

# PBIC Ltd



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## Assessment Information

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Accreditation Review
<b>Assessor's Decision</b>	Standard Met
<b>Assessor's Name</b>	Kathy Leahy
<b>Visit Date</b>	13/12/2023 on-site 20/12/2023 remote
<b>Client ID</b>	C12396
<b>Assessment Reference</b>	PN202182
<b>Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by</b>	19/12/2024
<b>Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by</b>	19/12/2025
<b>Accreditation Review onsite visit to be conducted by</b>	19/12/2026

## Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

PBIC Ltd, previously known as the Polish British Integration Centre, has been established since 2007 originally supporting the Polish migrant community. It is a charity and company limited by guarantee. It began informally in 2004, with the founding family supporting individuals from their home and has now developed into an advice centre that supports migrants from different countries, most recently those people hosted through the Homes for Ukrainian scheme. They are centrally located in Bedford in 'shop front' premises. Advisers who may work on different projects have multi-language skills that enables clients to gain access to services through their own language.

*'Helping migrants to settle, achieve and contribute'*

In common with many third sector organisations, the organisation is facing reduced funding due to the ending of ESF funded projects. At the time of the assessment, the work included:

National Careers Service	careers and employability support as a sub-contractor
You Are Valued	a Lottery funded project that provides a range of support to migrants including social and general advice, helping to reduce isolation and helping people move closer to the labour market
Ukrainian Guest Support	for people who have travelled from Ukraine and initially hosted with families
Homeless support	supporting homeless migrants to gain accommodation and access services/support
EUSS	European Union Settlement Status some limited support available, as the scheme has now ended, usually supporting applications for family members

As part of the review of services, the organisation has recognised that a key aspect of their delivery is about 'listening' to clients and as a result set up a 'listening service', which is notionally part of the You Are Valued project. Staff described how the complex needs of their client groups, which may include trauma, mental health concerns, addictions, housing issues, requires a lot of 'listening' to explore their circumstances, develop relationships and build trust. It is acknowledged that this level of listening is required across the board for all service delivery and supports individuals' wellbeing. However, 'listening' as a separate function is not generally funded through projects, but project work often requires much greater/longer interventions than for those who may not have the multiple/complex needs of their client groups.

*"They are outcome focussed, not output focussed, they have a holistic process to triage in order to identify the range of barriers" (partner)*

*"It's about showing options and empowering people – its giving people confidence to take their next step" (staff)*

*"You are guided and helped to know what to do next [described support to access mainstream services]" (client)*

Clients often find out about the services available through word of mouth, or through a referral from another agency. In the homeless project, an Outreach Worker engages with people who are street homeless to encourage them to engage with services; working in partnership with another organisation they are invited to a day centre that has a range of support such as meals, washing facilities and health support.

*"Without PBIC I wouldn't be able to do anything – they are so supportive and welcoming" (client)*

Whichever service is accessed, staff explore individual's needs, finding out about their reasons for contacting the service and helping to identify the issues/needs they are facing. It was described that often although there is a presenting issue, on exploring individuals' current situation there are a number of issues where support is needed, and it is this holistic review that is seen as a unique part of the service offer. Staff help clients to prioritise these needs and establish goals and actions that will help with progress, this could be through a support plan established with a client who is homeless, or through the careers and skills action plan for someone accessing National Careers Service support.

*"We are trying to change their current situation" (staff)*

The range of support available often means that individuals may benefit from different services, for example a client may first engage with the services through homelessness helping them to gain temporary accommodation, they may receive support with Food Bank vouchers, help to apply for benefits, develop their skills and look for work. This range of support enables, particularly vulnerable, migrants to receive all of the support they need to address their barriers and concerns. Staff stated that the migrants they support are almost all 'vulnerable' as those who are not, are able to access services/support independently or are not in need of support.

*"It was a question of life and death, they saved me from depression – it was step by step, I was given help" (client)*

Each project has its own outcomes for which information, advice and guidance (IAG) is an integral part, be that National Careers Service, general advice or the homeless support. Outcomes are monitored and reported upon regularly through reports to funders and the organisation has its own database that captures these, and the reports show how the organisation is successful in achieving its outcomes, with one example seen where the lead organisation confirmed that PBIC had overachieved on its targets. The success is attributed to the holistic way that staff engage with clients, the 'listening' approach as noted above, to explore all the barriers that clients are facing. The organisation also recognises where additional developments could be made to improve delivery further. For example, a reflective piece of work considered how staff are working, and the impact it has upon outcomes and demonstrating impact, showed an insight into practices and the changes needed to improve further.

However, although the organisation needs to meet their contractual profiles, as this allows them to continue to provide the service to clients and shows in quantifiable terms the impact of their work, staff described the outcomes for clients in a variety of ways. The regular contact, as noted above, allows advisers to identify the progress clients have made in working towards/achieving the actions in their action plan. Although it is noted in the reflective piece of work, that capturing these range of outcomes are not always recorded and there is an opportunity to demonstrate greater impact of the support provided.

The organisation is currently working with another community-based organisation, who also supports migrant clients, to develop their immigration work to be able to provide OISC Level 2 immigration advice which will further support clients with the range of barriers they are facing. It will be interesting to hear how this work develops during the annual continuous improvement checks.

*"They are ambitious to drive change" (partner)*

## Strengths

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

- The organisation has recognised that staff need very specific support to enable them to effectively support clients – many of whom have complex and demanding needs. This has led to implementing more creative/arts-based approaches to help staff describe the situations they have faced with managers describing being able to be more open about how they are feeling. During the assessment this was discussed and a link with the Sir Ken Robinson Ted Talk mentioned which may be of interest to help develop this thinking further:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/sir\\_ken\\_robinson\\_do\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity?language=en)

(2.4)

- Throughout the assessment, it was clear that staff engage effectively with clients to help identify, not only the presenting/immediate issue they are facing, but also help clients to 'open up' and describe the range of issues that may be affecting their life and ability to move forward. Staff then support clients to prioritise these identified needs, enabling them to manage their situation. (3.4)
- There is a clear sense of 'wanting to do a good job' and focus on continuous improvement. Staff described how they review what and how they deliver services on an ongoing basis to benefit the individuals they work with. They recognise that clients have multiple barriers, and they take pride in helping them to overcome these and move forward. (3.4)
- There were two words that were consistently repeated throughout the assessment, these were 'listening/listen' and 'trust'. There is a recognition of the level of listening that is overwhelmingly appreciated by clients; and the trust was mentioned by both clients and partners as a key aspect of their relationship with PBIC. (1.2)

## Areas for Development

Areas for development 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 areas for development. 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.

- In common with other third sector organisations, the organisation is faced with the ending of their ESF provision in the coming months. During the assessment, the assessor discussed other examples of support recently seen that was funded through health focussed projects, as there appears to be a number of health sector funding streams that recognise the importance of work/positive activities on individuals' mental and physical wellbeing. Below are some examples that the organisation may wish to explore:
  - Individual Placement Support <https://ipsgrow.org.uk/about/what-is-ips/>
  - Social Prescribing <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>
  - Employment Advice in Talking Therapies <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/case-studies/improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-iapt-case-studies/employment-advisors-in-improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-iapt-service-at-lets-talk-wellbeing/>

(1.1, 2.1)

- A range of quality assurance activities take place across the different delivery areas including observations of practice, review of feedback, service reviews and external reviews such as contract monitoring activity. There may be an opportunity to review some cross-service themes to identify good practice and areas for development across all delivery streams – this may also support some of the issues identified in the reflective piece of work. (4.5)
- There is a focus upon wellbeing for both learners and staff with a number of activities taking place. The organisation may be interested in exploring the West Midlands Combined Authority 'Thrive at Work' standard which has been created to support organisations develop their wellbeing work. Although this is out of the geographical area for the organisation, there may be resources they may find useful and may be replicated in other areas. <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/wellbeing/thrive-at-work/about-the-programme/> (4.6)
- Staff are mainly recruited for their personal qualities and skills, such as communication, empathy, and particularly their language skills; they also hold a range of different qualifications including Advice and Guidance. Given the clear focus on employment, the organisation may wish to explore the qualifications offered by the Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP) <https://www.myiep.uk>. Other areas of CPD could include coaching skills or motivational interviewing which would support the development of staff skills further. (2.4)

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals. These may include the Areas for Development above. <https://matrixstandard.com/assessment-journey/continuous-improvement-checks/>

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation, please see the section Assessment Information for dates.



## Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

The assessment was conducted over two days; the first day was conducted on-site at the organisation's centre in Bedford, with the second day being conducted by MS Teams.

Staff	Interviews with 9 staff
Clients	Interviews with 15 clients
Partners	Interviews with 4 partners
Document review	Website, Funding/tracking reports, Feedback, Supervision Notes, Reflective Review of Services/Projects

## Conditions of Accreditation

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

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
2. Throughout 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](mailto:matrixStandard@growthco.uk).
7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
8. Inform The Growth Company of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
9. Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause The Growth Company and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
10. Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
11. Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by The Growth Company and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to be a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
12. Be aware that The Growth Company reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.