



Our matrix Story

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service's Community Safety Department

Why did you seek to achieve the Standard?

It is a requirement within our contract with our funding provider. In addition, NFRS recognises the importance of acquiring appropriate accreditation to ensure it is delivering its service to the highest standard

What were the benefits of achieving the Standard?

We recognise that it is a national standard which would clearly indicate to external organisations and potential service users that the service we provide is of good quality. This would help to increase the likelihood of securing new or maintaining existing delivery contracts and attracting clients to programmes.

What did you discover / learn along the way to achieving the Standard?

We learnt that it is critical that all staff involved in the delivery of our service have an understanding of what IAG actually is (both formally and informally) and how they provide this in their day to day role; something which cannot be demonstrated by just having the appropriate documentation; e.g. policies and procedures available.

What changes did you make and how did you implement them?

We introduced further evaluation tools that elicited responses about the softer outcomes of our service.

What has been the impact of the changes on both your organisation and your customers?

There has been increased awareness amongst staff about the significance of the service they deliver and greater understanding of the importance of achieving nationally set standards. Customers have felt more involved in the process of feeding back into the service.

How would you summarise the whole process – including the assessment?

It has been a very positive experience – the assessor conducted the assessment in a thorough manner but also with warmth.

What recommendation would you give to someone thinking of working with the Standard?

Using the 4 main themes within the standard, meet with your team in advance to discuss how you think you meet them and what areas you think you can work on. Remember that the **matrix** accreditation process is not one which seeks to 'catch out' education providers, more that it is an opportunity to reflect upon practice and consider improvements.

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