



Background information for organisations applying for the CTA Quality Mark

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Information

This section is designed to be used to create reports and proposals to Trustees and Management Committees to secure an agreement to apply for the CTA Quality Mark.

The meaning of 'Quality'

It is useful to understand exactly what quality means. It is often incorrectly assumed to be the highest standard possible, which can lead to misunderstanding when financial resources are limited. The correct meaning of quality is explained by the following:

“A quality product or service is one that satisfies the needs of the customer”.

In examining the component words of the statement above it is important to accept that:

“the needs” includes all aspects of the stated requirements of the customer such as specifications, delivery method or date, time, price, etc, but it also includes the unstated, or implied customer requirements that they did not think they needed to explain and any requirements they did not have the technical knowledge to specify.

“the customer” includes people being carried on any transport, their relations and friends that may not be travelling but may be waiting to the passenger to arrive. Any staff at schools, day centres, medical centres, etc also waiting for passengers are included. Any organisation that is working in the voluntary and community sector, often as a registered charity, also have the whole of the general public as 'customers' because they may be making a direct or indirect payment for the charity work to be undertaken. To attempt to

meet the needs of the general public in a more focus way, organisations can plan to meet the requirements of the law and the established best practice as determined by organisations such as the Charity Commission and VOSA.

Origins of the CTA Quality Mark

The Community Transport Association has been the representative body for community-based transport operators for over 25 years. Throughout that time, the need for a standard that the members of the association should meet has been suggested several times.

Member organisations have indicated that they need to be able to demonstrate their professionalism and service delivery standards by obtaining an independently assessed award.

The need is to build relationships with other voluntary organisations and individuals requiring transport and with funders who often need reassurance that any funding allocated will be effectively and efficiently used for the intended beneficiaries.

Funding bodies have equally expressed the view that there are few effective monitoring processes available to guarantee that a community transport organisation they are funding is operating legally, prudently and appropriately. A role has been suggested for the CTA to provide this quality control system.

CTA member organisations have also expressed concern that, through lack of knowledge often on the part of funding bodies or others, some other community transport schemes have given the whole movement a poor reputation by failing to act in an appropriate manner.

The CTA Quality Mark was originally proposed to the Trustees of the CTA in 2008 and further actions were approved. Further research determined that the Charity Commission were enlisting the support of England and Wales 'umbrella bodies' to get involved in their Quality Mark, which was designed to raise awareness of their publication *CC60¹ - Hallmarks of an Effective Charity*. Other relevant agencies, such as VOSA, were also contacted to commence the process of gaining endorsements.

OSCR - the Office of the Scottish Charity Registrar - and the new Northern Ireland charity regulator have not been contacted at this stage.

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. Part of its regulatory role is to encourage charities to adopt good practice in all aspects of their operations and activities. Adopting good practice can help charities keep pace with changes and make them more effective where it really counts - in providing the best possible service to the people they were set up to benefit. It can also help to ensure that they fulfil their legal responsibilities.

¹ Brought up to date and made consistent with Charity Commission house style, it also has a new code, changing from CC60 to CC10.

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) provides a range of licensing, testing and enforcement services with the aim of improving the roadworthiness standards of vehicles ensuring the compliance of operators and drivers, and supporting the independent Traffic Commissioners.

Compiling ‘*The Standards*’

The draft of *The Standards* has been the subject of extensive consultation using the CTA’s website, articles in the CTA Journal and training sessions at events. The majority of comments from members have been incorporated.

The governance section of *The Standards* is based on ‘Hallmarks of an Effective Charities’. The vehicle operational requirements are based on VOSA documentation and CTA’s best practice recommendations. The personnel, training and Health and Safety sections have been compiled by CTA staff and follow legal and best practice standards. The requirements in the corporate social responsibility and environment sections have been set, initially, at a minimum level primarily to raise awareness of these areas because the CTA believes that they will both increasingly feature in contract and grant application conditions.

Level 1 & 2

The Standards cover two levels of award. Level 1 will be available to all CTA members irrespective of their legal status. *The Standards* are written in such a way to show that organisations gaining a Level 1 award would be confirmed as operating within the relevant legislation, including governance, transport, employment and health and safety. There are some elements in *The Standards* at Level 1 that are not actually legal requirements at this time. These have been included to reduce the possibility of CTA member organisations becoming involved in civil cases and to protect the public image of community transport, thereby benefitting all CTA members. The sections within *The Standards* covering governance have been designed to ensure that CTA members that are registered charities are operating within the legislation. However, all recipients of Level 1 awards will need to meet these requirements.

The Level 2 requirements in *The Standards* are written to confirm that the organisation gaining the award is working in accordance with best practice. Level 2 will normally only be available at this stage to registered charities, with the Charity Commission endorsement only applying in England and Wales.

Eligibility of Applicants

The CTA Quality Mark is appropriate for any community based organisation that operates transport either as a prime purpose or as part of a wider voluntary sector remit. It equally applies to car schemes, minibus operators or organisations using larger vehicles. Organisations that operate goods transport vehicles (furniture,

recycling, etc.) or individual transport (mopeds, scooters, powered wheelchairs, etc.) will also be able to apply for the CTA Quality Mark.

The CTA Quality Mark is only available to CTA member organisations that fulfil the following requirements:

For Level 1, organisations applying must be corporate bodies (charity, IPS, trust, company limited by guarantee, CICS, etc.) with a management committee, governors or trustees, etc. Sections of larger organisations, such as branches of national charities, would not be able to meet the requirements in *The Standards*. However, the whole organisation would be eligible.

For Level 2, organisations applying will need to be registered charities, with the Charity Commission endorsement only applying in England and Wales.

The CTA will be working to widen the range of organisations that can apply.

Benefits

- **All CTA Members** - *The Standards* document enables CTA member organisations to identify where they can make improvements, whether or not the organisation is looking to aspire to gaining the CTA Quality Mark. The document will be freely available to CTA member organisations.
- **Applying for charity status** - *The Standards* can be used internally by management committees of organisations that intend to apply for, but have not yet achieved charity status as a check list to measure the current position.
- **Funding bodies** - Funding bodies can require the CTA Quality Mark to be obtained within a specific period of time as part of the quality assurance process. (A reasonable allowance should be provided in any funding to cover the costs involved.)
- **Local branches of national voluntary sector organisations** - These operate transport as a way of facilitating their main charity work but they are unable to obtain the award in their own right because they are not independent, autonomous organisations. Nevertheless, local branch committees can decide that they should meet the standard set down in the CTA Quality Mark and conduct their own audit.
- **Partnerships** - A requirement to gain a CTA Quality Mark could be included in the process of forming partnerships (brokerage, joint working or other arrangements) to enable each partner to have confidence that all parties are operating to the same requirements.
- **Public opinion and reputation** - Widespread use of the CTA Quality Mark will cause a significant increase in the perceived professionalism in the provision of transport from the voluntary sector.

- **Benefits of holding the CTA Quality Mark** - Internally, organisations should see improvements in the recruitment and retention of volunteers, reduced staff turnover and an increased involvement of management committees in planning the future of their organisation and general improvements in the governance arrangements. Externally, organisations should see funding bodies reacting positively to the award. Organisations moving from grants to contracts will find that many of the items on the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) are met and if the organisation applies for any investment funds the CTA Quality Mark should cover many of the likely requirements. Individual passengers, group transport user groups, funding bodies and authorities arranging contracts should also notice the increased professionalism of organisation. In the longer term, the CTA believes that organisations holding a CTA Quality Mark will be more resilient and sustainable in terms of finance, resources available and public support.

The Future

In the future the CTA intends to review *The Standards* on a regular basis with a view to reflecting any legal changes, new best practice procedures and to reflect the potential requirements likely to impact on community based transport operators. The revised version of *The Standards* would then apply when an organisation applies for re-assessment.

Level 2 of the CTA Quality Mark is a tough set of requirements for organisations to meet but anyone involved in delivering community based transport services would agree these requirements have to be met.

Many community and voluntary organisations may already feel that they are providing a quality service and involvement in the CTA Quality Mark can enable them to prove this at the time the assessment is made.

However, the challenge is to continuously maintain the same standard. To this end, the CTA will be asking for evidence on complaints procedures and, specifically, that the same complaint does not re-occur. This aspect of the evidence requirements will be strengthened as part of future review. Successful organisations will be asked to introduce programmes designed to deliver continuous improvement and evidence of this will be required when the re-assessment takes place.

Reference information

The CTA Quality Mark is specifically designed for organisations engaged in delivering community based transport. Other quality systems are listed below for reference. Each of these have a similar process of examining an organisation based on a set of requirements. CTA members may wish to examine the benefits of these national schemes as they could add value to an organisation striving to deliver a quality service. If candidate organisations for the CTA Quality Mark already have one or more of these awards, they should find that there will be common elements.

Organisations holding one of these quality awards will still be required to complete all the evidence requirements of the CTA Quality Mark.

Other Quality Systems

- ISO 9001- 2000 is the internationally recognised standard for an organisation's internal quality management. Based on British military quality systems and a similar British Standard BS5750, ISO 9001 places the emphasis on process management as a way of ensuring the service delivered fully meets the customer's requirements.
- PQASSO, the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations, is administered by the Charities Evaluation Service and is widely used as a quality assurance system within the voluntary and community sector. The award which is valid for three years contains three levels. Each level of PQASSO offers guidance on what is required to run a healthy, efficient and effective organisation. The PQASSO Quality Mark is an externally assessed 'kitemark' to show that organisations have met the PQASSO standards.
- Investor in People – IIP is a tool for business improvement through people (employees and volunteers). It focuses on an analysis of people management systems, measurement of how well people are working, how they can be developed and provides guidance on where there is room for improvement.

A few community transport organisations have achieved recognition under one or more of these quality systems and each organisation has the view that the process of preparing for such a review and the resulting working practices has meant that they are now delivering more of what their passengers want.