



The Need for Quality in Drug Prevention - Good intentions are not enough!

What is Drug Prevention?

There is no commonly accepted definition of 'drug prevention' in Europe, and the EDPQS do not attempt to provide a normative definition. For the purposes of the EDPQS, drug prevention is any activity that is aimed at preventing, delaying or reducing drug use, and/or its negative consequences across the lifespan in the general population or for individuals and groups. It can address legal drugs (e.g. alcohol, tobacco), illegal drugs, medication, or any other psychoactive substances – or substances in general. Drug prevention may also address common factors that reduce vulnerability to drug use or which promote healthy development in general.

What is Quality?

"Quality" reflects essential or distinctive characteristics towards achieving excellence. Therefore **high quality prevention activities** are those which are:

- Relevant to the target population
- Ethical
- Evidence-based
- Able to provide evidence
- (Cost) Effective
- Feasible
- Sustainable

Why Quality Standards?

Only few people would argue with the view that prevention is better (and cheaper) than cure. However, a lot of what is done in the name of drug prevention is not based on what works or on what constitutes quality.

In recent years there has been significant progress in understanding what works in prevention and about the quality standards that are relevant to prevention activities. Application of this learning will **reduce the negative outcomes** of poor quality work and produce substantial **benefits** for society including:

- A decrease in substance use related harm
- Adoption of healthier lifestyles

- Reduction of negative social and economic outcomes
- More efficient use of economic resources
- Savings on costs from the reduced need for drug treatment
- Increased competency and professionalism of those working in prevention

Identifying and encouraging quality in prevention work has been the focus of the **European Drug Prevention Quality Standards (EDPQS) Project**.

What are the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards (EDPQS)?

The EDPQS provide a set of **principles** to help **develop and assess the quality** of drug prevention. They offer a comprehensive resource outlining all the elements of drug prevention activities. The EDPQS have been developed by the European Prevention Standards Partnership from a research project co-funded by the European Union. The Partnership undertook a review and synthesis of existing international and national standards as well as consulting with more than 400 professionals in six European countries. The EDPQS are the **first European reference point on high quality drug prevention based on a consensus incorporating scientific evidence and practical experience**.

Who are the Standards for?

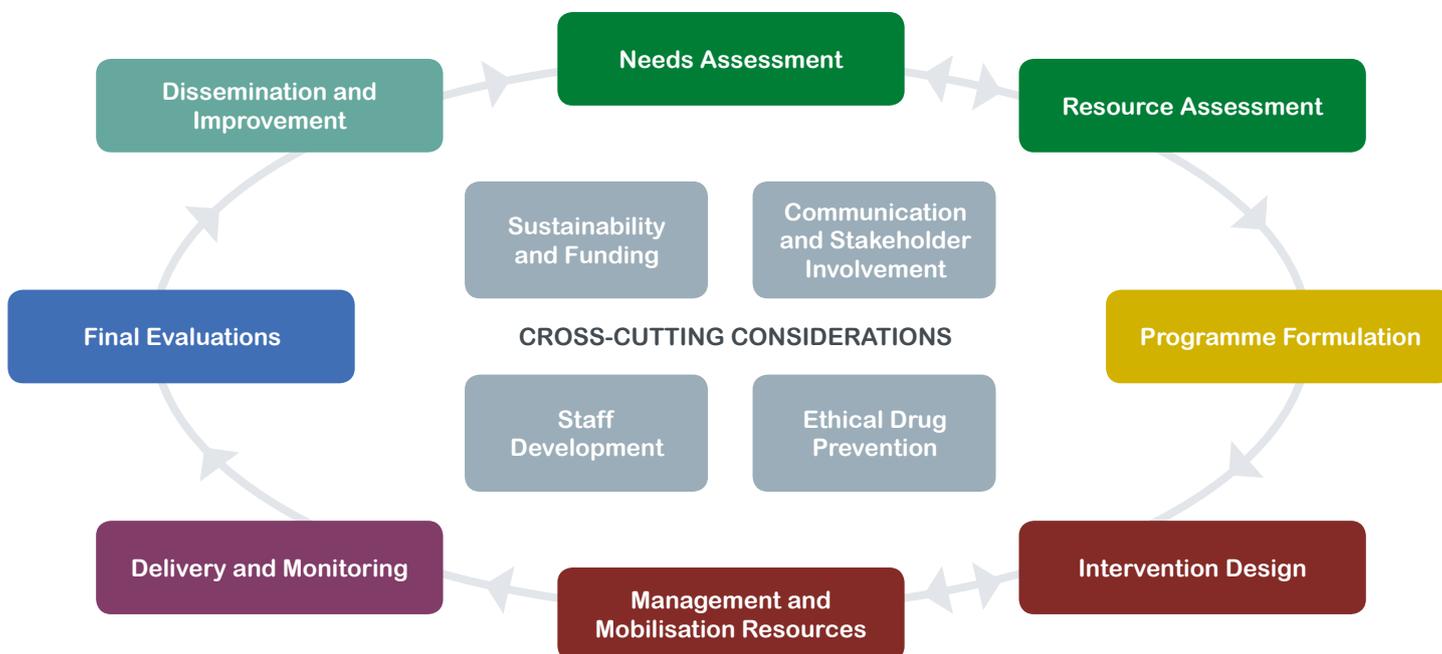
The Standards can be used by a wide range of people within the drug prevention community including:

- Programme Developers
- Programme Managers
- Commissioners and Funders
- Policy Makers
- Service Managers and front line Practitioners
- School Teachers
- Educators
- Trainers
- Evaluators
- Researchers

The Quality Standards Cycle

The EDPQS are presented within a **cycle structure with eight stages plus four cross-cutting considerations**. Each stage links to a more detailed explanation of how to promote quality in drug prevention.

Figure 1: The Quality Standards Cycle



How do the Standards help?

The Standards can be used to help:

- **Plan** for quality of new prevention initiatives
- **Identify** the strong quality aspects of prevention initiatives
- **Develop and Improve** the quality of existing prevention provision
- **Review** the quality of ongoing or completed prevention initiatives
- **Assess** whether a prevention related activity is undertaken or likely to operate in a way that can be considered “high quality”

The EDPQS can also be used in order to support:

- Information and Awareness raising
- Education and Training
- Self-reflection and self-improvement
- Professional development
- Performance appraisal
- Developing or updating existing quality criteria or standards

Read More

Further information about the EDPQS and the EDPQS resource materials is available at:

www.prevention-standards.eu

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