

Shared Practice Quality Assurance Policy

The primary purpose of the quality assurance process at Shared Practice is to determine or verify that our work meets or exceeds our own and client expectations. The aim is to ensure and enhance the quality of the work through a continuous process of asking and responding to the following questions:

- what have we done?
- how well did we do it?
- how can it be done better?
and
- what evidence do we have to demonstrate the above?

The objectives which underpin the policy are:

- to develop a full understanding of the needs of our clients, openly discussing the individual requirements of every contract to ensure clients are fully satisfied with our work;
- to work in close co-operation with clients and sub-contractors to provide the right quality of work and service, and to be responsible and accountable for the quality of work;
- to maintain the highest standards of quality and continuous enhancement through actively seeking client and stakeholder feedback, and to use this as a format for continuous assessment, identifying improvements to existing working practices and areas for strategic development;
- to carry out all our activities within our environmental policy guidelines (e.g. minimising waste), and to ensure our work contributes to sustainable development in accordance to the company's values (see separate Corporate Social Responsibility Policy);
- to ensure that all resources are sufficient and appropriate to support the work (e.g. through continually developing and upgrading the company's IT systems to meet latest standards);
- to develop the potential of Shared Practice by ensuring that all partners and associates are capable of undertaking the work required in a safe and responsible manner, in accordance with the company's health and safety, non-discrimination and environmental policies.

The responsibility for achieving these objectives and effectively maintaining and enhancing quality is located with the partners of Shared Practice, who are fully committed to delivering the objectives of this quality policy statement within all the activities and work undertaken by the company.

Specific and appropriate quality assurance and management processes are agreed with clients for each project. In general, Shared Practice works on research and creative development projects where expectations and quality standards are

necessarily continuously improved, and innovative development and practice encouraged through internal critical reflection and assessment. Externally, Shared Practice invites and encourages review and feedback on its work through ensuring that all project outputs, wherever possible, are openly accessible through its website in accordance with its Creative Commons license¹. Additionally, Shared Practice contributes to the review and development of quality assurance processes in the field of public, stakeholder and community engagement through involvement with a range of national networks and other activities.

Overall, Shared Practice quality assurance processes include identifying a dedicated project manager (one of Shared Practice's partners) and developing a project quality plan covering project aims and objectives, scope, task specification, schedules and key milestones, deadlines and deliverables, methodology, risk management, co-ordination and liaison.

The company also has specific quality assurance processes on evaluation projects, which are again tailored to individual projects. In general:

- Diane Warburton is a member of the Social Research Association and the UK Evaluation Society, and follows the methodological and ethical guidelines of those bodies and guidelines requiring high scientific standards in data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings. In addition, Shared Practice evaluations are guided by relevant standards in Government and elsewhere; for example, Shared Practice qualitative evaluation work is guided by the Cabinet Office framework².
- Shared Practice evaluations always use a mix of quantitative (e.g. tick box questionnaires) and qualitative (e.g. in depth interviews) methods, and triangulates results from different methods to test the consistency of results from different methods and sources.
- Shared Practice evaluations follow clear processes of research and analysis to ensure transparency and rigour at all stages of the evaluation; for example, fieldwork materials including questionnaires, topic guides for interviews, observation frameworks and analysis protocols are reviewed within the company and with the client. More than one team member will usually be involved in a sample of quantitative data collection and analysis, and in initial stages of undertaking and analysing qualitative research such as observation and interviews. Reports are reviewed with the client and other appropriate stakeholders to ensure accuracy, although the responsibility for the final draft remains with the evaluator to ensure independence.

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¹ <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/>

² Spencer, L. et al (2003) *Quality in Qualitative Evaluation. A framework for assessing research evidence*. National Centre for Social Research for Cabinet Office, London.