

Raising the Standards

– a guide to
Quality Systems
in the Youth Sector



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Note on prices

All costs given in this guide are accurate at the time of printing.
Contact us for the latest information.

FOREWORD

Every organisation wants to provide the best service it can and to demonstrate the positive results of its work. With the introduction of Aiming High, the ten year strategy for our children and young people, 'raising the quality of provision is crucial if all services are to reach out and support all young people, including the most disaffected, to access the opportunities and services available.' The provision of high quality youth services has never been more important.

There are plenty of quality systems around but how can you tell which one is right for your organisation, be that in the local authority or the third sector? Well, this guide will tell you. By identifying quality assurance systems which are of direct relevance and nationally recognised it signposts you to the most appropriate one.

As such it will prove an invaluable tool for all organisations in choosing the most appropriate system.

But it is not only youth work deliverers who will benefit. This guide will also provide information to funders and commissioners in children's trusts and elsewhere who are responsible for commissioning provision but who may not be familiar with the quality standards relevant to the youth sector. Through greater understanding and wider take up of recognised systems it is hoped more work will be commissioned from the voluntary and maintained sectors.

We welcome the timely production of this guide, jointly prepared by The National Youth Agency and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, and believe it will prove vital for all organisations and services wanting to ensure quality provision.

It will also help them raise the bar in the quality of the services they provide. And the biggest winners from that can only be our children and young people.



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INTRODUCTION

This guide to quality systems in the youth sector has been put together by The National Youth Agency and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, funded by VCS Engage, with the objectives to:

- Provide information and guidance to the youth sector on quality assurance systems relevant to the sector.
- Enable the sector to network and share practice around quality assurance systems.
- Explore and highlight where quality assurance systems overlap in order to enable the transfer of modules from one system to another and consequently avoid duplication of work.
- Raise the profile of quality assurance systems relevant to the youth sector to policy-makers, funders and commissioners.

Guide

As a part of this work, this guide has been produced to provide information on a range of quality assurance systems of direct relevance to the youth sector. The purpose of the guide is twofold:

- To provide information to organisations in the youth sector that will help them to identify the most appropriate standards and awards for:
 - ◆ Monitoring and evaluating their work;
 - ◆ Supporting continuous improvement; and
 - ◆ Demonstrating the quality of their work.
- To provide information to funders and commissioners in children's trusts and other organisations who are responsible for commissioning provision for young people, but who may not be familiar with the quality standards relevant to the youth sector.

Context

Every organisation wants to provide a good service and be in a position to demonstrate the positive outcomes or results of its work. They want to be able to show what they do, and how well they do it. This is essentially what quality is all about – knowing what you do, learning from it, and doing it better.

This is probably the first driver for an organisation's decision to adopt a quality assurance system. There are other drivers. Research commissioned by the Quality Standards Task Group (QSTG) and the Charities Evaluation Services (CES) suggest three:

- Influence of guidance (sometimes pressure) from funders.
- Accountability – eg to funders, partners, service users.
- Pre-empting mandatory requirements.

The same research also identified three main benefits:

- Quality system acts as an organisational development tool and provides a common agenda for action, for example, action planning, continuous professional development, team building.
- Increased organisational legitimacy, including improved reputation and credibility with external stakeholders.
- Opportunity for the organisation to reflect on and review its working processes and ways of doing things, including reflecting on service delivery arrangements.



QSTG produced four publications based on the findings of this research:

The Adoption and Use of Quality Systems in the Voluntary Sector: Research Report

The Adoption and Use of Quality Systems in the Voluntary Sector: A Literature Review

The Adoption and Use of Quality Systems in the Voluntary Sector: A briefing for funders

Getting Ready for Quality; Learning from experience – a practical approach

CES has also produced some useful related publications, particularly on impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation; and quality.

The CES publication *First Steps in Quality* can be downloaded free and includes clear and straight-forward guidance on:

- what quality and quality assurance means;
- why quality matters to voluntary organisations;
- what systems are available;
- how to choose the right approach;
- how to get started; and
- further help and information.

Other useful information about the quality process and its benefits can be obtained from the Performance Hub and also from VCS Engage who provide information, resources and training events to strengthen the voluntary and community sector's involvement in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services for children, young people and families.

But quality is not only a concern for the voluntary and community sector. Quality is a concern for everyone. Not least because the requirement on local authorities to explore a range of options for the commissioning of services for children and young people within an environment of competition and contestability means that everyone (including commissioners) needs to be confident about the quality (and impact) of the services being provided – not only in the voluntary sector, but also in the statutory sector.

Indeed, *Aiming High for Young People: A ten year strategy for positive activities* underlines both commissioning and quality as core elements in the planning and delivery of services for young people.

In relation to commissioning, *Aiming High's* vision is of integrated services delivered by a wide range of statutory, third and private sector partners, with a key leadership and coordinating role for local authorities.

In relation to quality, *Aiming High* is committed to:

- A strong accountability and performance management framework that will drive services to work effectively and promote personal development and build resilience.
- A skilled and confident workforce that will commission and deliver the most effective practice, known to improve young people's outcomes.

Central to these outcomes, is young people's empowerment.

"Empowering young people and communities to influence provision will help to drive up quality and ensure that local barriers to access are identified and addressed. Similarly, raising the quality of provision is crucial if all services are to reach out and support all young people, including the most disaffected, to access the opportunities and services available." (*Aiming High for Young People*, 1.46)

Young people's participation and influence in decision making is, therefore, crucial. This includes their active and practical involvement in needs assessment, planning, commissioning, service delivery, evaluation, and of course, quality assurance.



QUALITY STANDARDS

The Performance Hub website states that:

“Quality organisations are self-critical and honest, learning-focused and open to change, and driven by continual improvement. They want to offer the best service they can, and want to run themselves in a professional and competent way. To become and remain a quality organisation, you may need to set up some internal systems and processes. You can do this yourself, but there are also a number of well-known standards and frameworks that can guide you.”

Among the more familiar quality standards in general use are:

Investors in People (IiP) which provides a framework for helping organisations to improve performance and realise objectives through the effective management and development of their people, especially by setting standards for the training and development of staff. Its four principles are commitment, planning, action and evaluation, underscored by ten indicators of good practice.

EFQM Excellence Model is based on a framework of self-assessment and continuous improvement across nine criteria – five ‘enablers’ (leadership, people, policy and strategy, partnerships and resources, and processes); and four ‘results’ (people results, customer results, society results and key performance results). EFQM specifies that it is relatable to the voluntary sector.

Charter Mark is the government’s national standard for customer service excellence. It is for organisations dealing with the public, including voluntary organisations that receive funding from the public sector. It looks at the quality of service delivery and checks that an organisation is placing customers at the centre of everything it does.

ISO 9000 is a generic name for a suite of standards developed to provide a framework for implementing a quality management system. The aim is to help organisations achieve user satisfaction by preventing problems from developing within their services and products. ISO 9001:2000 (the quality management standard) includes five main sections – quality management system, management responsibility, resource management, product realisation, and measurement analysis and improvement.

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

These are useful standards and quality marks, some of which, or some elements of which, are used by organisations working with young people. However, whilst not specifically aimed at the youth sector, there are two standards/quality awards very often used by youth organisations in the voluntary sector. These are PQASSO and the NAVCA Quality Award.

PQASSO: the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (Charities Evaluation Services)

Aims and focus

PQASSO is a quality system written and designed specifically for third sector organisations. It provides a flexible, step-by-step approach to working out what an organisation is doing well and what could be improved. By using the self-assessment work pack, the system helps organisations to improve performance and set priorities for the future.

Target

PQASSO is a quality assurance system for small to medium sized organisations, or projects within larger organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

How the system works

The PQASSO work pack is a self-assessment tool divided into 12 quality areas.

1. Planning for quality	5. Staff and volunteers	9. Managing activities
2. Governance	6. Training and development	10. Networking and partnership
3. Management	7. Managing money	11. Monitoring and evaluation
4. User-centred service	8. Managing resources	12. Results

Each area has three 'levels of achievement', with details of what the organisation should be doing to meet each level. Each area has 'suggested evidence' to help organisations identify how to demonstrate their achievements. This leads to a self-assessment page, which focuses on the action that needs to be taken, by specific people and within specific timeframes to meet the 'levels of achievement'. Organisations are encouraged to set a review date to evaluate progress. PQASSO is published as a work pack with a supporting CD-Rom. CES also helps organisations to implement PQASSO through training, mentoring, consultancy, seminars and conferences.

Achieving the award

The PQASSO Quality Mark is an optional external assessment service for PQASSO users to use in addition to self-assessment. It offers accreditation against either level 1 or level 2 of the PQASSO quality standards. Accreditation against level 3 is planned to be available in 2009. Before applying, organisations must have already self-assessed against their chosen Level of PQASSO and have sufficient evidence that they fully meet all the requirements at that Level. A peer review is undertaken and successful organisations are awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark from the Charities Evaluation Service.

Timescale and cost

The charge for a PQASSO Quality Mark peer review depends on the size of the organisation and the PQASSO Level being reviewed.

- Organisations with five or fewer staff applying for Level 1: £1,055 + expenses + VAT
- Organisations with five or fewer staff applying for Level 2: £1,355 + expenses + VAT
- Organisations with more than five staff applying for Level 1 or 2: £1,755 + expenses + VAT

Further information

PQASSO Quality Mark Telephone: 020 7713 5722. E-mail: enquiries@ces-vol.org.uk

NAVCA Quality Award: A quality award for local infrastructure organisations who are members of NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action)

Aims and focus

The NAVCA Quality Award is assessed against the NAVCA Performance Standards. It offers a NAVCA-accredited award that evaluates the quality of services offered by local infrastructure organisations.

Target

Local voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations who are members of NAVCA.

How the system works

The Performance Standards of the Quality Award were developed after consultation with NAVCA membership, and have been mapped against several quality frameworks including PQASSO, Matrix and Community Legal Services Quality Mark. There are five Standards which reflect the core functions of infrastructure organisations. For each Standard there is a statement, a series of outcomes, a set of minimum outputs, and some suggested additional outputs.

Standard 1	The organisation proactively identifies needs in the local community and facilitates improvement in service provision to meet those needs.
Standard 2	The organisation assists local voluntary and community organisations to function more effectively and deliver quality services to their users, members or constituents.
Standard 3	The organisation facilitates effective communication or networking and collaboration amongst local voluntary and community groups.
Standard 4	The organisation enables the diverse views of the local voluntary and community sector to be represented to external bodies, developing and facilitating structures which promote effective working relationships and two-way communication.
Standard 5	The organisation enhances the voluntary and community sector's role as an integral part of local planning and policy-making.

Achieving the award

The organisation undergoes an assessment process to test that it is delivering quality services to its local voluntary and community sector. This involves:

- Self-assessment against the indicators that measure delivery of the outputs and outcomes that make up the Performance Standards.
- Visit from a NAVCA-accredited auditor to check the evidence submitted.
- If successful, the NAVCA Quality Award is issued.

Funding bodies and peer organisations may be contacted for their opinion of the organisation as part of the audit process.

Timescale and cost

Timescale is to complete the process within one year of application. Cost: £1,775 + VAT

Further information

Go to www.navca.org.uk/services/quality/qualityaward.htm

NATIONAL QUALITY SYSTEMS RELEVANT TO THE YOUTH SECTOR

There are a number of national quality standards and awards directly relevant to the youth sector. The challenge is how to decide which one is the most appropriate for your organisation, particularly since different stakeholders have different priorities for quality.

For example:

- improving services;
- gaining a better understanding of what the organisation is doing and why; what is working and what is not;
- increasing staff motivation;
- attracting more users and volunteers;
- developing a better approach to allocating resources;
- strengthening tender submissions, funding applications and monitoring reports;
- showing stakeholders, such as funders, how well the organisation is performing;
- establishing a shared understanding and approach between organisations across a network;
or
- gaining external recognition or validation.

In making a choice there are five key steps:

1. Consider what your organisation is trying to achieve, and agree the benefits you are looking for.
2. Assess your organisation's situation and circumstances, and what you will need to do to make quality work.
3. Find out as much as possible about different systems, what might meet your organisation's needs, and which could be adapted.
4. Draw up a budget to include not only the cost of subscribing to the system, but also the cost of people and time, training and the cost of making changes.
5. Identify any external support available to you and how you can make best use of it.

These are important since one of the main lessons from the QSTQ/CES research was that organisations who make an informed choice about which system to use and those that receive adequate support and resources have the most success with implementation.

An alternative is not to adopt an established system. Indeed, many youth service organisations have developed their own, most notably in local authorities, based on the Ofsted youth work inspection framework. Typically, these quality assurance systems include self-assessment against a set of Ofsted inspired standards and internal peer review, supported by management information (on reach, participation, recorded and accredited outcomes) and annual user surveys.

These are useful and helpful as development tools, especially if the organisation has been mindful to maximise the benefits in the context of its own needs (eg selecting and adapting criteria according to the size of the organisation).

It adds to legitimacy and credibility, and can support the commissioning relationship, but it does not provide national recognition.

The quality standards and awards detailed in this guide:

- are directly relevant to the youth sector; and

- provide national recognition of an organisation’s commitment and ability to be self-critical and honest, learning-focused and driven by continual improvement.

This guide contains details of:

- the aims and focus of each standard/award;
- the kind of organisations the standard/award is targeted at;
- a brief summary of how it works;
- steps to achieving the award (where appropriate);
- timescales and cost; and
- contact information.

STANDARDS

Hear by Right	Standards for the active involvement of children and young people	The National Youth Agency
Quality Standards	for Young People’s Information, Advice and Guidance	Department for Children, Schools and Families
Quality Standards	for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services	Youth Access
You’re Welcome	Quality criteria for making health services young people friendly	Department of Health

STANDARDS LEADING TO AWARDS

Becoming VISIBLE	Operating standards for community organisations	Community Matters
Clubmark	A cross-sport quality accreditation for clubs with junior sections	Sport England / Managed by KKP
Insync (For YMCA member associations)	Standards to ensure quality and ongoing development and improvement	YMCA
Keeping It Safe / Sound Systems	A young person-centred approach to safety and child protection	National Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Quality Mark	A quality assurance scheme for work with young people	Clubs for Young People
Staying Safe Commitment Scheme	Safeguarding and protecting children in organisations	NSPCC
The NYA Quality Mark	Towards better services for young people	The National Youth Agency

OUTCOMES

This guide provides details of national quality assurance standards and awards relevant to the youth sector. This information is provided in order to:

- help the youth sector be clearer about the significance of quality assurance systems and what is available and most relevant to them; and
- increase confidence among commissioners when commissioning services from the youth sector.

Including these standards and awards in this guide does not represent an endorsement or recommendation by The National Youth Agency, National Council for Voluntary Youth Services or VCS Engage. Rather, the hope is that this guide will contribute towards:

- increased take up of quality assurance systems generally;
- development in the quality of services for young people;
- organisations better able to demonstrate that they meet recognised standards and understand areas for improvement; and
- more quality work commissioned from the voluntary and maintained youth sectors.

STANDARDS

Hear by Right: Standards for the active involvement of children and young people (The National Youth Agency)

Aims and focus

Hear by Right provides a set of standards for organisations to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people. The standards framework is based on the 7S model of organisational change: Shared values, Strategies, Structures, Systems, Staff, Skills and knowledge, and Style of leadership; and aims to make young people's participation safe, sound and effective.

Target

Hear by Right is targeted at organisations working with or providing services for children and young people across the statutory and voluntary sectors. This includes organisations such as trusts and local authorities, integrated youth support, health providers, schools and colleges, national and local voluntary organisations.

How the system works

Hear by Right is based on a self-assessment framework and gathering evidence on how each standard is being met, including evidence from young people. There are three levels: Emerging, Established and Advanced. Each level builds on the previous one to ensure that young people's involvement is 'built in' and not just 'bolted on'. *Hear by Right* resources include:

- the *Hear by Right* book, setting out the context, standards and indicators, with questions and ideas about evidence of meeting the standards;
- the electronic mapping and planning tool on the accompanying CD-Rom, which sets out the standards and indicators in table form for easy completion to help develop the active involvement strategy based on clear evidence, self assessment and agreed priorities;
- *Building standards* – tools developed with children and young people themselves to involve

- them directly in the mapping and planning process;
- *Involving children and young people: an introduction*, a guide to different approaches and their relevant merits and application; and
- *What's changed?* – a tool to record and evaluate what has changed because of genuine dialogue with children and young people.

Hear by Right is not linked to a quality award, but the participation team at The National Youth Agency provides support, information, ideas, resources, training and consultancy.
Tel: 0116 242 7406. E-mail: participation@nya.org.uk

Timescale and cost

Hear by Right with CD-Rom and briefings: £10 from The National Youth Agency.
Tel: 0116 242 7427. E-mail: sales@nya.org.uk

Further information and resources

Go to <http://hbr.nya.org.uk>

Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

Aims and focus

The Quality Standards, launched in October 2007, set out DCSF's expectations of what good quality information, advice and guidance should consist of and the IAG services that local authorities will be expected to commission and manage after they assume responsibility for these services in April 2008.

Target

The Standards are also for use by providers of IAG such as Connexions services, learning providers, voluntary and community-service organisations and others.

How the system works

The Quality Standards provide a framework for planning, managing and reviewing information, advice and guidance services in a locality, in a coordinated way. There are 12 quality standards, each with evidence indicators against which performance against the standards can be assessed. In short they set out our expectations that:

- 1 Young people are informed about how information, advice and guidance services can help them and how to access the services they need.
- 2 Young people receive the information, advice and guidance on personal wellbeing and financial capability issues that they need.
- 3 Young people have the information they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and career options.
- 4 Young people have the advice and guidance that they need to make well-informed and realistic decisions about learning and careers.
- 5 Information, advice and guidance services promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes.
- 6 Young people (reflecting the make-up of their communities) are engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of information, advice and guidance provision.
- 7 Parents and carers know how information, advice and guidance services can help their

- children and know how these services are accessed.
- 8 Information, advice and guidance providers understand their roles and responsibilities.
 - 9 Programmes of career and personal development for young people are planned and provided collaboratively.
 - 10 Staff providing information, advice and guidance are appropriately qualified, work to relevant professional standards and receive continuing professional development.
 - 11 Information, advice and guidance services are regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated, and actions are taken to improve services in response to the findings.
 - 12 Processes for commissioning impartial information, advice and guidance services are effective and result in services that meet the needs of parents/carers and young people.

A User Guide and Good Practice materials are available to help organisations to deliver information, advice and guidance in line with these standards. They provide more detail about the evidence indicators, and give examples of how the standards are being met in practice.

Further information

Go to www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00253/



Quality Standards for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services (Youth Access)

Aims and focus

The Quality Standards are a development tool which provide a framework for helping youth information, advice, counselling and support services to build on their strengths while identifying areas for improvement.

Target

Youth information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS) in membership of Youth Access and other providers of these services. For an established agency the Quality Standards can be used to evaluate performance and gather stakeholder feedback on one or more particular areas of its work eg access, counselling provision, partnership working etc. For a new agency, the Standards provide a useful tool to guide the development of their service.

How the system works

Each standard (of which there are 17) represents a potential area of a YIACS service's activities. For each standard, a set of practice guidelines identify the elements, which together, work towards the attainment of the standard. Self-assessment materials for each of the standard areas provide organisations with a clear structure for generating the range of evidence needed to support a whole agency approach to assessing quality. The standard areas are:

Management	Initial Access	Counselling Services
Line Management Supervision	Premises	Other Personal Support Services
Recruitment, Selection and Induction of Staff	Information Services	Referral
Training Advice	Services	Case Records
Publicity and Promotion	Counselling Assessment	Casework Supervision
Monitoring and Evaluation	Partnership	

The standards are also required to be addressed within the framework of values and core principles set out in the quality manual. There are also minimum requirements in three key areas of policy:

- Equality of Opportunity.
- Confidentiality.
- User Involvement.

Award

There is currently no accreditation scheme for Youth Access members, but Youth Access will be considering how an accessible system could be introduced in 2008.

Timescale and cost

The Quality Standards are available free to Youth Access members.

A printed copy can be provided to non-members for £10.00 (currently under review)

Further information

Go to www.youthaccess.org.uk

You're Welcome: Quality criteria for making health services young people friendly (Department of Health: Endorsed by the Royal College of Nursing, The National Youth Agency and Brook)

Aims and focus

The You're Welcome criteria support the implementation of Standard 4 of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. The criteria lay out the principles that will help health services, both in the community and in hospitals, 'get it right' and become young people friendly.

Target

The You're Welcome quality criteria are based on examples of effective local practice working with young people aged under 20. They should be applied to general and acute health problems, chronic and long-term disease management (such as specialist care for asthma and diabetes) and health promotion.

How the system works

The quality criteria cover ten topic areas.

Accessibility	Joined-up working
Publicity	Monitoring and evaluation, and involvement of young people
Confidentiality and consent	Health issues for adolescents
The environment	Sexual and reproductive health services
Staff training, skills, attitudes and values	Child and adolescent mental health service

To support implementation, a companion toolkit will be available in Spring 2008.

To see the You're Welcome Quality Criteria go to http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_073586

STANDARDS LEADING TO AWARDS

Becoming **VISIBLE**: Operating standards for community organisations (Community Matters)

Aims and focus

Becoming VISIBLE is a diagnostic and development tool that helps organisations to demonstrate the systems and procedures they have in place, assess how well they are working, and identify gaps in performance.

Target

Becoming VISIBLE is a set of operating standards for community centres and multi-purpose community organisations.

How the system works

The Becoming VISIBLE workbook is a self-assessment tool in seven sections. Each section contains background and assessment charts relating to each letter of the VISIBLE acronym:

- A **V**oice to represent issue of local concern
- An **I**ndependent and politically neutral organisation
- A **S**ervice provider for local people
- An **I**niiator of projects to meet locally defined need
- A **B**uilder of partnerships with other local organisations and groups
- A strong **L**ocal network of people and organisations
- A way to **E**ngage local people to become active in their communities

Organisations work through the assessment charts identifying where indicators have been met, where improvement is needed and how this will be achieved. Community Matters provides telephone and consultancy support as well as information, training and publications.

Achieving the award

The VISIBLE accreditation scheme is optional. It provides an independent assessment of the standard achieved by organisations, and awards a kitemark to those achieving the national standard.

Timescale and cost

It is recommended that the assessment process should take no longer than 12 months from start to finish.

Becoming VISIBLE workbook:

- Community organisations under £10,000 turnover £25 (members) £35 (non-members).
- Community organisations over £10,000 turnover and others £40 (members) £55 (non-members).

Accreditation: Between £1,400 and £1,650 (plus VAT) per community organisation.

Further information

www.visiblecommunities.org.uk

Clubmark: A cross-sport quality accreditation for clubs with junior sections (Sport England / Managed by Knight Kavanagh & Page)

Aims and focus

Clubmark was introduced to:

- Ensure that accrediting partners apply core common criteria to ensure that consistent good practice and minimum operating standards are delivered through all club development and accreditation schemes.
- To empower parent(s)/carer(s) when choosing a club for their children.
- To ensure that Clubmark accredited clubs are recognised through a common approach to branding.
- To provide a focus around which all organisations involved in sport can come together to support good practice in sports clubs working with children and young people.

Target

All sports clubs with junior sections.

How the system works

Clubmark accreditation is awarded to clubs that comply with minimum operating standards in four areas:

- the playing programme;
- duty of care and child protection;
- sports equity and ethics; and
- club management.

The Resource Pack provides detailed breakdown of the criteria as well as a comprehensive set of templates that help clubs to develop the policies and procedures that put them on the

path towards accreditation. To provide a clear picture of what is required, the Clubmark core criteria have been summarised and can be download from the website.

Achieving the award

Each club that achieves accreditation will be recognised and promoted as a Clubmark club. Accreditation is usually 'fully renewed' every three or four years, depending upon which sport is involved. There is a simple annual 'health check' procedure of self-assessment and declaration organised by the national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), looking at what has changed within the club in the past year and an update of its development plan.

Clubs working towards accreditation receive training, support and advice from their NGB and other partners such as county sports partnerships (CSPs) who support club development plans and work to assist clubs to meet the Clubmark criteria.

Timescale and cost

There is no fixed timescale but clubs are likely to complete in three to six months. Some training is required (run by Sports Coach UK and runningsports) but there is no cost attached to the actual accreditation.

Further information

Go to www.clubmark.org.uk

Insync (YMCA)

Aims and focus

The YMCA Insync Standards ensure the services and support offered by YMCAs is of the highest quality and offers an ongoing process of development and improvement. There are nine core standards that apply to every YMCA, and eight service standards. The service standards only apply to YMCAs that offer each of the individual services. The standards are endorsed by the Charity Commission.

Target

YMCA member associations.

How the system works

The YMCA Insync Standards are a set of 'Core' and 'Service' standards against which member YMCAs undertake a self-assessment using workbooks.

'Core' Standards	'Service' Standards
Clear purpose	Catering
Governance	Housing
Client focus	International Work
Diversity and Equal Opportunity	Parenting
Involvement	Skills and Education
Committed and skilled staff	Sport, Health, Exercise and Fitness
Good relations with other agencies	Work with Children
Management, resources and risk	Work with Young People
Monitoring quality and success	

Achieving the award

YMCAs wishing to embark on the Standards process register with the Standards Unit. The YMCA carries out self-assessment using the core and service standards workbooks. An action plan is produced identifying areas that require further work. Once the workbooks have been completed, they are submitted (along with the evidence) to the Standards Unit. A team of peer assessors (who have completed an Institute of Leadership & Management endorsed training and development programme) visit and contribute to a verification report which then goes to an external Accreditation Panel for final decision. Standards Advisers and others within the Standards Unit are available for advice and support throughout the process.

Timescale and cost

There is no fixed timescale although the whole process should take no more than two years. The cost of the Standards is incorporated within the YMCA Affiliation Fee. The only cost for accreditation is incurred by the host organisation meeting the expenses and hospitality of the peer assessors' visit.

Further information

Go to http://www.ymca.org.uk/pooled/articles/BF_WEBART/view.asp?Q=BF_WEBART_232404 or email louise.seaman@england.ymca.org.uk

Keeping it Safe

Sound Systems: A young person-centred approach to safety and child protection (National Council for Voluntary Youth Services)

Aims and focus

The Keeping it Safe standards and guidelines help organisations to create a safe environment in which there is no negligence and unnecessary exposure to avoidable risks, but where the risks taken are calculated, carefully managed and communicated with children, young people and their parents and carers.

Target

Keeping it Safe is aimed at all organisations that work with children and young people within the voluntary and community sector, irrespective of size.

How the system works

The standards describe the desired and 'safe' level of practice within an organisation and form the basis for safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Organisations gather together existing policies and procedures to check against the standards so as to identify what is missing, needs updating or is already adequate. The guidelines provide in-depth guidance and give examples for each standard, to enable a clear understanding of the issues that need to be considered when establishing policies and procedures.

The six standards are:

1. Organisational policies and procedures	4. Managing paid staff and volunteers
2. Reporting concerns, suspicions and allegations	5. Providing education, training and support
3. Safe recruitment and selection	6. Providing safe activities

Achieving the award

Organisations wishing to become accredited within the Sound Systems Accreditation Scheme must complete the Keeping it Safe workbook and submit it (with a portfolio of evidence) for assessment. Support to complete the workbook is provided through a mentor who helps the organisation to establish action plans and targets within realistic timescales. Once complete, the workbook and portfolio of evidence are assessed by an assessor allocated by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services. The assessor examines the evidence, visits the organisation and makes recommendation to the moderation board made up of assessors and NCVYS representatives.

Timescale and cost

Keeping it Safe – standards, guidelines and workbook £35.00 (£30 to NCVYS members)
 Sound Systems Accreditation Scheme – No charge at present

Further information

www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=262&PHPSESSID=3f804cc1f78fd84540c3444693ad960d

Quality Mark: A quality assurance scheme for work with young people (Clubs for Young People)

Aims and focus

Quality Mark (QM) encourages clubs and projects to assess their provision, recognise good work with young people, and set targets that will make their work more effective. The aim of QM is not to be a pass or fail test, but rather to set a level of quality that can be achieved by all groups to demonstrate their competence in youth work.

Target

Clubs and projects engaged in youth work with young people in the voluntary and local authority sectors.

How the system works

QM is a portfolio based self assessment tool. The scheme is made up of 11 Quality Areas divided into three phases. Phase One (the basic level demonstrating that the group meets all legal requirements and has some fundamental elements of good practice); Phase Two (for groups who have made a significant effort to develop policies, procedures and practices; and Phase Three (for groups that have adopted a strategic approach to the development of youth work provision. The 11 Quality Areas are:

1. Young Person Centred Service	5. Staff	9. Administration
2. Youthwork Outcomes	6. Premises	10. Community Involvement
3. Protection of Young People	7. Resources	11. Quality Policy
4. Equal Opportunities and Access	8. Management	

Achieving the award

The minimum that must be completed to gain accreditation under the QM scheme is achievement of all of the Quality Areas at Phase One level. Familiarisation training is provided and clubs can also access support from their regional affiliation, umbrella organisation or the QM team at CYP. When the evidence has been gathered, it is submitted to the mentor who establishes an assessment panel. If the evidence is complete the panel will recommend the issue of certificates of accreditation for the relevant Phase. If the evidence is not complete then an action plan will be formulated to allow the group to complete their evidence. CYP moderates a sample of all submissions.

Timescale and cost

There is no set timescale, but Phase One can be completed within three months. Groups can then move to Phases Two and Three but there is no requirement to do so.

Affiliated clubs: Quality Mark manual £25. Training, support and moderation free.

Non-affiliated clubs: Quality Mark manual £50. Training and moderation costs individually tailored.

Further information

Development Manager: sandie.davis@clubsforyoungpeople.org.uk

NSPCC

Staying Safe Commitment Scheme: Protecting children and young people in organisations

Firstcheck: A step-by-step guide for organisations to safeguard children.

This contains nine standards (the Safetycheck standards) which define best practice for any organisation wanting to ensure it is providing an environment in which children and young people are safeguarded.

Aims and focus

The Staying Safe Commitment Scheme has been designed to assist organisations who want to ensure they are safeguarding children effectively. The Scheme is underpinned by the NSPCC Safetycheck standards designed to enable organisations to safeguard and protect children and also to allow that work to be measured. The Scheme offers recognition and support to organisations that have taken steps to introduce measures to protect children and young people from harm and abuse.

Firstcheck is a written guide containing advice on developing good child protection practice within an organisational context. It will help organisations that are seeking to put measures in place to prevent abuse and protect children; and it promotes best safeguarding practice in all areas of work with children and young people.

Target

Commercial and voluntary sector organisations in England and Wales, clubs and groups that provide activities or services for children and young people including recreational, creative, leisure or vocational activities; faith based activities; after-school and play schemes.

How the system works

All organisations who register on the Staying Safe Commitment Scheme receive a copy of Firstcheck. This is a guide to implementing the nine Safetycheck standards. It allows organisations to measure themselves against the standards and it contains useful information and templates for safeguarding. The nine standards cover the following areas:

Child protection policy	Codes of practice and behaviour	Education and training
Procedures and systems	Equality and inclusion	Access to advice and support
Prevention	Communication	Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

These standards provide a benchmark for good practice and when implemented will help to make organisations safe for children, young people, staff and volunteers.

Organisations, including those registered on the Staying Safe Commitment Scheme, can purchase additional consultancy or training if they so require.

Achieving the award

NSPCC awards a Certificate of Recognition to organisations that meet the Staying Safe Commitment Scheme requirements. To receive the Certificate organisations must be able to demonstrate that they have: completed a self-assessment against the Safetycheck standards and developed a safeguarding action plan; identified someone in the organisation to take responsibility for child protection issues; prepared a child protection policy statement and procedures for taking action when there are child protection concerns; and taken out public liability insurance with no exclusions for child abuse.

Timescale and cost

Staying Safe Commitment Scheme

Commercial £250 + VAT

VCS £195 + VAT

Voluntary organisations employing less than five full-time staff £125 + VAT

Firstcheck: A step-by-step guide for organisations to safeguard children £20

Safetycheck (standards only) £5.00

Further information:

Staying Safe Commitment Scheme – Tel: 0116 234 7276

Firstcheck – go to http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/trainingandconsultancy/Consultancy/SupportingProductsAndResources/firstcheck_wda47873.html

Safetycheck – go to http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/trainingandconsultancy/Consultancy/SupportingProductsAndResources/safetycheck_wda47794.html

The NYA Quality Mark: Towards better services for young people (The National Youth Agency)

Aims and focus

The NYA Quality Mark has been designed as a management tool to support an organisation's development and improvement of its quality management systems. It enables organisations to check their monitoring and reviewing procedures, and use management information to improve the quality and outcomes of their work.

Target

The NYA Quality Mark is targeted at organisations working with or providing services for young people across the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors. This includes local authority and third sector organisations contributing to integrated youth support, as well as those organisations working at regional or national level.

How the system works

The NYA Quality Mark is a self-assessment framework across three levels: Emerging, Aspiring and Established. These levels assist organisations to gauge their current performance and use The NYA Quality Mark as a tool for planning and continual improvement. There are 33 Indicators linked to 11 Standards in the framework. The Standards are:

• Performance Management	• Personal and Social Development
• Management Information	• Involving Children and Young People
• Quality Assurance	• Workforce Development
• Equality and Diversity	• Partnerships
• Curriculum/Programme of Work	• Resources
• Legal Requirements	

Achieving the award

The NYA Quality Mark is a developmental tool that is also a national award. Organisations seeking accreditation of The NYA Quality Mark National Award must have achieved an 'Established' score in each of the 11 Standards. The organisation must register with The National Youth Agency, prepare a self-assessment in line with national guidelines, and be assessed by an NYA Quality Mark consultant. The consultant's report and recommendation (based on the evidence and visit to the organisation) is forwarded to The NYA Quality Standards Committee for consideration and then onto The NYA Board for a final decision.

Timescale and cost

Subscription to self-assessment framework for one year: Local authority/National voluntary youth organisation £125 + VAT.

Local voluntary youth organisation £75 + VAT Cost for National Award varies according to size of voluntary organisation or local authority. Between £1,300 – £3,950 + VAT.

Further information

Go to www.nya.org.uk/Templates/internal.asp?NodeID=90871&ParentNodeID=89164

Raising the Standards

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