

NCIA Independence Audit

Indicator	Description	Notes	Rating 0-3
A: The organisation and the outside world			
A1	Purpose		
1.1	The organisation has a defined purpose which fits the broad definition of 'voluntary action' (service provision, social change and/or conviviality) and a rationale for that purpose based on need.		
1.2	The organisation has defined principles that guide its work.		
1.3	Upholding of the organisation's purpose and principles is central to all activity.		
1.4	The organisation communicates its purpose and principles openly.		
A2	Campaigning and collective action		
2.1	The organisation identifies who holds power in its world and negotiates with them for influence.		
2.2	The organisation speaks out against bad practice in other agencies if necessary.		
2.3	There is engagement in public debates.		
2.4	There is freedom to campaign and/or lobby if there is an area of concern affecting users.		
2.5	The organisation tries to increase wider understanding of ideas around independence and threats to the voluntary sector.		
2.6	Alternative visions and ways of doing things are actively pursued and promoted.		
A3	Local links and co-operation		
3.1	The organisation works in solidarity, not in competition with other organisations.		

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3.2	The organisation works with linked local campaigns, individuals and allies in other sectors, and can mobilise support locally if it is having its own campaign.		
3.3	Skills and learning are shared with local communities and other organisations.		
A4 Democracy and accountability			
4.1	Services are shaped and evaluated by those who use them.		
4.2	The organisation consults widely with users before speaking 'on their behalf.'		
4.3	The organisation does not charge for services in a way that would exclude people who need them.		
4.4	Paid and unpaid staff know and understand the users/community.		
4.5	Decision making is as collective as possible: no individual board or staff members make important decisions alone.		
4.6	The organisation is not too dependent on one or two people to define and preserve its identity.		
A5 Funding and Commissioning			
5.1	Funding is sought based on identified need, not funders' priorities.		
5.2	Relationships with funders are honest, and built on an equal and assertive footing.		
5.3	Contracts are negotiated which do not compromise benefits for communities.		
5.4	Contracts are negotiated which do not compromise conditions for workers.		
5.5	The organisation says no to money if it compromises independence.		
5.6	The organisation says no to money if it would mean straying too far from its purpose.		

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A6	Monitoring and quality assurance		
6.1	The organisation negotiates its own outcomes and monitoring systems with funders, which suit individual project circumstances and staff working styles.		
6.2	Work is to intentions, not targets.		
6.3	If quality assurance schemes are used, they are tailored to the organisation's activities and the staff working styles.		

Indicator	Description	Rating 0-3
B: Organisational culture		
B1	Pay and conditions	
1.1	Pay rates are kept within an agreed and advertised differential between the highest and lowest paid staff (no more than a 4:1 ratio for a large organisation, and less for a small organisation).	
1.2	There is no payment of discretionary or 'performance related' bonuses to some staff and not others, or payment by results, e.g. for fundraising.	
1.3	Staff feel happy with their holiday entitlement, sick pay, redundancy pay, maternity, paternity and dependents leave etc.	
1.4	A recognised union or other worker representation is in place and used in practice. Staff are encouraged to join.	
B2 Internal democracy		
2.1	Paid and unpaid staff are seen as the people they are first and their job descriptions second.	
2.2	Roles are not set in stone: people work in teams and share tasks.	
2.3	Workers at all levels are trusted to make judgements in their areas of activity.	
2.4	Workers at all levels have influence over the organisation as a whole. They are involved in producing new policies and practices, have influence over management styles and participate in internal forums as part of decision-making.	
B3	Management styles	
3.1	There are no unnecessary levels of management or rigid hierarchies.	

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3.2	Managers are also or have been practitioners, and know the content of what they are managing.		
3.3	Managers welcome (and appoint) staff who have more knowledge than them instead of fearing them.		
3.4	Management training challenges private sector ideologies.		
3.5	There is no unnecessary withholding of information from staff by managers.		
B4	Equality		
4.1	People's different cultural and/or spiritual backgrounds are accepted, people feel free to talk about their beliefs and life styles openly if they want to. Discussions take place around diversity awareness if there are problems.		
4.2	There are active attempts to present positive images of minority and oppressed groups of people, and to challenge stereotyping.		
4.3	There are attempts to ensure a diverse staff team, which reflects users/the community.		
4.4	Requests for flexible working are considered wherever possible (not just for parents), job sharing is encouraged, part time workers are not treated differently from full time workers.		
B5	How it feels		
5.1	Staff and board have personal commitment to the cause and personal values chime with organisational values.		
5.2	Paid and unpaid staff feel part of the organisation's history, the stories it tells.		
5.3	Creativity, passion, excitement, fun and anger are all encouraged. Emotional responses to work are valid.		
5.4	Criticism, conflict and difference are valued as a chance to talk and explore.		

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5.6	Risk taking is valued.		
5.7	Staff feel the organisation supports them to develop personally.		
5.8	Staff feel proud to represent the organisation.		
C: General observations			
C1	What do you want to get out of this audit? (organisation's view of strong and weak points, level of honesty and openness to change)		
C2	Organisation's rating 0-3 on 'do you practice what you preach?'		
C3	Assessor's rating 0-3 on 'do you practice what you preach?'		
C4	Anything else of relevance about the organisation not covered by these indicators.		
C5	Assessor's summary: things to safeguard.		
C6	Assessor's summary: things to keep an eye on or which need work.		
C7	Assessor's summary: overall impression.		
C8	Issues with the indicators, assessor's ideas for improvements to audit.		