



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**  
Social Care **Wales**

# 'Working with' principles

The principles of working with communities.

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Go to <https://socialcare.wales/working-with-communities-framework-home/3-working-with-principles> for the latest version.

Read these guiding principles.

Think about how they could help you work in communities and use them in your plans.

## **Set the right culture**

### **1. Develop your understanding of communities**

Spend some time getting to know the communities you'd like to work with.

Research the local history, background and politics. Find out what's going on, and if there are community groups or organisations running projects.

### **2. Place this work at the heart of your organisation**

It's important to put the voice and experience of people and communities at the heart of your work.

This will help you and your partners understand:

- what people need
- what works
- what can be improved, and
- how to work together for good community well-being.

### **3. Be clear that this work is everyone's business**

This work isn't just the role of community engagement teams. Leaders, programme teams, and wider stakeholders need to listen to, and act on, what they learn.

For advice on how to carry out the work, speak to people who have experience working with communities.

This is adapted from *Understanding integration* (The King's Fund, 2021).

#### **4. Recognise the challenge, use what's there and be prepared to do things differently.**

Find and speak to community groups and activities, places to meet, local services and buildings. These all help make a community vibrant and resilient.

## **Make a start**

#### **5. Focus on promoting people's well-being**

Focus on promoting people's well-being. Following the [Five Ways to Well-being](#) will promote good mental health for all.

#### **6. Start by building trust and two-way relationships**

Listen, respond to and value what everyone has to say.

#### **7. Make sure information is accessible, appropriate and doesn't use jargon**

#### **8. Encourage and make it easy for people to take part in community**

## **activities**

Community activities:

- involve people who aren't connected or part of community life, or in touch with services
- give people a sense of belonging and purpose
- create friendships
- make people feel better and more confident
- make it easier to get information, support and help.

### **9. Involve people to make a difference**

Involving people and working together makes sure that a community is involved from an early stage. It's a way to encourage the community to own the project, have a say on policy, and decide how services are designed and run.

Be creative, and don't be frightened to try different ways to involve people.

## **Develop**

### **10. Recognise and always build on existing community assets.**

Everyone has skills, and knowledge that they can share and the networks in local communities are the greatest asset.

There may also be community groups and activities, places to meet, local services and buildings which contribute to having a vibrant and resilient community.

### **11. Make more opportunities for people to connect with each other.**

Make sure that communities want the activities on offer, and can run them themselves where possible.

Activities should be based on what communities say they need, and not what 'experts' think they need.

These activities should be low cost, accessible and inclusive.

### **12. Work with people in communities.**

Listen and respond to the community; its people are best placed to know what they need.

Don't plan for them; work together to build resilient communities.

### **13. Support local ownership and decision-making in service design and delivery.**

Encourage co-production so people have the power and opportunity to make their own decisions about their life and community.

This means they'll own the services they help design. Find new creative ways for professionals and communities to work together.

### **14. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to be involved.**

Find specific groups and work with them to target and shape resources. Work together to decide what's important and help them to make that happen.

You should do this without undermining their control.

## **Reflect, invest and share**

### **15. Develop appropriate and meaningful ways to record change.**

Stories are powerful ways to show change within communities. They bring life to numbers that count 'how much' or 'how often'. Measure what matters, using targets that promote and focus on making the community more resilient.

### **16. Invest in community projects and build sustainability.**

Make the link between listening and doing. Long-term, stable funding makes community projects more sustainable, and can help those who provide skilled support.

Growing at a natural, sustainable pace can encourage and inspire confidence in a community.

True sustainability is leaving a legacy where a community can learn and do things themselves.

### **17. Communicate progress and share the learning.**

You should keep promises to build and keep trust.

Keeping everyone informed, sharing lessons learned and successes is a good idea, too. It will give you space for reflection, learning and improve your practice.

### **18. Look at others, take ideas and benefit.**

There are fantastic examples of community partnership work across Wales and beyond. Visit, ask questions and learn from others' experiences.