



Doncaster CVS Quality Systems



PQASSO

(Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)

Overview:

PQASSO is a quality assurance system designed specifically for use within voluntary and community sector organisations'. It is the most commonly used quality system in the UK voluntary and community sector, and is increasingly being used internationally. It provides a step-by-step approach to working out what your organisation is doing well and what could be improved. PQASSO can be used in two ways, either self assessment or an optional external assessment service which leads to the award of an accredited Quality Mark awarded by the Charities Evaluation Services (CES). Once completed, PQASSO lasts for three years.

There are three levels of achievement in PQASSO:

Level 1 - This sets the minimum requirements that any organisation should meet and helps organisations' to identify and meet their legal obligations.

Level 2 - This requires organisations' to be more strategic in their approach and most policies, procedures and practices need to be documented.

Level 3 - This requires resources and all aspects of organisational life to be systematically reviewed, with reviews resulting in measurable change.

The Self Assessment Process:

- Self assessment is undertaken by your organisation itself and to guide this process, CES have produced a comprehensive work book which is straightforward and easy to follow. An optional CD-ROM is also available to help you in creating an overall plan, recording evidence and detailed action planning
- It involves you making a judgment about your organisation's performance against the PQASSO standards and indicators as laid down in the workbook
- You identify what is being done well (your strengths) and decide what needs to be improved (your areas for improvement)
- You then work towards an action plan to address the areas for improvement
- Self assessment needs to be inclusive and reflect the views of the different stakeholders within the organisation
- Self assessment is not a 'one-off' process but should be continually reviewed to ensure continued improvement



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The Quality Mark:

This is an optional addition to self assessment. Achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark means that you have been externally assessed against the PQASSO quality standards and if you achieve the standard, you will receive the PQASSO Quality Mark Logo and certificate to help you promote and celebrate your achievement.

Benefits

For the organisation

- Assesses performance against agreed standards
- Demonstrates quality of service to purchasers and funders
- Improves management systems and organisational planning
- Improves communication.

For customers

- Helps customers to know what service they can expect
- Creates opportunities for customers to have their say.
- Through improvements it provides for better quality of service to customers.

Key Criteria:

Within PQASSO there are twelve quality areas

1. Planning
2. Governance
3. Leadership and Management
4. User-centered service
5. Managing people
6. Learning and Development.
7. Managing money
8. Managing resources
9. Communication and promotion
10. Working with others
11. Monitoring and evaluation
12. Results.

Within each of these twelve quality areas there are various indicators which you have to achieve in order to meet the standard required at either Levels 1, 2 or 3. The workbook also assists you in the process by indicating possible sources of evidence.

Time Frames:

No two organisations' are the same so the length of achieving both Self Assessment and the Quality Mark may vary.

Costs:

Costs to consider in relation to self assessment are the initial cost of purchasing the workbook and optional CD-ROM, training, time and the resources taken by your organisation as you work through the twelve quality areas achieving the standards. Costs to consider if you wish to achieve the accredited Quality Mark are the additional costs of bringing in an external assessor. Up to date information on the costs involved are available from the CES web site: www.ces-vol.org.uk

Support:

Support for implementing any quality system your group or organisation chooses is available by contacting Janet Gillott on Tel: 01302 343300 Ext 217

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