

Support collaborative and partnership work

Overview

This standard relates to the role of community development practitioners in encouraging and supporting collaborative work. Community development practitioners enable communities and groups to work in partnership and collaboration with others in order to achieve common aims, access resources or increase influence.

The community development standards are arranged in six key areas:

1. Understand and practise community development
2. Understand and engage with communities
3. Group work and collective action
4. Collaboration and cross-sectoral working
5. Community learning for social change
6. Governance and organisational development

This standard is within Key Area Four.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. facilitate communities to identify common needs and issues they share with other communities
2. identify other communities with similar interests to share ideas, experience and practice to potentially benefit both communities
3. support communities to clearly identify and agree aims, outcomes and short and long-term strategies for working collaboratively
4. support communities to assess the potential risks and benefits of engaging in partnership work
5. provide information about the remit, aims and work of existing partnerships and highlight opportunities for involvement to own community group
6. support communities to review the availability of resources for partnership working
7. support the establishment of transparent and accountable structures and systems for developing collaborative work between communities
8. promote collaborative working which recognises and addresses barriers to participation and promotes trust and understanding based on mutual respect between communities
9. support communities to make use of their legal rights
10. support monitoring and evaluation of partnership or collaborative working to improve future practice

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how representative and participatory democracy work in practice
2. concepts of political literacy, rights and responsibilities associated with governance
3. the contribution that diverse communities and autonomous groups can make to decisions affecting communities
4. how the nature of power relationships affects collaborative working
5. how decisions made by partnerships can impact on communities
6. the levels of representation and accountability required for effective partnership working
7. the motives, aims and remits of partnerships
8. barriers to involvement and approaches and techniques for overcoming them
9. the resource and support implications for engaging with a wide spectrum of potential stakeholders
10. the life cycle of partnerships, their limitations and the factors that can affect sustainability
11. inclusive and participatory techniques for involving people
12. how to negotiate, plan, agree, review and evaluate common goals and methods for partnership working
13. the pros and cons of working in a partnership
14. how to increase accountability to communities
15. how to support communities to develop their knowledge of relevant law and legal remedies
16. how to encourage diversity at all stages of collaborative/partnership working
17. how to deal with a lack of collaborative working in a partnership
18. how to monitor, evaluate and review the work of a partnership and its effectiveness

Values

Community development is underpinned by a set of values which distinguish it from other, sometimes related, activities in the community. These values are at the core of community development and underpin each of the standards. The values are;

1. Social justice and equality
2. Anti-discrimination
3. Community empowerment
4. Collective action
5. Working and learning together

The following examples illustrate how each of the community development values might inform practice in this standard. These statements are not part of assessment requirements.

6. barriers which prevent the involvement and participation of marginalised and excluded communities are identified and addressed
7. the autonomy and diversity of communities involved in partnerships is recognised, respected and encouraged
8. structures are developed to utilise the skills, knowledge and experience of community members and others
9. new and creative ways of working together are explored and encouraged
10. shared learning underpins all partnership activities

Glossary

Accountability

Involves being responsible within and to communities for the actions taken and decisions made; and the opportunities for members of communities to hold to account representatives, decision-makers, groups and individuals working on behalf of communities

Collective action

Working together with others to achieve a common aim.

Community

The web of personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that can develop among those who share a geographic area or identity or interest.

Community development practitioner

A person doing community development work as a paid worker, unpaid worker, group member, community activist or volunteer.

Community Engagement

A way to build and sustain relationships within and between communities, community groups or organisations, public sector, third sector and other agencies. It provides a foundation for collaboration

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helping them to understand and collectively take action.

Empowerment

A process where people gain control (eg confidence, knowledge, skills, resources) to affect decisions impacting on their communities.

Evaluation

Entails an overall assessment of the achievements, effectiveness and impact of work carried out.

Learning

Can be informal, formal and non-formal:

- Informal refers to experiential and personal learning
- Formal learning refers to what we gain from courses, academic studies and continual professional development
- Non-formal education is that which can be informal or formal but occurs in non-traditional settings e.g. in communities.

Monitoring

The systematic collection and recording of information to help an organisation know how it is doing; it helps to account for the work of the organisation.

Organisation

Any collection of people in the community, voluntary, public and private sectors and any hybrid configuration across these sectors. It refers to community groups, charities, community and social enterprises, statutory agencies, businesses.

Political literacy

The use of critical reflective, visioning and planning techniques which encourage individual and group questioning of cultural, social, economic and political norms, and their interdependence, that maintain inequalities and oppressions.

Resources

This covers any physical or human resource that supports the community development process and could include technical equipment, IT-based resources, buildings, sources of specialist knowledge, local assets

Support

The work a community development practitioner may undertake to ensure the group can pursue its aims. The types of activities may include: providing information, moral and motivational encouragement, researching particular topics, identifying sources of help, listening to group members' ideas and thought processes and reflecting them back, facilitating decision-making, acting as an advocate, coach, mentor, critical friend.

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Technology

This refers to both hardware and online tools/apps which can be used in practice and communication (including social media).

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