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The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales: Introduction and guidance

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The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales: Introduction and guidance

Audience

Organisations providing youth work provision within Wales.

Overview

This document contains guidance on how to use the quality standards, indicators and grade descriptors for the three levels of the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales. It also includes guidance on completing a self-assessment.

Action required

Organisations should refer to this document when using the quality standards as a tool for improving the quality and impact of their youth work provision, and when developing a self-assessment and associated evidence in order to apply for the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales.

Further information

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Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at

www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youth-work/quality-mark/?lang=en

Related documents

The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales: Bronze Level (2015)

The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales: Silver Level (2015)

The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales: Gold Level (2015)

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Ministerial foreword



To support our young people to improve their life chances, high quality youth work has a crucial role to play. Our National Youth Work Strategy for Wales recognises the value of quality youth work provision and includes a commitment to developing a Quality Mark for youth work organisations, to clearly define quality youth work provision. Together, we have developed The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales.

This Quality Mark will support youth work organisations to challenge their practice. It will drive up quality youth work provision. It will support the development of a more consistent youth work offer across Wales to young people and it will support services to build confidence in each other.

We believe by strengthening the quality of youth work, we can ensure that all of our young people have the opportunities and support they need to succeed.

We wish to thank all those that have taken the time to engage and share their views on the development of this quality mark.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huw Lewis".

Huw Lewis AM
Minister for Education and Skills

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James".

Julie James AM
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology

Introduction

Welcome to the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales, a unique tool for self-assessment, planning improvement and gaining a Quality Mark for youth work. The Quality Mark consists of two distinct elements;

1. a set of Quality Standards that youth work organisations can use as a tool for self-assessment and improvement; and
2. an externally assessed Quality Mark that is a national award demonstrating an organisation's excellence.

It is intended to assist the wide variety of organisations that deliver youth work to demonstrate and celebrate the excellence of their work with young people. It is hoped that youth work organisations will embrace the opportunity to gain this Quality Mark; a Quality Mark which demonstrates quality youth work provision available for young people and provision which supports young people to reach their full potential. It will also provide organisations with an external validation of the quality and impact of their youth work.

The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales has been developed with input from a wide range of representatives from voluntary and statutory organisations that support or directly deliver youth work. It draws on the English National Youth Agency's (NYA) Quality Mark for young people's services, and builds on the quality marks developed by the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) and Education and Training Standards Wales (ETS) to ensure that it fits with the context of youth work in Wales and can be used by a wide range of organisations.

CWVYS developed and implemented a Quality Mark for Workforce Development which voluntary organisations are using to highlight the quality of their arrangements for professional development. The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales aims to complement the CWVYS Workforce Development Quality Mark, and acknowledges the considerable amount of time and effort required to develop a portfolio of evidence and achieve the CWVYS Quality Mark. Therefore, any organisation that has successfully undertaken the CWVYS Quality Mark (in the past three years), will be assessed as having achieved a *'good practice'* grade for the Workforce Development standard in the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales, Silver Level.

Similarly, it is acknowledged that some organisations were externally assessed or prepared evidence for the ETS Draft Quality Mark. It is likely that much of the evidence generated for this process could be used to demonstrate good practice for the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales. It is strongly recommended that organisations who have prepared for or achieved the CWVYS Quality Mark for Workforce Development or the ETS Draft Quality Mark, review their evidence in the light of the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales.

Throughout this document, 'The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales' will be referred to as 'The Quality Mark' for simplicity.

Context and background

The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18 states that;

“High-quality youth work has a crucial role to play supporting many young people to achieve their full potential. Through informal and non-formal educational approaches, effective youth work practice builds the capacity and resilience of young people and can change young people’s lives for the better. Through participation in youth work young people gain confidence and competence, develop self-assurance and have the opportunity to establish high expectations and aspirations for themselves.”¹

Youth work in Wales has a long history of working to support young people to reach their full potential. Its contribution to national and local priorities for young people is recognised by the Welsh Government and local authorities. In recent years youth work in Wales has been shaped by a series of documents such as the Learning and Skills Act 2000; Extending Entitlement: support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales – Direction and Guidance (2002); National Standards for Young People’s Participation (2007); Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (2013); Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (2013) and most recently, the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018 (2014). The consultation processes used to develop these documents encouraged dialogue about youth work that promoted clarity about its purpose and principles. The result of this is a professionally confident youth work sector who work to a common definition of the purpose of youth work.

In February 2014 the Welsh Government published the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018. One of the main aims of the strategy is to elevate the status of youth work as both a service and a profession. The strategy recognises that youth work supports young people to achieve improved outcomes and contributes to national priorities. However, it acknowledges that more needs to be done to evidence the contribution of youth work to Government priorities, in a robust and systematic way. The Quality Mark is one way to support individual organisations and the sector as a whole to demonstrate the quality and impact of their work with young people.

The Youth Work Strategy includes the action to develop a quality mark suitable for both the statutory and voluntary youth work sector. The main purpose of a quality mark for youth work is defined as being, *“to challenge services, drive up quality youth work*

¹ The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youth-work/national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales/?lang=en>. <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales/?lang=en>

provision, support the development of a more consistent youth work offer across Wales and build confidence between services.”² A quality mark that provides robust independent external assessments of the quality and performance of organisations that deliver youth work, is an important element in improving consistency, quality and providing evidence of the impact and cost effectiveness of youth work interventions.

² The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youth-work/national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales/?lang=en>

The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

The Quality Mark consists of two distinct elements;

- **Quality Standards for Youth Work;** a set of Quality Standards that organisations can use to self-assess the quality and impact of their work with young people and develop plans for improvement.
- **A Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales;** a nationally recognised quality award that organisations can apply for through developing a self-assessment and associated evidence, which is then externally assessed.

The structure

The Quality Mark is made up of three Levels; Bronze, Silver and Gold. Within each level there are four Quality Standards. Within each Quality Standard there are three associated Indicators. Organisations are required to provide evidence to support each indicator. The Quality Standards in each of the levels are listed below.

Level	Quality Standards	Focus
Bronze	1.1 Performance management	The management of performance within an overall vision for youth work and the organisation's contribution to national and local policies and priorities for young people.
	1.2 Quality of youth work practice	The quality of face to face work including building relationships with young people and involving them in planning and evaluating challenging activities that capture their enthusiasm and promote their social and personal development.
	1.3 Young people's learning and development	The organisation's effectiveness in enabling young people to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding, facilitating their personal and social development and supporting them to transfer the learning gained from youth work experiences to other aspects of their lives.
	1.4 Legal requirements	The implementation of policies and guidelines that ensure the organisation meets legal requirements, in particular for providing a safe and healthy working environment for young people and youth workers.

Silver	2.1 Involving young people	The quality of young people's participation and changes and improvement as a result of young people's feedback and involvement in decision making.
	2.2 Curriculum	The effectiveness of the organisation's curriculum in supporting the delivery of informal and non-formal learning opportunities that match its aims and objectives, meet the needs of young people and contribute to improving their outcomes and life chances.
	2.3 Equality and diversity	The impact of the organisation's policies and practice on improving take up and participation of all young people and enabling them to extend their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity.
	2.4 Workforce development	The impact of workforce development on improving the quality of youth work practice.
Gold	3.1 Recognising young people's achievement and progress	The organisation's effectiveness in recording and, where appropriate, accrediting young people's learning and progress and capturing how this makes an impact on improving outcomes.
	3.2 Management information	The collection and analysis of management information to plan, deliver, evaluate and demonstrate the organisation's cost effectiveness and value for money.
	3.3 Partnerships	The quality of partnership working and its impact on improving the range of services and facilities available to young people.
	3.4 Resources	The organisation's effectiveness in ensuring that resources are targeted to meet young people's needs and achieve organisational priorities.

Why are there three levels?

The rationale for structuring The Quality Mark into three levels is to provide scope for it to be used by a wide range of organisations of varying sizes. Each of the three levels builds on the evidence presented in the previous level(s).

- **Bronze** focuses on the building blocks for high quality youth work.
- **Silver** focuses on ensuring that youth work recognises and promotes equality and diversity, is planned to meet young people's needs, makes an impact on their outcomes, is delivered by an appropriately qualified workforce and involves young people in decision making.
- **Gold** focuses on the use of management information and resources in demonstrating cost effectiveness, the quality of partnership working and the celebration of young people's achievements and progress.

Each of the levels and the associated Quality Standards and Indicators has an emphasis on the quality and impact of the organisation's work with young people; the Gold Level goes further and encourages organisations to demonstrate how well they assess their cost effectiveness and value for money.

Who can use the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales?

The Quality Mark can be used by any organisation that delivers youth work. The Youth Work National Occupational Standards (2012) states that the key purpose of youth work is to:

*"...enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential."*³

Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (2013) defines youth work as being:

*"...based primarily on a voluntary relationship between young people and youth workers. The Youth Service is a universal entitlement, open to all young people within the specified age range, 11-25."*⁴

³ LSI YW00 Youth Work Occupational National Standards 2012: <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/publications-lifelong-learning-leisure-and-information/youth-work-nos/>

The Quality Mark can be used by any organisation whose work with young people fits with the key purpose and definitions of youth work above. The Quality Mark takes into account the wide range of organisations that deliver youth work in Wales and recognises that youth work is delivered in a wide variety of settings and contexts. It acknowledges that many organisations also work with children from the age of 5 and continue to work with young adults beyond the age of 25. Where this is the case, the external assessment process for The Quality Mark will focus on their work with young people aged between 11 and 25. The Quality Mark seeks to embrace the diversity of structures and arrangements for delivering youth work rather than asserting a single model. It encourages organisations to demonstrate the effectiveness of their unique models for delivery; by providing evidence of how they assess young people's needs; how they develop, provide or commission youth work to meet those needs; and how they assess and demonstrate their quality, impact and value for money.

The benefits of using The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

There are a wide variety of benefits from using The Quality Mark.

The Quality Standards can be used as a tool for development and improvement. The standards can support an organisation to:

- identify its overall strengths and areas for development against a set of nationally recognised Quality Standards;
- generate plans for improvement;
- ensure they are offering high quality provision for young people;
- use specific standards and/or indicators to improve the parts of their performance they know to be weaker than others;
- highlight the importance of quality assurance with stakeholders including staff, young people, trustees and local councillors; and
- make informed judgements about how well they are doing in comparison with other providers.

⁴ *Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes* (2013): <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/publications-lifelong-learning-leisure-and-information/youth-work-in-wales-principles-and-purposes-january-2013/>.

The Quality Mark is a badge of excellence and enables the organisation to;

- engage in an external assessment process;
- gain The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales;
- assure young people, their parents and guardians, funders, partner organisations and other stakeholders that they provide high quality youth work;
- demonstrate their readiness to receive grant-aid or be commissioned to provide high quality youth work; and
- inform grant awarding and commissioning processes; for example a grant awarding body might want to specify the achievement of the Quality Mark or specific levels within it as prerequisites for applying for funding or tendering for the delivery of youth work.

The Quality Mark is unique in that rather than seeking to assert criteria for what must be provided it looks at how an organisation's quality systems determine what should be provided locally and how impact is assessed and demonstrated. Used creatively, the process of identifying evidence can bring staff, trustees, young people and other stakeholders in an organisation together to focus on the quality and impact of their youth work. This in turn, enables the organisation to identify its strengths and areas for development and ensures that what is provided meets young people's needs. Through the process of action planning the organisation can improve;

- the way it works with young people;
- how it gathers evidence of its quality;
- impact on improving young people's outcomes;
- contribution to achieving national and local priorities; and
- value for money.

At a time where resources for public services are reducing, sound evidence of impact and cost effectiveness is increasingly important to guide local and national decisions about investing in youth work.

How the Quality Mark for youth Work in Wales differs from other quality standards and awards

There are a wide range of quality marks and quality standards that apply to work with young people. There are specific quality standards and awards for; sports clubs; advice, information and guidance; health and safety; and safeguarding. There are sector specific quality standards and awards for example; Practical Quality Systems for Small Organisations (PQSSO) and the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) Quality Award are both aimed at voluntary and community organisations. There are also national quality standards and awards for that apply to a wide range of organisations such as; Investors in People (IiP) a nationally recognised framework and accreditation process that helps organisations to improve their performance through effective management and development of their people; and ISO 9001 that provides a set of standards and certification for an organisation's quality systems. In addition, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) manages Investing in Volunteers, a scheme for accrediting the quality of an organisation's work with its volunteers.

The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales differs from all these quality standards and awards in that it has been specifically developed for the Welsh youth work sector with input from representatives from a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations. It takes account of the Welsh context for youth work and encourages organisations to demonstrate how their work contributes to the achievement of local and national strategies and priorities for young people.

Applying for the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

Some organisations might chose to use the Quality Standards as an improvement tool, whilst others will want to apply for The Quality Mark. Organisations that wish to apply for The Quality Mark, an externally assessed nationally recognised award for excellence in youth work, must register with the Awarding Body⁵.

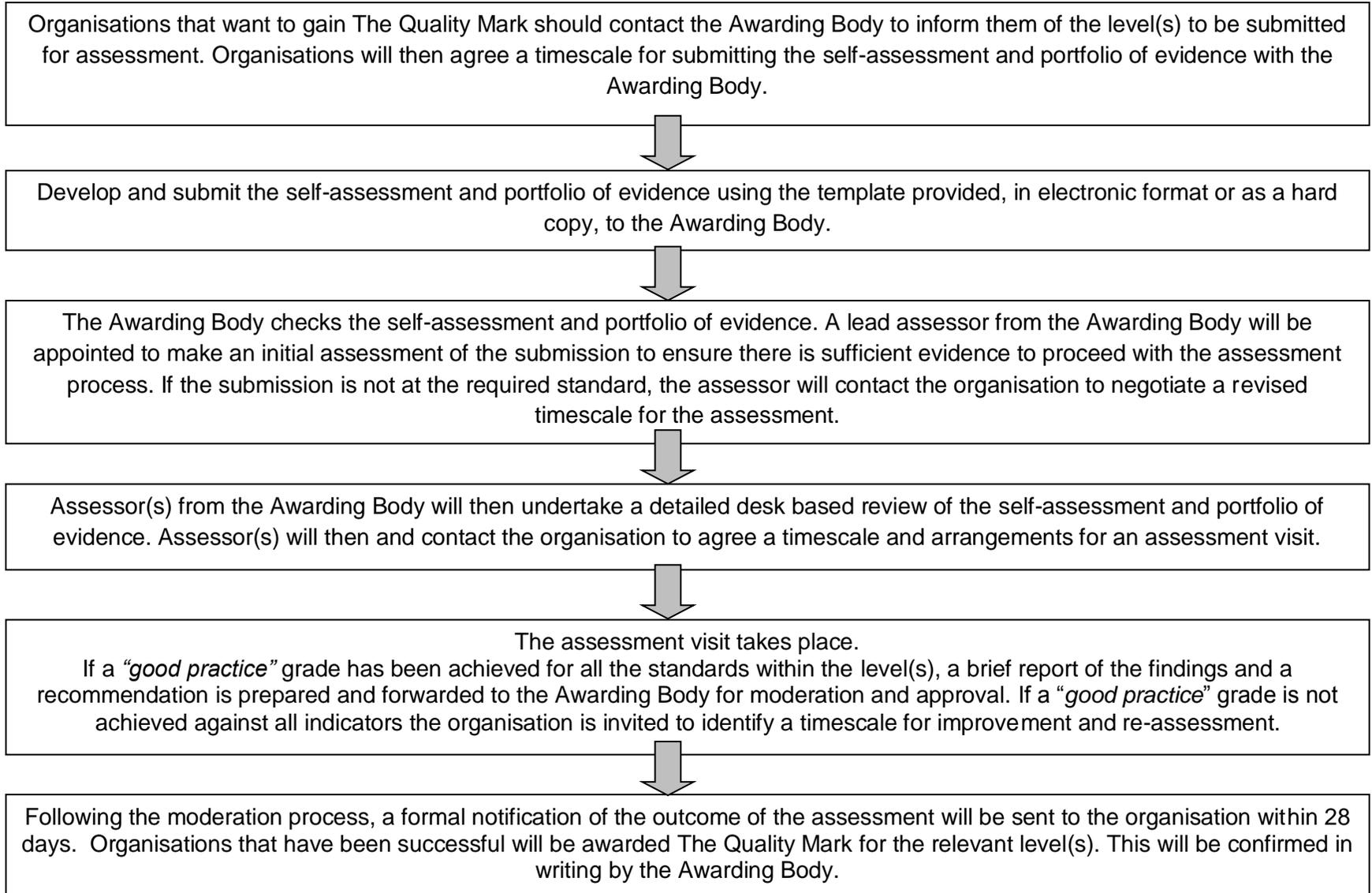
The three Quality Mark levels are intended to be undertaken in sequence; the Bronze Level, followed by the Silver Level and then the Gold Level. Smaller organisations may choose to undertake the Bronze Level only, as this would provide evidence that their work is underpinned by a sound range of policies, and enables young people to learn and develop personal and social skills. A Quality Mark will be awarded for each level that the organisation successfully completes. So, for example, an organisation that achieves the Bronze Level will be awarded a Bronze Quality Mark.

In order to gain The Quality Mark at any level, an organisation must submit a self-assessment against the standards, supported by a portfolio of evidence. A self-assessment template is included as an annexe to each level. The self-assessment and portfolio of evidence is then externally assessed by the Awarding Body. Organisations can chose to complete a self-assessment and portfolio of evidence for all three levels or undertake one level at a time.

In order to maintain the reputation and the high standards in The Quality Mark, only those organisations that successfully achieve the externally assessed Quality Mark will be invited use it in their promotional material.

⁵ The Awarding Body will be confirmed in spring 2016.

Overview of the application and assessment process



How to apply for the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

Organisations should:

1. Register their intention to make a submission to the Awarding Body and provide details of the likely timescale for submission.
2. Complete the self-assessment template and prepare a portfolio of evidence in electronic format or in hard copy.
3. The self-assessment and portfolio of evidence should be sent to the Awarding Body.
4. The Awarding Body will then assign a lead assessor for the assessment process.

Organisations may apply for The Quality Mark through the medium of Welsh or English.

Completing the self-assessment template and preparing a portfolio of evidence

The self-assessment process provides organisations with an opportunity to review the way they work and identify evidence of what they do well and where they could improve. It is important for organisations to understand the scale of this task and to allocate sufficient resources to complete the self-assessment and prepare the portfolio of evidence. Trustees and/or senior officers should be aware of the resource needed and should commit to providing strategic support. It is recommended that a nominated individual takes overall responsibility for leading the collation of evidence for the portfolio, completing the self-assessment template and for applying for The Quality Mark. Larger organisations might find it useful to set up a working group of people who can lead on specific areas.

Templates for self-assessment are provided for each Level (Bronze, Silver, Gold). When completing the self-assessment templates organisations must:

- Describe and evidence how each indicator has been met.
- Submit succinct evidence that clearly demonstrates how it links to the indicator.
- Include details of any learning and plans for improvement identified during the self-assessment process.
- Provide a self-assessed grade for each of the indicators (Good practice/ Some development needed/ Considerable development needed).
- Demonstrate a *good practice* grade.

Grade descriptors

The Quality Mark is made up of 12 Quality Standards. Each standard has three associated indicators. To help organisations develop an accurate self-assessment, grade descriptors are provided for each indicator. The grade descriptors are intended to assist organisations make a judgement about their current level of performance. The grade descriptors are:

- **Good practice** - There is good overall performance in this area. Policies and plans are up-to-date and consistently implemented. There are effective working arrangements that benefit young people.
- **Some development needed** - Policies and plans are generally appropriate, although practice is not always consistent and some young people do not receive the same quality of service as others. Some gaps exist, which managers/leaders plan to address.
- **Considerable development needed** - Policies are not widely understood or consistently implemented. Plans and working arrangements are generally weak, adversely affecting the quality of service offered to young people.

To be eligible for The Quality Mark an organisation must complete a self-assessment with a portfolio of evidence and participate in an external assessment process to demonstrate that a '*good practice*' grade has been achieved for each indicator within the level for which they are applying.

Developing a portfolio of evidence

Within each Quality Mark standard there is a list of suggested evidence. These lists are not exhaustive and are only intended to provide a guide. Organisations are encouraged to be creative and to identify the evidence that best demonstrates their quality and performance. The amount of evidence submitted within the portfolio of evidence may vary according to the size of the organisation. The portfolio of evidence should begin with a brief introduction about the organisation including its size, key priorities, and the make-up of the community it operates within.

All documents that have been referred to in the self-assessment narrative should be included in a portfolio of evidence. Organisations should note that a piece of evidence may be relevant to more than one indicator.

Evidence should come from a range of sources and should be:

- **Reliable** - strong and robust; the evidence is dependable and it comes from a trusted source. Cross-checking with other evidence provides the same or similar results.
- **Valid** - directly relevant to the indicator and have been generated within a timescale that is appropriate, from 6 to 24 months.
- **Sufficient** – it should provide enough information upon which to base a sound judgement.

Confidentiality

The self-assessment process is intended to be confidential. All information provided to the Awarding Body will be kept confidential except where there is potential for harm to an individual or a group of people or evidence of misconduct.

Organisations should take steps to ensure that their evidence complies with their own data protection policy.

Tips for the self-assessment process

The following points should help organisations to complete their self-assessment:

- Organisations should use the self-assessment process as an opportunity to highlight and celebrate what they do well. This is an opportunity for the organisation to celebrate and provide evidence of the quality of their work with young people.
- The narrative for each indicator should be used to describe the organisation's policies, processes and practice. It is important to 'tell the story' about how the organisation meets each indicator and provide evidence that demonstrates the 'good practice' grade.
- It is helpful to think clearly and systematically about what should be the first piece of evidence in each indicator. This will probably be a policy, strategy or guidelines that describe the context and arrangements for implementation.
- It is important to provide evidence from a range of projects so that the self-assessment provides a full picture of the organisation's work with young people. Where an organisation is involved in the delivering a wide range of youth work, there is an expectation that evidence will be provided from open access provision and targeted youth work.
- Any evidence referenced in the narrative should be underlined and provided in either an electronic file or hard copy. For example an organisation's annual plan would be useful evidence for the standard on 'Performance Management'. Part of the narrative might say, "The Annual Plan with performance targets demonstrates one way in which we measure impact and effectiveness. The Quarterly Reports provide evidence of a systematic process for monitoring and reviewing performance." In this case, the Annual Plan and Quarterly Reports should be provided as supporting evidence.
- It is important to provide evidence of how performance is monitored and reviewed. Most organisations have processes for monitoring and reviewing their performance and should be able to provide evidence of how these processes are implemented; for example, minutes of team meetings where performance is reviewed, regular performance reports, notes from supervision meetings where performance is discussed.

- In order for the self-assessment to be more than a “snapshot” taken at a particular point in time, the narrative and supporting evidence should identify any on-going or planned improvements that arise out of routine monitoring, evaluation or undertaking the self-assessment process for the Quality Mark.
- It is important to identify evidence that demonstrates impact. This evidence might be provided in a variety of ways; for example, numerical data; case studies; young people’s evaluation of their learning; and evidence of how engaging in youth work has improved young people’s outcomes and/or life chances.
- Avoid presenting raw data; the self-assessment should provide evidence of how data has been analysed, what this analysis indicates and how it is used to inform plans for improvement. For example, when providing evidence for the standard on *Recognising and celebrating young people’s achievement and progress*, an organisation might submit data on the number of young people that take up opportunities to have their learning accredited. The commentary should identify trends in this data; this might be an increase or decrease in the number of young people involved in accredited learning. It should also identify the reasons for this change. It might be that numbers are rising because staff are promoting these opportunities more effectively or because young people find qualifications useful in applying for education, training or employment.
- When using documents as evidence, it is useful to reference specific sections or pages within the narrative. If an electronic portfolio is submitted, where possible hyperlinks to the evidence should be included. This makes the task of reviewing the evidence much easier for an assessor from the Awarding Body.
- It is very important to include direct evidence from young people; for example evidence of their engagement in planning and evaluation, their views on what they’ve learnt, their feedback or case studies. Often this is the evidence youth workers gather on flipcharts, in photographic displays or on feedback sheets. It can be provided either in; electronic form, hard copy and through focus groups during the assessment visit. Remember, young people often provide the best evidence.
- Ensure that when an acronym is used the full name or term is provided on its first use or include a glossary.
- Provide full contact details for the person within the organisation leading on The Quality Mark.
- It is important to remember that a small number of well chosen documents demonstrating that the organisation has achieved a ‘*good practice*’ grade will be more helpful than piles of information that partly address the evidence requirements.

- Remember that assessment is less about the volume of evidence and more about good evidence which clearly demonstrates a *'good practice'* grade for each indicator.

Preparing for the assessment visit

Once the Awarding Body receives the completed self-assessment template and portfolio of evidence a lead assessor will be appointed to undertake an initial assessment of the submission. The number of assessors appointed will depend on the size of the organisation and the amount of evidence submitted, and will be decided by the Awarding Body. At this stage the lead assessor may seek further clarification and request further evidence. It is possible that the lead assessor may find that the self-assessment does not indicate a *'good practice'* grade. In this case they will contact the organisation to negotiate a revised timescale for the assessment.

If the submission meets the required standard for a *'good practice'* grade, the lead assessor will contact the organisation to agree a timescale for the assessment visit, clarify arrangements for any additional evidence that should be available during the visit and confirm who they will need to meet. The assessment visit will usually take a day for each level of The Quality Mark that is being assessed. Depending on the level that is being assessed the lead assessor may wish to arrange meetings with the following stakeholders:

- The head of the organisation or service.
- Senior managers.
- Trustees, management committees or in the case of a local authority, elected members.
- A range of staff from different levels and with varying roles.
- Young people.
- Partners.
- Stakeholders that the organisation considers useful for an assessor to meet.

The final list of stakeholders will be discussed and agreed between the lead assessor and the organisation.

The lead person or group of people who have worked on preparing the self-assessment from the organisation should be available for the assessment visit to answer queries about locating evidence, interpreting or accessing documents and providing directions for visits to provision. Ideally, a room should be made available to the assessor team with access to the evidence.

The assessment process

This consists of a desk-based review of the organisation's self-assessment and supporting evidence; meetings with stakeholders; and a small number of visits to the organisation's youth work provision. The stages in the assessment process for The Quality Mark are:

1. The lead assessor carries out an initial assessment of the organisation's self-assessment and portfolio of evidence to ensure there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the assessment process. If, at this stage the submission is not at the required standard, the assessor will contact the organisation to negotiate a revised timescale for the assessment.
2. The assessor(s) will carry out an in-depth desk-based review of the organisation's self-assessment and portfolio of evidence to identify where there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate a '*good practice*' grade; identify where further evidence is needed; and to develop a plan for the assessment visit.
3. The lead assessor will contact the organisation to agree a date and a schedule for the assessment visit, clarify any additional evidence that should be available during the visit and confirm who they will need to meet.
4. The assessor(s) will visit the organisation to meet young people, the workforce and other stakeholders, and will visit youth work provision.
5. At the end of the visit the assessor(s) will provide the organisation with brief verbal feedback on the assessment.
6. If a "*good practice*" grade has been achieved for all standards within the level(s), a brief report of the findings and a recommendation is prepared and sent to the Awarding Body for moderation and approval. If a "*good practice*" grade is not achieved against all indicators the organisation is invited to identify a timescale for improvement and re-assessment.
7. The assessment report is moderated by a moderation panel from the Awarding Body. If the moderation panel agrees that the organisation has demonstrated a "*good practice*" grade, The Quality Mark will be awarded.

Assessment feedback

There are three possible outcomes of the visit.

1. **A ‘good practice’ grade has been achieved against all Quality Standards.** This decision is subject to moderation*, approval and ratification by the Awarding Body. A brief assessment report commenting on the indicators and confirming that a ‘good practice’ grade has been achieved will be presented to the Awarding Body for moderation and approval.
2. **The Quality Standard(s) have almost been achieved.** A ‘good practice’ grade has almost been achieved, and with few improvements could be met within a six month timescale. A report detailing the areas for improvement will be sent to the organisation. The lead assessor will invite the organisation to identify a timescale of up to six months to make improvements and for their re-assessment.
3. **Quality Standard(s) have not been achieved.** If the assessment uncovers large gaps in evidence, a report detailing why the Quality Standard(s) have not been achieved, and outlining the areas for improvement, will be sent to the organisation.

*Quarterly, the Awarding Body will convene moderation panels who will approve and ratify assessment reports. If the moderation panel agrees that the organisation has demonstrated a “good practice” grade, The Quality Mark will be awarded. Following the moderation process a formal notification of the outcome of the assessment will be sent to the organisation within 28 days.

Organisations that achieve The Quality Mark for all three levels will be regarded as being a centre of excellence for youth work.

How long does the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales remain valid?

The Quality Mark remains valid for three years. After this time organisations are invited to update their self-assessment and supporting evidence and re-apply for The Quality Mark.

Appeals

If an organisation wishes to appeal against the outcome of the assessment, they must do so in writing within 28 days. The appeal should be addressed to the awarding body and should clearly outline the grounds for the appeal.

An appeals panel will consider the appeal. The appeals panel will be representatives from the Awarding Body and assessors who were not involved with the organisation's assessment process. The organisation will be invited to submit evidence to support their appeal, to the appeals panel and send representatives if required.

The decision of the appeals panel is final and will result in one of the following outcomes:

- Appeal upheld;
- Appeal upheld with conditions;
- Appeal dismissed.

Complaints

If an organisation is not satisfied with any aspect of the way in which an assessment is conducted, they are invited to contact the lead assessor to raise the issue and seek a resolution. If the issue cannot be resolved with the lead assessor the organisation should contact the Awarding Body. The awarding body will work with the organisation and the lead assessor to seek a resolution and to ensure the assessment is conducted in line with the assessment process.

If the complaint cannot be resolved using the above processes, the organisation is invited to write to The Awarding Body within 28 days of the assessment. The Awarding Body will then arrange for the complaint to be formally investigated.

Acknowledgements

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