

A Guide to Developing Excellence Frameworks

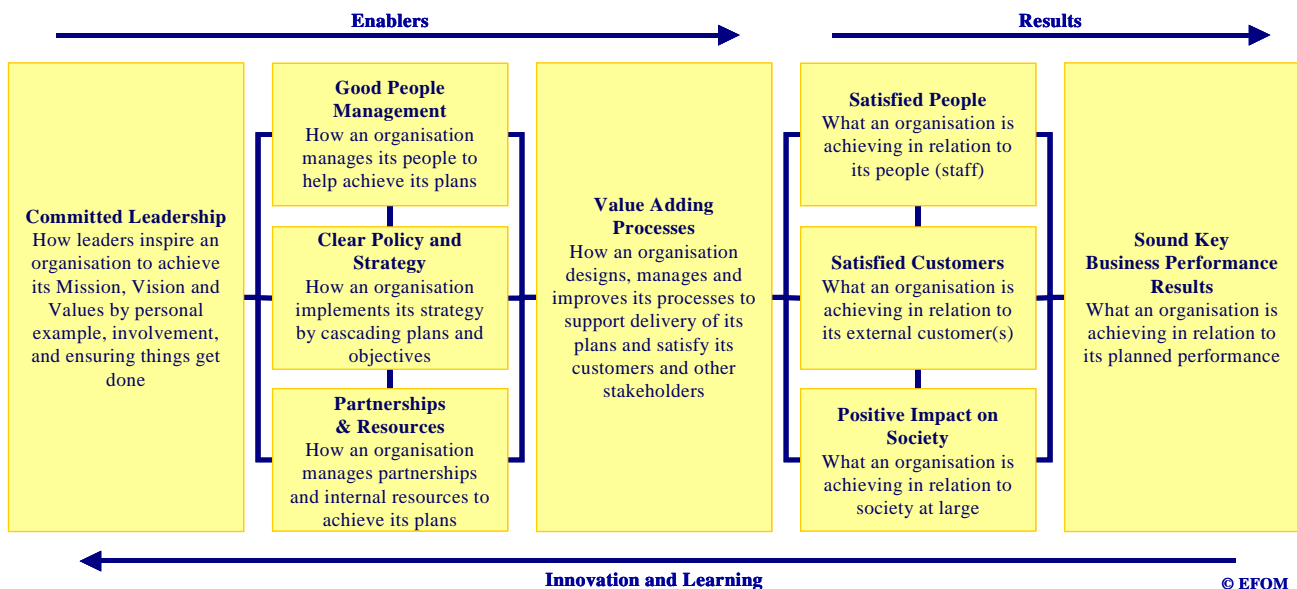
Introduction

Neighbourhoods NW and North of England Excellence are organisations experienced in developing bespoke Investors in Excellence frameworks and have been working together to support excellence and improvement in Northwest neighbourhoods since 2004. This guide is meant to provide an overview of the typical approach to developing such frameworks for those interested in exploring improvement tools.

What is the Investors In Excellence Standard?

This national UK Standard has been designed to enable organisations of all types and sizes and from all sectors to obtain accreditation against a standard that reflects Excellence.

The Investors in Excellence Standard is built around the EFQM **Excellence Model**[®] which is used widely throughout Europe as a framework for improving organisations. It covers every aspect of an organisation, and embraces the following nine aspects:



The standard incorporates 31 indicators. An applicant organisation needs to identify evidence that demonstrates that they are meeting each of these indicators. Organisations that successfully demonstrate such will be able to obtain certification against the standard and be recognised as an Investor in Excellence.

Those organisations that are recognised as an Investor in Excellence will receive a certificate and plaque and be entitled to use the Investors in Excellence insignia on their stationery and promotional literature.

Achieving Investors in Excellence

This is usually a process which can take some organisations up to two years and requires a great deal of commitment to get there. This process can be daunting and in some cases off-putting as organisations try to balance the benefits of working towards the award with everyday business operation. However, this commitment to working towards the standard can provide a whole host of additional benefits to organisations, staff and the neighbourhoods they support along the journey to Excellence.

Overview of tailor made stepped approach to Investors in Excellence

To ensure that organisations get the best from the process, North of England Excellence and Neighbourhoods NW have developed a stepped approach to achieving this award. Organisations using this stepped approach are Neighbourhood Warden Schemes, Neighbourhood Management organisations and Regional Neighbourhood Resource Centres.

This means that organisations can demonstrate that they are working towards excellence to stakeholders and partners without having to commit to completing all requirements of this award in one go.

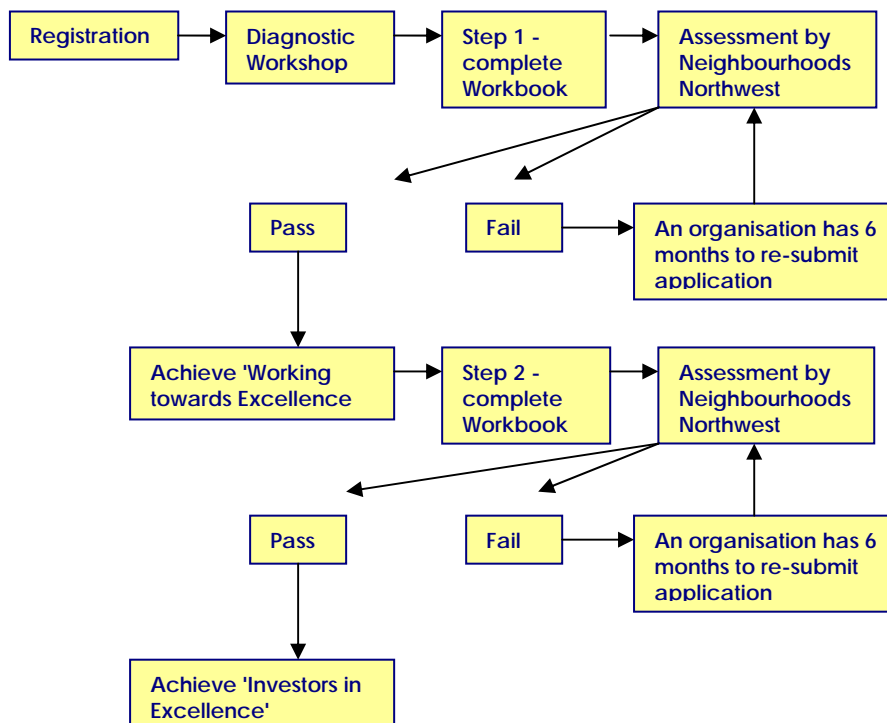
The stepped approach can be developed to be specific to an organisation or it can be used as a framework for a group of similar organisations. For example, the Neighbourhood Wardens Excellence Scheme was developed for all Warden Schemes in the Northwest and there are now plans to roll this out nationally. The Cleaner Safer Greener Neighbourhoods Kite Mark award was developed in partnership with Encams and is a bespoke award for housing providers throughout England.

What's Involved?

Typically when developing bespoke Investors in Excellence Frameworks, qualified Assessors will work together with the organisation and a group of sector specialists to develop the specific criteria of what Excellence looks like in that organisation or sector.

This is then translated into a range of workbooks and toolkits for applicants to use. The framework is then usually piloted by a number of willing participants to 'road test' the assessment process. Once this is completed the group will meet again to review the pilot process and revise any of the documentation in light of feedback. Once participants are happy the framework is then ready to use.

What does a typical stepped approach look like?



Organisations may decide to incorporate an additional step in the process e.g. The Neighbourhood Warden Scheme has 3 steps.

How does the bespoke Excellence Standard work?

Starting the drive towards the Investors in Excellence Standard - Committed to Achieving Excellence

In order to start the drive towards the standard applicants will need to register their commitment to the Standard and participate in a facilitated diagnostics workshop exercise. The purpose of this workshop is to help explain the Standard, give clarity on the assessment process and to identify any gaps between current activities and the requirements of the indicators of the standard.

Applicants may then need to develop and implement an improvement action plan in order to resolve and close the identified gaps before arranging to be assessed against the standard.

Assessment method - Step 1 Working Towards Excellence

In order to be assessed against the standard applicants will need to complete **step 1** of the evidence workbook which details evidence on how their organisation meets a selected number of the requirements of the indicators of the standard. This is then submitted to Neighbourhoods NW who will then arrange a suitable date to carry out a site visit in order to validate the evidence provided. The site visit will consist of a number of meetings and focus groups involving a selection of employees, managers, partners, community members (if appropriate) etc. from the organisation and will not normally last more than 1 day.

The Assessor will then make a decision based upon the site visit and the application, deciding if all the standards required for step 1 have been met. If they are then the applicant will be awarded the '**Working towards Excellence**' Certificate and will be able to progress to **Step 2** of the framework.

If the assessor feels that some of the standards required have not been met, the applicant will be provided with written feedback on those areas that may need improvement. Applicants will be given the opportunity to re-apply within 6 months of the initial assessment.

Assessment method - Step 2 Achievement of Investors in Excellence

As in step 1

A summary of some of the benefits of working towards and achieving the Investors in Excellence Standard

- Logical progression from Investors in People and ISO9001:2000
- An opportunity to review your current practices against a recognised benchmark
- Consistent approach for multi-site organisations
- External and Internal opportunity to be recognised as an organisation that invests in excellence
- Demonstrate quality of service to stakeholders, partners and communities
- Strengthen opportunities for long term sustainability

For more information on Investors in Excellence or this framework, please contact:

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