

Finding The Right Quality System For A Social Enterprise

One of the key aspects of demonstrating that your social enterprise is fit for purpose is to implement a **quality system**. Not only is having a quality system often a **compulsory** requirement when tendering for public sector contracts, but it is a way of improving how **efficiently** your social enterprise operates.

There are a **range** of quality systems and organisational standards that broadly look at **internal processes** of your organisation i.e. communications, clients, customer journeys and delivery. However, each quality standard will focus on a **specific area**.

You may need to use a **professional consultant** to implement specific quality systems. However, you can start by putting into practice some of the systems to **save costs** and prepare you for full implementation.

Why do you need a Quality System?

A quality system provides a number of benefits:

For funding bodies

- A means of evidencing for funding organisations
- Proving you meet the needs of beneficiaries

For commissioners

- A means of evidencing for commissioners
- Proving you meet the needs of customers

For your enterprise

- Increases your ability to win contracts from the public sector. The majority of public sector organisations will require a quality system or evidence that you are working towards implementing one. Some may be specific about which system they require.
- Improves customer loyalty
- Improves systems and generates efficiencies leading to synergy in working
- Improves staff morale
- Reduces costs and increases profitability

▶ Examples of Quality Standards

1) Trusted Charity (renamed from PQASSO)

This is a straightforward process allowing you to complete self-assessment for external assessment to achieve the mark. It will inform your business which systems of governance, financial risk management and outcome measurement systems are needed.



Find out more at: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/quality-and-standards/trusted-charity>.

2) Customer First



The Customer First quality standard focusses on building customer relationships, maximising market awareness and developing your people.

Find out more at: <https://www.customerfirst.org/about>.

3) Investors in People (IiP)

This quality standard is designed to improve the performance of a business through improvements to the workforce. An external assessment will award the quality standard.



Find out more at: <https://www.investorsinpeople.com>.

4) Matrix standard

This is applicable to service organisations and involves external and self assessment. It is suitable for businesses which offer support services.



Find out more at: <https://matrixstandard.com>.

5) Customer Service Excellence

This aims to improve the service delivered to customers by helping organisations to focus on their individual needs. It looks at customer insight, the culture of the organisation, information and access, delivery, timeliness and quality of service.



Find out more at: <https://www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com>.

6) International Organisational Standards

ISO is a quality standard that is constantly updated to reflect the changing business environment. Amongst other things, the standard looks at customer focus, motivation and continuous improvement.



Find out more at: <https://www.iso.org/home.html>.

7) Care Quality Commission (CQC)

This is applicable to health and social care providers which is a hybrid of legislation and quality standard. It is given using an inspection.



Find out more at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk>.

Advantages and Disadvantages of each System

Standard	Advantages	Disadvantages
Trusted Charity	Engage whole organisation Self-assessment	Third sector focus
Customer First	Customer driven External focus	Costly / time consuming Two years longevity
lIP	Staff morale Recognised	Costly / time consuming Maximum three years longevity
Matrix Standard	Well known Good focus	No costs indication Max three years longevity
Customer Service Excellence	Free on-line assessment tool Easy self-assessment	No costs available Very basic system
ISO	Competitive advantage Potential for increased profitability	Quite expensive Significant time and administration required
CQC	Everything you need Covers legislation for health and social care	Costly Time consuming

Top Tips

- Talk to other organisations
- Embed the system with new employees
- Get the support of your board and senior management team
- Look upon it as a benefit
- Create a working group
- SMART objectives (these are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound)
- Do not assume that funding organisations / commissioners are looking for the top level of any system – talk to them about their requirements
- Consider the cost
- Look at the long-term benefits to the business

Where to go for further help

- Care Quality Commission www.cqc.org.uk
- Customer Service Excellence <http://www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com/>
- International Organisation for Standardisation www.iso.org
- Investors in People www.investorsinpeople.co.uk
- Government Website www.gov.uk
- Matrix standard www.matrixstandard.com
- NCVO – third sector business support <https://www.ncvo.org.uk>
- Social Enterprise UK <https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk>
- Social Enterprise Yorkshire & Humber <https://seyh.org.uk>
- Social Value UK – member-led social enterprise impact management <http://www.socialvalueuk.org>

