



**Welcoming, Well Managed,
Safe and Inclusive**

The Quality Standards

**Revised information for sharing after the
closure of the Open Doors Project**

The Open Doors Project

The Open Doors Project was managed by the Ouseburn Trust and ran from 2012 to March 2016. It worked to build the capacity of people in the local community to manage community buildings and assets.

The project developed quality assurance standards around welcoming, well managed, safe and inclusive community buildings. This work was developed with a steering group of representatives from the local community and voluntary sector organisations and local authority.

The Open Doors standards set out the level of performance expected from community buildings that were awarded the Open Doors Charter Mark. This was seen as a stepping stone to schemes such as Community Matters Pre-visible and Visible. The Charter Mark was piloted with a number of organisations between 2012 and 2014. Resources, training and support were provided to complete the assessments, produce and implement action plans.

These standards have been reviewed and are now shared as a useful checklist for organisations that manage community buildings.

Open Doors Project
Ouseburn Trust
Arch 6, Stepney Bank
Ouseburn Valley
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 2NP

Tel. 0191 2616596
www.opendoorsnewcastle.org.uk
www.ouseburntrust.org.uk

Introduction to the Open Doors Standards

Community buildings exist to serve their community, whether that is a local geographic community or a 'community of interest'. These buildings are operated by a management committee (who may also be the trustees).

The practice identified in these standards ensures that the management committee meet their legal obligations as well as providing an environment that meets the expectations of the community, regulators and other potential partners.

Within each standard there are a number of criteria which are grouped into key areas.

The Process of Self Assessment

The self-assessment process used within the original charter mark pilot involved identifying to what extent the organisation met the specific criteria and then recording the evidence to support this assessment.

If you chose to use this process than assessment is best undertaken by more than one individual and setting up a small working group for each standard is recommended. This is in order to get different perspectives and to identify more evidence and examples than just one person would be aware of on their own.

You could use the Open Doors Community Building Handbook template to record the evidence and information from your assessments. The benefit of producing this handbook is that it will ensure consistency within the organisation and ongoing continuity as new people become involved in managing the building.

Following the self assessment the working group should be able to identify any gaps in practice that need to be addressed. An action plan will then be produced which records the areas for improvement and the actions that will be taken.

The **Open Doors Quality Standards** was produced by
the Ouseburn Trust



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

Ouseburn Trust

Arch 6 , Stepney Bank, Ouseburn
Valley , Newcastle upon
Tyne, NE1 2NP
Phone 0191 261 6596
admin@ouseburntrust.org.uk
www.ouseburntrust.org.uk

Welcoming

Welcoming

A community building that is welcoming is a place where people want to be and are happy to return to. A clean and pleasant environment helps people feel safe and gives them a sense of pride and belonging. This enhances the health and wellbeing of the community and reduces the risk of crime and antisocial behaviour.

A welcoming environment attracts more people and the venue becomes a place where the community can socialise, learn and develop. As the needs and expectations of the local community change over time it is important to get feedback about how welcoming people find the venue and anything which might put them off using the facilities. This helps management committees to identify where to make changes and invest time and resources. It ensures that community buildings remain relevant and attract the people and funds that they need to keep going.

Community buildings which are welcoming

- Provide an environment that looks and feels welcoming
- Have facilities that are easy to get to and to get around
- Ensure volunteers and workers value all individuals who use the facilities
- Have systems in place to monitor and evaluate the experiences and expectations of people using the building

Please note that throughout this section the terms ‘committee’ and ‘committee members’ also refers to organisations where the management committee are the trustees.

1. An environment that looks and feels welcoming

- Clear signage shows people how to get into the building and where to go once they get in
- The area around the building is clean, tidy and welcoming
- Everyone involved in running the building understands the importance of ensuring that the building is welcoming
- There is a cleaning schedule and all areas are cleaned regularly
- Waste is collected regularly, stored safely and disposed of appropriately
- The building is comfortable, light and airy
- All storage is clearly labelled and the rooms are tidy and free from clutter
- There is a regular visual inspection of furniture and fittings to identify any damage and need for removal, repairs or replacement

2. Facilities that are easy to get to and get around

- The pathways and entrances to the building are free from obstruction and easily accessed
- Reasonable adjustments are made to allow people with disabilities and/or additional needs to use the building and facilities
- There is signage within the building to ensure that people can identify where they are and where they need to be
- When people are in the building they can move around easily and safely
- The management committee have developed and adopted an access statement which demonstrates a commitment to give all members of the community the opportunity to access the building and activities
- The management committee discuss physical access and other access issues on a regular basis

3. Valuing all individuals who use the facilities

- All people are greeted politely and promptly
- There is an identified reception and an area where visitors can wait
- People who cover the reception and/or greet visitors know how to find their way around the building and can direct people appropriately
- People who cover the reception and/or greet visitors have information about the activities and the people based in the building and they can contact appropriate people for help and support
- Volunteers and staff behave in a way that makes people feel welcome and at ease
- Volunteers and staff are able to manage the expectations of people using or planning to use the building
- Volunteers and staff involve new people in a way that encourages them to use the facilities and return to the building
- There is a procedure for resolving problems which is understood and used by volunteers and staff
- There is a code of conduct and the expected behaviour of people using the building is made explicit
- Appropriate training and/or induction relating to managing difficult behaviour is made available for all volunteers, workers and members of the management committee (and/or trustees)
- Incident recording mechanisms are used and monitored

4. Systems to monitor and evaluate the experiences and expectations of people using the building

- People are asked about their experiences of using the building and how welcoming they find it
- People using the building can easily make suggestions or complaints about activities and facilities
- Suggestions and complaints are considered by the management committee and acted upon

Well Managed

Well managed

Community buildings which are well managed are easier to run, maintain and finance. Good management is about ensuring that the building, facilities and activities are provided in a way that meets legal, regulatory and contractual requirements. It is about being accountable to a range of different people including volunteers, staff, users of the building, funders, regulators and the wider public.

Community buildings are managed by a group of identified or elected people; these people are volunteers and are usually referred to as the management committee (and/or trustees). The Charity Commission recommends that this should not be less than three people. These people are legally responsible for the management of the building and all activities that take place within it. There will be a set of 'rules' that state how the management committee must organise themselves in order to be good custodians of the organisation. Although management committees can delegate some tasks to paid staff, they remain ultimately responsible for the safe running and sustainability of the organisation.

Clarity and agreement about the purpose of the building and who it is for will ensure that the management committee work co-operatively and effectively. Because of the many different people involved in community buildings and their varying expectations it is important to avoid the potential for misunderstanding. This is achieved by allocating clear roles and having policies and procedures which are understood and implemented. These should be reviewed at regular intervals.

This standard also covers financial management. It is important that the organisation has the cash-flow to meet all its financial commitments. In addition it is necessary to ensure that the funds of the organisation are kept safely and protected for use of the organisation and its beneficiaries.

Community buildings that are well managed have

- A clear management structure
- Processes and procedures for the management of the buildings and activities
- Appropriate levels of management for volunteers
- Active management of staff
- Processes and procedures for the management of finances

Please note that throughout this section the terms 'committee' and 'committee members' also refers to organisations where the management committee are the trustees.

1. A clear management structure

- Committee members understand the legal structure of the organisation and their associated responsibilities
- Committee members have identified roles and responsibilities
- Committee members understand their responsibilities in relation to organisational and operational liabilities, these include:
 - Health and safety legislation
 - Child protection and safeguarding
 - Employment legislation
 - Equality and diversity
 - Data protection
 - Charity Commission and Company House (for incorporated charities) requirements
- Committee members know when and where to get additional support and expert advice
- There are appropriate governing documents and / or rules for the committee, these include a statement on how decisions will be made
- There is a schedule of regular planned management committee meetings with an agenda agreed in advance
- There is an identified chair person for the management committee meeting and the meetings are minuted
- There is an understanding of the different roles of the management committee members, volunteers and paid staff
- Committee members understand, declare and record conflicts of interest
- There is a committee member information pack which is used to recruit and inform new members
- The Committee know what skills that they have between them which help them run the building and seek to recruit new committee members to fill any gaps
- There is an induction programme and written checklist for new committee members to include the roles and responsibilities of committee members, health and safety, safeguarding and site specific safety training
- Ongoing training and development opportunities are sought for committee members

2. Processes and procedures for the management of the buildings and activities

- The building is managed in accordance with the requirements of any lease
- The building is maintained and repaired in accordance with the requirements of any lease
- There is a maintenance schedule and long-term maintenance plan
- There is a clear and transparent booking system
- There are clear “Terms and Conditions for the Hire of the Building” which are shared with all existing and potential hirers
- A signed agreement is in place for all lettings
- All lettings have their own public liability insurance
- There is appropriate insurance and licences in place for activities
- All areas let out are regularly checked for damage, wear and tear, etc.
- Where the management committee deliver activities directly for the community there is a plan or schedule for the delivery of these activities
- Activity plans are reviewed on a regular basis
- The management committee, staff and volunteers plan ahead so that when people leave they are able to maintain the required level of service
- Potential emergency situations that stop or affect the ability to deliver services are identified and a contingency action plan agreed

3. Appropriate levels of management for volunteers

- There is a clear distinction between the roles and expectations of volunteers and those of paid staff
- The organisation has a clear understanding of how volunteers can make a contribution and seek to recruit volunteers from the community on a regular basis.
- The organisation ensures that volunteers are included within its insurance cover
- There is a recruitment process for volunteers which includes seeking references and undertaking DBS checks, where appropriate
- There is an identified person(s) with responsibility for volunteers and each volunteer knows who that person is
- Volunteer agreements are in place; these state what the volunteer can expect from the organisation and what the organisation expects of volunteers
- All new volunteers have induction and where required training in the organisation's health and safety policies and procedures and safeguarding policies and procedures and site safety
- Volunteers are asked for their feedback and ideas on how the organisation can improve and develop the facilities and activities
- Volunteers are asked for feedback on their experiences of volunteering with the organisation
- The contribution of volunteers is recognised
- Volunteer records are properly maintained and securely kept.

4. Managing Staff (if applicable)

- The management committee have an understanding of the areas that employment legislation covers and know where to seek expert advice
- There is a clear distinction between the roles and expectations of paid staff and those of volunteers
- Recruitment and selection policies and procedures (which are in line with the employment legislation) are in place and are implemented.
- The recruitment process includes checking DBS (where appropriate), references, qualifications and eligibility to work in the UK
- The organisation has appropriate employee liability insurance
- All staff have a contract of employment
- Staff have clear role descriptions and an understanding of their responsibilities (including line management)
- Staff know who their line manager is and have regular support meetings with that line manager
- Where there are sufficient staff consideration is given to the profile of personnel and whether it reflects local diversity
- All new staff have induction and training which covers the organisation's health and safety policies and procedures, safeguarding policies and procedures and site security
- Ongoing training and development is encouraged
- Staff records are properly maintained and kept secure

5. Processes and procedures for the management of finances

- There are clear policies and procedures related to the day to day management of money within the organisation. These include guidance on:
 - authorisation of expenditure
 - authorisation of the payment of invoices
 - payment of expenses
 - cheque signatories
 - petty cash procedures
 - the process for raising invoices and chasing up any that are unpaid
- There is an identified person on the management committee who is responsible for ensuring that the day to day finances of the organisation are managed in accordance with the policies and procedures
- Training and support is provided for those who are responsible for managing money and finances within the organisation
- Where there are paid staff the payroll is properly processed
- Budgets which cover all costs of the building and activities are produced
- Monitoring of actual expenditure against the budget is reported to the management committee
- The flow of income is sufficient to cover running costs
- The charging policy covers the costs of the room hire
- There is a plan to secure sufficient funding to maintain the building and continue to deliver services as planned
- Regular financial reports are produced for the management committee
- Annual accounts are produced in line with any requirements such as the Charity Commission (SORP) and Companies House

Safe

Safe Buildings

A building which provides a safe venue, resources and activities will protect people from harm and safeguard the buildings and assets for the continued use of the community.

Keeping people safe is about having clear policies and procedures and ensuring that individuals know what is expected of them. Appropriate induction, training and ongoing support will help with this. Sometimes organisations need to seek expert support and advice. It is important that management committees are aware of the areas where they need such support and the agencies that can provide this.

Within this standard are some criteria which are required by legislation, there are also some which relate to good practice and the duty of care which each individual owes to another. When these criteria are being met the management committee members can be confident that they are managing risk and taking proper action to reduce their liability.

Organisations that demonstrate a commitment to providing a safe environment for people have:

- Health and safety policies and procedures which are understood, implemented and reviewed
- Policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- Policies and procedures in place for the effective management of a safe building

Please note that throughout this section the terms ‘committee’ and ‘committee members’ also refers to organisations where the management committee are the trustees.

1. Health and Safety Policies and Procedures which are understood, implemented and reviewed

Health and Safety

- There is a named person who is responsible for health and safety
- There is a health and safety policy which is reviewed every year or in line with changes in legislation
- The management committee are informed of updates in legislation and have access to expert support if required
- There are clear instructions and information, related to health and safety, for all people using the building
- Staff, volunteers and management committee members have adequate training in health and safety
- An annual building risk assessment, which is recorded with any identified actions, is undertaken
- Regular consultation is held with volunteers and staff on health and safety and any issues are resolved quickly
- Correct accident and incident reporting is in place and monitoring is undertaken
- Appropriate policies related to the safe maintenance of the building are in place, e.g. COSHH (Control of substances hazardous to health), manual handling, PAT testing
- There are risk assessments for activities and these are reviewed as appropriate
- There are risk assessments to cover the safe use of equipment which might pose a danger, eg kitchen, IT, any specialist equipment
- Volunteers and staff have food hygiene training where appropriate
- Food is stored and prepared in line with food hygiene standards
- There is a lone working policy and procedure volunteers and staff

Fire Safety

- A fire safety policy is available and regularly reviewed
- A regular fire risk assessment is undertaken, recorded and identified actions are implemented
- There is a fire precautions log-book which schedules and records all checks, tests and inspection results
- There is an identified fire warden
- Scheduled fire drills are implemented, recorded and evaluated for potential problems
- A fire action plan is in place (including personal emergency evacuation plans where necessary) and people are trained to implement it
- Appropriate fire safety equipment is available and accessible.
- Fire equipment is suitably maintained and inspected according to current regulations
- Appropriate signage & lighting to facilitate emergency evacuation of the building is in place
- Regular checks are undertaken to ensure that escape routes and fire exit doors are accessible and sufficient

First Aid

- First aid boxes are easy to find and checked regularly
- There are identified trained first aiders
- The accident book is easy to find and is used to record accidents
- There are signs to help people know where the first aid boxes and any other first aid equipment is located and who the first aiders are

2. Policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults

- There are policies and procedures related to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- The policies and procedures are reviewed at regular intervals and in line with changes in legislative requirements
- There is a designated named person, with a clearly defined role and responsibilities in relation to child protection
- There is a designated named person, with a clearly defined role and responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults
- Appropriate training for all volunteers, staff and members of the management committee is completed and up to date
- An assessment of all roles in relation to DBS requirements is undertaken and there are appropriate levels of DBS checks for volunteers, management committee members and staff
- A process is in place to update DBS checks at appropriate intervals
- Incident reporting procedures are in place and adhered to
- The organisation has a written statement of its commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, which is available for users of the building. This includes what it will do to ensure that safeguarding is incorporated into the management of the building and the provision of activities.
- Policies and procedures that support safeguarding within the organisation exist and are implemented. These include:
 - Safe recruitment of volunteers, staff, students and management committee members

- Induction, support and supervision
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Effective complaints and whistle-blowing policies
- Equality policy

3. Policies and procedures in place for the effective management of a safe building

- Buildings are secure when open and closed to the public
- Signing in and signing out procedures are implemented
- A schedule of planned maintenance is produced, implemented and monitored
- There is a reporting system for unplanned repairs and maintenance
- There are procedures for restricting access to any area of the building that becomes temporarily unsafe
- There is a process for reporting and recording any new hazards and minimising the impact of these
- Terms and conditions for hire of the building and lettings agreements ensure that hirers of the building understand their responsibilities in relation to health and safety
- Public liability insurance and any other appropriate insurances related to the building lease and activities within the building are in place, eg. Product liability, event insurance, professional indemnity, etc.
- All high value equipment is marked, secured and logged in an up-to-date inventory
- An effective key holder policy is implemented
- Reporting procedures for all incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour are implemented

Inclusive

Inclusive

Community buildings exist to serve their community, whether that is a local geographic community or a “community of interest”. Being inclusive means really understanding the community and being able to identify who lives and works within it. Organisations which are committed to being inclusive ensure that steps are taken to remove any barriers that prevent individuals or groups from accessing the building or services. This means that no-one will feel excluded by being made to feel different because of their age, race, culture, disability, gender, faith or sexuality, or indeed because they have different ideas, hopes or ways of expressing themselves.

Involving more people from the community ensures that the building remains relevant, busy and sustainable. Valuing everyone who comes into contact with your facilities and being fair about how opportunities are provided encourages more people to get involved in new and different ways. It means being flexible and responding to the changing needs of the community.

When a community organisation supports different groups to come together and to think about what they have in common, and how they can work co-operatively in a positive way, it can help people live together within a community with greater understanding and respect.

A community organisation which is truly representative of its local population is also in a better place to become involved in wider democratic processes and to influence developments that affect the local area.

Community buildings which are inclusive

- Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally and that the diversity of the community is valued
- Encourage the community to use the building through a range of promotional, information and marketing activities
- Monitor who from the community is using the building, facilities and activities
- Involve the community in developing the building, facilities and activities

Please note that throughout this section the terms 'committee' and 'committee members' also refers to organisations where the management committee are the trustees.

1. Ensure that everyone (individuals and groups) is treated fairly and equally and that the diversity of the community is valued

- Research is undertaken to make sure that there is a good understanding of the community, eg ages, health, faith, ethnicity, etc.
- The needs and expectations of individuals and groups within the community are understood
- There is an understanding of how the people who use the building reflect the make-up of the community in terms of ethnicity, age, etc.
- Users of the facilities are represented on the management committee
- Members of the community are encouraged to become involved through a range opportunities, including volunteering
- The management committee understand the principles and requirements of the Equalities Act and ensure that these are incorporated into the work of the centre.
- Booking systems are clear and fair
- Everyone shows respect for the individual beliefs and expectations of others using the facilities
- Volunteers and staff know how to challenge unacceptable behaviour and report incidents

2. Encourage the community to use the building through a range of promotional, information and marketing activities

- Different approaches and formats are used to ensure that the community are aware of the building, facilities and activities
- Information on the location of the building, how to find it and local transport links is available in different formats
- External signage ensures that the building is easily identifiable
- Information on the facilities and activities within the building is made available to current and potential users

- Activities to market the building and facilities are planned
- Marketing activities are monitored to evaluate which ones are most effective
- The organisation has links with other groups and support agencies in the local area
- There is clear signage into and around the building
- Key-holders are available at times when people want to book and use the building
- The facilities are available at times that reflect the needs of the local community
- Volunteers and staff ensure that everyone is treated with respect and feels welcome in the building
- Volunteers and staff know how to support people with different needs to access the facilities and activities
- The space and rooms are used in such a way that supports access to the building
- People within the community who have a range of different needs can access the building
- The volunteers and staff understand their responsibilities in relation to data protection and confidentiality

3. Monitor who from the community is using the building, facilities and activities

- There are processes to monitor who is using the building, facilities and activities and whether this reflects the make up of the community
- The monitoring is undertaken in such a way that it provides information for longer term plans and funding activities
- The results of monitoring activities are used by the managed committee to identify what works well and any changes that are required to improve the way in which the building is used by the community

4. Involve the community in developing the building, facilities and activities

- The community for which the building exists is consulted to find out whether they use the building, to seek feedback and to identify what else the organisation could do to encourage people to use the facilities
- Different stakeholders are invited to review activities and how they are delivered
- A range of approaches are used to involve local people and other stakeholders in reviewing and evaluating the impact of the community centre
- A range of approaches is used to involve people and other stakeholders in reviewing and developing the longer term plans for the building