

**achieving**

**the PQASSO  
Quality Mark**

**a guide for applicants  
using PQASSO  
3rd and 4th editions**



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PQASSO Quality Mark:  
A Guide for applicants  
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## The PQASSO team

The PQASSO team at NCVO delivers all aspects of the PQASSO quality management system and supports charities and other not for profit organisations to achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark.

Organisations across the UK and overseas use PQASSO as a framework to review organisational structures and practice, leading to improvements that strengthen and build the capacity of the organisation.

NCVO supports the third sector across England, including charities and other not for profit organisations. We also work with funders and government organisations.

The PQASSO team offers workshops, training and consultancy to help organisations implement PQASSO. We also have a network of licensed PQASSO mentors across the UK whose role is to help organisations to understand the process of implementing PQASSO and to prepare for the external assessment for the PQASSO Quality Mark.

The PQASSO team will regularly assess the quality of the service provided by PQASSO Quality Mark assessors to ascertain that their defined roles and responsibilities are being carried out as agreed and with a view to making further improvements as necessary.

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**Please note** – this guide relates to both 3rd and 4th editions of the PQASSO standards and indicates where something relates to a specific edition. The key difference is that for organisations using the 3rd edition they can apply for a PQASSO Quality Mark assessment at levels 1, 2 or 3, whilst those using 4th edition can apply at levels 1 or 2.

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## part 1

# about the PQASSO Quality Mark

## What is the PQASSO Quality Mark?

The PQASSO Quality Mark is NCVO's externally accredited award for PQASSO.

PQASSO is the most widely used quality system within the third sector, and has been adopted by thousands of organisations wishing to become more efficient and effective. PQASSO uses a self-assessment approach which involves people within an organisation making judgements about its performance against the PQASSO standards.

The PQASSO Quality Mark is a 'kitemark' to show that your organisation has met the PQASSO standards. It is designed to build on your self-assessment by having an independent external assessment. Achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark means that you have been externally accredited against the PQASSO standards and you will receive the PQASSO Quality Mark logo and certificate to help you to promote and celebrate your achievement. The PQASSO Quality Mark is valid for three years.

## The benefits of using PQASSO

Research has shown that organisations using PQASSO as a self-assessment tool can gain the following benefits:

- more effective and more efficient organisational systems and procedures
- better quality of services for users
- better communication among staff, trustees and volunteers
- more creative thinking, enabling new perspectives and ways of working
- continuous improvement over time.



**If you would like more information about PQASSO, please visit**  
[www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso)

## The benefits of the PQASSO Quality Mark

Achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark will give your organisation the following additional benefits:

- external verification of your achievement of the PQASSO standards
- greater recognition and credibility from statutory and independent funders, users and other stakeholders
- increased motivation for staff, trustees and volunteers
- confirmation that your organisation has reached a recognised quality standard
- enhanced organisational learning through the assessment process
- Charity Commission endorsement for all levels of PQASSO

NB. PQASSO without the PQASSO Quality Mark is still available for those who prefer to use it solely as a self-assessment tool.

## Who can apply for the PQASSO Quality Mark?

The PQASSO Quality Mark is for any organisation that has carried out their self-assessment against the PQASSO standards and wishes to show that their achievement has been externally verified.

At present, the PQASSO Quality Mark is available in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

## How will your organisation be assessed?

To achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark, your organisation will undergo an external assessment which involves gathering evidence, reviewing documentation and interviewing staff, Board members and volunteers.

The external assessment will be carried out by PQASSO Quality Mark assessors – members of the third sector who are specially trained and supported by NCVO to carry out assessments of organisations against the PQASSO standards.



**For more information about how to get the PQASSO Quality Mark, see Part 2 Seven steps to the PQASSO Quality Mark.**

## How much does the PQASSO Quality Mark cost?

The cost for a PQASSO Quality Mark assessment depends on the size of your organisation and the PQASSO level at which you are assessed. The following prices refer to single site organisations. If you operate from more than one site or office, or if you have more than 200 staff, please contact [PQM@ncvo.org.uk](mailto:PQM@ncvo.org.uk) for a tailored quote.

Number of Staff	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0-5 FTE staff	£1,500	£2,250	£3,300
6-15 FTE staff	£1,750	£2,500	£3,575
16-25 FTE staff	£2,250	£3,000	£4,125
26-49 FTE staff	£2,600	£3,575	£4,900
50-100 FTE staff	£2,925	£3,900	£5,250
101-200 FTE staff	£3,250	£4,225	£5,600

In addition to the above, organisations will be required to pay assessor expenses. 'Expenses' relates to reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred during the site visit.

FTE refers to full-time equivalent staff and should include all paid staff.

These prices were current at April 2016. NCVO reserves the right to amend prices without notice.



**For more information about how to get the PQASSO Quality Mark, see Expenses guidance in Part 3 Further information.**

## How long will it take to get the PQASSO Quality Mark?

Before applying for the PQASSO Quality Mark you must implement PQASSO through self-assessment. This can take anything from 3 months to over a year.

From the point of submitting your PQASSO Quality Mark application, the site visit will usually take place within 10 to 12 weeks. Formal reporting and the issuing of the award can take a further 4 weeks. If improvement actions are required, you will be given 8 weeks to implement these actions.

The duration of the site visit depends on the size of your organisation and the PQASSO level, for example, for organisations with 0 to 5 FTE staff applying for the PQASSO Quality Mark at level 1, the site visit will only take 1 day.

For larger organisations, or for assessments at levels 2 or 3, the site visit may take 2 days or more.

The site visit usually takes 2 days, except for small organisations with 1 to 5 staff, applying for the PQASSO Quality Mark at level 1 in which case the site visit will take 1 day.

For larger organisations with more than 49 staff, the site visit may take 3 days or more.

## The seven steps to the PQASSO Quality Mark

### **Step 1 Implement PQASSO**

Purchase PQASSO, complete the self-assessment and fully meet the requirements of your chosen level of PQASSO.



### **Step 2 Application**

Complete and submit the PQASSO Quality Mark Application Form.



### **Step 3 Planning the assessment**

An assessor will contact you and agree dates for the desktop review and site visit.



### **Step 4 Desktop review**

Submit specific organisational documents to the assessor(s) to assess in preparation for the site visit.



### **Step 5 Site visit**

The assessor(s) visit your organisation to conduct interviews and gather evidence.



### **Step 6 Reporting**

Receive a detailed report of the findings of the assessment. If your organisation does not meet all the PQASSO standards, there is an opportunity to make improvements.



### **Step 7 Receiving the award**

If your organisation is successful, you will receive the PQASSO Quality Mark in recognition of your achievement.

## part 2

# seven steps to the PQASSO Quality Mark

**Before applying for the PQASSO Quality Mark, we recommend that you read and understand the seven steps to be taken to achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark.**

## Step 1 – Implement PQASSO

Before you apply for the PQASSO Quality Mark, it is essential that you have implemented PQASSO properly through self-assessment and have achieved your desired level.

The first stage in implementing PQASSO is to buy the PQASSO workpack.



**The PQASSO workpack is available to order from the NCVO website at [www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/publications](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/publications)**

Implementation should be carried out at your organisation's own pace, allowing plenty of time for planning, self-assessing and making organisational improvements. There are a number of services available to help you implement PQASSO:

- PQASSO training courses
- the NCVO publication *Next Steps in Quality: PQASSO in Practice*
- support from a NCVO licensed PQASSO mentor.

Organisations should not apply for the PQASSO Quality Mark unless they are certain that they have met the PQASSO standards at their desired level. Applying for the PQASSO Quality Mark is an important decision, which should be discussed and approved by your Board and not decided by an individual staff member or a NCVO licensed PQASSO mentor.



**For more information about training, publications, and NCVO licensed PQASSO mentors, please visit the NCVO website [www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso)**

Organisations can decide if they are ready to be assessed by reading *Guidance on PQASSO Indicators*. The guidance is available on our website and will help you to understand the PQASSO indicators and what assessors will be looking for. The guidance also contains the additional criteria that must be met for Charity Commission endorsement in the 3rd edition.

PQASSO requires that certain documents are available as sources of evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of an indicator are met. Where an indicator requires a policy, process or procedure to be in place, the following four requirements apply:

**Consistent** – Is practice consistent with policy and procedures? When evidence is collected, do documents complement and not contradict other documents?

**Accessible** – Are relevant staff, Board members, volunteers and users aware of the existence of the evidence and where they can find it?

**Recent** – Is the evidence up to date? Has it been recently developed or reviewed?

**Dated** – Do you know when the evidence dates from? Is there a date on it?

Assessors will be making judgements based on these requirements during the assessment process.

## Step 2 – Application

For your organisation to be externally assessed you must complete and submit a *PQASSO Quality Mark Application Form* and read and agree to the *Assessment General Terms and Conditions and Assessment Process*.



You can access the *Application Form* at

[www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/apply-for-pqasso](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/apply-for-pqasso)

You will also need to verify that you have completed the *Assessment Workbook* in preparation for the assessment. Your organisation must record details of evidence to demonstrate your achievement of each indicator or PQASSO.



You can download a copy of the *Assessment Workbook* from

[www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/pqasso-documents](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/pqasso-documents)

NCVO will process your application and, provided the information is complete and meets with NCVO's approval, you will receive an acceptance email and invoice for the PQASSO Quality Mark fee. Payment is required upfront so that the assessment can proceed (**see page 6 for details of fees.**)

## Step 3 – Planning your assessment

Once NCVO has accepted your application, and your organisation has paid the fee, the lead assessor responsible for conducting your assessment will contact you usually within 10 working days. The lead assessor will introduce himself or herself and the co-assessor (if applicable), and will arrange suitable dates for the desktop review (**see Step 4 below**) and site visit (**see Step 5**). The lead assessor will confirm these arrangements in writing and send you an *Assessment Timeline*, which contains the key dates of the assessment.

## Step 4 – Desktop review

The first stage of the assessment process is the desktop review. You will be asked to submit a list of compulsory documents to the assessor(s). The purpose of the desktop review is to help the assessor(s) determine whether your organisation is ready for the site visit. It also helps them prepare for the site visit. All information provided to the assessor(s) will remain secure and confidential.



**For more information on confidentiality, see the [Code of conduct for assessors](#), in [Part 3 Further information](#).**

To show that you are meeting the requirements of PQASSO, you will be asked to supply the following:

- mandatory documents including key sources of evidence for many PQASSO indicators
- an *Assessment Workbook* in which your organisation records your evidence to demonstrate your achievement of every indicator at your chosen level of PQASSO
- a completed *Desktop Review List*.



**The *Assessment Workbook* and *Desktop Review List* can be downloaded from [www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/pqasso-documents](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/pqasso-documents)**

It is important that you provide all the desktop review documents requested by the assessor(s) by the deadline given. If you do not provide all documents, or do not provide them on time, the assessment may be cancelled and you could incur a cancellation charge. For more information on cancellation charges, refer to the *Assessment General Terms and Conditions*.

If the desktop review reveals that your organisation is not ready for the site visit, the assessment may have to be cancelled and you will incur a cancellation charge. (Details of cancellation charges are given in the *Assessment General Terms and Conditions*).

## Step 5 – Site visit

The purpose of the site visit is for the assessor(s) to visit your organisation and to review evidence to assess whether your organisation has met the requirements of PQASSO. The assessor(s) will gather evidence by looking at documents and interviewing staff, volunteers and Board members.

Before the site visit, the lead assessor will write to you to request the following arrangements to be made for their visit:

- availability of those members of staff, Board members and volunteers whom the assessor(s) would like to interview
- availability of chair and chief executive (or equivalent) at key times during the site visit
- a liaison person who will be available to the assessor team throughout the site visit to deal with any questions or issues that may arise during the assessment
- any specific documents which the assessor team would like to have available when they arrive on site
- a separate room for the assessor team to meet in (or a suitable private space) refreshments (tea/coffee, water, working lunch)
- transport, if the assessment is of a multi-site organisation accommodation for the assessor(s), if needed for overnight stays.

The site visit usually involves the following:

- an opening meeting ideally with the chair, the chief executive and other key Board members or staff members
- the assessor(s) gathering evidence to assess whether your organisation meets the requirements of PQASSO
- interviews with Board members, staff and volunteers
- a closing meeting where the outline findings of the assessment will be communicated to you. Any findings reported to you at this stage are subject to amendment by the assessor(s) once they have reviewed the evidence further or during the moderation and quality assurance process.

## Step 6 – Reporting

After the site visit, you will receive a draft of the *Full Report* of the assessment from the lead assessor. You will have an opportunity to amend any inaccuracies in this draft. NCVO will quality control the *Full Report* to ensure the assessment process has been followed correctly. The lead assessor will then send you the final *Full Report*.

### If your organisation meets the PQASSO standards

If the assessor(s) finds that your organisation does meet the PQASSO standards, the conclusion of the *Full Report* will be that the assessor(s) will recommend to NCVO that your organisation be awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark at the relevant level of PQASSO. (You will then proceed to **Step 7**.)

### If your organisation does not meet the PQASSO standards

If the assessor(s) recommendation is that your organisation does not yet meet the PQASSO standards and therefore cannot yet be awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark, you may be given an opportunity to make improvements. The assessor(s) will be able to tell you which specific PQASSO indicators have not been met, but they will not be able to advise you on how to meet those indicators. For advice on how to make organisational improvements to meet the PQASSO standards, it is recommended that you seek appropriate specialist advice.

### Improvement action plan

If the assessor(s) concludes that your organisation has not yet met the PQASSO requirements, you may be asked to develop an improvement action plan.

You will have access to a guidance document called *Improvement Action Planning*. This contains a template for your improvement action plan as well as guidance on how to go about planning and making improvements. You will be expected to send your improvement action plan to the lead assessor within 2 weeks of the site visit. The lead assessor will check the plan and confirm if it meets the assessor(s) requirements.

Following this, you will have a further 8 weeks to undertake the improvement actions stated in the plan and to send evidence of these to the lead assessor. Having checked the submitted evidence, the lead assessor will send you an *Improvement Action Report* which makes a final recommendation as to whether or not your organisation has met the PQASSO standards. NCVO will quality control the *Improvement Action Report* to ensure the assessment process has been followed correctly.



The *Improvement Action Planning* guidance document is available to download from [www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/pqasso-documents](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/pqasso/pqasso-documents)

### If your organisation meets the PQASSO standards

If the assessor(s) recommendation is that your organisation does now meet all the PQASSO standards, they will recommend to NCVO that your organisation be awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark at the relevant level of PQASSO.

### If your organisation does not meet the PQASSO standards

If the assessor(s) recommendation is that your organisation still does not meet the PQASSO standards because the improvement actions have not been carried out within the allocated timeframe, or they have not been carried out satisfactorily, your organisation will not have successfully completed the PQASSO Quality Mark assessment.

## Step 7 Receiving the award

If your organisation has met the PQASSO standards and if NCVO accepts the recommendation made by the assessors, you will be awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark. Organisations which have been awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark are entitled to use the PQASSO Quality Mark logo on all their correspondence and to display the PQASSO Quality Mark certificate. The PQASSO Quality Mark will remain valid for three years, after which you will need to apply for a new assessment.



If your organisation has not met the PQASSO standards and if NCVO accepts the findings of the assessor(s), the assessment process ends. Your organisation will not be awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark and you will be invited to re-apply.

If you disagree with the findings of the assessment there is an *Appeals procedure* which can be followed. For more information on this, contact the PQASSO team at NCVO.

## Charity Commission endorsement

The PQASSO Quality Mark is endorsed by the Charity Commission at all three levels (3rd edition) or both levels (4th edition) of PQASSO as meeting the Hallmarks of an Effective Charity.

The Charity Commission endorses sector-led quality assessment schemes that raise governance and service standards among charities. It is a form of support that the Charity Commission gives to products that they consider important to the sector and which meet their strict criteria.

The endorsement means that eligible organisations achieving the PQASSO Quality Mark will receive the Charity Commission's badge of approval confirming they meet the Hallmarks of an Effective Charity. This endorsement badge can be displayed alongside the PQASSO Quality Mark logo to celebrate their achievement.

The endorsement has two tiers and PQASSO Quality Mark Level 1 awardees will receive the 1-star endorsement and Level 2 and 3 awardees will receive the 2-star endorsement (Level 3 relates to 3rd edition only).

The endorsement is available to registered charities in England and Wales and organisations registered as a charity under another jurisdiction in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

In order for the PQASSO Quality Mark to receive endorsement, the Charity Commission requires specific criteria around good governance and compliance to be met.

More information about the endorsement criteria can be found in our *Guidance on criteria for Charity Commission endorsement*.



# further information

## Code of conduct for assessors

### Principle one: Professional behaviour

- Assessors must keep to the overall timescales of the assessment and the times in the programme submitted to the assessed organisation, unless circumstances such as the unavailability of interviewees at the agreed times make this impossible. If changes are unavoidable, the assessors will ensure that good communication minimises any inconvenience to the assessed organisation.
- Assessors must not offer advice or examples from their own experience, recognising that this is not part of their role as a PQASSO Quality Mark assessor.
- Assessors must carry out their role in a courteous and professional manner at all times. This includes being aware of the needs of the assessed organisation while they undertake their daily activities.
- Assessors must be respectful at all times and be sensitive to the needs of those people using the services provided by the assessed organisation.
- Assessors must retain a level of objectivity throughout their activities as an assessor, and be aware of their experiences and prejudices that could affect their neutrality.
- In the unlikely event of serious allegations, such as abuse or corruption within the assessed organisation, or any practice which seems to the assessor to be unlawful, unethical or threatening to the safety of clients or staff, assessors must not attempt to resolve it but to report this to NCVO at the earliest opportunity.
- Assessors must comply with the terms and conditions in the assessor agreement.

### Principle two: Protecting the interest of assessed organisations

- Assessors must respect confidential information regarding an assessed organisation's business and will not disclose or permit the disclosure of any such information without the organisation's prior permission, or unless so ordered by a court or statutory body.
- Assessors should not seek or encourage publicity concerning the assessed organisation, unless the nature of that publicity is fully agreed with the organisation and NCVO.

- Assessors should not directly encourage any employee of an assessed organisation to consider alternative employment.

### Principle three: Disclosure of material information

Assessors selected to undertake an assessment of an organisation shall ensure that they disclose to NCVO any relevant information or other circumstances which might in any way influence the outcome of an assessment.

Before any assessment, the assessor must disclose to NCVO any circumstances of their employing organisation or themselves which might:

- Influence the assessment
- Influence the judgement of the assessor undertaking an assessment
- In any other way give rise to a conflict of interest.

If any such information becomes known after the assessment process has begun, NCVO must be informed without delay.

Examples of such information include the following:

- Any directorship or interest in any business in competition with the assessed organisation
- Any financial interest in goods and services recommended or supplied
- Any personal relationship with any individual in the assessed organisation
- Any known personal circumstances of personnel assigned to work for the assessed organisation that could materially affect the outcome of the assessment
- Receipt by any individual employed by the organisation being assessed of payment in cash or kind in connection with the services provided, other than that agreed with NCVO.

### Principle four: Quality of service

Assessors *will* carry out their duties in a manner which ensures that the assessment meets the high standards required by NCVO.

- Assessors *will* maintain accurate records of the assessment
- Assessors should adhere to the terms agreed in their *Assessor Agreement* and consult with NCVO if significant changes are required
- NCVO owns all intellectual property of the tools and templates used to carry out an assessment

- NCVO owns all copyright of methodology, findings, template documents and reports
- Assessor reports will be written and communicated in accessible language
- Assessors should maintain effective communication with NCVO's client organisations throughout the course of the assessment, to ensure key people are kept informed at regular intervals of progress made and any problems encountered in performing the assessment.

NCVO will maintain systems to monitor the quality of service, in order to ensure that the terms of the agreement of the assessment are fully met.

At the conclusion of the assessment, NCVO will seek to ascertain from the organisation whether the nature of the assessment was viewed as satisfactory.

NCVO will maintain clear procedures to deal with the possibility of any disagreement or dispute with the organisation about the nature or conclusion of the assessment.

In the event of any complaint expressed by an assessed organisation, NCVO will make a provision to investigate and reach agreement, as part of the contractual arrangements with the organisation.

### Principle five: Confidentiality

When carrying out an assessment of an organisation, assessors will have access to information about that organisation, including some confidential information, through written evidence and interviews. The following sets out expectations of the assessor team regarding confidentiality.

#### Access to information on site

Assessors need sufficient access to records to check that policies and procedures are being followed, and that evidence which is used to demonstrate that the organisation meets a particular standard is valid, reliable and recent. However, confidentiality of individuals can be exercised. For example, the assessor team may need limited access to confidential files of staff, volunteers or service users during the site visit, but the access should be supervised by the chief executive and be in line with data protection requirements. Also, staff, volunteers or service user records can be anonymised.

#### Transmitting information

Steps must be taken to ensure that information about the organisation, or information belonging to the organisation, which is sent by post or by email, is transmitted securely. For instance, hard copy information sent by post must be marked 'private and confidential'. It is important to remember this when sending information between assessors, as well as when sending information to and from the organisation.

### Storing information

Information that assessors have received from the organisation being assessed, or reports that they are writing, must be stored in such a way to ensure that no-one else has access to them. This includes electronic files as well as printouts.

Although reports will be submitted to NCVO, the assessors must keep their own personal notes that they have taken throughout the assessment until the assessment process has been completed in case of an appeal or complaint.

### Disposing of information

At the end of the assessment, all material relating to the assessment, including material received via email or held electronically, must be securely destroyed by the assessors or returned to the organisation as appropriate. Ideally, by the end of the site visit, assessors will return all of the material that the organisation provided for the desktop review.

### Disclosing information

Members of the assessor team will share information provided or identified during the assessment process as required to perform the assessment. This information is confidential to the assessment.

This means that information relating to an organisation being assessed, including the identity of the organisation, should not be shared with any other party, except appeal panel members and NCVO staff engaged in the quality assurance process.

Before carrying out each interview, assessors must make clear to staff, volunteers, Board members and service users what happens to the evidence, how it will be recorded and who will have access to it.

If an assessor identifies an issue of breach of law on the part of the organisation, NCVO must be informed and NCVO will be responsible for dealing with the matter.

### Principle six: Assessor dress guidance

NCVO recognises that assessors have the necessary qualities and maturity to dress appropriately for varied work situations. However, further clarity and guidance for the purpose of carrying out assessments may be needed.

This section provides guidance to assessors about appropriate forms of dress and presentation while conducting assessments or when representing NCVO. The guidance does not specify which forms of clothing are or are not acceptable. Instead, it outlines a number of general principles which assessors are expected to observe.

This guidance does not wish to restrict individuality unduly; nor does it wish to place undue pressure on people to dress in a manner beyond their means.

- Assessors are required to be neat and tidy in appearance while carrying out an assessment or when representing NCVO.
- Assessors are required to dress in a manner which demonstrates respect for colleagues working alongside them and to take into account their perception of what might be considered appropriate for certain situations.
- When representing NCVO, assessors should always be mindful that their own expectations about what may be considered appropriate dress for NCVO representatives may differ from NCVO's perception of appropriateness.
- Where assessors are unclear about what may be required of them for particular occasions, they should seek advice from NCVO beforehand.

Assessors who feel uncomfortable about a fellow assessor's choice of dress when representing NCVO should try and resolve the matter with the individual first. If this is not possible, then assistance should be sought from NCVO to help resolve the matter. In the event that NCVO considers assessors to be dressing inappropriately, NCVO will arrange to discuss the matter promptly and privately with the individual in order to address the issue.

## Expenses guidance

### Guidelines

The organisation applying for a PQASSO Quality Mark assessment is responsible for reimbursing assessors for legitimate expenses incurred while carrying out an assessment.

**NCVO cannot provide definitive guidance on the issue of expenses, but makes the following suggestions which both assessors and organisations have the option of referring to.**

- Every effort should be made to keep costs to a minimum, for example through the use of standard rate rail fares
- The organisation being assessed provides to the assessors in advance a copy of their expenses policy/guidelines which set out clearly any limits and mileage rates applicable
- The assessors do not exceed the limits set by the organisation being assessed

- The expenses are supported by receipts and/or other evidence
- Where claims exceed the limits set by the organisation being assessed, the assessor is encouraged to discuss this with the organisation and negotiate what is agreed to be a reasonable claim
- All assessors should, where possible, use public transport. Claims for taxi fares and private cars should only be met when the assessor has pre-arranged this with the organisation.

In the event of expenses not being paid by an organisation, NCVO will intervene on the behalf of the assessor.

### Procedure

It is advised that all expenses are submitted for settlement by means of an invoice to the organisation within 2 weeks of completing the assessment (unless otherwise agreed). Claims must be supported by receipts (for example, for taxis, meals, hotel and petrol expenses). Assessors are requested to obtain bills with VAT registration numbers, as this will enable the organisation to claim a refund of the tax in certain circumstances.

Claims must be completed with the following details:

- The dates of the assessment and itinerary
- The mileage involved where the journey was undertaken in a private car
- Details of expenses itemised to show separate charges for each meal and travel as appropriate.

The updated version of this document was produced with support from the Big Lottery Fund as part of the PQASSO for Wales project.

