

Why are people so demanding?

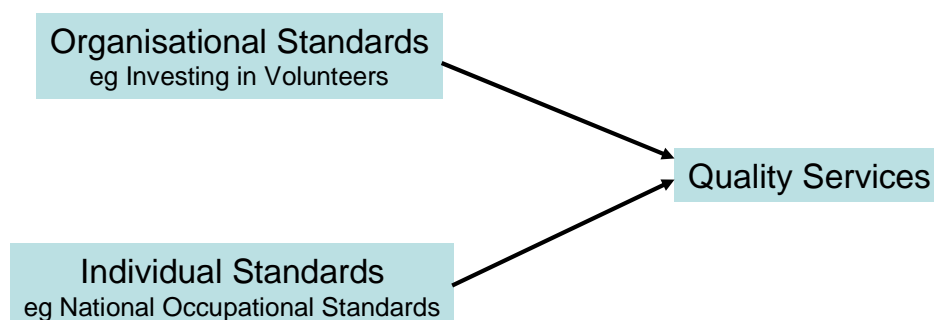
Whether you work in sport, leisure, the arts, education, housing, health and social care, the legal field, for a religious group or in the political arena, **people always demand a professional approach, a good standard of service and excellent results.**

- **Clients** expect the same quality of service from a small voluntary organisation run on a shoe-string as they get from a well-funded public authority or private company.
- **The Government and regulatory authorities** now, quite properly, require staff and volunteers who work with children, young people and vulnerable groups to be properly checked, trained and supervised.
- **Public funding bodies, private sponsors and individual supporters** want to know that their money is being wisely spent for the purpose for which it was provided. Individual employees and volunteers are also looking for satisfaction from the work they are doing and opportunities to develop themselves and expand their horizons.

How can you meet people's expectations?

To meet these demands, you first have to **make a clear statement about your organisation's mission, the services you provide and the standards of service clients can expect.** You must then **develop both your organisational processes and your people** to deliver services to these standards and achieve your mission.

Most organisations today use a range of standards to check that **individual workers are performing effectively** and that **the organisation's performance is in line with its own goals, government legislation and best practice** in its sector.



There are a number of commonly-used **organisational standards** and quality systems, such as Investing in Volunteers, Investors in People, ISO 9001:2000, the European Excellence Model, PQASSO as well as standards used in particular sectors, such as the National Minimum Standards for Care Homes and the Guidance Quality Standards for Learning and Careers Advice Work.

For **individual workers and volunteers**, there are National Occupational Standards.

This document focuses on the two complementary standards, **Investing in Volunteers** (organisational standard) and **National Occupational Standards** (individual standards) both important for **those who work with volunteers.**

National Occupational Standards can be used to

- **plan the people and skills required** to meet the organisation's or partnership's objectives
- **design rewarding and achievable jobs** for employees and volunteers
- draw up person specifications to **recruit the most suitable individuals**
- **plan the induction** of new recruits to the organisation and their work
- provide workers with guidance on what is expected of them and a **model of good practice**
- **develop objectives** with individuals and teams and help them **improve their performance**
- **assess if people are performing to the standards**, and if not where the problems may lie
- **identify learning needs, design training and development and evaluate its impact**
- recognise competent performance through **feedback, qualifications or reward**
- provide a clear framework for individuals' **continuing personal and professional development**
- help individuals **plan their careers** and develop the knowledge and skills they need
- **prepare individuals so they are ready to take over from others** who leave or retire.

National Occupational Standards will impact on **organisational culture**, as all workers start to work to a model of good practice and take personal responsibility for delivering a **quality service** in line with the organisation's quality framework. They also provide a **common language for different organisations within a partnership** to communicate with each other, negotiate, agree and understand each others' roles and responsibilities, support each others' work and **hold each other to account**.

National Occupational Standards describe the quality of performance expected of individual workers. They provide a **framework for developing individual performance and ensuring that all employees and volunteers make a quality contribution**.

National Occupational Standards for Managers of Volunteers

The key purpose of volunteer management is to **enable volunteers to make their full contribution to the organisation's goals whilst developing their own skills and interests**. The various functions that managers of volunteers carry out and the standards of performance expected of them are defined in the National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers. The 38 units of these standards are grouped under six key areas:

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| A. Develop and evaluate strategies and policies that support volunteering | D. Manage and develop volunteers |
| B. Promote volunteering | E. Manage yourself, your relationships and your responsibilities |
| C. Recruit and induct volunteers | F. Provide support for volunteering |

The National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers also recognise the importance of people's **personal qualities**, such as

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| • adaptability and innovation | • ethical stance | • relationship management |
| • communication | • focus on results | • self management |
| • concern for others | • information & knowledge mgt | • strategic awareness |
| • desire to learn | • persuasiveness | • thinking and decision making. |

The full text of the National Occupational Standards for Managing Volunteers can be downloaded from www.vsnio.org.uk. The Volunteer Development Agency in Northern Ireland provides training for managers of volunteers based on these standards.

Investing in Volunteers

Investing in Volunteers complements National Occupational Standards by providing a motivating **framework for reviewing and improving how your organisation attracts, values, supports and develops volunteers**. Originally developed and piloted by volunteer-involving organisations in south London, Investing in Volunteers is now being rolled out nationally as **an organisational standard of good practice in the management and development of volunteers**.

Organisations which achieve Investing in Volunteers status will be able to prove to funders, stakeholders, volunteers and service users that **the contribution of volunteers is valued and that they are well-managed**. This means that they can show they meet these 10 standards

- ✓ There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that **volunteering is a two-way process** which benefits volunteers and the organisation
- ✓ The organisation commits appropriate **resources to working with volunteers**, such as money, management, staff time and materials
- ✓ The organisation is open to involving **volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community**, in accordance with the organisation's stated aims, and operates procedures to facilitate this
- ✓ The organisation develops appropriate **roles for volunteers** in line with its aims and objectives, and which are of value to the volunteers and create an environment where they can develop
- ✓ The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, **volunteers are protected** from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering
- ✓ The organisation is committed to using **fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures** for all potential volunteers
- ✓ The organisation takes a considered approach to taking up **references and official checks** which is consistent and equitable for all volunteers, bearing in mind the nature of the work
- ✓ Clear procedures are put into action for **introducing new volunteers to the organisation**, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel
- ✓ Everybody in the organisation is aware of **the need to give volunteers recognition**
- ✓ The organisation takes account of the **varying support needs of volunteers**.

The **Volunteer Development Agency** is responsible for the delivery of the Investing in Volunteers standard in Northern Ireland. The Agency will support organisations in developing their processes, assess how well they meet these standards and help them achieve Investing in Volunteers status. Those organisations not yet ready to commit to Investing in Volunteers can still use the standard as a **self-assessment tool** to benchmark the organisation and drive up performance, and as a resource for **developing knowledge, good practice and learning** within the organisation.

Want to know more?

The **Volunteer Development Agency** can provide **detailed information on Investing in Volunteers and the National Occupational Standards** relevant to individual employees and volunteers, together with **help and advice on using these standards to deliver quality services and achieve the goals of both your organisation and those who work in it**. For further information, go to www.volunteering-ni.org or contact the **training team** on 028 9023 6100 or training@volunteering-ni.org.

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