Demonstrating the Value of Commonside's Services
Interactive Qualifying Project

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report submitted to the faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in cooperation with the Commonside Development Trust.

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Abstract

The Commonside Community Development Trust provides advice services to the community in Pollards Hill, UK. As funders look for official accreditation and accountability for these services, our project helped Commonside determine ways to improve their operational model to gain more funding. We analyzed the Advice Quality Standard, identified what funders want from organizations, and formed a prototype “demonstrated outcome” using client feedback and interviews. We concluded that Commonside should implement a database, document impact to funders, and pursue AQS accreditation.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for the time and effort in helping us complete our project:

- Our project liaison, Naomi Martin, for providing us with the opportunity to contribute to the Pollards Hill community and her constant effort to ensure our ease and quality of information.
- Our advisors, Professor Boucher-Yip and Professor Carrera, for their feedback and guidance through the duration of the project.
- The employees and volunteers of Commonside Community Development Trust who assisted us in integrating into the community and collecting data and interviews.
- The clients of Commonside Community Development Trust who willingly shared their stories with us and permitted us to present them in this report.
- The residents of the borough of Merton who contributed time and information to our project so we could deliver the best possible recommendations for the overall improvement and longevity of Commonside Community Development Trust.

Executive Summary

Commonside Community Development Trust is a volunteer-based organization in the London Borough of Merton aimed at improving the lives of community members by providing advice on a wide variety of topics. Commonside's work, like other social welfare organizations, is primarily funded by the public sector through donations and grants, but the changing landscape is increasing the demand for accountability. Funders are expecting official accreditations, raising hurdles for smaller organizations like Commonside. Pursuing accreditation services like the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) can consume essential resources and distract from Commonside's original purpose: helping the residents of Merton.

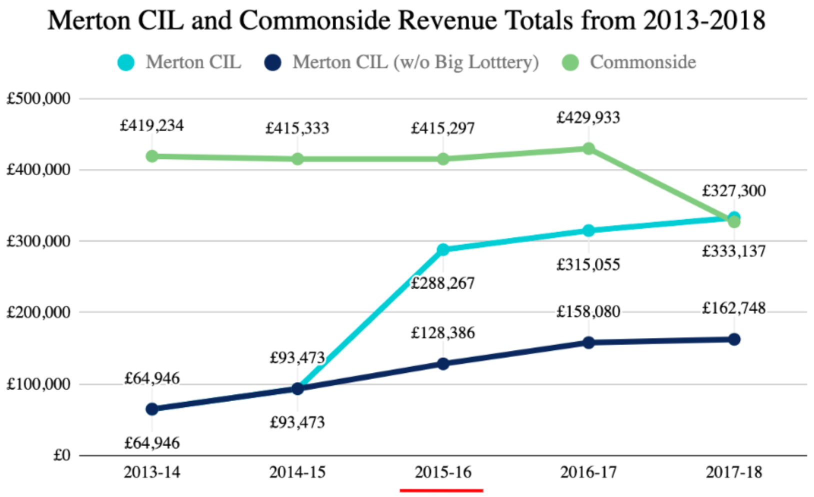
Project Goal and Objectives

Commonside's staff would like to prove to funders that they are doing quality work while maintaining human relationships. The goal of this project is to help Commonside determine the next best steps to improve their operational model in order to gain more funding. We created three objectives to achieve this project goal:

1. Identifying the areas of compliance with the Advice Quality Standard at Commonside;
2. Prioritizing Advice Quality Standard criteria used for accreditation;
3. Measuring the local impact of Commonside's services.

Findings and Recommendations

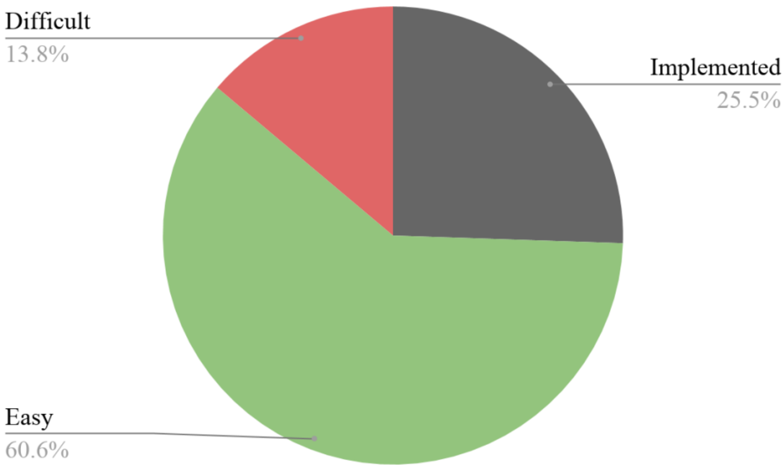
We found that acquiring an accreditation does not lead directly to funding. Instead, while accreditations and funding are related, being able to document the impact of the work being done in a tangible way is much more important when it comes to gaining more funding. We interviewed Lyla Adwan-Kamara, a representative at the Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL), an organization that received the AQS accreditation in 2016. From speaking with, her, our team learned that acquiring the accreditation was more beneficial to the structure of their organization, rather than leading directly to an increase in funding. In fact, Merton CIL did not show a significant increase in funding after receiving AQS in 2015-16, as shown by the dark line in the figure below.



We conducted interviews with funders and related individuals (proxies) to get a better sense of what funding agencies are specifically looking for in the organizations they support. According to these individuals, the most important factor in determining which organizations to fund is the ability to demonstrate positive outcomes, that can measure the impact of an organization on its community. However, the funders and proxies stressed that the quality standards necessary for an accreditation are still important, especially for organizations like Commonside who operate in the field of advice services.

To demonstrate the outcomes of Commonside's services in the local community, we conducted surveys with both current and former clients as well as with client volunteers. Evaluating client satisfaction is a cornerstone of the AQS requirements and our introduction of surveys provided Commonside with a starting point to begin collecting feedback. In addition, we interviewed a few of Commonside's client volunteers to learn more about their experiences with the organization to begin to compile case studies. Collecting the opinions of clients provides Commonside's management with a clear view of the human aspect of their community image that can be used in the promotion of Commonside to both the community and to funders.

We recommend that Commonside continue to make progress towards obtaining AQS because it would be beneficial for the internal operation of the organization, while also finding additional ways to demonstrate the value of their work. Many of the AQS requirements require a policy or procedure to be written out. Commonside already employs many of the procedures and policies required by AQS, but they are not formally enunciated in official documents. The process of formalizing existing procedures in writing would not require a major effort on the part of Commonside, even though, these documents would not have much of an impact on current services at Commonside. The pie chart below shows that almost two-thirds of the requirements of AQS would be fairly easy to implement for Commonside.



We recommend that Commonside begin the process by:

1. maintaining records of staff trainings,
2. maintaining a record of client follow-ups,
3. keeping track of a network of partner and referral organizations, and
4. maintaining accessibility for people with disabilities who are seeking help.

Additionally, to help complete further AQS requirements and demonstrate outcomes, we recommend Commonside implement a **database** to help ease the administrative work with client files and to create additional statistics proving their impact. For this database to have the largest impact on Commonside, it should be:

- accessible,
- secure,

- backed-up,
- searchable, and
- exportable.

To better present our recommendations to our sponsor liaison, Naomi Martin, our team created two presentations. The first presentation is tailored toward funders and community members. It focuses on demonstrating the outcomes of services that Commonside provides, as well as presenting case studies on several clients to humanize the statistics our team intended to emphasize. The other is a detailed presentation on our recommendations for the organization, including a more in-depth look at database features, so that they can be easily communicated to staff and trustees. With this process, we hope to have provided Commonside with the tools to improve their organization and gain more funding so that they can continue to help the residents of Merton.

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1.0 Introduction

Voluntary and community organizations serve an important role in the betterment of social welfare in the United Kingdom. According to the National Audit Office (2010), these value-driven organizations fall under the “Third Sector”. These smaller organizations have a greater engagement with their communities that allows them to provide efficient and effective services to difficult-to-reach groups that the public or private sector might otherwise overlook (Thompson & Williams, 2014). The Third Sector relies heavily on the public sector for funding through grants, as well as individual donations, to survive. UK government budget cuts threaten the very survival of these organizations, forcing them to allocate more resources towards obtaining alternative funding. However, by shifting their focus to collecting funds, the attention is drawn away from their original missions, which contribute so much to their local communities.

Social welfare organizations in the London Borough of Merton, such as Commonside Community Development Trust (Commonside), are able to support the community by running a community center, and putting on community events and development programs. Commonside funds these services through donations and grants but as there are limited funds, greater accountability is demanded for obtaining grants. This, in turn, means that social welfare organizations must either conform to the current system and meet the demands of funders or explore other options (Thompson & Williams, 2014). Commonside’s team fears that the process of becoming accredited is too time consuming and does not feel that a standard accreditation emphasizes the human aspect of its service enough. In order for Commonside’s team to continue its work in East Mitcham, their team will need to find alternative ways to prove to funders that they are providing safe, and quality advice services.

Even though social welfare organizations like Commonside accumulate funding through donations and grants, it is still important for them to have an accreditation that acknowledges their quality of work. Organizations similar to Commonside have gone through the process of acquiring AQS, like the Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL), which is an organization that delivers services to the deaf and disabled. Commonside, however, has yet to gain accreditation from an accrediting organization like the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) because of the lengthy, costly and recurring requirements (Advice Services Alliance, 2017). Over the years, AQS has been developed into the principal quality mark for the social welfare legal advice sector (Poole, 2017). While the AQS is not the only quality standard that exists for the advice sector, it is the most widely used in England and Wales including 300 local citizens advice organizations, 40 AgeUK partners, and more than 360 independent centers that give advice. It has provided the common language in the sector to talk about the advice services provided.

According to Naomi Martin, director of Commonside Community Development Trust, there have been previous attempts by Commonside to appeal to more funders by getting a national accreditation for its services, but no accreditation has been found that resembles closely what the organization does. For years, the Trust has thought about getting the Advice Quality Standard, yet Commonside’s staff believe this form of accreditation would mean losing the connection with the community and the face-to-face relationships with clients, as well as require too many resources. Commonside has been exploring other options for evaluating their own services in a thorough, yet effective manner. At the beginning of 2019, Commonside began looking into the possible investment in Twine, a low-cost web app that would allow them to record the number of hours worked by individual volunteers, capture feedback about the New Horizons Centre and its services, and measure the impact of the programs offered. Beyond accreditation, Commonside remains open to other methods of evaluating and reporting the impact of their services to funders and donors alike.

The purpose of this project was to aid Commonside Community Development Trust in their long-term effort to acquire more funding for their services. Our team supported Commonside in the direction of attaining the Advice Quality Standard and provided recommendations for demonstrating outcomes to funders. We had three objectives that we wanted to achieve. We identified the areas of compliance of the Advice Quality Standard at Commonside. By interviewing funders and representatives at accredited bodies, we were able to prioritize the criteria for accreditation. Lastly, we measured the local impact of Commonside's services. Our project included recommendations of a data management system, individually tailored presentations for the community and the Board of Trustees, as well as some suggested AQS requirements for Commonside to implement in the short term. Our project supported Commonside in documenting evidence of program outcomes, which they can present to funders to prove the quality and impact of their services.

2.0 Background

In this chapter, we review the role of social welfare organizations in the London Borough of Merton, and the changing landscape that affects local groups such as Commonside Community Development Trust (Commonside). First, we evaluate Commonside's need for an accreditation. Next, we take a deeper look at the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) which Commonside would like to pursue.

2.1 The London Borough of Merton

The borough of Merton is located in the southwest sector of London and, according to the 2019 City Population (Merton, 2013) report was estimated to have just over 206,000 residents in 2017.

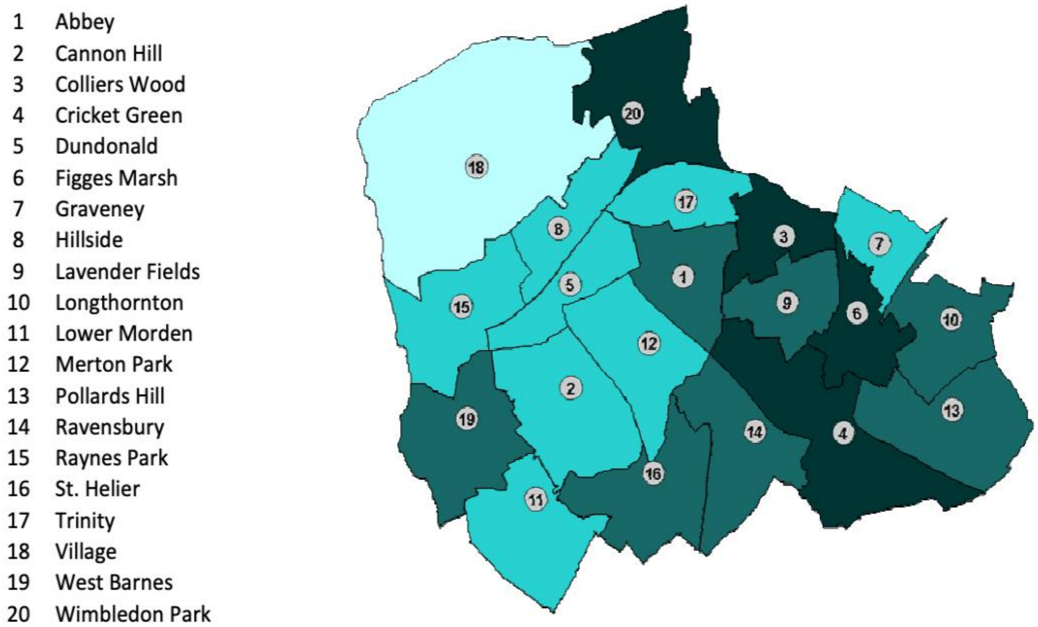

Figure 1. Population Density in the Borough of Merton
Source (Merton, 2013).

As shown above in Figure 1, the eastern half of Merton has a noticeably higher population density, indicated by a darker teal (estimated 2017 populations are referenced in Appendix A). However, the western half of Merton is significantly more affluent than its eastern counterpart, causing prominent socioeconomic disparities in the borough and creating unbalanced social dynamics. The western average annual salary is £40,000 (approx. $52,000 USD) whereas in the east the annual average is only £28,000 (approx. $36,500 USD) (This is Merton; Local Community Plan, 2013).

2.1.1 Social Welfare Organizations in Merton

The social welfare sector has grown in size and importance for the last few decades, becoming central to the prosperity of local communities by delivering services to those in need (Casey, 2016). Social welfare organizations in the United Kingdom are most often independent of government and target a smaller, more focused demographic than larger, more structured organizations (Thompson & Williams, 2014). Their services are more likely to be on a peer-to-peer basis, unlike the United States where, especially advice-wise, professionals are preferred (N. Martin, personal communication, 25 Jan 2019). Therefore, advisors do not need to be professionals and instead, tend to be volunteers (Commonside, 2017). These free and readily available services are essential to the health and development of the surrounding community (Cabinet Office, 2012). In addition to our sponsoring agency, the Commonside Community Development Trust, there are several local community centers in Merton, including, among others:

- Colliers Wood Community Centre
- The New Horizon Centre (home of Commonside Community Trust)
- North East Mitcham Community Centre
- St Helier Community Centre
- South Wimbledon Community Centre.

These social welfare organizations' staff and offices are often located in community centers. For example, the Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL) in the Wandle Valley Resource Centre provides opportunities and advice for the deaf and disabled members of Merton's community.

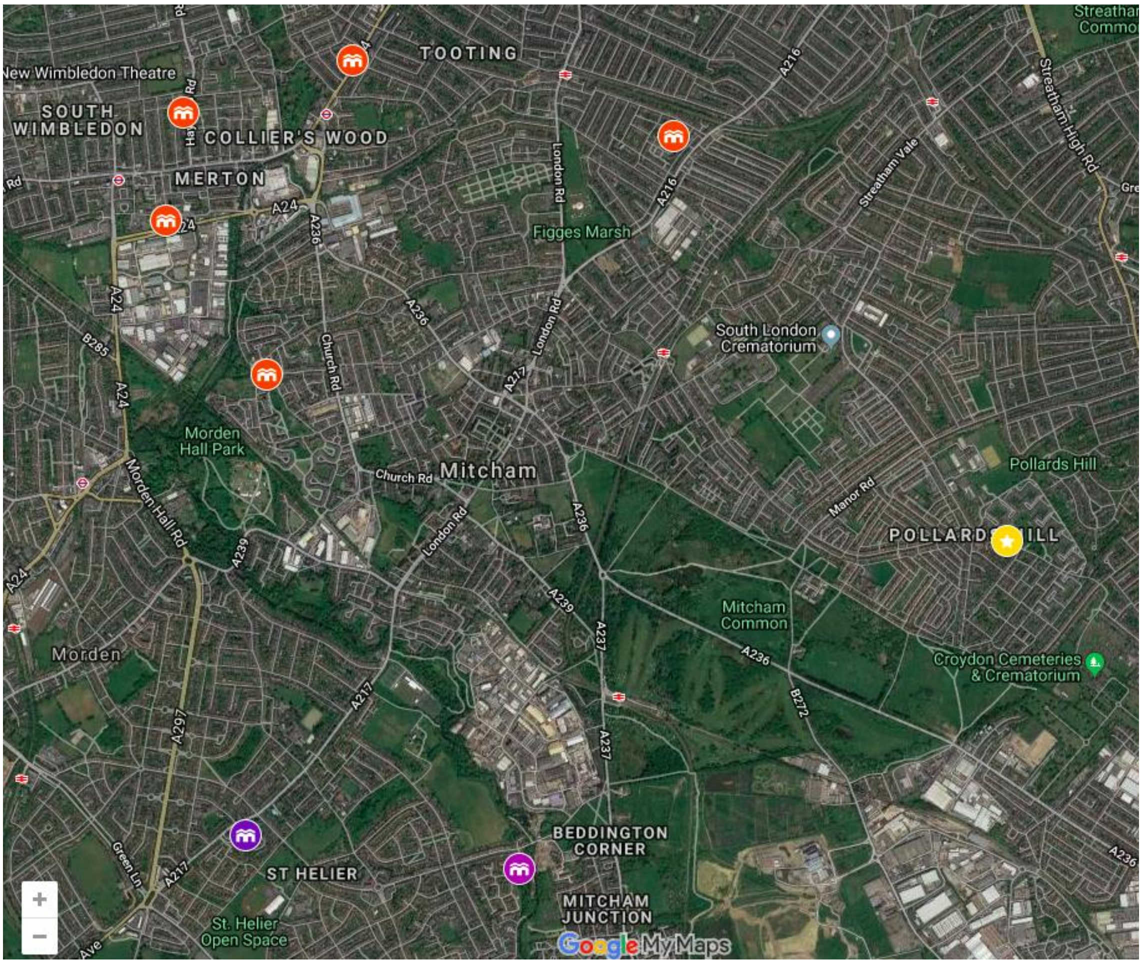

Figure 2. Local social welfare organization locations in Mitcham

While people throughout the borough may need these types of programs and organizations, the disproportionate number of centers available in the eastern half versus the western half is quite apparent. As can be seen in Figure 3, the majority of the other centers (red markers) are located in western wards such as Wimbledon, Merton Park, and Colliers Wood, which are all in the more affluent parts of the borough and have a smaller population density.

The New Horizon Centre (yellow marker), Wandle Valley Resource Centre (pink marker) and St. Helier Community Association (purple marker) are instead located in the eastern half of the borough where socioeconomic disparities are more prominent. Transport between wards exists, but the geography of the centers does create a deterrent for people who cannot or do not want to travel. With varying social environments, community centers and the services they provide are vital to the residents of the borough. In the Pollards Hill neighborhood, the Commonside Community Development Trust provides residents with those crucial self-improvement programs and services.

2.1.2 Funding for Social Welfare Organizations in the UK

In the last decade, the funding landscape of the UK has experienced a reduction of resources and an increase in demand for advice (Cabinet Office, 2012). Public funding has played a significant role in the success of Commonside and other organizations, but, with the limited funds available, funders are demanding increasing amounts of evidence from organizations to prove they are worthy of funding (Clifford *et. al*, 2010, 2013). Evidence could include detailed plans of delivering services to the community for as long as the next year, as well as demonstrating what sets them apart from any other organization (Third Sector Research Centre, 2014). As a result, larger organizations, as well as those located in more deprived areas that serve socially excluded or vulnerable people, are more likely to receive public funds than other foundations.

The amount of administrative overhead required to keep up with funders' demands presents a challenge to smaller charities in serving their community. When budget cuts first occurred, many charities were forced to cut services, reduce staff, and rely increasingly on volunteers (BBC News, 2012). 1 in 10 organizations was at risk of closing within the year, unable to compete with larger charities due to increased administration. It was a turbulent time for charities as they tried to adapt to the evolving landscape, forcing many to change the way they deliver services. Even with the governmental assistance offered, many organizations found it difficult to stay competitive and retain the same impact in their communities.

2.2 Commonside Community Development Trust

Commonside Community Development Trust (Commonside) is a social welfare organization that works with other local organizations like churches, schools, housing associations, and other charities to support the population of **East Mitcham** (N. Martin, personal communication, February 3, 2019). More specifically, Commonside focuses on the Pollards Hill, Longthornton, and Figge's Marsh wards. Commonside provides advice on family debt, welfare benefits, homelessness, addictions, health, domestic violence, and many other issues. Even though the volunteers and office staff at Commonside are not professional advisors in these areas, they help clients by listening to their cases, developing trust, and guiding them to the resources they need.

Figure 3. Commonside at the New Horizon Centre

Commonside (2011a) improves the lives and community of the people living in the borough of Merton in many different ways - from renting out training spaces to hosting community programs. Most of these activities are held at the community center managed by Commonside, the **New Horizon Centre**. This Centre rents out spaces to anyone in the community to use for weddings, classes, meetings, and other functions. The New Horizon Centre also supports events and classes for the community hosted by Commonside that are designed to improve the lives of people in Merton. Three of the main community programs Commonside offers are the:

- **Mini Market**,
- **Lunch Club for Over 55s**, and
- **Step Forward Programme**.

The **Mini Market** provides residents of Merton with the opportunity to shop at the New Horizon Centre for cheap items and long-life groceries to save money on household basics on Mondays and Fridays (N. Martin, personal communication, March 22, 2019). Small business stallholders at the Mini Market generate income for Commonside because they pay for their spaces at the community center.

2.2.1 Advice Services Offered by Commonside

Lunch Club for Over 55s provides a daily meal for anyone over the age of 55 in Merton (Commonside, 2019b). Lunch Club is one of the community programs clients can attend to receive advice services in an informal setting. The two-course lunch is followed by an hour of entertainment, information, or recreation with a different activity every day. Its purpose is to provide a quality, freshly-cooked, affordable meal to the clients from Monday to Friday, all year long. They also provide information, support, and enjoyment that will enrich the lives of the participants.

The **Step Forward Programme** is the advice service that Commonside runs, and it provides residents of Merton with support and information in areas such as employment, finances, and parenting (Commonside, 2011b). This program also works with other organizations in getting clients affordable housing. The mission of this program is to "support residents to increase their confidence, knowledge and skills to successfully manage everyday living" (para. 1). Run by Commonside, Step Forward is specifically tailored towards giving advice to clients; however, it receives funding independently from the other programs Commonside offers. One way the Step Forward team generates income for the program is by running a **second-hand stall** on Fridays with donations of clothing, toys, and other items from the public (N. Martin, personal communication, March 22, 2019).

The items are sold at affordable prices to local families, generating over £3,000 per year for the Step Forward Programme. Two-thirds of this income are kept by Step Forward team members to use to pay for client emergency travel, utilities, children's items, and hygiene products. The rest of the income is used as a contribution towards costs of staff and running the office. While the income is not large, it is a significant contribution because it shows self-help and impresses funders.

2.2.2 Current Funding Practices at Commonside

Commonside has an annual budget of almost £500,000. The organization is currently funded by general donations and by grants. While Commonside benefits greatly from donations given by other organizations and by the community, grants are 43% of Commonside's yearly budget. During the 2017-2018 financial period, Commonside expended £473,953 and had a revenue of £474,455, shown in the following table (Commonside, 2019a).

Revenue	Amount	Percent Total
Investment	£ 75.00	0.02%
Grants	£ 203,049.00	42.80%
Non-Grants	£ 271,241.00	57.17%
Other Income	£ 90.00	0.02%
TOTAL	£ 474,455.00	100.00%

Figure 4. Breakdown of Revenue of Fiscal Year Ended 31 Mar 2018.
Source: (Commonside, 2019a).

The breakdown of the £203,049 of grant-based revenue from this financial period is presented in Figure 5:

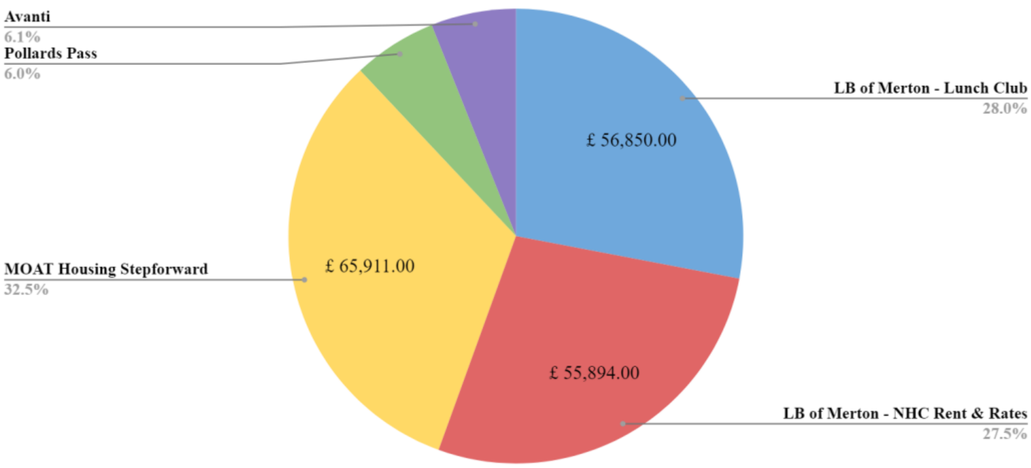

Figure 5. Breakdown of Grant Related Funding in Fiscal Year Ended 31 Mar 2018.
Source: (Commonside, 2019a).

Because of the restrictions that some of these grants have, funding from projects like Avanti and Pollards Pass does not go directly to Commonside to use in their own programs.

2.2.3 Importance of an Accreditation to Commonside

Accreditation is a process of evaluating and validating an organization through a set of standards. It is valuable to consumers, staff members, board members, and donors and funders, according to the Council on Accreditation (COA, 2019), a national accreditor of health services based in the United States. An accreditation will allow Commonside's clients to have faith in their practices and standards while also validating the quality of the services they offer to funders. Third-party entities such as government entities and foundations will recognize several accreditation schemes. This recognition means that people outside of the accrediting body also believe and support the quality standards set forth. While having an accreditation might not mean more funding directly for Commonside, it can open several doors to applying for different funds.

2.3 Accreditation of Social Welfare Organizations

The landscape of the not-for-profit sector in the UK has been changing, which has created a greater need for accountability. The number of charities and their scopes are increasing, and high-profile scandals have resulted in a diminished faith in the charity sector (Hyndman & McKillop, 2018). Funders and citizens are both looking towards nonprofit organizations to have more transparency and accountability (Gugerty et al., 2010). An accrediting body that has standards to ensure an organization's transparency and accountability creates trust in funders and clients. Seamus McCarthy, Ireland's Comptroller and Auditor General, believes that "there needs to be that constant accountability to taxpayers and to citizens" when it comes to the public sector spending money (Reddan, 2017, p. 21).

2.3.1 Advice Quality Standard (AQS) Accreditation

The Advice Quality Standard (AQS) is an advice focused quality standard, owned by the Advice Service Alliance (ASA, 2013), that is used to accredit independent advice organizations. The goal of the AQS is to ensure that accredited organizations are providing quality and safe advice and that they have their own quality control mechanisms. The AQS indirectly provides organizations with a framework to build off of because of the thoroughness of the standard. An additional benefit of becoming accredited with AQS is being added to the website database of all such organizations. Clients are able to look up accredited organizations to ensure their services are up to standard. The AQS is an in-depth quality assurance mark which offers many benefits to organizations, however the application process is very extensive.

The AQS has seven quality assessment areas known as the Quality Framework:

1. Access to service,
2. Seamless service,
3. Personnel management,
4. Organization operations,
5. Service operations,
6. Adherence to client needs, and
7. Commitment to quality.

This is a comprehensive way to assess organizations, but the application process can be lengthy as well as costly. An advice organization has the ability to apply to two separate levels of the AQS: the advice only level and the advice with casework level (ASA, 2014a). To fall under the advice level, an organization may diagnose client problems, provide general information and explain the options available. The organization can at most fill out basic forms and contact third parties for more information. Advice with casework allows an organization to go even further and act on behalf of the clients (e.g. negotiate with third parties). In addition to the two main levels, organizations also need to be audited independently if they provide a telephone service such as a help line.

The Advice Services Alliance (2013) lays out the requirements and their purposes for its application in great detail. In addition to application forms, there is a workbook aimed at guiding organizations through the requirements step-by-step while also pointing out some of the more detailed parts (ASA, 2014b). For each of the quality areas in the Quality Framework, an organization must complete up to five requirements per quality area by providing clear evidence supporting their case. For example, the first piece of evidence required is evidence of a "written strategy that sets out the key objectives or core values and principles of the service provider and what it aims to achieve, in detail for the following 12 months and, in outline, for a further two years ahead" (p. 10). Not only is the written strategy required, the organization is also advised to review the strategy every 12 months. There are a total of **94 pieces of evidence** required by the application making it an extremely time consuming process for any organization looking to become accredited with AQS (see Appendix B for a list of these 94 requirements).

The **quality areas** listed at the beginning of this section cover a broad range of criteria (ASA, 2013). **Seamless services** mean they refer clients to other organizations when needed. **Running the organization** covers the roles and activities of the key staff members and financial management. **People management** is the management of the other staff members such as providing adequate and equal opportunity training. **Running the service** involves the care of client information and case management as well as the review of those files. **Meeting the clients' needs** covers confidentiality, privacy, the information provided to clients, and general quality of service. Lastly, **commitment to quality** has to do with client complaints and maintaining quality procedures. Additionally, an organization with a telephone service must also meet separate standards that are structured very similarly to the Quality Framework requirements. For small organizations with only a few staff members, the process of becoming accredited while still maintaining the day-to-day work is a very daunting task even with guidance from the ASA.

After an organization applies, an auditor will be assigned to the case (ASA, 2014a). We produced a flowchart (Figure 6) below that shows the application process made using information from the ASA. A **desktop audit** is where the auditor compares all the requirements of AQS to the evidence provided by the organization. An **initial audit** occurs at the facilities of the organization. This in-person audit serves to ensure that the organization meets all standards and it is necessary to complete the assessment process. After an organization passes the initial audit, it is awarded the certification as well as use of the AQS logo. It is also added to the AQS database of accredited organizations.

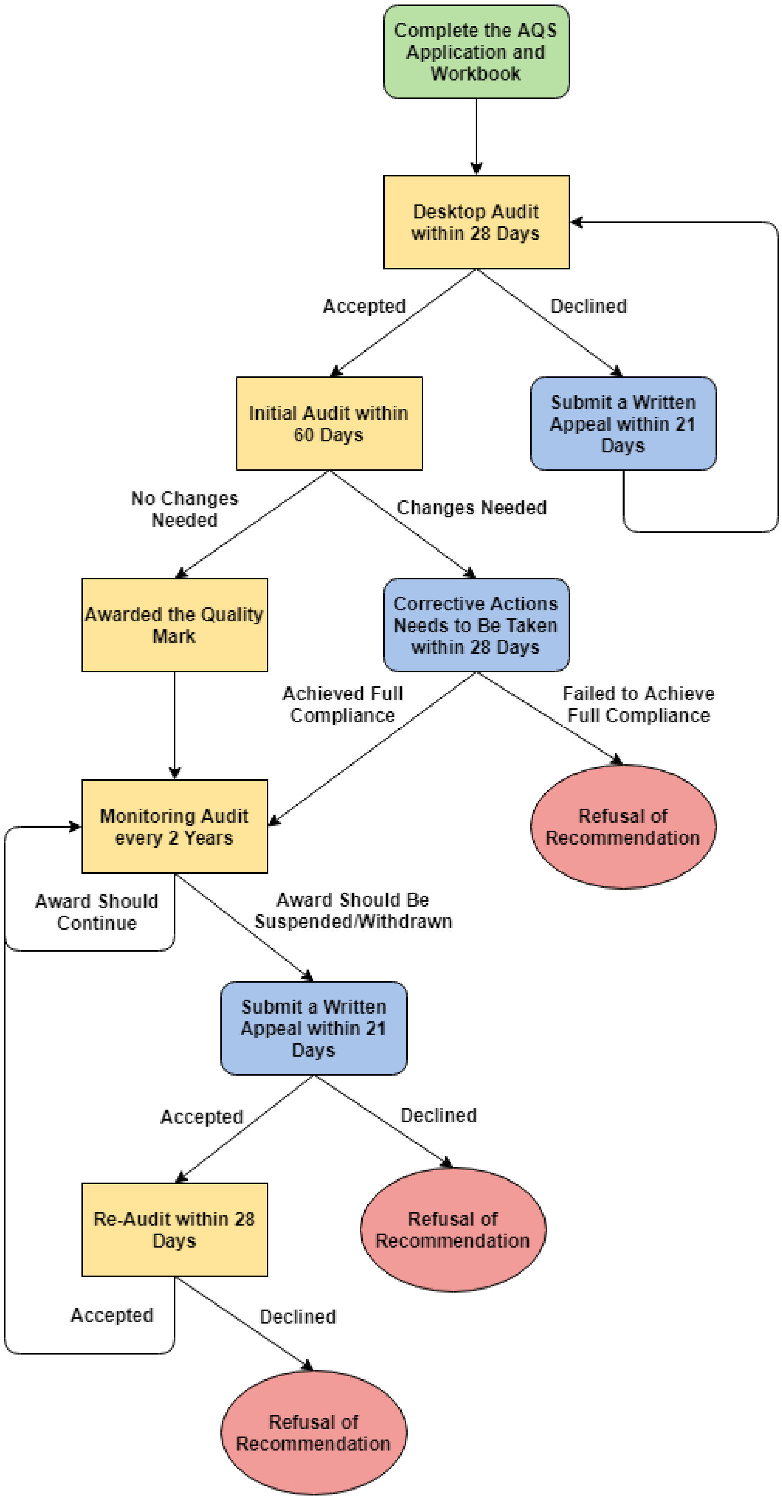

Figure 6. The AQS Accreditation Process

The AQS application can also be very costly for organizations (ASA, 2015). The desktop audit alone will cost an organization £400 excluding a Value-Added Tax (VAT). If an organization passes the desktop audit, it is then charged an additional fee for the initial audit and fees for the subsequent two-year audits. The initial audit and the regular two-year audit fees are prices based on the number of volunteers and employees working at the organization. For a medium-sized organization, like Commonside, of 16 - 30 people, the audit costs £1375 excluding VAT. While this money may not be considered a lot by some organizations, it is still money that could be put towards events and programs to help the local communities. Accreditations like the AQS are useful because of their comprehensiveness, however for smaller organizations, not all the requirements apply (N. Martin, personal communication, 25 Jan 2019). This can make it very difficult for smaller organizations to become accredited because they may need to apply too many resources just to meet certain requirements for the accreditation. Thus, these smaller organizations are looking for alternatives that will still prove the quality of their work.

2.3.2 Challenges in Accreditation for Commonside

Although many nationally recognized accreditation schemes exist, Commonside is reluctant to pursue these due to the costly process and overly-bureaucratic aspect of accreditation paperwork (N. Martin, personal communication, February 3, 2019). An option for accreditation that has been studied by Commonside is the Advice Quality Standard (described above); however, this would mean that more time would be spent on filling out forms and inputting data instead of actually seeing people and providing advice. The work of the Commonside team is impactful by being available for clients, talking one-on-one, and building trust by listening to them. Since the volunteers at Commonside are not professional advisors for debt or immigration issues, the Commonside team works closely with other organizations like the South West London Law Centre, which is accredited to do other work. Instead of needing to have its own accreditation to do this type of legal work, there are other accredited organizations that Commonside can work along with when clients need to access formally accredited services. Organizations like the Merton Council look for some form of quality assurance or work towards an accreditation standard, allowing Commonside to still receive funding because of their partnerships with accredited organizations.

Ideally, Commonside wants to prove that their services are still safe and professional without having to go through the accreditation process in order to obtain more funding (N. Martin, personal communication, February 3, 2019). Even though this means still losing out on certain funding opportunities, Commonside's team believes that they should not become an organization that treats human interactions and community connections as an afterthought. Acquiring an accreditation provides more for an organization than just additional funding opportunities, like the infrastructure to continue their work, however the process would potentially be too burdensome for Commonside's staff and volunteers. The Commonside team would need to expend vital resources that normally go towards community events on the numerous and complex steps required to get AQS. They will ultimately need to wrestle with the benefits and drawbacks to determine what is the next best step for the organization.

3.0 Methodology

The goal of our project was to ultimately help Commonside Community Development Trust secure more stable funding and improve their operational model through feasible implementation of procedures and policies and by evaluating their current services and local impact while still keeping their community relations at the forefront of their mission.

To lead towards our project goal, we developed the following objectives:

1. Identifying the areas of compliance with the Advice Quality Standard at Commonside;
2. Prioritizing Advice Quality Standard criteria used for accreditation;
3. Measuring the local impact of Commonside's services;

This project examined the advice services offered by Commonside and how they can satisfy the Advice Quality Standard, as well as how their outcomes can be demonstrated.

In order to achieve our objectives, our team used the following methods to gain accurate and helpful information, including financial analysis, content analysis, surveys, and personal interviews. This chapter addresses what information we were looking to obtain and why we used these methods to achieve our research objectives.

3.1 Identifying the Areas of Compliance with the Advice Quality Standard

The purpose of this objective was to assess how Commonside services matched up against the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) requirements and determine if pursuing AQS was a feasible option for them. In order to measure Commonside against the AQS requirements, our team conducted a content analysis with our sponsor of each quality area of the AQS accreditation, as well as the subsequent pieces of evidence needed, and classified each as one of the following:

- **already implemented**,
- **easily implementable**, defined as able to be individually introduced to Commonside within the next three months, or
- **difficult to implement**, implying that the process was too complex to be completed in a three-month time frame.

In Appendix B1 we describe these categories.

We chose the three-month time period to align with when quarterly reviews are conducted. To help determine if pursuing AQS was the right step, we interviewed a member of an organization that recently obtained an AQS accreditation: The Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL). We interviewed their CEO, Lyla Adwan-Kamara, to identify which aspects of the accreditation process were most impactful to their organization. We asked specifically about the difficulties encountered in the initial application process and in the bi-annual audits. Having already completed the AQS application and audit, Adwan-Kamara served as a personal point of reference of what the process entailed and whether it was beneficial for the organization (for interview questions, see Appendix C. For a summary of the interview, see Appendix D).

3.2 Prioritizing Criteria for Accreditation

We sought to prioritize our recommendations to Commonside based on what criteria is most important to funders. To research this topic, we interviewed funders and service providers who have worked with Commonside in the past. The topics of funding and accreditation require a more formal setting to obtain, so we conducted semi-structured interviews to discover what criteria they are looking for and to allow for some fluidity in the discussion. We first asked funders whether they found an accreditation essential, or if there were other things they deem more important. Additionally, we asked funders what criteria they are most interested in such as: client care, volunteer work, and financial management. For more details on the specific questions, as well as our interview protocol, see Appendix E. Martin reached out to current and potential funders of Commonside to set up interviews to be conducted by our team to maximize our potential responses, though she did not receive any responses from future funders.

We interviewed the following people:

1. Jason Charles, a community development officer for MOAT Homes who has close ties to the funding process of local community projects. MOAT Homes is on the Community Chest panel that distributes the Pollards Hill Community Fund, which only provides funding to projects within Pollards Hill. MOAT Homes currently funds Commonside.
2. Ray Hautot, a service provider who refers patients from the local hospital to Commonside. The patients that Hautot refers have issues which are usually not caused by physical health problems, but rather mild mental health or monetary problems.
3. John Dimmer, the Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships for the Merton Council. He focuses on the Information and Advice Services sector and has a grants budget of about £400,000 - £500,000, specifically for Merton organizations. Commonside are currently funded by the Merton Council as well.

In order to help further our prioritization of the AQS requirements, our team categorized the evidence requirements into four groups based on the wording of the requirements and Martin's notes:

- **financial criteria**,
- **policy criteria**,
- **procedural criteria**, and
- **data management criteria**.

This allowed us to understand the evidence criteria in order to better prioritize recommendations for Commonside. With the interviews and the list of criteria reviewed with Martin as well as our prior research of general accreditation requirements, we were able to prioritize the AQS evidence requirements.

3.3 Measuring the Local Impact of Commonside's Services

To accurately verify and determine the level of impact of Commonside has in Merton, we obtained feedback from clients the organization has helped as well as the general community to gauge what they know about Commonside and its services.

3.3.1 Surveying Members of the Local Community Serviced by Commonside

To determine the impact that Commonside has had on the local community, we surveyed some of the local residents who have used Commonside's services. Finding positive community feedback could be another way to convince funders that Commonside is a worthy organization even though they lack an accreditation at the moment. We felt it was crucial to helping Commonside convey the human-to-human connection they create within the local community to funders.

We conducted both a **digital and paper survey** in order to accommodate the preferences of Commonside's clients and to reach as many respondents as possible. With the help of Lorraine Thorn, we surveyed people electronically by placing our survey on Commonside's website and Facebook page. For the paper survey, we provided paper copies at Commonside's café area in the New Horizon Centre to be completed during various events, including Lunch Club, Mini Market, and the Step Forward Programme. Additionally, Step Forward staff members, Amy Tilby and Deniz Ali, asked clients to fill out our survey after their meetings to help us gather more responses. We attended other weekly or monthly events to distribute our survey to gain a broader range of responses regarding Commonside's impact, instead of focusing solely on Commonside's advice services. For returning the survey, people were instructed to return the paper survey into a suggestion box located in the main café area at the New Horizon Centre. By surveying at daily events, we gave more members a chance to respond.

A total of 39 responses were collected and analyzed. Commonside has a large proportion of "regular" clients but we also wanted to get responses from clients who only come every once in a while. The survey allowed our team to gather quantifiable data to effectively analyze Commonside's impact. Because of the personal nature of the issues being referred to in the survey, we needed the permission of the clients to refer to their responses in our report. All information from the surveys was kept anonymous and confidential (Appendices F1 and F2).

3.3.2 Interviewing Members of the Local Community Serviced by Commonside

In order to learn in more detail about Commonside's human-to-human connections with the community, we interviewed community members about their personal experiences with Commonside. Having this qualitative data helped us add context to the quantitative results from our survey data. Additionally, it allowed us to build **case studies** to show funders that Commonside is vital to the community. We were able to conduct three semi-structured interviews with people who have used Commonside's services recommended to us by the directors of the Step Forward Programme at Commonside. The built-in flexibility of a semi-structured interview of a semi-structured interview allowed us to obtain a more intimate and thorough response to questions. However, we recognized that there was the possibility of observer bias as well as the challenge of interpreting the qualitative data. Moreover, participation in the interview was optional and was not able to be random, as it was unlikely to obtain a list of every single resident of Merton. Thus, we used convenience sampling to choose our interviewees. We conducted the interviews at the New Horizon Center in the café area as it was a safe and familiar space for the interviewees. We aimed to interview 5 people so that we had a diverse set of opinions while still being able to compile and analyze our findings. Despite these shortcomings, we still believed that interviewing members of the community allowed us to collect valuable qualitative data about the perception and effect Commonside's services have on the local community. See Appendix G for more details on our interview questions. We used these findings to ultimately create recommendations as part of our project.

3.4 Limitations of Our Study

While our team intended to interview at least 5 funders, we were only able to interview a funder, a funding proxy, and a service provider due to the fact that funders themselves tend to be unresponsive. With this, the information cannot be generalized. However, they provided diverse perspectives that helped shape our understanding of the funding climate in Pollards Hill and Merton. Additionally, we had hoped for more client responses on the survey and number of interviews, however, integrating into the community and gaining trust from the clients was important. We realized that organizing a diverse focus group would have provided a more cohesive discussion but given time and resource constraints, we decided to move forward with individual interviews. In the next chapter, we present our findings.

4.0 Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, we discuss our findings on an accreditation scheme and funding. First, we found that an accreditation that benefits an organization the most by improving their business model. However, an accreditation can also help prove quality of work, especially to funders who are looking for demonstrated outcomes. From our interviews and surveys with Commonside clients, we found quantitative and qualitative data that Commonside will be able to use in the future to show to funder.

4.1 Areas of Compliance with the Advice Quality Standard at Commonside

Our interview with Adwan-Kamara from Merton CIL provided us with a new perspective of accreditation that we had not previously considered. The AQS serves to improve business model rather than the quality of advice that is actually administered to clients at organizations. The standard that accredited organizations are held to ensures that each advice body is held to the same minimum requirement for file and data records, practices, and legislation. This was noteworthy since Commonside can absolutely benefit from model improvements across the board.

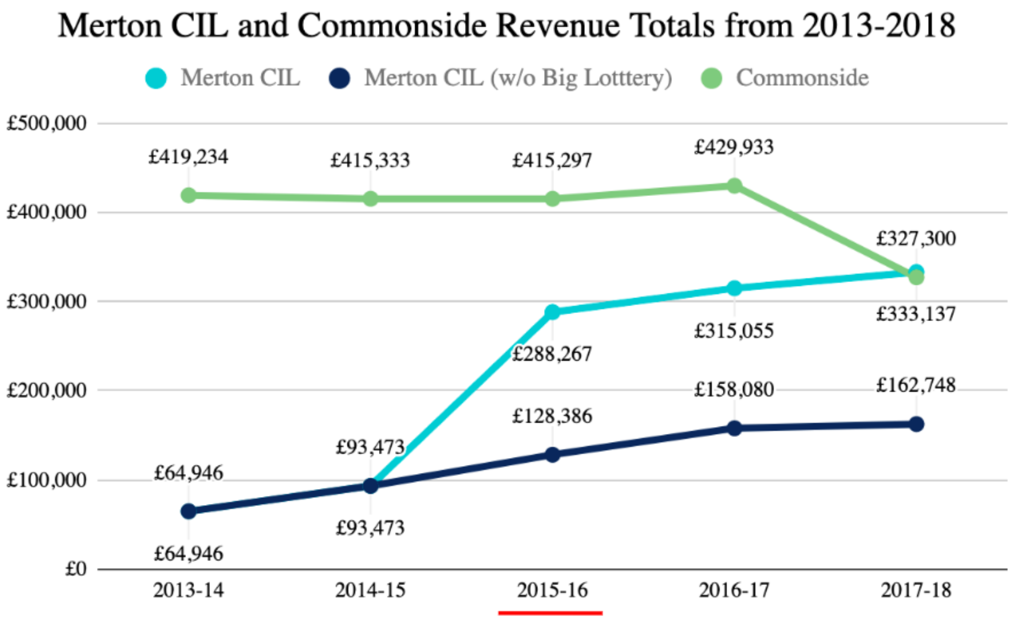

Figure 7. Funding Levels for Merton CIL and Commonside from March 2013 - March 2018.

A comparison graph of yearly revenue totals from Merton CIL and Commonside indicates that AQS relates to an increasing in funding. The beginning of the AQS application is noted in Figure 7. However, we found that after removing the funds from Big Lottery, the new totals for Merton CIL revenue (dark blue) disprove the previous speculation. The scope of our project does not include finding any correlation between the acquisition of AQS and an increase in funding.

This supports our finding that accreditation does not create an increase in funding levels. At the end of the 2017-2018 financial year, the difference between Merton CIL total funding and Commonside total funding was only £12,176, shown in Figure 7.

After reviewing the Advice Quality Standard criteria, (Appendix B2) our team found that Commonside currently does not comply with 74.4% of the 94 evidence requirements. These requirements are broken down further into **easy to implement** (within 3 months) and **difficult to implement** (in 3+ months) (Figure 8).

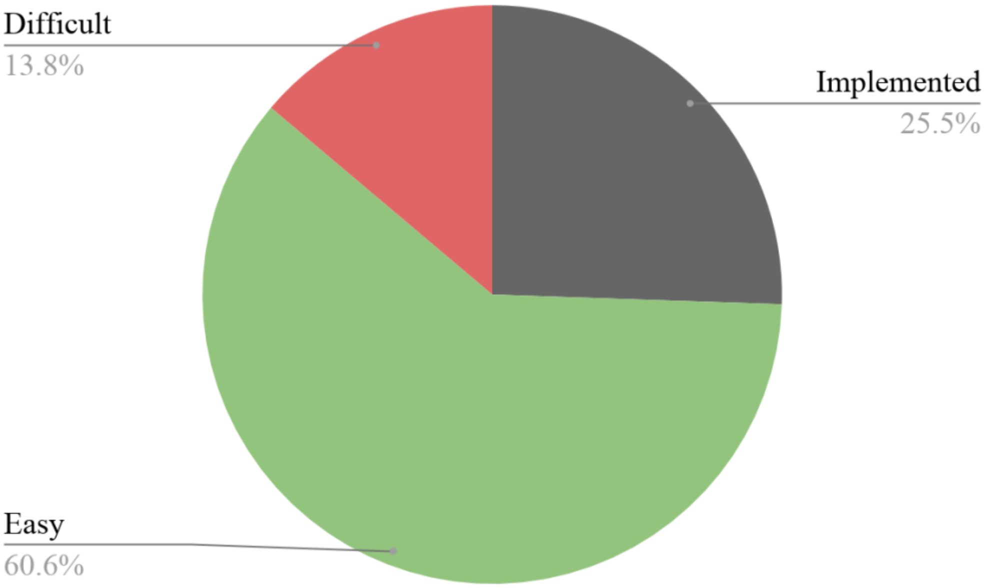

Figure 8. AQS Evidence Requirements Categorized by Feasibility.

While the requirements are numerous, the significant portion of **easy to implement** and **implemented** requirements (**86.1%**) confirm the feasibility of attaining AQS. We noticed that many of the **easy to implement** requirements were policies and procedures.

4.2 Prioritization of Accreditation Criteria

Our interviews with funders and proxies continued to suggest that the acquisition of an accreditation may not directly lead to an increase in funding for Commonside. Rather, demonstrating the work and impact Commonside does may have a greater influence in funding applications. Nevertheless, accreditation is still desirable when applying for large sums of money, since funders are more inclined to grant funding to an organization that can demonstrate the largest impact on the community and that will use the money to the fullest extent. In the long-term, having some type of quality assurance validation like the AQS is still very important as funders still need verification of the quality of work an organization is producing. Ultimately, funding comes down to proof of work rather than proof of quality.

Through interviewing Jason Charles (Appendix H), we learned that the funding of social welfare organizations has been cut in the last few years even though the need for monetary grants is as strong as ever. Social welfare organizations are not doing enough to "**demonstrate outcomes**," a phrase that was brought up throughout the interview. These organizations are not doing a good enough job of documenting the impact they are having, which is leading to cuts in funding because funders cannot be confident in what they are investing their money in. When it comes down to solely the amount of funding that can be acquired, **demonstrated outcomes** are more important than an accreditation. Having some form of a quality assurance mark remains essential, especially when it comes to organizations like Commonside. We were recommended to look at systems like the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT) Value, which assigns a monetary value to certain statistics. The goal of the HACT Value is to help organizations measure the value of their social impact. A similar system would be very helpful to Commonside.

We interviewed Ray Hautot (Appendix I), who refers patients to a number of local organizations, including Commonside's Step Forward Programme, supported by the Merton Council. Accreditation is not as critical to Hautot because the Merton Council already approves of them.

However, some type of quality assurance mark is important for these local organizations to have. There are a few methods of demonstrating outcomes that were brought to our attention, such as recording the amount of money an organization has raised for clients through the government's Personal Independence Payment (PIP) program. Commonside is further behind on the administrative side of things than they should be and the organization would benefit greatly from having more detailed client files through the implementation of a **database** of some kind.

Lastly, we learned that the Merton Council is much more prescriptive in what they wanted from organizations that they fund in the new round of funding through our interview with John Dimmer (Appendix J). The details on the new criteria are listed in the Merton Council Strategic Partner Programme Prospectus 2019/22. Organizations need to have some type of **quality assurance** however an accreditation was not the key factor in selecting an organization for funding. Instead, being able to show the work that they have been doing in a tangible way is much more important. Organizations that could not **demonstrate outcomes** but had an accreditation would immediately be excluded from consideration, while an organization that could demonstrate outcomes but did not have an accreditation would continue to be considered for grants.

In all the interviews, we found that an accreditation is not the be-all and end-all to the issues that Commonside may experience. Commonside would benefit from both having an accreditation and pursuing avenues of demonstrating the work that they do to funders. While both are tied together, Commonside will have to allocate resources into each part independently to achieve their goals in the long term.

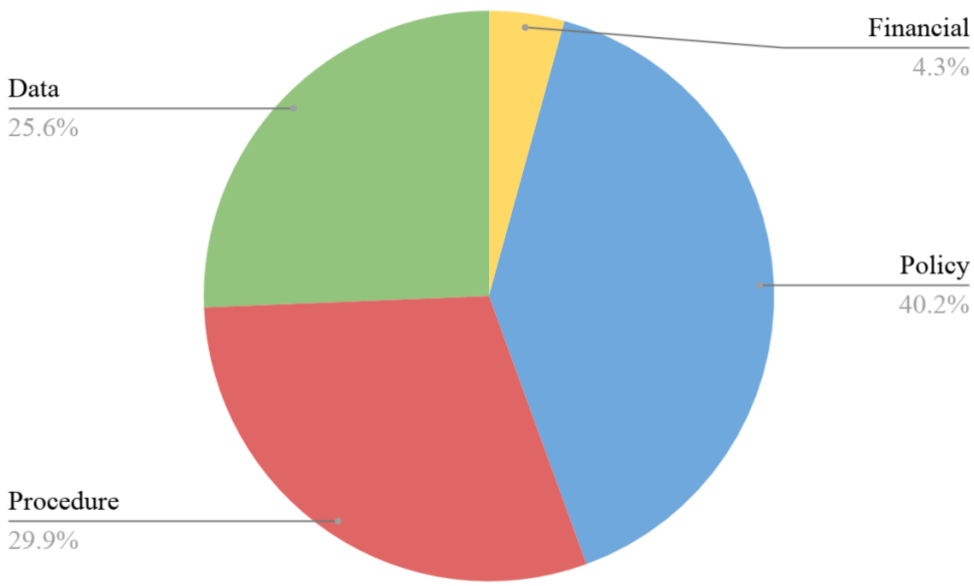

Figure 9. AQS Evidence Requirements Categorized by Type (with overlap).

After categorizing each piece of AQS evidence, we found that a majority of the pieces of evidence required a policy or procedure to be written. For pieces of evidence that only fit under one category, we found that **29 AQS requirements can be completed with a written <u>policy</u>** and **28 can be completed with a written <u>procedure</u>**, however creating policies and procedures takes time. Only 1 piece of evidence is solely financial while 12 are solely related to data management. Including overlaps, there are **30 evidence requirements that relate to data management**. See Appendix B2. for the detailed categorization of the AQS evidence requirements. Under Commonside's current practices, they have a records system using Windows folders and Word documents to keep track of client information, and meetings, but not a versatile **database**. Meeting the data management requirements will take more work and along with Hautot's suggestions, implementing a database is the next big step when it comes to meeting the AQS evidence requirements.

4.3 Local Impact of Commonside's Services

At the end of our five-week data collection period, our team was able to gather 39 survey responses, both paper and online. Figures 10 and 11 prove the appreciation and satisfaction of Commonside clients (Appendix K), providing us with strong evidence to include in our presentation of Commonside to funders and the community, described in the Recommendations chapter.

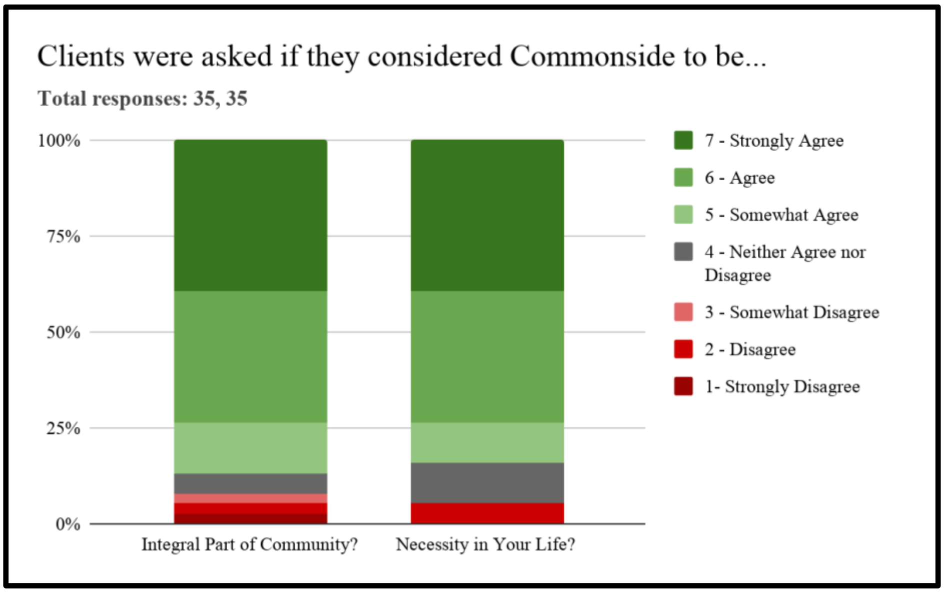

Figure 10. Survey opinions on Commonside's role in the community.

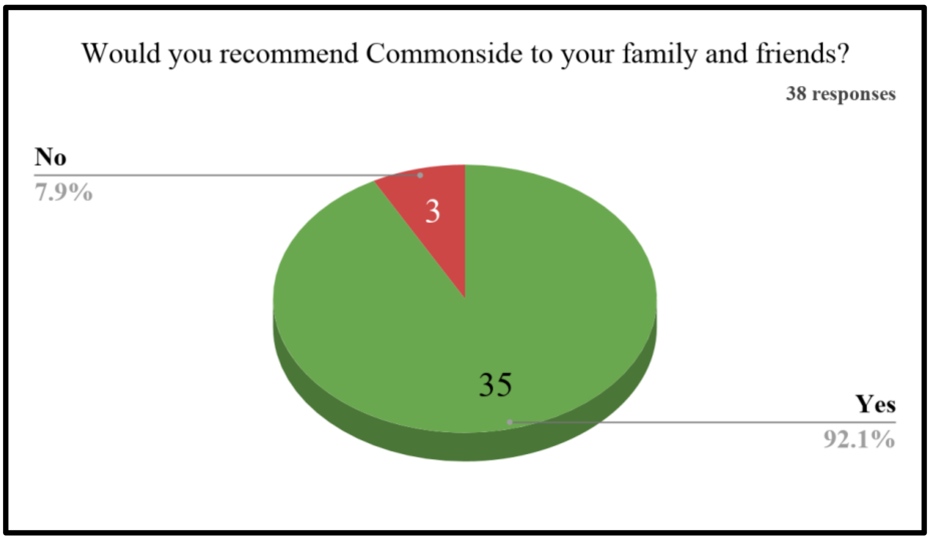

Figure 11. Survey results of clients' likelihood to refer friends to Commonside.

We interviewed three clients to give our team personal references of how important Commonside is to each of these interviewees. These quotes gave us specific material to include in our slide decks for both the community and the Board of Trustees.

Our interview with Yosief Tewolde provided insight into the support that Commonside provides. After a terrible accident resulted in loss of memory, Tewolde had to build his life again through information he obtained from others. Commonside worked with him to increase his brain strength and suggested that writing a book would benefit his memory growth. Tewolde is now a self-published author of his autobiography and has continued to write. He believes that **"the benefit that Commonside provides is different"**, and expressed to our team that he does not think there is **"anywhere else to go that matches the benefits of Commonside"**. A full summary of the interview can be found in Appendix L1.

We also interviewed William "Bill" Bumstead, who we met while helping serve Lunch Club one afternoon. Bumstead is 95 years old and moves like he is 20 years younger. He stressed the importance of being able to get out of the house or flat, especially at his age. **"The most important service that Commonside provides,"** he said, **"is a place for people to get together, to communicate because people of [his] age need to go out when [they've] been living alone to meet and share things with one another."** A full summary of the interview can be found in Appendix L2.

Our final client interview was with Peter Smith. Martin suggested we ask to speak with Smith as he is considered to be Commonside's greatest success story. His story was emotional - recounting his loss of benefits due to his age and an injury that did not allow him to work. He also failed to receive PIP, a welfare benefit in the United Kingdom intended to help with extra costs of living with a disability, leading to a big impact on his mental health. Commonside's Step Forward team worked closely to advise him on his appeal of the decision and helped him eventually earn PIP. Smith told our team that **"you won't find anyone better than these [people]"**, commending Commonside for working so closely with him. A full summary of the interview can be found in Appendix L3.

Through the weeks that we spent at Commonside, our team noticed that many clients give back through volunteering, highlighting the impact that the services have on their lives. Both Tewolde and Smith volunteer at Commonside, and Smith collects money specifically for Step Forward when he volunteers throughout the week. Bumstead's experience is the opposite - he used to volunteer when he was younger and mentioned knowing past directors and managers of Commonside and now benefits from the events at the community center, especially Lunch Club.

The survey data relating to client care and satisfaction paired with interview-based case studies showcases Commonside as a quality organization. Through this project, our group continued to emphasize the human-to-human connections the Commonside team has with their clients, which they were concerned would be lost in the accreditation process. With this in mind, we created a **presentation to showcase the human aspects** of Commonside's services to funders. The goal for this objective was to help Commonside market themselves as an organization worthy of receiving funding, as well as give recommendations for future steps. Our results link directly to our deliverables and will be explained in further detail in our Conclusions and Recommendations chapter.

5.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

In this chapter, our team recommends pursuing accreditation and funding independently since the connection is not as strong as our team previously thought. Our recommendations for obtaining AQS relate primarily to the steps that should be taken in order to move forward in the application process, while the recommendations for funding relate to ways of proving the quality of work to funders.

5.1 Move Towards Acquiring AQS

We recommend that Commonside pursue AQS because it provides more than opportunities of additional grant-based funding. We found that, in general, funders care more about **demonstrated outcomes** than having an accreditation. Though the accreditation does not directly cause more funding, we found that AQS requirements provide improvements to an organization's infrastructure. Adwan-Kamara, from Merton CIL, said that the process of acquiring the AQS accreditation gave their organization administrators a stronger sense of how to run the organization with a higher regard towards efficiency.

There are two different approaches that Commonside can take when trying to acquire AQS: completing the **easily obtainable** requirements or tackling the **difficult-to-obtain** requirements. We believe that executing the difficult-to-obtain requirements will have more of an impact in the long term and will help Commonside become a more sustainable organization. Additionally, it is likely that the easily obtainable requirements could change and will need to be updated far more often, making them cumbersome for the little gain they provide.

A majority of the AQS requirements are easily obtainable for Commonside, which is why we are recommending Martin and staff work towards a select group of evidence, which we believe are still vital. In order to maintain quality assurance standards, we recommend Commonside begin by **maintaining written records** of:

1. staff trainings,
2. client follow ups,
3. referrals to the network of partner organizations.

Additionally, we also recommend that Commonside should strive to **maintain accessibility for people with disabilities** who are seeking help.

These easily obtainable AQS requirements mostly require formal policies and procedures to be written out. We are also providing a list linking Commonside's existing policies and procedures to the AQS requirements as some of the requirements are already written or verbally discussed at Commonside, found in Appendix B2.

The difficult-to-obtain AQS requirements relate to data management and the structural model of the organization. We believe that many of the evidence requirements can be satisfied by the addition of a **database**. In terms of storing client information, Commonside has a record keeping system, but they do not have a database that can be easily searched and organized.

5.2 Adopt a Database System

A database can be very versatile, as it could hold calendars and appointments, as well as various statistics and client information. Our team believes that a database could also help in the long run when Commonside requires data to show demonstrated outcomes for future funding. We determined possible necessary features by further analyzing the AQS evidence, focusing on requirements we categorized as "data management" (see Appendix B2 for categorized requirements). We were able to determine a recommended features list:

- **accessible**
- **secure/encrypted**
- **backed up**
- **searchable**
- **exportable.**

A list of these features and the associated AQS requirements can be found in Appendix M.

For Commonside, a critical part to consider is the **accessibility** of the database to all the staff and volunteer members. Since Commonside is not a technology-heavy organization, the ideal database would be simple to use and easy to learn so that all members of staff can adapt quickly. Therefore, companies that offer training sessions for their database would be an ideal candidate when it comes to choosing the correct database.

When dealing with client and employee data, a database should first and foremost be **secure** as well as **backed up** onto a server or the cloud. Clients' sensitive data needs to safely recorded and both those features are necessary to accomplish that. If staff and volunteers are both allowed access to the database, there needs to be a way to restrict access to confidential data. Most evidence simply required associated files to be recorded in the database as appropriate, such as client and employee data, but the confidentiality policy itself requires more thought. The Commonside team's current networked drive (i.e. file system) requires the user to login, but it does not limit access to files based on permissions. Evidence F3.1 requires client confidentiality and permission when sharing data with outside sources, so a login for the database is strictly necessary.

We associated evidence pieces that were required to be "easily accessible" with "**searchable**". Similarly, when data was required to be sent to others or shared with external parties, "**exportability**" was included. While a file destruction policy may traditionally refer to shredding physical files, we included this feature in the database as well to ensure optimal client safety and confidentiality. For Commonside specifically, a database should, at the minimum, store client and employee/volunteer data and case review files. Unlike Microsoft Word documents, the use of a database can make client files and other types of data **searchable**. For example, if looking for all instances of referrals to Organization X, an ideal database should be able to return all case files where the client was referred to Organization X. Similarly, an ideal database should track the percent of appointment attendances, volunteer hours, and other statistics, which can be helpful for acquiring more funding. Lastly, for the benefit of the AQS audit and signposting, client files should be **exportable** and **encrypted** so that information can easily and safely be transported to their proper destinations. Again, for the database to be effective, it is critical that the staff learn about the capabilities of a database and how to use it to its fullest extent.

Unfortunately, it is not within the scope of our project to explore databases in detail, but as a starting point, we recommend contacting *Image Integral*, an independently run database company that creates bespoke databases and has previously worked with other charity organizations.

5.3 Begin Measuring the Value of Services

Regardless of whether or not Commonside acquires an accreditation, there are still ways that they can present themselves to funders. After speaking with Charles, Hautot, and Dimmer, we found that being able to tangibly show the work that an organization has done is a critical part to acquiring funding. This is otherwise known as **demonstrating outcomes**. In the current climate, demonstrating the value of the work carried out by an organization is possibly more important than an accreditation to some funders. Through our interviews with Commonside and through our first-hand experience, we can tell that Commonside is doing a lot for the residents of Merton. The problem they are facing is that because so much time and so many resources are spent helping people, they are not doing enough administrative work that allows them to effectively show the outcomes of their work.

There are many ways that Commonside can measure its impact, such as using various statistics or keeping track of specific case studies. Commonside will need to put energy towards the admin work in order to have a strong set of data which is why we are recommending the **database**, as previously mentioned, as a supplement or step towards demonstrating outcomes. More detailed case files can also help greatly with the amount of statistics that can be used.

Housing organizations use a scale called the HACT Value, which converts non-monetary statistics into a monetary value. For example, the number of volunteer hours is assigned a monetary value and the number of new volunteers a year is assigned a different monetary value. The monetary values in these cases represent the amount of money that can be saved down the line due to the volunteer hours put in now. Since Commonside has so many volunteers and part-time employees that put in extra volunteer hours, a scale like this can easily help them demonstrate outcomes. Unfortunately, to use the HACT Value, a membership is required, so a different scale needs to be found. Other organizations multiply the number of volunteer hours by the minimum wage to represent the amount of money and value that is not billed. Other statistics that could be used include:

- the number of clients who have become volunteers,
- the percentage of successful appeals for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) Commonside aids in, and
- the total amount of money they have helped raise for clients by PIP.

Using similar statistics in funding applications could be extremely impactful, however, Commonside would need to divert some resources into administrative work by tracking the number of volunteers, new volunteers, number of volunteer hours, etc.

5.4 Explore Other Fundraising Methods

While an accreditation standard serves as a method to open doors to new funding, there are other ways organizations can gain funding for their programs, like advertising the quality work done. A way to publicize the work of an organization is to create a digital advertisement campaign. By publicizing their work, organizations can often connect with funders and community members through a human bond rather than series of checkboxes. Two different organizations are presented as examples of advertising campaigns that helped gather funding.

1. In February 2018, the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, a charity invested in the fight against lung cancer, launched the eight-week Workplace Virtuathon along with other professional education partners (Virtuathon, 2018). This program got supporters to run a 5K or 10K at the end of the eight weeks to raise funds for the charity and promote importance of having an active lifestyle. Not only did this **program raise funds for the charity, but it also helped raise awareness of human wellbeing**.
2. Another example is the 2016 Everyday WaterAid campaign where global staff was sent out with 360° Video technology to different locations around the world to show the quality work being done by the organization (WaterAid, 2018). The film showed how their work towards clean water and better hygiene can change and save lives in different communities of the

world, as well as the beauty of the places and cultures that they work with. This digital **campaign helped raise awareness of the people, places, and communities** that WaterAid is helping to showcase the good work to current and possible supporters of the charity.

Even though no accreditation processes were involved in these digital campaigns, the charities involved were successful in showcasing their work to the world, making themselves more appealing to supporters. We understand that diverting resources is not ideal when there are always going to be people that need help, but in the long run, Commonside will need to make fundamental changes in order to help in the future.

Conclusion

Using a combination of data, we created short sets of slides to highlight areas where Commonside can progress and components where Commonside shines to aid in showcasing the organization. We make recommendations on the next steps to take in acquiring the Advice Quality Standard, features needed in a database for an organization like Commonside, and methods that will help acquire more funding in the near future. Through this project, we hope to help Commonside continue doing the quality work every day but also improve in the long-term for the benefit of the community.

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Appendix A: Populations of the Wards of Merton

Bolded wards are serviced by Commonside Community Development Trust:

Ward	**Population**
Abbey	10,925
Cannon Hill	9,469
Colliers Wood	10,663
Cricket Green	12,056
Dundonald	9,823
Figge's Marsh	**11,815**
Graveney	9,980
Hillside	9,167
Lavender Fields	10,922
Longthornton	**10,407**
Lower Morden	9,099
Merton Park	9,950
Pollards Hill	**10,999**
Ravensbury	10,134
Raynes Park	10,063
St. Helier	10,757
Trinity	10,249
(Wimbledon) Village	8,251
West Barnes	10,314
Wimbledon Park	11,189

Appendix B: AQS Evidence Requirements

Appendix B1: Ability of Requirements to be Implemented

Commonside AQS self-evaluation - We met with our sponsor on two separate occasions to thoroughly review the 94 AQS requirements point-by-point.

I = Implemented
EI = Easily Implementable (able to be independently implemented in three months or less)
DI = Difficult to Implement (independently would take longer than three months to implement)

EVIDENCE	I	EI	DI
A1.1 Written strategy of **key objectives/core values and principles** of Commonside and what it aims to achieve in the next 12 months, and, in outline, for a further 2 years.		X	
A1.2 Strategy should have **type and level of services** (e.g. how many caseworkers / how many hours of casework and in which subject areas, or the name of the casework supervisor and how the services will be provided). Also should include the skills and resources necessary to deliver the strategy.		X	
A2.1 The service provides details about the **type of work** they do to relevant local service providers, funders and the public (opening hours) and seeks their **feedback** on the service		X	
A2.2 Following certification, the **Advice Quality Standard logo** is displayed in accordance with guidelines.		X	
A3.1 An **equal opportunities policy** in effective operation that precludes discrimination in selecting and dealing with clients in the target group.	X		
A3.2 Where organizational principles or charter only allow the service to be **offered to specific client groups**, this should be reflected in the signposting and referral procedures in B1.3		X	
B1.1 The service provider will need to describe clearly the **service that it is capable of delivering**.		X	
B1.2 Where appointments are offered, the organisation should **record client attendance** and use information on non-attendance for service improvement	X		
B1.3 A procedure and process(es) for conducting **signposting and referral** exist and are in effective operation and staff must be able to demonstrate how they identify when to signpost or refer.		X	

B1.4 **Records of referrals are maintained** (including records of all instances where no suitable service provider could be found), and reviewed at least annually.		X	
B1.5 **Records** of all instances where **no suitable service provider was found** when the need for signposting or referral was identified. This information is made available on reasonable request to the auditor.		X	
B1.6 For signposting, your procedure must confirm that, as a minimum, you will **signpost any individua**l whom your organisation is unable to help.		X	
B1.7 For referrals, your **procedure must include**, as a minimum, the **practical steps** to be taken to identify appropriate service providers, including giving first consideration to Advice Quality Standard holders, and the circumstances in which use of a service without the Advice Quality Standard might be appropriate.		X	
B1.8 Access to the Advice Quality Standard Directory is available, and there is a **process** to ensure that **details about alternative service providers** are kept **up to date**.		X	
B1.9 When **signposting or referral** to an external service provider is used, the client is told **what role your organisation will take** and they know what service to expect at the new service provider.		X	
B1.10 A means of **recording feedback on the services** provided by the organisation to which clients have been **referred or signposted** and, on reasonable request, to provide this information to the auditor.		X	
B1.11 **Discussion** with the client, where relevant, **of the cost implications of them being signposted or referred** elsewhere. This discussion is subsequently noted on the file.		X	
B1.12 **Information** about advice or assistance already given (and any relevant documentation) is **forwarded to the new service provider**.			X
C1.1 A clear **written description of how the service is organised.**		X	
C1.2 **Decision making structure is defined in writing** with identification of key personnel and their responsibilities, including the person responsible for ensuring the organisation satisfies Advice Quality Standard		X	
C1.3 Where Management Committee runs organisation, **committee needs to demonstrate independence**, funding bodies remain a		X	

minority within the community membership, governing document is detailed in relationship between committee and those running the organisation is made clear			
C1.4 Organisations are **members of recognized representative bodies**. Where service provider is not affiliated, auditor may consider whether they are appropriate to be a holder of AQS		X	
C2.1 Those responsible for running the organisation **review levels of service performance** against service strategy every 12 months		X	
C2.2 The organisation should **monitor the take up of services including attendance/non-attendance** by clients in order to ensure effective use of resources available		X	
C2.3 Subsequent **decisions about service capacity are reviewed** to reflect available resources		X	
C3.1 **Financial management is exercised** in line with agreed statements of financial policies, procedures and authorities relevant to the organisation	X		
C3.2 **Evidence of financial review by an independent** source must be given	X		
C3.3 Organisations **use financial information to assist in reviewing** the provision of services	X		
C3.4 **Current professional indemnity insurance exists** in accordance with section 37 of the Solicitor's Act 1974. Non-solicitor organisations must be insured to the minimum amount required by the relevant association. Organisations which are not members of a recognised association should be insured for not less than £250,000. Statutory bodies may have other arrangements	X		
C3.5 Organisations will have **produced the following documentation** and **shown how it has been used in managing** the organisation: annual budget, quarterly reports of variance of income and expenditure against budgets, annual profit and loss account or income and expenditure account, annual balance sheet	X		
C3.6 Organisations will have **carried out an annual risk assessment**, clearly identifying all known key risks and what mitigating actions will be taken		X	
D1.1 An **equal opportunities policy in effective operation** that precludes discrimination in the selection, recruitment and treatment of staff.	X		
D1.2 **Open recruitment processes** that evaluate skills, knowledge	X		

and experience of those applying for posts.			
D2.1 **Induction procedures** for people who join the organisation.	X		
D2.2 **Systems for review / feedback on personal performance** to be undertaken at least annually and recorded.		X	
D2.3 **Training and development plans to support the needs of the service**, reviewed annually		X	
D2.4 All **training to be recorded on training records**.		X	
D3.1 All **staff are aware of their responsibilities**. These may be documented in job descriptions.	X		
D3.2 **Procedures to match the skills and competencies** of all members of staff to the roles they need to fulfill.		X	
D3.3 All staff are **aware of the need to inform the supervisor if the case is beyond their competency**.	X		
D3.4 Ready **access to relevant legal reference material** as documented by service providers and a method of regular updating.		X	
D3.5 **Process for giving timely information to relevant staff about changes in the law** pertinent to their service delivery.		X	
D4.1 Organizations **identify at least one person responsible for supervising individuals** that work with clients. Supervisor must have: at least 2 years' recent and ongoing experience (either by undertaking advice themselves or involvement in others' cases), have experience of managing advisors, demonstrate how they have maintained their knowledge of legal changes and practices, be accessible to those working within the organization.		X	
D4.2 Where there is more than one person identified as the supervisor, there must be **at least one person ultimately responsible for meeting the requirement of the standard**. This may be one of the supervisors or the manager of the service (C1.2)		X	
D4.3 A **method of allocating cases** / enquires to advisors / case workers **according to their abilities**		X	
D4.4 A **supervision system that is tailored to the skills** of the individual.			X
D5.1 **Organisations identify the individual caseworkers undertaking casework in their service strategy** and: demonstrate that at least one of the identified caseworkers spends at least 12 hours per week and any other identified caseworkers spend at least 6			X

hours per week each dealing with cases falling within the relevant casework category AS WELL AS demonstrate that the caseworkers (either individually or together) have undertaken casework across the specified range of subjects within the relevant casework category within the last calendar year and subsequently every 12 months.			
OR			
D5.2 **Organisations identify a casework supervisor who meets the required criteria**. These are designed to: demonstrate previous experience in the casework category. (see annex A), demonstrate availability to supervise caseworkers, demonstrate continued involvement in on-going casework.		X	
E1.1 **Access to client records** for audit purposes.	X		
E1.2 **Systems** are in place to **locate the client's information record / case file** and to trace all relevant documents (which should be retained for a minimum period of six years).	X		
E1.3 **Procedures to identify and deal with any conflict of interest** in acting for a client.		X	
E1.4 A **description of what the provider considers to be key dates and a diary system** for dealing with them.		X	
E1.5 **Systems for case files / information records to be orderly** and progress on case files / information records to be clear to any other caseworker.	X		
E1.6 There must be a **written record of the advice the client has received on the case file** / information record.	X		
E1.7 Organisations **collect and make available data reasonably required by the Advice Services Alliance** in assessing the performance of Advice Quality Standard.		X	
E1.8 **Procedures are in place to ensure clients know of their right to see the information held on them** and how they go about obtaining this.	X		
E1.9 **Organisation has a clear file destruction policy** which is acted on systematically.		X	
E2.1 S**amples of work are independently reviewed** to ensure the quality of legal advice provided and adherence to service procedures.			X
E2.2 The **number of cases and the frequency of review are described according to each person's experience** and quality of			X

work. The will need to be justifiable to an auditor.			
E2.3 A r**ecord of the review is retained on the case file and stored** centrally.			X
E2.4 **Systems are in place to ensure corrective action**, identified at file review, is done.			X
E2.5 **Reviews are undertaken by supervisors or delegated** to another experienced person within the organization.		X	
E3.1 **Results of independent reviews are fed back** to the individual by the supervisor.		X	
E3.2 A **summary of information from reviews is used in giving feedback to individuals** within their appraisal. Where an individual performance is found to consistently fall below the standard set by the organisation remedial action is taken and recorded.			X
E3.3 **Reviews of the central record are undertaken at least annually** to identify any potential organisational improvements.			X
E.3.4 **Results of the central record review** are used to inform the **review of service performance** undertaken every 12 months.			X
F1.1 **Processes that ensure clients receive independent advice**.		X	
F1.2 **Records show the client's needs**, any advice given and the actions to be taken next and by whom. In all appropriate circumstances, client authorisation must be clearly given and recorded.	X		
F1.3 **Clients are informed where the advice given includes action that the organisation may not be able to undertake** and the reason (e.g. organisational competence and policies of funders). Where the reasons include conflict with the policies of funders, or statutory duties, the organisation will need to demonstrate that the advice given was independent.		X	
F1.4 **Clients are informed of any potential costs** from any opposing party they may become liable for as a result of any action the organisation undertakes on behalf of the client.		X	
F1.5 **Where action cannot be taken immediately systems are in place to ensure it happens in the future**.		X	
F1.6 **Systems ensure clients are kept informed about the progress of a case** and, in particular, any change in future action.		X	
F1.7 **Clients are informed of the outcome of their enquiry** / case	X		

where it is known and this is noted on the file.			
F1.8 **Procedures identify when information must be confirmed to clients in writing**. As a minimum, clients receive a clear written record of advice where the agency is taking legal proceedings on behalf of the client and these have commenced.			X
F1.9 **Clients** are informed of their **right** under the Data Protection Act **to access information** held on them and of when such information will be destroyed.		X	
F1.10 Clients are **informed of the expectations they should have of the service** including the behaviour required of the clients themselves.		X	
F2.1 Where the client may have to pay the funder or the service provider, **clear information about the cost and pricing structure** is given in writing at the start of the case.		X	
F2.2 Where clients have to bear the cost of the advice, or contribute towards it, they are **given clear cost updates**, in writing whenever there is a change from the last estimate and at least every six months.			X
F2.3 If a charge is made for a service, **clients receive an explanation of the charges** and are told where they may be able to get the service free.		X	
F3.1 **Client information is treated confidentially**. Where access to information is required to be given to a third party, clients know that this may happen.	X		
F3.2 Arrangements should be made to **ensure privacy in meeting with clients**, where required.		X	
F4.1 Where part of the advice / case is done by **someone outside** the service provider, they are **selected using objective criteria**, including the principles of equal opportunity. The client will need to be advised, at the outset, if they are going to be charged for this service.		X	
F4.2 **Clients know who will be doing the work and have a say in who that is**, if applicable.	X		
F4.3 **The service provided externally is evaluated and recorded**.			X
G1.1 **Procedures for identifying and dealing with complaints by clients**	X		
G1.2 Clients are i**nformed who to complain to and who has**		X	

overall responsibility for the complaints process			
G1.3 **Central records are kept of complaints made and how they were resolved**	X		
G2.1 Organisations **demonstrate a commitment to quality by appointing a named individual to oversee the quality processes**		X	
G2.2 **Service providers review all quality processes annually**	X		
G2.3 A s**ystem for updating the quality processes and procedures** and the date that they came into effect		X	
G2.4 **Staff can access up-to-date copies of the quality processes**		X	
G3.1 **Procedures for obtaining feedback from clients** including complaints to providers about the service they received		X	
G3.2 **Feedback is analysed annually to identify trends**		X	
G3.3 **Service providers review their performance** and their strategy in the light of the results of the analysis of feedback and complaints		X	
TOTAL	24	57	13

Appendix B2: Categorization and Evidence of Requirements

Commonside AQS Self-evaluation

F = Financial
Po = Policy
Pr = Procedure
D = Data Management

Need = There is nothing written or currently understood about this
Have = This exists, but needs to be reviewed against AQS policy. If there is a policy that currently exists, it is noted in this column.

Note: Green highlight refers to "easily-obtainable" requirements that we recommend Commonside complete first.

Evidence	Financial	Policy	Procedure	Data Management	Evidence
A1.1 Written strategy of key objectives/core values and principles of Commonside and what it aims to achieve in the next 12 months, and, in outline, for a further 2 years.		X			Need
A1.2 Strategy should have type and level of services (e.g. how many caseworkers / how many hours of casework and in which subject areas, or the name of the casework supervisor and how the services will be provided). Also should include the skills and resources necessary to deliver the strategy.		X			Need
A2.1 The service provides details about the type of work they do to relevant local service providers, funders and the public (opening hours) and seeks their feedback on the service		X			Need
A2.2 Following certification, the Advice Quality Standard logo is displayed in accordance with guidelines.	-	-	-	-	N/A
A3.1 An equal opportunities policy in effective operation that precludes discrimination in selecting and dealing with clients in the target group.		X			Have - Equalities Policy (2)
A3.2 Where organizational principles or charter only allow the service to be offered to specific client groups, this should be			X		Need

reflected in the signposting and referral procedures in B1.3					
B1.1 The service provider will need to describe clearly the service that it is capable of delivering.		X			Need
B1.2 Where appointments are offered, the organisation should record client attendance and use information on non-attendance for service improvement				X	N/A
B1.3 A procedure and process(es) for conducting signposting and referral exist and are in effective operation and staff must be able to demonstrate how they identify when to signpost or refer.			X		Need
B1.4 Records of referrals are maintained (including records of all instances where no suitable service provider could be found), and reviewed at least annually.				X	Need
B1.5 Records of all instances where no suitable service provider was found when the need for signposting or referral was identified. This information is made available on reasonable request to the auditor.				X	Need
B1.6 For signposting, your procedure must confirm that, as a minimum, you will signpost any individual whom your organisation is unable to help.			X		Need
B1.7 For referrals, your procedure must include, as a minimum, the practical steps to be taken to identify appropriate service providers, including giving first consideration to Advice Quality Standard holders, and the circumstances in which use of a service without the Advice Quality Standard might be appropriate.			X		Need
B1.8 Access to the Advice Quality Standard Directory is available, and there is a process to ensure that details about alternative service providers are kept up to date.			X		Need
B1.9 When signposting or referral to an external service provider is used, the client is told what role your organisation will take and they know what service to expect at the new service provider.		X			Need

B1.10 A means of recording feedback on the services provided by the organisation to which clients have been referred or signposted and, on reasonable request, to provide this information to the auditor.			X	X	Need
B1.11 Discussion with the client, where relevant, of the cost implications of them being signposted or referred elsewhere. This discussion is subsequently noted on the file.		X	X		Need
B1.12 Information about advice or assistance already given (and any relevant documentation) is forwarded to the new service provider.		X	X		Have - Privacy Policy (4.5, 6.1.4, 6?)
C1.1 A clear written description of how the service is organised.		X			Need
C1.2 decision making structure is defined in writing with identification of key personnel and their responsibilities, including the person responsible for ensuring the organisation satisfies Advice Quality Standard		X			Need
***C1.3** Where Management Committee runs organisation, committee needs to demonstrate independence, funding bodies remain a minority within the community membership, governing document is detailed in relationship between committee and those running the organisation is made clear		X			Have the committee, need the review
C1.4 Organisations are members of recognized representative bodies. Where service provider is not affiliated, auditor may consider whether they are appropriate to be a holder of AQS		X			Have
C2.1 Those responsible for running the organisation review levels of service performance against service strategy every 12 months			X		Need
C2.2 The organisation should monitor the take up of services including attendance/non-attendance by clients in order to ensure effective use of resources available				X	Need record
C2.3 Subsequent decisions about service capacity are reviewed to reflect available			X		Need

resources					
C3.1 Financial management is exercised in line with agreed statements of financial policies, procedures and authorities relevant to the organisation	X	X			Have - Finance Policy
C3.2 Evidence of financial review by an independent source must be given	X			X	Have ex accountant,Need ex review
C3.3 Organisations use financial information to assist in reviewing the provision of services	X		X		Need
C3.4 Current professional indemnity insurance exists in accordance with section 37 of the Solicitor's Act 1974. Non-solicitor organisations must be insured to the minimum amount required by the relevant association. Organisations which are not members of a recognised association should be insured for not less than £250,000. Statutory bodies may have other arrangements	X				Have
C3.5 Organisations will have produced the following documentation and shown how it has been used in managing the organisation: annual budget, quarterly reports of variance of income and expenditure against budgets, annual profit and loss account or income and expenditure account, annual balance sheet	X			X	Have
C3.6 Organisations will have carried out an annual risk assessment, clearly identifying all known key risks and what mitigating actions will be taken			X		Need
D1.1 An equal opportunities policy in effective operation that precludes discrimination in the selection, recruitment and treatment of staff.		X			Have - Equalities Policy
D1.2 Open recruitment processes that evaluate skills, knowledge and experience of those applying for posts.			X		Have - Work Experience Policy
D2.1 Induction procedures for people who join the organisation.			X		Have - Work Experience Policy (2)
D2.2 Systems for review / feedback on personal performance to be undertaken at			X	X	Need

least annually and recorded.					
D2.3 Training and development plans to support the needs of the service, reviewed annually			X		Need
D2.4 All training to be recorded on training records.				X	Need
D3.1 All staff are aware of their responsibilities. These may be documented in job descriptions.		X		X	Have
D3.2 Procedures to match the skills and competencies of all members of staff to the roles they need to fulfill.			X		Need
D3.3 All staff are aware of the need to inform the supervisor if the case is beyond their competency.		X			Have - ?
D3.4 Ready access to relevant legal reference material as documented by service providers and a method of regular updating.		X		X	Need
D3.5 Process for giving timely information to relevant staff about changes in the law pertinent to their service delivery.			X		Need
D4.1 Organizations identify at least one person responsible for supervising individuals that work with clients. Supervisor must have: at least 2 years' recent and ongoing experience (either by undertaking advice themselves or involvement in others' cases), have experience of managing advisors, demonstrate how they have maintained their knowledge of legal changes and practices, be accessible to those working within the organization.		X			Need
D4.2 Where there is more than one person identified as the supervisor, there must be at least one person ultimately responsible for meeting the requirement of the standard. This may be one of the supervisors or the manager of the service (C1.2)		X			Need
D4.3 A method of allocating cases / enquires to advisors / case workers according to their abilities			X		Need

D4.4 A supervision system that is tailored to the skills of the individual.		X			Need
D5.1 Organisations identify the individual caseworkers undertaking casework in their service strategy and: demonstrate that at least one of the identified caseworkers spends at least 12 hours per week and any other identified caseworkers spend at least 6 hours per week each dealing with cases falling within the relevant casework category **AS WELL AS** demonstrate that the caseworkers (either individually or together) have undertaken casework across the specified range of subjects within the relevant casework category within the last calendar year and subsequently every 12 months.		X			Need
OR	-	-	-	-	
D5.2 Organisations identify a casework supervisor who meets the required criteria. These are designed to: demonstrate previous experience in the casework category. (see annex A), demonstrate availability to supervise caseworkers, demonstrate continued involvement in on-going casework.		X			Need
E1.1 Access to client records for audit purposes.				X	Have
E1.2 Systems are in place to locate the client's information record / case file and to trace all relevant documents (which should be retained for a minimum period of six years).				X	Need
E1.3 Procedures to identify and deal with any conflict of interest in acting for a client.			X		Need
E1.4 A description of what the provider considers to be key dates and a diary system for dealing with them.		X			Need
E1.5 Systems for case files / information records to be orderly and progress on case files / information records to be clear to any other caseworker.				X	Have
E1.6 There must be a written record of the advice the client has received on the case file / information record.				X	Have

E1.7 Organisations collect and make available data reasonably required by the Advice Services Alliance in assessing the performance of Advice Quality Standard.				X	Need
E1.8 Procedures are in place to ensure clients know of their right to see the information held on them and how they go about obtaining this.		X	X		Have - Privacy Policy (14), Need to add procedure about right to see info
E1.9 Organisation has a clear file destruction policy which is acted on systematically.		X		X	Need
E2.1 Samples of work are independently reviewed to ensure the quality of legal advice provided and adherence to service procedures.			X	X	Need
E2.2 The number of cases and the frequency of review are described according to each person's experience and quality of work. The will need to be justifiable to an auditor.			X	X	Need
E2.3 A record of the review is retained on the case file and stored centrally.				X	Need
E2.4 Systems are in place to ensure corrective action, identified at file review, is done.			X	X	Need
E2.5 Reviews are undertaken by supervisors or delegated to another experienced person within the organization.			X		Need
E3.1 Results of independent reviews are fed back to the individual by the supervisor.		X			Need
E3.2 A summary of information from reviews is used in giving feedback to individuals within their appraisal. Where an individual performance is found to consistently fall below the standard set by the organisation remedial action is taken and recorded.		X			Need - rely on previous
E3.3 Reviews of the central record are undertaken at least annually to identify any potential organisational improvements.		X		X	Need - rely on previous

E.3.4 Results of the central record review are used to inform the review of service performance undertaken every 12 months.		X		X	Need
F1.1 Processes that ensure clients receive independent advice.			X		Need
F1.2 Records show the client's needs, any advice given and the actions to be taken next and by whom. In all appropriate circumstances, client authorisation must be clearly given and recorded.		X		X	Have - Privacy Policy for second half, Need records
F1.3 Clients are informed where the advice given includes action that the organisation may not be able to undertake and the reason (e.g. organisational competence and policies of funders). Where the reasons include conflict with the policies of funders, or statutory duties, the organisation will need to demonstrate that the advice given was independent.		X			Need
F1.4 Clients are informed of any potential costs from any opposing party they may become liable for as a result of any action the organisation undertakes on behalf of the client.		X			Need
F1.5 Where action cannot be taken immediately, systems are in place to ensure it happens in the future.		X	X		Need
F1.6 Systems ensure clients are kept informed about the progress of a case and, in particular, any change in future action.			X		Need
F1.7 Clients are informed of the outcome of their enquiry / case where it is known and this is noted on the file.		X		X	Need (especially records)
F1.8 Procedures identify when information must be confirmed to clients in writing. As a minimum, clients receive a clear written record of advice where the agency is taking legal proceedings on behalf of the client and these have commenced.			X		Need
F1.9 Clients are informed of their right under the Data Protection Act to access information held on them and of when such information will be destroyed.		X	X	X	Have - Privacy Policy (17) , Need procedure on notification of destruction

F1.10 Clients are informed of the expectations they should have of the service including the behaviour required of the clients themselves.		X			Need
F2.1 Where the client may have to pay the funder or the service provider, clear information about the cost and pricing structure is given in writing at the start of the case.	-	-	-	-	N/A
F2.2 Where clients have to bear the cost of the advice, or contribute towards it, they are given clear cost updates, in writing whenever there is a change from the last estimate and at least every six months.			X		Need
F2.3 If a charge is made for a service, clients receive an explanation of the charges and are told where they may be able to get the service free.		X			Need - Signposting part
F3.1 Client information is treated confidentially. Where access to information is required to be given to a third party, clients know that this may happen.		X		X	Have - Privacy Policy (4.5, 6.1.4, 6?)
F3.2 Arrangements should be made to ensure privacy in meeting with clients, where required.		X			Need
F4.1 Where part of the advice / case is done by someone outside the service provider, they are selected using objective criteria, including the principles of equal opportunity. The client will need to be advised, at the outset, if they are going to be charged for this service.		X	X		Need
F4.2 Clients know who will be doing the work and have a say in who that is, if applicable.		X			Need
F4.3 The service provided externally is evaluated and recorded.		X		X	Need
G1.1 Procedures for identifying and dealing with complaints by clients			X		Have - Complaints Procedure
G1.2 Clients are informed who to complain to and who has overall responsibility for the complaints process		X			Have - Complaints Procedure

G1.3 Central records are kept of complaints made and how they were resolved				X	Have, Would be improved with Records
G2.1 Organisations demonstrate a commitment to quality by appointing a named individual to oversee the quality processes		X			Need
G2.2 Service providers review all quality processes annually		X		X	Need
G2.3 A system for updating the quality processes and procedures and the date that they came into effect			X		Need
G2.4 Staff can access up-to-date copies of the quality processes		X		X	Need
G3.1 Procedures for obtaining feedback from clients including complaints to providers about the service they received			X		Need
G3.2 Feedback is analysed annually to identify trends			X		Need
G3.3 Service providers review their performance and their strategy in the light of the results of the analysis of feedback and complaints		X			Need
TOTALS (INDEPENDENT)	1	29	28	12	
TOTALS (MULTIPLE)	4	18	7	18	
TOTAL	5	47	35	30	

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Merton CIL

Participant Notice:

Thank you very much for taking time out of your day to be a part of our study. We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, USA. We are working with Commonside Community Development Trust to create an appraisal scheme that can be used for self-evaluation. We are interviewing a representative from the Merton Centre for Independent Living (MCIL) to determine the effect that the AQS accreditation has had on their organization - monetary or otherwise. We would like to use this information for our research regarding Commonside Community Trust Development's potential acquisition of AQS accreditation. In order to gain the most accurate responses, we will refrain from providing options for representatives to choose from, unless guidance is requested. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. You may also refrain from answering any of the questions.

We will be taking minutes of this conversation - would you prefer to remain anonymous?
If name is provided: May we quote you in our report? If so, may we record you for an accurate transcript?

1. We looked at your website but we would love to hear your personal view of what the Merton Center for Independent Living is and what your missions and purpose is?
2. What resources are available to your organization? (e.g. # of staff, # of volunteers, space, etc.)
3. What services does your organization offer? (e.g. advice, rec halls, classes, etc.)
4. We're particularly interested in how organizations like yours get funding. We've reviewed your top funders from your website. We were wondering how you initially established those connections?
5. How would you describe your relationship with your funders? (e.g. one-way, two-way, etc)
6. When did you begin to apply for accreditation and when did you receive official notice of your accreditation?
7. Why did you pursue accreditation? (e.g. Pressure from funders, pressure from other organizations, own choice)
8. Were there any requirements that were difficult to satisfy? What were they and why was it a challenge for your organization?
9. Were there any requirements that were easy to satisfy? What were they and why was it easy for your organization?
10. AQS has a few requirements that recommend recurring self-evaluations (e.g. review of 2-year plan). How has the process of conducting those self-evaluations been? (i.e easy/difficult)
11. How did you feel about the 2 year re-audit process? Were there any aspects that were unexpected or challenging?
12. How has AQS impacted your services and your ability to serve your community? Did it have any effect on resources (e.g. reallocation/depletion)?
13. We researched your records of financial data from 2015 to 2018. Do you have any prior reports that would further indicate the change in funding levels?
14. Would you recommend this for other advice organizations?

If name is provided: May we still quote you in our report?

Final Words:

Again, we would like to thank you for your participation in our study. This will be a great help to us. Would we be able to contact you again if we need any more information? If so, what is the best way to reach you?

Appendix D - Interview with CEO of Merton CIL, Lyla Adwan-Kamara

March 11, 2019, 10:00AM-11:00AM

The team spoke with Lyla Adwan-Kamara, CEO of Merton Center for Independent Living and asked her questions outlined in Appendix C.

Merton CIL was initially granted the AQS accreditation in January of 2016 and had gone through their first audit in 2018. Adwan-Kamara detailed the process to our team and how time-consuming it was. The prep-work itself required nine months to be completed, and she mentioned that she and her team were just able to make the 12-month deadline required by the Merton Council for a grant they had been awarded. Adwan-Karama also stressed how adherence to the AQS requirements improved the structural organization of Merton CIL, especially since the organization itself was only started in 2013.

When we asked about the link between accreditation and their funding levels, Adwan-Kamara was sure to inform us that the increase in their total funding was linked to the Big Lottery Funding that Merton CIL received independently of their AQS acquirement. She said that Merton CIL will have to work hard in the coming years to secure funding still, since AQS does not guarantee more funding, but rather, more funding options.

Overall, when asked if the AQS accreditation was worth it, Adwan-Kamara adamantly agreed. She said that going through the process and implementing the requirements increased the quality of their work and improved their model. She feels that it was a good decision for Merton CIL, even though that it was initially imposed, but that it was a positive experience.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Funders

Participant Notice:

Thank you very much for taking time out of your day to be a part of our study. We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, USA. We are working with Commonside Community Development Trust to create an appraisal scheme that can be used for self-evaluation. We are interviewing funders to determine quality assessment criteria and the importance of accreditation. The information we collect will be cross-referenced with general accreditation requirements to create a baseline standard. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. You may also refrain from answering any of the questions.

We will be taking minutes of this conversation - would you prefer to remain anonymous?
If name is provided: May we quote you in our report? If so, may we record you for an accurate transcript?

1. What kind of funding do you primarily provide (Donation/Grant/etc)?
2. What kinds of activities or services are you most interested in supporting?
3. How much funding do you provide annually to advice organizations?
4. Do you see an accreditation as a must-have for advice organizations as a prerequisite to getting funding? Why?
5. What criteria do you consider to be the most important when considering an organization for funding? Why?
6. In terms of client care, what criteria are the most important for you? Why?
7. In terms of staff and volunteer management, what criteria are the most important for you? Why?
8. In terms of financial management, what criteria are the most important for you? Why?
9. Other than an accreditation, what methods of appraisal of services and supporting information would you accept or consider valid for measuring the value of an organization for funding?
10. If an organization were to submit a video that detailed their story and the personal impact that they make, would this positively affect your decision to fund them/the amount?

If name is provided: May we still quote you in our report?

Final Words:

Again, we would like to thank you for your participation in our study. This will be a great help to us. Would we be able to contact you again if we need any more information? If so, what is the best way to reach you?

Appendix F: Client Surveys

Appendix F1: Commonside Community Development Trust Client Survey (Version 1)

Participant Notice:

Thank you very much for taking time out of your day to be a part of our study. We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, USA. We are working with Commonside Community Development Trust (Commonside) to create an appraisal scheme that can be used for self-evaluation. We are surveying patrons to determine the impact Commonside's services have had on their lives. The data will only be used in a statistical analysis of Commonside's impact. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. You may also refrain from answering any of the questions you wish to skip. By completing this survey, you are verifying that you are over the age of 18. Please place the survey in the lockbox when you are finished.

1. How did you hear about Commonside? (Check all that apply)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends/ Family	Advertising	Social Media	Community Events	Referred from other Organizations	Other

If other, please elaborate: ____

2. In the last year, on average, how many times per week have you used Commonside's services? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+

3. How satisfied are you with Commonside's services? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

4. In the last year, on average, how many Commonside events have you attended per week? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+

5. How satisfied are you with Commonside's events? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

6. How often do use Commonside's advice services? (Choose the one that best applies)

☐	☐	☐	☐
Never	At least once a	At least once a	At least once a year

week month

7. How satisfied are you with Commonside's advice services? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

8. Would you consider Commonside to be an integral part of your community? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Do you feel that Commonside's services and events are a necessity in your life? (Select only one)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Would you recommend Commonside's services to your friends and family? (Select only one)

☐	☐
Yes	No

Final Words:

Again, we would like to thank you for your participation in our study. This will be a great help to Commonside and us.

Appendix F2: Commonside Community Development Trust Client Survey (Version 2)

Participant Notice:

Thank you very much for taking time out of your day to be a part of our study. We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, USA. We are working with Commonside Community Development Trust (Commonside) to create an appraisal scheme that can be used for self-evaluation. We are surveying patrons to determine the impact Commonside's services have had on their lives. The data will only be used in a statistical analysis of Commonside's impact. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. You may also refrain from answering any of the questions you wish to skip. By completing this survey, you are verifying that you are over the age of 18. Please place the survey in the Suggestion Box in the Café Area when you are finished.

1. How did you hear about Commonside? **(Check all that apply)**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends/ Family	Advertising	Social Media	Community Events	Referred from other Organizations	Other

If other, please elaborate: ____

Advice Services

2. How many times per week **on average** have you used Commonside's services?

Lunch Club:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1	2	3	4	5

Step Forward:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1	2	3	4	5+

3. How satisfied are you with Commonside's services? **(Select only one)**

Lunch Club:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

Step Forward:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

4. In the last year, on average, how many Commonside events (e.g. Themed Nights, Mini Market) have you attended per week? **(Select only one)**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+

5. How satisfied are you with Commonside's events? **(Select only one)**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

6. Would you consider Commonside to be an integral part of your community? **(Select only one)**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Do you feel that Commonside's services and events are a necessity in your life? **(Select only one)**

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Would you recommend Commonside's services to your friends and family? **(Select only one)**

☐	☐
Yes	No

Final Words:

Again, we would like to thank you for your participation in our study. This will be a great help to Commonside and our student team.

Appendix G: Interview Protocol for Commonside Clients

Participant Notice:

Thank you very much for taking time out of your day to be a part of our study. We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, USA. We are working with Commonside Community Development Trust to create an appraisal scheme that can be used for self-evaluation. We are interviewing clients to identify the human element of Commonside impact. With the addition of in-person interviews, our team can obtain qualitative as well as quantitative data on patron opinions. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. You may also refrain from answering any of the questions.

We will be taking minutes of this conversation - would you prefer to remain anonymous?
If name is provided: May we quote you in our report? If so, may we record you for an accurate transcript?

1. (If a volunteer) Have you ever been a client for Commonside rather than a volunteer?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing, what is your age? (We will not list specific ages in a report. We will group them together.)
3. What Commonside events do you regularly attend?
4. Which of Commonside services do you regularly use?
5. Do you feel that Commonside is an integral part of your community? If so, how?
6. If Commonside did not exist, where else would you go look for similar services?
7. Have you used Commonside's advice service?

If the advice service has been used:

1. How long have you been using Commonside's advice service?
2. Would you consider Commonside's services to be safe and helpful?
3. Have you ever received advice service from a different organization? If so, are there any notable differences between the two?
4. This question will be anonymous regardless of if you identified yourself. If you are comfortable sharing, what help were you seeking from Commonside's advice service and how was your experience using the service?

If name is provided: May we still quote you in our report?

Final Words:

Again, we would like to thank you for your participation in our study. This will be a great help to us. Would we be able to contact you again if we need any more information? If so, what is the best way to reach you?

Appendix H - Interview with Community Development Officer for MOAT Homes, Jason Charles

March 26th, 2019, 3:00PM – 4:00PM

Our group spoke to Jason for about an hour, and asked questions outlined in Appendix E.

Jason Charles is a Community Development Officer for MOAT Homes in Pollards Hill. Charles is a member of the Pollards Hill Community Chest, which is in charge of dispersing the Pollards Hill Community Fund to applicants. According to Charles, Commonside is one of the main organizations that receives funding from the grant. As someone who works directly with dispersing monetary funding to groups around the community, we asked Charles some questions to understand the most important aspect of an application for him.

Throughout the hour we spoke we Charles, he continuously revisited the importance of an organization like Commonside evidencing the work they are doing and outcomes that are being produced. We asked what kind of activities the Community Chest looks to fund, and he responded that the panel tries to help the welfare of the community and look for community-led or community-driven events. When asked about the application process, he said that it heavily depended upon the application reviewer. He believed that most reviewers looked at the application separately from the organization.

After we explained how far down the road AQS may be for Commonside, Charles was steadfast in his belief that if there was any demonstration of the outcomes from a service, that is one of the most valuable elements that he personally looks for. When asked about important criteria for staff and volunteer management, he said that organizations need to be able to demonstrate their ability and qualifications. As a way demonstrate outcomes instead of qualifications, he said there are social value calculators that can be used in relation to volunteers to assign a monetary value to statistics such as volunteer hours. For the housing associations, they use the HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) Value. When asked about financial criteria, he expected organizations to demonstrate responsible financial management such as having a breakdown of receipts.

Appendix I - Interview with Ray Hautot, Social Prescribing Coordinator for Figges Marsh, Cricket Green, Tamworth House, Wideway Medical Practices

April 1st, 2019, 3:30PM – 4:00PM

Humberto and Noel spoke to Ray for about 30 minutes, and asked questions outlined in Appendix E.

Ray Hautot is a social prescriber who works at the Doctors Surgery down the road from Commonside. His job is to refer patients to organizations like Commonside when their ill health does not necessarily require medical treatment. When a client's issues involve mental or money-related health issues, they may be referred to Commonside and other organizations to help. Often times, Commonside's Step Forward Programme can help clients find affordable housing or apply for increased income. To follow up with clients sent to Commonside for help, the Step Forward team provides monthly updates on each of these clients.

All the agencies that Ray refer patients to are funded by the Merton Council. He believes that funding is stopping because it is running out. When asked about "demonstrated outcomes," Ray made a big point to mention one method of demonstrated outcomes that he has seen. He mentioned that another organization he has worked with demonstrated the amount of money they have helped raise for clients by adding all of the successful Personal Independence Payment (PIP) applications and appeals. PIP statistics, such as percentage of successful appeals could be another good statistic to keep track of. Additionally, he suggested that Commonside could track the number of volunteer hours over a period of time and multiply it by the national average. This could be another method of tracking the value of the organization. All of these numbers and statistics can then be gathered and referenced in Commonside annual reports, which are available to funders.

In further discussion, Ray stressed that Commonside could improve the client cases by including more details. While this suggestion has nothing to do with funding directly, it is still a valuable recommendation to improve Commonside's records. Ray was even more helpful and recommended a bespoke database management company, ImageIntegral, that has worked directly with charity organizations.

Appendix J - Interview with John Dimmer, Merton Council Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

April 12th, 2019, 3:30PM – 4:30PM

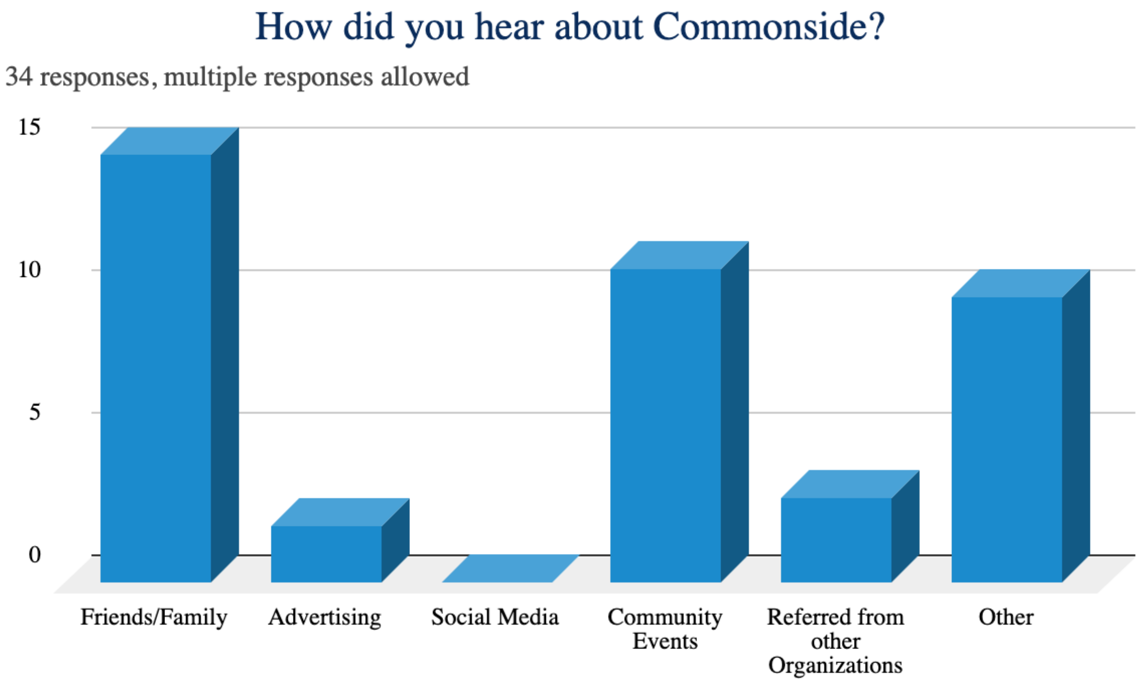
Noel and Humberto spoke to John for about 50 minutes, and asked questions outlined in Appendix E.

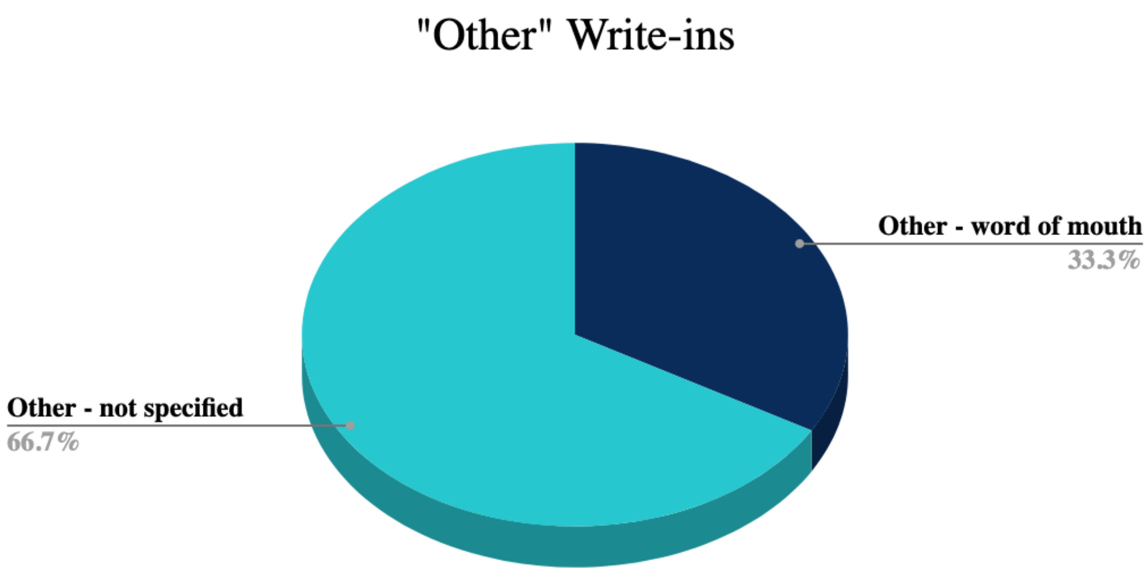
John Dimmer works with the Merton Council to give out grants in the Information and Advice Services sector with a budget of about £400,000 - £500,000. The Merton Council has moved away from contracts and chosen to move forward with grants. The distinction is that contracts allow anyone to apply whereas grants apply to only organizations in Merton. In their new round of funding, they were much more prescriptive in what they want from organizations and the details are outlined in the new funding prospectus, the Merton Council Strategic Partner Prospectus. With the budget cuts from the central government, many other councils have cut their funding for the Information and Advice Services sector. However, the Merton Council has not cut funding for this area because they believe that it is an investment. They have found correlation that people who are helped by the social welfare organizations are much less likely to require help down the line.

In terms of funding organizations, the new prospectus does not require an accreditation. They have a section specifically relating to quality assurance and they expect organizations to have some type of quality mark or to be working towards one. Some examples of quality assurance he mentioned were having a training for staff members, evidence that clients are followed up, evidence of a network with other organizations, and accessibility like forms of communication for people with disabilities. It could be difficult for them to fund an organization without an accreditation because he has to report back to the government and has audits throughout the year. The grants are public money so there is a lot of accountability involved. At the same time, he noted that, in the current climate, demonstrated outcomes was possibly more important than an accreditation. An organization who demonstrates outcomes but does not have an accreditation would still be in the running for a grant whereas an organization that had an accreditation and could not demonstrate outcomes would be discluded.

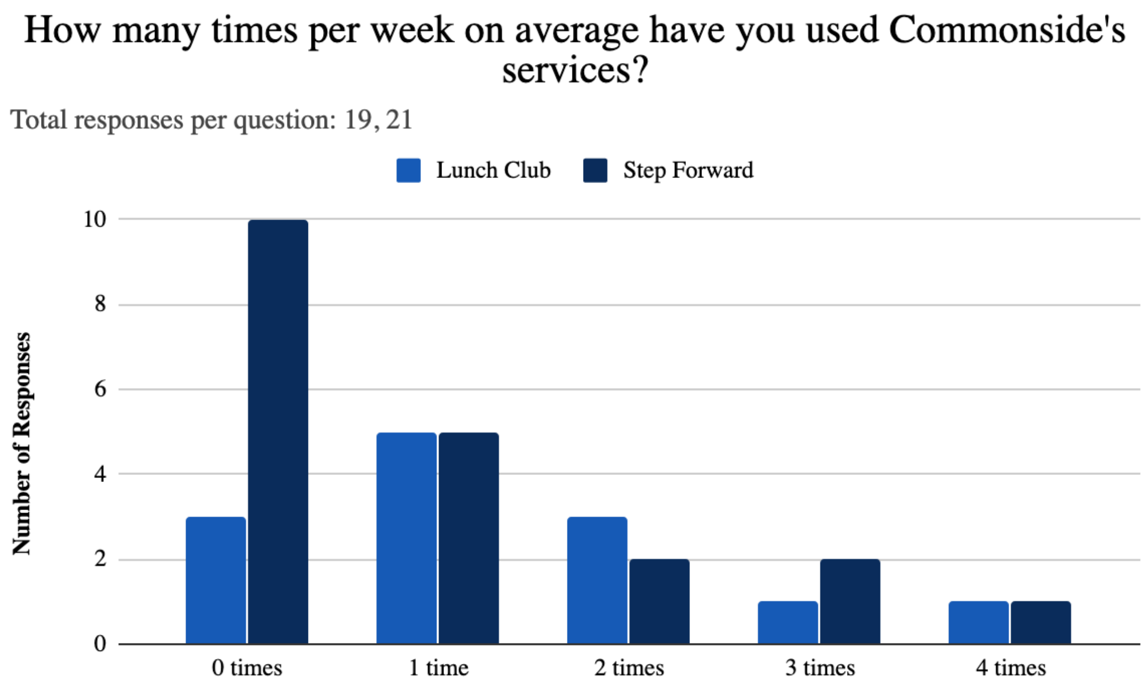
Appendix K: Graphic Analysis of Survey Responses

Question 1 (V1): How did you hear about Commonside?

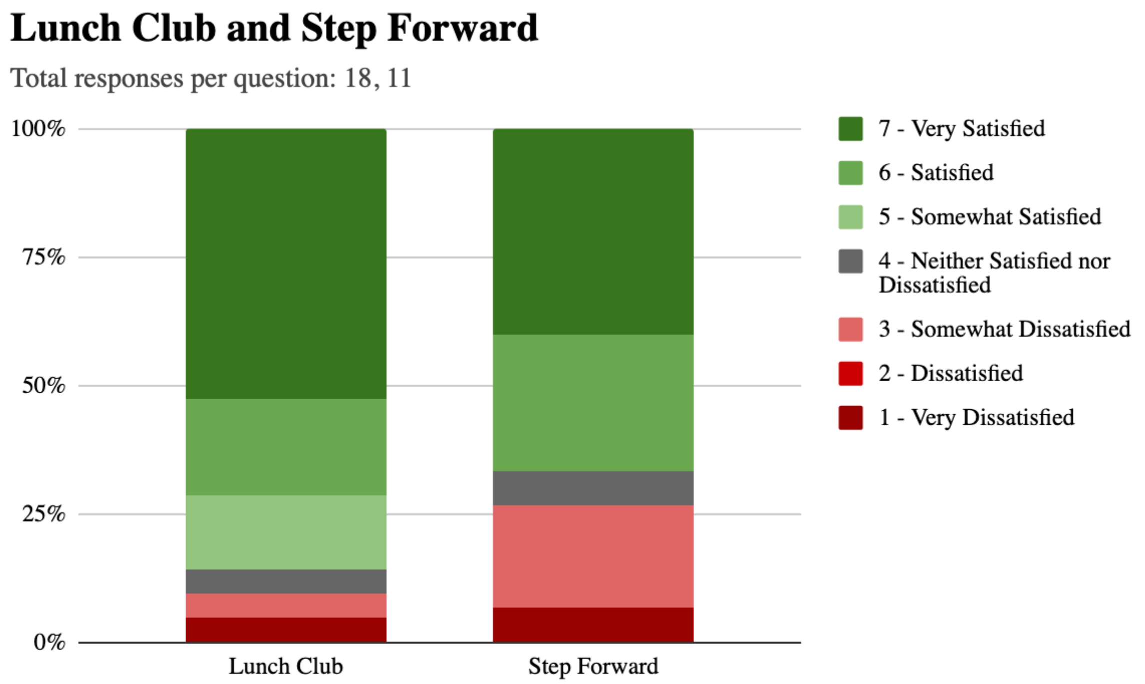




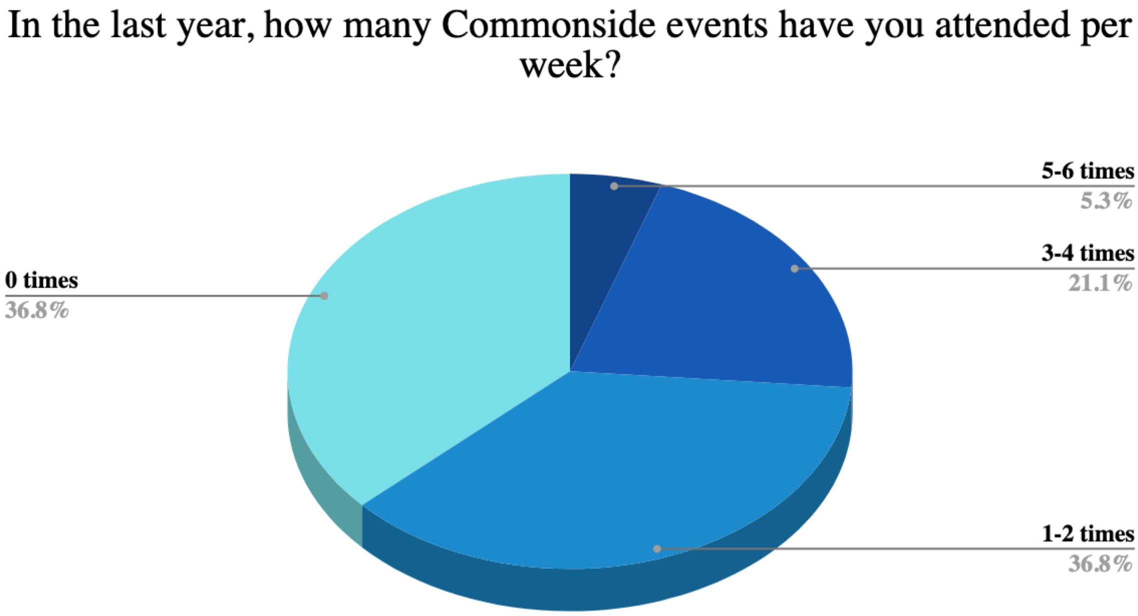
Question 2 (V2): How many time per week on average have you used Commonside's services?



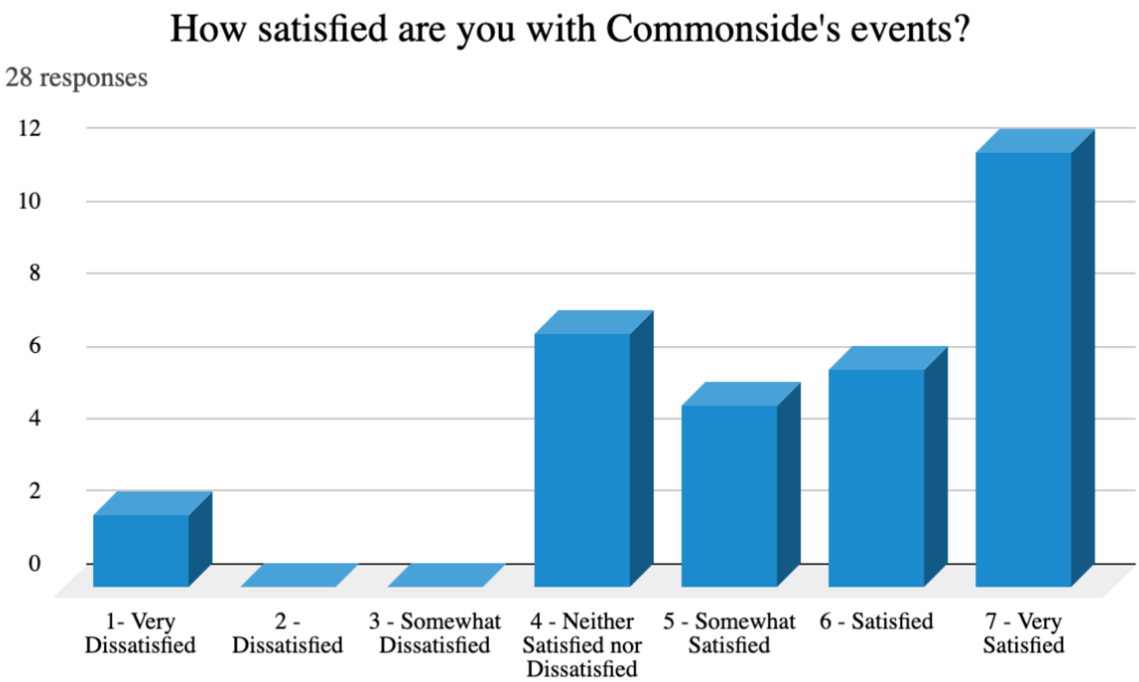
Question 3 (V2): How satisfied are you with Commonside's services?



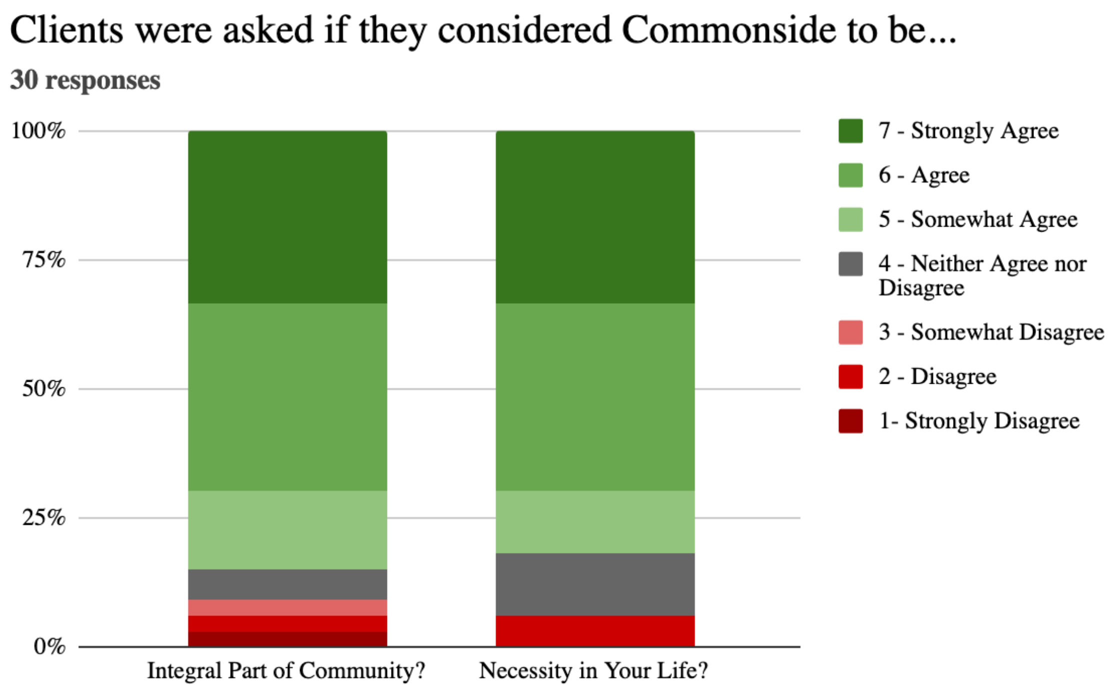
Question 4: In the last year, how many Commonside events have you attended per week?



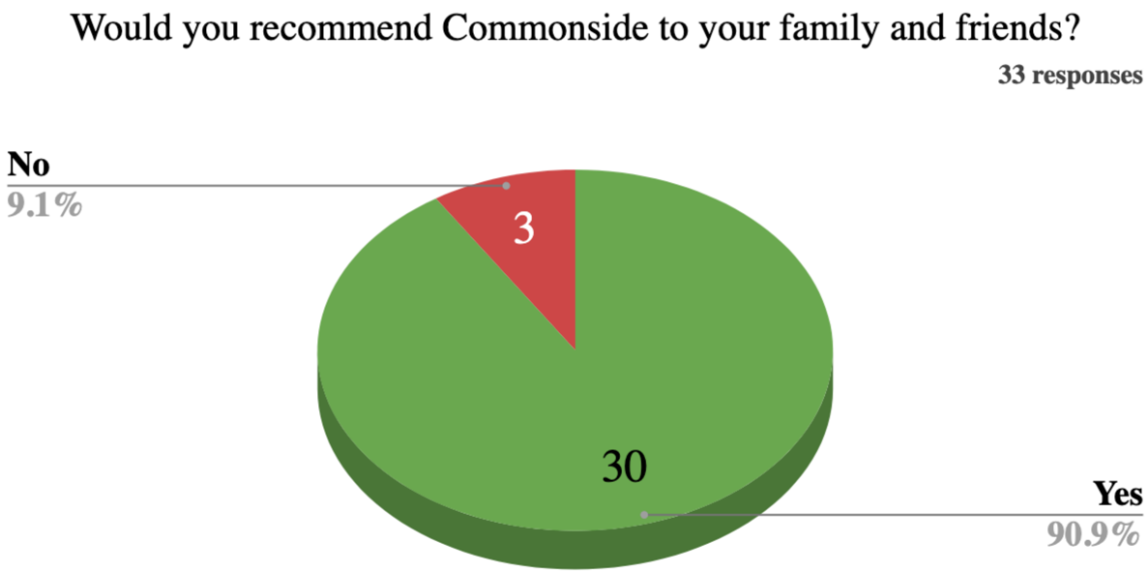
Question 5: How satisfied are you with Commonside's events?



Question 8,9 (V1) and Question 6,7 (V2):



Question 10 (V1) and Question 8 (V2): Would you recommend Commonside to your family and friends?



Appendix L - Interviews with Clients

Appendix L1 - Interview with Yosief Tewolde

March 21st, 2019, 2:00PM – 3:00PM

Noel spoke to Yosief for about 40 minutes, and asked questions outlined in Appendix G.

Yosief, age 54, shared his story of how he came to be both a client and a volunteer at Commonside Community Development Trust. Previously, Yosief worked as a safety engineering relating to chemical engineering. Unfortunately, around 2010, he was in a train accident which caused him to lose his memory. He was admitted to Springfield Hospital, where doctors saved his life and speech therapists helped him learn about his pre-accident self. After two years in the hospital, he was able to become a part-time volunteer at the hospital as a greeter. During this time, he was also recommended to use Commonside's services.

Now, Yosief refers to his post-accident life as his "second life" and views it as a second opportunity. He has spent the last 6-7 years using Commonside's services and getting to know the community at Commonside. In the beginning, while he was still working on his memory and speech, Jenny, a staff member, recommended that he read books and summarize them to promote brain activity. He wasn't able to focus enough to accomplish that, however he states that Jenny and Naomi, another staff member, provided him with another idea and recommended that he write books instead. Commonside provided Yosief with a laptop to write his books. Since this recommendation, Yosief has published a book on his story and is working on two others. He says that he is happy that he can now express himself after coming from a state of being closed off.

Apart from the advice service, Yosief also used the Lunch Club a couple times a week and attends many of the events listed on Commonside's events board. Yosief believes that Commonside is an integral part of the community because of the community. He has many interactions with the other clients and staff and believes that he would be very lonely if he didn't come to Commonside. Due to the nature of his situation, Commonside tailored their advice and services to him, and he believes that there is nowhere else that matches the benefits of Commonside.

Appendix L2 - Interview with William “Bill” Bumstead

March 28th, 2019, 1:00PM – 1:25PM

Noel and Emily spoke to Bill for about 20 minutes, and asked questions outlined in Appendix G.

Bill, age 95, shared that he used to be a volunteer at Commonside many years ago and is now a client himself. Our team met him through his consistent attendance at Lunch Club. He has lived in the Pollard’s Hill area for over 65 years - he tries to visit most all events that Commonside puts on for the community including Bingo Nights, Mini Market (especially on Fridays), and is looking forward to the Mediterranean Night in April. While he doesn’t require the advice services offered, he mentioned that he appreciates that he knows where and who to turn to for assistance if he were to ever need it.

When asked if he considered Commonside to be an integral part of the community, Bill became very serious and gave a strong affirmative. He said he feels that “the most important service that Commonside provides is a place for people to get together, to communicate because people of [his] age need to go out when [they’ve] been living alone to meet and share things with one another.” Though Bill knows of a few other similar community centers near his independent living facility that he recently moved to, he still makes the effort to continue to attend events in Pollards Hill.

Appendix L3 - Interview with Peter Smith

March 28th, 2019, 1:00PM – 1:18PM

Humberto and Maggie spoke to Peter for about 20 minutes, and asked questions outlined in Appendix G.

Peter, described by a member of the Commonside team as their “greatest success story”, has been coming to Commonside’s New Horizon Centre since September 2017. Originally a chef for 45 years of his life, Peter was 58 when he found himself out of work and applying to all sorts of jobs with no answer. To top it off, he fell down his stairs and badly broke his ankle, forcing him to spend 6 weeks in plaster and 12 weeks in an airboot. The job center he was attending deemed him “fit to work” and planned to stop his unemployment benefits.

He was at his lowest point, suffering from severe depression, when he was referred to the Step Forward Programme by his Doctors Surgery for his troubles with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). When Peter was about to turn 65, he was due to lose these benefits and therefore would be stripped of his income. He was helped by Deniz from the Step Forward team at Commonside in pursuing Personal Independence Payment (PIP). She encouraged him to speak up for himself and his needs, leading him through the application and tribunal process even after he was rejected. She has also helped him with any forms that needed to be filled out on the computer, as he does not own one. Finally, Peter was successful in getting PIP with the help of the Step Forward Programme.

Peter speaks very highly of the Commonside staff, telling Maggie and Humberto that “you won’t find anyone better than these [people]”. They check up on him when he doesn’t show up on his usual days, and always go the extra mile for clients. Even if they are stretched thin, they still have a client come in for a cup of coffee and a chat if the client needs their help. He also said no other organization within 20 miles deals with people the way Commonside does.

Peter now helps out Commonside whenever and wherever he can, helping them with their food collection as well as serving coffee and aiding with events, though he does not attend them himself. He still struggles with his mental health and doesn’t have excess money, but he won’t lose his flat and he has the support from his community to keep him going. He comes whenever he is called to help out and even collects a couple of pounds here and there for the Step Forward fund.

Appendix M: AQS Database Recommended Features List

Evidence	Feature/Data to Keep
B1.2 Where appointments are offered, the organisation should record client attendance and use information on non-attendance for service improvement.	Integrated Calendar/Appointment Interface Track Client Attendance
B1.4 Records of referrals are maintained (including records of all instances where no suitable service provider could be found), and reviewed at least annually	Keep data on client referrals/referral organizations Make searchable
B1.5 Records of all instances where no suitable service provider was found when the need for signposting or referral was identified. This information is made available on reasonable request to the auditor.	Keep data on client referrals/referral organizations Make searchable
B1.10 A means of recording feedback on the services provided by the organisation to which clients have been referred or signposted and, on reasonable request, to provide this information to the auditor.	Keep data on feedback of services from referral organizations Make searchable
B1.12 Information about advice or assistance already given (and any relevant documentation) is forwarded to the new service provider.	Keep track of all Client Data Make exportable
C2.2 The organisation should monitor the take up of services including attendance/non-attendance by clients in order to ensure effective use of resources available	Track Client Attendance Presented in easy to read format (e.g. table, graphs, etc.)
D2.2 Systems for review / feedback on personal performance to be undertaken at least annually and recorded.	Keep data on volunteers/staff (e.g. hours worked, cases, etc.)
D2.4 All training to be recorded on training records.	Keep records on training events
D3.1 All staff are aware of their responsibilities. These may be documented in job descriptions.	Keep records of job descriptions/employees
E1.1 Access to client records for audit purposes.	Keep data on clients
E1.2 Systems are in place to locate the client's information record / case file and to trace all relevant documents (which should be retained for a minimum period of six years).	Keep data of relevant documents in client files Make searchable
E1.5 Systems for case files / information records to be orderly and progress on case files /	Well documented case files

information records to be clear to any other caseworker.	
E1.6 There must be a written record of the advice the client has received on the case file / information record.	Well documented case files
E1.7 Organisations collect and make available data reasonably required by the Advice Services Alliance in assessing the performance of Advice Quality Standard.	Keep case files
E1.9 Organisation has a clear file destruction policy which is acted on systematically.	Ability to delete a client case file Set it to auto-delete after 6 years(?)
E2.1 Samples of work are independently reviewed to ensure the quality of legal advice provided and adherence to service procedures.	Keep client case files and employee case files
E2.2 The number of cases and the frequency of review are described according to each person's experience and quality of work. The will need to be justifiable to an auditor.	Keep client case files and employee case files
E2.3 A record of the review is retained on the case file and stored centrally.	Keep record of case reviews Make searchable
E2.4 Systems are in place to ensure corrective action, identified at file review, is done.	Keep client case files, employee case files, case reviews
E3.3 Reviews of the central record are undertaken at least annually to identify any potential organisational improvements.	Keep client case files, employee case files, case reviews
E.3.4 Results of the central record review are used to inform the review of service performance undertaken every 12 months.	Keep client case files, employee case files, case reviews
F1.2 Records show the client's needs, any advice given and the actions to be taken next and by whom. In all appropriate circumstances, client authorisation must be clearly given and recorded.	Well documented case files, keep track of workers per case Make searchable
F1.7 Clients are informed of the outcome of their enquiry / case where it is known and this is noted on the file.	Well documented case files
F1.9 Clients are informed of their right under the Data Protection Act to access information held on them and of when such information will be destroyed.	Ability to show and delete client case files
F3.1 Client information is treated confidentially.	Secure holding of client data, employee data

Where access to information is required to be given to a third party, clients know that this may happen.	login/password that allows certain views of data (similar to current system?)
F4.3 The service provided externally is evaluated and recorded.	Keep records of external organizations service in client files
G1.3 Central records are kept of complaints made and how they were resolved	Keep records of complaints by clients Make searchable
G2.2 Service providers review all quality processes annually	Keep case reviews
G2.4 Staff can access up-to-date copies of the quality processes	Keep quality processes