

Quality in Befriending

information for services



Introduction

what is Quality in Befriending?

Quality in Befriending (QiB) is a quality award for befriending services. There are two levels at which QiB can be awarded:

QiB Award (good practice) and QiB Excellence (excellent practice).

The Award is achieved by a service uploading digital evidence to an online platform to successfully demonstrate to the assessor that it meets all the required indicators.

development of Quality in Befriending

Quality in Befriending was developed by Befriending Networks (BNs) and is designed to complement the other BNs resources, including the Good Practice in Befriending resource and the Scottish Qualifications Authority credit-rated Vital Skills in Befriending training course.

Quality in Befriending was devised by Befriending Networks in consultation with member organisations and other experts in the field of befriending. It was launched in 2010.

benefits for services

- Befriending staff have the opportunity to review all aspects of the services they manage
- Services receive a 'health check' and advice on how they can continue to develop the quality of their practice
- Achieving QiB can help to increase the confidence of potential referrers, service users and volunteers as well as funders, commissioners and other stakeholders
- Successful applicants receive a certificate and use of the Quality in Befriending logo

scope

QiB assesses the core work of befriending services and is not an assessment of the wider organisation.

practice areas

The practice areas covered by QiB are:

1. The service
2. The befriender
3. The befriendee
4. The match

Each practice area comprises a set of indicators, all of which need to be evidenced in order to achieve the Award. There are 96 indicators to be satisfied before a service is awarded QiB, and a further 29 should the service undertake the Quality in Befriending Excellence Award.

eligibility

BNs aims to help all befriending services develop their practice. However, in order to ensure that services do not spend a lot of time preparing an application only to find that their structure doesn't meet the fundamental requirements of the award, there are eligibility criteria in place:

1. This standard is for services which:
 - Work with vulnerable or isolated people
 - Provide companionship-the aim is to do things with people, not for them
 - Have a strong emphasis on the idea that the primary intervention is the relationship-the relationship may be used to achieve goals, but it is not all about achieving goals (in contrast with mentoring-see the Befriending/Mentoring spectrum on page 12 of [Good Practice in Befriending](#))
2. The befrienders must be working in a primarily befriending role - i.e. not primarily as advocates, carers, advisors, personal assistants, shoppers, counsellors, DIY helpers, etc.)
3. The service must have completed at least one full cycle of work before registering (i.e. referrals and assessments, recruitment, training and matching of volunteer befrienders, providing support to both parties, reviewing matches)
4. The service must be currently active (i.e. have undertaken all the tasks listed in 3 above within the last 12 months).
5. Funding should be in place for the service to continue for at least the next 12 months, or funding applications to enable this should have been submitted.
6. All required policies, procedures and forms should be in place and being used.

- The service should use BNs [Good Practice in Befriending](#) (page 18) guidelines on staff:befriender ratio recommendations or have recorded the reasons why it believes it is safe to exceed these, so this can be submitted as evidence.

Any services which don't meet these criteria but would still like to work on developing the quality of their delivery should contact BNs to discuss what other options are available.

BNs membership

All services which apply for QiB **must also be BNs members and must remain members throughout the time that they hold the award, or lose the right to do so.**

For information about multiple service fees (i.e. for organisations that wish to apply for QiB for more than one service), please consult the Befriending Networks Quality Officer.

costs

Organisation size	Annual organisation turnover	To pay for registration	To pay for assessment	Total cost
small	<100K	£200	£300	£500
medium	<300K	£200	£550	£750
large	300K+	£200	£750	£950

how to apply

As a first step, a service should download, complete and return the **Application Form** from the Quality section of the BNs website.

Once eligibility has been confirmed but before any fees are due, services have the opportunity to see the QiB requirements and indicators so they can decide whether or not they wish to proceed and check they have resources to complete it in the **9 months** provided.

Once the service has examined the indicators, it should confirm its intention to proceed by email. At this point the **non-refundable registration fee** invoice is raised.

Once payment is received, the service is listed on the BNs website Quality pages as “Aiming for QiB” with the 9 month evidence due date as the end point. The service also receives its login details for the online platform.

The service can begin uploading evidence as part of its application at any point from this time, but must ensure all evidence has been uploaded by the cut-off date for the application, 9 months from registration.

Hint: Don't wait until 8 months in to begin uploading evidence, as you will miss the chance to get feedback as you go along.

Once we see that you are uploading evidence, we will contact you about raising the **non-refundable assessment fee invoice**. Payment is required before assessment of the application will be started.

using your feedback

Hint: The sooner the process of assessment starts, the sooner you will get feedback on how your application is doing.

Once the service receives feedback as to whether the evidence submitted is achieving the indicators, any adjustments can be made as necessary before committing time to completing the whole submission.

missing the application due deadline

If any service registers and doesn't upload their evidence within the 9 month period, or chooses to de-register, they can re-register 6 months after their original registration period expires without paying another registration fee.

resubmission

Very occasionally evidence is assessed as needing considerable modification in order to meet all the QiB award requirements, and the service is advised to take a minimum of 6 months to make the required changes before re-submitting. In this situation they will not have to pay another registration fee as long as they resubmit within 6 months of receiving their feedback report. However, a repeat assessment fee must be paid before the new evidence can be assessed.

preparing the evidence

QiB is hosted on a Moodle e-platform to which applicants will be given a password. The entire process is undertaken on the Moodle, which allows the service to log in, proceed through the indicators and upload evidence relevant to each indicator.

Services can complete any number of individual indicators at a time, returning at their convenience. Feedback from the assessor will be received through the platform via the email account registered.

The service collects evidence which satisfies each of the requirement indicators. Where appropriate, this evidence should be 'live' (i.e. copies of completed forms, anonymised where necessary to meet Data Protection/GDPR requirements). Some pieces of evidence may satisfy more than one indicator. Some indicators may need more than one piece of evidence to be fully demonstrated. Where indicated, the service should ensure that a submitted document had been reviewed within the stated time frame.

Each indicator has the capacity for up to 10 files to be uploaded as evidence, with a maximum combined size of 1Mb. If you have any difficulties uploading evidence that your service feels is essential for evidencing an indicator, please just email it as an attachment to your assessor including a note of which indicator it relates to.

Services are encouraged to contact their assessor over any part of QiB they need clarity over. This can save time for both parties and helps BNs to develop the Award.

Hint: The platform supports uploads in the form of Word, pdf, Xcel, jpeg files. If your evidence exists in a different form, please consider converting it to one of

the above, as if unable to access the file type, the assessor has to mark the indicator as not achieved.

Hint: There is a free text box attached to each indicator – this was originally included as a means of uploading links if evidence was online. PLEASE resist the temptation to use this as a way to explain why your uploaded files demonstrate the practice referred to in an indicator – narrative statements cannot be taken into account for QiB assessment.

Award or Excellence Award?

Services can choose to apply for QiB Excellence as part of their initial application – to do this, they simply need to submit evidence against all of the Excellence indicators as well as the Award indicators.

Alternately, the service may choose to focus on obtaining the Award first, so should ignore the additional Excellence indicators under each Practice Area.

After achieving the QiB Award, a service is given **6 months** to complete an upgrade to QiB Excellence as part of the same application. The service should contact BNs to confirm its intention if it chooses to do this. Any successful upgrade to Excellence is given the same expiry date as the original Award.

assessment

There are three possible outcomes for each assessment:

1. Achieved 'Quality in Befriending Excellence' –i.e. excellent practice has been achieved throughout all four practice areas
2. Achieved 'Quality in Befriending Award' -i.e. four practice areas have achieved good practice, but not all as excellent practice (although this may have been partially achieved if evidence was submitted)
3. Not yet fully achieved – where indicators have not yet been achieved after an initial assessment of all 4 Practice Areas

achieved Quality in Befriending or Quality in Befriending Excellence

Services will receive:

- a QiB (or QiB Excellence) certificate with the date that their award expires

- an electronic version of the QiB logo to use on their materials
- an award letter explaining that they have been assessed as demonstrating good practice/excellent practice throughout their befriending service
- a comprehensive assessment report highlighting examples of particularly good practice, and suggestions of areas for possible development
- an updated entry in the Quality 'Database on the BNs website and the QiB/QiB Excellence logo displayed with the service's name in the online Befriending Directory

not yet fully achieved

Services whose evidence has been assessed as not meeting all the indicators at the minimum good practice level will achieve:

- correspondence describing how they can achieve the award by submitting extra evidence within **4 months**, or
- a recommendation for resubmission, which includes an assessment report. This is highly unlikely in respect of those services which have submitted their evidence incrementally, as recommended.

N.B. When a service goes on to achieve QiB after submitting extra evidence, the Award's expiry date is calculated as 3 years from the date of the original assessment letter. This means that those service who achieve QiB first time around gain the benefit of holding the Award for the full 3 years.

appeals process

Services should contact the Quality Officer within three months of receiving the outcome of their assessment, outlining the reason for the appeal. The application will then be considered again by someone else within the organisation. If they still agree that the application is not successful or there is a difference of opinion, the application will be scrutinised by at least one Member Director of Befriending Networks, whose decision will be final.

feedback from applicants

Services which have achieved QiB will be sent a follow-up monitoring form. It provides feedback on the process and the quality of the feedback offered by Befriending Networks. The results are used to review the award.

annual monitoring

All services which hold a QiB award are required to complete a short annual monitoring form, which asks for updated information about any material changes in the service (e.g. about staffing levels or the number of matches being supported). If the responses indicate that the service may no longer be meeting the level of QiB which they have been awarded, or if BNs is made aware of this from any other source, the service will be asked for clarification. Ultimately, BNs has the right to withdraw QiB from individual services, or change the level of award they hold, if significant changes have occurred which impact on service delivery as assessed for the original Award.

significant service changes

Current holders of QiB are responsible for informing BNs if there are any significant changes to their practice or resources which could mean they are no longer meeting the Quality in Befriending requirements (e.g. the befriended:staff ratio increases dramatically). Similarly, they should inform BNs if the nature of the service changes significantly (e.g. if the befriended group changes or the type of befriending offered is altered).

If an organisation launches an additional befriending service, they must not claim or imply that this service has achieved QiB. However, if appropriate, it can state that the service has been set up using the same policies and procedures as an awarded service. Once the new service has completed a full cycle of work (including recruiting, training, matching and providing ongoing support to befrienders) it will be eligible to apply to QiB in its own right (for further discussion about multiple services, please contact the Quality Officer).

reaccreditation

Services holding QiB/QiB Excellence are contacted 6 months before the Award expiry date and invited to apply for reaccreditation. Details of the process are provided at this time.

For more information about Quality in Befriending, contact:

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