



A – Z Introductory Guide to Health and Social Care

Community Planning

Brief description

Community Planning provides the over-arching or 'umbrella' framework for planning, partnership working and initiatives at a regional, local and neighbourhood level, building on and further developing existing networks and partnerships, to make public services responsive to, and organised around, the needs of communities.

The National Picture

Background to the policy

Community Planning was given a statutory framework by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The Community Planning provisions in the Act came into force on 1 April 2003. The Act gave local authorities a statutory duty to initiate, maintain and facilitate a process of community planning by which the public services in the area of the local authority are provided, and the planning of that provision takes place after consultation among all the public bodies responsible for providing those services; and with such community bodies and other bodies or people as is appropriate.

- In addition to local authorities, other bodies were given a duty to participate in community planning: NHS Boards; joint police boards; joint fire boards; chief constables; Scottish Enterprise; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority. There is also a duty on Scottish Ministers to promote and encourage Community Planning, including local participation by Communities Scotland in Community Planning Partnerships.

The two main aims of Community Planning can be described as:

- Making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to
- Organisations giving a commitment to work together in providing better public services.

The Community Planning process has a key role in ensuring these challenges are met, by acting as a framework for making public services responsive to, and organised around, the needs of communities. The Act also gave local authorities in Scotland both a duty to secure “**Best Value**” and a “**Power To Advance Well-Being**”, a power of first resort that

will better enable them to work in a more innovative and flexible way to promote and improve the well-being of their area.

Key Requirements

Community Planning partnerships can influence national direction, but should also help to co-ordinate the delivery of national priorities in a way that is sensitive to local needs and circumstances. Local or neighbourhood priorities should also be able to influence the priorities at the Community Planning partnership level.

Assisted by those bodies subject to a duty to participate, the local authority will be responsible for facilitating the process by which the Community Planning partnership should, amongst other things:

- Develop and set out a joint vision with agreed objectives for the area, normally in the form of a Community Plan;
- Set out challenging outcomes of performance for the Community Planning partnership;
- Identify and allocate the resources necessary to achieve the agreed outcomes;
- Streamline the arrangements for the planning and delivery of services to ensure a connection between strategies and with other partnerships, the removal of any wasteful overlaps and the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness;
- Develop processes which maintain a regular and effective means of communication between participants in the partnership;
- Develop processes for the sharing of appropriate information between partners.

The Act is not prescriptive about how Community Planning should be carried out; recognising that what is appropriate will depend on local circumstances.

Community Planning Partnerships are operating in all 32 local authority areas, with a range of partners. In addition to those with a duty to participate, agencies and others such as Jobcentre Plus, Further Education institutions, Equality Forums, the voluntary sector and carers' representatives are involved in a number of partnerships.

Community Planning is not so much about the production of a plan, but about a process in which agencies work together to plan and deliver better services and involve the community in that process.

The effective and genuine engagement of communities is at the heart of Community Planning. There are a wide range of 'communities', some defined by geography (such as a neighbourhood or town), some by common or shared interests (such as young people or carers). Therefore, the definition of 'community body' in the Act is deliberately broad in order to avoid excluding any particular communities.

Consultation alone is not sufficient to ensure effective community engagement. Community engagement in this context must involve consultation, co-operation and participation. It is the responsibility of the local authority, as facilitator of the Community Planning process, assisted by organisations with a duty to participate, to take a view on the appropriateness of particular arrangements to their own particular circumstances.

Community learning and development can play a central role in supporting the engagement of communities (including young people) in the Community Planning process. Support should also be provided by Community Learning and Development partnerships to assist community bodies to develop their own ideas for their communities, including education and training support - this support should be targeted towards disadvantaged communities.

The Community Plan, intended to be the overarching local Plan, is expected to provide a strategic vision, and to reflect community consultation and involvement, partnership, and community leadership. In addition to Community Care Plans, local health, care and other agencies are expected to agree strategies in relation to the Framework for Mental Health, Partnership in Practice Agreements in relation to learning disability and Local Partnership Agreements in relation to “jointly managed and jointly resourced” services. At an even more local level, some Councils are developing local Area Plans, and Community Health Partnerships will be expected to plan for improvements in the health services of their areas. Within the planning process, public and service user involvement in community care planning has been a requirement for more than ten years, and there is also a requirement for public performance reporting.

Key issues for Joint Working

A holistic approach to health and social care needs assessment should take account of a wide range of needs including spiritual, cultural, recreational, social, financial, nutritional, environmental, housing, and educational needs. Community planning offers one route to developing the inclusive communities that health patients and care service users need.

Improving the health and welfare of people and families within local communities must involve health and social care partners seeking to engage with community planning around these issues.

An issue for health staff is how to ensure the consideration of NHS priorities, public health promotion, health improvement, and health inequalities, whilst social work staff need to address the issue of how to promote the needs of community care groups, and children and families. Both will have a concern to address the issues faced by carers and how to tackle inequalities and promote policies that address poverty and deprivation by working within community planning frameworks.

Social care and health agencies have particular experience of public involvement. An issue will be how staff skills are used to best effect in community planning.

How can I find out more?

The Scottish Executive has a dedicated Community Planning team that provides useful information on its website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/CP/CP>

There is also a Community Planning website for Scotland:

<http://www.communityplanning.org.uk/>

For your reference, a summary of legislation and statutory guidance that you might find useful is provided below.

Relevant legislation and statutory guidance

Local Government in Scotland Act 2003

<http://www.scotland-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/20030001.htm>

The Local Government In Scotland Act 2003

Community Planning: Statutory Guidance

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/localgov/cpsg-00.asp>

The Local Government In Scotland Act 2003 - Community Planning: Advice Notes

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/localgov/cpan-00.asp>

Other relevant material

Making a Difference - Community Planning A Year On - Report of the Community Planning Implementation Group June 2004

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/finance/cpayo-00.asp>

Involving Older People: Lessons For Community Planning

The Royal Bank of Scotland Centre for the Older Person's Agenda

Queen Margaret University College 2004

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/society/ioplcp-00.asp>

Integrating Social Inclusion Partnerships and Community Planning Partnerships

Communities Scotland August 2003

<http://www.communityplanning.org.uk/documents/SIPGuidance.pdf>

Equalities, Best Value, Community Planning and the Power to Advance Well-Being

<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/publications/bvequalitiesguidance.pdf>

Final report of the Community Planning Task Force March 2003

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/planning/frcp-00.asp>

Community Regeneration Statement: Implementation of Action Plan December 2002
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/crsi-00.asp>

Capacity Building For Community Planning A Report to the Community Planning Task Force 2002
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/planning/cbcp-12.asp>

“Under The Skin” Of Community Planning A Report to the Community Planning Task Force 2002
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/uscp-00.asp>

Community Planning in Scotland – an Evaluation of the Pathfinder Projects
Commissioned by COSLA January 2000
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc10/pathfinder.pdf>

Report of the Community Planning Group The Scottish Office
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents5/cp-00.htm>