

## Overview

This standard sets out how community development practitioners support communities to better understand:

- how public bodies and other agencies work and make decisions
- how to influence decision-making processes
- how to determine whether they should work with public bodies and other organisations
- how to develop effective relationships

There are many benefits to be gained from effective relationships between communities, public bodies and other organisations. However, to fully benefit communities need to understand the remits, powers and duties that public bodies and other organisations hold and, how they can influence decision-making processes. Public bodies and other organisations want to work with communities for a variety of reasons. It is important that communities are clear about how it will also benefit them.

This standard is relevant to all community development practitioners who support communities in this process.

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.

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

1. assist communities to understand local, national and global democratic and political processes and where power and influence lie
2. gather information about the roles and responsibilities of public bodies and other organisations whose work impacts on communities which is up to date and relevant to current community action
3. assist communities to understand the legal powers, statutory responsibilities and resources held by public bodies and other organisations and how this may impact on joint decision-making
4. promote relationships between communities, public bodies and other organisations for the benefit of communities
5. support communities to understand the tensions that can arise between organisations with different structures and decision making processes in order to improve relationships
6. provide information to communities about how to engage and work collaboratively with public bodies and other organisations to achieve agreed aims
7. support communities to make use of their legal rights
8. assist communities to examine government initiatives and the opportunities they present for communities to influence decision-makers
9. assist communities to access information about existing multi-agency working arrangements to inform community action
10. support communities to identify the skills needed to engage with public bodies and other organisations
11. support communities to identify and establish relevant contacts within public bodies and other organisations to achieve agreed aims

## Knowledge and understanding

### *You need to know and understand:*

1. how representative and participatory democracy work in practice
2. concepts of political literacy, citizenship rights and responsibilities in relation to governance
3. relevant local, national and international government policies
4. the contribution that diverse communities and autonomous groups can make to decisions affecting communities
5. how injustice, discrimination and social exclusion impact on the lives of individuals and communities
6. how power relationships affect collaborative working
7. the social, political, cultural and economic context of own community
8. the potential links and disparities between concepts of community development and key ideas presented in government policies and initiatives
9. how public bodies and other organisations are regulated and managed
10. the duties and responsibilities public bodies and other organisations have to communities
11. how to support public bodies and other organisations to improve how they engage with communities
12. how to support communities and individuals to influence decision-making
13. how to develop the skills needed to influence decision-making
14. how to support communities to develop their knowledge of relevant law and legal remedies
15. inclusive and participatory techniques for relationship building
16. how to negotiate, plan, agree, review and evaluate relationships between communities and other organisations
17. techniques and approaches to increase accountability to communities
18. communication systems which promote understanding and open dialogue
19. methods which facilitate collective learning opportunities to ensure effective collaborative working

## 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.

1. power imbalances between communities, public bodies and other agencies are recognised and addressed
2. opportunities to influence and challenge discriminatory practice is critically examined
3. the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action are made explicit
4. actions are taken to build confidence within communities to engage in dialogue with public bodies
5. knowledge of how public bodies and other agencies work is shared with communities

## 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 action

Community-based campaigns and networks concentrating on issues of concern to that community, eg a campaign to develop a safe and creative play space for children, a campaign against the planned closure of a library, a campaign for empty houses to be made available at affordable rents, the public demonstrations against deportations.

#### 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 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### Technology

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

CLDSCCD13

Promote and support effective relationships between communities and public bodies and other agencies



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<b>Developed by</b>	CLD Standards Council Scotland
<b>Version Number</b>	1
<b>Date Approved</b>	30 Mar 2023
<b>Indicative Review Date</b>	30 Mar 2028
<b>Validity</b>	Current
<b>Status</b>	Original
<b>Originating Organisation</b>	JETS
<b>Original URN</b>	JETSCD14
<b>Relevant Occupations</b>	Community Voluntary Workers, Community Activator
<b>Suite</b>	Community Development
<b>Keywords</b>	community development; community development practitioner; community development practice; community development values; community development research; community development consultation; community development groups; community development methods

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