

National Standards in Community Development

The National Occupational Standards in Community Development Work summary

The revised occupational standards are now available. If you are planning or revising a training course, running a workshop or giving a presentation on community development work, seeking to employ a community development worker, developing a mentoring scheme or involved in any aspect of community development work, the standards can help.

Introduction

The key purpose of community development work is collectively to bring about social change and justice, by working with communities* to:

Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities

Plan, organise and take action

Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action all in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities.

*** communities refer to those that can be defined geographically and/or those defined by interest.**

The revised Community Development Work National Occupational Standards place, at their core, the values and principles of community development.

Since the first standards were produced in 1997 community development, community involvement, working in partnership, participation etc., have become central elements in many government policy initiatives. However, the words are often not reflected or even understood in practice.

The revised standards contain the skills and knowledge that community development workers and activists need to do the work. They provide the basis from which we can promote effective and appropriate community development work practice across the UK. We need to use these standards with confidence to argue for community development values and processes to be integral to the work.

This is a summary document, the full occupational standards are available: see back page for details.

These outline the basic values and principles for good community development work practice. The values that underpin the standards are:

Social Justice

Self-determination individuals and groups have the right to identify shared issues and concerns as the starting point for collective action.

Working and learning together valuing and using the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity within communities to collectively bring about desired changes. Sustainable communities
Participation Reflective practice

The revised standards have been written following extensive consultation across the UK.

The current standards:

Are strong on the values, principles and processes of community development

Celebrate the diversity and creativity of how different communities organise

Reflect the excellent community development practice of many unpaid and paid practitioners

Are more user-friendly and accessible in language and layout

Reflect different levels of responsibility

Contain core units which define what all community development workers will need to do, and optional units which only some will need to do depending on levels of responsibility, specialist roles etc.

How can you use the standards?

The standards can be used to define and argue for what is good community development

practice and learning. You can use standards to inform:

Development of partnerships and participation initiatives

Training and learning programmes

Action plans

Terms of reference

Job descriptions

Explaining what Community Development is

Community development work practice in different settings e.g. health, regeneration, rural areas and at different levels e.g. grass roots work, managing a CD project, evaluating practice.

The list will grow as the new standards become more widely used.

The revised standards will also replace the former community work occupational standards as the basis for Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs) at levels two, three and four. There are core and optional units. Key roles

The key roles are the main areas of what constitutes community development work. They reflect how people are practising this work today. The key roles are listed below with a brief explanation.

Key

Role A:

Develop working relationships with communities and organisations

1. Make relationships within communities
2. Build relationships within and with communities and organisations
3. Develop strategic relationships with communities, organisations and within partnerships.

Key Role B:

Encourage people to work with and learn from each other

1. Contribute to the development of community groups/networks
2. Facilitate the development of community groups/networks
3. Facilitate ways of working collaboratively
4. Promote and support learning from practice and experience
5. Create opportunities for learning from practice and experience
6. Support individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict
7. Take action with individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict.

Key Role C:

Work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action

1. Work within communities to select options and make plans for collective action
2. Contribute to collective action within a community
3. Support communities to plan and take collective action
4. Ensure community participation in planning and taking collective action
5. Contribute to the review of needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities within a community
6. Work with communities to identify needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities.

Key Role D:

Work with people in communities to develop and use frameworks for evaluation

1. Support communities to monitor and review action for change
2. Facilitate the development of evaluation frameworks.

Key Role E:

Develop community organisations

1. Encourage the best use of resources
2. Review and develop funding and resources
3. Develop and evaluate a funding/resourcing strategy
4. Develop people's skills and roles within community groups/networks
5. Facilitate the development of people and learning in communities
6. Develop and review community- based organisational structures
7. Develop and maintain organisational frameworks for community-based initiatives.

Units imported from National Occupational Standards for Management

8. Contribute to planning and preparation
9. Co-ordinate the running of projects
10. Contribute to project closure.

Key Role F:

Reflect on and develop own practice and role

1. Identify and reflect on own practice, knowledge and values
2. Review own practice, knowledge and values
3. Evaluate and develop own practice
4. Identify and take action to meet own learning and development needs
5. Review and meet own learning and development needs

The standards were revised following an extensive consultation process led by the Community Work Forum (CWF). The CWF involves employers, trade unions, training providers and practitioners from across the UK and represents community development work within Paulo (see below). It is also instrumental in the development and implementation of Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications in Community Development Work.

Paulo is the current National Training Organisation (NTO) for community development work, youth work, and community based adult learning. Paulo has ultimate responsibility for the Community Development Work National Occupational Standards. Paulo is currently in the process of reforming with other NTOs into a sector skills council following recent legislation.

This is a summary document. The full standards are available and will be published by Paulo. The standards will also be published by the awarding bodies for community development work S/NVQs at levels two, three and four.

As an interim measure, the full standards are available on CD Rom @ £5.00 from the Federation.

Also see the Federation's website: www.communitydevelopmentlearning.org.uk effective community development is informed and enhanced through reflection on action. everyone has the right to fully participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. empowering communities to develop their independence and autonomy whilst making and maintaining links to the wider society. working towards a fairer society which respects civil and human rights and challenges oppression.

The Federation is organising workshops on how to use the occupational standards in developing training courses. If you are interested in using the standards and would like to be involved in the Federation's work, see contact below.

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The Community Work Forum can be contacted c/o the Federation.

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