

# Community Development National Occupational Standards

## What is Community Development?

Community development enables people to work collectively to bring about positive social change. This long term process starts from people's own experience and enables communities\* to work together to:

- Identify their own needs and actions
- Take collective action using their strengths and resources
- Develop their confidence, skills and knowledge
- Challenge unequal power relationships
- Promote social justice, equality and inclusion

in order to improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live and societies of which they are a part.

## What are National Occupational Standards?

National Occupational Standards (NOS) define the skills, knowledge and understanding required to undertake the functions carried out by the community development practitioner.

Community development is undertaken by a wide range of people in different settings and roles. Community development practitioners may be paid (employed workers) or unpaid (community activists and volunteers), and all community development practitioners need to be competent in the necessary skills and knowledge.

The Standards applied to practice will ensure that community development impacts on poverty, racism and social exclusion in a way that empowers, enables and encourages participation. standards outlining relevant performance criteria.

## Values of Community Development

The community development process is underpinned by a set of key values on which all practice is based.

Community development practitioners need to relate these values to their roles and actions.

There are five key values that underpin all community development practice:

- Social justice and equality
- Anti-discrimination
- Community empowerment
- Collective action
- Working and learning together

## The National Occupational Standards will support;

- Community development workers and community activists
- Individuals and organisations adopting a community development approach in their work
- Employers of community development practitioners
- Community development education and training providers
- Funders of programmes and projects
- Development and delivery of strategic plans
- Evaluation of community development practice

\*Communities refer to those that can be defined by geography, identity or interest.

# The Community Development Standards Summary



# Summary of Key Areas and Standards

## Key Area 1: Understand and Practice Community Development

- S1 Integrate and use the values and process of community development
- S2 Work with the tensions inherent in community development practice
- S3 Relate to different communities
- S4 Develop yourself as a community development practitioner
- S5 Maintain community development practice within own organisation
- S6 Support inclusive and collective working

## Key Area 2: Understand and Engage with Communities

- S7 Get to know a community
- S8 Facilitate community research and consultations
- S9 Analyse & disseminate findings from community research

## Key Area 3: Group Work and Collective Action

- S10 Organise community events and activities
- S11 Support communities to effectively manage & address conflict, within and between communities or community groups
- S12 Support communities who want to bring about positive social change
- S13 Facilitate community leadership

## Key Area 4: Collaborative and Cross-Sectoral Working

- S14 Promote and support effective relationships between communities and public bodies and other agencies
- S15 Encourage and support public bodies to build effective relationships with communities
- S16 Support collaborative and partnership work
- S17 Strategically co-ordinate networks and partnerships

## Key Area 5: Community Learning for Social Change

- S18 Promote opportunities for community development learning
- S19 Facilitate community learning for social and political development

## Key Area 6: Governance and Organisational Development

- S20 Advise on organisational structures to support community development
- S21 Plan and gain resources and funding for sustainability
- S22 Strengthen the organisational development of groups
- S23 Monitor and evaluate community development activities
- S24 Manage internal organisational development and external relationships
- S25 Supervise and support community development practitioners

# The Community Development Values in Detail

## Social justice and equality

Work for a more just and equal society which recognises environmental, political, cultural and economic issues by;

- Celebrating the strengths, skills and assets in communities
- Acknowledging and challenging inequalities, injustice and imbalances of power
- Promoting human and civil rights and responsibilities

## Anti-discrimination

Respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism.

- Recognise that discrimination works at individual, community, organisational/institutional and societal levels
- Explore and challenge all forms of discrimination
- Develop anti-oppressive policies and practices which actively support and value diversity

## Community empowerment

Enable communities to develop confidence, capacity, skills and relationships to shape collective action and challenge imbalances of power.

- Enable communities to recognise and build on their existing skills, knowledge and expertise
- Promote the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action
- Provide the space for communities to develop critical, creative, independent and active decision making and participation

## Collective action

Promote the active participation of people within communities, using the power of a collective voice and goal.

- Recognise the wealth of creative and positive resources within individuals and communities
- Promote and support diverse communities to agree and take action on their common concerns and interests
- Use the power of the collective voice to plan and take collective action while respecting the rights of others

## Working and learning together

Create and encourage opportunities for collective learning through action and shared reflection.

- Learn from shared experiences of working in collaboration
- Understand experiences in the context of wider social, political and economic forces
- Encourage critical reflection on own practice, values and beliefs.

## The Reflective Community Development Practitioner

