

Derbyshire Trading Standards Service Quality Manual

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Introduction

This Quality Manual has been developed to give a broad outline of how the Trading Standards Division's range of services comply with the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 standard for Quality Management Systems.

Quality Management Principles

There are eight recognised quality management principles applied when developing and maintaining our services. Each of these principles has been adopted specifically for the Trading Standards Division as follows:-

Customer Focus. The service depends on a broad range of customers with different and sometimes contradictory expectations. It is important that customer requirements are identified using as broad a range of techniques as possible. As a minimum these requirements and expectations are fed into the design and planning of our work activities. The importance the service places on its customers is demonstrated by a commitment to achieving Charter Mark status in 2007.

Leadership. The direction of the service comes clearly from its leadership. Within the organisation the management of the service ensures an environment where all of these eight quality principles can be applied.

Involvement of People. The most important assets of the service are the staff who carry out and support the work activities. The need to support these staff and involve them at all levels is demonstrated by the gaining and maintaining of an Investors in People award.

Process Approach. The service's activities have been broken down into key processes reflecting the different areas of work activity. These have been further subdivided to detail the specific control measures in place.

System Approach to Management. The processes identified are managed as interrelated activities to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the service.

Continual Improvement. The service is committed to improvement. All areas of the Quality Management System and work activities are subject to a range of techniques aimed at identifying and delivering improvement.

Factual Approach to Decision-Making. All decisions taken by the service are based upon appropriate analysis of relevant information.

Mutually Beneficial Supplier Relationships. The service recognises the importance of its suppliers and strives to build and document relationships of benefit to both parties.

Quality Management System

The documented Quality Management System (QMS) operated by the service is designed to act as a reference point for both staff and other interested parties. It is reflection of how the work activities are carried out at all levels within the organisation. The documents making up the QMS detail the range of management controls in place to ensure the effectiveness of the services.

As such the QMS acts as an aid to the training of staff, an assessment tool for the service and external bodies and a marker when assessing the service and the possibilities for improvement.

Processes

The range of work activities undertaken by the service has been broken down into broad processes. Within each of these processes the details of the more specific elements of planning, resources, preparation, service delivery, record keeping, monitoring and links with other processes have been identified and documented

Documents

The QMS consists of a range of documents. The level and degree of this documentation is a reflection of the complexity and diversity of the service. Key elements of the QMS are:-

Quality Policy
Divisional Operating Procedures
Quality Records

Additional forms of documentation in support of the above are included within the QMS. These include internally generated items and those received from external sources.

Document Control

The documents making up the QMS are approved, and made available to officers in their current form. To ensure control of documents a specific procedure and a dedicated software system are maintained as part of the Quality Management System.

Quality Records

All documents and electronic information demonstrating the effectiveness of the services provided and the processes involved are clearly identified and retrievable. This is supported by a formal retention schedule and a specific procedure within the QMS.

Management Responsibility

The quality of the service provision is the primary concern of the senior management team. It is therefore the management's responsibility to ensure that the following key aspects are effectively in place.

Management Commitment

The management's commitment to Quality Assured services is clearly demonstrated by the emphasis within the organisation of establishing customer requirements, the existence of the Quality Policy and objectives, conducting management reviews and the continuous assessment of resources.

Customer focus

The identification of the wide range of customers and their individual requirements has been an integral part in planning existing services and the basis for the development of the Quality Management System. Further assessments of customer requirements will be key in future service planning.

Quality Policy

Our statement reflecting the management and organisations commitment to the Quality Management System and the provision of Quality Assured services. This policy holds a place of prominence throughout the service and has been promoted accordingly.

Planning

The Cultural & Community Service Department produces an annual Service Plan which includes a range of service measures specific to Trading Standards. Any priority service delivery, development and improvement areas are identified with an appropriate target, defined timescale and lead officer. These form the main Quality Objectives for the service.

Any changes to the Trading Standards Division and its services are made with due consideration for the impact on the Quality Management System.

Responsibilities, Authorities and Communication

The different responsibilities of all staff and the authority they have to carry out work activities are clearly defined.

The Management Representative role of the Quality Assurance Officer ensures a focal point for all matters concerning the Quality Management System. Ensuring that effective controls of processes are maintained, the promotion of the Quality Management System, improvement and customer requirements are key responsibilities.

Officers carrying out enforcement activities are specifically authorised via the issuing of individual warrants.

Appropriate and effective means of communication exist between and across all levels of the organisation including training and information days, team meetings, e-mail and electronic sources of information.

Management Review

The management of the service carries out a specific review of the Quality Management System and its effectiveness. As a fundamental part of this review issues of customer focus, satisfaction and improvements to the service are raised.

Resource Management

The importance of resources is recognised as a key element in ensuring and maintaining the ability to deliver services.

Provision of Resources

The necessary resources to provide effective services and deliver customer satisfaction are identified and made available in sufficient quantities at the correct time.

Human Resources

Staff within the service are allocated work activities based on their competence to undertake the task.

Competence requirements are established for work activities based on legislative requirements and the service's own assessments. These requirements are met by a combination of an individual's qualification, experience and training.

Individual training needs are regularly assessed. Training needs are met using specialist courses and a programme of in house training. Training provided is assessed for its suitability and effectiveness.

Infrastructure

The provision of adequate and appropriate workspace is regularly assessed to identify any additional needs.

Equipment and information technology needed to provide services is maintained, upgraded and added where a need is identified and assessed.

Work Environment

Where necessary specific work environments are provided and controlled to ensure the successful provision of services.

Service Provision

Trading standards services are controlled and managed to ensure their effective and efficient delivery.

Planning of Service Provision

Service provision is planned in advance for a twelve month period commencing each April based on information from the previous year and a wide range of consultation.

Any priorities and targets for individual work activities set during the planning process are made publicly available.

Customer Requirements and Communication

A broad range of services are provided on the basis of established customer requirements. Additional requirements of legislation and the service itself are also met.

When undertaking specific tasks individual requirements are confirmed and staff ensure that they are able to meet these.

Communication with customers is maintained to ensure the availability of general information about trading standards services and that specific requests and feedback are possible.

Design and Development of Services

Whilst the trading standards service meets the requirements placed on it as a local authority the methods of delivery may be subject to design and development processes.

Where these processes are applicable they are carried out in a planned manner identifying the necessary design stages and allowing for review and assessment.

The actual design and development process is a creative exercise where ideas about service delivery can be explored. The management controls are therefore connected with the documenting of the process and ensuring the results meet the original requirements and are deliverable.

Once established any changes to services are assessed against the original design criteria.

Purchasing

Any items or services obtained from outside the service with a direct impact on service delivery are made from suppliers and subcontractors in conjunction with County Procurement Officers and following corporate requirements.

Orders placed ensure that all requirements of the service are clearly understood.

On delivery of items or provision of services any checks identified as a result of supplier assessment or service requirements are carried out at the earliest appropriate point.

Delivery of Services

At the actual point of service delivery the planning and design processes has ensured that the following controls are in place:-

- Necessary information
- Appropriate instructions
- Suitable equipment
- Monitoring
- Post delivery activities

Services where monitoring may not be possible after delivery are controlled by the establishing of competence requirements and key control measures prior to delivery.

Services are appropriately identified to ensure traceability back to specific items, dates, equipment and officers as appropriate.

Where the condition of items affects the service delivery these are maintained to the necessary level.

All testing and measuring equipment used directly in service provision or to measure service delivery is identified and calibrated to a traceable national standard.

Measurement, Analysis and Improvement

To ensure that the management systems and control mechanisms are working effectively a range of measurement, analysis and improvement techniques are employed at stages throughout and between the processes.

Monitoring and Measurement

Customer satisfaction is monitored by the use of specific consultation exercises, general customer feedback and specific customer complaints.

Internal audits are carried out against the Divisional Operating Procedures to ensure documentation accurately reflects work carried out, service is delivered correctly and areas for improvement are identified. To ensure this a specific procedure is maintained as part of the Quality Management System.

Monitoring of processes is undertaken at predetermined intervals to establish if the control measures are effective and any specific targets are being met. Additional monitoring of the processes is carried out in response to specific incidents or need for analysis.

Monitoring of the actual services provided is undertaken on a random sampling basis to establish if customer requirements and service requirements have been met.

Control of Non Conforming Service

Any service found to be non-conforming is corrected and controlled to ensure the effect is minimised and the service is correctly provided subsequently. To ensure this a specific procedure is maintained as part of the Quality Management System.

Analysis of Data

All information collected from monitoring exercises is analysed using appropriate techniques before being passed to the appropriate management team.

Improvement

Continual improvement is the aim of the Trading Standards Division. Wherever possible specific incidents or trends are analysed for improvement opportunities. All suggestions from any source are assessed for improvement potential.

Corrective action is taken to eliminate the cause of any detected non conformities. To ensure this a specific procedure is maintained as part of the Quality Management System.

Preventive action is taken where analysis indicates the possibility of future non conformities. To ensure this a specific procedure is maintained as part of the Quality Management System.