



Recognising quality
in independent advocacy

Frequently Asked Questions

This document aims to provide information useful to organisations who are considering, or are in the process of, applying for the **Advocacy Quality Performance Mark**.

What is the definition of Independent?

Some organisations will be affiliated to national bodies like MIND and AGE UK

The definition of independence in this context means that the organisation has a constitution and a local management board and structure

The important issue is that the organisation is independent of the funding bodies from which it receives its contracts or grants

We are merging with another organisation can we apply when this is complete?

Yes, but please do let us know when this is likely to happen so that we can plan it in to our work programme

What are the costs and how are they worked out?

For single sites the fee is £1800. For larger sites (i.e. those with more than one site) we calculate a bespoke fee. We will work with you to understand in detail how your organisation operates and develop a fee that offers best value

Why do we need to have a register of staff/board interests?

We require this to ensure that there is no conflict of interests in the organisation or if there are these are transparent, recorded and managed

It is key to provide evidence of your independence

Why do we have to have accessible publicity material?

You need to provide evidence that your service is inclusive and responds to individual need and the diverse communities that access your service

This might mean access to information in different languages, easy read or Braille

It might also include spoken word or videos

How do we provide evidence in the workbook?

Please list supporting statements against each indicator, including if they are met, require further development or are not met / not relevant

We will ask for a selection of your policies ahead of the site visit to review

We will explore this further on the site visit

What is an engagement protocol?

You will need to evidence that you offer an inclusive service. For example, if you only provide advocacy support to older people we would need to see that you have agreements or working protocols with other agencies to ensure that people who are outside of your age parameters are signposted to relevant support if they contact you

Can the QPM apply to profit making organisations?

Yes, the organisation should have relevant policies and protocols in place and management structures

The advocacy should be offered as a free service

What is the process once we have applied?

Your Policy and Process Confirmation (PPC) will be submitted for review by the Relationship Manager

They will allocate an Assessor and agree the number of days needed to visit you (this might involve a number of visits if you have more than one office)

See below for more detail regarding the process once this is received

What are the timescales?

It is important that we receive your policy and process confirmation within 4 weeks in order for us to plan the work –we will send the invoice and work agreement for approval

Once your work agreement is returned and first payment received we will send out the workbook (we recommend this is completed in 3 months and a maximum of 6 months) we aim to visit you within 1 month of receipt of the workbook

What happens once we send our workbook in?

The workbook will be sent to the assessor for review

Subject to satisfactory completion of the workbook, the assessor or another member of the QPM Team will contact you to agree a provisional date for the visit

This should be done within in 1 month

How long do we hold the award?

The QPM is awarded for 3 years. We will notify you when it is time for renewal

What is the process for renewal?

You would need to complete the PPC and submit a new workbook

What do you supply as evidence of us having achieved the award?

We will provide you with a formal letter, certificate and logos

What happens at the Site Visit?

The assessor will contact you in advance of the visit and agree an agenda with you

They will discuss who should be interviewed and what documentation is needed including a review of case files (anonymised)

How do I appeal if I am not happy with the decision?

We have an appeals process that is included in the flowchart below

What type of staff training is expected?

We expect the advocates and volunteers to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their role

We would need to see evidence of staff training and development plans

IMCA services need to provide evidence that they have attended relevant and enhanced safeguarding training

Attending courses at a basic level would not be sufficient for IMCAs. It would be expected that for both adult and child safeguarding that IMCAs have received training in and fully understand:

- How to spot abuse
- How to make an alert
- The process/responsibility of the local authority on receipt of an alert
- The responsibilities of the chair in adult safeguarding meetings
- The responsibilities of adult safeguarding leads
- With regards child safeguarding in depth knowledge will not necessarily be relevant unless IMCAs are attending case reviews but the overall process should be known and training received on this
- IMCAs should be able to verbalise both the process of making a safeguarding alert as well as the process of reaching an outcome

What kind of processes do we need related to unmet demand?

This applies if your demand is more than your capacity to deliver

We would need to see evidence of a prioritisation process so you can respond to people quickly if this is required

We would need to see evidence of a recording system to support this

It may also include a reciprocal agreement with another advocacy organisation to support this additional work when you have reached capacity

We need to see evidence that unmet demand is recorded and reported back to funders to highlight the issue