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QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality is about ensuring you are providing the best service possible. It involves learning what you are doing well, but also identifying what you need to do better. It is essentially about seeking to achieve continuous improvement.

A Quality Assurance System uses quality as a way of reviewing performance against agreed standards. Systems are internally implemented which improve and maintain service delivery and which also respond to the needs of users. It is also a great way of outwardly demonstrating the quality of your service.

HOW CAN A QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM HELP YOU?

Quality Assurance Systems can help you to:
• Demonstrate the quality of service
• Identify what you are doing well
• Identify what you do less well
• Show you how you can make improvements
• Help users know what services they can expect

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

• It can bring staff, volunteers and trustees together to work towards improvement.
• It develops consistency across the organisation.
• It demonstrates a level of credibility and quality of service to funders.
• It can help with realistic planning and target setting.
• Overall, implementing a Quality Assurance System can improve the performance, effectiveness and the quality of services provided by your organisation.

WHICH SYSTEM SHOULD WE IMPLEMENT?

There are a number of providers of Quality Assurance Systems that are suitable for the voluntary and community sector. There is no right or wrong system, there are simply a variety from which you can choose. The right one for your organisation will depend upon what you want it to achieve, and how you want to work.

KEY AREAS TO THINK ABOUT ARE:

• The size of your organisation
• The cost of resources and time that are available to devote to quality assurance
• The kind of evaluation processes your organisation wants and needs and what you can afford

A useful point to remember is that external evaluation will have an associated cost. Systems that are not externally evaluated however may not be seen to be as rigorous as other systems.

SYSTEMS AVAILABLE

PQASSO

PQASSO stands for Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations. It is a straightforward evidence-based system which is self-assessed through 12 quality areas. PQASSO was developed by the Charities Evaluation Services specifically for the voluntary sector and is widely used within it. For more information visit: www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso

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VODA

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Investors in People (IIP)

One of the most recognised systems available, Investors in People (IIP) is suitable for all types of groups and companies and is externally evaluated. The system has several basic principles to which an organisation must subscribe along with standards which then need to be met and against which evidence must be collected. This is mostly used by relatively large organisations where the staff are the primary resource of the organisation. However, it has been successfully applied in the voluntary and the public sectors. For more information visit:
www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management)

EFQM is a very popular model for businesses and not-for-profit organisations throughout Europe. While mainly used in large businesses, it can have applications for the voluntary sector. The Excellence Model is externally evaluated. For more information visit: www.efqm.org

Other recognised systems include:

Customer Service Excellence (previously The Charter Mark):
www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com
British Quality Foundation: www.bqf.org.uk
ISO9001: www.iso.org/iso/iso_9000

For more information about how VODA can help you implement a Quality Assurance System, contact our Development Team on 0191 643 2636 or email development@voda.org.uk

RELATED DOCUMENTS

North Tyneside VODA | www.voda.org.uk | Charity number 1075060