

Case Study



voluntary action sheffield

'We wanted to achieve a quality standard that challenged us and moved us forward, rather than just being a rubber stamp.'

Who Are You?

Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS)

What is Your Customer First Status?

Achieved full compliance for the second time in October 2008

Why Go For Customer First?

- To help us to be as good an organisation as we can be for our customers
- To help meet funder and contractual requirements

What Were The Benefits of Being Assessed?

- It helped us to focus on what we do well and less well and make improvements as a team.
- The (robust) assessment and endorsement from an external assessor is very affirming for staff and the organisation.

What Improvements Followed?

- We became more consistent across the organisation in our dealings with customers
- We improved our procedures and systems such as our management information system; and ways of gathering customer feedback

Why Are You Recommending Customer First?

- The framework is an excellent tool to help you focus on what you do as an organisation in relation to customers. We always aim to provide the best possible services to customers and we feel gaining Customer First is an important additional endorsement of this.

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Voluntary Action Sheffield, owns and manages the Circle in Sheffield city centre, and funds its work through a mix of public sector contracts and grants, including regional development agency Yorkshire Forward and Sheffield City Council; charitable income and fees and charges for services.

The organisation started out in 1926 as Sheffield Council for Social Services, before becoming Sheffield Council for Voluntary Services 50 years later, and finally being re-branded as Voluntary Action Sheffield in 1989.

The organisation supports 900 community and voluntary groups and 4000 individuals throughout the city every year, offering practical advice and support for the launch and development of a wide range of voluntary and community groups providing services including legal and human resources advice, payroll and accountancy, training and information.

This is the second time Voluntary Action Sheffield have achieved compliance with the Customer First Standard, and although their reasons for doing so were partially related to funding and contractual requirements, they also felt the process helped them to be the best organisation they could be for their customers.

Voluntary Action Sheffield director of services, Sue James, comments:

“We wanted to achieve a quality standard which challenged us and moved us forward rather than just being a rubber stamp”.

Voluntary Action Sheffield felt that the Standard fitted inline with their organisations aspirations, as the focus is solely on the customers. They also found that the framework for achieving the Standard deemed to be very useful as it allowed them to identify areas of service and make practical changes.

