

Community Cohesion Proofing Tool



Local
Definition

"Community Cohesion is about different communities, individuals, groups and agencies talking to each other to find common ground where they respect difference so that they may more powerfully engage with each other to improve everyone's life."

National
Definition

A cohesive community is one where:

- **there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for communities.**
- **the diversity of people's different backgrounds & circumstances are appreciated & positively valued;**
- **those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and**
- **strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.**

What is Community? People have their own definitions. For the purposes of this document the term community means communities of interest and takes into account:

Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, Care Leavers, Carers, Children, Disabled People, Faith Groups, Gay & Lesbian, Geographical Communities, Homeless People, Older People, People with Learning Disabilities, People on Low Income, People with Literacy & Numeracy Problems, People with Mental Health Problems, People with Other Health Issues, Prisoners and Ex-offenders, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Residents Living in Areas of Multiple Deprivation, Substance Users, Travellers, Unemployed People, Young People. (This list is not exhaustive and is listed in alphabetical order)

What do we mean by Cohesion? Cohesion affects everyone. It is about all communities, not just those from Black & Minority Ethnic Communities. Because of this it requires collective ownership.

Cohesion cannot be forced. But the process can be hastened by taking into account issues of equality and by making sure there is a fair and even distribution of resources, relevant to individual and community need.

Community Cohesion includes equalities, access and inclusion and is the means by which all three of these areas can be addressed.

Why do we need a Proofing Tool? People have different ways of responding to each other and this influences how people work together. Agencies from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors also have different approaches. This tool shows the value of considering the implications for community cohesion when planning your service delivery to allow for these and to maximise positive impact.

Purpose

What is the Proofing Tool for? *The Community Cohesion Action Group* of the Gloucester Partnership and the Gloucester Challenging Attitudes Partnership was asked to design this tool to help partners build community cohesion into their policy and practice.

- To help minimise mistakes made through generalisation, by bringing national, regional and local knowledge into one useful focus.
- To promote interdepartmental, interagency and partnership working, and the sharing of information and good practice where appropriate.
- To promote inclusion, not exclusion.

It is an opportunity for partner agencies to bring together policies and practices under an overarching commitment to community cohesion, and to promote community cohesion to the public.



Areas to proof &
Questions to ask

Policy development
& implementation

Response

Action

Does it promote inclusion
- internally?

- externally?

Does it challenge negative
perceptions?

Did staff contribute to the
development of the policy?



Areas to proof &
Questions to ask

Staff & systems

Response

Action

Does your equal opportunities policy include community cohesion?

Do all staff have access to training in equality & diversity issues?

Does the induction process inform staff of equality & diversity policies and how these are used in community cohesion impacting?

Is awareness of community cohesion in relation to equality & diversity policies discussed in supervision sessions & annual reviews?

Do all job descriptions have the promotion of community cohesion built into them?



Areas to proof &
Questions to ask

Impact of proposals

Response

Action

Will the initiative reflect the requirements of the community as a whole?

Have all staff been consulted on the proposal?

Have a reflective cross-section of potential users been consulted on the proposal?

Has training been provided for community/voluntary organisations likely to deal with questions?

Have all staff been trained on the new policy/proposal and its implications?

Have consultation comments been logged and reasons for using/not using suggested changes been included?



Areas to proof &
Questions to ask

User access to
independent advice
and advocacy

Response

Action

Has the information on access to advice & advocacy been provided in different formats & languages?

Has the information been widely publicised?

Has training been provided for community & voluntary organisations likely to deal with questions?

Have all staff been trained on the new proposals and its implications?

Have consultation comments been logged and reasons for using/not using suggested changes been included?



Areas to proof &
Questions to ask

Equality & anti-
discriminatory practices
in service delivery

Response

Action

Do all the residents/members of the community have access to the service?

If targetting a particular section or community of interest, have relevant facilities/adaptations been taken into account?

Have the community been consulted on the relevance of the service?

Has the service been promoted through relevant voluntary/community groups?

Have staff been informed of the service?

Have front line staff received an update/training?



Do all job descriptions have an element of community cohesion built into them?

Is community cohesion included in diversity & equality policies?

Are all diversity & equality policies monitored for community cohesion practice?

Do you monitor all activities for community cohesion impact?

Are examples of community cohesion impacting shared in order to minimise repetition and promote good practice?

This community cohesion proofing tool is available in electronic format on the Gloucester Partnership website at:
www.gloucesterpartnership.org.uk

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