



National Standards System 2002

a national network to alleviate
poverty through re-use



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DEFINING THE STANDARD

The FRN endorses the use by its member Projects of this system of National Standards in order to guarantee a level of service standard in the core functions of those Projects' operations. The FRN recognises that its members should:

- Strive for continuous improvement in all areas of operation;
- Use recognised standards or models as a means to continuous improvement and not as an end;
- Involve and be accountable to Stakeholders
- Promote equality of opportunity through internal and external conduct
- Add value to the services offered to their Beneficiaries

By adopting the National Standards framework, each FRN member Project will be able to demonstrate to:

- Beneficiaries (Clients): that it seeks to understand their needs and is determined to improve its service to better meet those needs
- Donors (of furniture etc.): will receive a responsible and trustworthy service for the removal of their donated items from the waste stream and enable them to be re-used by Beneficiaries to the furtherance of the Project's Charitable Objects
- Funders: that the secure and competent handling of resources is ensured and that Best Practice is adhered to
- Regulatory Bodies: that it is accountable, well governed and in compliance with all relevant legislation.
- Staff and volunteers: that their work is valued and that there is commitment to developing opportunities for their personal development.

Collectively, the adoption by all member bodies will enable the FRN to establish itself nationally as a 'cutting edge' organisation in terms of:

- Adopting and developing Best Practice in the Voluntary Sector
- Waste minimisation, re-use and recycling
- Innovation and effectiveness
- Combating Social Exclusion and Poverty

The FRN's National Standards framework is not designed to operate as a penalising-regime, but seeks to enshrine the following principles:

- Recognition of diversity and commitment to equality of opportunity
- Valuing Beneficiaries, Staff and Volunteers
- Enabling cross and intra-sectoral partnerships and effective communication
- Fiduciary, environmental and ethical responsibility

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

In recognition of its member Projects' diversity in terms of scale and operation, the National Standards framework has two Levels of Achievement. It is envisaged that all member Projects will seek to achieve Level 1 in all areas, thereby proving that they have the policies and procedures in place which ensure legal obligations, accountability and sound management of resources and personnel. Whilst Level 1 may be wholly sufficient for some Projects, the demands of scale and scope of operation coupled with the commitment to continuous improvement of service-delivery require a higher level. Level 2 should therefore only be approached once all sections of Level 1 have been fully achieved.

The National Standards framework should not be seen as a penalising code which requires instant and comprehensive compliance. Content and scope of the Standards herein have been researched and developed by the FRN Executive Committee Working Party (National Standards) and have been subject to a consultation process, and, as such, seek to both reflect general practice within the sector and incorporate best practice.

The framework is designed to enable Projects to develop towards quality standards in a sustainable and phased manner. There is no set timescale for achievement; it is assumed that individual Projects will move up the achievement ladder at a pace suitable to them. A steady and considered programme of implementation of quality systems will result in successful and sustainable development.

The divisions of 'Not met', 'Working towards' and 'Fully met' are there to help the participating Project map its own progress. At first, many of the Standards will be ticked or marked as 'Not met', or 'Working towards' where there is partial evidence. Where subsequent advances are made within the Project, further boxes can be marked up to 'Fully met'. At this point, the Project has met the Quality Standard.

This document represents only an initial phase in what is hoped will be an expanding range of Achievement Levels and Quality Standard Areas. As both the resources and remit of the FRN and the range and ability of member projects develop, it is envisaged that greater levels of quality criteria will be included in this framework in order to produce an up-to-date reflection of the increasing value and importance of our sector.

Please note that these Standards exclude activities concerning the collection, storage, refurbishment and supply of domestic electrical appliances ('White Goods'). A comprehensive guide to the recycling and re-use of white goods was published by the FRN in November 2001 and forms a separate framework. Whilst we recognise that many of the quality standards will overlap, it is suggested that participating Projects omit references to such activities in their implementation of these Standards and the accompanying evidence submissions.

EVIDENCE PROCEDURE

The National Standards framework is predominantly one of self-assessment, though, in the interests of quality assurance and monitoring, the FRN may require Projects to volunteer to present evidence or cooperate with a National Standards Audit.

Each Quality Area has a number of Suggested Evidence Types attached to it. These are not exhaustive; they are to be used as guidelines to indicate areas of policy or procedure within the individual Project from which evidence can be drawn or in where review and development may be initiated in order to produce that evidence. Projects should satisfy themselves, and be able to satisfy any external party, of the validity and appropriateness of that evidence.

Some of the Suggested Evidence Types will not require any additional explanatory notes. For example, Quality Area 4 (Collection of Furniture) Level 1 point 1 requires that there is a free collection service; this can simply be evidenced by the attachment of the relevant policy document, promotional information leaflet or similar. However, many of the Standards will require not only documentation but also explanation as to how the evidence offered ensures that the Quality Standard is fully met. For example, Quality Area 3 (Supply of Furniture) Level 1 point 1 requires that furniture is fit for the purpose it was designed or supplied for. Some projects may have a fully descriptive policy evidencing the procedures which ensure compliance, whilst others may need to attach a written statement (and any other relevant supporting documentation) outlining how this requirement is met. In all cases, the evidence and supporting notes should be signed and dated by the senior staff member, Chair of Management Committee or similar.

Completion of the assessment procedure should be seen as the sole responsibility of an individual member of staff, but should seek to involve the whole Project Team. The tasks of measuring your Project against the criteria in these Standards, identifying areas for improvement and revision and implementing these will, we acknowledge, be a challenge for many teams; we hope that FRN Members will recognise the benefit such a process will bring. By working together we can help to improve all our services and organisations.

MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

QUALITY AREA ONE

Aim: to provide a worthwhile workplace opportunity to unemployed volunteers which develops personal and task performance.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Volunteers are given an interview, the procedure of which is codified, and details recorded			
There is a codified Induction Procedure			
Health and safety awareness and Safe Manual Handling techniques training provided to volunteers			
Personal Protective Equipment provided free to manual worker volunteers			
Volunteer expenses paid			
Regular individual support and supervision given by line manager			
Volunteers have a description of their expected voluntary activities			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
References are taken up or Police checks made (where appropriate)			
Volunteers' training itemised on the budget			
Volunteers' information pack/handbook issued			
There is a procedure for representing volunteers' issues at Management Committee level			
A reference is provided for volunteers on leaving			
Access to external training opportunities for volunteers is provided			

Q.A.1 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Policy on Volunteer Interviews and recruitment, records of Volunteer Interviews

Policy on Induction, records of Induction, excerpts from Volunteer Handbook etc. referring to Induction procedure.

H&S policy, policy on Awareness Training, records of Awareness Training

SMH policy, policy on SMH Training, records of SMH Training, copies of SMH Awareness materials

PPE Provision policy, evidence of PPE procurement

Volunteer Expenses policy, evidence of payment

Volunteer Supervision policy, records of Supervision sessions

Level 2

References and notes on checks retained in individual volunteers' files. A policy codifying where and when it is acceptable/necessary to pursue checks.

Policy commitment to Volunteer Training, reference to actual current or planned Budgets.

A standardised and/or task-specific Handbook or guidance notes.

A policy on Volunteers' issues and their representation or clear evidence of individual Volunteers' ability to have interests represented at Management Committee meetings. Where this has not been fully codified, examples of such representations, and due consideration given to them, which indicate an acceptable level of consultation, could be included.

Examples of References produced and/or a policy statement to this effect.

Policy on Volunteers' external training opportunities or clear examples of Volunteers having accessed such resources.

CLIENT SERVICES: REFERRALS AND CLIENT CHARGES

QUALITY AREA TWO

Aim: to provide furniture to those in most need at a cost they can afford.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
The commitment to supply furniture to individuals and households in hardship is contained in the Governing Document.			
A referral system exists which targets those: in housing need on low incomes in poor health or with disabilities who are unemployed. This can include self-referral.			
Evidence of benefits or income is seen			
There is a Confidentiality Policy regarding information pertaining to Clients			
Price setting reflect the clients ability to pay based on their income			
Funding is sought to avoid client-derived income becoming the predominant financing of the core service			
The Project seeks to develop partnerships with Social Services, Housing and Health agencies on issues around furniture provision.			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Customers are given a choice of furniture wherever possible			
There is a Price Policy set and reviewed by the Management Committee			
A referral system is agreed by and reviewed with social services/housing depts and key agencies			
Premises are equipped to ensure disabled access and information materials are produced in relevant languages			
Development plans include strategies for increasing client provision			

Q.A.2 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Charitable Objects, Constitution, Memorandum and Articles or other recognised form of Governing Document contains clear commitment to supplying furniture to those in need, those experiencing poverty, on low incomes etc. Where a project is not yet properly or fully constituted, a Mission Statement or similar may be deemed admissible.

The policy on Referrals is made clear in a Governing Document, Mission Statement or separate policy. Where projects have more than one system of referral or solely operate a self-referral procedure, each should have clear evidence showing the scope and nature of that system, and evidence from any external referral body (e.g. Social Services or Housing depts) shown.

The policy regarding Clients' evidence of income source, the procedure for registering this, evidence of this being recorded and monitored. Where pre-selection and income-source checks are conducted by an external referral body, evidence of this should be presented.

A Confidentiality policy which pertains to all staff, volunteers and agents of the project. Where no explicit policy has been adopted, evidence of recognition of the requirements for confidentiality (e.g. from a volunteers handbook etc.) could be included.

A policy committing the project to supplying furniture at as low a cost as possible, evidence of 'sliding scales' related to income or similar.

A policy regarding, or historical evidence of, fundraising designed to shift a significant proportion of the overall project's costs away from financing via Client sales etc.

Copies or excerpts from partnership agreements, letters from potential partners referring to such discussions, documentary evidence of involvement of relevant bodies in improving the service etc.

Level 2

There is a policy regarding Client Choice; range of choice is mentioned in the Mission Statement or similar; there are references to Clients choosing their own furniture in Service Procedure Manual or similar.

Price Policy, or similar policy or procedural document containing reference to price setting. Minutes of meetings recording Management Committee's discussion or review of pricing; documentation showing pricing levels have been reviewed, changed or considered.

Minutes of meetings, letters or authorised documentation showing that external partners have agreed or been involved in the review of referral systems. Letters or documents from referral bodies clearly showing their understanding of, or compliance with, the referral system.

Documentation from local planning authority, Disability Access Officer or similar affirming the Project's access compliance. Plans of the Project's premises showing disabled access, or promotional materials showing this.

Promotional or other 'in-house' materials in a language other than English. A Policy on same or documentation confirming why such measures are inappropriate.

Sections of Business, Development or similar Plans referring to strategies for increased Client access. This could include commitments to promoting the Project's services to new communities, outreach work or plans to develop new referral partnerships etc.

CLIENT SERVICE: SUPPLY OF FURNITURE

QUALITY AREA THREE

Aim: to provide a good standard of furniture, including delivery, with a courteous and respectful service.

Level 1	Not met	Working towards	Fully met
Furniture meets all legal requirements			
There is a documented delivery schedule			
Furniture is transported safely and securely			
There is a re-delivery service offered			
Records of customers and deliveries are kept			
Vehicle and Public Liability Insurance are in place			
A receipt is issued for each transaction			

Level 2	Not met	Working towards	Fully met
There is a Replacement/Refund Policy displayed			
Items are delivered to the main entrance of clients home			
Special need clients receive extra help regarding delivery			
Furniture provided has been inspected and is fit for the purpose			
Development plans include strategies for increasing furniture supply			
Product Liability Insurance is in place			
Annual Report clearly shows numbers of clients and items of furniture supplied			
Core service staff and volunteers receive training and support in Customer Care issues			

Q.A.3 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Policies or procedural documentation showing that furniture and appliances supplied and/or collected meet legislation relating to gas, electric and upholstered items. In particular, there should be reference to upholstered goods meeting fire regulations, and, where non-compliant items are supplied, that this does not constitute a 'supply in the course of business' (DTI leaflet URN 96/1018). This latter regulation refers to supply in order to raise funds for other charitable purposes.

Policy on Delivery Schedule or excerpts from a Delivery Schedule, Procedure relating to Drivers' system of ensuring delivery to Clients at an agreed time/date etc.

Policy on safe carriage of furniture, Driver/Loaders' procedure relating to secure carriage of furniture or evidence of training relating to furniture security for Driver/Loaders. This could also extend to insurance coverage on Goods in Transit. Secure carriage should refer not only to transportation within a vehicle but also to movement in and out of vehicles and in/out and around any warehouse or storage/display areas. Thus, evidence should encompass mechanical lifting and carrying devices (e.g. sack wheels) etc.

Policy or procedural documentation referring to a Client's being offered re-delivery in the event of failure to deliver on schedule. References to delivery and re-delivery on promotional or referral body agreement materials. This could also be evidenced by letters showing that re-delivery was offered.

Policy or procedure on recording clients and their use of the Project's services, Monitoring forms or similar. This could also be contained within a Confidentiality policy.

Copies or excerpts from Insurance policies and/or confirmation of such from a senior staff member.

Copy of Receipt or similar.

Level 2

A policy referring to Replacements and/or Refunds, and an indication from a senior staff member that this is indeed clearly displayed where Clients can see it.

A policy or procedural document clearly stating the delivery service's terms. This could also be evidenced by a Staff or Drivers Handbook, or similar, which makes reference to furniture deliveries.

As above, but including reference to Drivers extending delivery coverage where Clients with particular needs (e.g. elderly, disabled etc.) require this.

A policy or procedural document committing the Project to only supplying furniture which has been inspected and passed as fit for the purpose. This could also be evidenced by a Job Description or Volunteer Task Description which includes duties pertaining to inspection of furniture etc.

Sections of Business, Development or similar Plans referring to strategies for increased turnover of furniture. This could include commitments to promoting the Project's collection services to new communities, outreach work or plans to develop new partnerships with corporate furniture donors etc. Letters or agreements with external bodies referring to access to new areas of furniture donation.

A copy of, or excerpts from, the Project's current Product Liability Insurance policy.

Excerpt from the current Annual Report showing numbers of Clients and turnover of items of furniture. If the Project has not yet completed a full year or produced the Annual Report, some other form of documentation, e.g. Quarterly or Performance Report showing same, or a clear commitment from the Management Committee to produce this in the forthcoming Report.

A policy on Staff and Volunteers access to training, or documentation (e.g. training agreements or certificates of completion) showing that training in Customer Care or similar is available.

COLLECTION OF FURNITURE

QUALITY AREA FOUR

Aim: to ensure that donors of furniture receive a courteous, reliable prompt response to their offer.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Collection service is free of charge			
Thank you card issued to each donor			
Information is available on request about the furniture charity			
Records of donations are kept for at least 12 months			
There is a Confidentiality Policy requiring all staff and volunteers not to use or pass-on information on Donors to any third party			
Furniture is only accepted if it is fit for the purpose or if resources for refurbishment exist			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Response time is publicised and adhered to			
Where collection appointment cannot be met, Donors are made aware of cancellation and an alternative appointment offered			
Annual Report clearly shows number of items of furniture donated			
There is a written policy on items refused and accepted, and reasons are given when items are refused			
There is a written policy of what to do with valuable Furniture, which makes reference to the Project's Charitable Objects.			

Q.A.4 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

A policy or promotional document confirming that, in general, furniture donated by the public is collected free of charge by the Project. If a Project has supplementary agreement, e.g. a service level agreement with a Local Authority concerning waste collection, which does include payment, this will not be affected.

A copy of the card presented to donors of furniture or similar.

A policy or procedural document referring to information being available, or examples of such promotional materials. This could include Web Sites, Reports, posters, information packs for Clients or referral bodies etc.

A policy or senior staff/Management Committee confirmation that records are retained for at least 12 months. This may be contained within, e.g., the Confidentiality or Monitoring procedures.

A copy of the Confidentiality Policy or a similar policy containing reference to this.

A policy or procedural document, Staff Handbook or Donor Information material etc., making reference to acceptance of furniture being subject to assessment by the Project.

Level 2

A copy of a policy or procedural document referring to the confirmation of arrangements for collection of furniture, including references to the Project's commitment to honouring such arrangements to the best of its ability. This could include letters to donors or partner bodies referring to this subject or similar contained in promotional material.

A copy of a policy or procedural document referring to the commitment to inform Donors or Clients in the event of a cancellation. This could include letters to donors, clients or partner bodies referring to this subject or similar contained in promotional material.

Excerpt from the Annual Report showing the range and quantity of furniture the Project received. Where a Project has not yet produced an Annual Report, this could be evidenced by a Quarterly Report or Management Report etc. indicating such figures.

A copy of a policy or procedural document detailing types of furniture to be refused, the reasons for this and the requirement to inform potential donors of these reasons. This could include reference to same in promotional or information materials.

A copy of a policy or procedural document, or excerpt from the Charitable Objects or similar, concerning the issue of donated furniture which may be diverted from core Client use in order to raise funds for the Project etc. If there is no such policy, and where the commitment is to supply all donated furniture to the core Client group, documentation referring to this or confirmation of such by the Management Committee should be used.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

QUALITY AREA FIVE

Aim: that the organisation is seen to be established on a sound footing with accountable and transparent procedures, and seeks to enshrine Best Practice.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
There is an up to date Constitution			
Qualified, external advice is sought prior to formal constitution of the Project and before any additional services or Objectives are initiated			
There is a Mission Statement, Environmental 'Green House-keeping' Policy or similar			
There is an organisational chart showing staff responsibilities			
All staff have a contract of employment			
All staff have a current job description			
Insurance cover is clearly displayed in a publicly accessible area			
PAYE and N.I. deductions are contained in Payrolling procedure			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
The Project is registered with the Charity Commission, Companies House, Registrar of Friendly Societies or similar			
The management committee debates, reviews and decides on Policies			
Staff have access to regular Supervision			
There is a Health and Safety Policy which is periodically re-viewed			
There is a Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure			
There is an Illness/Absence Policy			
Regular reports from all service areas/departments are produced for Management Committee			
Annual Report reflects all levels of service provision			
Management Committee includes stakeholder representation			
Annual Report clearly lists all funders, supporters and stakeholders and acknowledges their support			

Q.A.5 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

A copy of the current Constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association, showing its adoption date.

Documents or letters showing that professional advice has been sought, or confirmation from a Management Committee member that such procedures have been conducted.

Copies of Mission Statement and Environmental Policy, or excerpts from other documents referring to these matters.

Copy of organisational chart, or excerpt containing same from Development/Business Plan or funding bid etc.

A copy of a current contract. The Employment Protection Consolidation Act 1978 requires that every employer provide employees with a statement of the main terms and conditions of employment within 2 months of employment commencing. The statute requires that the following information be contained: names of both parties, start date of employment, place of work, provisions for pay and frequency of payment, hours of work, terms relating to holidays and sickness, pension, job title and duties, length of notice required to end employment (or notification of fixed term), grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Copies of current Staff Job Descriptions, or excerpts from relevant documents.

Confirmation by senior staff member that Insurance Policy is displayed, or excerpt from procedural or policy document requiring this.

Excerpt from Payrolling procedure or similar policy relating to PAYE and N.I payments for employees. Copies of documents showing calculation and/or recording of regular deductions (inc. payslips). Where payrolling is undertaken by a separate organisation, evidence of payrolling arrangements may be used.

Level 2

Copies of registration confirmation from relevant organisation.

Management procedure relating to Policy setting/review, copies of Minutes of Management Committee meetings showing same etc. Where the Project has not yet reached registration or incorporation, this could be evidenced by documents showing that the steering group or equivalent have debated and agreed basic policies or procedures.

Policy on Staff Supervision or documents clearly showing that staff have regular sessions.

Copy of H&S policy and minutes of meetings or procedural documents showing that it has been reviewed or updated etc.

Copy of Grievance & Disciplinary policy, or excerpt from Staff Contract.

Copy of Illness/Absence policy, excerpt from Staff Handbook relating to such issues, memo from Management Committee or senior staff setting-out procedure in case of illness etc.

Excerpts from or copies of departmental or service area reports, minutes of meetings noting their production etc.

Excerpts from the Annual Report clearly showing the full scope of the Projects' service performance. This should include range and quantity of furniture collected, numbers of clients served etc.

Confirmation by Chair of Management Committee of stakeholder representation on the Committee or similar evidence.

Excerpts from the Annual Report showing funders and supporters and acknowledgements etc.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

QUALITY AREA SIX

Aim: to enable all those affected by the Project's operation to have their concerns or complaints responded to effectively and accountably.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Feedback on satisfaction with the service is actively sought from Clients			
Complaints from Clients or Donors are dealt with by the appropriate senior staff member and are recorded			
Public notification of Complaints Procedure is displayed around the Project			
Staff and Volunteer Grievance Procedures are clearly noted in contracts (where appropriate) and related information			
Complaints regarding staff or members of the Governing Body are dealt with by the appropriate staff members or Management Committee members			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
There is regular review of the Complaints Procedure, ensuring that it is clear, workable and in accordance with legal requirements			
There is a Complaints Report Form for organisations and individuals to register their issues are available.			
Senior and relevant Staff and Volunteers receive appropriate training, e.g. handling complaints, conflict resolution, customer care etc.			
There is a Policy on Staff Meetings, Supervision etc., defining Staff and Volunteers right to air their concerns and that there are systems in place to record and respond to these.			
There is a codified Complaints Procedure with details of e.g. time-scale, confidentiality, any third party arbitration and outcomes/ measures for redress.			

Q.A.6 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Policy or procedure on gathering Client satisfaction. Copies of Client feedback forms, monitoring exercises showing client involvement, review procedures which draw on opinion polls etc.

Policy or procedure relating to complaints from Clients or Donors. This should show reasonable steps are taken to ensure equity of consideration: e.g. that if a complaint involves a staff member, that same member does not deal with the matter. Documents relating to a complaint which show procedure and a clear outcome. Where a complaint has resulted in policy or procedural review and/or alteration, evidence of this could be used.

Policy relating to this or confirmation from a senior staff member that Complaints Procedure is publicly displayed.

Policy on Grievance and Disciplinary. Excerpts from Contracts, staff handbook or similar showing same.

Policy or procedure relating to complaints against or involving Staff or Management Committee, Trustees etc. Documents relating to such an incident clearly showing reasonable consideration and equity of treatment etc.

Level 2

Policy on Complaints procedure clearly showing review, revision or update. Documents, minutes of meetings indicating that this procedure has been reviewed or that relevant of legislation have been considered by Management Committee etc. Even if an original policy has not been altered, the aim here is to provide evidence showing that any issues or legislative/best practice innovations are, or can be, taken into consideration.

Copy of Complaints form or similar recording document.

Memo to staff on relevant training, copies of certification of training attendance/completion or confirmation from senior staff member that access to such training has been provided.

Excerpts from relevant policies. Mission Statement, Code of Practice or similar confirming same. Policy on Staff and Volunteers' ability to have their issues recorded and responded to should be demonstrated to exist separately from any Complaints procedure.

Excerpts from Complaints Policy clearly showing the scope and timescale of consideration, access to third party advice etc.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

QUALITY AREA SEVEN

Aim: to enable the Project to account for the financial past and plan/inform the financial future, to ensure the security of the Project's assets and measure financial performance.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
The Project has an agreed and publicised accounting year			
Accounts are inspected by an external professional agent and meet all legal requirements (e.g. SORP/SOFA)			
Accounts are lodged with Charity Commission/Companies House/ Inland Revenue within the required period			
Accounts are publicly available, printed in the Annual Report and are accompanied by relevant explanatory notes			
There are at least 2 signatories to the Bank Account			
There are clearly defined responsibilities in the staffing structure with regard to security of cash, cash banking etc.			
Expenditure is noted with recording sheets showing the nature of the expenses, is signed for and has receipts attached.			
A receipt is issued for all supplies of furniture or related services to Clients or purchasing bodies			
The origin and nature of all Income is recorded			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Individual accounts for all current funders are kept			
Management Committee (or equivalent) receive regular statements of financial activities and balances etc.			
Treasurer and/or senior staff review financial turnovers and produce forward-budgets/financial plans which are examined and formerly adopted by Management Committee			
Regular reconciliations are conducted across bank accounts, petty cash, departmental/specific budgeted areas etc.			
The Project has the appropriate levels of insurances, covering (where appropriate): vehicles, premises, public liability, product, cash on premises, stock etc.			
There is a Reserves Policy which reflects the Project's contractual obligations and organisational commitments			

Q.A.7 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Excerpts from documents from Companies House or Inland Revenue, accountants or auditors, clearly indicating the accounting year period.

Minutes of Management Committee meetings, Code of Practice or similar documents showing commitment to publishing accounts. This could also be evidenced by excerpts from Annual Reports, or other externally available materials, containing the accounts.

Copies or excerpts from accounts showing the compilation by or verification by a professional agent, such as registered accountant or auditor. Where the Project does not meet current legislative requirements for external verification, evidence should be produced to show how the accounts were produced and by whom.

Copies of dated Annual Returns or supporting documentation from relevant authority.

Copies of, or excerpts from, Annual Reports, or other externally available materials, containing the accounts. Where the Project has yet to produce an annual Report, this could be evidenced by minutes of Management Committee meetings, Code of Practice or similar documents showing commitment to publishing accounts.

Documentation from the Project's bankers showing that there are at least two signatories, policy on same or confirmation from a senior staff member.

Policy or procedure relating to Financial Responsibilities, excerpts from job descriptions clearly showing staff responsibilities or similar.

Excerpts from financial administration systems showing how expenditure is recorded. Policy or procedural documents on same.

A copy of the Project's Receipt. Where a project operated different services, all relevant receipting formats should be evidenced.

Excerpts from financial administration systems showing how income is recorded. Policy or procedural documents on same.

Level 2

Excerpts from accounting system showing separation of and administration of funders' financial records. Copies of financial procedures relating to same.

Copies of Treasurer's or finance staffs' reports to Management Committee, or, where these are verbally reported, minutes of meetings noting this. Policy or procedure on same.

Copies or excerpts from forward budgets or other financial plans produced for Management Committee. Minutes of meetings showing Committee's consideration of same. Budgets prepared for funding bids etc.

Relevant excerpts from Financial Policy or procedure. Minutes of Management Committee meetings, Treasurer's or finance staff reports indicating that reconciliations have been undertaken, or that, where conflicts have arisen regarding financial monitoring, revisions or alterations in procedure have been implemented.

Excerpts from Insurance policy or procedural documents indicating levels of insurance have been

set at reasonable levels, reviewed etc. Where no explicit policy exists, confirmation of adequate insurance could be confirmed by a senior staff member or similar.

Copy of Reserves Policy, or excerpt from other financial policy making reference to the accumulation of the Project's own, unrestricted funds: 'free reserves'. Bearing in mind the often under-resourced situation of many Projects, the policy may be unrealised, and only serve as a target for development. It should, however, make reference to current or perceived future obligations, with particular reference to periods of notice for staff or premises etc.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

QUALITY AREA EIGHT

Aim: to ensure that the Project and its stakeholders can fully evaluate services and activities, and to provide information for strategies for improvement and development

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
All Clients complete Monitoring Forms, identifying their socio-economic grouping			
There are systems for recording: numbers of collections numbers of deliveries			
The production of funding bids is subject to consultation with key stakeholders and their advice and support sought			
Client, referral body and stakeholder feedback is regularly sought			
There is an Accident Report Book maintained			
The number of items supplied other than to the core Client group is recorded			
The number of items tipped/scrapped is recorded			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
Upon leaving, Staff and Volunteers are invited to attend an Exit Interview to inform evaluation of the Project			
Staff and Volunteers tasks and working hours are recorded			
There is a system for recording and monitoring both demand for and actual supply of specific items of furniture			
Senior Staff produce regular reports for Management Committee and Funders			
Funders are approached to fund explicit areas of work with clear targets and timescales for delivery			
There is a regular Risk Assessment carried out and procedural improvements reported			

Q.A.8 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Copy of Client Monitoring Form, or equivalent system for recording particulars such as income source, housing status, referral body etc.

Excerpts from procedural documents or staff handbook or examples of administrative systems used for recording collections and deliveries of furniture.

Letters, minutes of meetings or other documents which indicate a level of involvement in or support for funding bids or development plans from stakeholders. These could include partner bodies, voluntary or statutory advice or service-provision organisations, service user groups (Clients), 'parent charities' etc. This could also be evidenced by reports etc. making reference to consultation processes leading to the Project's creation or subsequent development.

Examples of consultation, review sessions, assessments or appraisals from key stakeholders. Where explicit policies exist which refer to such involvement these should be included.

Copy of, or excerpts from, the accident Book, or confirmation of use of such a recording system from a senior staff member. Where H&S policy refers to accident recording, those excerpts should be included.

Evidence of administrative systems recording instances where furniture has not been supplied to the core Client group. This would include sale of donated furniture for fundraising or supply to an 'umbrella', voluntary or statutory organisation. This evidence could be in the form of a 'client form' or receipt provided that clear identification of the end-user is noted.

Evidence of administrative systems recording instances where donated furniture has become waste, and reasons for this, e.g. deemed to be beyond reasonable repair or damaged subsequent to donation etc.

Level 2

Policy on Exit Interviews or excerpt from staff handbook or contract etc. referring to this. Minutes of such meetings or documents showing that issues raised by retiring staff or volunteers have been recorded and considered.

Evidence of administrative systems recording staff and volunteers 'working hours' or time spent on various operations. This could include 'time sheets' or forms used for claiming expenses where the hours worked are noted etc.

Policy on, or excerpts from administrative systems for recording, clients' demand for various types of furniture and donors' offers of types of furniture. This could include e.g. 'Offers Form' or 'Requests Form', daily notes indicating occurrences of both etc.

Policies on staff reporting or excerpts from job descriptions referring to these. Copies of staff reports, minutes of Management Meetings showing that such reports have been produced etc. Letters to or from funders referring to reports.

Excerpts from funding bids or development/financial plans showing that fundraising is targeted, time-scaled or has clear 'milestones' or similar methods of measuring success. This could include reports to funders detailing how their funds were spent and what was achieved etc. Where Annual Reports or similar are sent to funders or other stakeholders, and they clearly define the Project's achievements, these could also be used as evidence.

Policy on Risk Assessment, or documents showing that periodic assessments have been conducted. Minutes of Management Meetings or similar showing that there is on-going awareness of H&S issues. This could include reports of new systems or assessment from external bodies such as Fire Officers etc.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

QUALITY AREA NINE

Aim: to ensure that Clients, Stakeholders, Staff and Volunteers are not discriminated against because of their nationality or ethnicity, religious or cultural beliefs, gender, sexuality, disability or age. To further ensure that all communities can gain equal access to the services and activities of the Project.

Level 1	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
The Project has an Equal Opportunities Policy			
Recruitment of staff and volunteers is conducted in a non-discriminatory way			
Facilities are available for people with disabilities			
Volunteers and client records are monitored for Equal Opportunities purposes			
Jobs, voluntary positions and services are advertised so as to reach all communities or social groups within the Project's area			

Level 2	Not met	Working to-wards	Fully met
All applications for paid or unpaid positions within the Project require a completed E.O Form			
Staff , Volunteers and Management Committee receive Anti-Discriminatory and E.O Practice training			
Contracts and agreements clearly state that accusations or complaints regarding conduct or language contrary to E.O Policies will be investigated and treated as Gross Misconduct			
The Project actively seeks guidance from relevant local, regional and national organisations on methods of improving access to services for excluded groups			
E.O issues are considered at the development stage of new work			

Q.A.9 Suggested Evidence

Level 1

Copy of Equal Opportunities policy, or excerpts from policy containing this. This should conform to current legal requirements and best practice.

Copy of policy or procedure on Recruitment making clear reference to the Project exercising non-discriminatory practice. This could include Job Advertisements, Interviewing Arrangements or Procedure etc.

Documents of confirmation by senior staff member that disability access is organised for services and highlighted in promotional material.

Copies of Volunteer, Client feedback and/or Client Monitoring Forms showing how E.O issues are recorded.

Confirmation by senior staff member that all relevant media are utilised, committee reviews equal opportunities actions, records of adverts kept on file etc.

Level 2

Copies of E.O recording from Application forms, proof that recruitment records of unsuccessful candidates are kept for analysis.

Copies of records of training courses and content, clearly showing that training has covered issues of non-discriminatory practice.

Excerpts from contracts or agreements, excerpts from handbooks etc., referring to conduct in breach of E.O. policy. Minutes of meetings which have addressed E.O. etc.

Documents, letters, training arrangements or agreements with external bodies indicating that the project is informed on the subject of E.O.

Minutes of planning meetings and commitment highlighted in development or promotional documents. Excerpts from development or business plans showing consideration of E.O issues.