

Mapping Briefing

The **Approved Provider Standard** and **Investing in Volunteers**

Introduction to **Investing in Volunteers**

Investing in Volunteers is promoted as: *'the UK quality standard for organisations which involve volunteers in their work'*. The Standard enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management, and also to demonstrate an organisation's commitment to volunteering.

The Standard is managed locally by the lead volunteer development agency of each individual country of the UK. In England, the Standard is overseen by Volunteering England.

How well does **liV** relate to requirements for the **Approved Provider Standard**?

Investing in Volunteers has good relevance for organisations who involve volunteers that have already achieved the **Approved Provider Standard (APS)** or who are currently 'working towards'. The crossover between the two standards is also recognised by **liV** who have themselves undertaken a mapping exercise of the two that is downloadable from: <http://mapping.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/> Organisations wanting to achieve **liV** in addition to **APS** would need to take a more detailed view of broader aspects of volunteer management.

The **Approved Provider Standard**

The **APS** framework focuses on five key areas that form the basis of the assessment:

- ✓ Project aims and structure
- ✓ Client group
- ✓ Recruitment and selection of volunteers
- ✓ Volunteer preparation and training
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation

In assessing these, the standard requires organisations to answer 14 questions using MBF guidance to highlight their practice.

Investing in Volunteers

The **liV** standard looks in depth at four areas of volunteer management:

- ✓ Planning for volunteer involvement
- ✓ Recruiting volunteers
- ✓ Selecting and matching volunteers
- ✓ Supporting and retaining volunteers

In assessing these, the standard is based on 10 indicators and 55 practices against which organisations are required to benchmark and review their practice.

What are the key similarities between the two Standards?

- ✓ The **APS** lasts for three years.
- ✓ **liV** lasts for three years.

- ✓ The **APS** is a national award.
- ✓ **liV** is run by the national Volunteering Development Agencies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to self assess their practice.
- ✓ One of the steps within **liV** is completion of a self assessment checklist.

- ✓ The **APS** recommends that organisations have been involved in delivering mentoring or befriending for a minimum of 12 months prior to completing their application.
- ✓ **liV** has no time stipulation but due to the required structures it is unlikely that an organisation could have been operational for much less than this and meet the requirements.

- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to provide detailed information about how they manage volunteers.
- ✓ **liV** is based on four areas of volunteer management.

- ✓ Support is offered to organisations via workshop sessions that are run nationally and directly from MBF.
- ✓ Support is offered to organisations from the assessor who will be allocated to oversee implementation of the standard, organisations also have access to a password protected section of the **liV** website offering best practice materials and can gain additional support from local volunteer centres.

- ✓ The **APS** offers 'Working Towards' certification for mentoring and befriending providers for a period of 12 months prior to submission of an application
- ✓ **liV** has no interim certification but organisations would be able to say that they were in the process of implementation once they had officially registered their interest

- ✓ The **APS** is assessed by MBF and feedback will be received as a result of the portfolio submission from which recommendations may be made before successful achievement of the Standard.
- ✓ The achievement of **liV** will be initially recommended by the assessor at three levels, Met, Met with Recommendations, Unmet. Ultimate certification decisions are made by a UK panel.

- ✓ Successful applicants will receive a certificate highlighting their achievement.
- ✓ Successful organisations will receive a certificate, a plaque and become members of the Achievers club network.

What are the key differences between the two Standards?

- ✓ MBF do not charge for the **APS**.
- ✓ The charge for **liV** will be determined by the size of the organisation, turnover, numbers and location of volunteers. Costs currently start at £1500 for organisations with a turnover of less than £1m.
- ✓ The **APS** is essentially a desk top exercise that is undertaken by organisations in house who then complete and submit an application and portfolio of evidence.
- ✓ Organisations implementing **liV** will be allocated an assessor who will oversee the 10 step process that is required to achieve the standard. This will include an introductory workshop, and an assessment visit involving interviews with both staff and volunteers.
- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to complete an application based on MBF guidance answering 14 questions about their practice.
- ✓ **liV** requires organisations to assess their practice against 10 indicators and 55 practices that make up the standard
- ✓ The **APS** is focused on the delivery of the mentoring or befriending element of service provision and incorporates broader elements of service provision such as the referral processes for clients and how their views are incorporated.
- ✓ **liV** is specifically focused on the involvement and management of volunteers within the organisation with less focus on the wider service delivery elements.
- ✓ Once a mentoring/befriending service has been running for the period recommended, the **APS** application can be submitted at any time and a response will usually be received within 4 weeks
- ✓ Depending on the size of the organisation, number of volunteers and the gaps highlighted by the self assessment process, **liV** can take, on average, up to 12 months to complete and achievement of full certification will depend on the dates of the UK panels which take place three times a year.
- ✓ Reaccreditation for the **APS** consists of the completion of a questionnaire highlighting any key changes in practice together with supporting evidence, as appropriate
- ✓ Reaccreditation for **liV** consists of the same process as for the initial application and the cost is likely to be similar depending on the growth of the organisation in respect of volunteer numbers and location.

How would organisations benefit from having both standards?

- ✓ The **APS** has been developed with the specific objective of providing a national benchmark for organisations running mentoring and befriending projects.
- ✓ **liV** has been developed with the specific objective of improving practice in relation to volunteer management.

- ✓ The **APS** requires organisations to assess all aspects of project management in relation to the delivery of their mentoring or befriending programme.
- ✓ **liV** requires organisations to assess all areas of volunteer involvement and how this is recognised at all levels within the organisation.

- ✓ The **APS** incorporates assessment of the views of a range of stakeholders including clients.
- ✓ **liV** incorporates direct assessment, through interview of volunteer's views and covers areas of volunteer involvement other than mentoring/befriending.

- ✓ Both **APS** and **liV** have been specifically mentioned in relation to different funding strands.

How do the two Standards compare?

For organisations considering implementing both standards or for those who have already achieved **APS**, a mapping table has been compiled that highlights where the evidence for one would also meet the requirement for the other. Organisations are recommended to refer to this as well as the mapping completed by **liV**.

Further Information:

Detailed information regarding **liV** and the process for implementation is available from the dedicated website: www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk
Or contact can be made via Volunteering England Tel: 020 7520 8982.