



Plymouth Guild

About the organisation

Plymouth Guild was established in 1907 and runs information, advocacy, advice and support services for disabled people and those with long term health conditions. It also provides infrastructure support to voluntary and community organisations through volunteer brokerage and the promotion of placement opportunities.



Why PQASSO?

We have had Investors in People since 1990 but felt it only did part of the quality job for us as an organisation. We explored a number of quality frameworks and felt that PQASSO was the best option for us as it was designed for voluntary and community organisations and covers all aspects of our operation.

How did you implement PQASSO?

We started out with Level 1 in January 2007 and set up a working group of our managers that met monthly to assess our progress and to plan the work. They had a responsibility to engage the staff and volunteers in their teams to ensure it was owned across the organisation. At that time, we also had a CES licensed PQASSO Mentor who set us off in the right direction. It took us approximately 12 months to self-assess as having met level 1 across the organisation. We then started work on level 2 with the express intention to go for the PQASSO Quality Mark and we were ready for assessment by the end of 2009.

Why did you decide to go for the PQASSO Quality Mark?

We felt that self-assessment only took us so far and we wanted the challenge of an external review. We also felt that external funders, particularly when bidding for contracts, would rate it more highly.

Your experience of the assessment process

The process was very comprehensive and made us feel that we had not got there by ticking boxes. Instead we were able to demonstrate to the peer reviewers the high

quality organisation that we have become. There were not many stones left unturned and the peer reviewers were professional and knowledgeable. Very impressed.

What were the benefits of achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark?

The award has been a real boost internally for trustees, staff and volunteers, who are very proud of what they have achieved.

Practical tips

- ✓ Plan well; be realistic about timescales and capacity. Take the time to get it right, it's worth it.
- ✓ Get some mentoring support, especially in the early stages.
- ✓ Keep going when it all feels too much!
- ✓ Commitment and leadership from the top of the organisation is essential.

Charities Evaluation Services, 4 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 5HL

Website: www.ces-vol.org.uk

Email: enquiries@ces-vol.org.uk

Tel: 020 7713 5722

Registered charity number 803602 in England and Wales and SCO40937 in Scotland.

A company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales. Company registration no: 2510318