

Guidance Sheet

Human Resources Quality Standards

What are the benefits of quality standards?

Quality standards, particularly those around HR, demonstrate to your own staff and others that you are a good employer, and help you to recruit and retain employees and volunteers. Quality standards, some to a greater degree than others, demonstrate your corporate social responsibility. They will help you to adhere to legislation and best practices, help you to reduce sickness levels and increase productivity. Quality standards indicate a minimum level at which your organisation is operating in various business and social areas. This is attractive to funders, buyers, customers, prospective employees and volunteers.

Some of the standards and commitments...

Investor in People

The Investors in People standard provides a framework that helps organisations to improve performance and realise objectives through the effective management and development of their people.

The Investors in People Standard is based on three key principles:

Plan – Developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation

Do – Taking action to improve the performance of the organisation

Review – Evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation.

Payroll Giving Quality Mark

The Payroll Giving Award is a new scheme that recognises and rewards charities and businesses of all sizes for making Payroll Giving available to their staff. The quality standard comprises a certificate and logo, as well as Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. The Bronze level is awarded to employers that achieve 1% employee participation in Payroll Giving; the Silver Award is awarded to employers that achieve 5%; and the Gold Award is awarded to employers that achieve 10% Payroll Giving and pay the administration charge, match donations **or** have promoted Payroll Giving during the previous year.

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Mindful Employer

The Mindful Employer quality standard is an award that recognises employers who are positive about mental health. The Mindful Employer initiative is led and supported by employers and is aimed at increasing awareness of mental health at work and providing support for businesses in recruiting and retaining staff.

As a Mindful Employer, you will recognise that:

- ◆ People who have mental health issues may have experienced discrimination in recruitment and selection procedures. This may discourage them from seeking employment.
- ◆ Whilst some people will acknowledge their experiences of mental health issues in a frank and open way, others fear that stigma will jeopardise their chances of getting a job.
- ◆ Given appropriate support, the vast majority of people who have experienced mental ill health continue to work successfully as do many with on-going issues.

Employers will aim to:

- ◆ Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues. This will include positive statements in recruitment literature.
- ◆ Ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act, and given appropriate interview skills.
- ◆ Make it clear in any recruitment or occupational health check that people who have experienced mental health issues will not be discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment.
- ◆ Not make assumptions that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress or take more time off than any other employee or job applicant.
- ◆ Provide non-judgmental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health issues.
- ◆ Ensure all line managers have information and training about managing mental health in the workplace.

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Positive about Disability

The Positive about Disability quality mark is an award that recognises employers who are positive about disability. As a Positive about Disability employer you will:

- ◆ Interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum (essential) criteria for the post.
- ◆ Ensure a mechanism is in place to discuss, at least once a year, with disabled employees what improvements can be made to ensure that they can develop and make best use of their abilities.
- ◆ Make every effort to ensure that when an employee becomes disabled, they can stay in employment.
- ◆ Take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to ensure that all commitments work.
- ◆ Conduct an annual review of what has been achieved and plan ways to improve on them. This is reported to the Department for Work and Pensions.

Breastfeeding Friendly Award (available at through VAB)

The Breastfeeding Friendly Award is a quality mark that recognises employers who are positive about breastfeeding and making breastfeeding mothers welcome in their work places. As part of the Breastfeeding Friendly Award, employers and their staff will:

- ◆ Adopt the Breastfeeding Friendly Policy.
- ◆ Agree and adhere to the best practice requirements in relation to being breastfeeding friendly.
- ◆ Attend Breastfeeding Awareness training and participate in the related workshops.
- ◆ Display the breastfeeding friendly welcome stickers on their premises.
- ◆ Pass a final assessment and further annual assessments to maintain the Award.

The Government issued a Green Paper in June 2007 consulting on its proposals, one of which is to give women the legal right to breastfeed in public. Working towards a standard such as the Breastfeeding Friendly Award will assist your organisation to meet the legal requirement should such proposals be introduced.

If your organisation is interested in working towards the Breastfeeding Friendly Award, or would like to find out more about it please contact the team on 01226 242726

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Work Wise Standard

The Work Wise Standard is a mark of excellence, which assesses the effectiveness and deployment of flexible and remote working practices within the UK workforce.

Specifically, organisations will be asked to provide evidence of working practices which will be subject to evaluation by a Work Wise Assessor.

Assessment is on a three year rolling programme and will guide the organisation to plan further improvements. This will be supported by feedback from staff on the degrees of flexibility that exist within their workplace.

Specifically, organisations will have to demonstrate how smarter working practices impact on:

- ◆ Operational benefits
- ◆ Client benefits
- ◆ Employee benefits
- ◆ Change management
- ◆ Legal aspects
- ◆ Transport and environment
- ◆ Healthy Workplace

This is a non-exhaustive list of HR quality standards. If you would like to find out more about other standards which could benefit your organisation, or would like to discuss your needs further, please contact Voluntary Action Barnsley on 01226 242726 or [e-mail: info@vabarnsley.org.uk](mailto:info@vabarnsley.org.uk)

