

Citizens Advice Performance and Quality

Leadership self-assessment

Year 1/2 outcome report



Local Citizens Advice: Oxfordshire South & Vale

Chair of Trustee Board: Eleanor Hards

Chief Officer: Jon Bright

Teleconference date: 31/7/18

Performance Assessor: Rachel Irvine

Leadership area	Self-assessed score (0-5)	Confirmed score (0-5)	Areas of strength and agreed areas for development
1. Governance	5	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition you have indicated that you do half or more of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>You are capitalising on your good fortune in attracting people with the right skills and experience by inviting them to join the board. You have a process in place which includes a semi formal conversation with the Chair, taking up references and referring to your trustee skills audit. You follow this up with an induction, of which records are kept.</p>

			<p>You're actively pursuing contacts in the Muslim community as you'd like to ensure that the diversity of your community is reflected in your board members.</p> <p>You've completed a good appraisal of how your trustee board performs, based on the Charity Governance Code. Your appraisal includes planned action.</p> <p>Your trustee board papers show that the board makes good, evidence based decisions.</p> <p>I was pleased to see that the board accesses development opportunities, such as research and campaigning training in January 2018.</p> <p>If you want to go even further in Governance, you could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a process by which you can ensure that staff, volunteer and other stakeholder feedback is used to inform your annual trustee board appraisal. You may get more insight into how to focus on this when you're able to access the free text responses to your People Survey.
2. Strategic business planning	5	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition you have indicated that you do half or more of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>You have reviewed and updated your 3 year strategic business plan, and are confident that it shows your budget assumptions for the period covered. You're currently fairly confident that you'll have resources in place to deliver the plan, although there are uncertainties ahead, of course.</p> <p>Your trustee board papers show that you regularly monitor progress against the objectives in your plan.</p> <p>You have plans in place to test your business continuity plan in one or more of your</p>

			<p>locations - I have seen LCA successfully use this as a team building opportunity, which is an approach to consider if you want to get added value from the exercise.</p> <p>You have co-designed your KPI's with your local authority, and these are subject to amendment in light of performance. This is a good outcome of the relationship you've worked hard on; seeking out opportunities to describe your impact, and therefore improving confidence in the Citizens Advice service at county level and attaining a position of being seen as the 'main' charity.</p> <p>You have a diarised meeting in place to peer review plans with your neighbour LCA.</p> <p>If you wish to go even further with business planning, I suggest you look at how to formalise consultation with users, potential users and stakeholders when developing services, in a way which provides useful information but is as resource-light as possible. Perhaps you could explore using existing research and campaigning or other relationships to achieve this.</p>
3. Risk management	4	4	<p><i>4 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition you have indicated that you do up to half of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>We had an interesting discussion about risk, which showed that you have a good appreciation of potential challenges for the organisation, and a robust approach to risk management. We talked about how your suite of documents used to manage risk may be enhanced by drawing the elements together and defining them as your risk management strategy - you need not do extra work, but you would be correctly 'pinning' your risk management at the appropriate strategic level.</p> <p>In particular you mentioned your staffing structure which is necessarily lean due to resource pressures, but is overly reliant on a few individuals. We also talked about the tough commercial environment you operate within, and how this is likely to</p>

			<p>become even more stringent in future. You've analysed your competitors, as this is linked. Your risk register captures your current responses to these issues.</p> <p>You're also using your risk register to monitor GDPR compliance, and you hold quarterly meetings of the people in the responsible roles.</p>
4. Financial management	4	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition our discussion indicated that you do half or more of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>Your trustee board papers show that the board properly considers financial matters. The notes to the financial reports were good - succinct and easy to understand.</p> <p>You described how you've had a focus on core business because of the potential vulnerability of project based funding streams. I described that you're fairly unusual in this position, and we discussed that your board has acknowledged that you may not be able to maintain it in future.</p> <p>You have an income generation strategy as part of your business planning process; you've based this on experience and lessons learned as well as organisational ambition. You'll be discussing this at your next trustee board meeting.</p>
5. People management	4	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition our discussion indicated that you do half or more of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>Your key development focus in your workforce development plan has been to build capacity and capability to deliver the service. You've increased training hours to assist with this. Your neighbour LCA will peer review your plan.</p> <p>You have 5 locations across a large geographical area and have found that it's</p>

			<p>important to hold regular team meetings to keep in touch, and consistent. In addition, each adviser has regular one to ones with their supervisor, which allows for any performance or other issues to be addressed early and informally in the first instance. You have appropriate systems and procedures in place to deal more formally with conflicts that may arise.</p> <p>Your training officer is responsible for keeping records of training attendance, including MAS accredited training.</p> <p>If you wish to go further in People Management I recommend that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse the free text responses from your People Survey and develop an action plan to address issues raised.
6. Operational performance management	5	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition you have indicated that you do half or more of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>We talked about your progress towards full compliance with GDPR requirements, including the Information asset register that you have in place and your Data retention policy which will go to the trustee board for final approval in September. You confirmed that you've reviewed data security at all your locations. Your Privacy statement is available on your website.</p> <p>You're working with other LCA to manage Adviceline peaks and troughs. Understandably, you've found an unpredictable variability of demand to be difficult to manage; your best guess at the moment is that holiday periods are playing a part.</p> <p>You've also extended your service delivery overall so that at least one of your locations is open until 6pm each day, delivering face to face and telephone advice. You raised additional money to do this.</p>

			In future you'd like to attract younger volunteers and extend your digital services to deliver webchat, but this isn't an immediate priority.
7. Partnership working	4	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition our discussion indicated that you do half or more of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>In addition to working to enhance your relationship with your local authority as described above, you have an excellent relationship with your neighbour LCAs. One example of several which illustrates this is the recent 'Partnership working to meet future challenges' report, jointly commissioned with your County neighbours.</p> <p>You've learned lessons from the partnership survey you ran last year; the results weren't as useful as you'd hoped. This year you staged an annual conference with a housing focus, and found this far more productive in gaining feedback and building relationships.</p> <p>You've mapped your stakeholders and have an engagement plan in place. Your focus is on building relationships with parish councils, as they don't consistently provide financial support in line with patterns of client use. I recommend that you formalise your plan so that you can monitor progress.</p>
8. Research and campaigns	5	5	<p><i>5 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership and can show this easily. In addition you have indicated that you do half or more of what counts as excellent leadership.</i></p>

			<p>You have a research and campaigning development plan in place which is monitored by the Deputy Director, as well as reported at each trustee board meeting. You're pleased with the progress that's been made over the past couple of years, in that your research and campaigning activity is "really solid". We don't underestimate the challenge of developing and embedding this work day to day, so this is admirable.</p> <p>You've participated in 2 national campaigns, as well as putting a lot of effort into developing links with local job centres and being part of the Universal Credit intelligence hub. You produce a newsletter which is circulated to all local politicians including the MP, who supported you during #CABlive.</p>
Overall rating	Green	Green	<p>This is an impressive outcome, congratulations and well done to everyone involved. You've thoughtfully worked on implementing recommendations from last year's assessment, and the value of this was apparent in our discussions about your service.</p>
9. Equality leadership	4	4	<p><i>4 - You are confident that you have in place everything under satisfactory leadership, can show this easily, and can provide the evidence required by external quality marks. In addition you have indicated that you do up to half of what counts as good or excellent leadership.</i></p> <p>We discussed an enquiry you'd made to Citizens Advice about increasing diversity, I advised that the person you contacted has left. Alternatively I suggest that if you have capacity you could join the trustee development group. The group contributes to Trustee News which includes articles like this one about diversity on boards.</p> <p>You've made a decision to advertise vacancies on a broader range of websites, so that you attract a more diverse spread of candidates.</p> <p>You have participated in training about Hate Crime reporting, delivered by the Police</p>

			and Crime Commissioner’s office. This links with an initiative by the District Council. You’re pursuing links with the local council Equality Officers in respect of a joint approach to supporting the 15 wards in your area where children live in poverty.
Equality rating	Green	Green	

Outcome

The organisation has demonstrated excellent leadership overall.