

CANDL Quality Mark



A Quality Assurance
Tool for Small Groups



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Introduction

After years of supporting grassroots projects with recruiting volunteers, funding applications, finding suitable venues, the CANDL Project recognised the struggles that many of these groups experienced. We identified that some of the reasons for this was due to the lack of knowledge about the need to put basic strategies and procedures in place. It became clear to us that a system, such as a Quality Mark, was needed to help groups provide a well run service.

We were familiar with quality marks such as PQASSO and Investors in People which have become popular in recent years and we thought they were basically a good idea. We found, however, that for small grassroots groups they were too complicated, too much in danger of becoming a paper exercise and not relevant enough to the realities of forming a new group. Project Workers Sonia Chambers, James Ashdown and Gill Kanga therefore developed CANDL's own Quality Mark which we have tried to keep as simple as possible and rooted in the realities of creating a new group. The Quality mark concentrates on ten areas which we have identified as being paramount to the effective and efficient delivery of any community service, these are:

1. Aims and Visions
2. Being Aware of Key issues
3. Abilities of a Management Committee
4. Supervision of People
5. Attracting Workers and Volunteers
6. Keeping Children Safe
7. Managing Finance
8. Fundraising
9. Managing Resources
10. Providing a Service

Our main focus is to encourage groups to recognise the importance of putting these in place and ensuring that good and safe practises are implemented throughout the project. We will work with any group, whether they are just starting out and need to go through the whole process, or whether they have been up and running for some time and just need help in one area.

Aims and Vision

- Being clear about what you want to do
- Having a shared sense of purpose
- Practically expressing your vision

Introduction and explanation

Having a clear idea of what you are seeking to achieve is important for a modern voluntary project. Not only is this helpful for you, but you will also be expected by funders and other agencies to be able to say simply and clearly what your vision is and what your specific aims are. The distinction between a vision and aims can be helpful:

- A vision is a very general statement of what you are about and what you are seeking to achieve.
- Aims are much more specific and will include the actual projects you want to engage in.

It is important that everyone involved in the management of a project should have a clear understanding of the vision and key aims. It is not enough for one person to understand these and just be supported by a group of people who don't have a clear idea of what the project is about.

Nowadays projects are expected to have a vision (or mission) statement and a clear set of written aims. These can be helpful in enabling everyone to understand what your project is seeking to achieve but are not an alternative for every member of the management committee having a shared understanding which they are able to individually articulate.

What we will expect

- A simple written one paragraph vision statement
- A clear and simple written statement of one or more aims
- Five different members of the management committee, including those holding the most responsible positions, being able to speak clearly about the vision and aims

How will we evaluate this?

- Documentary evidence
- Conversations with five individuals

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Vision statement			
Written aims			
Chair			
Secretary			
3			
4			
5			

Being Aware of Key Issues

- Awareness of the responsibilities of roles
- Awareness of safety and equality issues
- Awareness of legal responsibilities
- Awareness of the role and nature of meetings
- Awareness of the issues related to child protection

Introduction and explanation

When you are running a small project it is not always possible to do everything 'by the book'. Nonetheless it is still important to be aware of good practice and to take practical steps towards running a safe, fair and responsible organisation. This will be of great practical help to you as your project matures and will increase your credibility with funders and other agencies.

The first step towards running a safe, fair and responsible project is to ensure that your management committee is aware of the key issues.

What we will expect

- The chair (and vice-chair if you have them) are aware of the role of the chair and his/her responsibilities
- The treasurer, management committee members and secretary (or secretaries) are aware of their roles and the responsibilities of those roles
- An awareness of your legal status and responsibilities (especially in relation to responsibilities relating to child protection)
- A basic awareness of health and safety
- A basic awareness of the importance of equal opportunities and promoting diversity (especially in relation to faith based organisations)
- A commitment to running regular, well ordered meetings of which records are kept and an understanding of why this is important

How will we evaluate this?

- Conversations with appropriate individuals
- Discussions with management committee
- Written records/minutes of meetings

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Management committee roles			
Legal responsibilities			
Health and safety			
Equality issues			
Child Protection			

Abilities of the Management Committee

- Hold regular meetings with minutes
- Carrying out roles effectively
- Good communication between committee members

Introduction and explanation

A management committee that works well is crucial to the effective performance of any project. This means both that certain key tasks are undertaken but also that people learn to work together as a group, respecting everyone's opinion and making use of everyone's gifts and skills.

A 'management committee' may have many different names – steering group, board of trustees etc. The important thing is that every voluntary group needs a group of people that are responsible for it.

What we are looking for

- Evidence of regular meetings
- Clear minutes which record decisions that have been made and how these decisions will be put into practice.
- Monitoring how this is put into practice from meeting to meeting
- Effective chairing of meetings
- Meaningful contributions from more than one or two people
- People listening to each other and respecting different points of view

How will we evaluate this?

- Documentary evidence
- Observation of meeting

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Regular meetings			
Good minutes			
Good participation			
Good-quality of communication			

Supervision of People

- Role description for paid staff and volunteers
- Monthly supervision meetings for paid staff
- Quarterly supervision meetings with volunteers

Introduction and explanation

In a well-run project it is important for workers and volunteers to be clear about what is expected of them, and to have access to support. This means giving them a role description, as well as the chance to sit and discuss what they do on a regular basis (known as supervision) with another person, e.g. a management committee member. It is important that you plan this time in advance so that the worker or volunteer has a chance to prepare what they want to discuss.

The purpose of supervision is to give support to the workers and volunteers, to check that they are carrying out their role in the most effective way, whilst also giving the management committee member the opportunity to keep up with the work of the project.

What we are looking for

- Separate written role descriptions for paid workers and for volunteers
- Written evidence of regular supervision sessions, e.g. monthly for paid workers, quarterly for volunteers
- Annual review for each worker or volunteer
- Evidence of opportunities being provided for workers/volunteers to be guided by the supervisor, or directed to other sources of assistance or training when necessary

How will we evaluate this?

- Documentary evidence
- Conversation with the workers/volunteers

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Clear role descriptions			
Regular meetings			
Good supervision notes			
Evidence of opportunities for further training			

Attracting (and Retaining) Workers and Volunteers

- Role descriptions for paid workers and for volunteers
- Opportunities for learning
- Recruitment strategy

Introduction and explanation

All projects need committed workers or volunteers in order to operate efficiently and effectively. Providing an opportunity for learning is, therefore, a good way of attracting and retaining workers or volunteers.

As part of a recruitment strategy, it is important that you have a carefully thought-out role description for both workers and volunteers. It is good practice to have a person or steering group chosen to oversee this task. This should also include where they can advertise, e.g. local churches, local newsletters/papers, job centres, agencies, etc.

What we are looking for

- Written role descriptions for paid workers and for volunteers
- Volunteer agreement
- Written evidence of a recruitment strategy
- Visible method of publicising training opportunities

How will we evaluate this?

- Observation of the work/volunteer environment
- Documentary evidence

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Clear role descriptions			
Planned recruitment strategy			
Variety of opportunities for learning			

Keeping Children Safe

- Inclusion of keeping children safe as being paramount in the running of the organisation or group
- Opportunities for learning how to keep children safe
- Inclusion of keeping children safe in recruitment strategy

Introduction and explanation

All projects should have knowledge of how to keep children safe. However, for those that are specifically working with children it is important that you have some knowledge on the Every Child Matters Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children (government guidelines) as well as demonstrating their motivation towards working to meeting these aims, making use of the materials from Safe from Harm (www.watton.org/abuse/safe/guide).

What we are looking for

- For projects looking to provide or make provision for children to be working towards having the Management Committee members, workers and volunteers CRB checked
- To be creating an environment where children can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve their potential, make a positive contribution to their community, and achieve economic well-being
- Written evidence of their thinking on developing their Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Visible method of publicising training opportunities for keeping children safe

How will we evaluate this?

- Observation of the safety of the environment for children
- Documentary evidence

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Written evidence of the thinking in developing Child Protection Policy and procedures			
Recruitment strategy that reflects keeping children safe			
Variety of opportunities for training and learning about keeping children safe			

Managing Finance

- Having a bank account
- Basic book-keeping and recording systems
- Having a system of financial control

Introduction and explanation

When running a small project it is very important that your finances are well managed. This would include having a bank account in the project's name, with cheques needing to be signed by at least 2 authorised people. A basic, clear book-keeping system should be adopted.

Financial controls need to be put in place, with a system of receipts and payments being authorised by an identified person, e.g. the treasurer.

What we are looking for

- Evidence of the authorised signatories
- Evidence of the book-keeping system
- Documentation of the financial controls and minuted procedures

How will we evaluate this?

- Documentary evidence
- By talking to the treasurer

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Reconciling and filing of bank statements			
Keeping financial documents in order			

Fundraising

- Fundraising strategy
- Monitoring the progress of funding applications/and monies received
- Developing an exit strategy

Introduction and explanation

A good project is one which has a clear idea of what finances are needed to run the activities, how to go about attracting funding, and how to manage this process. It is good practice to develop a basic fundraising strategy before trying to raise funds. This helps to produce good fundraising application letters.

Having a simple system for monitoring enables funds received to be efficiently administrated, and ensures transparency at all times. It is also important for you think ahead and consider how/if the activities will continue once the funding has come to an end.

What we are looking for

- Clear evidence of a funding strategy
- Knowledge of how to write effective fundraising applications
- Documentation of a monitoring system
- Documented thinking about an exit strategy

How will we evaluate this?

- Documentary evidence
- Sight of fundraising application letters
- By talking to the fundraiser/management committee

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Methodical (systematic) monitoring of applications			
Regular updating of monitoring system			
Development of exit strategy			

Managing Resources

- Identification of person holding responsibility
- Keeping a record of the equipment
- Having safety checks on the equipment
- Storing equipment safely

Introduction and explanation

One of the first steps in managing a project lies in identifying someone to take overall responsibility for the resources. This involves you keeping a record of all equipment, as well as ensuring it is stored safely, regularly maintained and checked for health and safety.

What we are looking for

- Record of all equipment
- Evidence of regular safety checks
- Evidence of safe storage

How will we evaluate this?

- Observation of storage area
- Documentation evidence

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Record of equipment			
Record of regular safety checks			
Equipment safely stored			

Providing a Service

- Records of what is provided
- How the service is publicised
- Networking evidence

Introduction and explanation

It is very helpful for projects to produce information which clearly shows what you do and how people can access the project. Careful thought should be given to where the project is publicised in order that you reach your targeted group.

There are often other projects engaged in similar activities in the local area and it can be helpful to make contact with them to share skills and ideas. Networking in this way can help you identify gaps and avoid overlaps in your provision, as well as provide a means of support.

What we are looking for

- Photographs of activities
- Evidence of networking meetings/activities
- Records of where the service is publicised

How will we evaluate this?

- Observation visit
- Documentation evidence

Progress chart

	Not met	Partially met	Fully met
Photographic evidence			
Notes of networking meetings/activities			
Publicity material			

Quality Mark – Going Further

Aims and Visions

- Developing a Constitution
- Regularly reviewing aims, visions and key priorities
- Being explicit about values and engaging in theological reflection so as to promote a learning organisation

Being Aware of Key Issues

- Developing written policies and procedures to implement them
- Developing an authentic commitment to the values behind the policies

Abilities of the Management Committee

- Providing regular training for the Management Committee
- Conducting regular reviews of the project and Management Committee
- Networking with similar projects and appropriate agencies
- Managing the transition to new Management Committee members by developing community
- Developing a Management Committee which reflects the diversity of users and community
- Creating a culture where Management Committee members feel supported and everyone's thoughts and feelings are recognised

Supervision of People

- Developing a formal job pack for all staff and volunteers which supplies them with all relevant information
- Having clear written policies for grievance, complaint and discipline procedures
- Training and support for people supervising staff, volunteers and management

Managing Finance

- Developing appropriate auditing procedures
- Producing budgets which are widely understood
- Having the capacity to produce cash flows and predict future financial situation

Fundraising

- Developing a long-term funding strategy
- Raising funds from a variety of different sources
- Having documented thinking about an exit strategy (if appropriate)

Managing Resources

- Developing written resource policies and procedures

- Having a widespread understanding and implementation of resources policies

Providing a Service

- Producing an annual report
- Involving users in the management of the service
- Reviewing who is using the service and who is being missed/excluded
- Updating policies to keep service fresh and with new developments

Attracting (and retaining) Workers and Volunteers

- Having a written recruitment strategy which is widely understood and implemented
- Developing networks through whom workers and volunteers are recruited
- Having policies which enable staff and volunteers to input into the direction and management of the project
- Networking with people and organisations outside the project
- Creating a culture where workers and volunteers are supported, having their feelings recognised, and non-managerial supervision being encouraged