system YETI in place. The system has undergone a number changes that have come from improvement suggestions and issues identified by the SC. The MI has been a challenging issue. Significant investment has been made by IWF to improve the system integrity and an internal IT Manager has been recruited to further strengthen the IT resources.

A Performance Dashboard has been developed which has enabled the SC to cross check performance data thus supporting the integrity of the data. The SCP's have taken a consultative role in the development, roll out and on-going improvements to the YETI system. There are examples of IWF designing specific reports for some SCP's.

IWF have shared performance data to the maximum but within the confines of Ministerial guidelines, which makes accurate benchmarking and comparisons challenging. Value for money started at the outset of procurement where IWF made the decision not to conduct separate events but to offer joint events with DWP wherever possible to reduce the time that potential SCP's had to take out of their businesses to attend various events and were mindful of the amount of travel and the costs of this.

The BFD Aligned Services provides good evidence of value for money (VFM) as the BFD compliments and does not duplicate existing provision. IWF's stakeholder engagement policy demonstrates VFM although tools to monitor and measure VFM are not fully developed.

IWF have worked extensively with DWP, LEP's and feed into local authority as well as central government. They formed a WP forum of the Primes to ensure it wasn't just a small voice from an individual CPA but it was a loud voice for all the Primes. IWF strategic management sit on projects and Boards to get local councils to provide more connectivity between providers.

Customer distance travelled is currently measured through the PAM process. The MI reports require further development in order to effectively benchmark and measure this. Change requests are in place with new reporting mechanisms that require embedding. RAG ratings have improved to measure distance travelled but require further development. All SCP's said the MI system was rapidly improving.

3e) Promoting Equality and Diversity

IWF has a clear commitment to D&E and this is embedded within due diligence and contracting processes. Due diligence procedures are robust and check policies and procedures for promotion of D&E. The D&E is promoted and checked during the monthly audits, the monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly meetings. It is included as an important element of the Quality Framework and policies and procedures are checked throughout the SC yearly.

The SC although small in numbers encompasses a diverse range of specialisms particularly through the BFD which will enable the SC to meet the needs of the different customer groups. The different projects, committees and Boards that strategic members of IWF sit on enable IWF to keep abreast of D&E and evolving community needs. D&E is a key feature of the Academy on line training functionality. IWF may need to consider how D&E is more robustly promoted across the SC.

There is evidence of review of percentage by customer group and wider equality measures and how deprivation and disadvantage requires addressing within D&E measures. System based development has been prioritised and over the past months it has concentrated on integrity of data. This is now in place through the MI Dashboard. Further work on the MI case management system needs to be undertaken to create comprehensive D&E reports that support the linkage to wider policy and objectives.

4 Review

4a) Supply chain review

Feedback is an integral part of IWF's stakeholder engagement policy. Feedback from stakeholders is gathered in many formats including customer questionnaires, on-line feedback, evaluation forms and comments cards. Some employers are consulted informally and this needs to be formalised. The SCP's can feedback during the various meetings. IWF would benefit from a structured feedback process that includes all stakeholders and then identifies how feedback will be used and how stakeholders will be informed of improvement activities.

The transparency and openness of IWF has seen the end-to-end partners being included in the completion of the SAR and QIP documents. The SCP's were included in the SAQ process for the Merlin assessment and IWF shared their Pre Assessment Notes (PAN) document. Tier 3 partners were sent a copy of the SAR but weren't asked to input into the process. The process could be improved by inviting the Tier 3 partners to input into this very important activity.

There are insufficiently developed mechanisms in place to measure social and community impact of the SC. Evidence of IWF's strategies are largely informal. The SC and IWF are working independently on a number of wider policy and objectives, however, the SC is not fully aware of what constitutes wider policy and objectives or how these will be measured. The SC are aware of the impacts of sustained jobs but do not have an awareness of the impacts on other areas such as reducing crime or child poverty.

Policy of the commissioner is discussed and shared through the SMSG, during year 2 of the contract IWF intend to work with their partners to improve awareness and impact on strategy and policy.

The SC continues to evolve and improve as can be evidenced through the BFD and there is senior recognition of the changing needs of customers and the commissioner and the IWF commissioning strategy reflects this. Feedback from the SC is used to improve SC design on an on-going cycle for example the new partners on the BDF.

IWF is embedded in the structure of the local services and external stakeholders that tackle worklessness. IWF has a recognised shared agenda with a number of key partners including local authorities and LEP's. They work with these organisations to meet key social objectives shared by the commissioner. IWF work with local partnerships to develop joint initiatives to improve environmental sustainability and IWF have an environmental sustainability group to improve its contribution to environmental issues.