

Buckingham Canal Society Quality Assurance Policy

March 2017 - Review Date: March 2020

Introduction

For any organisation to be successful it is essential that users' requirements are fully met. Buckingham Canal Society (BCS) is committed to providing the best experiences/services possible for all volunteers, staff, customers and partners. BCS needs to be able to demonstrate that it provides quality experiences/services and manages the organisation efficiently and effectively.

In an increasingly competitive market it is critical that Buckingham Canal Society is able to evidence its commitment to quality to partners, users, potential employees and volunteers.

As per normal quality management practice, this document will use the term **services** to encompass all interactions through volunteer experiences and delivery of contracted services. It will also refer to participants and recipients of BCS services as **users**

What is Quality Assurance?

Quality Assurance is the process of verifying or determining whether products or services meet or exceed user expectations. Quality assurance is a process-driven approach with specific steps to help define and attain goals. This process considers design, development, implementation and evaluation.

It is essentially about learning what we are doing well and striving to do it even better. It also means finding out what we may need to change to make sure we meet the needs of our users.

Quality Assurance in practice

As a user- led organisation we must always endeavor to understand current and future users' needs and so will strive to meet users' requirements and exceed expectations at all times.

There is a shared understanding throughout the organisation about what we are trying to achieve and how we are trying to

achieve it. This involves:

- Agreeing quality objectives, reviewing their relevance and monitoring performance against objectives regularly.
- Ensuring that our users know what to expect from us.
- Having a trustee committee and management team in place who can provide clear vision and direction.
- Having all policies and procedures documented and reviewed.
- Having a strategic plan that details our strategic priorities for the next five years.
- Having a work plan with measurable outcomes for each task within the projects.
- Developing a Personal Development Plan for each employee to ensure that they have the relevant skills and expertise.
- Using effective communication tools to keep everyone informed.
- Actively participating in the quality audit process, both internal and external, in order to drive continual improvement.

Additionally we need to ensure that: -

- There is a technical infrastructure capable of supporting the delivery of our aims and strategic priorities.
- There are the necessary resources in place to support the delivery of our aims and strategic priorities.
- There are monitoring procedures and controls in place to ensure that policies and procedures are being implemented and are effective.
- We have positive relationships with our partners and others working in our field to enable us to share experiences and resources, to pool expertise and work in partnership in the best interest of our users.
- We evaluate all activity on a continual basis and use the feedback gained to inform the development of our policies, Business Plan, Work Plans and Personal Development Plans.

Quality Marks

There are various industry quality marks that demonstrate that an organisation has effective quality management systems in place. Buckingham Canal Society will implement at least one quality mark that is easily recognised within the volunteering field and seen to be synonymous with quality. The quality mark held will be assessed on an annual basis to ensure that it is still the most relevant for the organisation.

Responsibilities

Ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Board of Trustees. They are responsible for ensuring that the policy is reviewed, ensuring that the organisation is in a position to deliver quality services as described above.

The Executive Officer is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy and ensuring that all managers are adhering to their responsibilities.

The general responsibilities fall primarily with the Work Party Leaders and all members of the management team in terms of ensuring that quality assurance processes are assigned to relevant employees and volunteers and that adequate and appropriate training is delivered to enable all employees and volunteers to deliver the required standards.

Achievement of this policy's aims involves all employees and volunteers. In order for the organisation to be successful every person must understand our users' needs and be responsible and accountable for the quality of their work.

Policy Revisions

This policy will be reviewed every five years and amended as necessary, or earlier in accordance with any forthcoming legislation. All employees should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of any aspect of the policy through normal channels to the trustees.