QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Joint QQI/Community and Voluntary Sector Working Group

Minutes

Minutes of the fourth meeting of the **Joint QQI/Community and Voluntary Sector Working Group** held in QQI Offices, 26-27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2 on Monday, 27 July 2015 at 11:00 am.

PRESENT:
For the Community and Voluntary Sector
Tara Farrell, Longford Women's Link (AONTAS Executive Committee)
Maria Finn, CASP *(Clondalkin Addiction Support Programme)*
Gaye Kelly, An Cosán
Suzanne Kyle, Limerick Community Education Network (AONTAS CEN Steering Group)
Stuart Lawler, National Council for the Blind
Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS (Head of Strategic Development)
Rachel Tucker, CTEC *(Community Training and Education Centre, Wexford)*
Nuala Whelan, Ballymun Job Centre (QA Network)

For QQI
Colette Harrison, Quality Assurance Services
Mary McEvoy, Provider Relations
Trish O'Brien, Provider Relations

Independent Facilitator
Peter Nolan

APOLOGIES
Deborah Brock, South County Dublin Partnership
Sive Bresnihan, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
Sylvia Ryan, ICTU

1. **MINUTES OF THIRD MEETING (CVSWG/M3)**
   It was noted that at the last meeting a discussion took place on the role that QQI can play in facilitating groups of providers to come together and share expertise on quality assurance and qualifications matters of common interest and importance. Apart from this omission, the minutes were agreed.

2. **MATTERS ARISING**
   None

3. **SEMINAR ON DRAFT QQI QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTARY PROVIDERS OF FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

   3.1 <u>Review of impact of Seminar</u>
   The group noted that the seminar took place on 30 June 2015 in the Ashling Hotel, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 and was attended by approx. 90 participants.

   It was generally acknowledged by the group that the seminar was welcomed by the community and voluntary sector and the attendance number reflected this. There appeared to be a genuine enthusiasm and energy amongst the participants with regards to the matters discussed.

   Members expressed regret at the lack of time allocated on the agenda to the 'questions & answers' session. There were related concerns regarding the insufficient time for participants to digest and discuss the information presented at the seminar. In addition, it was noted by members that some providers in the community and voluntary sector had not received an invitation to the event.

   QQI outlined that the reason invitations were not sent to some providers that could be considered as community & voluntary sector providers was probably due to the self-selection criteria by these providers when registering with FETAC; a categorisation that was carried into QQI. Other categories such as Youth Services, Disability Services etc. were also included and may have resulted in organisations opting for those categories, rather than 'community & voluntary'. QQI will follow up on the providers identified as not receiving an invitation:

   Following discussion it was agreed by the group that:
   - QQI's database of community & voluntary sector providers be reviewed in as far as possible by QQI;
   - further consideration be given to extending the scope of future seminars to a full day be explored; and

- the structure and methodology of future seminars be planned in terms of affording sufficient time to discussions.

3.2   Seminar Questions: Methodology for Response by QQI

The group noted the list of questions which were submitted in writing at the Seminar *(attached as an appendix).*

The group further noted that QQI is in the process of drafting responses to the questions and that this is nearing completion.

Following discussion it was agreed that:

Action	Timeframe
When finalised, the questions and answers will be issued to all participants of the recent Seminar;	End of August
Participants will be invited to submit any questions which they feel are not addressed;	End of August
QQI will circulate proposed text for the website to the Working Group members outlining the terms of reference of the group, its membership, lifespan etc.;	End of August
QQI will publish a web page outlining the work of the Joint Working Group based on agreed text. This will include a link to more overarching FAQs based on the detailed FAQs generated from the seminar.	September

It was generally agreed that the above actions represent a welcome openness and transparency by QQI and of the Working Group in terms of its deliberations and objectives.

3.3   Feedback on QA Guidelines

The group noted that the deadline date for feedback on QQI's consultation document '***Draft QA Guidelines and Criteria for Voluntary Providers of Further Education and Training'*** was 7 July 2015. It was noted that not all of the feedback was received from the table facilitators. QQI asked that any additional feedback

be forwarded as soon as possible. It was envisaged that a report from the wider consultation process will also become available prior to a final policy being published.

4.   WORKLOAD AND PRIORITIES OF WORKING GROUP: 2015
Models of Networking
The discussion on models of networking was born from previous meetings where members sought information on how QQI could support providers of the community and voluntary sector in terms of re-engagement, quality assurance, validation, etc. QQI reiterated that providers can be facilitated to explore ways in which they can come together to pool resources and knowledge in an effort to share information and learn from each other. In addition, the development of a quality culture in the first instance, was articulated by some members as an important stepping stone whereby providers learn to value and understand the concept of a quality culture, before progressing to understanding what is required in terms of achieving quality assurance.

As the discussion evolved, it became clear that distinctions in terminology are important; specifically the differences between collaboration, networking and consortia. Whilst networking and sharing practice is supported by the Working Group, it was agreed that the issue of how providers can collectively re-engage with QQI should be the focus of the Working Group. It was therefore agreed that QQI would (i) provide working definitions of these terms at the next meeting of the Working Group and (ii) elaborate on some initial thoughts / potential models of collaborative re-engagement. It was further agreed that documentation / diagrams emerging from this thinking would be made available to the working group in advance of the next meeting

5.   FEES: Parliamentary Q&A of 7 July 2015
The group noted the Parliamentary Q&A of 7 July 2015.

Members were generally concerned at the potential implications of the response provided to the PQ above as it could be interpreted as the Working Group having a remit with regards to the fees associated with QQI's re-engagement with providers. It was agreed that it was very important that QQI would seek clarification from the Department of Education and Skills on behalf of the Working Group and that this correspondence would be forwarded to members in order to confirm that this is our joint understanding. Notwithstanding the remit of the group, the community and voluntary sector participants wished to record their ongoing opposition to being subject to QQI fees.

6.   SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The group noted that the Working Group will meet a further three times before the end of 2015. The next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, 28th September 2015**, with two further meetings in October and December 2015.

7.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1   Communication of Working Group deliberations

QQI confirmed that the Board and the Department of Education and Skills are kept informed as appropriate of its engagement with sectors and sub-sectors through a range of fora.

7.2   Documentation

The QQI executive agreed that where possible, documentation will be issued in advance of meetings, so as to afford adequate time for members to read papers.

The meeting concluded at 1.17pm.

APPENDIX

Joint QQI/Community & Voluntary Sector Working Group

SEMINAR: QQI Draft QA Guidelines and Criteria for Voluntary Providers of Further Education and Training

PARTICIPANT'S QUESTIONS

FEES
1. The community & voluntary sector cannot afford fees. How can they resource a QA officer?
2. How can we address the issue of fees? How much for each?
3. Can QQI outline all the fees associated with services e.g. re-engagement, programme evaluation and validation, self-evaluation etc. certification (see appendix from ETB)
4. Has a decision been made on a fee structure/waiver for community/voluntary groups?
5. If groups choose to opt out of re-engagement, what impact would that have on future application for QA? Would fees be greater?
6. What is the situation regarding fees?
7. When will the situation on fees be clarified?
8. All centres here want a guideline figure in relation to fees i.e. re-engagement fees, validation fees.
9. What are the planned fees for re-engagement (ballpark)?
10. Does ETB pay fees for validation, certification and re-engagement? (It all sounds like money making money for QQI).
11. When will QQI know what the re-engagement fees are?
12. When will we know how much the fees are?
13. Can there be a schedule of fees to suit the C&V sector and ensure their inclusion.

FUNDING
14. Does a provider who is HSE-funded and run, have to pay the money and how is it estimated?
15. Small training centres do not have the resources to continue on an individual basis – How do we go on?
16. Will there be any room for small community providers with no source of funding, but who are providing a good quality service?

QUALITY ASSURANCE
17. How is 'scale and scope' measured?
18. What is the timeline from first notification to completion of quality assurance?
19. Are there templates available to use for the Self-Evaluation process and Improvement Plan? (There used to be templates on the FETAC website).
20. Re the Self-Assessment Report, is this a pro-forma? Are there published guidelines to complete same?
21. What is the criteria for judging on scale of delivery?
22. Does QQI have examples of quality indicators they would like us to use?

23. Please explain how a 'governance' structure can involve external bodies? (academic structure)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION
24. What kind of resources are required for monitoring and evaluation.
25. What can we be doing from now?
26. When a centre takes on a course and students are accredited for a level 5 e.g. logistics forklift, safe pass – all capable of manual side, but when it comes to academic side i.e. paperwork, the tutor has to be qualified for this area to keep things on track.. I feel that the best feedback for the course comes from past pupils.
27. Will QQI provide templates for all documents they require, to ensure consistency of information provided?
28. How would QQI suggest organisations overcome the difficulty presented by evaluation i.e. 'happy sheet' responses?
29. Do we need our own policies, or do QQI have ones we can implement?

VALIDATION

30. Can a provider submit the same component description as another provider, as part of their submission of their programme validation?
31. What is the process of RPL for learners wishing to know if the acquisition of component modules amount to a major award?
32. Is submission of validation of a new programme, subject to review of QA procedures?
33. Is there a specific format for the programme validation procedure?
34. Does a programme need to be delivered fully or is it possible to deliver it in stages? If so, how do we complete the programme duration section in the validation submission? If so, does it have to be the same group of learners?
35. If a group of training providers in a given area offer various components at the same level in order to enable learners to aim at obtaining a full award over a period of time, does each provider need to validate the programmes they deliver? Is it possible for one of the providers to validate all programmes and contract other providers as a second provider? Should they submit all programmes as a consortium?
36. The processing time of QQI hinders providers from quickly reacting to current learner needs for awards. Can this be improved, especially in IT and tech.)?
37. Please clarify programme validation – why is there no template?
38. What does 'under review' mean for programmes?
39. Can an organisation get a new programme approved in this period?
40. Can changes be made to existing programmes now, or are they frozen?
41. How long are programmes validated for, before they need to be re-validated?
42. To amend an already validated programme, is this the same process as making a new programme application?
43. Do providers get notification from QQI when programmes need to be re-validated.
44. How long does/will it take for a programme to be validated?
45. How long is a programme certified for?
46. If a student does not complete a programme in 2 years, how long can that go on for?
47. Can you explain academic goy system?

COLLABORATION

48. In terms of programme sharing, can QQI:
    a. Expand on the First Provider/Second Provider Model and how this might operate?
    b. Advocate with ETBI/FES at national level for the continuation of the mechanism where national programmes were shared with QA providers outside of VEC/Training Centres such as Community Providers/Community Colleges (e.g. in Limerick the QA Providers were part of a joint programme consortium at Levels 3 and 4 as well as being approved to share programmes through the then CLVEC's Programme Approval Committee).

49. Could the community and voluntary sector between themselves organise a shared programme development process?

50. Would they be considered brand new providers? Could groups share a quality officer?

51. Please define 'collaboration' in the context of sharing and delivery of programmes.

52. How will shared programmes be documented by QQI?

53. Will there be any room for small community providers with no source of funding but who are providing a good quality service?

DEFINITION OF 'COMMUNITY' AND 'VOLUNTARY'

54. What criteria will QQI use to identify what constitutes a 'community organisation?

55. What constitutes a 'voluntary organisation'?

QQI SUPPORT

56. Will it be possible to have a designated contact person in QQI?

57. What are the support/communications systems within QQI? Who are they? When and where can we contact them?

58. Can we have the contact details of the reps on the C&V Working Group?

59. Is it appropriate for QQI to become involved in HR/Employer responsibilities in regard to CPD.

RE-ENGAGEMENT

60. When will QQI know the time-frame for re-engagement?

61. Will QQI favour collaborations?

62. Can C&V organisations apply for re-engagement as one group? If so, whose QA will apply? Is it one overall QA?

63. Will bigger organisation in the community & voluntary sector be contacted first?