



Federation
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creating change



A GUIDE TO USING THE
Community Development National
Occupational Standards

Author: Anna Clarke



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National Occupational Standards

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ISBN 978-1-904111-25-2



Published by FCDL, 3rd Floor, The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW
Tel. 0114 253 6770 Fax: 0114 253 6771
Email: info@fcdl.org.uk www.fcdl.org.uk

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Steering Group which included representatives from Community Development Cymru (CDC), Community Development Exchange (CDX), Community Development Foundation, Community Workers Co-operative (Ireland), Community Work Education and Training Network (Northern Ireland), England Standards Board (ESB), Regional Community Development Networks (England) and the Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL).

Many thanks to the Community Development Foundation for funding towards the development and production of this guide.

About the author



Anna Clarke has worked within the community development field for 25 years. During the 1980s and 1990s she worked in Liverpool, Wirral, Knowsley and Lancashire in England within both local authority and voluntary settings. In the mid 1990s she moved to Northern Ireland and worked for two years with a PEACE 1 Local Strategy Partnership before moving to work at regional level with a Northern Ireland-wide rural voluntary organisation, coordinating community development training and learning provision. In 2007 she set up her own freelance business, Anna Clarke, Learning for Change Consultancy.

Supporting statements

Community Development Alliance Scotland (CDAS)

The principles and values of community development are shared across the United Kingdom and around the world, whatever name the workers involved are called by. They help communities to find ways of achieving the outcomes that matter to them, and in ways that both markets and governments cannot achieve without them.

Community Development Cymru (CDC)

Community development is a transformative process of change. As a result it is fundamental to the revitalisation of individuals, groups, organisations and communities in enabling them to develop their potential and capacity. The new Community Development National Occupational Standards (CDNOS) will further support this process through learning opportunities that enhance practice and skills. In addition community development values and principles will be promoted. Putting these values into practice is an essential aspect of the community development process so that social justice and human rights are promoted and any form of oppression challenged. This is community development at its best and this guide will enhance this process.

Community Work Education and Training Network (CWETN – Northern Ireland)

Community development has proven successfully over the years to be a key mechanism for physical, psychological and political change within societies. It is a collective process acknowledged cross-sectorally as being the main vehicle for partnership working in local governance and the delivery of essential services. We believe the new Community Development National Occupational Standards and values will help consolidate the innovative and dynamic practice, act as a reflective practice framework for practitioners in developing their practice, guide the development of learning programmes, steer policy developments and support the development of a strategic framework for the sector.

Community Development Exchange (CDX)

The recession and cuts in public spending can still be an opportunity for community development to thrive if we can prove that community development workers play a vital role in helping communities to develop themselves.

The new National Occupational Standards will help us strengthen community development by illustrating the elements which make it so exciting, creative, resilient and oppositional. Community development's greatest strength is its creative energy, its commitment to work alongside people and not on top of them – the principles and values laid out in this guide will help you challenge your own thinking and practice, and help you tease out how to explain your work to others.

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Community Development Foundation (CDF)

Communities are being overwhelmed with change, including new rights and powers and a new ethos of responsibility, especially in the areas of public service reform and delivery, all within a context of reduced public spending. The one method that can help our communities cope in this new environment – and indeed thrive – is community development.

The CDNOS have been developed jointly by the community development field and represent the skills and knowledge that make up effective community development practice.

This guide provides clear practical guidance, based on the CDNOS, to help you understand, undertake and manage effective community development, giving strength to local voices and contributing to the development of an inclusive and just society.

Endorsement and Quality Standards Board for Community Development Learning (England)

The England Standards Board welcomes this pack as the Community Development NOS have always provided the basis for our endorsement processes and criteria. Our endorsements are designed to ensure quality community development learning and qualification programmes for community development activists and workers. This guide will be useful to all training providers and those involved in designing community development learning programmes and will help ensure that practitioners will be more confident and effective when working with and within communities.

Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL)

The Federation for Community Development Learning supports the promotion and wide use of the CDNOS. We are pleased to have led the review which resulted in the CDNOS 2009 and the production of this practical guide that explores the use the CDNOS have across different roles and needs.

Community development is a value based process supporting the political literacy of individuals and groups who name their issues and identify ways to challenge inequalities in order to address imbalances of power and bring about change based on social justice, equality and inclusion.



Preface

Community Development is a long term value based process which aims to address inequalities and imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. While it began to emerge as a recognisable paid activity in the UK in the 1950s, the process of communities organising themselves to fight for justice and against oppression has been present throughout history. Community development can be practised by unpaid community activists, paid community development workers and increasingly a range of other workers whose role depends on working effectively with communities. It is not the title of posts or the description of programmes that define good quality community development learning and practice. It is whether the values and processes of community development underpin and inform the activities.

The community development national occupational standards 2009 were developed with the active participation of hundreds of community development practitioners reflecting a wide range of roles, perspectives and settings. The standards provide the framework for good quality community development learning and practice. They define the 'bottom line', and many community development practitioners, both paid and unpaid, have used the previous CDNOS to argue for good quality and value based community development practice rather than tokenistic, top down and tick box approaches to working with communities.

The standards do define but do not limit what is good quality community development practice. Experienced community development practitioners can bring their own skills and creativity to using them and people and organisations who are just starting to learn about community development may look to them for guidance and reassurance. FCDL has produced a 4 sided summary of the CDNOS 2009 and also a poster which represents them as a tree, and these can be downloaded free from www.fcdl.org.uk or hard copies purchased at low cost.

At the time of publication of this Guide Community Development is facing particular challenges as current policy promotes one version of community organising and current economic policies are decimating jobs, community and voluntary sector organisations, and services. But it will be community development practitioners and community development practice that will continue to support and help sustain communities, especially the most dispossessed and marginalised, to recognise and further develop their own unique strengths and capabilities. The values and processes of community development need to underpin community organising in order for it to be inclusive, sustainable and effective (as with community empowerment, community capacity building, and all the other community something initiatives in the past) and doubtless many community development practitioners will make links with and offer support to the community organisers.

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FCDL is proud to have played a leading role in reviewing the standards and publishing this guide, and we express our thanks and appreciation to Anna Clarke, the author, and all our members and partners who have contributed so much.

Janice Marks

Head of Agency

Federation for Community Development Learning

November 2011



Introduction

The Community Development National Occupational Standards 2009 (CDNOS) have been designed by community development practitioners across the UK. These CDNOS are the culmination of extensive consultation with the community development field and are based on a wide body of knowledge and experience. They are for the benefit of everyone using community development approaches and are intended to build the quality of community development practice. Working to the CDNOS ensures that community development practice is promoted in a consistent way with strong advocates and champions.

This guide is provided to help organisations and individuals to use the CDNOS. It is intended to support organisations to integrate and use the CDNOS through a range of functions and activities. Individual community development practitioners will find additional information and support around day to day working with community groups on www.fcdl.org.uk and other websites listed at the end. To maximise use of the CDNOS and this guide, you will find it useful to have a complete copy of the CDNOS 2009 for reference. These can be downloaded from the web link below.¹ A summary of the CDNOS and tree poster are downloadable from www.fcdl.org.uk.

The guide offers a step-by-step approach on how to use the CDNOS. It sets out in a methodical way some suggested approaches for applying the CDNOS but it is not intended to be prescriptive or restricting. To ensure its appeal and applicability to a wide range of users, the material in the guide has been kept quite generic. However, you can customise the material to take account of the context, environment and constraints within which you work, for example: health, urban regeneration, environmental sustainability, political/economic context and so on.

What are Community Development National Occupational Standards?

Community Development National Occupational Standards (CDNOS) describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in their job in order to carry out their role in a consistent and competent way. Essentially, CDNOS assist in the development of the workforce by promoting good practice, bringing together the skills, knowledge and values that underpin the work.

All National Occupational Standards follow a similar format across all sectors. The first Community Development National Occupational Standards were developed in the mid 1990s. The process involved extensive engagement and consultation with community development practitioners across the UK, drawing on years of community development practice experience. Thus, this body of experience has informed and defined what we now understand as community development and is enshrined in the values, principles of

¹ www.fcdl.org/about-fcdl/community-development

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practice and key areas of activity. The process of engagement and consultation has been repeated every six to seven years (2002 and 2009) to produce revised and updated CDNOS.

The 2009 version is the third generation of CDNOS. Produced with the support of Lifelong Learning UK, they synthesise a huge amount of collective thinking, based upon a solid history of practice experience across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They have been revised in consultation with a wide range of employers, practitioners and stakeholders to ensure they are relevant and fit for purpose in each jurisdiction.

Who can use the Community Development National Occupational Standards?

The Community Development National Occupational Standards provide a guiding framework for practice across a range of roles, settings and levels of responsibility.

They are applicable to all those across the range and diversity of the community development workforce. For example:

- Community development workers with generic or specific briefs, e.g. neighbourhood workers, community development and health workers
- Community development activists and volunteers
- Community development employers and managers, e.g. voluntary management committee members or paid managers
- Other professionals using community development approaches, e.g. health development workers, neighbourhood housing workers, tenant engagement workers, development workers in women’s centres, family centres and so on
- Community development trainers and learning providers
- Policy makers and funders of community development programmes.

What can the Community Development National Occupational Standards be used for?

The CDNOS can be used in all manner of innovative ways to support practice development. There are reputedly over 100 uses! You are encouraged to be creative in your use of them and to share that with other practitioners through the FCDL website.²

Uses of CDNOS include:



² www.fcdl.org.uk

What do the Community Development National Occupational Standards contain?

The CDNOS contain the following:

- Definition and key purpose of community development
- 5 Key Values
- 7 Key Areas (containing statements of knowledge and understanding)
- 25 Standards (containing statements of what you need to be able to do – skills)
- Examples of values in practice.

The definition of community development within the CDNOS is expressed in the following key purpose:

Community development is a long-term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion.

The process enables people to organise and work together to:

- *identify their own needs and aspirations*
- *take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives*
- *improve the quality of their own lives, the communities³ in which they live, and societies of which they are a part.*

The community development process is underpinned by a set of five key values on which all practice is based. Community development practitioners need to relate these values to their roles and actions. The five key values are:

■ Equality and Anti-discrimination

Community development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to challenge the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- acknowledges where there is inequality and discrimination, and rejects and challenges any form of it
- supports and develops anti-oppressive policies and practices
- respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity
- promotes and supports diverse communities to agree on their common concerns and interests
- acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities.

³ Communities refers to those that can be defined by geography, identity or interest



■ Social Justice

Community development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to achieve change and the long-term goal of a more equal, non-sectarian society. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice
- recognises and challenges inequalities and power differences
- values diversity of experience
- promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities
- promotes a sustainable environment
- challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances
- makes the link between local, societal and global contexts.

■ Collective Action

Community development practitioners will work with communities to organise, influence and take action. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- promotes the active participation of people within communities
- supports the rights of communities to organise, access support and take action
- respects the rights of others when planning collective action
- empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise
- uses the power of the collective voice and of collective action
- recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities.

■ Community Empowerment

Community development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to work together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- promotes the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action
- encourages an understanding and commitment to the long-term nature of community development practice
- promotes the rights of communities to be consulted, involved in, and influence decision making that affects their lives
- promotes accountability and transparency
- promotes co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities
- uses research to support communities in determining needs as a basis for influencing.

■ Working and Learning Together

Community development practitioners will support individuals and communities working and learning together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- recognises, shares and values skills, knowledge and experience

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- promotes empowerment through building on existing knowledge and skills
- creates opportunities for collective learning through shared reflection on action
- encourages reflection on own practice, values and beliefs
- uses analysis and evaluation to inform future action
- promotes learning from the experiences of communities locally, nationally and globally.

Key Areas and Standards for Community Development Practice

The Community Development National Occupational Standards consist of seven Key Areas that between them contain 25 Standards. **Key Area 1 – Understand and practise community development**, is a core key area that underpins all community development practice, in all roles and settings at all levels of practice. **Key Area 1** applies to all practitioners whether they are voluntary, paid workers/managers or those using a community development approach as part of their work. The five Key Values together with the five **Standards** that make up **Key Area 1** are the interdependent constituent parts that are integral to all community development practice.

The Key Areas and Standards are as follows:

Key Area 1

Understand and practise community development

1. Integrate and use the values and process of community development
2. Work with the tensions inherent in community development practice
3. Relate to different communities
4. Demonstrate competence and integrity as a community development practitioner
5. Maintain community development practice within own organisation

Key Area 2

Understand and engage with communities

6. Get to know a community
7. Facilitate community research and consultations
8. Analyse and disseminate findings from community research

Key Area 3

Take a community development approach to group work and collective action

9. Support inclusive and collective working through community development practice
10. Organise community events and activities
11. Respond to community conflict
12. Support communities to campaign for change

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Key Area 4

Promote and support a community development approach to collaborative and cross-sectoral working

13. Promote and support effective relationships between communities and public bodies
14. Encourage and support public bodies to build effective relationships with communities
15. Use a community development approach to support collaborative and partnership work
16. Apply a community development approach to strategically co-ordinate networks and partnerships

Key Area 5

Support community learning from shared experiences

17. Promote and develop opportunities of learning from community development practice
18. Facilitate community learning for social and political development

Key Area 6

Provide community development support to organisations

19. Advise on organisational structures using community development perspectives
20. Plan and gain resources and funding for sustainability through community development practice
21. Strengthen groups using community development approaches and practice
22. Set up new projects and partnerships using community development approaches and practice
23. Use a community development approach to monitoring and evaluation

Key Area 7

Manage and develop community development practice

24. Supervise community development practitioners
25. Manage internal organisational development and external relationships to support effective community development practice.

Where can the full Community Development National Occupational Standards be found?

The full published version of the Community Development National Occupational Standards, along with the 4-page summary and a very useful tree diagram poster (which also summarises the CDNOS), can be downloaded free from the following website:

www.fccl.org/about-fccl/community-development

Hard copies of the 4-page summary and the tree diagram can also be obtained from:

Federation for Community Development Learning
3rd Floor, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW
Telephone: 0114 253 6770
admin@fccl.org.uk www.fccl.org.uk

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How to use this guide

The guide has been designed for you to access it at any point and start using the CDNOS straight away. For example, if you want to use the CDNOS to develop some new job descriptions you can go straight to that section. If you want to begin to embed the CDNOS across the full range of organisational functions, you can start at Section 1 and work your way through the entire guide over a period of time, or you can work through each section in any order that makes sense to your organisation.

This guide contains 12 main sections each focusing on a different use for the CDNOS but the list is not exhaustive, there are many other uses.

The sections are ordered loosely but in a way that should be helpful if you wish to work through them in a logical order in terms of implementing CDNOS in your organisation. For example, Section 1 is Strategic and Project Planning. Logically, if you work through this section, setting strategic aims etc, and identifying key areas of activity, you will also identify staff needs and perhaps the requirement to employ new staff or review existing job roles. This would take you to Section 2 Job Design, which would lead to Sections 3 on Recruitment and Selection. Once staff are in place, you would logically begin thinking about induction, supervision, staff development needs and so on.

However, it is perfectly valid to start using the CDNOS and this guide at any point that meets your needs.

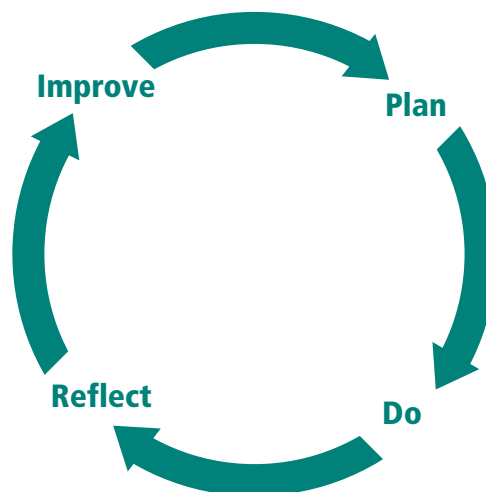
Each section explains how to use the CDNOS for a specific purpose following a common format. Using CDNOS to inform community development practice takes a methodical approach which eventually leads to embedding the process and the CDNOS themselves in day to day practice. This process starts with the overall 'big picture': the Definition of Community Development and its key purpose, the Key Values, Key Areas and the Standards, and then drills down into the detail within each Key Area in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills required. Examples of resource materials, tools and activities to support each section will be available on the FCDL website and you are encouraged to contribute any tools and resources you develop so that these can be used by other organisations and practitioners.⁴ As you work through different sections you will recognise the methodical approach and you can use this to support your own uses of the CDNOS too.

⁴ www.fcdl.org.uk



1 Strategic and project planning

Good community development practice is planned, prepared, monitored and evaluated, as well as implemented. The values and practice principles of community development will also inform the planning process. The Community Development National Occupational Standards can be used at each of these stages, to identify and plan the types of activities to carry out and how they will be monitored and evaluated. This process can be utilised within teams to plan out a new programme or project. It can also be used for developing a new strategy utilising a longer, collective process with staff and board/committee members and, potentially, external stakeholders.



CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Agree/review the vision, mission and values
- Set SMART objectives and outcomes
- Identify the range of activities needed to meet the objectives
- Identify staff skills, knowledge and experience and allocate work accordingly
- Make the case for recruiting new people or planning staff development
- Review and evaluate strategic objectives

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What to do:

1 Agree vision and mission

To develop or review the vision, mission and key purpose refer to the definition of community development, stated in the introduction to this guide and on page 2 of the full CDNOS. Consider the following questions:

- Are the existing vision and mission compatible with the key purpose of community development?
- What changes can you make to ensure the key purpose of community development is reflected in the vision and mission?

2 Values

The community development process is underpinned by a set of key values that have been collectively agreed by community development practitioners across the UK.

Equality and Anti-discrimination

Social Justice

Collective action

Community Empowerment

Working and Learning Together

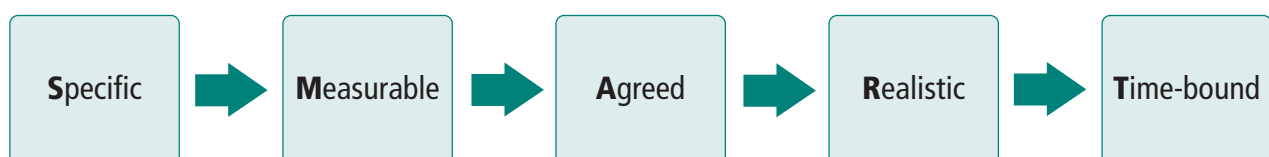
These values must be understood and reflected in any activity that is described as community development. As a community development organisation or practitioner it is therefore important to subscribe to the values and demonstrate them in your practice.

As an organisation or team, discuss each of the values in turn. Consider the detail of each value – the descriptive paragraph, the bullet points and also look at the examples of values in practice at the end of each of the 25 Standards.

- Does your current work involve promoting these values?
- Are they reflected in the work that is done?
- Are they stated in any existing strategy or policy documents?
- What are the challenges to working to these values?
- How can the values be more effectively embedded in practice?

3 Use the CDNOS to set SMART objectives and outcomes

SMART objectives



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What is planned will depend very much on the needs and issues that have been identified. At organisational level, objectives may be identified for each of the seven Key Areas. **Key Area 1 – Understand and Practise Community Development** is core to all community development practice. This means that, at the very least, it should underpin all community development activity and should always form part of key objectives.

When developing objectives for a team, or project, identify relevant standards around which to develop the objectives. These might be focused within one Key Area or be drawn from a number of Key Areas. Again, Key Area 1 should underpin objectives.

Example of a project objective using Key Area 1, Standard 1:

To integrate and use the values and process of community development in all planned activity.

Outcomes

Having set the objectives, consider the desired outcomes. These are similar to SMART objectives in that they are specific, measurable statements that describe what the successful result of the activity will be/look like and whether the desired change has occurred.

Example of outcomes using Key Area 1 – Knowledge and Understanding statements:

- *Able to explain the values upon which community development is based*
- *Understands the historical and current factors influencing local community development activity*
- *Can recognise the benefits and value of taking a community development approach to addressing local issues*

4 Identify the range of activities that must be carried out in order to meet these objectives

The types of activities chosen must be designed to meet the objectives and lead to achieving the desired outcomes.

Examples of possible activities using Key Area 1, Standard 1:

- *Support communities to work together to identify local issues*
- *Encourage people to gather information, explore and understand how past events and circumstances have influenced the current range of issues*
- *Facilitate the sharing of learning between groups to demonstrate how a community development approach can help to address local issues*

5 Identify the staffing requirements and allocate activities

Use the CDNOS to map out the skills, knowledge and experience needed to deliver the objectives and undertake a skills analysis with the staff. Identify any gaps in skills or knowledge and where necessary plan

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to recruit staff to meet these gaps or plan staff development opportunities to build the skills and knowledge of existing staff.

6 Review and evaluate strategic objectives

Ensure regular monitoring and review of progress towards achieving the objectives. If necessary reset objectives to ensure they remain achievable. Decide at the planning stage, how to monitor and evaluate, what evidence will be needed and how to capture it.



2 Job design – job descriptions and person specifications

Community development is a recognised occupational field of work so it is important that job descriptions and person specifications for community development posts should clearly reflect the purpose of the role, the values, and the required skills, knowledge and experience. By using the Community Development National Occupational Standards to develop job descriptions and person specifications, the required skills, knowledge and performance levels are clear and explicitly stated, resulting in the values being embedded within practice.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Develop clear and concise job descriptions and person specifications
- Determine the key purpose of the job, the responsibilities, duties and tasks
- Develop the person specification, setting out the skills, knowledge and experience required
- Ensure staff know where to access the CDNOS
- Review and update job descriptions regularly

What to do:

1 Develop the job description

Complete a detailed job description according to your organisational requirements. Use the headings below as a checklist to ensure all the elements of the job description are included.

- **Job title** – title of job, post or position
- **Organisation** – the name of the employer
- **Name of the post holder**
- **Grade or salary** – this may be a fixed figure or a scale
- **Location** – where the post holder will usually work

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- **Reporting relationship** – job title of the post holder’s line manager
- **Team members** – job title(s) of other staff who report directly to the post holder
- **Purpose of job** – what the post holder is expected to achieve
- **Responsibilities, duties or tasks** – this list of responsibilities can be drawn from the CDNOS
- **Other information required by your organisation**, for example, terms and conditions

2 Clarify the purpose of the job

Be clear about why the job exists and what the post holder will be expected to contribute towards achieving the team or organisational objectives. This is a good place to state clearly that the work of the post holder must be underpinned by the values of community development work. Key Area 1 is core to all community development activity and should always form the basis of any community development post. Key Areas 2 and 3 are generic community development skills that are applicable in virtually all community development practice contexts. Key Areas 4, 5, 6 and 7 are more specialised and may or may not be applicable depending on the nature of the post and the level of responsibility. You will not be able to include every aspect of every Key Area, and it will be important to prioritise critical aspects from the relevant Key Areas.

3 Determine the responsibilities, duties and tasks

For each Key Area that has been chosen, identify the relevant Standards for the post and use the descriptions of what a community development practitioner needs to be able to do as the basis for defining the responsibilities, duties or tasks of the job.

Depending on the nature of the job it may be necessary or appropriate to refer to other National Occupational Standards, for example, if the post holder perhaps has a leadership or management role, has a remit for designing and delivering training, or perhaps carries an area of cross-organisation responsibility such as IT, facilities co-ordination etc.⁵

4 Develop the person specification

The person specification is a detailed description of the essential and desirable qualities the post holder needs to have in order to carry out their duties effectively. These qualities are usually expressed in the following ways:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Experience
- Qualifications

State that the knowledge, skills and experience required for the post should be underpinned by the values of Community Development. Be clear about what is essential and what is desirable. *Key Area 1 – Understand and Practise Community Development* is the core Key Area and the 5 Standards within it are therefore essential to all community development posts.

⁵ Other NOS can be accessed at www.ukstandards.org.uk

Other essential criteria will be determined by the nature of the post. For example:

Key Area 4 – Promote and Support a Community Development Approach to Collaborative and Cross-sectoral Working

Essential Standard 13 – Promote and support effective relationships between communities and public bodies

Desirable Standard 14 – Encourage and support public bodies to build effective relationships with communities

Standard 13 would be essential for a community development practitioner directly supporting local communities whereas Standard 14 is aimed at those implementing local/national government policies/initiatives.

Well planned induction and initial staff development can support new staff to quickly gain the desirable knowledge, skills and experience that will enhance the post.

5 Seek feedback from others

Consult on the job description and person specification with other colleagues/staff members to ensure the job description and person specification are fit for purpose.

3 Recruitment and selection

The Community Development National Occupational Standards help to form the basis for a fair and equitable recruitment and selection process. Using the CDNOS to inform this process will:

- help applicants decide if they have the required community development knowledge, skills and experience
- enable the selection panel to assess applicants in relation to their community development practice.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Update job descriptions and person specifications
- Write the job advertisements
- Prepare application packs
- Assess written applications for short-listing
- Interview shortlisted applicants and appoint
- Give constructive feedback at all stages to all applicants upon request
- Consider reasonable adjustments if recruitment is difficult

What to do:

1 Convene the selection panel

Ensure the panel has:

- a) knowledge and understanding of your organisation and the role of the post holder
- b) an agreed understanding of community development purpose and values
- c) external community development expertise on the panel if necessary (for example if your organisation is not a community development organisation).

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2 Update the job description and person specification

Check that the job description and person specification are up-to-date and based on the CDNOS. Refer to the previous section of this guide for more information on this process.

3 Write the job advertisement

In addition to standard content, ensure the advertisement includes:

- a summary of knowledge, skills and experience required (3-4 key points taken from the CDNOS)
- a key statement of commitment from your organisation to work in accordance with the values set out in the CDNOS.

4 Information pack and application form

Prepare an information pack containing the essential documents such as job description, person specification, application form etc. Ensure that the application form contains questions that are pertinent to the detail of the post, allowing applicants to demonstrate their relevant community development knowledge, skills and experience. Consider including a question specifically related to the CDNOS, for example:

*Please outline how your practice is underpinned by the key values of community development.
(As detailed in the Community Development National Occupational Standards)*

In addition to the main documentation for applicants the pack could also include:

- background information about your organisation and the context for community development practice
- a copy of the 4-page CDNOS summary⁶.

5 Design the assessment and selection process

Use the agreed job description and person specification to design the assessment and selection process to assess applications, carry out the interviews and reach a decision.

Develop an assessment grid to assess and record each application.

6 Presentations at interview

If a presentation is required, use the CDNOS to identify an appropriate theme, linked to the requirements of the post. For example:

- What challenges might you foresee with putting the CDNOS into your practice? How would you address these?

⁶ www.fcdl.org/about-fcdl/community-development

Using Key Area 2, Standard 6, presentation themes could be:

- Outline the approach you would use in getting to know this local community.
- or
- Demonstrate how you would put the key values underpinning community development into practice when getting to know the local community.

7 Interviews

Using the Key Areas and the relevant Standards included in the job description and person specification:

- a) formulate the questions for the interview. For example, a question based on Key Area 2, Standard 7

Please outline how you would support local groups to undertake community based research to identify needs?

- b) agree in advance what is expected in terms of answers to each question
- c) record applicants' responses to each question, keeping brief notes and scoring each answer. For example: 0 – not met or poor, 1 – partly met or OK, 2 – fully met or good.

8 Give feedback to applicants

Feedback to applicants can also be structured around the CDNOS. Explain to applicants where they scored well and where they were unable to demonstrate that they possessed the necessary skills, knowledge or experience required. Applicants then know these are areas they need to further develop or demonstrate.

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4 Induction of new staff

A good induction process builds on the positive attitude of new staff and will give out a message that your organisation supports and values its staff. It also helps individuals to settle in quickly and begin working efficiently.

Using the Community Development National Occupational Standards will provide a framework for you to focus the induction process and will help to ensure that your organisation's commitment to the CDNOS is explicit from the outset.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Develop an induction programme for new employees
- Explain job roles, job descriptions and associated duties
- Identify any knowledge and skills needs of new employees
- Plan development programmes for new employees
- Review progress regularly

What to do:

1 Develop an induction programme

If your organisation does not have an induction programme already you will need to design one. A good basic induction programme should include:

- outline of your organisational structure and background – explaining how the new employee fits into the team and how their role fits with your organisation's strategy and goals
- details of your organisation's history, activities and services, culture and values
- a clear outline of the job/role requirements and the performance expected
- tour of your building/offices – describing where the facilities are
- health and safety information – this is a legal requirement
- explanation of terms and conditions.

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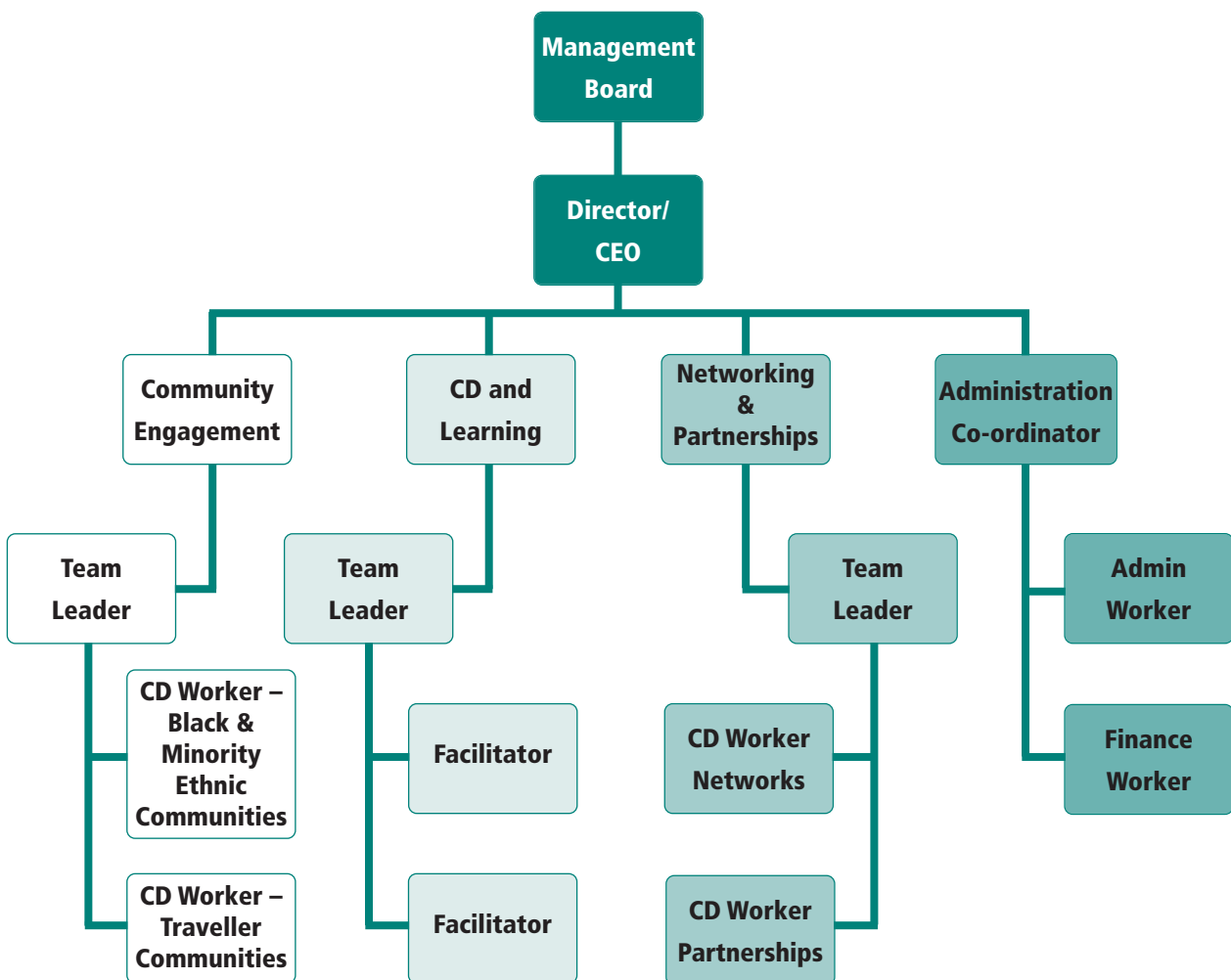
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Much of this can be carried out on the first day. However, by giving more thought to an induction programme that may run through the first week or even longer, you will help new employees get to grips with your organisation and their job more quickly and effectively. For example, the induction may include attendance at external meetings with colleagues, or spending time with colleagues in other teams, visiting projects in other communities, attending events etc.

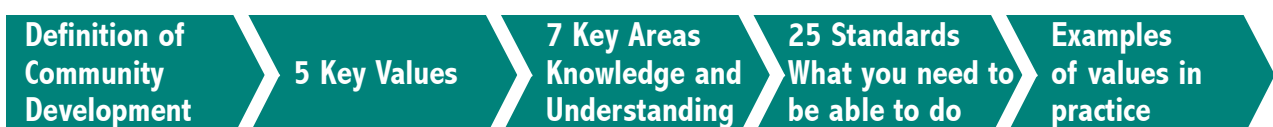
2 Organisational background and structure

It is important to provide information about the history of your organisation, membership, remit, staffing and management structures etc. This is a good opportunity to introduce new employees to the CDNOS and explain how they are used to inform your organisation’s work. Use an organisational chart to outline the organisational structure and highlight the community development roles of each team/staff member. Outline the culture and values of your organisation and link these to the key values in the CDNOS. Use the examples of values in practice to illustrate how your organisation puts the values into practice in each area of work. An example is shown below, illustrating how the CDNOS have informed the structure of the organisation, the teams and the individual roles.



3 Explain the job

As part of the induction process, give new employees a copy of their job description and copies of the relevant Key Areas and Standards within the CDNOS that relate to the specific activities of their role.



Explain the relevance of the CDNOS to them so they can understand what is expected of them and what they need to know if they are to do their job well.

4 Discuss and agree priorities

Take some time to discuss the requirements of the post and prioritise those duties and activities which are the most important in the early stages. For example, if their role involves working with specific local communities then getting to know those communities will be a key priority. Give them background on the communities in question or signpost them to where they can find the information. Use Key Area 2 of the NOS to jointly agree a timetable of activities and events that they can attend, key contacts to make etc. and where appropriate ensure they are accompanied or introduced.

Check in regularly with new employees to ensure they are content with their induction, if they have questions etc. This may be daily in the first week.

5 Identify and address immediate training needs

During discussions in the first few days and weeks, spend some time exploring how confident they are with the activities, knowledge and skills required for the role in the short term. This will help to identify any immediate development needs at an early stage. Simple conversations structured around the relevant Standards that relate to their job will help to identify any immediate needs.

Plan a development programme for each new employee to address any gaps in their skills or knowledge. Not all the gaps will need to be met by training. Perhaps shadowing a colleague, reviewing archive material and so on may be more appropriate.

5 Planning and reflecting on personal practice development

Critical reflective practice is a key element of community development and one that ideally is embedded, so that the process becomes natural and ongoing within day to day work. The Community Development National Occupational Standards can be used by practitioners to plan and reflect on how they are working to standards of good practice. This can be done individually, or collectively within teams, with peers etc. Each Key Area covers a specific function and describes what someone has to do to perform this function effectively. It is also valuable to reflect on practice in relation to the key values.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Plan and structure work, particularly new activities or projects
- Prepare a checklist to ensure the activity is being delivered in line with good practice
- Monitor practice development throughout the duration of the event, activity or project
- Evaluate performance by asking critical and probing questions
- Reflect on practice, identify areas for improvement and actions to enable this to happen

What to do:

1 Identify the relevant area of practice to reflect on

This may be a programme of work that has been undertaken or an issue/challenge that needs to be addressed/worked through.

2 Identify the relevant Key Areas and Standards within the CDNOS

If the CDNOS were used to assist with planning the programme of work this will be very straightforward. If the programme of work was planned without reference to the CDNOS, identify those which are most relevant.

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3 Reflecting on knowledge, understanding and skills within the Key Areas

By using a reflective practice process even the most skilled and experienced community development practitioners can identify areas for development.

Consider posing the following types of questions:

- To check the knowledge and understanding statements for the relevant Key Area/s.
 - What examples from your practice can you identify to demonstrate your main strengths in terms of knowledge and understanding?
 - Are there aspects of knowledge and understanding that could be further developed and enhanced?
 - How might this additional knowledge and understanding be acquired?
- To check the most appropriate Standard(s) within each identified Key Area.
 - Where do your strengths lie in terms of the skills required to carry out the activity?
 - What examples do you have?
 - Which skills do you feel need to be further developed?
 - How might these skills be learned and developed?
 - What additional support would help to improve the level of practice in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding?

4 Monitor performance

As the activity is undertaken, use the relevant statements as a checklist to keep track of progress and ensure that the Standards within the CDNOS are being adhered to. It may also be useful to review progress with a colleague or peer, perhaps focusing on the values in practice.

5 Evaluate performance

When the activity or project is completed, reflect and evaluate on your own performance. This is an important part of community development practice and should be additional to any evaluation processes that seek feedback from participants.

Reflective learning is a process of asking open and probing questions that lead to insight and learning about oneself, which in turn informs future practice, as the following diagram illustrates:



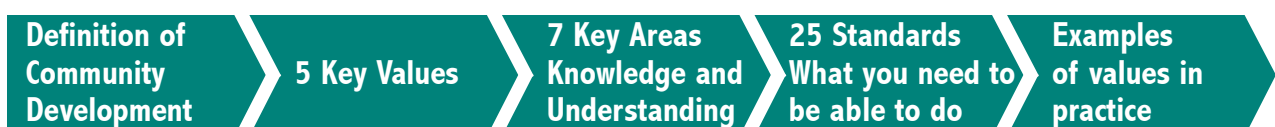
Exploring the following questions will help you to gain insight into your community development practice. You could also use them to work through a particular issue or challenge that you are trying to address:

Helping you to gain insight into your community development practice	
Action, Issue or Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name/describe the piece of work, issue or challenge When did it take place? What was the purpose? Who was involved? What took place?
Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were your thoughts and feelings about this piece of work/issue during and after it took place?
Evaluation and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What went well and why? What were the success factors? What did not go so well/could have been better and why? What were the barriers/inhibitors to success and why? How were the CDNOS used to help undertake this activity? How were the values put into practice in relation to this activity?
Conclusions and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What else could you or others have done? What do you know now that is new learning about yourself and your practice? What personal development or training would contribute to improving/enhancing practice in relation to this activity in the future?
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What could/should be done differently next time and how?

Often it is useful to carry out this reflective process of evaluation with other colleagues/peers. Reflecting on practice in this way offers different perspectives on the work/activity, issues involved and potential solutions. Peer group reflection often enables the process to go 'deeper' because it is explored through different 'lenses'. This in turn can lead to the development of more creative and innovative practice in response to a challenge or need identified.

If the activity was carried out by a team of people, a collective reflective process will help to explore how the team worked together as well as get different perspectives on what worked well etc.

Other ways to monitor personal performance and enhance own learning include reflecting on practice through the use of a Reflective Log. This could be structured around the Values in Practice in relation to the specific activity that has been undertaken.



6 Managing performance – supervision and staff appraisal

The Community Development National Occupational Standards can be used to help you manage the performance of employees. Performance management brings together a range of activities and is part of a bigger process tied into the overall aims and strategic work plan of your organisation. The first section of this guide explores how to use the CDNOS to develop strategic objectives, work plans and related activities.

The elements of performance management can be summarised in the diagram below.



CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Agree SMART objectives for each member of staff
- Identify the relevant Key Areas and specific standards for each objective
- Identify appropriate support mechanisms required for staff to achieve their objectives
- Encourage members of staff to use the CDNOS to plan their work and reflect on their practice performance
- Ensure appraisal processes are fair, objective and beneficial
- Provide constructive and specific feedback, focused on continuous improvement in standards and performance

What to do:

1 Agree objectives

Each team and individual staff member should be working towards objectives that are consistent with the organisation's strategic objectives and operational plan. At this level objectives should be SMART and focus on the specific results that each member of staff is expected to achieve.

If the CDNOS have already been used to develop your organisation's strategic objectives, team objectives and individual job descriptions, the process of agreeing individual objectives will be quite straightforward.

If the CDNOS are being introduced here for the first time, it will be important to explore and become more familiar with them, and build connections with existing objectives. In this way a new or revised set of objectives for each staff member can be developed that are compatible with existing organisational strategy whilst still being informed by the CDNOS.

2 Identify relevant Standards from the CDNOS

Identify which of the Key Areas, and within them which specific Standards, are relevant to each objective.

During discussions:

- explore and ensure a shared understanding of the objectives
- jointly plan how the objectives will be achieved
- specify the standard of performance required to achieve each objective
- discuss and agree the types of evidence that can be used to demonstrate that the objectives have been met – this can also be used for monitoring and evaluation.

3 Agree the support required to achieve the objectives

This may vary and possibly be a combination of forms of support. For example, it may be training or skills development, information gathering/research, coaching or mentoring. Whatever is agreed should be put in place to allow the employee to develop and feel they are supported to carry out their duties effectively.

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4 Undertake activities to the agreed standards

Encourage employees to use the CDNOS to plan their activities and programmes of work as discussed in the previous section, decide on working methods and review their own performance over time.

Regular review/supervision meetings provide further opportunities to use the CDNOS to review progress, discuss any issues arising and agree work plan and targets for the coming period.

5 Appraising performance

By this stage you should have in place:

- clear objectives
- agreed standards of performance
- identified mechanisms for evidencing satisfactory performance
- regular supervision/review meetings to ensure progress towards achieving objectives, and dealing with issues/barriers that might arise.

The appraisal meeting, which often takes place on an annual basis, will review objectives, targets and achievements over the year and take a bigger picture approach than the detail of interim supervision meetings. If the performance management process has been working well through the year, the appraisal should hold no surprises.

It is good practice to have a standard process for conducting appraisals, with a recording form that is linked to the individual's work plan, drawn from the CDNOS Key Areas and specific Standards. Review the achievements of the previous year and use the CDNOS again at this stage to agree objectives for the coming year.

6 Giving feedback

The statements of knowledge, understanding and skills contained within the CDNOS provide a specific focus for giving feedback to staff about their performance. Having agreed in advance the types of evidence that will demonstrate achievement and performance to the required standard, the information gathered can be used to determine what was effective, what could have been better, and what still needs to be done to raise standards of performance.

Praise and positive feedback on good performance provides strong motivation, and will fuel enthusiasm and creativity. However, if things have not gone as planned, it may not necessarily be the fault of the member of staff. External constraints or contexts may have influenced or impeded outcomes. This makes it all the more important to explore the practice issues together with factual evidence. Structuring feedback around the CDNOS statements keeps the focus on the role and what is required to meet that and achieve the performance required.

7 Identifying learning and development needs

The Community Development National Occupational Standards can be used to help identify learning and development needs. The statements of knowledge, understanding and what a community development practitioner needs to be able to do within each Key Area provide clear and concise indicators for performance. By examining each of these in turn, they can be used to identify areas where performance needs to be improved, new knowledge acquired and skills and abilities further developed. Customised learning plans can be developed for each individual, to maximise the benefit to both the individual and your organisation.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Recognise, value and praise existing good standards of performance and endeavour
- Encourage staff members to engage in personal review and reflection
- Assess current performance and practice
- Assess and prioritise learning and development needs
- Agree clear learning outcomes
- Consider individuals' preferred learning styles and the full range of learning methods

What to do:

1 Identify the Key Areas and Standards to be used for assessing learning and development needs

The assessment process may be quite general and be simply to look at each Standard within the seven Key Areas; or if a particular area of practice is being assessed it may be more appropriate to identify the elements most closely linked to the individual's role. Draw out the specific areas of knowledge, understanding and skills against which to make the assessment.

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2 Assess current performance

Use the Standards and statements to assess how members of staff are currently performing. This can be carried out in a number of different ways, for example, devise a questionnaire which lists the relevant Standards (or specific statements if a particular area of practice is being assessed) and then assess/score. An example is given below:

Key Area 3: Take a community development approach to group work and collective action			
Knowledge and understanding	High level	Average level	Low level
The context			
Setting common goals			
Group dynamics and processes			
Community organising			
Conflict within communities			
Campaigning			

The Standards within KA3			
The Standards	High level performance	Average level performance	Low level performance
9. Support inclusive and collective working through CD practice			
10. Organise community events and activities			
11. Respond to community conflict			
12. Support communities to campaign for change			

In assessing these areas of practice reference to the detail within each Standard will be important for the fullest assessment to be undertaken.

Other methods of assessment could include:

- peer review opportunities such as Action Learning Sets
- observation of members of staff at work
- self-reflection on practice thus engaging staff in ownership of their own learning.

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If performance is less than required, clarifying the reasons why will help you to jointly identify the best learning and development approach to take to meet the gaps.

3 Set learning outcomes

Once the areas for further development have been identified, agree some clear learning outcomes. Each learning outcome should state in specific and measurable terms what the person will know or be able to do as a result of engaging in the learning activity.

Examples of learning outcomes based on aspects of Key Area 3:

1. Participants will be able to explain the impact of transient and changing populations on groups (KA3.13)
2. Participants will be able to demonstrate how to make contact with people who are concerned about their community (KA3 S9.2)
3. Participants will be able to support groups to plan a campaign (KA3 S12.7)

4 Decide on learning requirements and methods

Having agreed the learning outcomes the next step is to identify what are the most suitable learning methods. These will be dependent on a number of factors:

- The learning outcomes identified
- Available resources (money, time, information/materials, etc)
- Is individual or group learning required? (Has the area for development been identified for a number of staff or just one?)
- People's preferred learning styles
- Whether there is a requirement for the learning to be accredited

Consider the range of methods available, for example:

- Action learning (working on real issues with colleagues in a structured way)
- Coaching or mentoring
- Conferences/workshops/seminars
- Courses (programmes of study and learning perhaps at a college or university)
- E-learning or computer-based learning
- Experiential learning (learning by doing in a supported way)
- Open learning or distance learning course
- Private research/study
- Professional non-line management supervision
- Project work
- Secondments (working for a time in another department or organisation)
- Training courses either on site or off. This may involve negotiating with a training provider to develop a customised training course for staff
- Work based learning – for example the Community Development Recognition Scheme
- Work shadowing (observing how more experienced colleagues perform over time).

8 Designing and delivering programmes of learning and development

The Community Development National Occupational Standards explicitly set out the standards of performance required and also specify the knowledge, understanding and skills needed in order to work to these Standards. Using the CDNOS to shape community development learning ensures that it is clearly designed to meet performance requirements. Furthermore, as the CDNOS cover the breadth of the community development occupational area, working to them ensures that the full range of knowledge, understanding and skills are being addressed.

In addition to using the CDNOS to inform the design and delivery of learning, you may also need to refer to the current guidance or standards which outline what is expected of learning providers.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Determine the overall aim and learning outcomes
- Design learning programme content
- Identify appropriate methods of delivery
- Effectively deliver learning programmes
- Assess learning that has taken place
- Evaluate learning programmes

What to do:

1 Determine the aim and learning outcomes

Use the CDNOS to state the overall aim and identify the desired results from the learning activities.

The aim is the overall purpose of the learning being undertaken. For example, the overall aim of a learning programme focusing on the development of knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to Key Area 6 could be:

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'To develop competence in the provision of Community Development Support to Organisations'.

(Derived from title of Key Area 6)

The programme would then include learning outcomes derived from the relevant Standards within that Key Area, such as:

At the end of the learning programme, participants will be able to advise on organisational structures using community development perspectives.

(Key Area 6, Standard 19)

By the end of their learning, participants will need to have had access to opportunities to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to meet the outcome and be able to apply these in a supported and supervised way until they are competent in this area.

At the end of theory based learning relating to this outcome, participants will need to have acquired the relevant knowledge and understanding set out in Key Area 6.

At the end of practical learning, participants should have had the opportunity to develop the skills set out in Standard 19 (What community development practitioners need to be able to do).

After a period of supervised practice, participants should have developed their competence and consistently be able to perform the activity in line with the statements of effective performance as set out in the CDNOS.

2 Design the programme – content

Design the training or development programme to meet the learning outcomes required, taking into account preferred learning styles and differing abilities, and the resources available. The statements of required knowledge, understanding and skills contained within the relevant Key Areas and Standards will provide the focus for the content/syllabus of the learning programme.

For example, in relation to the learning programme above, content may include consideration of:

- democratic structures
- ways of organising
- legal matters
- resources and finance
- project management
- participative and collective evaluation and monitoring.

3 Identify appropriate methods of delivery

There might be a number of different learning or development activities required to meet the learning outcomes in full. Factors such as preferred learning styles, differing abilities and available resources may influence choice of methods. Above all, it is important to ensure the choice of teaching/learning method is appropriate to support achievement of the learning outcome. A programme could involve one or more of the following:

- Background reading on the area

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- Tutor input – lectures/presentations
- Tutorials and workshops
- Simulated activities to practise skills and develop confidence
- Supervised placement practice under the guidance of a competent professional
- Group work with others to reflect, discuss and learn from experiences
- Assessment of competence against the CDNOS through observation, a personal report and additional evidence
- E-learning or distance learning
- Coaching or mentoring.

4 Deliver the programme

Ensure that the training or development programme is delivered according to the agreed plan. Ensure the programme is flexible enough to respond to changing needs/contexts as the programme progresses.

Ensure that the necessary support, guidance and resources are made available to participants to underpin the delivery of learning.

5 Assess the learning that has taken place

The assessment of learning allows you to determine if learning is taking place and whether the programme is achieving its aim. For this reason all learning should be assessed whether it is accredited or not. If a programme is accredited by an awarding body, assessment will be formalised, it will require evidence of learning and may be externally verified. Non accredited programmes may not require the same level of formality, but nonetheless will require some evidence upon which to base the assessment. Assessment might be done by:

- the individual engaging in a process of reflection
- an in-depth discussion between the trainer/provider and the individual
- a questionnaire to see how much information has been acquired
- assessed pieces of work – coursework, projects, papers
- a test or exam (in cases where this is appropriate)
- observation of practice.

6 Evaluation of learning

All programmes of learning and development should be evaluated. Short programmes may simply be evaluated at the end, but programmes of any significant duration should also be monitored at regular intervals to ensure good progress towards learning outcomes and participant satisfaction.

Using the CDNOS to support the evaluation of learning and development is covered in more detail in the next section.

NOTE: Accreditation of learning

If there is a requirement for accreditation of the learning programme, it is advisable to make contact with the awarding body at the earliest possible stage to ensure the programme meets with their requirements. There is now a requirement that community development qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework are mapped to the CDNOS 2009.⁷

In England, the England Standards Board (ESB) provides a peer-based endorsement process for community development work learning – courses and work-based programmes – at all levels. Criteria for endorsement are based on the CDNOS.⁸ There may be other specialist community development endorsing processes in the other jurisdictions.

⁷ www.qcda.gov.uk

⁸ www.esbendorsement.org.uk



9 Evaluating learning and development

The statements of knowledge, understanding and skills contained within the Community Development National Occupational Standards offer clear objectives and outcomes for learning programmes. These statements can be used for assessing learners and also provide a structure for evaluating the effectiveness of training and development activities.

Those involved in evaluating training and development should also refer to the current guidance or framework relating to learning and development.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Measure current levels of performance, knowledge, understanding and skills
- Define the objectives and outcomes of learning programmes
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the learning/development
- Assess the impact of the learning on individual work practice and performance
- Assess the impact of the learning on organisational objectives

What to do:

1 Measure current levels of performance, knowledge, understanding and skills

Previous sections have already suggested some ways in which to do this, using the CDNOS. The advantage of doing this is that it provides a benchmark upon which to measure and assess progress after the learning and development activity has taken place.

2 Evaluate effectiveness of the learning activity

At the end of a learning programme or activity it is important to find out the learner's response to it. There are various ways of doing this, depending on the type of learning opportunity.

The most common approach to this is through completion of an evaluation form or discussion/feedback at the end of the learning/development programme. This will normally seek feedback on:

- extent to which learning outcomes (derived from the CDNOS) have been met

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- the presentation techniques
- appropriateness of methods and suitability to preferred learning styles
- how well topics were covered
- usefulness/value of the learning
- how the learning will be used within the work context.

With other types of development opportunities it might be more appropriate to:

- have a brief discussion with the member of staff
- complete an online questionnaire for an e-learning programme
- write a report after a conference or seminar.

3 Assess the impact of learning on the individual's work/practice performance

In addition to checking how much individuals have learned it is also appropriate to assess how the learning programme has helped learners to improve their performance in the workplace in terms of what they do, as well as what they know.

Refer back to the prior assessment of their knowledge and abilities before the learning activity took place. A repeat assessment can be done to determine the impact of the learning on performance, or alternatively observation or reflective practice process can be used to measure the impact on performance.

4 Assess the impact of the learning on the organisational objectives

The impact of the learning and development on organisational objectives can be measured by the changes in the working environment.

It is important to ensure that there are ways for employees to bring back and embed the learning from training or development programmes they have participated in, even attendance at conferences. An effective way to do this is to discuss and agree what has been gained in terms of learning outcomes and examine how that can inform work plan objectives and ultimately practice.

For example, if following a programme of training/development staff are more competent to *Use different techniques to make contact with relevant people and groups* (Key Area 2, Standard 6.1). This should result in a wider range of people and groups from different backgrounds becoming aware of, and potentially involved in, the work of the organisation and benefiting from that involvement. In turn, this wider involvement will promote the work of the organisation and build further community support and confidence, all of which may also contribute to other organisational objectives.



10 Building organisational commitment to quality and performance

One of the long-term uses of the Community Development National Occupational Standards is to support the development of organisational ethos and culture, commitment to quality and performance and to the values of community development.

The first section in this guide looks at strategic planning. Within any strategic plan, the organisation will set out its vision and mission. By working to the CDNOS, you can ensure you are enshrining the values of community development and aligning your vision and mission with the stated key purpose of community development. Doing so will make a clear and purposeful statement (internally and externally) of what your organisation is about and how it intends to go about its work.

By using the CDNOS across your organisation to assess and improve the performance of individuals, your organisation will be more likely to assure quality across its processes and in its work. Put simply, this can be illustrated by the following diagram:



CHECKLIST**Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to**

- Make a public commitment to raising organisational quality, standards and staff performance
- State organisational commitment to the key purpose and values of community development
- Specify any quality assurance systems to implement within the organisation
- Ensure quality assurance systems are compatible with the CDNOS
- Ensure a consistent approach to raising quality and standards
- Encourage commitment to the cycle of continuous reflection and improvement, both individually and collectively
- Regularly monitor individual and organisational performance to ensure it is in line with quality standards

What to do:**1 Make an organisational commitment to raising quality and standards**

Be clear, open and transparent about your organisation's intentions to continuously raise quality, standards and performance. This commitment needs to have support at the most senior level, i.e. board/management committee level.

Beyond giving this clear message from the start, embedding the Community Development National Occupational Standards can help to foster a positive organisational culture and commitment to improving quality and standards.

2 If appropriate identify an organisational quality assurance system⁹

If this is a new development for your organisation consider the following questions:

- Does the quality assurance system consider the specific development of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the staff?
- Is the system compatible with the CDNOS?
- How could working to the CDNOS support these quality systems?

Agree how the CDNOS should be used to support organisational quality systems.

3 Make sure people know the Standards to which they should be working

Ensure all staff know and understand why they are working to the CDNOS and that they:

- work consistently to the CDNOS

⁹ Investors in People, ISO9001:2000, PQASSO

- embed the values of community development within their practice
- have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills and can plan their development if they do not already possess them
- reflect on their work individually and with colleagues/peers.

This 'normalisation' process will lead to the language, terminology and understanding of the CDNOS becoming part of the organisation's culture.

4 Monitor performance

Check to make sure people are performing to the Standards. This can be done through the organisation's normal processes of staff supervision and appraisal.

5 Recognise and value good performance and behaviours that meet the Standards

This will raise morale and motivation and provide role models of good practice for other members of staff. It may also be appropriate to consider validating or rewarding good performance through APEL schemes, linking performance to pay and progression or simply, but importantly, celebratory events.



11 Working in partnership and teams

Many organisations involved in community development will work in partnership with a range of other agencies and statutory services, such as councils, health providers, schools and colleges, social services, the police and government departments. Increasingly, voluntary groups and organisations are representing the sector on large area wide partnerships making significant decisions about the delivery of services and allocation of resources. This is in addition to the breadth of other voluntary and community sector organisations they may work with.

The Community Development National Occupational Standards provide a framework and common language for working in partnerships and teams and open up further opportunities for collaboration. They also provide a clear and unambiguous description of what community development is, the values that underpin it and the range of appropriate methods and approaches to use.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to

- Establish common standards of performance within each partnership/team
- Audit the capacity of all partners
- Promote joint learning and development activities with partners
- Ensure common and consistent arrangements for assessing learning across the partner agencies
- Monitor and evaluate the performance in partnerships/teams

What to do:

1 Agree a common understanding of community development

This is very important as, too often, the term 'community development' has been used by different people to mean different things. Be clear that community development is a recognised occupational field of work in its own right, with its own National Occupational Standards.

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Explore and discuss the values of community development, again ensuring there is clear and common understanding. The summary of the Community Development National Occupational Standards 2009 is a very useful document to use for this purpose.¹⁰

2 Agree common standards of working/performance

In a partnership/team, it is important that the standards of performance are clearly stated and agreed by all. The CDNOS offer a clear and concise way of describing what is expected of staff working within the partnership/team. Key Area 4 focuses specifically on Community Development Approaches to Collaborative and Cross-sectoral Working. This Key Area thus provides clear guidance and structure on objectively measuring performance in relation to partnership working.

When agreeing roles within the partnership, specify the Standards, particularly but not exclusively within Key Area 4, to which people should be working.

3 Audit the knowledge/skills of the partnership/teams

It is important to know whether the partnership/team has the capacity to meet its objectives. All teams need a range of roles to be fulfilled and a variety of skills, knowledge and experience. Use the CDNOS to assess staff and build up an overview of the strengths of the partnership/team and also identify areas for development to meet objectives that would otherwise not be met. This may also identify areas where others with specialist skills or expertise need to be recruited.

This audit can also be used to prioritise training and development for the partnership/team as a whole.

4 Develop joint learning arrangements

Organise joint learning and development based on CDNOS to meet learning objectives that partners/team members have in common.

There are several benefits to joint learning and development arrangements including:

- sharing of costs – maximising available resources
- strengthening of funding applications as multiple needs are met
- cost-effective use of training resources
- broadening experience and opportunities for individuals
- better understanding of different organisations' aims and values at individual and partnership/team levels
- team building
- widening network of contacts.

However, it may also be necessary to put in place learning and development programmes for individual members.

¹⁰ www.fcsl.org/about-fcsl/community-development

5 Share assessment arrangements

If people are working to common standards, it is important that their performance is assessed in a common and consistent way, whether the assessment is for formal qualifications or for quality assurance of the partnership/team as a whole. Develop common protocols and techniques for assessment across the organisations involved in the partnership.

6 Establish common criteria for monitoring and evaluating performance

Partnership agreements need to specify the roles each partner will play and the outcomes expected. Outcomes may be expressed in quantifiable terms, e.g. the number of events held or the number of referrals made etc. They can also be expressed in qualitative terms and specify the quality of performance expected from the people involved.

The CDNOS can offer a concise and consistent way to express outcomes. For example, staff should *use a community development approach to support collaborative and partnership working*. (Standard 15)

Use the statements of knowledge, understanding and skills to frame the criteria for monitoring the progress of partnerships and evaluating whether outcomes have achieved the required quality.

12 Working with groups

National Occupational Standards are primarily designed for use in employment, as they relate to occupational fields of work. Having said that, the CDNOS essentially set out what is considered to be good practice in community development and they are therefore relevant in both paid and voluntary contexts.

Much community development activity is carried out by groups whose members are working on a voluntary basis. Some groups will be newly formed with members who are perhaps also new to community development. Other groups will be more advanced and experienced. They may be members of a Management Committee, and may also be employers. If the group does employ staff, all the previous sections in this guide are still highly relevant.

You can also use the CDNOS as a resource to support group development in every area of their activity, as well as for all the purposes outlined in this guide so far (where they apply to the group).

The following areas are also relevant to supporting groups, but are not exhaustive and are not intended to be prescriptive. Each group is different and it is important to value what they have achieved as the starting point for exploring any development. Look on the FCDL website for ideas and resources on using the CDNOS that you can use or adapt.

CHECKLIST

Use the Community Development National Occupational Standards to help the group

- Agree the key purpose of community development and the underpinning values
- Identify the needs of the community and operate in an inclusive way
- Work together effectively to take collective action
- Work strategically through networking and collaborative working practices
- Encourage and utilise collective learning from shared experiences
- Establish appropriate and effective working practices and structures

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What to do:

1 Agree a common understanding of community development

This is very important. Too often, the term 'community development' has been used in reference to a wide variety of activity, some of which is not community development as defined by the CDNOS. It is particularly important that community group members have a common understanding, and that this is communicated to the community they are engaging with.

Write the definition of community development from the CDNOS out on flip-chart or hand it out on sheets of paper.

Invite people to share what community development means to them, ask them to make connections between what they see as the purpose of their group and the definition from the CDNOS.

Highlight the connections, and where appropriate, explore further any differences.



Newer groups in particular may also find it useful to look at the terms used in the glossary¹¹ as this sets out a wide range of terms that are used within the community development field and which groups will benefit from being familiar with.

Key Area 1 is core to all community development practice. It sets out the fundamentals of good community development at all levels and in all contexts. You could use Key Area 1 to facilitate a discussion about the values of community development, again ensuring there is clear and common understanding. The summary of the 2009 Community Development National Occupational Standards is a very useful document to use for this purpose.¹²

To make the connections between the values and their own community development activity, encourage groups to consider:

- a) How the values are reflected in their community development activity*
- b) What challenges they experience in putting the values into practice*
- c) What would help them to put the values at the heart of their community development activity*



2 Identify the needs of the community and work inclusively

Just as you, as a community development practitioner, need to know and understand the diverse and complex nature of communities, so it is important that community group members have a knowledge and understanding of their own communities. The Standards in Key Area 1 and Key Area 2 could be used to help groups to explore and develop understanding about the dynamics within their communities. It isn't necessary to hand out copies of the Standards, you could use a variety of creative and participative ways to pose questions which are informed by the Standards.

¹¹ Pages 14-23 in the full National Occupational Standards for Community Development 2009

¹² www.fcdl.org/about-fcdl/community-development

For example drawing on Key Area 1, Standard 3, you could facilitate a discussion framed around the following types of questions:

- a) What do we know about the make-up and circumstances of communities within this area?*
- b) What can we do to find out the realities experienced by the different communities in our area?*
- c) How can we begin to establish relationships with the different communities?*



Exploring these kinds of questions will help community groups to ensure their activities are based upon real needs and issues informed by the diverse views and experiences of the community.

3 Work together effectively to take collective action

The focus on collective action is central to community development practice. But it doesn't happen just because a group of people are in the room together. Effective collective action requires time, effort and a range of knowledge, understanding and skills.

Often the focus of community group activity involves planning and organising events or sometimes ongoing projects or campaigns. Key Area 3 sets out the range of knowledge, understanding and skills involved in organising for collective action.

For example, you could use Key Area 3, Standard 10 to:

- *develop a simple checklist that groups could use as they plan each of their events or activities*
- *ensure that the values are informing the planning process, by considering the examples of values in practice for Standard 10.*



4 Work strategically through networking and collaborative working practices

Strategic thinking is not just for planners and policy makers. Strategy is about having a plan to achieve a purpose, and most community groups have a plan of some kind that might range from a common understanding through to a lengthy document.

However, sometimes groups can need support to make connections between what they are doing within a wider context. It is highly likely that for many groups, the achievement of their goals and objectives will be more effective if they have good, productive working relationships with other groups and agencies, within both the public and voluntary/community sectors.

To support groups to make these kinds of connections you could use Key Area 4, Standard 13 to work with groups to develop a plan for engaging with public bodies.

For example, a group wishing to develop an environmental project may need to consider the following:

- a) Which public bodies have a remit for environmental issues?
- b) What do we know about them and how are decisions made?
- c) What contact/experience has anyone in the group had of these agencies and what was it like?
- d) What do we want to achieve from working with them, and what can we offer as the benefits of working with us?
- e) What other information and support do we need and where can we get it?



Key Area 4, Standard 15 focuses on networking and collaboration between community groups and voluntary organisations. Networking and collaboration are important elements of community development activity and help establish common aims, the sharing of resources, maximisation of assets and skills and the ability to present a strong and united position on common issues and concerns.

To support groups to explore the potential for networking and collaboration you could use Standard 15 to devise a mapping activity such as the one below. The questions used in the example are simply a starting point. You can design and customise the questions using Standard 15 as a guide.

If the groups you are working with are interested in establishing partnership projects, you may also find it useful to refer to Key Area 6, Standard 22.



5 Encourage and utilise collective learning from shared experience

Collective experience and shared learning are very powerful aspects of community development practice. Engaging in community development is a learning experience in itself. In working with groups it is important to facilitate the process of informal learning and to encourage reflection. In this way the learning from the experience can be used to inform and enhance how the group works and the activities it is engaged in.

You could use Key Area 5 Standard 18, to devise a simple checklist to help groups plan new activities and projects. Focus on the good practice and strengths the group is already demonstrating. For example, the group that is developing an environmental project may need to enhance their knowledge and skills in this area to be fully effective:

- *You could start by establishing members' existing skills and knowledge (S18.6)*
- *Discuss and agree how these can be shared among the group using appropriate methods (S18.8)*
- *Generate ideas about the gaps that exist within the group's collective experience and how these can be met (S18.5 and S18.3)*



6 Establish appropriate and effective working practices and structures

Much community development activity is undertaken on a voluntary basis by community groups whose members are giving of their own time. However, there is still a strong expectation and in many cases now, a requirement, that the group conducts its activities in an open and accountable manner, in accordance with a range of legal requirements.

Good governance has a significant impact on both the efficiency and effectiveness of community development activity. This is true even in the simplest of ways such as having a valid constitution, or other appropriate governing document, keeping minutes of meetings, basic accounts of money in and out, details of membership etc.

This is an area where the CDNOS can be particularly beneficial to groups, as they set out within the Standards, what is considered as good practice for community development organising.

You could adapt (simplify and customise) the knowledge and understanding statements in Key Area 6 to create a mini Governance Review for use with groups. These could be in the form of a members' questionnaire or on flip chart for group discussion or on topic cards and explored in small groups.

You could ask members to rate their agreement level – strongly agree, mostly agree etc to gauge the extent of satisfaction.

Ideas could then be generated around how to improve the structures and procedures etc in order to improve the working of the group and produce an agreed plan of action that the group can work towards.



It is important to remember that development of this kind takes time. If there are a number of groups in the area exploring similar themes, they may benefit from coming together to share ideas and learn from each others' experiences.

Sharing CDNOS resources for work with groups

Using the CDNOS to inform your work with groups is one of the best ways to embed them not only within your own practice, but also within that of the groups you work with. There is no right or wrong way to do this, there are many ways. It is up to you to decide on the most appropriate way to use the CDNOS with the groups you work with because you know them best. By breaking things down into small chunks of activity and using creative exercises that get people talking, sharing and generating ideas you will be able to introduce aspects of the CDNOS in easy, accessible ways.

If you want to introduce the concept of the CDNOS as a whole, but in a more visual and accessible way, you could introduce them using the CDNOS tree diagram poster. You could make your own tree on paper or cloth to put up on the wall, big enough for people to stick their own issues and actions on the different parts. As you create your own activities and resources for using the CDNOS to support work with groups, add them to the FCDL website, so that other practitioners can use them too.

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13 Promoting the Community Development National Occupational Standards

Community Development National Occupational Standards have existed since the mid 1990s. Despite this, there is no specific organisation tasked with promoting and disseminating the CDNOS and there are many organisations and practitioners who are still unaware of them. Promoting the CDNOS is an important task for all those who use and value them. In essence, practitioners who work to the CDNOS are also CDNOS champions and advocates.

This is equally applicable to a community development practitioner seeking to make others within her/his organisation aware of the CDNOS, to a national organisation raising the awareness of the occupation within other statutory agencies or even government departments.

This short section offers some ideas on how to promote the CDNOS in day to day practice, in order to raise awareness and understanding of what community development is, the values that underpin it and what constitutes good community development practice.

What to do:

The suggestions below can be undertaken by individual practitioners and by organisations:

1. Use the 4-page CDNOS summary and the tree diagram poster¹³ to prompt discussion and promote awareness and understanding with colleagues, in meetings, events etc
2. Take copies of the summary and tree diagram to events/conferences, distribute and ensure that participants are aware that they are available
3. Use the definition within the CDNOS to bring clarity and understanding of what community development is/is not in discussions with other practitioners/organisations
4. Use the values to illustrate what is distinct about community development approaches to work with communities
5. Add a statement in the organisation's promotional materials, annual reports etc demonstrating commitment to the CDNOS
6. Upload information about the NOS onto the organisation's website, including details of how the organisation uses the CDNOS

¹³ Both available from www.fcsl.org.uk

7. Put up web links to other organisations promoting, using and sharing practice in relation to using the CDNOS
8. Ask other organisations to promote the CDNOS on their websites
9. Host workshops/events on the CDNOS to raise awareness, encourage reflective practice and raising standards
10. Refer to and use the CDNOS in work with groups and volunteers to raise awareness within communities about the CDNOS
11. Inform the Federation for Community Development Learning about the actions being taken to promote the CDNOS so that ideas can be shared with other practitioners

This list of suggestions is by no means exhaustive. There are over 100 uses of Community Development National Occupational Standards and ultimately using them is a means of promotion in itself. However, promotion also needs to be active and explicit in order to reach those unfamiliar with the CDNOS. The Community Development National Occupational Standards are robust and have longevity. They have been developed in consultation with hundreds of practitioners across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and provide a commonly agreed guiding framework for community development practice across the UK.

All practitioners should welcome, embrace and embed the CDNOS, because they recognise, validate and give credence to community development practice as a professional occupational field of work. For this reason, all who use the CDNOS should also seek to champion, advocate for and promote the Community Development National Occupational Standards.

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Links to other organisations using and promoting the CDNOS

England

Federation for Community Development Learning	www.fcld.org.uk
Community Development Foundation	www.cdf.org.uk
Community Development Exchange	www.cdx.org.uk
England Standards Board	www.esbendorsement.org.uk

Scotland

Community Development Alliance Scotland	www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org
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Wales

Community Development Cymru	www.cdcmru.org
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Northern Ireland

The organisations below are all members of the Community Work Education and Training Network (CWETN), an informal network of community development training and learning providers.

Community Change	www.communitychange-ni.org
Rural Community Network	www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org
Ulster Peoples' College	www.ulsterpeoplescollege.org.uk
Workers Education Association	www.wea-ni.com
NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)	www.nicva.org
University of Ulster	www.ulster.ac.uk
Queens University Belfast	www.qub.ac.uk

Belfast Metropolitan College

www.belfastmet.ac.uk

Anna Clarke, Learning for Change Consultancy

www.annaclarke.net

Republic of Ireland

UK National Occupational Standards are not valid in the Republic of Ireland. However, in recent years members of the CWETN from Northern Ireland and community work practitioners from the Republic of Ireland have come together on an all-Ireland basis to explore standards in community work. In 2009 *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work, An All Ireland Statement of Values, Principles and Work Standards* was produced and published. This followed extensive consultation with the community development field across the island of Ireland.

Copies of Towards Standards can be obtained from the Community Workers Co-operative www.cwc.ie

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ISBN 978-1-904111-25-2

Federation for Community Development Learning
3rd Floor, The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Telephone: 0114 253 6770
www.fcdl.org.uk

