community legal service

Support

consultancy line: 0870 7700 447
email: cls.support@asauk.org.uk

People Management – Sample Procedures

Quality Mark Briefing No.6
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All Quality Mark levels

advice services alliance
www.asauk.org.uk

This briefing is a resource for your whole organisation. Please ensure that every member of staff involved in Legal Aid or Quality Marked work has access to it.

12th Floor, New London Bridge House, 25 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9ST
Tel: 020 7378 6428 Fax: 020 7407 6822

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This briefing has been checked and agreed for accuracy by the Legal Services Commission (LSC). It is not a substitute for reading the relevant documentation in full nor does it constitute legal advice. The Quality Mark is still evolving, and therefore managers and staff will need to take responsibility for ensuring that they comply with the latest requirements at their particular level. Each briefing reflects the position at the date it was published. Organisations should get further up-to-date advice on specific topics covered in briefings either from their network, their LSC regional office or CLS Support.

CLS Support is run by the Advice Services Alliance. ASA is the representative body for national advice networks in the UK. ASA is independent of the Legal Services Commission.

Authors: Alison Lamb; Clare Shirtcliff; Jim Fearnley; Kem Herbert.

Series Editor: Jim Fearnley

Making the best use of this briefing

We are aware that some of our briefings are fairly lengthy documents. Please do not feel that you are obliged to read the whole briefing from cover to cover – the headings on our contents page will point you towards the major themes under discussion.

Further sources of support and guidance

If you need further guidance on any of the issues covered in this briefing, please contact your network, the Legal Services Commission or the CLS Support consultancy line – see the pages at the back of this briefing for contact details.

You may come across the telephone symbol ☎ at various points in the text which deal with what we regard to be a complex issue. The symbol is there to remind you that we are able to provide further clarification and/or guidance if you need it.

Please note that the What's New pages on ASA's website www.asauk.org.uk provide guidance that highlights and clarifies both new and existing requirements for Quality Mark and General Civil Contract holders.

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1 Introduction

1.1 This briefing provides information on how to draft procedures and policies that will help your organisation meet section D of the Community Legal Service Quality Mark General Help standard, which deals with various aspects of staffing or "people management". Section D contains requirements covering equal opportunities for staff, recruitment, induction, training and development, assessment of advisers' competence, access to up-to-date reference materials and supervisors and supervision.

1.2 For the purposes of this briefing we are using a fictional organisation, Bankside Advice Agency (BAA), as a model, and have drafted sample procedures and policies based on the profile we have assigned to this organisation. The briefing takes you through the steps that BAA undertakes to develop its procedures, and outlines some of the issues that staff and Management Committee members face along the way.

1.3 Although the briefing is primarily directed at organisations operating at the General Help level of the Quality Mark, guidance is also provided about Information level requirements – please refer to section 9 below. Similarly, Specialist level requirements are outlined at section 10. The General Help-compliant sample procedures at the end of this briefing can be adapted/supplemented to meet the requirements at these other levels.

1.4 The briefing provides:

- a profile of Bankside Advice Agency (BAA);
- an overview of standard D and how BAA chooses to meet the requirements;
- a description of how BAA develops procedures for:
  - ❑ appraisal
  - ❑ supervision
- a demonstration of how BAA revises its existing procedures;
- a discussion about how BAA intends to monitor and review its new procedures and policies;
- an explanation of how Information level and Specialist level requirements differ from those that apply at General Help level;
- copies of the following sample BAA procedures and policies:
  - ❑ equal opportunities policy that covers recruitment, selection and treatment of staff
  - ❑ recruitment and selection procedure
  - ❑ induction procedure
  - ❑ appraisal procedure
  - ❑ training and development policy (including individual plans and records)
  - ❑ supervision procedure
  - ❑ information resources policy
- sources of further information and support.

1.5 The documents referred to in this briefing are:

- The **Quality Mark standard** (first edition April 2000) ("QMS")
- The **General Help standard workbook** (first edition April 2000) ("GHW")
- The **Specialist Quality Mark standard** (Issue 1: April 2002) ("SQM")
- The **Guidance to the Specialist Quality Mark** (Issue 1: April 2002) ("SQM Guidance")

1.6 This briefing draws on previous briefings and guidance issued by the Advice Service Alliance's CLS Support Project:

- Quality Mark Briefing no.1 "Introduction to the Quality Mark" (April 2001)
- "Guidance on drafting Quality Mark policies" (January 2002)

What is the difference between a policy and a procedure?

1.7 In this briefing, the terms "policy" and "procedure" are defined as follows:

Policy: A statement of what you want to achieve and why, ie the line you will take on certain issues. Policies are based on the values according to which your organisation operates, eg confidentiality, independence, and commitment to equal opportunities. Once you have agreed a policy, your written document will tend to start with this as a statement of intent. A description of how you are going to put the policy into practice is a procedure. See the sample equal opportunities policy at the end of this briefing for an example.

Procedure: A written description of the process(es) you undertake to carry out a task or function, eg case recording. A procedure for case recording would outline the steps a worker should follow when completing a case enquiry or record sheet. Most of the documents you will need to produce in order to meet Quality Mark requirements are procedures rather than policies (although some documents will incorporate both). A number of sample procedures are included at the end of this briefing.

2 Profile of Bankside Advice Agency

2.1 Bankside Advice Agency (BAA) is based on the main road of a busy inner-city area. It provides information and advice on housing, welfare benefits, debt, consumer and employment issues.

Service profile

2.2 BAA operates the following services:

Main site

- two-hour drop-in sessions three times a week, which act as a feeder for future appointments where necessary;
- two-hour telephone advice line twice a week.

Homeless day centre outreach

BAA also runs two housing and welfare benefits outreach advice sessions every week at a local day centre for homeless people. Enquiries on other issues are referred/signposted to the main site. Day centre reception staff book half-hour appointments for prospective clients and fax through appointment sheets with a one-line "nature of query summary" to BAA's office.

Levels of service

2.3 BAA is applying for the Quality Mark at different levels for the different areas that it advises on:

Welfare benefits:	General Help with Casework
Housing:	General Help with Casework
Debt:	General Help
Consumer:	General Help
Employment:	General Help

The welfare benefits and housing advice that BAA staff provides at the day centre is considered to match the General Help with Casework level.

Staff profile

2.4 BAA employs three full-time members of staff:

Dexter – joined the organisation one year ago as a welfare benefits caseworker, having previously worked for a Citizens Advice Bureau as a generalist adviser for three years.

Sara – has been with BAA for four years, having previously been a specialist housing adviser with a local Shelter Housing Aid Centre for ten years. Sara is the co-coordinator of BAA and also provides generalist advice.

Raheel – joined BAA six months ago as a housing adviser. He has three years' previous experience in housing advice gained as a volunteer in an independent advice centre.

2.5 Three volunteer workers have worked at BAA for a number of years:

Cynthia – volunteers two days a week in the day centre as a housing advice caseworker, although she also undertakes one-off advice sessions.

Sean – volunteers one day a week and undertakes one-off advice.

Dolores – also volunteers one day a week and undertakes one-off advice.

2.6 A Management Committee, made up entirely of local residents, governs BAA. One of the members, Derek, has recently joined the committee and is very enthusiastic about BAA's Quality Mark application. Derek recently retired from a local solicitor's practice that operated a number of Legal Aid contracts. Derek has offered to help BAA with its Quality Mark application.

Funding profile

2.7 The local authority is the sole funder of BAA. When BAA developed its service strategy three months ago, staff identified that the organisation needed to diversify its funding base. As a result, a fundraising sub-committee has recently been formed.

Quality Mark application

2.8 BAA has decided to work on its Quality Mark application over a period of six months, and has chosen to work on one Quality Mark area at a time. It has been agreed that staff and Management Committee will work together on developing the necessary policies and procedures on Thursday afternoons, when BAA is closed to the public. Management Committee members will attend the meeting where it is judged to be appropriate. Final drafts of all procedures/policies will be presented to the Management Committee for approval before they are implemented.

2.9 Sara is BAA's nominated quality representative and is co-ordinating the overall Quality Mark application and development of individual procedures and policies - see General Help requirement G2.1: "*Organisations demonstrate a commitment to quality by appointing a named individual to oversee the quality processes.*" (QMS page 59)

3 Overview of standard D requirements and how BAA chooses to meet them

3.1 The BAA staff team takes the standard D evidence requirements and groups them into individual policies and procedures.

Staff equal opportunities policy

3.2 General Help requirement D1.1: "*An equal opportunities policy in effective operation that precludes discrimination in the selection, recruitment and treatment of staff.*" (QMS page 44)

BAA currently has an equal opportunities statement that staff recognise needs to be expanded into a policy that will meet requirement D1.1. Rather than simply add a section to cover their clients and other agency users and stakeholders, the team decides to draft a separate policy that specifically meets D1.1. Your organisation may, however, choose to combine an equal opportunities policy relating to staff with one that also covers clients – see General Help requirement A3.1: *"An equal opportunities policy in effective operation that precludes discrimination in dealing with clients in the target group.*" (QMS page 37)

Recruitment and selection procedure

3.3 General Help requirement D1.2: *"Open recruitment processes that evaluate skills, knowledge and experience of those applying for posts."* (QMS page 44)

BAA's current procedure was adapted from one used by a local housing association. When staff come to review it, they decide the procedure is out of date and too onerous for an organisation of BAA's size, and therefore agree to draft a new one.

Induction procedure

3.4 General Help requirement D2.1: *"Induction procedures for people who join the organisation."* (QMS page 45)

General Help requirement D3.1: "All staff are aware of their responsibilities. These may be documented in job descriptions." (QMS page 46)

Although BAA routinely inducts staff, the organisation has never written up a procedure for doing so. Staff are clear about what their procedure involves – an existing member of staff taking a new worker (paid or unpaid) through a series of information sessions. Staff decide to add a checklist to their procedure that will both help managers monitor at each supervision session which elements of the induction programme have been carried out since the last meeting, and also provide evidence that induction has taken place. BAA considers that this procedure will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and so will also meet requirement D3.1. When considering D3.1 BAA staff also recognise that this requirement will be addressed via a number of other Standard D policies and procedures, including supervision and appraisal.

Appraisal procedure

3.5 General Help requirement D2.2: *"Systems for review/feedback on personal performance to be undertaken at least annually and recorded."* (QMS page 45)

Appraisal is a new concept for the workers at BAA. They ask their new Management Committee member, Derek, to assist with developing this procedure, as he has experience of appraisal at his former workplace. The process by which BAA drafts an appraisal procedure is outlined at section 5 below.

Training and development policy

3.6 General Help requirement D2.3: *"Training and development plans to support the needs of the service, reviewed annually."* (QMS page 45)

General Help requirement D2.4: "All training to be recorded on training records." (QMS page 45)

Since there must be individual plans for each member of staff, BAA decides to develop a policy that includes a template for an individual plan and record. Staff discuss how the policy should be implemented and decide that each individual worker will be responsible for maintaining their own training record, whilst the Management Committee and Sara will take responsibility for both ensuring the effectiveness of the policy overall and the extent to which individual plans are actually put into action. The staff are confident that Sara will ensure that any training they attend is relevant to their needs and those of the service, and that issues arising from supervision and file review can influence what training individual workers might be offered.

Supervision procedure

3.7 For a detailed description of how staff develop a supervision procedure and a discussion of the issues they need to consider, please refer to section 6 below.

Information resources policy

3.8 General Help requirement D3.4: "*Ready access to relevant legal reference material as documented by service providers and a method of regular updating."* (QMS page 46)

General Help requirement D3.5: "Process for giving timely information to relevant staff about changes in the law pertinent to their service delivery." (QMS page 45)

The final policy BAA considers is one that incorporates D3.4 and D3.5 and addresses the information resource needs of the workers at BAA.

3.9 Having developed procedures and policies that address the following areas, staff are confident that they have met standard D:

- equal opportunities for staff
- recruitment and selection
- induction
- appraisal
- training and development
- supervision
- information resources

4 How BAA develops its procedures: the process

4.1 Staff decide that they will use the Thursday sessions to decide what each procedure should include and to agree amongst themselves what BAA staff would normally do in the course of their day-to-day work. Once the team has reached agreement, responsibility for drafting the procedure is delegated to one or other of the paid members of staff. Draft procedures are then circulated to all staff with a deadline to feed back comments.

4.2 BAA has adopted a standard format for writing their procedures that includes the date written, a review date and a space for the relevant Management Committee member to sign off the finished documents. Once the procedure or policy is agreed it is written up in the standard format identified and taken to the next Management Committee meeting for final approval.

5 How BAA develops a procedure: Example 1 – appraisal

5.1 Since appraisal is a new concept for BAA, staff carry out a number of preparatory activities before they start to write their procedure:

- They agree a common definition of appraisal – *"a review of performance by both the worker being appraised and their line manager that addresses past performance and identifies goals for the next year"*.
- They ask other local advice organisations for a copy of their appraisal procedures.
- They ask Derek to attend the Thursday meeting.

- Raheel is familiar with another quality standard, PQASSO (often used by small voluntary organisations). He agrees to bring in relevant sections on appraisal from PQASSO for staff to have a look at.

5.2 The meeting to draft an appraisal procedure is organised as follows:

- Relevant non-Quality Mark procedures such as PQASSO Quality Area 5: "*Staff and volunteers"* are distributed to staff in advance of the meeting.
- Derek explains how appraisal worked in his solicitor's practice.
- The staff discuss what they want to get out of appraisal and what the purpose of appraisal is.
- The meeting agrees what should go into the procedure.

Other procedures and standards

5.3 Staff examine copies of appraisal procedures used in other organisations and draw out the following points:

- All the procedures assume that annual appraisal meetings will be based on issues that have arisen in supervision sessions carried out in the course of the year.
- One organisation does not include volunteers in their appraisal system. All present at the meeting think there is value in including all staff – paid and unpaid.
- All the procedures include a standard form that can be used to record the outcome of appraisal meetings. One procedure also includes a preparation form that asks a series of questions to encourage both the appraiser and the appraisee to think through points to be discussed in advance of the meeting. Everyone agrees that this idea is useful.

How appraisal worked in a solicitor's practice

5.4 Derek tells the staff that the practice he worked in had been conducting staff appraisals since the date of making their application for a Legal Aid contract. Derek found the experience of taking part in annual appraisal interviews extremely helpful, and he valued having time to reflect on and discuss his previous year's performance. He remembers that it took some time to get the appraisal procedure established – during the first year of operation both partners and solicitors at the firm needed reminding that the meetings were to take place.

5.5 Derek also recalls that junior staff were apprehensive about the process, because they felt that their line managers might use the opportunity to discipline or complain about them. The introduction of a template agenda for the meeting reassured staff that they would be appraised against objective criteria. Additionally, Derek suggests that it would be useful for the Management Committee to be made aware of any issues arising from appraisal.

Group discussion

5.6 Sara leads a session where staff share their thoughts about what appraisal should or should not be like. This session helps staff reach agreement that they want to see the following elements covered by BAA's appraisal procedure:

Meaningful feedback – The appraiser should know in detail the type and level of work carried out by the staff member being appraised, so that recommendations and comments made are relevant to the adviser's daily work. The team agrees that Sara should appraise the paid workers, and Dexter should undertake the appraisals for the volunteer workers, as he has more contact with them on a day-to-day basis. Sara's appraisal will be undertaken by the Chair of the Management Committee.

Management Committee should be involved in the process – The team agrees with Derek's suggestion that the Management Committee should know about issues arising from appraisals. They agree that a general summary should be prepared that identifies general patterns emerging from individual appraisals, which is then shared with the Management Committee and referred to at BAA's annual review and planning day. This is the event BAA intends to hold to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the various Quality Mark policies and procedures alongside the development plans for BAA.

Further points are agreed:

Forms to be used – There will be a standard preparation form based on questions about the worker's previous year's work and a record form detailing the key points coming out of the appraisal meeting. The record form will be stored on the worker's file.

Sharing of information – The team accepts that certain issues arising from appraisal meetings may need to be discussed in other contexts, and therefore to say that the process is entirely confidential is not strictly correct. As such, the team agrees that workers should be told of any information from their appraisal that is going to be shared with third parties, such as training needs, and the record form should include a note of their agreement to the information being shared.

Frequency – The team agrees on a timetable of annual meetings and thinks it important to keep this under review to avoid "slippage".

Drafting the procedure

5.7 Once staff have agreed the basic content, Raheel agrees to draft a procedure and preparation and record forms to circulate to colleagues by the end of the following week. The team agrees to sign off the procedure at their next meeting in two weeks time. The finalised documents are provided as samples at the end of this briefing.

6 How BAA develops a procedure: Example 2 – supervision

6.1 Staff spend a considerable amount of their time considering this procedure. The questions they ask are:

- Who should be their D4 supervisor?
- What model should they adopt for welfare benefits and housing – D5.1 or D5.2?

- Do they want one supervision procedure for all levels/areas of advice or a separate one for each?

6.2 To start work on the supervision procedure, the team decides that it should first decide what requirements they need to meet in each subject area (eg welfare benefits, debt etc) and who qualifies as the D4 supervisor and/or either of the models for D5 caseworker/caseworker supervisor.

6.3 These requirements can be found on pages 47 (D4) and 48 and 49 (D5) of the Quality Mark standard. The caseworker supervisor requirements are detailed in Annex A of the QMS at pages 101 to 102.

6.4 The team also refers to pages 5–7 of CLS Support Quality Mark briefing no. 1 “Introduction to the Quality Mark”, which provides a full description of supervisor and caseworker requirements at General Help level.

6.5 Having read through the relevant requirements, the team realises that it can nominate one D4 supervisor for all areas that BAA advises on: debt, consumer, employment, welfare benefits and housing. This supervisor will provide generic support to workers, such as advising them on how BAA procedures should operate in practice and how to handle an enquiry in general terms.

6.6 However, the team recognises that there are additional requirements for supervising General Help with Casework areas that mean additional staff with technical supervisory responsibilities will need to be identified for welfare benefits and housing. These are outlined at D5 (QMS page 48).

6.7 Staff decide that the D4 role sounds very similar to the one that Sara currently undertakes as co-ordinator. They check that Sara meets the requirements for the D4 supervisor:

Has at least two years’ recent and ongoing experience (either by undertaking advice or involvement in others’ cases)

Sara has over ten years’ experience as a housing adviser. She also has over two years’ experience in the last four of advising in welfare benefits and debt, and continues to deal with enquiries in all these areas either directly when providing staff cover or through supervision of staff. This includes advising Raheel on complex housing issues.

Has experience of managing staff

Sara has been the BAA co-ordinator for the last four years and already supervises staff. Sara mentors Cynthia’s professional development through discussion of her cases and ongoing support.

Demonstrates how maintained knowledge of legal changes and practice

Sara maintains her knowledge of changes in legal practice by reading relevant journals and attends training courses whenever there is a change of law.

Is accessible to those working within the organisation

Sara works full-time and is usually in the office when advice sessions are taking place. When she is out at meetings she is contactable on her mobile phone.

6.8 The meeting considers the implications of Sara being the supervisor. Derek thinks that nominating only one person would not be consistent with the supervision arrangements that currently operate, where all paid staff take on a supervisory role on a rota basis. Staff think this will probably be addressed when they come to look at D5 – the supervision of the General Help with Casework badged categories. However, they can see the value of looking first at their current practice. They identify that:

- Sara and the paid caseworkers carry out day-to-day supervision on a rota basis. If Raheel, who advises mainly on housing issues, gets a complicated welfare benefits enquiry to supervise he tends to ask Dexter to deal with it.
- There are monthly supervision meetings between designated members of staff and their supervisees.
- Monthly team meetings include items that could be considered supervision, including staff reporting on any difficulties with individual cases.

Staff agree that when writing up their procedure, existing arrangements should be maintained, but that Sara will be formally nominated as the overall D4 supervisor.

6.9 BAA needs to demonstrate that it meets D5 for the two categories where it is working at General Help with Casework level – welfare benefits and housing. In each of these categories either D5.1 or D5.2 needs to be met:

- Identify at least one caseworker who spends at least twelve hours per week dealing with casework in the category (D5.1 route one: the caseworker or “twelve hour” route).

OR

- Identify a casework supervisor who has done on average twelve hours of casework a week for two out of the last four years, and
- if they have not done any casework in the last year, arrangements have been made to bring their knowledge up to date, and
- they spend a minimum of twelve hours a week, on average, working for BAA as a supervisor, at least six hours of which is within the casework category (D5.2 route two: the caseworker supervisor route).

6.10 Derek and the staff team decide they need to be absolutely clear about the casework supervision requirements before they make a decision. The other information they take into consideration is:

What about the workers who do not meet the above requirements – can they still do casework in that category? The group refers to page 48 of the QMS and finds that under route one BAA can identify other caseworkers so long as they spend at least six hours a week dealing with cases falling within the casework category. If they chose to fulfill D5 via D5.2, the casework supervisor route, there would be no specific requirements such as hours per week for the other caseworkers, but the casework supervisor would need to demonstrate that they supervised all casework in the category undertaken by other members of staff, including the volunteers, and the supervisor would have to be able to supervise all casework fully, especially in relation to advisers with less experience.

What about meeting the casework range? The group is aware that for both housing and welfare benefits there are casework ranges which detail the breadth of work which organisations will need to provide evidence of having carried out in order to achieve the General Help with Casework level. The casework range covers the Quality Mark subject-based categories, including both housing and welfare benefits, and also client-based categories such as disability and young people (which do not apply to BAA's service). The casework ranges are at Annex A on pages 79–100 of the QMS. To apply for the Quality Mark at General Help with Casework level in welfare benefits and housing, BAA will need to complete CASE 1 forms for both welfare benefits and housing from the application pack. Staff refer to pages 5 and 6 of CLS Support Quality Mark Briefing no.1 and find that:

Under route one – In a calendar year, ie the twelve months prior to their application and in all subsequent years, all the nominated caseworkers at BAA can, either individually or together, demonstrate that they have undertaken the range of casework. In terms of demonstrating prior experience across the subject range in welfare benefits and housing, individual caseworkers can pool their previous caseloads if they choose to, and no individual worker has to provide ongoing evidence of meeting the range individually, not even the twelve-hour caseworker.

Under route two – The supervisor must undertake their own casework across the range of subjects specified for either housing or welfare benefits. The minimum number of types of cases within the category must have been completed within the last calendar year and subsequently every twelve months. Unlike route one, where the caseworker has to undertake twelve hours of casework each week, there is no minimum weekly hours requirement for amount of casework carried out under route two, although the casework supervisor has to ensure the range of subjects has been covered in whatever time is necessary.

6.11 The group decides that Raheel should be the nominated twelve-hour housing caseworker, as he has been advising in this area for the last three years. Cynthia's two days a week in the centre includes an average of six hours housing casework per week. They check the case range and find the range of category-specific requirements for housing is covered between Raheel and Cynthia.

6.12 For welfare benefits, BAA decide Dexter is the obvious candidate to act as a D5.1 (route one) caseworker:

Dexter has done a minimum average of twelve hours of welfare benefits per week over the last year. Most of the rest of his time is also taken up with welfare benefits casework, although because of his generalist background which dates back a number of years, he can provide initial advice on the phone line and at drop-in sessions regarding consumer, debt, housing and employment issues.

Sean and Dolores both volunteer one day a week and provide one-off advice on welfare benefits, consumer, debt and employment queries, but the majority of these enquiries are welfare benefits-related, so the decision is taken to include them as nominated caseworkers too. Sean and Dolores ask that if BAA takes on any more volunteers they might start to undertake welfare benefits casework, supervised by Dexter.

6.13 Once the staff are clear about who the supervisor, caseworkers and casework supervisors will be, they start to think about what needs to go in the procedure. Dexter agrees to draft a procedure and include the record form that BAA uses for individual supervision sessions. He is able to do this within the next few days, and agrees to circulate his draft by the middle of the following week and bring the final draft to the next meeting. The group thinks it is useful to consider supervision and appraisal at the same meeting as they can see how the two procedures link up with each other.

6.14 The group is also aware that independent file reviews should feed into supervision – see General Help requirement E2.1: *"Samples of work are independently reviewed to ensure the quality of legal advice provided and adherence to service procedures."* (QMS page 53) The results of file review, eg evidence that a worker is consistently omitting to calculate entitlement to a benefit, could indicate that increased levels of supervision are needed or that a training need should be discussed in supervision. Staff agree to incorporate feedback from file reviews into the BAA supervision procedure as a standard item for discussion during supervision sessions.

7 An opportunity for the organisation to develop – how BAA revises its existing procedures

7.1 Policies and procedures should be developed to reflect the way your organisation actually works and so must be based on what services you offer and how you actually deliver them. But what if those circumstances change? BAA has just signed off its supervision procedure when Sara hears of an opportunity to bid for a grant programme for debt advice that has recently been announced by a major bank. Submitting the bid is consistent with the service strategy BAA has recently put in place and is something both Management Committee and staff are keen to explore.

7.2 BAA hopes that the new funding would enable them to undertake negotiation on behalf of clients. At their last annual review staff evaluated the profile of the issues clients were bringing to the centre. They identified that clients were returning on a number of occasions for help and assistance with debts, including priority debts such as housing. This led to the team re-evaluating the approach they were taking with debt – a client empowerment self-help model where clients used sample letters provided by BAA to negotiate with creditors. Both Management Committee and staff agreed that funding should be sought to enable BAA to offer a casework service to those clients who felt less confident using the self-help model. Having been successful in its bid, the organisation is therefore keen to ensure that the new debt service operates at General Help with Casework level.

7.3 When this new opportunity arises BAA can see the value of having a recruitment procedure that defines the individual steps that need to be taken

- the importance of confidentiality;
- the importance of anti-discrimination practices.

Feedback on performance

9.4 Assisted Information requirement D2.2 – *"Staff are given feedback on their performance"* (QMS page 29) – does not specify how feedback should be given, nor does it stipulate how often. Organisations can choose to adopt a variation of the appraisal model in this briefing but be aware that you do not have to undertake appraisal. Feedback at Assisted Information level could be more informal and take the form of meetings with or briefings to workers.

D3: Supervision

Nominated supervisor

9.5 Organisations operating at Assisted Information level need to name a supervisor or manager but, unlike at General Help level, there are no specific skills, experience or competence requirements that the nominated person has to meet.

Supervision

9.6 The supervision provided would need to ensure:

- *"Staff know to whom they should refer an enquiry if it is outside the scope of their knowledge"* – Assisted Information requirement D3.2 (QMS page 30).
- *"Work undertaken by staff involved in dealing with clients is within their capability"* – Assisted Information requirement D3.3 (QMS page 30).

A written procedure may assist organisations in addressing the above points (although it is not mandatory to draft one), and a simpler version of the sample supervision procedure at the end of this briefing could be adopted.

There are no other supervision requirements at Assisted Information level.

10 Specialist level standard D – how the requirements differ

10.1 The Specialist standard includes more detailed requirements regarding who can qualify to be the supervisor (see SQM pages 64–73) and from October 2002 introduces requirements for caseworkers' training (see SQM requirement D5.1). From October 2002 caseworkers should also have "*a professional legal qualification or conduct a minimum of 12 hours' casework per week*" (SQM page 80). However, the generic people management policies and procedures required at this level are similar to those covered by the General Help standard. This section identifies when the sample documents we provide can be adapted for use at Specialist level.

D1: Roles, responsibilities, recruitment and equal opportunities for staff

10.2 Specialist requirement D1 specifies that organisations have:

- a job description and person specification for each post;
- an equal opportunities policy (see sample);
- an open recruitment process (see sample).

D2: Induction, appraisal and training

Induction

10.3 The induction process at Specialist level must begin within two months of joining, and D2.1 Specialist definitions state that induction must cover:

- *"the organisation's aims;*
- *the management/staff structure and where the new post fits into it;*
- *the recruit's role and the work of their department or team;*
- *the organisation's policies on non-discrimination, quality, customer care and complaints;*
- *the office manual and/or other work instructions/processes relevant to the post;*
- *terms and conditions of employment and welfare and safety matters."*

Records confirming induction for each individual must be kept. The sample induction procedure we provide can be adapted so that the checklist addresses the areas outlined above.

Performance review and feedback

10.4 Specialist requirement D2.2 specifies that *"performance appraisal of all members of staff takes place, and is undertaken at least annually."* (SQM page 60) Records must detail existing and future objectives and be signed by both parties. The sample procedure at the end of this briefing can be used as a basis for meeting this requirement.

Individual training and development plans and records

10.5 The Specialist definitions for D2.3 specify that plans must include any training needs and/or development opportunities identified:

- *"during appraisals, file reviews and supervisory sessions*;
- *from business or service reviews;*
- as a result of recognising that a required skill is not available in the organisation."

Plans must outline what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved and over what timescale:

- Assessment of training needs and development opportunities must cover organisational, managerial and/or legal competence, as applicable.
- Training records must include the dates of external and in-house training courses attended (or given), the course titles, the names of course providers, and, where qualifying for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points, the hours awarded must be recorded.

Where additional or alternative criteria apply (for courses or for non-course training respectively), details must be documented in order to qualify towards meeting supervisory training requirements (D3.4) or caseworker training requirements (D5.1).

when recruiting new workers. Sara suggests that the job description and person specification for the new post include reference to the casework requirements in D5.1, because although the staff at BAA do some aspects of debt work, no-one would meet the caseworker requirements. The recruitment goes ahead, and BAA recruits Sam, who for the last four years has been working for a credit union providing debt advice to members. Sam is able to meet the D5.1 requirements and, after her induction period is completed, will start as supervisor for debt. BAA amends its procedure to reflect this change.

8 How BAA intends to monitor and review its procedures and policies

8.1 BAA realises that the organisation is continuing to develop. This means that new policies and procedures are likely to need amending from time to time.

8.2 Staff discuss how they will ensure their policies and procedures are kept up to date, and come up with the following suggestions:

- Individual supervision sessions – Staff can notify their supervisor if they feel a procedure is not working effectively or is difficult to understand.
- Staff meetings – Any short-term changes can be discussed and agreed at the monthly staff meeting. Sara will bring any other changes to staff meetings.
- Annual review – All the policies and procedures will be reviewed at the annual review and planning meeting.

9 Assisted Information level standard D – how the requirements differ

9.1 Organisations applying at the Assisted Information level will need to meet the following requirements:

D1: Equal opportunities

9.2 Rather than a policy such as that required at the General Help and Specialist levels, organisations can adopt an equal opportunities statement. An example of a statement is included in the sample equal opportunities policy at the end of this briefing. Organisations need to ensure that the statement is in effective operation, ie what is stated as a principle is carried out in practice.

D2: Training and development

Induction process

9.3 Induction is included in the Assisted Information requirement D2.1*: "There is an induction process for all new staff*." (QMS page 29) The format of the sample induction procedure at the end of this briefing can be adopted to meet this requirement. Induction for staff at Assisted Information level needs to include:

- an awareness of the CLS;
- the importance of discretion;

The sample training and development policy at the end of this briefing, including the training plans and record templates, can be adopted to address this requirement.

D3: Supervisors

10.6 This requirement specifies that organisations should have a named supervisor in each Quality Mark category of work and details how supervisors can demonstrate that they meet the requirements for legal competence, supervisory skills and legal training. D3.5 of the requirement covers the conditions for supervision. This briefing does not address the Specialist standard supervisor requirements. If you require further information you should refer to pages 68-73 of the SQM or contact your advice network or the CLS Support project. ☎

D4: Operation of the supervisory role

10.7 D4 requirements include:

Specialist requirement D4.1: *"Processes to ensure that staff are allocated cases according to the role they are required to fulfil and on the basis of their skills, competence and capacity."* (SQM page 74)

Specialist requirement D4.2*: "Effective systems of supervision exist that are tailored to the skills and competence of individual members of staff."* (SQM page 74)

Specialist requirement D4.3: *"All members of staff know their own limits and are aware of the need to inform their supervisor if a case is beyond them."* (SQM page 76)

These requirements place the same emphasis on supervision as that applied by the General Help standard. The sample supervision procedure at the end of this briefing can be adopted to address these requirements.

Specialist requirement D4.4: *"There is ready access to current legal reference materials."* (SQM page 76)

Specialist requirement D4.5: *"A process exists for giving timely information to staff about changes in law, practice and procedures that are pertinent to the service they deliver."* (SQM page 76)

This requirement can be met by adopting a policy on information resources. Please note that casework at Specialist level may require additional information resources beyond those specified in the sample procedure provided here, as workers are more likely to need to access, for example, websites that provide case law and law reports such as www.bailii.org and www.casetrack.com.

D5: Individual competence

10.8 From October 2002 the Specialist standard includes training requirements for casework staff (D5.1) and a requirement that all caseworkers have a professional legal qualification or conduct a minimum of twelve hours' casework per week (or equivalent) (D5.2). Pages 78–81 of the Specialist Quality Mark standard provide further details.

Bankside Advice Agency sample procedures

The following sample procedures/policies are included in this section:

- staff equal opportunities
- recruitment and selection
- induction
- training and development
- appraisal
- supervision
- information resources

All the sample documents are based on BAA's circumstances and therefore meet the General Help standard (incorporating General Help with Casework requirements where applicable). These samples are for guidance only – please consider how each procedure or policy fits with your own organisation's requirements before using it.

Please note that these procedures/policies also comply with guidance that accompanies General Help requirements. However, while the requirements are mandatory, the guidance is not.

Bankside Advice Agency

Staff Equal Opportunities Policy

Scope and purpose:

This policy applies to all staff and Management Committee members.

The policy sets out how Bankside Advice Agency (BAA) will promote a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment and personnel practices. (1)

For our equal opportunities policy relating to clients, please see the service delivery equal opportunities policy. (2)

Other relevant policies and procedures:

- recruitment and selection (3)
- disciplinary and grievance procedures (4)

Equal opportunities statement

BAA is committed to ensuring that no job applicant or interviewee or employee (paid or volunteer) is discriminated against, verbally, physically or by intimidation on the grounds of age, class, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race, HIV status, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or trade union activity.

BAA will work to comply with all relevant legislation including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Human Rights Act 1998 when recruiting or employing staff. (5)

HOW THE POLICY IS IMPLEMENTED

Publicising the policy

BAA will seek to ensure that all Management Committee members, staff and job applicants are made aware of the policy by providing existing staff and committee members with a copy of this policy and by including a copy in all recruitment packs for new staff/members. We will also ensure that Management Committee members and staff are made aware of it during induction.

Compliance with the equal opportunities policy will be included as a standard requirement in the person specification for all posts.

1. This summarises how BAA intends to demonstrate that it meets evidence requirement D1.1: *"An equal opportunities policy in effective operation that precludes discrimination in the selection, recruitment and treatment of staff."*

2. This refers to A3.1: *"An equal opportunities policy in effective operation that precludes discrimination in selecting and dealing with clients in the target group."* Organisations can choose to combine D1.1 and A3.1 into one policy.

3. This policy covers recruitment in order to be compliant with D1.1, but also refers to the recruitment policy, which meets D1.2: *"Open recruitment processes that evaluate skills, knowledge and experience of those applying for posts."*

4. These procedures are not required by the Quality Mark, but it is good employment practice to have them, and they would need to be referred to if a member of staff wilfully and/or consistently did not adhere to the equal opportunities policy.

5. *S*ome organisations that target specific groups may be exempt from certain legislation, eg women's organisations and the Sex Discrimination Act, and your statement will need to reflect this.

Implementing the policy

The Management Committee will be responsible for ensuring that BAA complies with this policy. Keith Dunn, Vice Chair, is the Management Committee member responsible for ensuring the committee is aware of equal opportunities legislation and good practice, including any new developments.

Members of recruitment panels will be made familiar with both this policy and the recruitment and selection procedure, and at least one member of each recruitment panel will have received equal opportunities training.

The co-ordinator and any member of staff with line management responsibilities will attend equal opportunities training. The co-ordinator will have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the equal opportunities policy is followed.

Recruitment and selection

BAA ensures that paid and volunteer vacancies are advertised widely, and where finance permits, paid vacancies will be advertised in a range of media including local and national newspapers, newsletters and other information networks that will reach individuals from under-represented groups: black and minority ethnic press, community centres, women's groups, disability groups, lesbian and gay press etc.

Every application form will include an equal opportunities monitoring form that will be detached from the application form when the application is received. Forms will not be seen by the selection panel until after the shortlisting process.

Shortlisting and selection for paid vacancies will follow the steps listed in the recruitment and selection procedure.

The Management Committee will receive a report on the profile of applicants, shortlisted candidates and successful candidates for each recruitment. This data will be reviewed and the Management Committee will advise on any necessary changes to the recruitment procedure to ensure that it promotes equal opportunities.

The complaints procedure should be followed if an applicant or candidate wishes to complain about any stage of the recruitment and selection process.

Employment

The Management Committee will be responsible for ensuring that employment contracts are consistent with good practice and include allowance for parental, adoption and dependants' leave, religious holidays, and compassionate leave.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware that discriminatory behaviour towards colleagues or users of the service is not acceptable. Inappropriate behaviour or attitudes will be addressed via training and/or, where appropriate, BAA's disciplinary procedure.

Training on equal opportunities issues will be made available to staff, and updates on equal opportunities issues will be covered at staff meetings.

Monitoring and revision

The Management Committee will be responsible for monitoring the equal opportunities policy and revising it as appropriate at the annual review meeting.

Date adopted: October 2001
Date for review: October 2002
MC Signature:

Bankside Advice Agency

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Scope and purpose:

This procedure applies to all staff and Management Committee members. It sets out how Bankside Advice Agency (BAA) will ensure that recruitment is fair and effective and that open recruitment processes evaluate the skills and experience of those applying for posts. (1)

Other relevant policies and procedures:

- staff equal opportunities
- complaints

1. Identifying a vacancy

When a new post is created or a vacancy arises, the co-ordinator will notify the Chair of the Management Committee and a decision will be taken if/when to recruit.

2. Recruitment panel

Once a decision to recruit has been made, a recruitment panel will be appointed. This will normally be the line manager of the post, a representative from the Management Committee, and one other.

3. The recruitment process

Members of the panel should be involved in the following stages:

3.1 Drafting job description and person specification

All job descriptions and person specifications should be based on an evaluation of the skills, knowledge and experience required for the post.

If the post is new, the co-ordinator should prepare draft documents for consideration by the panel.

If an existing post is being recruited to, the co-coordinator should review appraisal and exit records relevant to the duties of the post and notify the panel sub-committee if any significant revisions are required to the existing job description.

1. This summarises how BAA will meet evidence requirement D1.2: *"Open recruitment processes that evaluate skills, knowledge and experience of those applying for posts."*

2. This meets D1.2 guidance that *"advertising, whether internal or external, reflects the job and person specification".*

3. If your organisation anticipates a large number of requests for information/applications and does not have the resources to contact all unsuccessful applicants, your initial materials should stipulate *"if you have not heard by (date) please assume your application has been unsuccessful".*

4. This process will ensure that you can meet the D1.2 guidance that *"interviewing is conducted consistently".*

5. This ensures that you comply with employment legislation and that you can meet D1.2 guidance that *"documentation is retained to provide feedback to candidates and is available for audit. Interviews or assessment notes for all short-listed candidates (whether recruited or not) should be kept for not less than twelve months."*

6. Operating this policy ensures you are able to demonstrate that you meet D1.2 guidance that *"recruitment is fair and effective, with no discrimination, except as allowed within current legislation".*

3.2 Fix timetable for recruitment

The co-ordinator is responsible for liasing with the recruitment panel and setting the timetable. This should allow for a period of at least three weeks from the date on which the advertisement appeared to the closing date for applications, and a further week to contact applicants who have been short-listed for interview.

3.3 Make arrangements for administration

For each vacancy potential applicants should be sent:

- covering letter stating closing date and interview date if known;
- job description and person specification including terms and conditions;
- application form;
- background about the organisation including equal opportunities policy;
- equal opportunities monitoring form.

3.4 Draft and place the advertisement

The recruitment panel is responsible for both drawing up an advertisement that reflects the job description and person specification and deciding where to advertise. Advertisements should be placed as widely as the budget allows and should include media that target under-represented groups. (2)

3.5 Shortlisting

Once applications arrive, staff should remove the front sheet of the application form containing the applicant's name and personal details, and number each application and front sheet. The recruitment panel should not have access to the front sheet, until shortlisted candidates are invited for interview.

The co-ordinator should prepare a shortlisting form based on the person specification criteria. The recruitment panel should meet and score the extent to which each criterion is met by each applicant across the following range:

0	not met
1	partially met
2	fully met

The shortlisting meeting should also consider appropriate methods by which applicants can demonstrate they meet the criteria for the post, ie in which cases compliance can be established via questions in an interview, and in which cases compliance needs to be tested, eg by presentation or case study. The interview questions should be agreed upon at this meeting.

3.6 Notification of shortlisting

All applicants should be informed of the outcome of their initial application and shortlisted candidates should be notified of the date, place, and time of interview and be sent a map. Details of any test or presentation should also be given. (3)

3.7 Interviews

Interviews will be conducted using the interview questions and supplementary prompting questions as appropriate to ensure that each candidate is given the maximum opportunity to demonstrate how they meet the criteria. Questions will be scored in the same way as shortlisting. Tests will be scored. (4)

The panel should use interview sheets. These should be retained by the co-coordinator for a period of twelve months. A summary of the notes should be agreed by the panel for use in feedback to unsuccessful candidates. (5)

4. Offering the post

The panel should decide which candidates are appointable and offer the post to the individual with the highest score. The offer should be made by phone and be made "subject to satisfactory references". The offer should be confirmed in writing following the candidate's acceptance, and receipt of references.

If the candidate does not accept the job offer, other appointable candidates can be approached in order of scoring. This means not contacting other appointable candidates until the first candidate has definitively decided whether or not to accept the offer of employment.

4.1 Take-up of references

References should be taken up for the successful candidate. The start date should be delayed if necessary until satisfactory references have been received.

4.2 Confirm appointment

Once satisfactory references have been received the appointment should be confirmed in writing, and a contract of employment issued.

5. Complaints

If there are any complaints about the recruitment process and procedure, the complainant should be invited to put the complaint in writing to the complaints panel. (6)

Date adopted: October 2001

Date for review: October 2002

MC Signature:

Bankside Advice Agency

Induction Procedure

Scope and purpose:

This procedure applies to all staff and volunteers.

The procedure sets out the induction procedures for BAA. (1)

Forms to be used with this procedure:

- induction form

Other relevant policies and procedures:

- supervision
- training and development

The purpose of induction is to:

- introduce new members of staff and volunteers to Bankside Advice Agency, their colleagues, their job and where appropriate other organisations doing similar or related work;
- enable new members of staff and volunteers to become familiar with those aspects of BAA's working practices and procedures that are relevant to their role within BAA;
- assess the initial training needs of a new member of staff or volunteer.

Who should be inducted

All new members of staff and volunteers undergo an induction programme that follows the relevant sections of the attached checklist. On occasion, this checklist may need adding to or amending in order to meet the specific needs of particular workers joining BAA. (2)

Who is responsible for ensuring induction is carried out?

The co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that wherever possible all elements of the induction programme are covered within the following timescales:

Position	**Timescale (within date of job start)**
Caseworker (full-time)	2 weeks
Caseworker (part-time)	4 weeks
Volunteer	4 weeks
Co-ordinator	2 weeks

1. This procedure ensures you can meet evidence requirement D2.1: "*Induction procedures for people who join the organisation.*"

2. This matches D2.1 guidance that "*the core induction process will generally be consistent across the various job types within the organisation. Where specific employees need an individual approach this should be documented on file where appropriate. Any new adviser recruited to undertake legal advice work should have an understanding of core procedures*". "Specific needs" refers to particular jobs such as development work, or specific needs such as loop or minicom facilities for deaf people.

Induction Checklist

Name:		Position:		Start date:	

General (for all staff):

Item	How covered	Responsibility	Date completed (or N/A)
About BAA: • Brief history of organisation • Current services provided • Current funding • Current structure • Affiliations/Memberships • Ethos			
Premises, including location of: • Fire exits, means of escape, assembly point, extinguishers • Toilets • Tea/coffee/lunch facilities • First-aid box • Accident book • Keys/opening/closing office • Stationery			
Introduction to other members of staff and volunteers			
Introduction to MC members			
Conditions of service and any administrative arrangements for: • Timekeeping • Holidays • Salary scales • Pay/expenses • Sickness/notification of sickness • Team meetings			
Health and safety including fire drill and First Aiders			
Use of equipment: • PC • Relevant software • Fax • Photocopier • Telephones/minicom/ansaphone			

Financial practice and procedures: • Expenses • Petty cash • Cheque requisition/ authorisation			
Supervision			
Appraisal			
Training and development			
Scheduled events: • Team meetings • In-house training • Courses booked • Social events			

Induction Pack including:

Item	**How covered**	**Responsibility**	**Date completed (or N/A)**
Copy of this checklist			
Copies of core policies covering confidentiality, equal opportunities, complaints, and health and safety.			
In addition (depending on relevance to role): • Latest annual report • Service plan • Minutes of last team meeting • Minutes of last MC meeting • Decision-making structure, key personnel and their areas of responsibility			

Advice work:

Item	How covered	Responsibility	Date completed (or N/A)
Office manual and how to use it			
Quality Mark and how to maintain it including as appropriate: • Ongoing casework competence requirements • Ongoing supervisor requirements			
Links with external organisations: • Role of/our relationship with CLSP [*clarify?]* • Identify other relevant links			
Meeting with casework supervisor or twelve-hour caseworker, as appropriate			
Assess immediate training needs			
Information/library resources			
Ensure clear understanding of procedure and/or practice in the following areas:			
• Supervision and allocation of cases			
• File review			
• Conflict of interest			
• File organisation and management			
• Information for clients			
• Key dates			
• Case recording			
• Services of others			
• Active signposting and referral			
• Updating legal information			
• Independent advice			
• Client feedback			

Item	How covered	Responsibility	Date completed (or N/A)
• Complaints/professional indemnity insurance			
• Standard letters, forms and pro-formas			
• Diary and appointment systems			
• Taking/recording/passing on messages			

Questions raised:
Notes:

Signature of new staff member:	Date:
Signature of co-ordinator	Date:

Copies of completed form to: new staff member and supervisor

Date adopted: October 2001

Date for review: October 2002

MC Signature:

Bankside Advice Agency

Appraisal Procedure

Scope and purpose:

This procedure applies to all staff and volunteers.

The procedure outlines the systems for annual review/feedback on personal performance. (1)

Forms to be used with this procedure:

- appraisal preparation form
- appraisal record form (2)

Other relevant policies and procedures:

- file review
- supervision
- training and development

The purpose of an appraisal is to:

- evaluate the work of individual members of staff;
- identify and plan personal development;
- review job descriptions;
- ensure members of staff are receiving the resources and support necessary to carry out their role effectively.

Who has appraisals?

- all members of staff, both paid and volunteer

Who will carry out appraisals?

Staff Member	Appraised by:
Sara	Chair of MC
Dexter	Sara
Raheel	Sara
Cynthia	Sara
Sean	Dexter
Dolores	Dexter

The co-ordinator's appraisal will be carried out by the Chair of the Management Committee following the same procedure described below.

1. See requirement D2.2: "*Systems for review/feedback on personal performance to be undertaken at least annually and recorded.*"
2. This ensures appraisal is recorded as required by D2.2.
3. This ensures that appraisal is a two-way process, as suggested by D2.2 guidance. You may want to extend this process by asking the appraiser to complete a preparation form. This form could be an amended version of the preparation form appended to this sample procedure.
4. This format would ensure that BAA addresses the guidance that the appraisal system is *"able to relate the performance of the individual to the needs of the service"* and is *"able to identify training needs as well as set objectives"* (D2.2 guidance).

Timing of appraisal

Appraisals will take place:

- at a mutually convenient time;
- giving sufficient notice for both parties to prepare;
- annually;
- in the case of new staff and volunteers, within nine to twelve months of their start date.

What to bring to an appraisal interview

- preparation form (see next section)
- job description
- training and development plan
- training record
- previous year's appraisal record (if applicable)

Preparation form

The member of staff being appraised will be given a preparation form three weeks before the appraisal meeting and will be asked to consider and make a response to each section. A copy of the completed preparation form will be returned to the appraiser one working week before the appraisal meeting. (3)

Format of appraisal

Comments from the preparation form and any goals agreed at the previous year's appraisal will form the basis of the meeting. The other documents listed above will be referred to where applicable.

The meeting is likely to last around one hour and will be conducted in confidential surroundings. The appraiser will lead a discussion based on the areas set out in the preparation form. Any training needs identified should be recorded in the appraisee's training and development plan and also identified as goals on the appraisal record. (4)

Appraisal records

A mutually agreed record of the outcomes of the appraisal will be made using the appraisal record form. A copy of the record will be given to the appraisee within two weeks of the meeting. The appraiser and appraisee should sign the record if/when it is agreed. One copy will be kept on the staff member's file and a second copy will be provided to the appraisee.

If any of the appraisal content (eg an objective that can only be met with the involvement of others) needs to be discussed with any other members of staff or in a team meeting, this will be agreed by both parties prior to any such discussion.

Date adopted: October 2001

Date for review: October 2002

MC Signature:

Appraisal Preparation Form

1. For the period under review, what were you expecting to achieve and did you?
2. What parts of the job have gone well and why?
3. What areas have not gone so well and why?
4. How should the job description be changed (if at all)?

5. Is there any area of work you can identify that you need to improve?
6. What would you say were your objectives for the next review period? What needs to be achieved, by when?
7. What specific help/support/training or development initiatives would help you to achieve these work objectives?

Staff Appraisal Record Form

Name:	**Date of last review:**
Appraiser's name:	**Date of current review:**
Date started with BAA:	

1. Summary of objectives and results in the review period	
Objective	**Result**
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	

2. Comment on those areas in which performance has been of a high standard during the review period.
3. In which areas have things not gone well and why?
4. Are there any items no longer appropriate to include in the job description? Any items left out that should be in?
5. List the agreed tasks/objectives and dates for achievement over the next twelve months

Task/Objective	How will this be achieved?	Target date
a.		
b.		

c.		
d.		
6. What help/support/or training can be provided to enable the member of staff achieve these objectives?		
7. Appraisee’s comments:		

Record prepared by:
Record agreed by:
Date:

Bankside Advice Agency

Training and Development Policy

Scope and purpose

This procedure applies to all staff who provide advice to clients.

The procedure describes how the training and development needs of advice workers will be met.

Forms to be used with this procedure:

- training and development plan
- training record

Other relevant policies and procedures:

- supervision
- appraisal

Who does this procedure cover?

This procedure applies to the training and development needs of all staff in the organisation who provide advice to clients. Although administrative staff provide basic information to clients at reception, they are not formally covered by this policy. The admin team will be updated on relevant issues at staff meetings or via memos, and are expected to use appropriate reference materials such as the CLS Directory when signposting clients.

This procedure aims to ensure that:

- all advice staff receive training which enables them to maintain and enhance their professional competence;
- all advice staff take active steps to identify their own development needs;
- advisers are up to date with current legal issues and tactical approaches;
- identification of training needs is integrated into the day-to-day work of the advice service.

BAA is committed to ensuring that advisers receive timely and appropriate training and that the skills and knowledge individuals gain is cascaded through the organisation.

1. This ensures that BAA are able to meet the D2.3 requirement: *“Training and development plans to support the needs of the service, reviewed annually.”*
2. This will ensure that there is a link between training plans and appraisal, as suggested by the guidance to D2.3.
3. This section ensures that requirement D2.4 is met: *“All training to be recorded on training records.*”

Access to training is vital both for the professional development of individual workers and as a means of safeguarding the accuracy of the advice that BAA provides to its clients.

Identification of training needs

Training needs will be identified by the following means:

- Initial training needs of new advice staff will be assessed at induction, and an individual training plan will be completed for each new worker.
- After any agreed post-induction training, specific further training needs will be discussed at supervision meetings and if identified as urgent will be dealt with immediately.
- Discussion of longer-term training needs will be included in annual appraisals.
- Changes to service agreed in the annual service review will be assessed to identify what further training staff will need to carry these out.
- Advisers are responsible for identifying relevant changes in legislation and for cascading this knowledge to other advice staff on a rota basis.
- Advisers should identify gaps in their knowledge and skills as these become apparent in their daily work, and raise these at supervision meetings.

Meeting training needs

A variety of training methods will be used: in-house sessions, reading relevant books, journals and handouts, distance learning packages, observation of appointments/advice sessions (shadowing) and external courses.

Training and development plans (1)

The supervisor will draw up a training and development plan for each individual worker during the induction period.

Training plans will be based on the job description issued for the individual worker.

In drawing up a training plan, the supervisor and adviser will:

- identify the skills and knowledge required from the job description;
  review existing skills and knowledge to identify which requirements have been met to date;
- record any gaps in skills and knowledge on the training plan and provide plans of how they will be filled.

The training plan will be updated at supervision meetings on the basis of any new needs identified.

The supervisor and adviser will review the objectives of the initial training plan after six months, at probationary review, to ensure that its aims have been or are about to be met.

The training plan will be reviewed at the annual appraisal in the light of the yearly review of service strategy. (2)

Training records (3)

Each member of staff has a training record that records training undertaken. This is kept with their training plan in an individual training folder. After attending any training, either in-house or external, advisers must enter the date and title of the course on the training record and a brief assessment of the course. The supervisor will refer to the training record in supervision sessions.

Annual review

Information from the annual review of individual training plans will be integrated into an organisation-wide annual training review. This will be conducted as soon after the annual review of service as practicable.

Date adopted: October 2001

Date for review: October 2002

MC Signature:

Training Plan

Name:			
Post:			
Date of Plan:		**Date of Review:**	

Skills and knowledge	**Training need identified**	**How need will be met**

Staff Training Record

Name:...

Date/s	Training description	Evaluation

Bankside Advice Agency

Supervision Procedure

Scope and purpose

This procedure applies to all staff who provide advice to clients.

The procedure describes the supervision and support arrangements necessary to enhance and maintain the quality of advice delivered at BAA. (1)

Forms to be used with this procedure:

- individual supervision record (2)

Other relevant policies and procedures: (3)

- appraisal
- training and development
- file review

Who does this policy cover?

This policy describes the supervision arrangements for all staff who provide advice to clients, either at drop-in/reception sessions or by telephone, home visit, outreach or appointment. Centre reception staff are covered by a different supervision policy, as they provide information only. Reception staff at the Day Centre are covered by their own supervision procedure that complies with BAA's own procedures. Different supervisory arrangements apply to different areas of work.

Who supervises what?

Welfare benefits and debt

Dexter is the nominated caseworker for welfare benefits and will supervise welfare benefits work. Sam is the nominated caseworker for debt.

Subject to availability, Dexter or Sam is the first point of contact for queries in their casework areas.

If either Dexter or Sam is not available, welfare benefits and debt queries can be raised with Sara, who is the nominated deputy supervisor in these areas. Arrangements are in place to ensure that where an adviser has a query in one of these areas during a drop-in session that Raheel is supervising, he will refer them either to Sara or Dexter, who, if not on-site, will be available by phone. (4)
Sara has overall responsibility for general supervision of staff at BAA. (5)

1. BAA has drawn up this procedure to meet both requirement D4 for all its General Help subject areas and requirement D5 for those areas it delivers at General Help with Casework level.
2. The Quality Mark does not require organisations to record supervision but auditors will want to see evidence that it is happening.
3. It is good practice, and you will find it useful, to create a link between supervision, file review, training and appraisal – supervision should be increased if file reviews raise issues of concern, for example.
4. These arrangements ensure that staff are able to access supervision.
5. This demonstrates how BAA meet D4.1: *"organisations identify at least one person responsible for supervising individuals that work with clients", and D4.2: "where there is more than one person identified as the supervisor there must be at least one person ultimately responsible for meeting the requirement of the standard."*

Housing, consumer and employment

Sara is the nominated supervisor for housing, consumer and employment enquiries and casework.

When Sara is unavailable, Raheel and Dexter act as deputy housing, consumer and employment supervisors.

Day-to-day support

These arrangements apply whenever there is direct scheduled contact between an adviser and a client, ie when drop-in sessions, telephone sessions or appointments are taking place.

A duty supervisor (either Sara, Dexter, Sam or Raheel) will be either present or otherwise contactable during and immediately after periods of client contact. For outreach sessions, this will mean being at the other end of a telephone. Supervisors' diary and contact details will be posted on the staff notice board.

Although different supervisors have different areas of expertise, any duty supervisor will be able to provide basic support as a minimum on any query an adviser raises.

If a welfare benefits or debt query is raised when Sara or Raheel is acting as duty supervisor, they will feed back the advice they provided to the adviser to the relevant supervisor and also pass on a copy of the relevant enquiry sheet/case record to them on their return, so that they retain overall supervisory control.

Advisers should speak to the supervisor if:

- they have any queries about how to advise on a case;
- they feel the case is too complex for their skills and experience. (6)

If the duty supervisor judges that an adviser cannot continue to advise on a query raised by a client at a drop-in session even with supervisory support, they will either pass the client to another adviser or deal with the enquiry themselves.

Although the daily supervision needs of staff will vary according to experience, the basic message is "if in doubt consult". Supervisors would much rather that an adviser asks for confirmation of what they believe to be correct advice even on fairly basic queries than that they exceed their knowledge because they don't want to bother someone else by asking for help.

Outreach sessions

Any adviser staffing an outreach session at the Day Centre will have remote access via telephone to a supervisor or deputy in the relevant area/category.

6. This ensures that the procedure covers evidence requirement D3.3: *"All staff are aware of the need to inform the supervisor if the case is beyond their capabilities.*"
7. This ensures that BAA meets D4.4: "*A supervision system that is tailored to the skills of the individual"* as they can increase or decrease supervision according to the adviser's needs.
8. This ensures that BAA meets D4.3: *"A method of allocating cases/enquiries to advisers/caseworkers according to their abilities*."
9. The inclusion of an agenda item in these meetings to allow for discussion of recent relevant legal changes ensures that BAA meets D3.5: *"Process for giving timely information to relevant staff about changes in the law pertinent to their service delivery."*

Individual supervision arrangements

All staff will have an individual monthly supervision session with either Sara or Dexter. Dexter will lead sessions with Sean and Dolores and any other volunteers who work for the organisation, and Sara will lead sessions with Raheel and Cynthia. The frequency of these supervision sessions can vary. (7)

The supervisor and adviser will discuss the following matters:

1. current caseload;
2. cases closed since last session – file references and outcomes (if known);
3. any areas of interest or concern related to individual cases or enquiries;
4. file review results;
5. training and development needs;
6. instances of unmet client need for legal or other assistance.

The outcome of the session will be recorded on a supervision record form, and signed by both parties to agree the record. The supervisor will file the original in the supervision file kept in a locked cabinet in the managers' office, and will provide the adviser with a copy.

Casework allocation

Allocation of cases will be based both on an adviser's current caseload and on their individual skills and experience. (8)

If an adviser feels that they are unable to continue advising on a case because they have reached the limits of their competence, they should raise this with their supervisor so that the case can either be promptly reallocated internally or referred to another organisation. This should be done at the earliest opportunity.

Monthly team meetings (9)

All advice staff attend a team meeting once a month, which will include the following agenda items:

discussion of any recent relevant legal changes;
report-back from any training staff have attended – arrangements to cascade information internally where appropriate will be made;
highlighting of any changes to office policies and procedures;
best practice group discussion – tactics on how to deal with enquiries/cases;
discussion of issues coming out of articles in current editions of relevant journals;
unmet need – canvassing suggestions;
social policy – current agreed topics to monitor and report back on.

Appraisal

As staff manager, Sara will look through individual supervision records to identify issues to raise at advisers' annual appraisals.

Date adopted: October 2001

Date for review: October 2002

MC Signature:

Supervision Meetings – Agenda and Record

Supervisor:	
Adviser:	
Date:	

Current caseload (including cases closed since last session):
Areas of interest/concern related to individual cases or enquiries and instances of unmet client need:
Feedback from file review and supervision:
Training needs identified and action to be taken:

Bankside Advice Agency

Information Resources Policy

Scope and purpose

This policy outlines the information systems and resources available to staff, and provides details of how these are maintained and updated. (1)

Reference materials

BAA maintains a library of up-to-date handbooks, reference books and legislation to assist advice staff in researching and conducting advice. (2)

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that there is a written list of standard reference material for each area that the organisation advises on. The following reference materials are held:

- CPAG's Welfare Benefits Handbook
- Disability Rights Handbook
- CPAG Council Tax Handbook
- CPAG Fuel Rights Handbook
- CPAG Child Support Handbook
- LAG Employment Law Handbook
- LAG Homelessness and Allocations
- LAG Repairs: Tenants' Rights

The supervisor is responsible for deciding at least once a year which reference materials the organisation requires. This review will evaluate whether any materials used are out of date and need to be replaced. (3)

Extra copies of frequently used material may need to be ordered if workers cannot gain sufficient access to the information they need and have no other suitable alternative at hand.

Updating materials (4)

The administrator will be responsible for ensuring all materials are up-to-date.

Periodicals and subscriptions

BAA subscribes to relevant journals and publications to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of changes in legislation, practices and case law.

1. This policy meets requirement D3.4: *"Ready access to relevant legal reference material as documented by service providers and a method of regular updating."*
2. BAA has identified what legal resources are needed for each advice subject, depending on the level of work being delivered.
3. If the service changes and advice given becomes more in depth, this may affect the range and content of the books needed.
4. You may want to include more detail in this section about how you regularly update materials.
5. This ensures that BAA has a mechanism to guarantee that advice resources are accurate and appropriate to services provided.

The current list is:

- *Adviser*
- *Legal Action*

Internet access

Advisers can use the internet at any time during the working day to access sites that may assist them with cases. These include:

www.rightsnet.org.uk – a website with caselaw and legislation updates for welfare rights advisers

www.dwp.gov.uk – the site of the Department for Work and Pensions

www.irs-review.org.uk – Social Fund Independent Review Service

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/menus/credits.htm – Inland Revenue tax credits

www.shelternet.org.uk – information on housing problems written for the public

www.homelesspages.org.uk – guide to information about homelessness

Websites and other sources of electronic information will be reviewed at least once a year to check for accuracy and to assess whether they are updated with sufficient frequency.

Second-tier services

Staff are encouraged to contact relevant consultancy services to which they have free access. Details of these services will be maintained by the administrator and displayed on the staff noticeboard.

Leaflets and forms

The administrator is responsible for ordering and maintaining stocks of leaflets and forms. S/he keeps a list of the leaflets that are displayed in the reception interview areas. S/he should also be responsible for ensuring that copies of forms and leaflets are current and updating where necessary.

Monitoring (5)

The supervisor will make an annual assessment of information needs and resources and use the results to inform the annual service review. Equally, the outcome of the annual service review could have implications for information needs and resources.

Advisers should inform the supervisor in the relevant area if they find materials that are inaccurate or could be misleading, so that appropriate action can be taken, ie contacting the publisher.

Date adopted: October 2001

Date for review: October 2002

MC Signature:

Getting further help

Network contacts

Management Helpline DIAL UK St Catherine's Hospital Tickhill Road, Balby Doncaster DN4 8QN 01302 310123	James Kenrick Youth Access 1a Taylors Yard Alderbrook Road London SW12 8AD 020 8772 9900
John Mulligan Federation of Information and Advice Services 4 Deans Court St Paul's Churchyard London EC4V 5AA 020 7489 1800	Citizens Advice Myddelton House 115-123 Pentonville Road London N1 9LZ Bureau Management Consultancy Line 0845 120 2035 CLS Consultancy Line 020 7833 7046/7134
Law Centres Federation 18-19 Warren Street London W1P 5DB 020 7387 8570	Tricia Euston Shelter 3rd Floor, Ludgate Chambers Ludgate Hill Leeds LS2 7HZ 0113 2455030
JJ Costello Shelter Cymru 25 Walter Road Swansea SA1 5NN 01792 469400	John Edwards Age Concern England 1268 London Road London SW16 4ER 020 8765 7468

Legal Services Commission contacts

You can also contact your regional LSC office. If you aren't sure which area you are in, any regional office should be able to direct you to the one for your area. For queries about the Quality Mark **only**, you can email the LSC at sdg.issues@legalservices.gov.uk.

London Regional Office 29/37 Red Lion Street London WC1R 4PP 020 7759 1500	North Western Regional Office 2nd Floor, Elisabeth House 16 St Peter Square Manchester M2 3DA 0161 244 5000
South Eastern Regional Office 3rd/4th Floor Invicta House Trafalgar House Brighton BN1 4FR 01273 878800	North Eastern Regional Office Eagle Star House Fenkle Street Newcastle NE1 5RU 0191 244 5800
Southern Regional Office 80 King's Road Reading RG1 4LT 0118 955 8600	Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Office City House New Station Road Leeds LS1 4JS 0113 390 7300
South Western Regional Office 33/35 Queens Square Bristol BS1 4LU 0117 302 3000	East Midlands Regional Office Fothergill House 16 King Street Nottingham NG1 2AS 0115 908 4200
Wales Regional Office Marland House Central Square Cardiff CF1 1PF 029 2064 7100	Eastern Regional Office 62-68 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 1LA 01223 417800
West Midlands Regional Office City Centre Podium 5 Hill Street Birmingham B5 4UD 0121 665 4700	Merseyside Regional Office Cavern Walks 8 Mathew Street Liverpool L2 6RE 0151 242 5200

Project Adviser: Kem Herbert
Project Consultant: Audrey MacDonald
Project Consultant: Patrick Torsney

community legal service
Support

Advice Services Alliance
12th Floor, New London Bridge House
25 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9ST

www.asauk.org.uk
Fax: 020 7407 6822

Telephone and email consultancy

Consultancy line: 0870 7700 447   Email: cls.support@asauk.org.uk

The line will be open at the following times:

Monday	3 pm – 5 pm
Tuesday	10 am – 12 pm
Wednesday	10 am – 12 pm
Thursday	10 am – 12 pm

Consultancy will be provided to individual agencies on issues relating to Quality Mark and Community Legal Service Partnerships. We will be able to advise agencies that have applied, or are considering applying for the Quality Mark, with the focus being on issues relating to the General Help level and above. We will also be able to advise on CLS General Civil Contracts. Our intention is to tailor our support as closely as possible to the nature and requirements of individual agencies.

The consultancy line is staffed by the project advisers, who will answer enquiries at first contact wherever possible. Where further research needs to be carried out in order to answer an enquiry, callers will be informed when they are likely to receive a reply and will be contacted at that time for an update if a full response is still not possible. The project advisers will aim to send any further written information to enquirers within five working days.

Training and Seminars

CLS Support provides training and seminars on both Quality Mark and contracting issues. For further information, including details of costs, please either contact us on the consultancy line or log on to our website.

Briefings

Our current programme of briefings is listed on the following page. Quality Mark briefings will deal with requirements at all Quality Mark levels to which the briefing topic relates. The order of priority of briefings is subject to consultation with subscribers – please complete and return the attached briefings feedback form to give us your views.

The LSC has agreed to subsidise the cost of briefings initially. Currently therefore, briefings will be free to Not-for-Profit organisations who are members of the major advice networks, while private solicitors, non-networked organisations and local authorities will be required to pay a subscription fee.

Email and Internet

You can also send your enquiries by email. A project adviser will respond to you within five working days. We request that you include a contact telephone number with your enquiry so we can call you back to obtain further information if necessary.
The ASA website includes a What's New page with Quality Mark and contracting updates, access to electronic versions of a limited number of our briefings, and details of our current training courses.

Briefings

Series 1: The Quality Mark

1	**Introduction to the Quality Mark**
2	**Client Feedback**
3	**Independent File Review**
4	**Conflict of Interest**
5	**Service Planning**
6	**People Management – Sample Procedures**
	Signposting and referral
	Case management and client care
	File Management

Series 2: The General Civil Contract

1	**Separate matters and Work that can count against contracts**
2	**Contract reporting arrangements – SPAN**
3	**Changes to Eligibility**
4	**Disbursements**
	Employing a solicitor for the first time
	The Contract
	Cost Assessment
	Time Standards
	Sufficient Benefit Test

Please note that the titles in italics are not yet published. Both the running order and the titles themselves are subject to alteration. We aim to respond to the changing priorities and needs of our readers as identified from any feedback received. We will also take into account any new developments in the Quality Mark.

Franchising Support Project Briefings

A limited number of the following briefings published by the Franchising Support Project are still available. When current stocks run out, they will not be reprinted, as they will be superseded by the CLS Support briefings listed above.

<u>Not for Profit Sector Briefings</u> – all of these are correct as at date published

No. 7	The Contract Rules**
No. 9	General Civil Contract: the Framework – The Access to Justice Act 1999
No. 10	Funding Code and Other Levels of Service

<u>New Agency (Phase Two Pilot) Briefings</u> – although out of date these still contain relevant points

No. 22	Designating contract work and time recording**
No. 24	The Contract**
No. 26	Survey Findings: the transition to block contracting and BriefCase

** These briefings are only applicable to agencies that have, or are applying for, the Specialist Help Quality Mark*
*** These briefings are only applicable to agencies who have, or are applying for, a CLS fund contract*

BRIEFING FEEDBACK SHEET
CLS Support Project Quality Mark Briefing No. 6

Please let us have your views on this briefing and whether there are other aspects of the Quality Mark, General Civil Contracts or the Community Legal Service on which you would like more briefings. Feedback from your organisation will help us make future briefings as relevant and easy to follow as possible.

Did you find this briefing helpful?...... ....

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Do you have suggestions for any changes that might have made it more useful to you?
If yes, please specify:

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Were there issues that you expected to be covered in this briefing and about which you want to know more? If yes, please say what these are:

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Are there other aspects of the Quality Mark, General Civil Contracts or the Community Legal Service on which future briefings would be useful?
If yes, please list below in order of importance:

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Your name:.. Tel: ....

Email:...

Name/address of your agency: ....

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Please return to: Advice Services Alliance, CLS Support Project, 12th Floor, New London Bridge House, 25 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9ST or email **cls.support@asauk.org.uk** subject line " Quality Mark Briefing No. 6 Feedback”