

Key Areas and Standards for Community Development Practice

The National Occupational Standards for Community Development Practice consist of seven key areas that between them contain 25 standards. Key Area 1, **Understand and practise community development**, underpins all the other six key areas. They identify the roles that community development practitioners adopt within the process and outline the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to carry out the roles.

Key Area 1: Core 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

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.

A Summary of the National Occupational Standards for Community Development Practice

What is community development practice?

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 communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part.

What are the Standards?

The National Occupational Standards outline clearly the skills, values and processes required for effective and appropriate community development practice. We need to use these Standards with confidence to argue for values and processes to be integral to the work.

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

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

Key Values

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

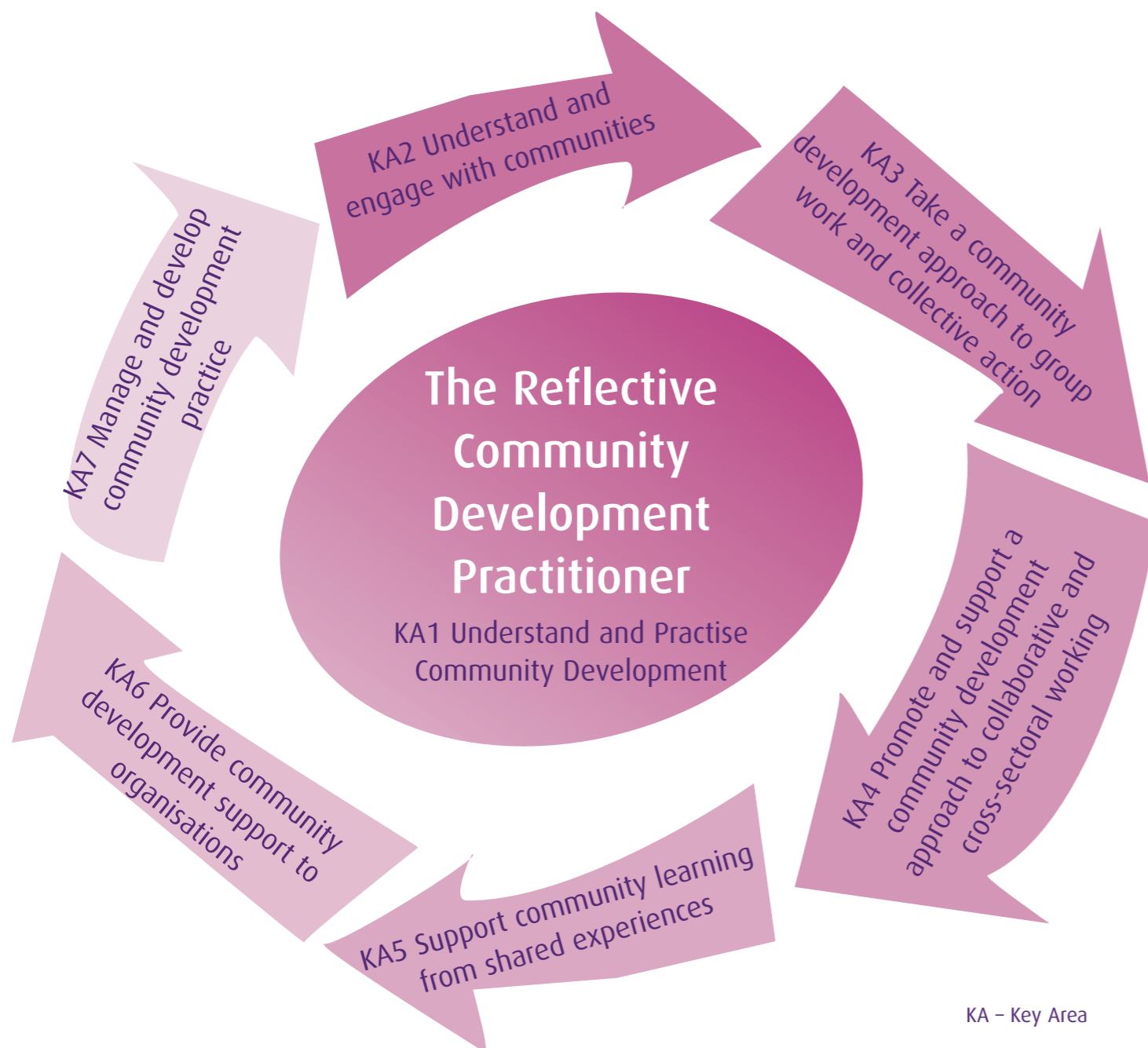
- Equality and Anti-discrimination
- Social justice
- Collective action
- Community empowerment
- Working and learning together.

The National Occupational Standards support

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

The Reflective Community Development Practitioner

In community development practice the HOW and WHY, the PRACTICE and PROCESS are key to the work. Central to this is the reflective practitioner. The reflective practitioner regularly reviews how the values underpin, inform and are present within their community development practice.



Key values

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.

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
- 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.