Bringing People Together
Community Cohesion in Derbyshire

Guidance Note for

Elected Representatives

Who is this guidance for?

People who are elected to represent the interests of their local community, e.g. County, District, Borough, Parish and Town Councillors, Police and Fire Authority Members, Residents' Association Committee Members 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 it 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?

People in Derbyshire rely on you to represent their views and influence decisions so that everyone can benefit from good quality local services which are value for money. Making sure local voices are heard is a crucial part of building cohesion and you are in a strong position to help this to happen. Please turn over for ideas on how you can help.

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

- Raising your profile so that local people know how to get in touch with you and let you know about community issues. You can do this through your local surgeries and by being involved in neighbourhood meetings. Ensure opportunities for people to have their say are well advertised so that all members of the community get to know about them.

- Representing local voices by being a channel of communication between the communities you serve and your organisation. Make sure the views of all people are known and your organisation's decisions reflect local needs. In particular, speak up for those whose voices are not always heard, e.g. younger people, older people or people with disabilities. Encourage people to express their views.

- Being a champion for cohesion in your area. Communicate the message to local people and help to encourage community activities which help to being people from different backgrounds together. Spread the word about local events so that as many people as possible get involved.

- Supporting community action and providing assistance to local leaders who are keen to improve their area. Let people know about local funding opportunities or put them in touch with officers who can help them to progress their ideas.

- Encouraging the use of local buildings such as Parish Halls, community rooms, libraries, schools and churches etc for local events which could help to bring people from different backgrounds together.

- 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).

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

✆ 01629 538254
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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