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quality standard for information
advice and guidance services

Assessment Report

The Write Time



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behalf of the Department for Education
E: matrixStandard@growthco.uk T: 01423 229 665

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION	
Assessment Type	Three-Year Reaccreditation
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Lorna Bainbridge
Evidence Gathering/Assessment Date/s	25 th , 26 th and 27 th June 2024
Client ID and Assessment Reference	C16749 / PN202445
Accreditation Review to be conducted by	13 th April 2027

METHODOLOGY	
Evidence gathering	Remote
Staff interviews	Ten
Recipient interviews	Twelve
Partner interviews	Three
Document review	The Write Time Strategy 2024 – 2027, School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2024 – 2025, School Development Plan July 2023 – August 2024, Self-Evaluation Summer 2024, Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy, Personal Development Plans (PDP), Headteacher Report Autumn 2023 – 2024, and Governors Report June 2024.

About the organisation

The Write Time (referred to as TWT or the Organisation throughout the report) is a social enterprise with one fundamental mission: *'To help people by providing the best quality support, training, and education to thrive'*. A set of core values underpins the mission; *'promoting education, high quality, supporting one another, providing a safe environment'*.

TWT provides education and mentoring programmes for children, young people, and adults (referred to as recipients throughout the report) from a primary school setting and secondary schools to Post 16 and onwards. Currently, the main programmes provided by TWT include:

- Education for children and young people aged 11 – 16 with Special Education Needs (SEN) at an Independent School in South London. All young people have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). The school uses the Choice Theory / Reality Therapy approach to education, applying a conceptual framework to teaching and learning. All young people have access to independent living skills, sports and recreation, and employability and accreditation, which are essential to succeed at school and home and contribute to a positive destination after Year 11.
- Take Charge – Reducing Parental Conflict is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The programme is designed for parents facing challenges with a child with additional needs and parents who long for a harmonious family life filled with understanding, connection, and growth. Choice Theory and Reality Therapy are brought into the learning with the aim of providing consistency to young people's lives by using the same language and techniques at school and home.

In addition, TWT delivers Mentoring in Education, which supports children from Primary and Secondary Schools, Pupil Referral Units, and other Alternative Provisions. The aim is to keep young people engaged in education through one-to-one support and group activities, ultimately reducing their risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). However, no contracts were in place at the time of the **matrix** reaccreditation.

The three-year strategy 2024 – 2027 clearly indicates the aims of the Organisation. Examples include:

- *'To grow and sustain TWT'*
- *Parenting programme to be a core programme embedded within our school*
- *Strategic direction to become the best 'special school' in South London*
- *Invest in our staff and be open to external inspections*
- *Develop a new school*
- *Invest in our current building to become a social hub.'*

Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) is embedded within the recipient's journey across all programmes. Senior leaders explained that IAG is the vehicle that supports individuals in identifying and achieving key outcomes and goals, monitors progression, and contributes to the success of the Organisation. To meet the changing needs of local authorities and young people, the school has evolved since it was established just over nine years ago. TWT performs well in achieving outcomes, for example, the positive destination for young people, and through funding from different commissioners over the years, has supported an ever-increasing number of parents / carers and young people. This has been through different employability programmes and working with specific groups of recipients, for example, young people at risk of gang-related activities.

The Careers Education, Information and Advice (CEIAG) Policy and IAG Policy outline the key objectives of the respective services, who can use them, the recipient's and TWT's expectations, the range of activities / interventions available and how the feedback mechanisms work.

Choice Theory and Reality Therapy supports the provision of IAG and is applied in all teaching and learning activities. The aim is to help individuals meet their basic needs through assessment of current behaviour so that they may make more needs-satisfying and positive behavioural choices. Teachers are employed to deliver the teaching and learning to meet the requirements of the curriculum and provide an element of IAG. The Organisation invests in Outreach Development Tutors (ODTs) who provide IAG to young people to identify goals, aspirations, and outcomes and subsequently measure the distance travelled, adopting the plan, do and reviewing model. While ODTs provide careers IAG, to meet the Department for Education (DfE) requirements, TWT procures the services of a Careers Advisor (Level 6) to deliver Careers IAG. The Education Development Trust (EDT) has a contract to provide the service to all Year 10 and 11 recipients on a termly basis for 2023/2024. In addition, there is an internal Princes Trust and Careers Lead, who provides the young people with the opportunity to participate in various activities to develop their employability skills and gain accredited units of achievement to contribute to the outcome / next steps.

TWT aims to support parents / carers with SEN children, and as a result, it has successfully delivered several employability programmes, which DWP or European Funding have sponsored. Currently, the Take Charge – Reducing Parental Conflict provides a service to families with children requiring additional support through mentoring and counselling services to strengthen relationships. This is a six-week course that uses the principles of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy and provides a host of IAG to address the needs of each parent / carer as they experience challenges and issues, including behavioural. The support has been extended to these parents, and a weekly coffee morning encourages parents to meet others in similar situations, share their experiences, and gain support in, for example, completing application forms and accessing IAG.

The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

The recipient journey is tailored to meet each young person's or adult's needs, with IAG provided through various interventions dependent upon the programme.

Independent School – Prospective students and parents are provided with information about the service offer. An initial IAG session with the young person and parent / carer is undertaken to get to know the potential student and ensure the school / chosen programme is appropriate to their needs and achievable based on the entry-level. The potential student is invited to visit the school and experience a typical day, referred to as a trial. They can have subsequent trial days to ensure they are happy with the environment and that it meets their education and behavioural needs.

Initial assessments identify the English, Maths, and ICT levels the student should be working towards. In addition, the EHCP is reviewed and updated, where appropriate, to reflect the student's needs. As a result of these approaches, the expectations of all stakeholders - students, parents / carers and TWT, are clearly understood.

Students confirmed that an induction provided further information concerning policies and procedures, how TWT would support them and the development of a personalised Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Teachers and ODTs explained that they aim to get to know each student and their interests, aims, and aspirations and build rapport and a trusting relationship as quickly as possible. Each student is allocated a Mentor (an ODT) who meets with them every two weeks (weekly if they have a Behavioural Support Plan). These interventions aim to identify the individual's aspirations, establish short-, medium- and long-term goals and barriers to success, and stretch and challenge each student to achieve their full potential. The plan, do, review cycle forms the basis of this activity. A Personal Development Plan (PDP) is discussed and agreed with the student, which sets out the overarching outcome and milestones and to address barriers, including behaviours and issues relating to attendance, punctuality, and engagement. The distance travelled from one meeting to the next is measured, achievements are celebrated, and new goals and milestones are discussed and agreed upon.

Students' soft skills and qualities are observed and assessed against the eight Personal Social Skills - Positive Behaviour, Time Management, Critical Thinking, Effort, Teamwork, Communication, Leadership, and Negotiation - and the five requirements of Choice Theory, for example, love and belonging, survival, etc. These are reviewed at mid-point and the end of the academic year.

To ensure students gain impartial and objective career advice with no conflict of interest, an external Careers Advisor provides Careers IAG to students in Years 9, 10 and 11. This allows students to identify and plan their next steps regarding work experience and post-16.

TWT provides a career curriculum that equips young people with a range of employability skills and encourages them to consider their work experience options and the next steps post-16. IAG is provided to support young people in searching for and applying for work experience, job vacancies and application forms for colleges or other training providers. In addition, the Princes Trust programme provides unit accreditation for developing different skills to prepare them for independent living and their next steps.

Take Charge – Reducing Parental Conflict – The programme comprises a six-week course to support parents / carers with SEN children of all ages. Whilst the programme is aimed at adults, TWT adopts a similar approach to delivering IAG to young people. An initial IAG session with the parent / carer is undertaken to get to know them, their issues and challenges with parenting and keeping a family unit together, and any potential barriers. The needs of each prospective recipient are noted, along with the overarching purpose and outcome for completing the programme being identified.

This programme is also based on the Choice Theory and Reality Therapy, and as a result, the recipient completes the Needs Star assessment. This indicates the current situation in relation to the level of their basic needs being met and is subsequently revisited at the end of the programme to measure distance travelled.

Over two hours per week for six weeks, recipients are provided with a workbook and handouts summarising the primary learning outcomes and enabling individuals to take their own notes. Whilst key topics are covered, the sessions allow the programme leads to provide IAG. More importantly, and of value, are the advice and guidance of other recipients experiencing similar issues and challenges.

At the end of the programme, a further IAG session takes place to establish whether the outcome/s was achieved and agree on the next steps. For example, ongoing attendance at the coffee mornings, completing additional courses, signposting to further support, access to an Occupational Therapist, and / or preparing to return to work.

The difference the IAG makes to recipients and the overall impact

At an Organisation level, key outcomes and measures are in place. For example, within the Independent School, qualifications, accreditations, and subsequently moving onto a positive destination at the end of their secondary education. Other measures include attendance levels, managing behaviour, and equipping young people with soft skills to enable them to contribute to society and gain employability and independent living skills.

At the individual level, the outcome/s are discussed and agreed upon at the start of the recipient's journey. The young people were very clear about the outcome/s identified, which included going into employment or further education / training. In addition, several young people recognised the development of soft skills and personal qualities and what these meant in practice.

Individual performance and progression are monitored and evaluated daily through observation and behaviour, which is shared with the staff team throughout the daily morning and evening briefing sessions. This highlights individual young people facing issues and challenges, enabling the staff to discuss and agree on strategies and ways of working with them to keep / get them back on track.

The fortnightly PDP intervention with the allocated mentor allows young people to review their performance and distance travelled, recognise their achievements, identify any current issues and challenges, and discuss additional goals to move them to the outcome/s.

In addition, the reviews of the EHCP, parent / carer evenings and one-to-one interactions also contribute to monitoring the performance and progression of each young person to ensure they achieve the outcome/s. There is a close working relationship between the staff and parents / carers, with communication taking place regularly, on occasion daily, to ensure each young person gains the right support at the right time, in the right way.

TWT annually undertakes a self-assessment, including a performance review against the key outcomes and measures. Whilst the aim is to gain 100% of young people moving to a positive destination, which has been achieved in previous years, in 2022/2023, only 65% of young people achieved the outcome. The impact of Covid-19 on this cohort of young people was evident. As a result, strategies were identified to support and track individual young people for an extended period.

Attendance levels have been consistently good over the past years due to strategies to support individuals being discussed and agreed with the young person and parent / carer. Whilst behavioural issues and challenges remain, Choice Theory and Reality Therapy continue to provide staff with a range of techniques to use daily, resulting in issues being de-escalated quickly.

The school uses the Gatsby Benchmarks to measure the delivery of the career's curriculum, which is evaluated every term and reported to the Governing Body. The delivery of the Careers IAG by an external provider, a suite of lessons to provide career education and the use of the Prince's Trust, complemented by work

experience, provide a rich source of activities to prepare the young people for their next steps.

Quality assurance activities, including observation of practice, sampling of PDPs and the work completed by the young people, ensure the IAG provided is tailored to meet individual needs and contributes to the outcome/s.

The Take Charge – Reducing Parental Conflict allows parents / carers with time to reflect and realise that they, too, have needs and the importance of spending time on themselves. The funder has a target of 200 parents / carers to engage in the course, with 150 completing throughout the programme's life. The number is tracked and currently stands at 149 engagements and completions.

The initial IAG session allows the recipient to identify the outcome/s of the programme, which is documented. Subsequently, a review of the achievements and outcome/s is undertaken at mid-point and following the six-week course, and the impact is evaluated. Recipients explained that they have gained many outcomes from participating in the programme. For example, it has improved their self-worth and confidence, removed loneliness and a feeling of isolation, recognised that their health and wellbeing are just as important as that of their children, provided a catalyst for change, etc. The feedback from recipients was consistently overwhelmingly positive, but the course should be longer!

An evaluation report is being developed to provide TWT and DWP with a clear understanding of the programme's value and potential gaps in services. Similar processes have been followed in the past. For example, Gang Prevention and several Employability programmes, including the provision of IAG, have been thoroughly evaluated to recognise the benefits and impact on individuals and wider stakeholders, such as the recipient, employers, local communities, etc.

What is working particularly well

A number of strengths/areas that are working particularly well were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- The service provided is wholly recipient-focused and built around sound values. The Glasser Institute values have provided a strong foundation for TWT to develop its services, and these are embedded across the Organisation. Staff are aligned with the values and actively promote them daily. (1.1)
- All recipients confirmed that they felt safe, welcome and accepted by TWT. Staff were cited as being professional, knowledgeable, friendly, accessible and non-judgmental, and they were treated with kindness and respect. The Organisation identifies potential risks of involvement with activities / people that may cause harm to the recipients or others and is not afraid to take action. Recipients, especially the young people, described what they would do if they felt unsafe, as they had identified key staff, they would be confident approaching in these situations. (1.3)
- Recipients and staff confirmed a strong focus on their health and wellbeing. A family ethos was developed when TWT came into existence, and despite its evolution and growth over the past nine years, this culture has remained. There is extensive peer-to-peer support amongst the staff team, with individuals supporting others to overcome issues and challenges, both professionally and personally. Several parents / carers explained that it is a long time since anyone demonstrated a genuine interest in how they felt and, subsequently, had the confidence to be open and share their feelings of low confidence and self-esteem, and loneliness / isolation and that they were not being judged as bad parents / carers. (1.4)
- While the values-based approach to delivering IAG considers confidentiality, impartiality, integrity, and transparency, this goes a lot deeper; as mentioned above, Glasser's values are at the forefront of how the Organisation operates and delivers its services. Using an external organisation (EDT) to deliver the careers IAG further demonstrates TWT's commitment to providing an impartial service, having integrity, and addressing the possibility of any conflict of interest. (2.4)
- TWT invests time and money in a broad range of continuous professional development (CPD) activities for staff that are relevant to the Organisation and individuals. All new staff are trained in the Choice Theory and have access to qualifications, for example, IAG Levels 2, 3 and 4 and those relating to teaching. Mandatory training is delivered in a timely manner. In addition, twice weekly CPD sessions and the school in-set days provide access to a broad range of training linked to teaching and learning methodologies, behaviour management and providing IAG. Staff confirmed that they feel well

supported and strongly believe they have opportunities to progress their career within TWT. (2.5)

- Partners explained that TWT has developed a good reputation for supporting SEN children and their parents / carers in the local area. It has developed and nurtured good relationships with Local Authorities, SEN communities, and other providers. TWT partners and works with many organisations and agencies to ensure the service is delivered and signposting effectively meets all stakeholders' ever-changing needs. (2.7)
- There is a robust approach to identifying individual recipient needs through the initial meeting/s and trial days with young people wishing to attend the school. The overarching aim is to ensure that the school is the right place and attendance is at the right time for the potential student to achieve their outcomes. Subsequently, staff get to know and understand each individual, tailoring the service to meet their needs. The mentors work with each young person on a one-to-one basis, completing the PDP every two weeks, identifying short, medium and long-term goals and milestones, and supporting them in overcoming many barriers. (4.2)
- Choice Theory provides staff with a framework that contributes to a consistent approach across the school. It gives young people a range of options and consequences and promotes independent problem-solving and decision-making. The young people confirmed that they are stretched and challenged and encouraged to work outside their comfort zones, on many occasions, academically, physically and mentally. (4.3)
- The PDP encourages young people to take ownership of their journey and be accountable for their actions. The PDP is an ongoing cycle, tracking the progression and distance travelled by the young person, celebrating achievements, and constantly reviewing the goals to navigate them to their outcome/s. The young people have developed positive relationships with the teachers and mentors, and as a result, whilst stretched and challenged, feel well supported. (4.5, 4.6)
- TWT has evolved over the past nine years to meet the changing needs of young people, parents / carers and commissioners. It has stayed true to its values and continually built upon its strengths. It measures the impact of the services, the differences made, and identifies the gaps to influence future programmes. (7.2)

Development suggestions

Development suggestions are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality, development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is, or to give insight into practices seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and development suggestions. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice, and guidance service is in any way lacking. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- CEIAG and IAG policies meet many of the requirements of the **matrix** Standard. However, consideration could be made to indicating any key partnerships in place to support the delivery of effective CEIAG / IAG to ensure service recipients are aware of the different stakeholders / contributors. (3.1)
- Several policies are accessible on the website, such as Safeguarding, Data Protection, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, etc. Whilst Information, Advice, and Guidance are listed on the policies page, neither the CEIAG nor the IAG policies are displayed. As a result, TWT might consider promoting the services either as a standalone or within the policies section of the website. This would raise the profile of IAG with current and potential recipients. (3.2)
- TWT is committed to continuous improvement and welcomes feedback from service recipients. Whilst feedback mechanisms are outlined in the IAG and CEIAG policies, consideration could be made to improving the promotion of feedback and potentially identifying different approaches, for example, post course forums (not facilitated by those delivering the course), to gain far more objective feedback, which may influence changes to the IAG. (7.1)

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Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
2. During the period of accreditation satisfy The Growth Company that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
3. Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
4. Inform The Growth Company or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
5. Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre-on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment, and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
6. Inform The Growth Company of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrixStandard@growthco.uk.
7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
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