

PQASSO[®]

Demonstrate quality with PQASSO: A briefing for Industrial and Provident Societies

'For an IPS aiming for social outcomes, PQASSO offers a tried, tested and recognised way forward'.

Jean Barclay

Demonstrating quality and impact

Social enterprises increasingly need to provide evidence of the impact and value of their work. Industrial and Provident Societies seek to manage their legal and financial risk and maintain high standards. More and more they need to demonstrate these standards to their stakeholders.

Quality standards provide a clear, consistent and objective assessment of performance. They are formal systems which encourage organisations to make the most efficient use of resources, to deliver goods and services effectively and to improve how they do things and the results they get.

PQASSO is the leading quality standard developed for the third sector, by the sector. It has been designed specifically for organisations whose primary purpose is to make a social impact rather than a profit. PQASSO offers social enterprises, including Industrial and Provident Societies, a set of outcome-focused quality standards to help improve efficiency and effectiveness.

What is PQASSO?

PQASSO is a quality standard that offers:

- a self-assessment process
- an externally verified quality award, the PQASSO Quality Mark.

When organisations self-assess using PQASSO, they:

- systematically review how they work and their results
- identify what they are doing well
- consider what and how to improve
- develop action plans to put in place improvements.

PQASSO's flexibility means it can be used by all types of third sector organisation – over 14,000 organisations have made PQASSO their standard of choice. It is appropriate for organisations of all sizes, from those with a handful of employees and volunteers, to large organisations such as Redbridge Community Housing Limited (RCHL) delivering social care services nationally.

'In comparison to other quality systems, this process has given our organisation a positive opportunity to improve our processes, outcomes and impacts, as well as achieving a kite mark.'

RCHL, PQASSO user

How PQASSO can help

PQASSO can help trading organisations with a social purpose.¹ PQASSO will help you:

- address your key processes and activities
- address the needs of your users
- focus on outcomes
- prioritise key sector issues such as environmental responsibilities.

[View our case studies](#) to see how other others have benefited from using PQASSO.

How does PQASSO work?

PQASSO is built on 12 topics or quality areas. These provide the building blocks for organisations with a social purpose wishing to operate to a high standard. They are:

Planning	Managing money
Governance	Managing resources
Leadership and management	Communications and promotion
User-centred service	Working with others
Managing people	Monitoring and evaluation
Learning and development	Results

PQASSO breaks down each topic into three levels. Organisations assess themselves against indicators at the level that is right for them, using evidence to support judgements. This allows organisations to assess how they are doing and plan a clear path for development in each area.

The next two pages show an example of a PQASSO quality area – *Planning*.

¹ Cooperative societies may find that PQASSO has a more limited applicability because they share benefits between members rather than distribute them to a wider community. They may also require a greater overall emphasis on membership and shareholding. PQASSO was designed primarily for non-profit organisations, and it may not fully address issues relating to generating a financial surplus from trading for the benefit of a community of interest, for example pricing and break-even analysis.

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planning

The standard: The organisation's mission, values and broad aims are clearly defined. Plans are based on the needs and expectations of users and other stakeholders, and take into account the resources required. Clear priorities and targets are set for the short and medium term, and progress is regularly reviewed.

level 2

The organisation develops its medium-term strategy. Key stakeholders are involved in the planning process. Plans are regularly reviewed and updated.

Indicators

	Not met	Just started	Progressing well	Fully met
1 Board members, staff and volunteers are involved in developing and reviewing the organisation's strategy and plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 A two- to three-year strategy sets out the organisation's values and priorities and is based on an assessment of users' and other stakeholders' needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 A range of specific aims and expected outcomes are developed in consultation with users and other stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Targets are realistic and the organisation uses them to help manage expectations and performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Annual operational plans are systematically developed from the strategy and they are implemented, reviewed and regularly updated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 There are detailed plans for the next year for projects, teams and individuals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 There is an established system for assessing and managing risk – for example to individuals or to the organisation's financial health or reputation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Quality improvements, based on regular self-assessment, are integrated into planning processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PQASSO – an example from the workpack

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planning

1

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Sources of evidence

- 1 Records of strategy meetings. Current strategy and planning documents.
- 2 Strategy documents. Demographic information. User needs assessments. Reports on feedback from users and other external stakeholders.
- 3 Records of consultation with users and other stakeholders. Strategy documents. Statement of aims and intended outcomes.
- 4 Framework or details of planned outputs, outcomes and their related targets. Other statements or plans containing targets, including equality and diversity targets, and targets relating to environmental sustainability, such as energy efficiency and recycling.
- 5 Operational plan, progress reports and updates.
- 6 Project plans. Workplans for teams and individuals.
- 7 Records of risk assessments and related plans. Reports to the Board.
- 8 Quality self-assessment records and action plans. Operational plan.

PQASSO – an example
from the workpack

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External recognition with the PQASSO Quality Mark



Some organisations choose the option of external accreditation. External recognition can be vital for many organisations, particularly those involved in commissioned services. The PQASSO Quality Mark is the externally-assessed award for PQASSO users which demonstrates achievement of the PQASSO standards. It can help an organisation to get the recognition it deserves.

When an organisation has worked through the self-assessment process, it can apply for the PQASSO Quality Mark. This nationally recognised award offers users as well as commissioners and funders external verification of the quality and credibility of an organisation.

'With the move to intelligent commissioning there is consideration as to Quality Assurance being a requirement - our view is that starting now we will be ahead of the game.'

Serendipity Enterprising Solutions (SES), PQASSO user

Start today

PQASSO is a tried and tested set of quality standards, with a package of support already in place. For something more tailor-made, CES offers the option of a bespoke set of quality standards, adapted from PQASSO to precisely fit the needs of an organisation.

Contact CES on pqasso@ces-vol.org.uk or [020 7713 5722](tel:02077135722) to discuss how PQASSO can meet your needs.

How can we help you?

Charities Evaluation Services is an independent charity and the UK's leading provider of training and consultancy on evaluation and quality systems in the third sector. We are experts in the field, with over 20 years' experience, and have worked with over 25,000 third sector organisations. We provide information, publications and training to third sector organisations, funders and commissioners on PQASSO and measuring outcomes. We can support you by:

- providing further information on PQASSO
- providing consultancy to help you to measure effectiveness and get to grips with quality standards and implementing an outcomes focus
- helping you to adapt PQASSO to better meet your needs
- providing training and support to help you improve your performance, including courses on PQASSO and demonstrating outcomes
- guiding you to our nationwide network of PQASSO mentors who are trained and licensed by CES to support you to implement PQASSO.

To find out more:

Visit our website www.ces-vol.org.uk

Email us pqasso@ces-vol.org.uk

Call us [020 7713 5722](tel:02077135722)



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