Bringing People Together
Community Cohesion in Derbyshire

Guidance Note for

Managers

Who is this guidance for?

Senior managers, middle managers, those who can embed and mainstream community cohesion within organisations.

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 are at the forefront of developing new services which can potentially impact positively or negatively on cohesion. For example, initiatives to reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and improve access to jobs, training and quality housing can be designed to improve cohesion. You are in a position to influence a wide range of staff working face to face with local people and you can help them to understand their role in building cohesion in local communities.

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

- Understanding how cohesion relates to your service area. Visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/bringingpeopletogether to view the Derbyshire Community Cohesion Strategy - 'Bringing People Together'. This short strategy outlines what cohesion is about, what factors affect cohesion and what we can do to improve cohesion.

- Planning services so that people from different backgrounds have fair access to them. Undertake an Equalities and Cohesion Assessment to ensure that the needs of all local people are met. Visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk and click on 'Equalities' in the 'Your Council' section for advice on how to do this.

- Ensuring that projects and initiatives encourage interaction between individuals and different groups and improve attitudes and understanding e.g. by making safe spaces where people can meet and developing services which create opportunities for inter-group contact.

- Being transparent and communicating to local people how and why service provision decisions have been made. This will help to dispel myths. Also let communities know when you have responded positively to a local issue. Publicise any action which has been taken.

- Increasing awareness among your staff about their role in building cohesion. To help you we have produced a Bringing People Together' Guidance Note entitled 'The role of staff working in communities' and a power point presentation and notes which you can use to brief staff about cohesion – both are available at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/bringingpeopletogether. Information could be added to induction packs or added to existing training.

- Capturing the knowledge and experience of your staff to build a better understanding of local communities. There is a wealth of local information amongst your staff which, if used correctly, could help to prevent local tensions and conflicts from arising.

- 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

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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