

# INFORMATION FACTSHEET



## Quality Assurance

### Summary

- Quality promotes continuous improvement within an organisation, i.e. it identifies issues early on before they become problems
- Quality assurance is increasingly becoming a requirement of funders
- Various quality systems are available.



### What Quality Assurance involves

- Quality assurance is defined as “the ability of a product or service to meet the needs of the target group.”
- Monitoring and evaluation identifies areas for improvement within an organisation on an ongoing basis.
  - The system employed may involve self assessment, internal *accreditation* and regular *auditing*.
  - Often internal processes and systems will need to be defined to maintain consistency across the organisation and to encourage good practice.
  - Quality assurance promotes effective and efficient services.

### A sample of Quality Systems<sup>1</sup>

- **PQASSO- A Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations** by Charities Evaluation Service

<b>Application</b>	Small to medium sized voluntary organisations and smaller projects within larger organisations.	
<b>Suitability for voluntary sector</b>	High	
<b>Concepts</b>	12 quality areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for quality</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• User-centred service</li> <li>• Staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Training and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing money</li> <li>• Managing resources</li> <li>• Managing activities</li> <li>• Networking and partnership</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Results.</li> </ul>
<b>How it is implemented</b>	By use of a work pack and CD ROM (database).	
<b>Cost</b>	£80.50 work pack, £49.50 CD ROM incl VAT and P&P (as of Oct 2007)	
<b>Accredited</b>	A new ‘peer assessed’ Quality Mark will be awarded from early 2008.	

- **Excellence Model** by European Foundation for Quality Management

<b>Application</b>	Designed for business applications
<b>Suitability for voluntary sector</b>	Medium
<b>Concepts</b>	The Excellence Model is a non-prescriptive framework that recognises there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results Orientation</li> <li>• Customer Focus</li> <li>• Leadership &amp; Constancy of Purpose</li> <li>• Management by Processes &amp; Facts</li> <li>• People Development &amp; Involvement</li> <li>• Continuous Learning, Innovation &amp; Improvement</li> </ul>

• **Accreditation** - A process of ensuring that your quality assurance meets the relevant standards, this may be carried out internally or by an external party.

<sup>1</sup> Information correct at time of print.

• **Auditing** – Checking your performance against agreed internal systems and procedures to ensure that quality assurance is implemented accordingly.

• **Stakeholders** – An individual or organisation who is interested in your project. It may be the funder/partners/users/trustees/staff or volunteers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership Development</li> <li>Public Responsibility.</li> </ul>
<b>How it is implemented</b>	Useful to become a member of British Quality Foundation. Starter kit available.
<b>Cost</b>	Varies between self assessment and accreditation option chosen.
<b>Accredited</b>	Self assessment, external accreditation and quality awards.

- Investors in people (IIP)**

<b>Application</b>	IIP is a national framework for improving business performance and competitiveness, through a planned approach to setting and communicating business objectives and developing people to meet these objectives.	
<b>Suitability for voluntary sector</b>	Medium	
<b>Concepts</b>	The IIP Standard is based on four key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment</li> <li>Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action</li> <li>Evaluating</li> </ul>
<b>How it is implemented</b>	Self help	
<b>Cost</b>	Standard - £8.80. Self help publications are also available	
<b>Accredited</b>	External assessment	

Other standards exist which are relevant to specific areas of work or types of organisation, e.g. ISO9000, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Qualitymark for legal advice services or New Economics Foundation for social accounting and auditing.

### Action points

- Establish a quality team of interested individuals, ensure that the management support the quality process.
- Discover if your organisation has adopted a quality assurance system. If not, research which quality system would be most appropriate for your organisation
- Define any quality assurance processes which currently take place within your organisation
- Consult with key *stakeholders* as to their viewpoint on quality assurance.

### Resources

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charities Evaluation Service<br/><a href="http://www.ces-vol.org.uk">www.ces-vol.org.uk</a></li> <li>British Quality Foundation<br/><a href="http://www.bqf.org.uk">www.bqf.org.uk</a></li> <li>Quality Standards Task Group<br/><a href="http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/gstg/">www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/gstg/</a></li> <li>ISO 9000<br/><a href="http://www.bsi-global.com/index.xalter">www.bsi-global.com/index.xalter</a></li> <li>New Economics Foundation<br/><a href="http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/newways_socialaudit.aspx">www.neweconomics.org/gen/newways_socialaudit.aspx</a></li> <li>Community Matters (The Visible Difference)<br/><a href="http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/">www.communitymatters.org.uk/</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic Skills Quality Mark<br/><a href="http://www.basic-skills.co.uk/">www.basic-skills.co.uk/</a></li> <li>Qualitymark<br/><a href="http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/index.htm">www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/index.htm</a></li> <li>Quality Development Initiative (LASA)<br/><a href="http://www.qdi.org.uk/about.shtml">www.qdi.org.uk/about.shtml</a></li> <li>Chartermark<br/><a href="http://www.chartermark.gov.uk/">www.chartermark.gov.uk/</a></li> <li>Investors in People<br/><a href="http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/">http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/</a></li> </ul> |
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Other CSAS information fact sheets in this series include; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's.

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