

Quality in the Voluntary Sector

a guide to
not-for-profit sector
quality awards

produced by
**Newcastle University
Business School**
on behalf of the
Accreditation
Providers
Forum



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how to use this document

- ◆ This document is an interactive PDF, which means that you can click on logos and underlined text to jump to the relevant section of the document or the appropriate website.
- ◆ You can return to the contents page at any time by clicking on the link at the bottom of each screen.
- ◆ You can navigate forwards and backwards through a section of the document using the yellow arrows, and move through the whole document in sequence by scrolling with the mouse or using your keyboard's arrow keys.

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about the forum

- ◆ The Accreditation Providers' Forum [APF] is a membership group which enables organisations to share learning on accrediting quality in the voluntary and community sector. The Forum was originally set up and serviced by CES [Charities Evaluation Services] with a grant from the Big Lottery. Since October 2010 when that grant finished, the APF has been managed on a collaborative basis by its members.
- ◆ Although diverse, the providers are all leaders in particular parts of the voluntary and community sector. Promoting continuous improvement is a feature of the expertise and support they provide to front-line voluntary and community organisations. The Standards have been developed in response to the needs of front-line organisations where more generic frameworks are seen to have limited relevance and require disproportionate time and resources.



about the forum

- ◆ Voluntary and community organisations [VCOs] that achieve these Standards are mindful of quality and are well established and managed - with a focus on working effectively and efficiently. If they were not, they would not have been accredited. Whether funding is distributed by grant making or competitive tender, Standards therefore inform due diligence and other aspects of risk management, assured through external validation.
- ◆ The Standards covered in this guide have been developed with and for particular sectors. As a result their content reflects the key features and issues within a specialist field. They also enable individual organisations to benchmark their work objectively against their peers, ensuring minimum standards. Further the process of accreditation builds capacity and capability. As illustrated, many VCOs use a combination of Standards and other mechanisms as required by their particular circumstances.



about the forum

- ◆ Reflecting their different histories, the Standards have different balances between a focus on organisational features and service delivery. In the restricted procurement procedure, they therefore have different relevance at PQQ [Pre Qualification Questionnaire] and ITT [Invitation To Tender] stages. Many Standards require the evidencing of delivery, so can also be integrated into proportionate contract management.
- ◆ If you want to find out more about the forum or this guide, please e-mail: info@accreditationprovidersforum.org.



the benchmarking process

- ◆ Newcastle University Business School [NUBS] was commissioned by the APF to support the process of assembling evidence from members about Quality Standards, reviewing submissions in relation to the ISO 9001:2000 process and producing a report of this activity. Aspects of the review process were subject to a validation by an external group of procurement and commissioning experts. The members of the team were Chris Ford, David Wright, Mike Martin and Rob Wilson.
- ◆ The evidence was collected using a template accompanied by an outline of the ISO headings which was circulated to members during Spring 2011. Participants were asked to assess the extent to which their Standards corresponded with the ISO criteria. Individual returns were moderated via a blind review of each APF-member Standard against the requirements of the ISO Standards. This review used "ISO 9001:2000 case studies" by Klaus Graebig¹ as the key reference text.

¹Graebig, K (2006) ISO 9001:2000 Case Studies. Experiences from Auditing Practice. London: BSI



the benchmarking process

- ◆ There is a range of roles and responsibilities involved in any accreditation process and the NUBS team developed a model of the ways in which these are allocated by different Standards (including ISO). It was observed that some APF members' Standards use external assessors whereas others use peer-review and service-user input. Both methods have pros and cons and it is notable that the Charity Commission's Quality Standards Endorsement Programme (in essence a Quality Standard for Quality Standards) recognises that both techniques can be part of a rigorous assessment process.



organisations

- ◆ Action with Communities in Rural England [ACRE]
- ◆ Action for Advocacy [A4A]
- ◆ Befriending Network Scotland [BNS]
- ◆ Community Foundation Network [CFN]
- ◆ Community Matters [CM]
- ◆ London Youth
- ◆ Mentoring and Befriending Foundation [MBF]
- ◆ Mind
- ◆ The Helplines Association [THA]
- ◆ Volunteering England
- ◆ YMCA England

benchmarking

	<i>standard</i>	<i>organisation</i>	<i>service focus</i>	
	ACRE Standards	Quality Performance Mark	Quality in Befriending	Quality Accreditation
	<u>ACRE</u>	<u>A4A</u>	<u>Befriending Network Scotland</u>	<u>CFN</u>
	community action	independent advocacy	befriending organisations	community philanthropy
governance – strategic management	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – financial management	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – legal compliance	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – accountability and transparency	Y	Y	Y	Y
service user engagement	Y	Y	Y	Y
staff & volunteer management	Y	Y	Y	Y
equalities & diversity	Y	Y	Y	Y
external validation	Y	N	Y	Y
Charity Commission endorsement*	Y	N/A	N/A	Y

N = not covered

Y = covered

N/A = not applicable/available

***Charity Commission endorsement** is not available for activity-specific standards, or for standards run by organisations outside England & Wales and is not currently open to new applications. [Click here to find out more.](#)

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benchmarking

	<i>standard</i>	<i>organisation</i>	<i>service focus</i>	
	<i>Pre</i> VISIBLE	VISIBLE	<i>London Youth Quality Mark</i>	<i>Approved Provider Standard</i>
	<u>Community Matters</u>	<u>Community Matters</u>	<u>London Youth</u>	<u>MBF</u>
	community organisations	community organisations	youth organisations	mentoring & befriending
governance – strategic management	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – financial management	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – legal compliance	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – accountability and transparency	Y	Y	Y	Y
service user engagement	Y	Y	Y	Y
staff & volunteer management	Y	Y	Y	Y
equalities & diversity	Y	Y	Y	Y
external validation	Y	Y	Y	Y
Charity Commission endorsement*	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A

N = not covered

Y = covered

N/A = not applicable/available

***Charity Commission endorsement** is not available for activity-specific standards, or for standards run by organisations outside England & Wales and is not currently open to new applications. [Click here to find out more.](#)



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benchmarking

	<i>standard</i>	<i>organisation</i>	<i>service focus</i>	
	Quality Management in Mind	The Helplines Standard	Investing in Volunteers	YMCA Insync Standards
	<u>Mind</u>	<u>The Helplines Association</u>	<u>Volunteering England</u>	<u>YMCA England</u>
	local Mind Associations	non-profit helplines	volunteer involving organisations	transforming communities
governance – strategic management	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – financial management	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – legal compliance	Y	Y	Y	Y
governance – accountability and transparency	Y	Y	Y	Y
service user engagement	Y	Y	Y	Y
staff & volunteer management	Y	Y	Y	Y
equalities & diversity	Y	Y	Y	Y
external validation	Y	N	N	Y
Charity Commission endorsement*	Y	N/A	N/A	Y

N = not covered

Y = covered

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Charity Commission endorsement

- ◆ The Charity Commission is the statutory regulator for charities in England and Wales. It has run a Quality Standards Endorsement Programme since 2006. The endorsement criteria are based mainly on the Commission's guidance Hallmarks of an Effective Charity. To assess the suitability of standards for endorsement, the Commission:
 - ◆ maps the standards against the *Hallmarks of an Effective Charity* - this identifies if the elements of the Hallmarks are covered by the standards
 - ◆ checks that the assessments carried out on charities have a degree of independent verification and are robust, fair and transparent
 - ◆ (if the organisation is accrediting its members) looks at the group structure's membership agreements to see if they are consistent with its criteria for allowing the use of the Members' Quality Stamp
- ◆ Although due to funding constraints the future of the programme is under review, the *Hallmarks of an Effective Charity* remains Commission guidance. As outlined in the template, many of the Standards' providers achieved Charity Commission endorsement. However for some agencies this opportunity was not available or relevant.
- ◆ The Commission's guidance can be seen as a template of good practice. Indeed the endorsement programme highlights both the similarities and differences between bespoke standards and ISO: both are concerned to ensure the credibility of Standards to a range of stakeholders, however while ISO seeks to be ubiquitous, bespoke standards reflect a specific set of core concerns and values. As one agency articulates it: "*reflecting the fact that we are a movement improving together and not through a top-down process.*".

testimonials

*In our experience,
the ACRE standards are
higher than those
required under
ISO9001.*

Linda Watson
Chief Executive
Oxfordshire RCC

*Big Lottery Fund
...encourages
befriending projects to
work to achieve the
Quality in Befriending
award.*

Jackie Killeen
Acting Director
BIG 2011

1 of 3

*Insync 2010
will give YMCAs a
comprehensive quality
assessment in which they
and their stakeholder can
have confidence*

Andrew Hind
CEO Charity
Commission

*Achieving Level 2...
gave us leverage for
negotiating with the
Sheffield Well-Being
Consortium.*

Bridget Strong
CEO
Sheffield Mind

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testimonials

The dedicated implementation body for youth volunteering should use liV as its quality assurance framework.

Russell Commission
Report

As their partner we are very happy for our name to be associated with the London Youth Quality Mark

Chris Jones
Director-General
City and Guilds

2 of 3

QPM will help us to continually evaluate and appraise the quality of our advocacy provision.

Elaine Boyden
Chief Executive
Advocacy Matters

VISIBLE or PreVISIBLE are used as eligibility criteria for asset transfer or grant funding by Bristol, Birmingham, Coventry and other councils.

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testimonials

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*Acquiring
APS demonstrates
that an organisation is
thinking about the right things
in the right way and that it
has a desire to improve.*

Richard Walton
Programme Manager
Northern Rock
Foundation

*Quality
Accreditation
has enabled us to
secure additional funds
and gives excellent reassurance
to new donors.*

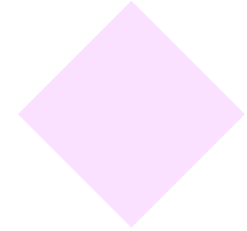
Wendy Varcoe
Executive Director,
Community Foundation
for Surrey

*We see
charities which
are members of The
Helplines Association as
those who have made a
commitment to good
practice*

Lisa Suchet
Chief Executive
The Nationwide
Foundation



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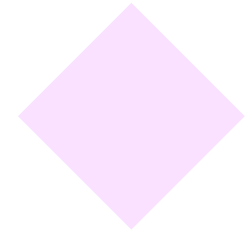
- ◆ **Action with Communities in Rural England [ACRE]** is the national umbrella body of the 37 Rural Community Action Network [RCAN] members and their eight regional bodies. RCAN members are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities.
- ◆ **The ACRE Standard** is the nationally accredited quality standard for members of the RCAN network. It covers 9 areas of good practice in organisational management and service delivery. A robust process of external Peer Review and assessment was introduced in 2004. The ACRE Standard can be achieved at 3 levels (Level 3 being the highest).

organisation: ACRE
standard(s): ACRE Standards
website: www.acre.org.uk/our-work/the-acre-standards
contact Colette Williams, Director of Network Standards & Support
phone: 01285 653477 x 201
e-mail: c.williams@acre.org.uk



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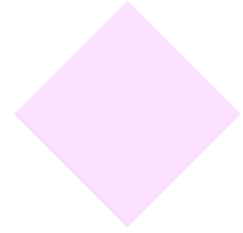
- ◆ **Action for Advocacy [A4A]** authored The Advocacy Charter and has built a reputation as the leading authority on the development of effective advocacy services for vulnerable and disempowered people. It is the central point of information on independent advocacy in England and Wales.
- ◆ **The Quality Performance Mark [QPM]** is the only advocacy specific test of quality in England and Wales. Launched in 2008, it has since been cited in commissioning guidance by SCIE and Welsh Government as an effective test of the quality of advocacy provision. An additional specific review of IMCA service quality [ISR] has also been supported by the Department of Health.

organisation: Action for Advocacy
standard(s): Quality Performance Mark
website: www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk
contact: Martin Coyle, Deputy Chief Executive
phone: 0207 921 4395
e-mail: quality@actionforadvocacy.org.uk





Befriending NetworkScotland



- ◆ **Befriending Network Scotland** [BNS] aims to ensure that befriending is a positive experience for everyone involved, by providing the information, training and support to encourage its ~250 member projects from throughout the UK and beyond to exchange experience and develop good practice.
- ◆ **Quality in Befriending** [QiB] was launched in 2010 and is free for BNS members. QiB assesses the core work of befriending projects (not the wider organisation) and can be achieved at two levels: Award and Excellence.

organisation: Befriending Network Scotland
standard(s): Quality in Befriending
website: www.befriending.co.uk/quality-awards.php
contact: Martha Lester-Cribb, Quality Officer
phone: 0131 225 6156
e-mail: quality@befriending.co.uk

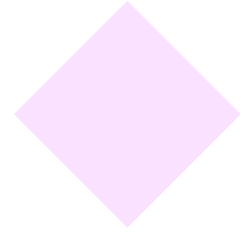


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Community Foundation Network



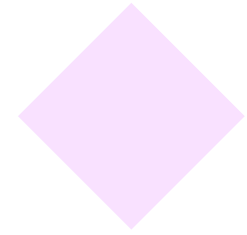
- ◆ **CFN** leads a movement of community foundations committed to positive social change in the UK through the development of ‘community philanthropy’. This involves people from all parts of a community working together to harness resources and change lives for the better through effective grantmaking.
- ◆ **Quality Accreditation [QA]** is run by CFN to endorse and encourage best practice in the network. Achieving QA demonstrates that community foundations are serious about quality and accountability. It specifies what we do and how we do it in a way that other quality systems cannot and covers key performance areas including governance, finance and grantmaking.

organisation: Community Foundation Network
standard(s): Quality Accreditation
website: www.communityfoundations.org.uk
contact: Suzie Webster, Network Development Manager
phone: 07508 769096
e-mail: swebster@communityfoundations.org.uk



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- ◆ **Community Matters** champions community action as a means of local people taking control of issues in their area and fostering community spirit. Its membership is the largest network of such organisations in the UK.
- ◆ **PreVISIBLE** is a free online questionnaire which tests whether an organisation is legal and well governed. It also contains detailed guidance and advice to help groups put in place appropriate systems, policies and procedures.
- ◆ **VISIBLE** is the national accredited standard specifically for community organisations. It is based around a set of seven core principles that underpin strong, sustainable community organisations and promotes quality and best practice in the charity and community sector.

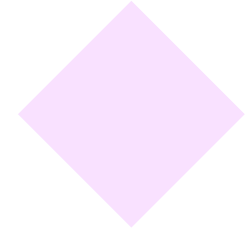
organisation: Community Matters
standard(s): *Pre*VISIBLE / VISIBLE
website: www.visiblecommunities.org.uk
contact Nadia Denton, Quality Services Manager
phone: 0207 837 7887 (head office)
e-mail: nadia.denton@communitymatters.org.uk

*pre***VISIBLE**
VISIBLE



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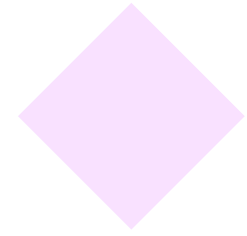
- ◆ **London Youth** is a network of 400 community organisations serving young people and their families in every London borough. We advocate on behalf of young people and youth workers: in some contexts work directly with young people: and help our member organisations increase their effectiveness.
- ◆ **The London Youth Quality Mark** is accredited by City & Guilds and uses their staff and young people in assessment. Aimed at community-based youth organizations its aim is for young people, their families and funders to recognise the award as a sign of excellence.

organisation: London Youth
standard(s): Quality Mark
website: www.londonyouth.org
contact: Gary Hartin, Head of Quality Standards
phone: 020 7549 8803 / 07736 619604
e-mail: gary.hartin@londonyouth.org.uk



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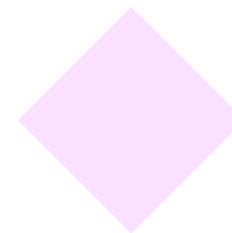




- ◆ **The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation [MBF]** aims to increase the effectiveness and quality of mentoring and befriending as methods of enabling individuals to transform their lives and/or reach their full potential. MBF does this by providing training, quality assurance, information, advice and guidance, organisational consultancy and network membership for people interested in mentoring/befriending.
- ◆ The **Approved Provider Standard [APS]** is a national benchmark of safe and effective practice for organisations that use mentoring and befriending. It is applicable to programmes of any size and delivery method working with a range of clients groups.

organisation: Mentoring and Befriending Foundation
standard(s): MBF Approved Provider Standard
website: www.mandbf.org/quality-standard
contact Rosy Dick, Quality Standards Co-ordinator
phone: 03300 882877 or 07918 070610
e-mail: rosy.dick@mandbf.org





For better mental health

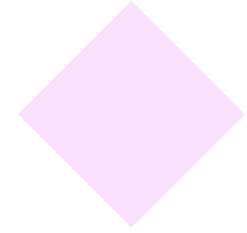
- ◆ **Mind**'s vision is of a society that promotes and protects good mental health for all, and that treats people with experience of mental distress fairly, positively and with respect. We provide information and support, campaign to improve policy and attitudes and, in partnership with independent local Mind associations, develop local services.
- ◆ The quality of the services provided by local Mind associations is vital in ensuring a better life for people experiencing mental health problems. Participation in **QMIM** provides assurance that each local Mind association is robustly run, meets relevant legislation and provides quality services, irrespective of where they access them. There are 12 QMiM standards.

organisation: Mind
standard(s): Quality Management in Mind [QMIM]
website: www.mind.org.uk
contact: Perry Marshall, Quality Manager
phone: 020 8519 2122
e-mail: quality@mind.org.uk



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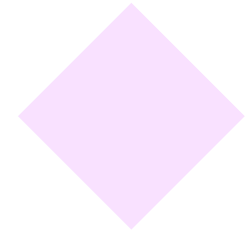
- ◆ **The Helplines Association [THA]** is the membership and good practice organisation for email, SMS, internet and telephone-based helplines. We promote good practice by training, consultancy and publication activity. We also put the public in touch with reputable helplines via our online helplines directory and campaign on issues affecting helplines and helpline users.
- ◆ **The Helplines Standard** has been designed specifically to assess the practice which operates in information, advice, guidance and support services that are provided remotely (eg by telephone, email or other channels). It was launched in 2011 to replace the THA Quality Standard, against which over 100 helplines have been accredited.

organisation: The Helplines Association
standard(s): The Helplines Standard
website: www.helplines.org.uk/content/helplines-standard
contact: Mark McLean, Head of Helplines Development Services
phone: 020 7089 6321
e-mail: mark.mclean@helplines.org.uk





volunteering england



- ◆ **Volunteering England** is an independent charity and membership organisation, committed to supporting, enabling and celebrating volunteering. The UK Volunteering Forum made up of Volunteering England, WCVA, Volunteer Now, and Volunteer Development Scotland has guardianship of the quality mark.
- ◆ **Investing in Volunteers** is the national quality standard for volunteer involving organisations. The standard recognises good practice in volunteer management through a formal assessment process focussing on the experience of volunteers, staff and trustees.

organisation:

Volunteering England

standard(s):

Investing in Volunteers (managed by VE in England)

website:

www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk

contact

Michael Scott, Enterprise Officer

phone:

020 7520 8982

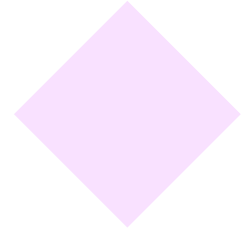
e-mail:

iiv@volunteering.org.uk



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- ◆ YMCA England represents 135 YMCAs supporting young people at every stage of their lives. From providing housing, training and sports and health facilities to supporting young people and their families, YMCAs in England encourage, support and challenge young people to become all that they can.
- ◆ YMCA England developed the YMCA Insync Standards in partnership with member YMCAs, and launched them in 2007. They consist of 9 core standards (applicable to all YMCAs) and 8 service specific standards. As well as improving and developing services provided they are a means of sharing best practice: the Peer Assessment element is endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management and Accreditation is made by an External Panel.

organisation: YMCA England
standard(s): Insync Standards
website: www.ymcainsync.ning.com
contact: Rosh Milner, Standards and Training Manager
phone: 01302 623064 (YMCA Insync Standards Unit)
e-mail: rosh.milner@england.ymca.org.uk



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benchmarking to ISO 9001

	<i>standard</i>	<i>Quality Performance Mark</i>	<i>Quality in Befriending</i>	<i>Quality Accreditation</i>
<i>organisation</i>	<u>ACRE</u>	<u>A4A</u>	<u>BNS</u>	<u>CFN</u>
<i>service focus</i>	community action	independent advocacy	befriending	community philanthropy
quality management systems	F	F	F	F
management responsibility	F	F	F	F
resource management	F	F	F	F
product realisation	F	F	F	F
measurement, analysis and improvement	F	F	F	F

N = not covered

P = partially covered

F = fully covered



benchmarking to ISO 9001

	<i>standard</i>	<i>organisation</i>	<i>service focus</i>	
	<i>Pre</i> VISIBLE	VISIBLE	London Youth Quality Mark	Approved Provider Standard
	<u>Community Matters</u>	<u>Community Matters</u>	<u>London Youth</u>	<u>MBF</u>
	community organisations	community organisations	youth organisations	mentoring & befriending
quality management systems	P	F	F	F
management responsibility	P	F	F	F
resource management	P	F	F	F
product realisation	P	F	F	F
measurement, analysis and improvement	P	F	P	F

N = not covered

P = partially covered

F = fully covered



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benchmarking to ISO 9001

	<i>standard</i>	<i>organisation</i>	<i>service focus</i>	
	Quality Management in Mind	The Helplines Standard	Investing in Volunteers	YMCA Insync Standards
	<u>Mind</u>	<u>The Helplines Association</u>	<u>Volunteering England</u>	<u>YMCA England</u>
	local Mind Associations	non-profit helplines	organisations with volunteers	transforming communities
quality management systems	F	P	P	F
management responsibility	F	P	F	F
resource management	F	F	F	F
product realisation	F	F	P	F
measurement, analysis and improvement	F	F	P	F

N = not covered

P = partially covered

F = fully covered


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acknowledgements

- ◆ APF would like to acknowledge the work of a team led by Chris Ford from Newcastle University Business School [NUBS], in developing the specification and undertaking the independent review of members' Quality Standards processes; and the input and insights provided by local government commissioners and procurers identified through the National Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement Programme.



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