

Bringing People Together

Community Cohesion in Derbyshire

Guidance Note for

Staff working in communities

Who is this guidance for?

For example, home helps, park and countryside rangers, children's centre staff, youth workers, teachers, school staff, social workers, trades people, environmental health officers, community safety officers, housing officers etc.



What is community cohesion?

Community cohesion is the glue which binds communities together. This is strengthened when people get on well together, respect each other and feel they can influence decisions in their area. It can be weakened when people feel that they do not enjoy the same life opportunities as others.

What does this mean in Derbyshire?

In Derbyshire, a wide range of factors affect cohesion. These include ethnicity, social and economic background, housing, the length of time people have lived in an area, age, nationality, the availability of local services and levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. We want to build communities where:

- There is a shared vision for the future and a sense of belonging
- Young and older people get on well together and people respect each other
- People from different backgrounds, particularly those who are under represented have a voice and access to the same life opportunities, employment and services
- The gap between “the haves” and “the have nots” is reduced by tackling inequality
- People from new communities are welcomed and are able to settle and integrate.

Why is community cohesion important?

Communities where people work together are stronger communities. Cohesion has many knock on effects such as helping people to feel a sense of belonging and improving satisfaction with an area as a place to live. Although every area is different, cohesion relates closely to many other priorities such as reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving education and training.

Why are you important?

You may visit people's homes or deal with local people's queries or concerns from a community based office or facility. Your face to face contact with local people means that you understand their needs, personal circumstances and often the wider issues in their communities. Please turn over for ideas on how you can help.

You can help to make communities in Derbyshire more cohesive by:

- Helping people to understand and build a sense of identity with their local area. Understand individual or community aspirations and help people to work towards common goals and tackle local issues.
- Helping people to discover the things they have in common rather than the things which make them different and supporting people to overcome their fear of difference.
- Dispelling myths and challenging negative perceptions which may persist among some individuals. These have the potential to create mistrust, unfounded prejudice and divide communities.
- Running activities which increase understanding of diversity. Make sure these involve a wide range of individuals and groups from different backgrounds, e.g. intergenerational activities which bring together young and older people.
- Being aware of any fears or concerns of individuals or groups you work with and ensuring that problems are reported or people signposted to appropriate support. Mediate in local conflicts where appropriate.
- Encouraging people to volunteer, which can provide social networks, connect people to their communities and create stronger communities and helping them to develop their ideas for their local community.
- Encouraging local people with the ability to lead and inspire to become champions for cohesion and letting people know how they can influence decision making at the local level.
- Reporting problems and encouraging members of your community to do the same. If you see or hear anything worrying in your neighbourhood call 0345 123 3333 and report it to Keystone (the Derbyshire operation to combat violent extremism).
- Making sure that people always receive a high quality, personal service so that people know they can trust local institutions.

For more information on community cohesion in Derbyshire visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/bringingpeopletogether

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On the above website you'll find:

- 'Bringing People Together' – Derbyshire's Community Cohesion Strategy
- A 'Bringing People Together' Action Plan outlining current activities
- Key contact details and information about who is leading this work
- Other guidance notes and resources to help you understand cohesion
- More ideas about how you can help to build cohesion

