

Fit 4 Purpose

Strengthening infrastructure support for
voluntary and community organisations
working with young people

**Interim Report
Learning Needs Analysis**

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by

**Lesley Derry
Julia Mason**

on behalf of the
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services

for
VCS Engage

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1. Introduction

Fit 4 Purpose is a pilot quality development and learning programme designed to assist local youth infrastructure organisations and networks in their support of voluntary and community sector (VCS) youth organisations working directly with young people. It will have links to existing quality frameworks and training.

The project to develop *Fit 4 Purpose* is part of a DfES-funded initiative to develop the capacity of the VCS to engage effectively with Children's Trusts and service delivery to the children, young people and families sector. NCVYS is part of the *VCS Engage* consortium working towards infrastructure and capacity development of the children & young people's VCS and is responsible for activities within its Youth Strand.

This report was commissioned by NCVYS in January 2007, to identify the main learning and development skills needed to strengthen infrastructure support for voluntary and community organisations working with young people. Its findings are based on the analysis of a skills audit questionnaire, telephone interviews, a focus group and the review of generic and youth specific quality frameworks.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of *Fit 4 Purpose* are:

- To research & identify the learning needs of youth infrastructure organisations
- To research & develop a comprehensive learning programme, delivery models and materials for learning strands
- To plan, deliver and assist in the evaluation of pilots for the programme

1.2 Project design

The project is designed to be delivered in four phases.

Phase 1 - project design and planning

Phase 2 - research and consultation

Phase 3 - development of pilot learning programme and materials and design evaluation

Phase 4 - pilot learning programme and complete evaluation

2. Progress on *Fit 4 Purpose* phase 1 and phase 2

2.1 Phase 1

During January and February several project planning meetings took place between NCVYS and the consultants to agree the project scope and methodology. We also jointly determined project management, monitoring and communication systems. NCVYS identified existing research findings, reports and other relevant documentation to inform the desk research stage.

2.2 Phase 2

2.2.1 Skills audit questionnaire

A skills audit questionnaire was designed based on the eleven themes identified by NCVYS as representing current key issues for youth infrastructure organisations (Appendix 1). This was e-mailed to all relevant local infrastructure organisations in membership to NCVYS¹ This was followed by a reminder e-mail and also re-circulated to delegates attending the March NCVYS Conference in Cumbria². Eighteen questionnaires were completed and returned, a 27% response rate, from relevant NCVYS member infrastructure organisations. The questionnaire results provided a good basis for further exploration of emerging findings through interviews and focus group discussion.

2.2.2 Focus group and telephone interviews

A focus group topic guide was developed based on the analysis of the questionnaire results (Appendix 2). Two focus groups were planned, one in Birmingham and one in London, but due to recruitment difficulties these were cancelled. However, a single focus group was re-scheduled and successfully facilitated by two NCVYS officers with twelve participants at the NCVYS' Cumbria conference. Additionally, ten individual telephone interviews were conducted, including interviews with all those who registered for the original focus groups.

2.2.3 Desk research

A large number of reports, quality frameworks, standards, web based information and other documentation has been reviewed to inform the development of the next phase, the pilot learning development programme. A review of quality frameworks is provided in Appendix 3.

This work continues as additional information provided by interviewees and focus group participants is being followed up and researched.

¹ (65 Councils for Voluntary Youth Services [CVYSS] & Councils for Voluntary Services [CVSS]).

² *Services, Sustainability and Young People*. 27th-29th March 2007, Cumbria. NCVYS residential conference

2.2.4 Links to other VCS Engage activities

A meeting took place with the *VCS Engage* London Regional Manager, hosted by NCVCCO. This was to ensure that any *Fit 4 Purpose* developments learn from and fit with the findings of the Regional Managers' capacity-building activities. Links will also be made with the wider *VCS Engage* skills audit, which is now underway, and any training and learning development tools or frameworks developed from this process e.g. commissioning training and tools referred to in Section 4.

3. Findings from phase 2

3.1 Questionnaire results

Voluntary sector infrastructure organisations were asked to identify on a Lickert scale³ of 1-5, the current level of skills and knowledge of trustees, staff, volunteers in their organisation or network, and for member organisations, for each of eleven broad areas listed in the questionnaire (it was agreed with NCVYS officers that the twelfth area, Induction, would not be included). They were also invited to identify any other important skills & knowledge areas and to make any additional comments.

In all cases an individual staff member completed the questionnaire on behalf of their organisation, so responses need to be considered as primarily representing staff assessment of the level of skills of each stakeholder group. Most questionnaires were posted or emailed back; a few were completed by phone at organisations' request. Results have been analysed to identify the three areas rated most and least highly for each group.

Trustees are considered as **most** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Networking & partnership working
- Working with young people
- Safeguarding and child protection

And **least** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Commissioning and contracts
- Representation & strategic influence
- Government policy affecting young people

Staff are considered as **most** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Networking & partnership working
- Working with young people
- Management

And **least** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Commissioning and contracts

³ 1 = very competent and knowledgeable in this area
5 = little or no skill or knowledge in this area

- Representation & strategic influence
- Workforce development

Volunteers are considered as **most** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Working with young people
- Working with diversity
- Safeguarding and child protection

And **least** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Commissioning and contracts
- Representation & strategic influence
- Government policy affecting young people

Network organisations are considered as **most** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Working with young people
- Working with diversity
- Safeguarding and child protection

And **least** knowledgeable and skilled in the areas of:

- Commissioning and contracts
- Representation & strategic influence
- Government policy affecting young people

Additionally, infrastructure organisations were asked to identify their top three priorities for future learning, development & support. These priorities, shown below, strongly reflect infrastructure organisations' concerns about their engagement and influence with new Children's Trust systems and processes.

1. Commissioning and contracts
2. Engaging with Children and Young People's Trusts
2. Representation and strategic influence

However, from an analysis of questionnaire results **working with diversity** emerges more strongly as a priority, particularly at strategic and policy level for Trustees and staff. Questionnaire results also indicate that for Trustees, volunteers and network members, **understanding and responding to Government policy** is a priority area for learning and development and for staff, **workforce development** emerges as a priority.

A number of other learning and development areas were identified including **communication, management and information systems, fundraising, quality assurance and business skills**.

One infrastructure organisation poignantly stated that their main priority is '**staying alive**', a view that emerged more strongly from the interviews.

Several comments were made about the importance of learning how to **initiate and manage innovation**, as well as respond to change. This appears to reflect a need to support a cultural shift, as well as the development of improved skills and knowledge, across the sector.

3.2 Interviews and focus group analysis

The interviews and focus group were designed to test out the questionnaire findings and to pursue key lines of enquiry in more depth. They helped to identify preferred learning and development methods and approaches and the current use of quality frameworks across the sector. The process was also effective at initiating a process of engagement with infrastructure organisations to begin the joint process of designing the pilot learning and development phase of the project to best meet their needs. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurrent ideas, issues and recommendations.

3.2.1 Learning and development priorities

A consensus emerged about the top three learning and development priorities from the interviews and focus group that are consistent with the questionnaire findings.

1. Commissioning and contracting
 2. Strategic influence and representation
 3. Workforce development and Addressing Diversity – joint third priority
- Support and development for **commissioning and contracting** knowledge and skills emerged strongly as the main priority, including knowledge of **outcome measures and service evaluation**. This is linked to respondents' wider concerns about **sustainability and fundraising** across youth infrastructure organisations, particularly for smaller organisations of five or less employees who are considered vulnerable to funding cuts within new commissioning arrangements. There is considerable interest in developing **collaborative and consortia commissioning** to pool resources and to increase VYS' collective strength and influence in commissioning processes.
 - The second priority is **strategic influence and representation** of the voluntary youth sector in working with Children's and Young People's Trusts (CYPT). It is considered that the voluntary youth sector and its infrastructure is not well understood and several CYPTs have not yet established good working links with CVYS'. It is recognised that this requires improved **partnership working** skills and an improved **knowledge of related policy and practice issues** e.g. early years, family support and processes such as the Common Assessment Framework, to enable representatives to contribute effectively to multi-agency CYPT planning and decision making processes.
 - Improved **workforce development skills** and **addressing diversity** emerged as the joint third priority. There is concern about accessing sufficient resources for **professional and business skills** development and

engagement with sector skills councils. Member organisations are working at different levels and have a wide range of training needs. **Training and support for Trustees and volunteers** are seen as important to ensure they remain engaged and supported as a vital part of the VYS workforce. Infrastructure organisations consider that that the sector is generally aware of diversity issues and that there is some good practice on the ground, but **addressing diversity at strategic and policy level** is far less developed. There is an identified need to develop and strengthen BMER (black and minority ethnic and refugee), LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) and disability VYS networks, and specifically to ensure they are **fully included** in strategic planning, commissioning and procurement processes.

3.3. Learning and development programme

3.3.1 Use of quality frameworks

Interviewees were asked additional questions about their preferences with regard to learning and support activities and current knowledge and use of existing quality frameworks.

Although a relatively small sample, there was a consistent response in relation to understanding and use of quality frameworks. Whilst there is an appreciation of the benefits of quality assurance to the organisation, the smaller CVYSs in particular, seem to find the use of quality frameworks more of a burden than a positive experience. Use of quality frameworks is perceived as a process done 'to them', rather than a process they feel in control of.

Small organisations also stated that they do not have sufficient time or resources to undertake quality assurance processes, unless they are administered by the Local Authority, when they are perceived as a 'tick box' exercise rather than a developmental process. Larger CVYS' or VYS development workers in CVS' reported use of generic quality frameworks or standards such as *Investors in People*, or localised local authority-administered tools which they consider meet their organisation's needs effectively.

Most interviewees consider that generic quality frameworks suitable for the wider VCS would meet their needs if choosing a framework and there was some knowledge and understanding of the range that are currently in the marketplace e.g. most had heard of *PQASSO* (Appendix 3), even if they felt they did not have the capacity to apply it within their own organisation. Several would (and do) encourage their direct delivery member organisations to use 'youth specific' frameworks such as Clubs for Young People's *Quality Mark*. There did appear to be a gap, however, in knowledge of frameworks which could meet their specific needs as *infrastructure* organisations and this may be an area to explore further e.g. how the *NAVCA SkilD* or *PERFORM* frameworks (see Appendix 3) might be adapted and utilised by CVYSs.

Notwithstanding the capacity issues noted above, there was a clear interest in learning more about the wide range of quality frameworks available, how they could

be utilised for support and development and their suitability for different member and infrastructure organisations.

3.3.3 Preferred learning and support methods

It is clear that infrastructure organisations value developmental and peer learning processes and actively engage in a several different learning activities as part of their everyday work.

Organisations report that they keep up to date on national and regional issues by accessing information and policy updates from magazines and newsletters, increasingly via the internet. NCVYS' provision of policy update and information was reported as being one of the organisation's most valued services. Web links are popular and respondents use them to access more detailed information about issues they are interested in.

All organisations are part of several local and regional networks and, where the terms of reference are clear, they gain a great deal of support and shared learning from their peers or advisors. Professional networks provide mutual support, and the opportunity to develop ideas through facilitated discussion. Local networks appear less useful for professional development and support but are useful for networking, partnership working and increased understanding of local systems and processes. Most organisations stated that they would not have enough time or capacity to participate in any more networks.

Conferences and seminars, with focused presentations, are considered valuable for learning about key policies, statutory requirements and local plans. Organisations particularly value action planning that leads to practical action after the event.

Training events were seen as less useful, unless they were supported with follow up development and practice support. Internet, CD Rom and web based learning are popular with some respondents, as e-learning offers more flexibility to undertake learning at home or at an individual pace.

The most preferred learning and development style is individualised or small group learning, supported by face to face or telephone coaching and mentoring to support the achievement of key learning goals.

4. VCS Engage commissioning training

VCS Engage are developing training tools and materials to assist VCS organisations in strategic planning and commissioning processes specifically linked to the Every Child Matters agenda. Fit4Purpose will need to liaise closely with VCS Engage to ensure alignment of learning and development methods and materials to support CVYS' commissioning training needs.

5. Recommendations

1. Learning and skills development to be based on identified priorities of youth infrastructure organisations:
 - Commissioning and contracting (assuming no duplication and a fit with the wider VCS Engage developments in this area)
 - Strategic influence and representation
 - Workforce development
 - Promoting diversity

Additionally, for trustees and volunteers:

- Understanding of national and local policies and processes
2. To pilot telephone coaching and mentoring networks to fit with infrastructure organisations' preferred learning style
 3. To provide a web based directory of quality frameworks, incorporated within the NCVYS web-site, which signposts CVYSs to appropriate tools and standards for their own and member organisations
 4. To explore the use of existing networks and events as pilot Fit4Purpose learning sets
 5. To liaise closely with the VCS Engage development of training tools and materials for strategic planning and commissioning

Appendix 1

Fit 4 Purpose Quality Development Programme Consultation

Introduction

'Fit 4 Purpose' aims to be a holistic quality development programme to strengthen local infrastructure organisations and networks to support voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations working directly with young people. It is designed to be a voluntary learning programme, which will support the development of any of your trustees, staff and volunteers with a role to play in delivering effective support, representation and capacity-building work at local level and member organisations delivering direct work with young people. It may also have links to some other existing quality frameworks and training.

Background

The project to develop Fit 4 Purpose is part of a DfES-funded initiative to develop the capacity of the VCS to engage effectively with Children's Trusts and service delivery to the children, young people and families sector. NCVYS is part of the 'VCS Engage' consortium working towards infrastructure and capacity development of the children & young people's VCS and is responsible for activities within its Youth Strand.

The aims of this development phase of the Fit 4 Purpose programme are:

- To research & identify the learning needs of VCS infrastructure organisations
- To research & develop a comprehensive learning programme, delivery models & materials for a range of learning 'strands' or themes
- To run pilots with a draft Fit 4 Purpose programme in nine infrastructure organisation or networks

The Fit 4 Purpose development phase is being undertaken by consultants, Julia Mason and Lesley Derry.

Julia can be contacted on: 07762 969116

email: jamason103@hotmail.com

Lesley can be contacted on: 07973 842993

email: lesleyderry@yahoo.co.uk

The consultation

We very much hope you will assist us in identifying and prioritising the key learning needs for infrastructure organisations by getting involved in this consultation. There are two ways you can do this:

- 1. Complete the attached questionnaire which should take no more than 20 mins of your time. This can be based on your existing knowledge or you may want to check your views out with others in your organisation if you have time.*

Return by Friday 30th March by email to: lesleyderry@yahoo.co.uk or fax to: 020 7682 0203

- 2. Take part in a short phone interview (about 20 mins). If you don't want to complete the questionnaire as well, please just complete the contact details at Section 1, tick the box to indicate you would like to be contacted for an interview, and return as above.*

Any comments and suggestions will be treated in confidence; you will not be identified by name unless you give your permission. Completed questionnaires, interview & focus group recordings and analysed data will be securely stored in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998).

If you have any queries or concerns or would like more information about this project, please feel free to contact either Lesley or Julia by phone or email.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Email Questionnaire to voluntary & community sector infrastructure organisations supporting work with young people

1. Organisation details

1.	Organisation name & contact details																
2.	Name & role of person completing questionnaire/contact																
3.	Is your organisation a: (Tick all that apply).	<input type="checkbox"/> Registered charity <input type="checkbox"/> Community Interest Company (CIC) <input type="checkbox"/> Company limited by guarantee <input type="checkbox"/> Regional organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-regional or local organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Local or sub-regional branch of a regional or national organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Regional branch of a national organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure organisation/network <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the National Council of Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) <input type="checkbox"/> Part of the local Voluntary Youth Organisation network (CVYS, VYON or similar) <input type="checkbox"/> Member of NAVCA (Voluntary & Community Action) <input type="checkbox"/> Member of ACRE (Rural Community Council) <input type="checkbox"/> Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliated to any other network or association not mentioned (specify)															
4.	What is your organisation's annual turnover?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under £50,000 <input type="checkbox"/> £50,000 to £150,00 <input type="checkbox"/> £150,000 to £500,000 <input type="checkbox"/> £500,000 - £1 million <input type="checkbox"/> Over £1 million															
5.	How many paid FTE staff and unpaid volunteers does your organisation have?	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">None</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">1-10</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">11-50</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">51 or more</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Full-time equivalent paid staff</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unpaid volunteers</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		None	1-10	11-50	51 or more	Full-time equivalent paid staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unpaid volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Full-time equivalent paid staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													
Unpaid volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													

2. Skills & knowledge audit

Please identify on a scale of 1-5, the current level of skills & knowledge of your organisation/network for each of the broad areas listed in the table below where:

1 = very competent and knowledgeable in this area

5 = little or no skill or knowledge in this area

Complete a separate column for trustees, staff, volunteers & your (youth) member organisations. Some areas will of course be more relevant to some of these groups than others. Please feel free to add any additional comments in the column provided. There are also some extra spaces for you to identify any other important skills & knowledge areas that you feel are not included.

Skills & knowledge areas	Trustees	Staff	Volunteers	Your member organisations	Additional comments
Working with young people					
Youth participation					
Government policy affecting young people					
Governance					
Commissioning & contracts					
Safeguarding / child protection					
Representation & influence e.g. Children's Trust					
Working with diversity					
Management e.g. of staff/ volunteers/ resources					
Workforce development e.g. recruitment & retention, supervision					

Networking & partnership working					
Other?					
Other?					
Other?					

3. Areas for future learning, development & support

Please tell us your organisation's top three priorities from the list above or any others you can think of.

	Priority	Target Group (trustees, volunteers, etc)
1.		
2.		
3.		

Many thanks for your assistance. Please feel free to add any other comments or information you feel has not been covered in the box below and return *by Friday 30th March* to: lesleyderry@yahoo.co.uk or fax to: 020 7682 0203

Appendix 2

Fit 4 Purpose focus group topic guide

- Agree ground rules for the session – no right answers, all views count, etc
- Briefly summarise Fit 4 Purpose project
- Explain that the focus of discussion will be:
 - a) infrastructure organisational skills and development
 - b) learning and support methods and structures
 - c) quality frameworks
 - d)

Topic	Issues to explore	Prompts
Learning and development priorities	<p>Consensus on priorities from questionnaire list</p> <p>Check against questionnaire findings</p> <p>Identify main needs of staff, trustees, volunteers, members – are they very different?</p>	<p>Questionnaires to date identify top 3 priorities as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning & contracts • Representation & influence e.g. Children's Trust • Working with Diversity
Current skills & development support	<p>Identify existing structures and resources & views on effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient? • Easy to access? • Youth service orientated? • Organisational development? • Trustee training? 	<p>Examples so far include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity Builders £ • Children's Trust events • LA/or County Council courses/events • Youth networks • Vol sector networks
Quality frameworks	<p>Experiences of and views about need for quality frameworks</p> <p>Identify different frameworks or standards used</p> <p>Barriers to using?</p>	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PQASSO <p>Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough time • Not youth focused • Tick box not developmental
Preferred learning & support methods	<p>What would work for staff, volunteers, trustees?</p> <p>Barriers</p> <p>Enablers – cost & no cost options</p>	<p>Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overload • No time/interest <p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day event • Learning set <p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching or mentoring
Other emerging themes	<p>Impact of contextual issues</p> <p>Views on policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to commissioned services • Uncertain future • Staff morale • Capacity to deliver
Group feelings and messages	<p>Observe and record</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points of conflict • Points of agreement • Unexpected views 	<p>Possible examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural vs urban • Diversity issues

Appendix 3

Review of selected quality frameworks and standards

There are a range of quality assurance frameworks and quality marks on the market: Investors in People (IIP); EFQM Excellence Model; Charter Mark; Matrix (for IAG services), Investing in Volunteers (IIV) and many others. Reviews of several of the most relevant to VCS, VCs infrastructure organisations and the children & young people's sector are listed below.

Additionally a number of localised frameworks are in use. Examples we were informed of in interviews include:

- Warwickshire CVYS uses an adapted version of Warwickshire County Council's which, in turn, is based on OfSTED inspection criteria; a web search found that it also supports its members, through advice and training on implementing the Clubs for Young People's 'Quality Mark' scheme (detailed below).
- Merton & Suffolk CVSs have both apparently developed their own Quality Assurance Frameworks (unfortunately, not found during our web search).

The section is split in to three in an attempt to broadly categorise the frameworks in to:

1. Youth Specific
2. Generic
3. VCS Infrastructure

Please note that the information contained in this section has been collected and edited from web and paper-based desk research and copyright on information supplied lies with the relevant organisations.

1. Youth specific frameworks

1.1 National Youth Agency: *YSQM* (Quality Mark for Services for Young People)

The *YSQM*, launched in March 2006, is a bespoke Quality Mark which focuses on work with young people and the building blocks for quality in youth work organisations. Its development was commissioned and funded by the DfES; overseen by the NYA's Quality Action Group and designed with the participation and input of fifteen youth work organisations.

The *YSQM* comprises 11 standards divided into 3 key themes:

- *Policy and Strategy*
 - Performance management
 - Management information
 - Quality assurance
 - Equality and diversity
 - Curriculum/Programme of work
 - Legal requirements

- *People*
 - Personal and social development
 - Involving young people
 - Workforce development

- *Partnerships and Resources*
 - Partnership strategy
 - Resources strategy

Each standard is assessed at one of four levels – Advanced 4, Established 3, Aspiring 2, and Emerging 1. The *YSQM* is primarily a self-assessment tool, which can be used by any organisation as a means to quality improvement. There is, however, also an option to register (and pay an additional fee) for external assessment for a national award – or quality mark – upon reaching the required standard. Once achieved, an award will be valid for 3 years.

The *YSQM* is designed for use by any public or VCS organisation working with young people – registration fees for voluntary organisations are set to reflect annual turnover, making it an affordable option for even small VCS organisations. It relates to OfSTED's self-assessment framework and can assist in its completion. Commissioning bodies wishing to satisfy themselves of the quality and health of an organisation they want to commission as a service provider could also use it.

1.2 National Association of Clubs for Young People: *Quality Mark*

CYP first launched its quality assurance scheme, *Quality Mark* (QM) in 2003 and re-printed the scheme in 2006. It formally recognises levels of quality in youth work. It gives clubs a mark of recognition that can boost their external profile and fundraising potential; whilst giving funders, parents and external agencies assurances that a club or project provides a quality service for young people.

The portfolio-based assessment scheme takes clubs and projects through the policies, procedures and practical elements that comprise a quality service, outlining clear steps required to meet three distinct levels of quality. The process of self-evaluation will also reveal areas where performance can be improved.

Once a club or project has provided the required evidence for a level of quality, CYP makes a formal accreditation. This serves as a benchmark standard to assure external agencies that the club or project is efficient, safe and well-managed.

Publicly accessible information on this scheme is limited. It is a portfolio-based assessment scheme with 64-page manual, which is available from CYP for £25.00 + £2 p&p

1.3 London Youth: *AQYP* (Assuring Quality for Young People)

London Youth is due to launch a year-long pilot of a new quality mark scheme this month; initially involving 30 affiliated youth clubs. The scheme will offer three levels of achievement – bronze, silver & gold and pilot participants will receive cash rewards upon reaching each level. Areas covered include:

- Child & staff protection
- Equal opportunities
- Health, safety & resources
- Staff & volunteers
- Management & administration
- Youth participation

At gold level, extra standards will cover:

- New ideas
- Improvement

London Youth aims to provide 'more structured and long-term support' via the scheme and emphasises the importance of accreditation 'in order to be taken more seriously by funders' (Nick Wilkie, Chief Executive, YPN, 14-20 March 2007)

1.4 Youth Access: *Quality Standards for youth information, advice, counselling and support services*

Youth Access first produced a set of Quality Standards and Self Assessment Materials in 1998 designed to help agencies recognise strengths and identify areas for improvement in practice. Its Quality Standards manual offers a strategic approach to implementing quality. It also provides:

- a framework for consulting and involving all stakeholders, including young people as service users
- an effective management tool to help manage and support staff as well as to plan the strategic development of a service
- assistance in the development of a clear and credible identity for youth information, advice, counselling and support services
- added strength in negotiations with purchasers and funders

The Quality Standards include 18 potential areas, which a youth information, advice, counselling and support agency may encounter, including 2 new areas designed to enable agencies to evaluate the quality and standard of their counselling assessment practice and develop and improve partnership working across the sectors. Each area includes a statement followed by practice guidelines:

Management	Line management
Supervision	Recruitment
Training	Publicity and promotion
Initial access	Premises
Information services	Advice services
Counselling assessment (new)	Counselling services
Other support services	Referral
Case records	Casework supervision
Monitoring and evaluation	Partnership (new)

The manual also includes comprehensive self-assessment materials written specifically to complement each of the standards areas. The evidence forms outline different statements and questions relating to each of the standard area practice guidelines. There are different forms designed for use with each of the different stakeholder groups. The groups include the management body, co-ordinators, staff, young people and other related professionals where relevant. A detailed monitoring checklist has been drawn up for each self-assessment standard area, which lists all the paper and systems evidence that an agency would need to have in place. The materials also include a set of useful appendices including action and development plans, checklists, a flowchart of the process and guidance notes.

(The manual is available to YA members for £45 and non-members for £65.)

1.5 Community Legal Service (CLS): *Youth Access - Quality Standards for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services*

CLS provides a Quality Mark for any advice or youth organisation meeting its standards for information, advice, counselling and support services in either or both of two categories:

- Youth Access General Help
- Youth Access Assisted Information

Organisations must provide evidence of meeting a range of criteria such as responsiveness to its target community, clear management structure etc, as contained in each assessment template.

1.6 National Youth Agency: *Hear by Right* Standards for youth participation

Hear by Right is a standards framework for organisations across all sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people. There are a wide range of tools to encourage effective participation across a range of settings, but fewer to help assess what has been achieved, *Hear by Right* aims to do this.

The standards framework in *Hear by Right* is based on the 'Seven S' model of organisational change:

- Shared values
- Strategy
- Structures
- Systems
- Staff, elected members or trustees
- Skills and knowledge
- Style of leadership.

The standards are public and measurable promises to reach a level of activity or service and can help develop and evaluate action plans for change. Use of the framework relies on self-assessment and is divided into three levels of '*emerging*', '*established*' and '*advanced*', with each level building on the last. This ensures that young people's involvement is built in and not just bolted on.

Hear by Right has been designed as a practical and flexible toolkit, and comes supplied with a CD-Rom and a pre-prepared PowerPoint presentation to help explain its function. It is already being used by a wealth of different organisations in many different sectors. A website has been developed to present an ongoing picture of how *Hear by Right* is being used, and to provide organisations with inspiration for how the active involvement of children and young people can be used to benefit their work.

1.7 Yorkshire & Humberside: *Steps to Quality*

N.B. This scheme has been included as we were informed of it during an interview. It provides one example of several regional & national frameworks in the early years, childcare and play work fields. Others include, for example, the Pre-School Learning Alliance, National Day Nurseries Association, National Childminding Association, London Play.

Steps to Quality is a quality assurance scheme for childcare and education developed by early years workers in the Yorkshire and Humber region. It was then adapted within different local authority areas and approved by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships within the region.

Step 1: Is the basic standard. This builds on the registration process and ensures that the main policies and procedures are in place and links very closely with the requirements of the National Daycare Standards. This step is about planning the service.

Step 2: Focuses on developing practice and builds on Step 1. It looks at the way that policies and procedures support good practice in the setting. This step concentrates on how the service is provided.

Step 3: Celebrates top quality practice and builds on the previous two steps. It covers the way the setting evaluates and continues to plan their service to promote and maintain quality. This step focuses on the reviewing process.

There are 5 standard areas within each step, with quality criteria and evidence for each area.

- Setting management - covers such things as legal responsibilities, development plans and the business side.
- Staff development - looks at training and personal development
- Environment - ensures that the setting is warm and welcoming, clean, safe and child orientated.
- Meeting individual needs - a commitment to make sure that the children's needs have priority. This is divided into three areas: Play, Care, Inclusion & Equality
- Relationships - looks at the partnerships between all the people who come into contact with the setting - children, parents, staff in group settings, management and outside agencies.

Steps to Quality links closely with national standards to support childcare and education providers to meet OfSTED's requirements and conditions for receiving additional funding such as the Nursery Education Grant.

2. Generic frameworks

2.1 *The EFQM Excellence Model*

The *EFQM Excellence Model* is based on the assumption that, regardless of sector, size, structure or maturity, to be successful, organisations need to establish an appropriate management framework. It 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 has become the basis for the majority of national and regional Quality Awards.*

The *EFQM Excellence Model* is a practical tool that can be used in a number of different ways:

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

The *EFQM Excellence Model* is a non-prescriptive framework based on nine criteria. Five of these are 'Enablers' and four are 'Results'. The 'Enabler' criteria cover what an organisation does. The 'Results' criteria cover what an organisation achieves. 'Results' are caused by 'Enablers' and 'Enablers' are improved using feedback from 'Results'.

The Model, which recognises there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance, is based on the premise that excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy. This is delivered through People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes. Innovation and learning are key to achieving excellence.

The organisation's progress towards Excellence is self-assessed against the nine criteria. Each one has a definition, which explains the high level meaning of that criterion. To develop the high level meaning further each criterion is supported by a number of criterion parts. Criterion parts pose a number of questions that should be considered in the course of an assessment. Finally, below each criterion part are guidance points. Uses of these guidance points are not mandatory, nor are the lists exhaustive but they are intended to further exemplify the meaning of the criterion part.

The nine criteria describe what would need to be in place for the organisation to be deemed 'excellent'. These are:

- **Leadership:** Excellent Leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision. They develop organisational values and systems required for sustainable success and implement these via their actions and behaviours. During periods of change they retain a constancy of purpose. Where required, such leaders are able to change direction of the organisation and inspire others to follow.
- **Policy and Strategy:** Excellent organisations implement their mission and vision by developing a stakeholder focused strategy that takes account of the market and sector in which it operates. Policies, plans, objectives and processes are developed and deployed to deliver strategy.
- **People:** Excellent organisations manage, develop and release the full potential of their people at an individual, team-based and organisational level. They promote fairness and equality and involve and empower their people. They care for, communicate, reward and recognise, in a way that motivates staff and builds commitment to using their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the organisation.
- **Partnerships and Resources:** Excellent organisations plan to manage external partnerships, suppliers and internal resources in order to support policy and strategy and the effective operation of processes. During planning and whilst managing partnerships and resources, they balance the current and future needs of the organisation, the community, and the environment.
- **Processes:** Excellent organisations design, manage and improve processes in order to fully satisfy, and generate increasing value for, customers and other stakeholders.
- **Customer Results:** Excellent organisations comprehensively measure and achieve outstanding results with respect to their customers.
- **People Results:** Excellent organisations comprehensively measure and achieve outstanding results with respect to their people.
- **Society Results:** Excellent organisations comprehensively measure and achieve outstanding results with respect to society.
- **Key Performance Results:** Excellent organisations comprehensively measure and achieve outstanding results with respect to the key element of their policy and strategy.

2.2 Charities Evaluation Service: *PQASSO* (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)

PQASSO is a quality assurance system, designed by the Charities Evaluation Service, for use in small and medium-sized VCS organisations. It covers twelve quality standards:

- Planning for quality
- Governance
- Management
- User-centred service
- Staff & Volunteers
- Training & Development
- Managing Money
- Managing resources
- Managing Activities
- Networking & Partnership
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Results

PQASSO offers a flexible and staged approach to implementing quality through three levels of achievement, along with guidance on what is required for organisational health, efficiency and effectiveness at each level. It provides a self-assessment model and an accessible tool which can be used in different ways and for different purposes, such as prioritising, team building, participation and performance improvement. It also provides an action planning process supporting decision-making and action to be taken. *PQASSO* can assist VCS organisations to both improve and demonstrate quality and is increasingly being recognised by funders and commissioning agencies within the UK.

3. Infrastructure frameworks

3.1 National Association for Voluntary & Community Action (NAVCA): *SKiLD*

SKiLD or 'Skills and Knowledge for Local Development - a framework' is an online database specifically designed for development workers based in second tier local infrastructure organisations whose jobs involve giving hands-on support to local frontline voluntary and community groups.

Launched in October 2005, it is a competency framework which lists what development workers do, and the skills they need to do it well. The four *core* tasks required for all posts are set out along with the skills & knowledge needed to perform them. These are:

- Understanding & working within the VCS
- Promoting equality & diversity
- Working with your own organisation
- Personal & professional skills & abilities

A further eight key areas of development work are then set out which apply to some posts but not others – or the *main purpose of specific roles*. These are:

- Governance
- Managing people
- Funding & financial management
- Organisational development
- Influence
- Premises for community groups & organisations
- Working with groups & organisations
- Training & learning

A customised description of an individual worker's role can be produced by combining core sections, relevant to everyone, with options that apply to the specific post. Workers and their line managers can then measure their work against the framework which also includes suggestions on how to provide evidence of competence, and values and principles that underpin the work undertaken.

The framework can be used by development workers, their managers, chief officers & directors and has many applications, including:

- Assessment of organisation's job roles, job descriptions & person specifications
- Recruitment & selection
- Induction of new staff
- Explaining to external agencies what the role involves
- Setting boundaries
- Performance assessment – self & others
- Supervision & appraisal
- Funding bids
- Training planning & design

The *SKILD* project has begun recently to design & roll out a national training programme that meets development workers' needs, determined by a national Training Needs Assessment, in areas of the framework. *SKILD* worked with the Federation for Community Development Learning to develop the framework.

3.2 NCVO & COGS: *Perform*: An Outcomes Approach for Infrastructure Organisations

PERFORM is a framework and planning and assessment tool for use by organisations providing infrastructure services to the voluntary and community sector. The framework helps infrastructure organisations plan and review those functions which specifically relate to infrastructure provision. Its purpose is to help develop and implement an outcomes based approach to strategic planning and review.

PERFORM is *not* a quality standard but a self-assessment tool which should complement existing quality assurance models and standards. As such it can assist infrastructure organisations in strategic planning, measuring and improving performance and, if desirable, working towards achievement of relevant quality standards or marks. The *PERFORM* framework and tool:

- Provides an introduction to the concept of outcomes and their role in strategic planning
- Identifies a vision and four ‘High Level Outcomes’ for VCS infrastructure. The high level outcomes relate to the *collective purpose* of infrastructure organisations and the *functions* they perform.

Perform vision: A strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary & community sector

<i>High Level Outcomes</i>	<i>Functions</i>
VCOs are skilled, knowledgeable & well run	Sector support & development
VCOs network and collaborate	Sector collaboration & co-ordination
VCOs reflect and promote diversity & equality	Sector diversity and equality
VCOs influence policies and programmes	Sector influence and representation

The *PERFORM* vision is drawn from the development process that informed *ChangeUp*. The high level outcomes are broad statements of what we would see if we achieved the vision of ‘a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary & community sector’. Infrastructure organisations can use the *PERFORM* guidance and tools to identify how they contribute to the vision and high level outcomes and thereby determine their functions.

Beyond outlining the vision and high level outcomes, the *PERFORM* framework is not prescriptive. The high level outcomes are the starting point for developing the organisation’s own outcomes framework. The means of contributing to the high level outcomes is determined by setting outcomes relevant to its own context and ‘users’ within the voluntary & community sector.

PERFORM outlines up to six stages through which organisations can work, using the high level outcomes as a starting point to develop and review their own infrastructure

strategy. It provides a range of resource materials to assist in working through these stages.

The *PERFORM* framework focuses on infrastructure functions but acknowledges that there are a range of additional activities which may be undertaken by infrastructure organisations e.g. activities & frontline services which fill a gap in the voluntary & community sector and are often vital to the sustainability of the organisation.