

GUIDANCE ON PQASSO INDICATORS

LEVEL 1

PQASSO Quality Mark

3rd edition

NCO / **PQASSO**

How to use this document

In order to achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark at level 1, organisations must demonstrate that they have **met** all level 1 indicators across all 12 quality areas. This document provides a guide to **what assessors will be looking for** at the desktop review and site visit stages of the PQASSO Quality Mark assessment. The guidance is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive and recognises that different organisations will provide different types of evidence.

Disclaimer

This document is for use by organisations and assessors during a PQASSO Quality Mark assessment. It is not a definitive interpretation of the PQASSO indicators, but will provide some guidance in understanding them, in preparation for a PQASSO Quality Mark assessment.

The guidance is in 12 sections, following the 12 quality areas of PQASSO. For each quality area the guidance sets out the following:

- **Indicators** - The first column numbers the PQASSO indicators by quality area, level, and indicator number.
- **What assessors will be looking for** – This list is offered as a guide for organisations and assessors to the *key* sources of evidence which assessors will expect to find to demonstrate achievement of the PQASSO level 1 indicators.

People

The term 'people' is used throughout PQASSO and this document. 'People' generally refers to staff and volunteers. Where Board members are to be included in the scope of the indicator, this will be spelt out in the guidance as 'Board members, staff and volunteers.'

Quality area 1: Planning

The organisation has a clear overall purpose, and plans what it will achieve in the next year.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The mission and aims are in line with the objects set out in the governing document.▪ The organisation's mission, values and aims are clear.
1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ People can describe how the organisation consults with users, and how the organisation's services fit with other relevant services.▪ There may be notes of meetings with users.
1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There is a written statement of aims and intended outcomes.▪ People can demonstrate an understanding of the needs on which aims and intended outcomes are based.▪ People can describe some of the needs of minority groups.▪ There may be notes of meetings recording discussions of needs, including needs of minority groups.
1.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Funding applications, bids, tenders and monitoring reports refer to funders' and purchasers' requirements.▪ Relevant staff can describe funders' and purchasers' requirements for particular projects, services or pieces of work.
1.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There is an operational plan for the current year with defined targets for main outputs.▪ People are aware of the operational plan and feel that it is realistic and achievable.
1.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reports to the Board refer to risk.▪ Managers can identify major risks and describe actions planned to minimise and manage these.▪ There may be a documented risk assessment.

1.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe how they monitor progress against plans. ▪ Board minutes show that at least quarterly progress reports against the operational plan are made to the Board.
-------	---

Quality area 2: Governance

The Board meets all its legal and regulatory responsibilities and accounts appropriately to stakeholders. Board members understand their role and act with integrity.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual general meeting minutes show that Board members are appointed, resign or retire in line with the governing document. ▪ The number of Board members and their length of time in office is in line with the governing document. ▪ Board members and relevant staff can demonstrate an understanding of the process for appointing new Board members in line with the governing document.
2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members and relevant staff can describe the induction process for new Board members. ▪ Board members can demonstrate an awareness of the mission, values and aims of the organisation and say why these are important.
2.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members can demonstrate an understanding of their role, responsibilities and powers. ▪ Board members' interests are declared in Board minutes or in a register of interests.
2.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual general meeting minutes and Board minutes show that these meetings are in line with the governing document. ▪ Officers, for example the Chair and Treasurer are familiar with the governing document and can give an overview of how legal requirements are understood and met. ▪ Board members can describe how they inform themselves of and act on changes in the law which may affect the organisation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board minutes and notes of other meetings show how the Board oversees work on quality and risk. Board members can demonstrate an awareness of the organisation's work on quality and how risks are identified.
2.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board minutes show that meetings are regular and quorate in line with the governing document. Board minutes record decisions and agreed actions.
2.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board minutes show discussion and approval of the operational plan and budget. Board members can describe how the organisation reports to stakeholders on outputs and outcomes.
2.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members can describe what responsibilities are delegated to managers. The Chair and managers can describe the sorts of decisions taken at Board and at staff level. Managers have written job descriptions setting out their responsibilities. The governing document or financial procedures include procedures for authorising expenditure.
2.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board minutes show that the Board receives and discusses written reports against the operational plan and budget at least quarterly. There are published annual reports and accounts and Board minutes show that these have been approved by the Board.

Quality area 3: Leadership and management

The organisation has good leadership, promoting effective internal communication and commitment to the organisation's plans. Managers implement legal and statutory requirements and oversee the organisation's progress, development and quality.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
3.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers can give examples of how they provide direction, coaching and support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can give examples of coaching and support they receive from managers.
3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are examples of written communications and records of meetings involving two-way communication between Board members, staff and volunteers. ▪ People can give examples of two-way communications. ▪ Board members confirm two-way communication within the organisation. ▪ Managers can give examples how they encourage initiative and make use of people's diverse strengths.
3.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members, staff and volunteers can demonstrate an understanding of the organisation's purpose and plans and their part in making them happen. ▪ There are records of planning meetings.
3.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe how they find out about and ensure compliance with legal requirements, including those on health and safety, data protection, equal opportunities, disability discrimination, information sharing and the environment. ▪ Managers can show how they ensure that contractual obligations are met. ▪ Published annual accounts show that accounts have been audited or externally examined as required by law. ▪ Up-to-date insurance certificates exist.
3.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe how they generate income and control expenditure in line with the budget. ▪ There are bids, tenders, funding applications or records of other income-generating activities in line with the operational plan.
3.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Memos, circulars, administrative procedures and notes of meetings set out how things are done. ▪ Relevant staff can demonstrate a good understanding of the different stages involved in delivering key activities.
3.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can give examples of how they represent the organisation at external meetings, events and media. ▪ There may be articles or other written promotional materials. ▪ There may be records of talks and presentations to external audiences.
3.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe how they lead work on quality improvement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can identify managers that lead on quality improvement. ▪ There may be notes of meetings, for instance quality working group meetings, which show managers' leading quality improvement activities.
--	---

Quality area 4: User-centred service

The organisation knows who its users are, avoids unfair discrimination, and makes its services accessible. Information about users is gathered and recorded, and the organisation responds appropriately to user feedback.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
4.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People consistently define the user groups. ▪ The mission and operational plan clearly define the target user groups. ▪ People can describe how the organisation prevents unfair discrimination or exclusion from services.
4.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans reflect the identified needs of service users including disadvantaged groups as appropriate. ▪ People can outline the needs addressed by the services offered.
4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can describe how services are made accessible and promoted. ▪ The organisation has information and publicity materials. ▪ User feedback and monitoring information show that services are accessible to targeted users.
4.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant people can describe how personal information is kept about users, where it is kept and who has access to it. ▪ Personal information about users is stored securely and used only for agreed purposes, in line with data protection requirements.

4.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can describe how they work with individual users to monitor their needs and desired outcomes, and review their progress. ▪ There may be records of individual user needs, desired outcomes and progress reviews.
4.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotional information about all services and activities is available. ▪ Information about services shows that users have some choice.
4.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can describe how user feedback is encouraged and recorded. ▪ There are examples of user feedback forms or other processes for gathering user views. ▪ Relevant people can describe how complaints and suggestions are dealt with. ▪ There may be records of complaints which show that they have been dealt with promptly.

Quality area 5: Managing people

Legal requirements relating to staff and volunteers are met. Information is shared and staff and volunteers understand their role and are supported.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
5.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe the recruitment process and how they ensure it meets equality and diversity requirements. ▪ There may be a recruitment procedure. ▪ There are examples of staff and volunteer advertisements and application forms.
5.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are staff contracts for each member of staff. ▪ All staff confirm that they have a written contract and written terms and conditions of employment.

5.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can explain how they find out about and ensure they comply with legal requirements relating to staff and volunteers. ▪ There is an up-to-date employer's liability insurance certificate and professional indemnity if required.
5.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are written job descriptions for all staff. ▪ People can describe their roles and responsibilities in line with their role description. ▪ People know who they report to and, if applicable, who reports to them.
5.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recently appointed staff and volunteers confirm that they were given enough information to be effective. ▪ Managers can describe how new people are told about the organisation and their role. ▪ There are examples of induction information.
5.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and volunteers confirm that they receive enough individual support and supervision to carry out their work effectively. ▪ Managers can describe how they support and supervise staff and volunteers. ▪ There may be notes or action points from supervision or support meetings.
5.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe how they ensure that relevant news and information are circulated to staff and volunteers. ▪ There are examples of news and information which has been circulated ▪ Staff and volunteers confirm that they attend regular meetings at which they discuss the organisation's activities.

Quality area 6: Learning and development

Staff, volunteers and Board members are informed about and take up opportunities for learning. Quality self- assessments lead to planned improvements.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
6.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe how they identify training and information required to support the organisation’s work. ▪ Examples of information which supports specific areas of work. ▪ There may be records of training to support specific areas of work.
6.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members, staff and volunteers can give examples of recent opportunities they have had for learning. ▪ Managers can describe how they ensure that people have fair access to training and development opportunities. ▪ Records confirm that people have access to training and other learning opportunities.
6.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are records of training (or learning events) attended by Board members, staff and volunteers. ▪ People can describe how learning events are evaluated. ▪ There may be evaluation forms or records of feedback from people who have attended training or learning other events.
6.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are examples of circulated information about training and other learning opportunities. ▪ Board members, staff and volunteers can describe how they receive information about training and other learning opportunities.
6.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can give examples of how internal and external networking develops their knowledge. ▪ There may be notes of internal and external meetings where learning has been shared.
6.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members, staff and volunteers can describe their involvement in the self-assessment process. ▪ There are documented quality self-assessments and action plans. ▪ There may be notes of meetings where quality has been discussed.

Quality area 7: Managing money

The organisation meets all legal requirements in relation to money, and spends its money on agreed purposes. There are basic financial procedures in place.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
7.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members and relevant managers can identify a range of possible income streams in line with the aims of the organisation. ▪ There is an annual budget setting out income targets. ▪ Board members and managers can outline priorities for income generation for the year ahead.
7.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant managers can describe how they ensure they meet HM Revenue and Customs requirements. ▪ There are copies of tax, national insurance and VAT returns as required.
7.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant Board members and managers can describe auditing requirements and how they ensure that annual accounts are in line with the current SORP and charity or company law, according to the organisation's legal status. ▪ Managers can demonstrate they know about and act on relevant legal and regulatory requirements relating to fundraising, if applicable. ▪ Relevant Board members and managers are aware of the requirements of the governing document in relation to generating and managing money.
7.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is an annual budget and Board minutes show that this has been agreed by the Board. ▪ There are up to date management accounts. ▪ Recent progress reports against the budget show that the budget is realistic and affordable. ▪ Relevant Board members and managers can describe how and when they review income and expenditure against the budget and how adjustments are made.

7.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are written financial procedures. ▪ People are consistent in describing the systems for handling and banking income, authorising payments, signing cheques, spending and recording petty cash, and the payment of salaries and expenses. ▪ People are aware of the expenses they are entitled to and how to claim them.
7.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are up to date cash flow projections. ▪ Relevant managers can explain how they ensure that invoicing and payments are dealt with promptly, and how cash flow is monitored. ▪ There are records of income and expenditure.
7.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports to funders and purchasers show that the organisation meets their financial requirements. ▪ Relevant managers can demonstrate an awareness of the financial requirements of their funders and purchasers.

Quality area 8: Managing resources

The organisation has enough resources to deliver its planned services efficiently, and to meet safety and accessibility requirements. Some steps are taken to help protect the environment.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
8.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and managers confirm the allocation of sufficient resources to deliver this year's plans.
8.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can explain how they inform themselves and ensure compliance with disability discrimination legislation. ▪ Relevant people can describe how premises are maintained and how they ensure security and accessibility. ▪ User feedback may contain comments on the premises.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There may be premises maintenance and security procedures.
8.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can explain how they inform themselves and ensure compliance with health and safety and other legal requirements. ▪ People confirm they are aware of the health and safety policy or practice and comply with it, and can describe any relevant safety procedures. ▪ There may be information about health and safety on display. ▪ There may be a health and safety risk assessment.
8.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Records show that equipment is regularly maintained. ▪ People report that they are able to easily use the equipment and systems they need to do their job.
8.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are records of all purchases and deliveries.
8.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a back-up system for all information stored electronically. ▪ People can describe how to find things in a paper or electronic filing system.
8.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant people can describe how confidentiality is maintained where appropriate. ▪ Managers can describe how they find out about data protection requirements relevant to the work of the organisation and how they ensure these are met. ▪ There may be a documented confidentiality policy.
8.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe the ways in which the organisation aims to be environmentally responsible. ▪ People can describe how they are encouraged to be environmentally responsible, for example, save energy, reduce waste, re-use or recycle materials, and shop ethically. ▪ There may be minutes of meetings where environmental responsibilities are discussed.

Quality area 9: Communications and promotion

The organisation knows what it wants to communicate and to whom. It takes steps to promote its work and to represent the needs of its users.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
9.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant people can describe the key messages they want to communicate externally. Key messages may appear on service information and publicity materials.
9.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a system for recording contact details for users. Contact details are held for external stakeholders.
9.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are promotional materials which give information about services and include the organisation's contact details.
9.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are examples of information displayed in a variety of places, for example in the phone book or a directory, on the internet, or in publications.
9.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation's name, legal status and contact details appear on publicity materials, letterheads and other stationery.
9.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers describe how they find out about any relevant legal requirements which may relate to communications and promotion and comply with these. There are examples of communication and promotion materials.
9.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers can give examples of advocating users' needs externally. There may be documented letters or articles which advocate the needs of users to relevant agencies and individuals.
9.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members and managers can identify who is authorised to speak publicly on behalf of the organisation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job descriptions may include representing the organisation in public. ▪ There may be records of written publications, presentations and talks.
--	---

Quality area 10: Working with others

The organisation networks with other relevant organisations and works with them to support its own mission and to benefit users.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
10.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can demonstrate they know about other organisations with whom they need to work and why. ▪ The operational plan may include reference to working with other organisations.
10.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Up-to-date information is held about other organisations and services. ▪ People can demonstrate they know about other relevant local services.
10.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can describe when and how they signpost or refer users, and how they record and respond to referrals from other organisations, if appropriate. ▪ There may be records that show users have been referred to and from other organisations. ▪ People can identify other organisations to and from which users might be signposted or referred.
10.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members, staff and volunteers can give examples of participation in networks and forums including e-networks, attendance at external meetings and links with other organisations. ▪ There may be records or notes relating to relevant networks and forums and communication with other organisations.
10.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can give examples of how they comply with any legal or constitutional requirements relating to working with other organisations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There may be documented partnership agreements or contracts.
10.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant managers can describe any joint working arrangements. ▪ There are examples of correspondence relating to joint working arrangements. ▪ There may be planning documents and notes of meetings discussing joint working arrangements, including how income or expenditure will be managed.

Quality area 11: Monitoring and evaluation

The organisation routinely tracks its activities and services, and its outcomes. It assesses how well it is doing and uses this information for decision making and planning, and to report to funders and purchasers.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
11.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can describe what monitoring data is collected, analysed and why.
11.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are records of services and activities delivered. ▪ There is a system for gathering monitoring data. ▪ There are examples of completed monitoring forms show information is collected about users. ▪ There are examples of monitoring tools used to capture information about outcomes.
11.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are records of complaints and suggestions. ▪ There may be reports on feedback from users. ▪ People can describe how user feedback is recorded. ▪ There are examples of completed user feedback forms or other processes for gathering user views.

11.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collated monitoring information can be seen electronically or in hard copy. ▪ Monitoring reports exist. ▪ People can describe how monitoring information is collated and reviewed. ▪ People can describe how monitoring information is fed back into daily practice and used to inform management decisions.
11.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There may be examples of information and resources on monitoring and evaluation. ▪ There may be records of staff training or other support received. ▪ People can describe information, training, or other support received relating to monitoring and evaluation. ▪ Managers can describe how M&E practice is developed within the organisation.
11.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports to the Board include monitoring and evaluation information. ▪ Minutes of planning meetings show that monitoring findings have been considered and used to make improvements. ▪ People can describe how monitoring information is used in planning.
11.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports to funders and purchasers include required monitoring information. ▪ Managers can demonstrate they understand funders' information requirements.

Quality area 12: Results

Users are satisfied with the service and receive identifiable benefits. The organisation has competent staff and volunteers, and the working environment is good. The organisation's financial plans are achieved, planned services carried out and quality improvements made. There is evidence of contributions to the wider community.

Indicator	What assessors will be looking for
-----------	------------------------------------

User results	
12.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collated user and other stakeholder feedback. ▪ Feedback from users and stakeholders may address how identifiable and contactable the organisation is. ▪ There are examples of promotional materials. ▪ There may be records of take up of services or responses to promotional materials.
12.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collated information about users shows that the user group is consistent with the intended target group as defined in the mission and operational plan.
12.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collated user feedback shows overall satisfaction with the service.
12.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collated information shows planned outcomes have been achieved.
People results	
12.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers confirm staff and volunteers have the skills and competencies to carry out their roles effectively. ▪ Staff and volunteers confirm that they have the skills and competencies to carry out their roles effectively. ▪ There are records of supervision and appraisal.
12.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and volunteers confirm that they feel they are treated fairly.
12.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff report that overall morale is good. ▪ Records show that staff retention is good. ▪ There may be records of exit interviews and staff appraisals which show that morale is good.
12.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are records of health and safety audits. ▪ There may be records of actions carried out to meet health and safety legal requirements.

Organisational results	
12.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual accounts, progress reports against the current budget and cash-flow statements show that the organisation's assets are greater than its liabilities, and that it can make all payments as they fall due. ▪ Board members and managers confirm that the organisation is solvent.
12.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress reports against the current budget show that income is coming in as projected. ▪ Cash-flow forecasts show that the organisation can make payments as they fall due. ▪ Board members and managers confirm that the organisation is able to carry out its plans for the current year.
12.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ End of year and current progress reports against the budget and reports to funders and purchasers show that expenditure is broadly within budget.
12.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ End of year or current progress reports against the operational plan show that main services, activities and their outputs have been or are on course to be delivered as planned.
12.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can give examples of evidence that the organisation is known and respected by others.
12.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed quality action plans describe improvements made. ▪ People can give examples of improvements related to quality action plans.
12.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers can give examples of improvements resulting from monitoring and evaluation findings. ▪ Examples of improvement and recommendations in progress reports. ▪ There may be documented evaluation reports.
Community results	
12.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Records of staff and volunteer recruitment.
12.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People can give examples of efficiencies and savings in the use of environmental resources.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Evidence of recycling.▪ Utilities bills may show reductions in the use of energy.▪ Board reports may address environmental sustainability. |
|--|--|



NCVO

Society Building
8 All Saints Street

London N1 9RL

020 7713 6161

ncvo@ncvo.org.uk

ncvo.org.uk

Registered charity number 225922