

Quality Standards

for the voluntary & community sector

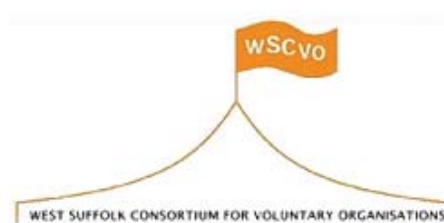


LOTTERY FUNDED

Suffolk Local Infrastructure Partnership



**II Suffolk Coastal
Resource Network**



Please note that this guide is put together in good faith and cannot be held accountable for any misinformation that occurs within.

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Introduction

Being able to demonstrate the quality of your services and the effective way in which your organisation or group is run is becoming ever more important. Funders are interested in ensuring they are funding quality projects and services. Volunteers and staff want to know they are working and volunteering for a 'quality' organisation that has a real sense of direction and purpose. Service users have expectations that they are receiving a quality service from you. Trustees wish to be assured that they are governing in the best way they can. Achieving a relevant Quality Standard is therefore a tangible way to prove that your organisation is committed to improving and embedding quality.

Other potential benefits include:

- development of systems, policies and procedures
- improvement in communication especially within your organisation
- identification of areas of development for your organisation
- helping with funding bids
- identification of good practice
- improvement of the external profile of your organisation and raising its image
- more effective monitoring and evaluation
- improved partnership opportunities
- improvement to staff recruitment, development and retention

Where to start

Working towards a Quality Standard can seem a daunting and difficult task. Even choosing the right one to work towards can be confusing as there are a range of different schemes, at different levels and for different audiences. This booklet aims to give you an overview of the most relevant schemes for the Voluntary and Community Sector and some tips and guidance in what to expect in working towards a Quality Standard. The Standards have been divided into sections (see Contents Page) and are listed in alphabetical order in each section.

You may be embarking on this out of necessity (for example, as a requirement from a funder) or as part of your organisation's planned development. You may have lots of past experience in quality assurance and monitoring, or this could be your first encounter! Don't forget, achieving a Quality Standard in bite size chunks is much easier than tackling the whole thing at once. Think about breaking it down into a series of smaller steps.

Ask yourselves these questions and keep the answers in mind throughout the process:

- what are we trying to do and for whose benefit are we doing it?
- are we as good as we can be?
- how do we know that?
- What are we going to do to improve?
- how can we measure improvements?
- what is our budget and what resources do we have?
- are we as good as we think we are?



Choosing a Quality Standard Scheme

There is a number of “off the shelf” quality appraisal schemes, quality standards and quality marks that are relevant to voluntary and community organisations. They range from simple “guided DIY” schemes and locally recognised programmes to national approval and accreditation schemes.

Which scheme you choose will depend on the answers you give to the questions on page 4. A community group funded solely through grants would not be able to afford or see the relevance of ISO 9000, whereas a larger voluntary organisation with paid staff, wishing to gain a contract with the local council would.

Remember: Most Quality Standard Schemes have a cost attached, all require effort to achieve and some will need renewing after a period of time.

Research into the adoption and use of Quality Standards in the VCS² found that:

- involving staff early in implementing a quality system will encourage them to be more committed to using it
- the involvement and commitment of trustees has a positive effect upon implementing quality standards
- the challenges and problems of implementation are generally operational rather than ideological
- setting up an internal working group is a useful organisational structure to facilitate the implementation of a new quality system, as is seeking advice and support from other system users and infrastructure bodies
- one of the key determinants of the success or failure of gaining a quality standard is the organisational ‘fit’ (e.g. culture, size, context, maturity of organisation)
- problems tend to be encountered when an organisation tries to implement and maintain more than one quality standard scheme, especially when trying to integrate them together

²The Adoption and Use of Quality Systems in the Voluntary Sector, 2005. Aston Business School - Centre for Voluntary Action Research.



Typical Quality Accreditation Process

Once you have decided to undertake a Quality Standard Scheme, what can you expect?

Many of the Quality Standards follow a similar process, which is outlined below (please note that each Scheme may vary and information provided here is given in good faith, for guidance only). Whilst some processes may purely require self-assessment, many more formal quality accreditation processes will require external assessment.

Registration

The first step is to register for a Quality Accreditation Scheme. This may take one or two steps, as the regulatory organisation may wish for a 'register of interest' first so they can check out your suitability as an organisation, before you commit formally to the process. In some cases, you may have to join the regulatory body as a member, which can take time to process.

Registration forms may be available on the relevant lead body's website or can be requested in writing or over the telephone. Ensure you clarify answers to any questions or concerns you may have and request a cost estimate for your organisation.

Once your organisation has been approved as suitable to undertake the Quality Standard, you will probably (if applicable) need to pay either the full or partial cost upfront before you receive your workbooks. If you are liable for VAT, ensure that you have budgeted for it! Once you have registered and payment is made, you are committed to the Scheme and will probably forfeit some or all of the cost should you then decide to pull out. Ensure that you check out these types of details from the start. If the Scheme is time limited i.e. to be completed within a year or six months, this will tend to start from the payment or formal registration date.

Named contact

Once you have signed up to start your Quality Accreditation, you will probably be assigned either a named contact at the regulatory organisation or an approved Assessor, who may be local or not, who will be your key contact throughout the process. Ensure you keep in touch with this person and let them know if you need any help, advice or support throughout the process. You may be required to attend an initial workshop or briefing session, or they may pay a visit to you or contact you by telephone.



Self Assessment

Many Standards require you to complete a self assessment on your organisation, such as your practices, policies, procedures and the type of work or service you undertake. This can be in the form of a work book (either hard copy or on-line), or a CD-Rom to work through and can form the bulk of the workload you need to achieve the Standard. You may tackle this as an organisation, or assign one trustee or staff member to lead on it. The content and requirements of a Standard will really depend on the scheme that you are working to. Most will have a set of specific areas for you to work on and that you will need to be able to evidence achievement against.

Remember that Quality Standards are about continuous improvement and so don't worry if you can't meet every piece of criteria at the beginning. You may need to put new policies, procedures and work practices in place, or achieve a piece of work or service before you can sign off a particular section. You will probably be asked to complete an action or development plan to show that you will be implementing improvements and have identified areas of development. Your Management Committee or Trustee Board may need to sign off the workbook or development plan at the end of the process. You will then submit your work to the named contact to be assessed. Depending on the criteria, this could be returned if more work or evidence is felt necessary to pass to a certain standard.

External Assessment

Although your organisation may have been subject to visits during the process, there will normally be an external assessment visit at the end, once you have submitted your self-assessment workbook or plan. This assessment visit may be very brief, or take place over a number of days. You could be asked to provide written evidence and interviews could take place with staff, volunteers, service users and Trustees.

Final Decision

Once your self-assessment and external assessment has been completed, the Assessor will make a recommendation and write up a report. This decision may need to be ratified by the regulatory body or go before a Panel.

Award

Once your organisation has achieved the Quality Standard, you are usually issued with formal notification. This could be a certificate to display, or you may be issued a plaque (this may have an extra cost attached). You will be entitled to use the Quality Standard logo and/or branding on your stationery and website (make sure you read their guidelines carefully). Some awards are time-limited and you may need to refresh it after a period of time has lapsed (e.g. 3 years).



Quality Standards relating to organisational management



C3Perform

The C3Perform tools have been designed to help VCS organisations “embark on a journey of performance improvement and quality management”. Its flexibility enables organisations of many types and at different stages of development to tailor an appropriate and achievable approach that matches their capacity. C3Perform tools help organisations focus on using results strategically to improve.

The C3Perform Toolkit offers a tailor-made range of resources and downloadable tools, together with advice and tips, all designed to help third sector organisations assess performance, develop an action plan and improve. The toolkit was written by Social Enterprise Works staff as part of the C3 Partnership project. The toolkit contains 3 self assessment tools: C3Perform, C3Quick Perform and C3Perform Workshop and a range of Action Planning Tools.

The tools can also be used to help organisations to write or re-write a business or strategic plan and ensure that it is relevant, comprehensive, useful and owned by paid staff and volunteers. By conducting a self-assessment of performance before embarking on business planning, organisations can:

- review what works and what does not within an organisation to provide a solid foundation for the business planning process
- identify tasks in an Action Plan that need to be completed to write a business or strategic plan - for example: reviewing mission, vision and values; assessing profitability of products and services; conducting a stakeholder analysis
- ensure that business plans set targets and put in place systems for reviewing progress against the plan in a 'results orientated' way

Although C3Perform tools aren't accredited, they can be used alongside specific quality standards and can help organisations prepare for most quality systems.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Any VCS organisation wanting to embark on QS's

Time scale: n/a

Cost: Free to download

Assessment method: Self-assessment

Renewal required: n/a

More information: www.c3partnership.org/toolkit



EFQM Excellence Model

The EFQM Excellence Model was introduced at the beginning of 1992 as the framework for assessing organisations for the European Quality Award. It is now the most widely used organisational framework in Europe and it has become the basis for the majority of national and regional Quality Awards. The Excellence Model is designed as an overarching self-assessment framework for continuous improvement. There are nine criteria in it covering everything from strategic planning and good people management, to the use of outcomes to understand how effective an organisation is.

One of its great strengths is that it looks both inwards and outwards - looking at both the way an organisation is run and also how it interacts with stakeholders, including clients, partners and funders. The self assessment results in a list of areas for performance improvement that are then used to actually improve performance, followed by regular assessments of improvements made.

It can be used:

- as a tool for self-assessment
- as a way to benchmark with other organisations
- as a guide to identifying areas for Improvement
- as the basis for a common vocabulary and a way of thinking
- as a structure for the organisation's management system

By undergoing external assessment, organisations can also aim for the UK Quality Award. The model is very comprehensive, but could be seen as daunting by many smaller VCS groups.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Large VCS organisations who are tendering for contracts

Time scale: Depends on individual organisation's requirements

Cost: There are a range of booklets that can be ordered (costing £20 to £200 each). Organisations applying for external assessment will be charged depending on their size and complexity. For organisations with less than 500 employees, the application fee is around £11,000 + Assessor expenses.

Assessment method: Self-assessment (+ external audit if required)

Renewal required: This is a continuous process

More information: www.efqm.org



The Hallmarks of an Effective Charity

The Charity Commission has developed Hallmarks of an Effective Charity to set out the standards that will help trustees to improve the effectiveness of their charity. This guidance has been divided into six Hallmarks or principles and gives ideas on how these can be demonstrated. Whilst a few of these are legal requirements, most are matters of good practice and can relate to any VCS organisation large or small!

Staff and trustees can use these Hallmarks as a means of reviewing how their charity is performing and to identify the areas in which the charity is strong and those areas which need further development. Compliance with the law is an integral part of good governance and effective performance.

Hallmark 1: Clear about its purposes & direction

An effective charity is clear about its purposes, mission and values and uses them to direct all aspects of its work.

Hallmark 2: A strong board

An effective charity is run by a clearly identifiable board or trustee body that has the right balance of skills and experience, acts in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries, understands its responsibilities and has systems in place to exercise them properly.

Hallmark 3: Fit for purpose

The structure, policies and procedures of an effective charity enable it to achieve its purposes and mission and deliver its services efficiently.

Hallmark 4: Learning and improving

An effective charity is always seeking to improve its performance and efficiency, and to learn new and better ways of delivering its purposes. A charity's assessment of its performance, and of the impact and outcomes of its work, will feed into its planning processes and will influence its future direction.

Hallmark 5: Financially sound and prudent

An effective charity has the financial and other resources needed to deliver its purposes and mission, and controls and uses them so as to achieve its potential.

Hallmark 6: Accountable and transparent

An effective charity is accountable to the public and others with an interest in the charity (stakeholders) in a way that is transparent and understandable.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Any VCS organisation

Time scale: Depends on the organisation

Cost: Free to access

Assessment method: Self assessment

Renewal required: As required

More information: www.tinyurl.com/amp3cs

(see Other Useful Websites on page 37 for other Standards relating to trustees and governance)



NAVCA Performance Standards & Quality Mark

NAVCA, funded through ChangeUp, has developed a set of Performance Standards and an assessment process that can be used to help local infrastructure organisations to review and improve the effectiveness of their core activity (the NAVCA Quality Award).

Five Performance Standards have been developed that cover the five core functions of local infrastructure organisations. For each of the five Standards, there is a statement, a series of outcomes, a set of minimum outputs, and some suggested additional outputs. The Performance Standards form the basis of the NAVCA Quality Award. The Award assures the quality of the delivery of infrastructure services to local voluntary and community groups. The standards are as follows:

Development, Support and Liaison

Standard 1

The organisation pro-actively identifies needs in the local community and facilitates improvement in service provision to meet those needs.

Standard 2

The organisation assists local voluntary and community organisations to function more effectively and deliver quality services to their users, members or constituents.

Standard 3

The organisation facilitates effective communication or networking and collaboration amongst local voluntary and community groups.

Representation & Strategic Partnership work

Standard 4

The organisation enables the diverse views of the local voluntary and community sector to be represented to external bodies, facilitating effective two-way communication.

Standard 5

The organisation enhances the voluntary and community sector's role as an integral part of planning local services and policy making.

Each Performance Standard is presented with a set of required outputs and activities, and outcomes.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	VCS Infrastructure organisations
Time scale:	Up to 1 year
Cost:	£1828.25 + VAT (2008/09) + membership of NAVCA
Assessment method:	Self-assessment and external audit visit
Renewal required:	Every 3 years
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/uu7nu



PQASSO and the PQASSO Quality Mark

(a Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)

PQASSO is designed for small and medium voluntary organisations to provide a system for assessing and improving all aspects of their work. It is the most commonly used quality standard in the voluntary and community sector: 46% of charities surveyed in Futureskills 2003 had achieved PQASSO levels, or were working towards them.

PQASSO was developed by Charities Evaluation Services as a self-assessment tool in 1997 and revised in 2000 and 2007. The third edition was launched in 2008. The tool helps VCS groups:

- focus on what the organisation is doing
- bring people together to identify areas for improvement
- facilitate discussion to ensure all stakeholders are aware of policies, procedures and plans
- motivate people to make visible progress
- use a clear language for negotiating with funders

The Self-Assessment Pack is divided into twelve quality areas and each of these has three “levels of achievement”, with details of what the organisation should be doing to achieve each of these levels. Each area has “suggested evidence” to help you identify how to demonstrate your achievements. This leads you on to a “self-assessment” page, which helps you decide what action needs to be taken, by specific people and within specific timeframes to meet the “levels of achievement”.

For those who would like external recognition of their achievement, CES is now offering a new service - the PQASSO Quality Mark - which assesses organisations against the PQASSO standards. Successful organisations will gain the right to display the PQASSO Quality Mark logo to show they are accredited. Before applying, you must have already self-assessed against your chosen level of PQASSO and be confident that you have fully met all the requirements of PQASSO at that level. Currently, external accreditation is only available at Level 1 and 2.

SAVO staff are available to help VCS organisations in Suffolk work towards a PQASSO award. Christine Pinsent, SAVO’s Training Field Officer, is now a qualified PQASSO mentor, while Robin Hodgkinson (Training Manager) is a qualified PQASSO Peer Reviewer. Please contact SAVO for more information on 01473 273273.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Small to medium sized VCS organisations
Time scale:	Between 28 to 42 weeks
Cost:	PQASSO 3rd edition costs £95.00 (plus p&p) The CD-Rom costs £54.00 including VAT (plus p&p). The cost to then apply for the Quality Mark varies depending on the size of your organisation. For example, an organisation with 1 to 5 full-time equivalent staff, applying for the level 2 would be £1,255 + expenses (2008 prices). Organisations with 16 to 49 full-time equivalent staff applying for level 1 or 2 would be £2,055 + expenses (2008 prices).
Assessment method:	Self-assessment + external assessment for the Quality Mark
Renewal required:	n/a
More information:	www.pqassoqualitymark.org.uk



Quality First

This Quality Standard is based on PQASSO, but designed for very small organisations, with no paid staff or only part-time staff. Like PQASSO, Quality First is a self-assessment tool, based around nine quality areas. It was developed by Birmingham CVS and piloted with small organisations in the local area. Quality First is regarded as relevant for very small organisations, and a useful foundation for moving onto other systems.

The Quality First workbook comes in an easy-to-read ring binder with full instructions and photocopy-friendly work sheets. It has been piloted with a number of small organisations run by volunteers.

Organisations using Quality First work through the Quality First Workbook, which suggests that an organisation should make procedures explicit (say what you do), ensure that those procedures are carried out (do what you say) and check their effectiveness by monitoring and reviewing performance. Improvements in quality should be seen as a result.

The 9 quality areas in Quality First are:

1. Stating our purpose
2. Our standards and values
3. Managing it all
4. Involving our community
5. Working together as volunteers
6. Equality and fairness
7. Reviewing our work
8. Financial management
9. Communicating effectively

Each quality area has two levels:

- Level 1 - the basic standards that even the smallest organisation should address
- Level 2 - for organisations that have met Level 1 and have done so for at least a year.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Very small VCS organisations

Time scale: n/a

Cost: £30 + £4 p&p

Assessment method: Self-assessment

Renewal required: n/a

More information: www.tinyurl.com/cuobl2



Reach

Reach is the self assessment framework for Youth Action agencies. Designed specifically for youth action agencies (youth volunteering), Reach was put together with the help of Youth Action workers and is firmly embedded in youth volunteering, with sections ranging from support to participation and from recognition to community benefit. It is based on a user friendly happy/sad face system so that young people can easily access the process.

The framework focuses on the key principles of Youth Action, with sections looking at:

- mission and aims
- support
- accessibility
- youth participation
- induction and progression
- reflection and learning
- rights and responsibilities
- recognition
- safety
- community benefit
- diverse action
- networking and partnership

The pack includes the framework itself, a support handbook, an action planning poster and a toolkit of activities aimed at making the framework more user-friendly, and to encourage use by a wider range of people or organisations.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Specifically for youth action agencies (youth volunteering)

Time scale: Flexible

Cost: One copy of 'Reach' is provided free of charge to full and associate members of Youth Action Network. Additional copies can be purchased for £97.50 (plus p&p) for members or £139.29 (plus p&p) for voluntary organisations.

Assessment method: Self assessment

Renewal required: n/a - about continuous improvement

More information: www.tinyurl.com/at2w3o



Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation

Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation is a quality framework for Volunteer Centres, specifically addressing the delivery of six core functions of volunteering infrastructure at a local level:

1. Brokerage
2. Marketing volunteering
3. Good practice development
4. Developing volunteering opportunities
5. Policy response and campaigning
6. Strategic development of volunteering

The recently reviewed assessment process for Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation examines the activity of Volunteer Centres in delivering these six core functions. For each of these, Volunteer Centres are asked to demonstrate that they have processes in place to deliver those functions and to monitor the outcome of their delivery. Evidential portfolios are submitted on a sub-regional basis. Achieving Volunteering England Quality Accreditation enables Volunteer Centres to carry the Volunteering England branding.

Support for Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation

Support is made available through a rolling programme of support meetings, and resources including free workshops, which are offered to volunteer centres six months prior to the submission deadline (workshops tend to be held in Leeds, Birmingham and London) and by email.

Volunteer Centres are also able to access examples of “good” evidence on request and there is a dedicated section of the Volunteering England website (password protected) with a wealth of further information and resources to help with VCQA, including sample forms, information sheets, guidance and the latest versions of the submission form, checklists and pro-formas needed to complete a portfolio.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Volunteer Centres
Time scale:	Depends on circumstances
Cost:	No direct cost
Assessment method:	Self-assessment & portfolio submission
Renewal required:	Every 3 years
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/are8nz



Young Suffolk Quality Mark

This Award is in recognition that an organisation has provided evidence that it is a well run and safe provider of services for children and young people. It is designed to be, "rigorous but not onerous". The Standard focuses on the systems and structures you have in place to ensure you are a safe, well run provider of services, rather than look at the quality of service delivery. It is appropriate for all voluntary children and youth sector organisations, from the largest national or affiliated groups to smaller groups. Smaller groups with no paid staff may find Young Suffolk's "Lite" Quality Standards more appropriate.

This Standard is recognised by funders in the county as a benchmark for good practice. The Standard operates in four categories, which are designed to provide a comprehensive safeguarding environment in which to work and that children and young people can access with confidence:

- child protection
- health and safety
- staff support and development
- organisational management

To support you throughout the process, and also after achieving the Award, you will have a Support Worker from Young Suffolk allocated to you. You will also receive priority access to Young Suffolk training, example policies and procedures and Peer Mentoring through the process if you wish.

Summary.....

Aimed at: VCS organisations providing services for children and young people

Time scale: Usually between 4-12 months

Cost: No charge

Assessment method: Self-assessment portfolio, external verification of your portfolio and a final Review by the Quality Standards Review Panel

Renewal required: Every 3 years

More information: www.onesuffolk.co.uk/youngsuffolk/qualitystandards



Quality Standards relating to staff and volunteer management



Investors in Diversity

The 'Investors in Diversity' is a new standard, which helps organisations adopt and develop a set of characteristics and behaviours, which if embraced, can lead to real and sustainable gains through cultural movement. It also enables organisations to measure their progress as well and be recognised for achievements.

Its aim is to support and enable organisations to adopt, develop and benchmark behaviours and practices, which promote inclusion, equality, diversity and achievement.

Investors in Diversity - Objectives:

- support organisations that are committed to inclusion
- assist organisations to learn about their stakeholders
- support organisations to develop and sustain an inclusive and adaptive organisational culture and environment
- help organisations to measure their success
- provide accreditation to achieving candidate organisations

liD offers a user-friendly route map, to any organisation, to higher achievement. It supports organisations towards inclusion of all stakeholders via an informed and self determined organisational culture shift. It measures distance travelled against a cross sectoral national standard and it offers recognition for successes. As part of the package, there is at least two days structured support from a National Centre for Diversity trained, liD Advisor for your organisation, plus two days support from an liD Assessor.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Volunteer involving organisations
Time scale:	Up to 2 years to gain accreditation as 'Leader in Diversity'
Cost:	Depends on organisation's size and structure. From £1975 + VAT.
Assessment method:	At least 2 days structured support from an liD Assessor and then a formal assessment
Renewal required:	Contact National Centre
More information:	www.nationalcentrefordiversity.com/iid/about



Investing in Governance Framework and Quality Mark

Investing in Governance is a new board evaluation framework. It is designed to enable boards to assess their governance against best practice, and to make changes to improve performance. Investing in Governance is run as a social enterprise, whose mission is to improve the governance of UK charity and social enterprise boards.

The Investing in Governance board evaluation framework contains 69 governance practices designed to reflect the breadth and depth of processes involved in running a board, recruiting and inducting board members - through to supporting and reviewing their individual performance and that of the whole board.

There are 7 steps to ensuring a successful board review:

- the board agrees to evaluate its governance practices
- Investing in Governance framework is circulated to all board members
- all board members complete the evaluation
- the results of each board member's evaluation are collated and the results shared;
- the collated evaluation results are discussed at a board meeting
- a plan of action for addressing any gaps in board practice is discussed and agreed by the board
- an impact assessment of the action plan is carried out 6 to 12 months after its implementation

Organisations can also apply for the Investing in Governance quality mark which defines best board practice for charities and social enterprises across the UK. It has been designed to enable boards to evaluate their governance practices against a best practice standard and create an agenda for performance improvement.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Any VCS organisation and social enterprise
Time scale:	Depends on circumstances
Cost:	Framework: £29.50 (a discount on this price is available through SAVO*). Quality mark accreditation £3,250.
Assessment method:	Self assessment + external assessment
Renewal required:	Not stated
More information:	www.investingingovernance.org.uk

*Contact Tom Bright for more details on 01473 275193 or email tom.bright@savo.co.uk



Investors in People

The Investors in People Standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through its people. It offers a framework (rather than prescribing any one method) for organisations to achieve the Standard, working to the same criteria - or 'indicators' - as other organisations, but recognising that organisations will meet them in their own way. Research has shown that working towards the IIP standard offers real benefits, both for the organisation and its staff.

Like any employer, VCS organisations rely on people to provide products and services. Therefore, the most important investment any organisation makes is in the people who work (or volunteer) for it. IIP thus focuses on key aspects of an organisation's capabilities as a good employer.

In particular it looks at:

- how an organisation develops & communicates its aims, values & goals to its staff & volunteers (including how staff & volunteers are involved in the group's business planning process)
- how the organisation caters for its staff and volunteers' learning and development needs
- how staff and volunteers are valued and respected
- how well managers manage & support their staff & volunteers (including what competencies & skills managers should have according to their seniority & level of responsibility within the organisation)

The Investors in People Standard is based on three key principles:

- PLAN - developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation
- DO - taking action to improve the performance of the organisation
- REVIEW - evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation

There are 10 Indicators (or statements) which organisations have to fulfill under the 3 key principles.

In order to be recognised against the Investors in People Standard, a VCS organisation is required to undergo an Assessment. Once an organisation has decided to work with the Investors in People Standard, it can embark on assessment at any time. An external assessor will come and visit your organisation and interview a representative sample of trustees, staff and (if appropriate) volunteers to collect evidence to match your organisation against the Standard.

SAVO can offer assistance in helping organisations with IIP, through its online resources, toolkits and e-learning programmes. Recently Robin Hodgkinson, SAVO's Training Manager, worked on an Investors East project, taking a number of organisations through the IIP process. Contact Robin for more information on 01473 275194.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Voluntary organisations employing staff
Time scale:	6-9 months on average
Cost:	Assessor costs are around £550 + per day (2 or more days are required)
Assessment method:	Self-assessment and external audit visit
Renewal required:	3 Years
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/awvkng



Investing in Volunteers

Launched in November 2004, Investing in Volunteers (IIV) is the UK quality standard for volunteer management. If your organisation involves any number of volunteers, achieving the Investing In Volunteers standard will enable your organisation to make the best use of this valuable people resource. The Standard enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management, and also publicly demonstrates their commitment to volunteering.

The Standard comprises of ten “indicators of volunteer management best practice”, supported by a range of 55 practices an organisation needs to be carrying out, based on four key areas of volunteer management:

- planning for volunteer involvement
- recruiting volunteers
- selecting and matching volunteers
- supporting and retaining volunteer

Investing in Volunteers is being managed within England by Volunteering England. The Investing in Volunteers process has been broken down into ten easy steps. With the support of an Advisor and Assessor, access to relevant advice documents, training, and the IIV website, an organisation is supported through each of the ten steps.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Volunteer involving organisations
Time scale:	3-12 months
Cost:	The price for Investing in Volunteers will vary according to the size and complexity of your organisation. As an example, a very small organisation with less than 100 volunteers, 1-10 volunteer roles and based within 1 office - the cost of the IIV package would be £1,500 to £2,000 + VAT.
Assessment method:	Self-assessment and external audit visit
Renewal required:	3 Years
More information:	www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk



Quality Standards relating to customer service



Customer Service Excellent: Government Standard

This is a new quality system (replacing Charter Mark) aimed at organisations dealing with the public on a day to day basis. It looks at the standards of customer service delivery, checking that the organisation is placing customers at the centre of everything it does; its focus is on customer satisfaction needs.

Organisations can download the Standards for free and also use an on-line assessment tool (also free) to benchmark themselves. If an organisation wishes to carry out a formal assessment for Customer Service Excellence and use the Government Standard for branding, they can register with one of the licensed certification bodies (a charge is then payable).

This Standard is open to any Sector and is a good way to improve customer services within your organisation.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Any customer-facing organisation
Time scale:	On-line assessment tool available at any time
Cost:	On-line assessment tool is free. Cost negotiated to take formal Government Standard through a certification body.
Assessment method:	Free on-line assessment
Renewal required:	Depends on whether full Standard applied for
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/bbxbnc



ISO 9000

(the International Organisation for Standardisation)

ISO 9000 is the term applied to a group of standards that aims to help organisation achieve customer satisfaction by focusing on “how things are done”. The term ISO 9000 unfortunately has two different meanings in that it refers to a single standard (ISO 9000) and it also refers to a set of three standards (ISO 9000, ISO 9001, and ISO 9004). ISO 9000 discusses definitions and terminology and is used to clarify the concepts used by the ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 standards. ISO 9001 contains requirements and is often used for certification purposes while ISO 9004 presents a set of guidelines and is used to develop quality management systems that go beyond ISO 9001. (www.praxiom.com/iso-intro.htm)

To achieve ISO 9001 an organisation will develop a quality management system that meets the requirements specified by ISO 9001. External assessment to gain the Quality Standard ISO 9001 is carried out by a certification body. Although the Standard was originally oriented towards the manufacturing sector, it has been developed over time to encompass both product and service organisations across all three sectors. There are some examples of usage in the VCS, largely among organisations working in social care or development. The ISO 9001 standard is generalised and abstract and therefore its parts must be carefully interpreted, to make sense within a particular organisation. It can be applied across a diverse range of businesses from software design, to food manufacturing to counselling services.

Most organisations need ISO 9000 certification to qualify for a tender or to achieve preferred supplier status: typically for a Local Authority. There are, however, many other benefits that can be added to these, including:-

- improved internal working leading to less errors and re-work
- improved customer satisfaction and loyalty
- improved morale and motivation
- preferential insurance premiums
- competitive advantage
- increased profitability
- enhanced status

Summary.....

Aimed at:	VCS groups wishing to tender for contracts
Time scale:	Depends on individual organisation requirements
Cost:	The Standards cost around £70 to purchase. External assessment costs vary depending on the size, needs and turnover of an organisation. Ask for a quote from one of the accredited bodies before starting the process. The audit part can cost between £700-£2000 + VAT.
Assessment method:	Self-assessment + external audit
Renewal required:	This is a continuous process
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/2ely7u



Quality Standards
relating to specific areas of operation



Approved Provider Standard

(A National Standard for Mentoring and Befriending)

The Approved Provider Standard (APS) has been developed as a national benchmark for organisations providing one-to-one, volunteer mentoring or befriending. Supported by the Home Office Active Communities Directorate and the Department for Education and Skills, it aims to provide programmes with a badge of competence and underpin safe practice in mentoring and befriending. Applications can be from organisations of any size. The Standard is awarded to a provider based on an assessment of a particular project. The vast majority of providers, operating in a specific local area and using a single delivery structure, will need to apply for the assessment of one project against the Standard.

The Standard is promoted and administered by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) on behalf of the Government. Mentoring and befriending projects dependent on Government funding will be required in future to demonstrate a commitment to the Approved Provider Standard.

Benefits of achieving APS

- recognition for good practice
- entry onto a database of approved providers
- APS is an accepted benchmark by government departments and other funding bodies
- certification and use of the 'Approved Provider' logo
- increased public confidence in mentoring or befriending programme
- helps promote your programme to potential clients and volunteers
- provides a 'health check' of your programme

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Any organisation that provides a one-to-one volunteer mentoring or befriending scheme
Time scale:	Up to 12 months
Cost:	Free
Assessment method:	Self assessment + external audit
Renewal required:	Every 3 years
More information:	www.mandbf.org.uk



Becoming Visible Community Standards

Becoming Visible is an operating standard for community centres and multi-purpose community organisations that are mission and performance focused.

The Standard is:

- endorsed by National and Local Government
- endorsed by the Charity Commission

Becoming Visible has been developed as a self assessment tool and a nationally accredited kite mark scheme. Organisations will have to complete 28 of the 121 indicators (some are mandatory, others optional) and provide the necessary evidence. The scheme is accredited and verified by Community Matters.

The standards are based on the following:

- a **VOICE** to represent issues of local concern
- an **INDEPENDENT** and politically neutral organisation
- a **SERVICE** provider for local people
- an **INITIATOR** of projects to meet locally identified needs
- a **BUILDER** of partnerships with other local organisations and groups
- a strong **LOCAL** network of people and organisations
- a way to **ENGAGE** local people to become active in their communities

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Community centres and multi-purpose community organisations
Time scale:	Around 6 months
Cost:	Purchase of a Workbook is necessary to use VISIBLE. Fees for accreditation are currently £1650 + VAT £1500 + VAT for members of Community Matters £1550 + VAT for organisation supported by a local licensed agent £1400 + VAT for Community Matters members supported by a local licensed agent.
Assessment method:	Self assessment + external assessment
Renewal required:	Every 3 years
More information:	www.visiblecommunities.org.uk



Clubmark

Clubmark is the standard developed by Sport England to ensure that sports clubs provide a high quality experience for young people. It is an accreditation scheme for clubs with junior sections including certain criteria laid down by their sport's National Governing Body (NGB).

National governing bodies (NGBs) and county sport partnerships (CSPs) award Clubmark to proven high quality clubs. The national scheme has been in place since 2002 and there are now over 4,700 accredited clubs across more than 35 sports. If a sports club is multi-sport, each separate sport would need to achieve the relevant Clubmark for its own sport. Contact the appropriate National Governing Body of sport.

NGBs accredit clubs that comply with minimum operating standards in four areas:

- the playing or participation programme
- duty of care and child protection
- sports equity and ethics
- club management

Clubmark demonstrates to partners, parents and young people that Clubmark accredited clubs are active, accessible and accredited.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Sports clubs offering services to young people
Time scale:	Within 12 months
Cost:	The basic Standard is normally free, though there may be other costs required to obtain it
Assessment method:	Each NGB have different ways of accessing their own 'Clubmark' Scheme and contact should be made with the relevant body for your sport.
Renewal required:	Varies depending on the NGB
More information:	www.sportengland.org/clubmark



The Community Legal Service (CLS) Quality Mark

This standard has been specifically designed for organisations providing legal information and advice to the public. It is produced and audited by the Legal Services Commission.

The Quality Mark has different levels to choose from depending on the information, advice and help offered by the organisation. Each organisation applies at the level best suited to their services and is reviewed by an auditor. All members of the Community Legal Service must reach a minimum required standard. The Quality Mark is still relatively new, and is therefore still evolving. Having the Quality Mark will identify you as a quality-assured service provider; it will give funders and clients confidence in the service you provide, and other agencies will be able to signpost clients to you.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Organisations providing legal advice and information to the public
Time scale:	3-6 months
Cost:	Generally free
Assessment method:	Self-assessment application and external audit
Renewal required:	Annual audit
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/djsg6z



CommunityMark

The CommunityMark is a new national standard which recognises business excellence in community investment. The CommunityMark consists of five key principles that govern good community investment. The standard is run by Business in the Community (BITC).

The CommunityMark was developed in partnership with a consultation group that contributed to identifying five best practice principles for evaluating corporate community investment programmes:

- identify the social issues that are most relevant to your business and most pressing to the communities you work with
- work in partnership with your communities leveraging your combined expertise for mutual benefit
- plan and manage your community investment, using the most appropriate resources to deliver against your targets
- inspire and engage your employees, customers and suppliers to support your community programmes
- measure and evaluate the difference that your investment has made in the community and on your business. Strive for continual improvement

Organisations wishing to apply complete an on-line self assessment, attend workshops and then have to submit their applications before a certain deadline. Community Marks are then awarded after a six month panel process.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Any business working in the UK in any sector, however big or small, can apply for the CommunityMark. At this stage the CommunityMark will not be offered to public sector organisations or social enterprises.
Time scale:	Up to 12 months
Cost:	£500 - £600 for organisations with less than 500 employees
Assessment method:	Self assessment + external assessment
Renewal required:	Every 3 years
More information:	www.bitc.org.uk/community/communitymark



Hear by Right

Hear by Right is a tried and tested standards framework for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people.

It uses measurable standards to map the current level of young people's participation across a wide range of service providers and then strategically develop an action plan to further this.

The Hear by Right standards framework is designed to help secure sustained and beneficial participation of children and young people and to encourage continual improvement in an organisation's activities. It is intended to be applied to all services that affect children and young people, directly or indirectly. The framework encourages inclusion of a wide range of children and young people, while urging care in choosing approaches appropriate to different ages, abilities and understanding.

Hear by Right is based around the Seven S model for organisational change:

- Shared values
- Strategy
- Structure
- Systems
- Staff
- Skills and knowledge
- Style of leadership

For each of these seven standards, there are seven indicators. The standards are split into three levels of performance, emerging, established and advanced, with each building upon the previous one. This ensures that young people's involvement is built in and not just bolted on. There are certain requirements that need to be met in order to meet each performance level.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Organisations working with, and delivering services to, children and young people
Time scale:	Ongoing
Cost:	Free to download online
Assessment method:	Self-assessment
Renewal required:	n/a
More information:	hbr.nya.org.uk



matrix Standard

The matrix Standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work to external clients or internal staff.

Your organisation may deliver information, advice and guidance to external clients. This could be in the context of a careers service, learning centre, recruitment agency, trades union or a business training provider - an external service.

Alternatively you may be an employer offering your staff support or assistance in areas such as skills training, management development, appraisals, promotion and succession planning or redundancy programmes - an internal service.

The matrix Standard consists of eight elements, four focused on how you deliver your service and four focused on how you manage your service:

Delivering your service

- people are made aware of the service and how to engage with it
- people's use of the service is defined and understood
- people are provided with access to information and support in using it
- people are supported in exploring options and making choices

Managing your service

- service delivery is planned and maintained
- staff competence and support they are given are sufficient to deliver the service
- feedback on the quality of the service is obtained
- continuous quality improvement is ensured through monitoring, evaluation and action

Some funders request this Standard as a requirement of funding. Once you register, you receive a Certificate of Commitment, which demonstrates to funders that you are committed to achieving this Standard within the next year.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	VCS organisations providing information, advice and/or guidance to service users.
Time scale:	6-9 months
Cost:	The standards can be downloaded or ordered for free. Assessment costs are typically £600 + VAT and expenses per day (2+ days required).
Assessment method:	Self-assessment + external assessment
Renewal required:	At a maximum every 3 years
More information:	www.matrixstandard.com



QASRO

QASRO, or Quality Assurance System for Refugee Organisations, is a tool to help refugee organisations ensure they are well run and deliver high quality services. Developed in partnership by the Refugee Council and other refugee organisations, QASRO provides a unique tool to meet the growing demand for quality assurance and performance management.

QASRO is designed specifically for frontline organisations providing services to asylum seekers and refugee organisations, including refugee-led community organisations. Projects for asylum seekers and refugees, or non-specialist organisations with asylum-seekers and refugees among their other users, may also find QASRO useful. Second-tier organisations may find QASRO a useful tool

Based on self-assessment, QASRO enables an organisation to set standards, monitor performance, and make improvements in all aspects of its operation. A portfolio of evidence shows funders and other stakeholders how the organisation maintains standards and improves performance.

QASRO contains 3 key sections that make it uniquely suitable for refugee organisations:

- standards in 12 key areas of organisational development
- guidelines for delivering key services for refugees
- sample policies and other materials

All three sections reflect the activities and challenges of refugee organisations, and the sample materials were developed by refugee organisations themselves.

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Frontline organisations providing services to asylum seekers and refugee organisations
Time scale:	Ongoing
Cost:	Free to download
Assessment method:	Self-assessment
Renewal required:	As required
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/dd5rdt



QuADS – Quality in Alcohol and Drug Services

The QuADS Organisational Quality Standards Manual for alcohol and drug treatment services was developed by the QuADS Project, a joint Alcohol Concern/ Standing Conference on Drug Abuse (SCODA) project funded by the Department of Health, and actively supported by the United Kingdom Anti-Drugs Co-ordination Unit.

The QuADS Organisational Standards manual is intended for use by alcohol and drug treatment service providers as an assessment tool, to help with the development of quality in services. It provides an opportunity for services to audit comprehensively all aspects of their organisational practice and to determine areas of strength or areas where further development is required. It will form the basis of the forthcoming national quality assessment system for alcohol and drug treatment providers.

The manual will also be useful for other professionals who work with drug and alcohol treatment services.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Organisations delivering drug and/or alcohol support services

Time scale: Ongoing

Cost: Free to download

Assessment method: Self-assessment

Renewal required: As required

More information: www.tinyurl.com/cjhrm3



Quest

Quest is the UK quality standard for sport and leisure organisations (centres) in the commercial, voluntary and public sectors.

There are two models:

The Facility Management (FM) model is aimed at the management of any facility which provides an activity for customers; public, private, trust and voluntary sector.

The Sports Development (SD) model is aimed at the management of any team which provides or facilitates participation in an activity; public, private, trust and voluntary sectors.

Although initially designed for the sports and leisure industry, the good practice is flexible enough to relate to all cultural activities. Each of the areas identified above has both a self-assessment improvement programme, and the opportunity for an independent external assessment.

To start the assessment process organisations need to purchase a Quest Pack. This purchase includes subscription to the members only area of the website where there is access to all the best practice guidance documents as well as benchmarking data and case studies.

Quest reached its 1000th registration in November 2008.

Summary.....

Aimed at: Organisations delivering services funded by Supporting People

Time scale: Approximately 3 months

Cost: Quest Pack is £95 plus p&p. External assessment is £1,260 per facility, for a two day assessment or £525 - 845 (plus expenses) for a sports development team, depending upon the scope and size.

Assessment method: Self assessment + external assessment

Renewal required: Every 2 years

More information: www.quest-uk.org



Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport

The Child Protection in Sport Unit has a downloadable publication which gives full details of the ten Standards developed by Sport England Governing Body Services and the Sports Task Force on Policy and Standards. Designed to help sports organisations safeguard children and young people, the Standards provide a national benchmark of good practice to work towards. The Standard is supported by Sport England and the NSPCC.

The standards are based on current good practice and are informed by legislation and guidance, evidence from research and experience of what works, drawing from the field of child protection and from sport.

They raise awareness and help organisations know what they need to do to protect children involved in sport and to minimise avoidable risks. When implemented fully, they should provide parents with increased confidence and peace of mind. Most important of all, they should help create safer environments for children, where they can enjoy and get the very best from their involvement in sport.

Purpose of standards

- to help create a safe sporting environment for children and young people and protect them from harm
- to provide a benchmark to assist those involved in sport to make informed decisions
- to promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Organisations involved in providing sporting activities for young people.
Time scale:	5 years
Cost:	Free for organisations that fall into the Child Protection in Sport Unit's (CPSU) group, which consists of Governing Bodies and County Sports Partnerships. A new strategic framework is being reviewed with regards to implementing more organisations into the standards process.
Assessment method:	Self assessment + external audit
Renewal required:	Every 5 years
More information:	www.tinyurl.com/bqcqg9



Star Social Firm Standard

The Star Social Firm is the first quality standard to be developed in the social enterprise sector and has been developed by Social Firms UK, especially for Social Firms (a type of social enterprise). The Star Social Firm confirms quality - of the businesses, their products and services and the workplace. The Star Social Firm quality standard is externally verified and moderated by the standards setting body, SFEDI who further ensure the integrity and reliability of the standard.

For Social Firms and customers alike the Star Social Firm quality standard confirms they are:

- leading-edge, genuine Social Firms
- sustainable, professional quality-driven businesses
- businesses with a sound commercial focus
- business where people and organisations can purchase with confidence
- businesses that can help others achieve their own corporate social responsibility targets
- businesses with high values and an ethical purpose

The Standard is based around three areas:

Enterprise

- legal status and constitution
- financial and environmental sustainability
- social firm business sustainability

Empowerment

- legal compliance
- training and learning
- proactive support and development

Employment

- employment of severely disadvantaged people
- clarity of role within the workplace and at board level

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Social Firms
Time scale:	Around 6 months
Cost:	Currently heavily discounted by Social Firms UK Expect to pay around £250-£300
Assessment method:	Self assessment + external assessment
Renewal required:	Every 2 years
More information:	www.starsocialfirms.co.uk



Supporting People Regional Accreditation

It is a requirement of Supporting People that all providers, or potential providers, of support services funded by Supporting People can demonstrate they are suitable organisations to contract with. In 2006 the ten Supporting People teams within the Eastern Region adopted a Regional Accreditation process. This was developed in order to provide a co-ordinated approach to accreditation and to allow the passporting of Providers within the region.

There are 5 accreditation criteria, which are used to ensure that providers:

- are financially viable
- have competent administrative procedures in place
- have effective employment policies in place
- have robust management procedures in place
- are competent to deliver services

It is possible for providers to achieve some or all of the above criteria using accreditation with other frameworks. If this is the case then providers can be 'passporting' through the relevant sections. Details of this can be found in the guidance document, which can be downloaded here: www.tinyurl.com/aqtkey

The Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) was introduced in 2003 and sets out the standards expected in the delivery of Supporting People services. The QAF also identified methods of evidencing their achievement and has been a successful practical tool for ensuring continuous improvement in services delivering housing-related support over the past five years.

The QAF has become an essential part of the Administering Authorities' (AAs) means of ensuring that providers deliver services to an acceptable standard and in accordance with contractual expectations. Although no longer mandatory, the majority of Administering Authorities continue to use the QAF today. Now updated, the original purpose of the QAF remains: to continue to drive up quality standards across the sector and to ensure that services evolve to meet the changing needs and aspirations of clients.

There will now be five core objectives:

- C1.1 Assessment and Support Planning
- C1.2 Security, Health and Safety
- C1.3 Safeguarding & Protection from Abuse
- C1.4 Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion
- C1.5 Client Involvement and Empowerment

Summary.....

Aimed at:	Organisations delivering services funded by Supporting People
Time scale:	Depends on circumstances
Cost:	Free
Assessment method:	Self-assessment
Renewal required:	Every 3 years
More information:	www.spkweb.org.uk



Training Quality Standard

The Training Quality Standard is an assessment framework and an assessment and certification process which has been designed to recognise and celebrate the best organisations delivering training and development solutions to employers. The Standard has been created by the Learning and Skills Council to develop a new higher standard for the certification of training providers, including those previously recognised as Centres of Vocational Excellence.

The Learning and Skills Council has invested in the development of the Training Quality Standard (formerly the new standard) to create a credible national mark which employers can follow to access responsive and relevant training and development provision. In doing so, it is expected that the Training Quality Standard will stimulate significant improvements in the quality of training and development provision, so that it delivers greater impact for employers, greater value for the taxpayer, and recognition for those delivering to a high standard.

The Training Quality Standard has been designed to reflect employers' priorities and expectations in sourcing training and development solutions, and the practices of the organisations proven to be the best at delivering them. The Assessment is split into two parts (A and B).

The aims of the Training Quality Standard are to create an assessment framework and process through which the best organisations providing and delivering training and development solutions to employers can be recognised and marked out.

The Standard assesses and, where appropriate, certifies organisations for their:

- responsiveness to employers
- excellence in delivering training
- commitment to continuous improvement
- specialisation around industry sectors

Summary.....

Aimed at: VCS organisations delivering training

Time scale: 4 months +

Cost: Up to £10,000 for Part A and Part B.

Assessment method: Application form and external assessment

Renewal required: 3 years

More information: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk



Other useful websites:

The Performance Hub

Developed with ChangeUp funding, this useful website closed in March 2008, but still has lots of relevant information on performance.

www.performancehub.org.uk

The National Occupational standards (NOS) for Trustees and Management Committee Members

The NOS is available on the website shown below. The NOS is aimed at individual trustees of a charity or community organisation.

www.governancehub.org.uk

Code of Governance

This is a tool for encouraging the development of better VCS governance practice in England. It provides a set of principles for VCS organisations that ensures the highest standard of governance practice in areas such as Board Leadership, High Performance, Board Review & Renewal and Board Delegation.

www.tinyurl.com/ddjvqu

British Quality Foundation

The British Quality Foundation (BQF) is an independent, not for profit organisation founded in 1993 by the then Department of Trade and Industry and leading businesses. They help organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors to improve their capabilities and performance.

www.qualityfoundation.co.uk

Social Auditing

Tools for social auditing have been developed by the New Economics Foundation to measure, report on and improve an organisation's social performance & ethical behavior, and to increase accountability to various stakeholder groups.

www.tinyurl.com/qp65k

The Charities Evaluation Service

Offers training, consultancy, external evaluations and publications to help VCS organisations strengthen the quality of their work and achieve better outcomes for service users. They work in partnership with other organisations to deliver key programmes supporting voluntary and community organisations.

www.ces-vol.org.uk

Other specific sector related quality standards information:

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

This came into operation on 1 October 2008. Combining the best aspects of two different and highly successful sector bodies - the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), the LSIS will focus on learners and on developing excellent and sustainable further education and skills provision across the learning and skills sector. Leadership development will underpin and form an important part of the organisation's strategic role in this skills sector.

www.lsis.org.uk

Proving and improving: a quality and impact toolkit for social enterprise

This is a downloadable toolkit for mission-driven organisations to help them explore practical ways to measure their impact and demonstrate the quality of what they do and how they operate.

www.proveandimprove.org/new

Many national charities have their own quality standards and performance frameworks that local branches work to. For example Age Concern works to "Quality Counts". Check your national or regional head office for more details if you are a national charity.

