

PQASSO[®]

Quality standards for every organisation

Strengthening third sector organisations for a better society



Charities Evaluation Services

'PQASSO has enabled us to check that everything we needed was in place. Achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark meant we could communicate our effectiveness externally, in particular to potential funders.'

Family Action

How PQASSO can help you?

PQASSO is the leading quality standard developed for the sector, by the sector. PQASSO's flexibility means it can be used by all types of third sector organisations, including charities, social enterprises, community interest companies and community groups. It is appropriate for organisations of all sizes, from those with a handful of employees, such as Ryedale Special Families (see inset) to over 2,000 employees, like the Alzheimer's Society. Over 14,000 organisations have made PQASSO their standard of choice.



'The process was easy to follow and very user-friendly – a good opportunity to systematically review all our processes. It was a good exercise for staff and volunteers and gave us the opportunity to prove to funders that we assess and evaluate our services.'

Ryedale Special Families
(North Yorkshire)

If you are a frontline organisation:

There has never been a more important time for you to ensure that you work efficiently and effectively with the resources you have available. Voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises and other organisations with a social purpose all need to think about how to do more with less and prove their worth to funders and commissioners. Whether you are a small community group changing society through localised voluntary action, or a big multi-sited charity or social enterprise delivering large government contracts, you'll need evidence-based methods and tools to develop and demonstrate the value of your work. PQASSO offers you a tried and tested way to develop, with a menu of options to meet your support needs.

If you are a funder or commissioner:

PQASSO sets out what organisations need to have in place in order to ensure sound governance practices, financial and risk management procedures and a robust system for measuring their outcomes – and sets out a path to continuous improvement for those starting off.

Organisations must be able to demonstrate the quality of their work in order to bid successfully for public sector contracts. Once organisations have implemented PQASSO, they can do this through the PQASSO Quality Mark, the external accreditation for PQASSO users.

The PQASSO Quality Mark remains the only sectoral quality mark that covers the work of charities and other organisations; no other award addresses all the essential areas necessary for the effective management and governance of a charity or other third sector organisation.

The PQASSO Quality Mark is widely recognised as providing a comprehensive framework for running an effective organisation. An organisation that has the PQASSO Quality Mark offers a guarantee of being fit for purpose in all areas essential to commissioners.

The PQASSO Quality Mark is endorsed by the Charity Commission at levels 2 and 3 as meeting the hallmarks of an effective charity.

‘As a funder with an interest in strengthening the voluntary sector, we see PQASSO as an important tool for helping organisations reflect on their activity and find the very best ways of working.’

The Baring Foundation

What is PQASSO?

PQASSO has a straightforward, user-friendly approach to strengthen all areas of your organisation. Used systematically, it will help you run your organisation more effectively and efficiently.

PQASSO is built on 12 topics or quality areas. These are the building blocks an organisation needs in order to be able to operate to a high standard. They are:

1. **Planning**
2. **Governance**
3. **Leadership and management**
4. **User-centred service**
5. **Managing people**
6. **Learning and development**
7. **Managing money**
8. **Managing resources**
9. **Communications and promotion**
10. **Working with others**
11. **Monitoring and evaluation**
12. **Results**

PQASSO breaks down each topic into three levels. This enables organisations to assess how they are doing and plan a clear path for development in each area.

PQASSO may be used in a variety of ways, including as an organisational healthcheck or to help guide organisational development and growth. Organisations implement PQASSO by assessing themselves against standards and indicators using evidence to support judgements made. PQASSO also offers an external accreditation: the PQASSO Quality Mark. (See page 8.)

The next three pages show one of the 12 quality areas covered by PQASSO; this example focuses on **user-centred service**.

user-centred service

the standard

The organisation recognises and values its users and builds good relationships with them. Users are central to the design, delivery and review of services and activities. The organisation is focused on achieving better outcomes for users and represents their interests.

benefits

Working on this standard involves placing your users at the heart of your organisation and ensuring you have the appropriate systems and practices to support sound user involvement.

This standard will help you assess how well you:

- value users as the experts on their own lives, and learn from them
- give users a voice in service design, delivery and review
- help users achieve better outcomes
- ensure that services are accessible and effective for all intended user groups.

what the standard covers

Users can include people or organisations who:

- use or benefit from your services or activities or have done so in the past
- fall within your target group but do not currently use your activities or services
- speak or act on behalf of users
- support or care for users.

Recognising and valuing users means being clear about who your target users are and promoting a culture of respect, tolerance and understanding which affirms the equal value of all users.

Achieving better outcomes for users means working with them to make the changes or gain the benefits they want and need.

Representing the interests of users means giving users a voice or making their case to statutory and other agencies.

PQASSO – an example from the workpack

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Each of the 12 quality areas starts with the **standard** and the **benefits** of the standard, and then describes the elements of **what the standard covers**.

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user-centred service

The standard: The organisation recognises and values its users and builds good relationships with them. Users are central to the design, delivery and review of services and activities. The organisation is focused on achieving better outcomes for users and represents their interests.

level 1

The organisation knows who its users are, avoids unfair discrimination, and makes its services accessible. Information about users is gathered and recorded, and the organisation responds appropriately to user feedback.

Indicators

	Not met	Just started	Progressing well	Fully met
1 User groups are clearly defined and targeted to prevent unfair discrimination or exclusion from services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Services and activities are based on the identified needs of the organisation's users, including disadvantaged groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 The organisation plans, promotes and delivers its services so that it is fully accessible to its users.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Personal information about individual users is recorded and held confidentially, meeting data protection requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 The organisation works closely with individual users to monitor their needs, identify desired outcomes, and review progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Users are given detailed information about the organisation's services and activities, and are encouraged to make appropriate choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 User feedback is encouraged and recorded, and complaints are dealt with openly and promptly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PQASSO – an example
from the workpack**

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Indicators show broadly what your organisation should be doing to meet its desired level of PQASSO. Self-assessment involves different people in your organisation discussing how well you are doing against the indicators and whether any improvements are needed. This example shows indicators for **level 1**.

The standard: The organisation recognises and values its users and builds good relationships with them. Users are central to the design, delivery and review of services and activities. The organisation is focused on achieving better outcomes for users and represents their interests.

level 1

The organisation knows who its users are, avoids unfair discrimination, and makes its services accessible. Information about users is gathered and recorded, and the organisation responds appropriately to user feedback.

Sources of evidence

- 1 Aims and objectives which define the user groups. Monitoring information.
- 2 Annual report demonstrating public benefit. Needs analyses. Funding applications and project plans. Operational plan. Minutes of planning meetings. Management reports.
- 3 Publicity and promotional activity. Opening hours or contact hours. Response times for phone calls. Answerphone facilities. Information and facilities for people with disabilities, sensory impairment or other specific needs.
- 4 Filing systems, databases and user records. Monitoring information. Confidentiality policy. Data protection registration certificate.
- 5 Case records and other user records or files.
- 6 Information about the range of services and activities available, including information on fees, cancellation, data protection and confidentiality. Publicity materials, including leaflets and flyers.
- 7 Records of feedback, complaints and suggestions from users. Records of action taken in response to complaints.

**PQASSO – an example
from the workpack**

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Sources of evidence offer some ideas about where you might look for evidence to demonstrate that your organisation has met the indicators. This example shows sources of evidence for **level 1**.

About the PQASSO Quality Mark



About the PQASSO Quality Mark

We can help you get the recognition you deserve! It's important that organisations can prove they have attained a recognised level of quality.

We believe that self-assessment is essential for learning and development – but we know that external recognition can also be vital for some organisations.

The PQASSO Quality Mark is the externally assessed award for PQASSO users which demonstrates achievement of the PQASSO standards.

This nationally recognised award offers both users and funders/commissioners external verification of the quality and credibility of an organisation.

Charity Commission endorsement

The Charity Commission has endorsed the PQASSO Quality Mark at Level 2 and Level 3 of PQASSO 3rd edition.

The endorsement means that organisations achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark will receive the Charity Commission's badge of approval confirming that they meet the Hallmarks of an Effective Charity.



'Achieving a recognisable quality assurance standard is vital to the future of the organisation.'

Centre for Equality and Diversity

'The PQASSO Quality Mark is the ideal way for us to ensure that we are meeting our objectives and offering the best service possible.'

The Interlink Foundation

'The PQASSO Quality Mark has given us confidence that we are performing well and that we will be ready for tendering this autumn.'

Home Start

Achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark

To achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark, organisations follow a step-by-step process

Step 1 Implement PQASSO

You need to purchase the PQASSO workpack, complete the self-assessment and be confident that you have the evidence in place to demonstrate that you have met the PQASSO standards at your chosen level.

Step 2 Application

You should complete and submit the PQASSO Quality Mark Application Form.

Step 3 Planning the review

An assessor, known as a peer reviewer will be selected and will contact you to agree dates for the desktop review and the site visit.

Step 4 Desktop review

You will submit specific organisational documents to the peer reviewer(s) to assess in preparation for the site visit.

Step 5 Site visit

The peer reviewer(s) will visit your organisation to conduct interviews and gather evidence and determine whether you fully meet the PQASSO standards.

Step 6 Reporting

The peer reviewer(s) will provide a detailed report of their findings to you and to CES. If your organisation does not meet all the PQASSO standards, you will be given an opportunity to make improvements.

Step 7 Receiving the award

If your organisation is successful, you will receive the PQASSO Quality Mark in recognition of your achievement.



Charities Evaluation Services



Charities Evaluation Services



Charities Evaluation Services

For more information on the PQASSO Quality Mark including useful guidance and documents for assessment, please visit www.pqassoqualitymark.org.uk

What support do we offer?

Training

We offer a range of training courses designed specifically to help you to successfully implement PQASSO at your organisation. Our most popular course is the practical two-day 'Implementing PQASSO', which runs regularly throughout the year.

If you are interested in learning about the PQASSO Quality Mark, we offer a free half-day workshop, which will tell you everything you need to know, including how to apply.

Can't come to us? We can come to you!

For more information about CES training, please email training@ces-vol.org.uk or call **020 7713 5722**.

For a full list of the courses CES can deliver visit www.ces-vol.org.uk/courses

Online support

PQASSO training is now online! If you want to learn more about PQASSO and the PQASSO Quality Mark but find it difficult to get time away from the office, we are offering a free on-line training course. For more information email training@ces-vol.org.uk

CES licensed PQASSO Mentors

Our pioneering nationwide network of development workers, consultants and other professionals have been trained and licensed by CES to deliver training and provide personal support to help organisations implement PQASSO.

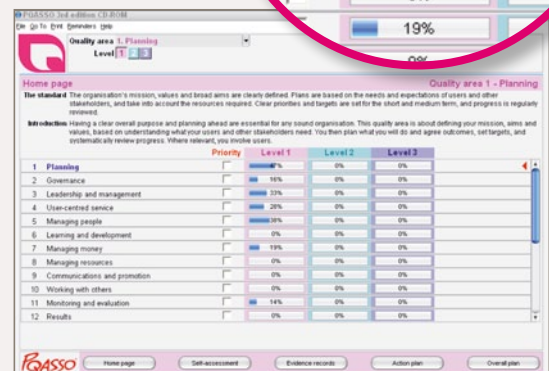
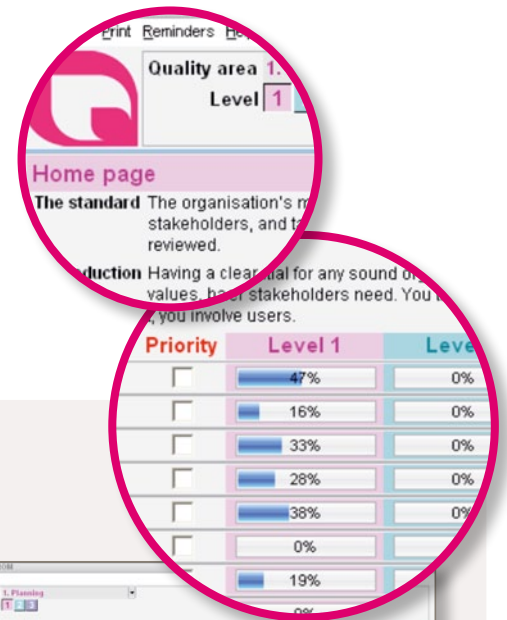
To contact a mentor, or if you are interested in becoming a mentor yourself, see: www.ces-vol.org.uk/PQASSOmentors

The **PQASSO CD-ROM** has been designed to accompany the PQASSO workpack, to help you manage your evidence and to reflect how well your organisation is doing against each of the quality areas.

By using this helpful tool you can:

- plan and monitor your overall PQASSO progress
- record evidence
- develop detailed action plans
- print PQASSO records in a variety of formats.

The CD-ROM also includes features to help you prepare for your PQASSO Quality Mark application.



Next steps

Adapting PQASSO to meet your needs

Don't re-invent the wheel!

Are you looking for a fast and effective way to set your own quality standards?

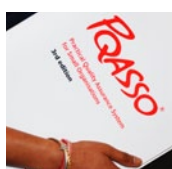
We've invested in PQASSO so you don't have to. Don't start from scratch; talk to us about add-ons and adaptations of PQASSO.

PQASSO is a tried and tested comprehensive set of quality standards, with a whole package of support already in place. It has already been used to form the basis of most bespoke quality frameworks in use within sub-sectors, for example, mental health, early years, adult care services, refugee community organisations, and housing and regeneration. If you think your network of organisations needs something more tailor-made, why not talk to us about how we can help you?

Example: The Princess Royal Trust for Carers wanted a standard that would allow their network to measure the quality of their specific services. So rather than develop a new quality system, they decided it would be better to add on two additional standards to PQASSO that would look specifically at the services that their network provides.

'We worked very closely with CES in developing the standard. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers brought the knowledge and insight into the service and what we were trying to achieve and CES was able to provide the valuable technical expertise to translate that into indicators and standards... At the end of what we see as a very successful partnership, CES produced standards that we were very happy with and met our needs.'

Ruth Clark, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers



How to order PQASSO

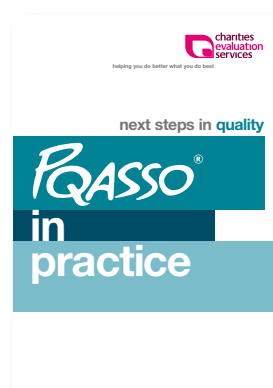
Visit the CES website at www.ces-vol.org.uk/publications

Publications

First Steps in Quality provides an introduction to quality systems. It uses everyday language and is written for individuals and organisations who are new or fairly new to quality. It is available to download for free.

Next Steps in Quality: PQASSO in Practice is a publication providing a practical and detailed guide to the process of implementing PQASSO and achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark.

For more information, see: www.ces-vol.org.uk/publications



About CES

We provide training and consultancy on monitoring and evaluation, PQASSO and other approaches to quality. We are experts in the field with over twenty years' experience, and have worked with over 25,000 third sector organisations.

Training

We offer over 20 courses to help you improve your performance, including courses on PQASSO, quality, monitoring, evaluation and outcomes.

www.ces-vol.org.uk/training

Monitoring

We can help you to implement an outcomes focus in your work and set up the systems for monitoring your progress.

Email enquiries@ces-vol.org.uk for more information.

Evaluation

We can carry out evaluations of your organisation and its work, or of specific projects.

Email enquiries@ces-vol.org.uk for more information.

Consultancy

We can help you by providing practical support, tailored to meet the precise needs of your organisation.

www.ces-vol.org.uk/consultancy

Publications

We provide guidance, demystify jargon and provide resources to help you demonstrate that you're making a real difference. Many are free to download.

www.ces-vol.org.uk/publications

For more information about PQASSO:

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www.ces-vol.org.uk/PQASSO