



# **Reader & Reporter Application Guidance Pack**

**Endorsement and Quality Standards Board for Community Development Learning**

[www.esbendorsement.org](http://www.esbendorsement.org)

[esb@esbendorsement.org](mailto:esb@esbendorsement.org)

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# 1. Introduction

Community Development practitioners take on a vital role – working with communities and community groups to collectively bring about social change and social justice. It is important that practitioners, paid and unpaid, have appropriate training which is derived from the values of Community Development.

Community Development training and learning experiences encourages the sharing of up-to-date field experience and is valued by employers.

Endorsement And Quality Standards Board For Community Development Learning (England), usually known as ESB recognises and promotes good quality learning and training by offering programme providers a rigorous professional endorsement process.

ESB is committed to the concept of Peer Assessment in the Endorsement process. Experienced practitioners, by becoming a Reader and a Reporter in the Endorsement process, can offer their valuable field experience to inform and influence programme design, management and delivery. Such engagement in this role can make a real difference to the quality of learning and training, helping programme providers to build on their most successful innovations and learn from other providers' good practice.

## 2. What is endorsement?

Endorsement is a mark of quality, showing that a programme is firmly based in the values and practices set out in the Community Development National Occupational Standards – 2015

(CD NOS 2015).

ESB offers a professional endorsement of Community Development courses and Work-based Learning (WBL) programmes and Recognition schemes at all levels. This includes non-accredited courses as well as those leading to formal qualifications. The endorsement is a sign of professional standing of a quality product. It signifies that ESB is confident a programme will equip practitioners with the skills and understanding that are required to be able to DO Community Development well. The ESB perceives endorsement as a developmental process and a means of offering trainers and tutors constructive support to continuously improve the quality of community development learning. ESB endorses CD practice Recognition Schemes now being offered by organisations. The endorsement process adopts a broadly comparable procedure to traditional courses and programmes but with much greater attention to the recognition scheme's procedures for managing the practice evaluation and assessment. Support and guidance is offered to practitioners to systematically and critically reflect on their practice.

The definition of Community Development (CD) and effective value-based CD practice that ESB uses to assess submissions is taken from the CD 2015. See further on in this guide for the definition and Key Values.

## 3. The endorsement process

Organisations which organise and deliver CD courses or programmes can apply to ESB for endorsement. This application is processed by a Coordinator who invites qualified Readers and Reporters to assess the submission according to ESB's criteria for good practice. Readers critically review the course documentation; Reporters have the role of visiting a course and meeting participants. The reports and recommendations from the reader's and reporter's assessments are presented and considered at an ESB Panel meeting, which reaches a decision about endorsement. There are four main options:

- » Full endorsement for five years,
- » Endorsement for five years with conditions,
- » Conditional endorsement for one year,
- » Refusal.

## 4. Who can be a Reader and a Reporter?

Practitioners, paid and unpaid, with practice experience of CD and CD learning are invited to apply. ESB provides successful applicants induction and refresher training in its specific approach and procedures and operates an informal mentoring scheme for new people coming into the process.

ESB's expectation is that the following core competencies can be evidenced by those recruited:

- » » Qualifications or experience necessary to assess and quality assure CD learning
- » » Substantial CD experience, paid or unpaid, or be a recognised trainer of CD or hold a qualification in community development, youth and community work or a relevant degree or practice at higher education diploma foundation degree level (5) or above
- » » A clear understanding of the values, practice, and principles of Community Development
- » » Demonstrable experience of working within the values of Community Development
- » » A thorough understanding of social exclusion and demonstration of taking positive steps to tackling discrimination, promoting equalities and personal development
- » » A detailed understanding of the latest CD National Occupational Standards and how they relate to programmes
- » » The ability to assess whether learning and personal growth has occurred from reflective practice. Currently we have Readers and Reporters who work within Universities teaching and supporting CD programmes of study, others who are independent consultants and trainers involved with CD, project managers and CD practitioners working in a wide range of different settings and employers. Some people are paid CD practitioners, while others undertake their CD activities on an unpaid basis.

The next section outlines the different roles and the skills and knowledge needed to undertake them. The main requirement is a passion for quality CD and a commitment to its values and ethos.

## 5. Specific roles of Readers and Reporters

### 5.1 Readers

A Reader is responsible for the first part of the endorsement process. They receive a copy of all the documents provided by the course or learning programme who have submitted their application to ESB.

The Reader cross references these documents against ESB's criteria for good practice and completes the Reader's report form.

For very short courses the same person may read and visit as a Reporter. For long or higher-level courses there may be up to two Readers and two Reporters. Where there are two Readers, one takes a leading role and they will contact the Submitters to ask for further information if this is required prior to the visit.

The Reader's key tasks are as follows:

- » To read through the application and accompanying documents carefully.
- » To assess the information against ESB's criteria for endorsement by making notes in the column provided on the submitter's documentation and then transferring these notes to the Reader's report form.
- » If necessary, lead or sole Readers are to contact the Submitters for more information.
- » To make clear and concise notes on the Reader's report form about queries or gaps that need checking.
- » To email on the report and all the application information to the next Reader
- » If there is only one Reader, then they will forward the reports to the first / only Reporter by email
- » If there is a second Reader, they will look at the report, make notes on the submission, then liaise

with the lead Reader to agree a final report which is forwarded to the lead reporter if that is a different person. In most teams, the second Reader becomes the lead Reporter.

- » When all the Readers' reports are completed, a copy is sent into the ESB office and to any second Reporter involved.

## 5.2 Reporters

The Reporter(s) visit a programme to gather and confirm information supplied, and to meet programme participants and have the central task of critically reviewing a programme's practice and procedures and programme content against the values inherent in the CD National Occupational Standards. The reporter emphasises that the ESB is interested in innovation and new ways of learning. Thus, standards are emphasised not standardisation. Any Reporter(s) who is not a reader will also get the copy of the original submission (but not all the supporting documents unless anything is requested or highlighted by the reader) and the Reader's report, and uses this to decide what the focus of the visit will be. If the programme includes practical experience, for example a work placement, Reporters make sure they ask participants about the quality and value of that experience and ideally meet the providers of this learning experience.

Sometimes a Reporter may not be able to visit a programme while it is running, for instance, it may be a short course that has finished for the year. In this case, Reporters can meet a tutor and look through material to get a sense of the aims and content of the programme. People who have finished the programme may be able to meet the Reporter. If not, then the Reporter will make other arrangements to get their comments, for example, by emailing or phoning.

The Reporter's key tasks are as follows:

- » » If there are two reporters, or any one who is taking a mentoring role, then dates will need to be agreed with them as well as the programme
- » » To negotiate with the Submitter over timing and arrangements to visit the programme. This includes asking to see particular material and meet particular people ahead of time, so that Submitters are clear about what they need to provide. Once the details of the visit have been negotiated, the visit is confirmed by email to the Submitter. It is good practice to provide a summary of the key areas that the visit will focus on and what has already been clearly demonstrated in the submission.
- » » To read the Reader's report carefully and make sure that the visit will address any questions or concerns raised by the Reader(s), to structure the visit so as to investigate how well the programme meets ESB's criteria for good practice. Visits should include:
  - Talking to programme participants to get a sense of the course's contribution to their practical work and wider thinking.
  - Having a thorough discussion with the tutor(s) to get a sense of the programme's content, aims and values base.
  - Reading any relevant written material that could not be sent before the visit e.g. a student's portfolio of practice
  - Meeting with others involved in the programme delivery as appropriate such as employers, placement providers or advisory groups
  - Watching part of a participatory course session, if this is deemed appropriate and possible within the constraints of the visit timetable and for a particular reason
- » To complete the Reporter's visit report for panel and send it to the ESB office and Panel Chair and Members at least one week before the panel meeting by email.
- » To attend the panel and present their report – most panels are run over Skype or similar

### 5.3 Panel Members

Panel members are drawn from the pool of Readers and Reporters and are selected to have the range of experiences needed to make a judgement about an application. People cannot sit on a Panel for a programme they have reported on or read. One Reporter assigned to a programme must attend the Panel meeting for that programme to answer questions. Panels when appropriate can meet physically or through internet conferencing.

A Panel decides whether to endorse a programme or not. A panel can suggest conditions for endorsement and recommend how long the endorsement should run before the programme has to be submitted again (within the options available to it).

The Panel Members' key tasks are as follows:

- » To attend the Panel meetings, review sessions and any training days
- » To read through the Reader's and Reporter's reports before a Panel meeting and consider if the programme meets ESB's criteria; panel members have access to the submitters application form and to the first Readers form if they choose
- » To come to the Panel with points for discussion and relevant questions
- » To share ideas, concerns and suggestions with other Panel members at the meeting and arrive at a decision on endorsement
- » To ensure that the relevant forms are completed and submitted to ESB
- » To ensure that the wording of the letter to the Submitter giving the Panel's decision lays out the exact category of endorsement, with any requirements and comments (Chair's responsibility).

## 6. Person specifications

### 6.1 Readers

Essential requirements

These are the skills, qualities and the experience you must have to be a Reader.

1.1 Substantial experience as a paid or unpaid community development practitioner. This should include helping groups to:

- » Get started, run and develop
- » Set and review their own targets for action
- » Deal with conflicts and discrimination
- » Learn from experience.

**Or**

1.2 Substantial practical experience as a community development trainer / tutor.

**Or**

1.3 A relevant degree or equivalent practice at HE Foundation degree / diploma level or above.

2. A proven understanding of and commitment to community development values and processes as outlined in the National Occupational Standards

3. A proven ability to assess written information against agreed criteria and judge its quality.

4. A proven ability to produce reports on time.

5. A willingness to undertake relevant training, for example, in applying the Occupational Standards.

6. IT skills and both access to and familiarity with widely used computer programmes for communication (WORD or equivalent, Skype etc.). Expectation that both readers and reporters will be able to access the most up to date files for use in endorsements via cloud storage or the ESB website.

Additional essential requirements for Readers of HE programmes

Experience of HE as a participant, tutor or consultant at HE levels

## 6.2 Reporters

Essential requirements

As for readers, plus:

1. Group work experience and proven facilitation skills that put the Values and Principles of community development into practice. This includes:

- » Reflection on your own work and values
- » Respect for participants

2. Experience of validation processes

Additional requirements for Reporters at degree level

1. Experience of validation (HE internal systems) AND/OR

2. Experience of course development for submission at HE level.

## 6.3 Panel Members

Essential requirements are the same as for Readers and Reporters as all readers and reporters are expected to take part in panels once they have been involved in some endorsements

## 7. Creation of teams

A nominated member of ESB has responsibility for putting together teams for the endorsement at the point where submissions are received or about to be received. A list of people who are available and up to date with their ESB training is used as the basis for selection. Readers can be from any geographical area, reporters tend to be selected for ease of travelling and access to the visit site. The nominated person takes into account the need to ensure that all those on the current list have opportunities to keep their skills up to date, and also to provide mentoring opportunities for people coming into the process and needing to find their feet. Usually an email call for available people is sent out and then the selection made, but different Board members may use different approaches. Board members are not paid for this task.

Once a team has been put together and a timescale agreed, then the nominated Board member contacts other people on the list to become panel members. A date for the panel is then agreed between the team members and the panel members.

**NOTE:** ESB undertake dual validation of youth and community programmes with the NYA, and in this case the process is a little different as the paper work has been jointly agreed by the two organisations, and the reporters are part of the joint team that visit the programme. More details will be given to anyone taking on these endorsements but the administration is carried out by NYA, the dates are fixed many months in advance and so there is little negotiation over dates and the timing of the visit. This will be made clear at the point that a call for teams is made.

## 8. Payments

ESB receives no funding and so exists through the charges it makes to submitting programmes. These charges are reviewed from time to time and are posted on the ESB web site, and vary with the complexity and length of programmes.

There are set rates that are paid to people undertaking the roles of readers, Reporters and Panel members and they are available from the coordinator. They are reviewed at the internal and updating training sessions. See Appendix B for hours allocated to each role. The hourly rate is available from the coordinator who will put the teams together and will be specified in the contract. Attendance at training

days is not usually payable unless we have lots of funding available; people attend in their own time and we cover all travel costs and other expenses.

ESB works on a contracts basis, once a role has been agreed a contract is sent out for signing; payment is made upon completion of the work outlined in the contract.

A small part of the current endorsement fee is allocated to consultancy so the board can offer support to programmes looking to be endorsed or to programmes given conditional endorsement.

## **9. How ESB is organised**

The ESB office is in Manchester, where we have a part time admin support worker, who also maintains our web site. ESB is a company limited by Guarantee. It is legally

structured to have founding directors who will keep an overview on the organisation and an active board of people interested in the work of the board and they take the lead for all strategic and operational developments.

ESB uses cloud storage and its web site as its main vehicles for organising itself; all of the forms and guidance booklets are on the web site. All our reports on projects we have delivered, or are involved in, are hosted there along with current activities and discussions with their associated blog pages are on the web site. Readers and Reporters are required to use the web site and cloud storage to download whatever forms and materials they need. If there are problems with the site or you notice any problems then contact our website administrator via [esb@esbendorsement.org](mailto:esb@esbendorsement.org) Please do not contact her just for forms to be sent to you.

# Appendix A: Community Development National Occupational Standards (CD NOS) 2015

## Introduction

These revised National Occupational Standards for Community Development will provide a cornerstone and guiding framework for all Community Development practice across a wide range of roles, settings, levels of responsibility and present and future challenges.

The first national occupational standards for community work were produced in 1995 through the Care Sector Consortium, and were followed by new Community Development work standards in 2002 through Paulo, the National Training Organisation that covered Community Development work and a 2015 version. These, 2015 incarnation, are the fourth generation Community Development National Occupational Standards (NOS). A wide range of Community Development employers and practitioners have been actively involved at every stage, both past and present.

## The Term Community Development Practitioner

Community Development is undertaken by a wide range of people in many different roles and settings, and some people may utilise their skills in Community Development in different setting – both paid and as a volunteer. These standards apply the term Community Development practitioner to anyone who undertakes Community Development practice (as defined in these standards) – whether as a generic Community Development worker or a member of another profession/occupation who is using a Community Development approach, and whether as a paid worker or a community activist /volunteer.

The definition of Community Development is expressed in the following Key Purpose:

### **The Key purpose of community development**

Community development enables people to work collectively to bring about positive social change.

This long term process starts from people's own experience and enables communities\* to work together to:

- » Identify their own needs and actions
- » Take collective action using their strengths and resources
- » Develop their confidence, skills and knowledge
- » Challenge unequal power relationships
- » Promote social justice, equality and inclusion in order to improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live and societies of which they are a part.

*\*Communities refer to those that can be defined by geography, identity or interest.*

## The Changing Context for Community Development

The interest in, and contexts for, Community Development practice have extended significantly since the first standards were developed, as the policies of some governments, administrations and organisations have recognised the need to work effectively with communities. The Community Development workforce is composed of:

- Community Development workers – with generic or specific briefs
- Community Development activists/ volunteers
- Other professional workers taking a Community Development approach to their role
- Managers of Community Development – paid or volunteer employers (trustees).

Community Development workers may be employed by public bodies, voluntary and community organisations, and a wide range of other organisations, agencies and partnerships. They may be neighbourhood based or have a community of interest or identity based focus. They may have a generic brief that is totally determined by the interests of the community, or start with a policy agenda, for example improving health.

Community Development activists/ volunteers often have a wealth of experience and skills they have developed over many years of involvement. They have a unique role and particular relationship to their communities. Their practice is frequently as “professional” as paid workers and they are often the ‘driving force’ for change. They can

also provide valuable support to other less experienced Community Development practitioners.

Other workers who are increasingly taking a Community Development approach include for example, community health workers, housing support workers, planners, community welfare rights workers, drugs and alcohol support workers, workers on advice and support projects for Refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers, workers employed in CVS or other voluntary and community sector organisations, and firefighters.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in their job, in order to carry out their role in a consistent and competent way. In essence, they inform 'best practice' by bringing together skills, knowledge and values.

While the NOS are for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales they have been developed in a way that should enable employers to use them appropriately in each jurisdiction. Also it is recognised that this may vary from one jurisdiction to another.

The aim is that the Standards are versatile and support employers in a range of ways including:

- Performance management (for example appraisals)
- Identifying training needs
- Aid in structuring learning programmes (formal and informal)
- Recruitment and selection (for example job descriptions)
- Assessing achievement
- Formal and informal recognition of competence (for example Continuing Professional Development)
- Careers guidance and counselling.
- Design of work programmes and projects

### **Community development values**

The community development process is underpinned by a set of values on which all practice is based. Community development practitioners need to relate these values to their roles and actions. There are five key values that underpin all community development practice:

- » Social justice and equality
- » Anti-discrimination
- » Community empowerment
- » Collective action
- » Working and learning together

### **Social justice and equality**

Work for a more just and equal society which recognises environmental, political, cultural and economic issues by:

- » Celebrating the strengths, skills and assets in communities
- » Acknowledging and challenging inequalities, injustice and imbalances of power
- » Promoting human and civil rights and responsibilities

### **Anti-discrimination**

Respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism.

- » Recognise that discrimination works at individual, community, organisational/institutional and societal levels
- » Explore and challenge all forms of discrimination
- » Develop anti-oppressive policies and practices which actively support and value diversity

### **Community empowerment**

Enable communities to develop confidence, capacity, skills and relationships to shape collective action and challenge imbalances of power.

- » Enable communities to recognise and build on their existing skills, knowledge and expertise
- » Promote the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action

- » Provide the space for communities to develop critical, creative, independent and active decision making and participation

### **Collective action**

Promote the active participation of people within communities, using the power of a collective voice and goal.

- » Recognise the wealth of creative and positive resources within individuals and communities
- » Promote and support diverse communities to agree and take action on their common concerns and interests
- » Use the power of the collective voice to plan and take collective action while respecting the rights of others

### **Working and learning together**

Create and encourage opportunities for collective learning through action and shared reflection.

- » Learn from shared experiences of working in collaboration
- » Understand experiences in the context of wider social, political and economic forces
- » Encourage critical reflection on own practice, values and beliefs.

### **Overview of the Community Development Standards**

There are twenty-five standards which are organised into six Key Areas. Key Area One is core to all Community Development practice and underpins all the others. Each standard contains the knowledge and understanding necessary in order to carry out the performance statements described in that standard. contained within it. Each standard ends with five examples of Community Development values in practice that ill

### **Use of the Standards**

Key Area One: Understand and Practise Community Development has been designed as the core or underpinning standard and applies to all Community Development practice in all roles, settings and levels. People who describe themselves as Community Development practitioners need to be able to articulate their understanding of Community Development as a process and an activity which “aims to bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion”.

Key Area One is applicable to all practitioners who undertake Community Development – whether as unpaid activity within their community, paid Community Development workers/ officers, or other professionals who are adopting a Community Development approach.

Key Area One is core and essential in its entirety for all Community Development practice across all levels, roles, and settings.

The standards provide the skills and knowledge set required by a Community Development practitioner working with different communities and groups. Any Community Development practitioner would be expected to be able to undertake work in each of the Key Areas 1-6, customising the details to their particular role.

There is a reflective practitioner diagram following a diagram showing the standards and key areas on the following page. A full list of the standards, including a brief overview of each standard follows these diagrams.

# Key Areas and Standards for community development practice

The Community Development National Occupational Standards (CD NOS) consist of six key areas that between them contain 25 standards. Key Area 1, Understand and practise community development, underpins all other 5 key areas. The Standards identify the roles that practitioners adopt within the community development process and outline the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to carry out the roles.

1	 Understand and practise community development	<b>S1</b> Integrate and use the values and process of community development <b>S2</b> Work with the tensions inherent in community development practice <b>S3</b> Relate to different communities <b>S4</b> Develop yourself as a community development practitioner <b>S5</b> Maintain community development practice within own organisation <b>S6</b> Support inclusive and collective working
2	 Understand and engage with communities	<b>S7</b> Get to know a community <b>S8</b> Facilitate community research and consultations <b>S9</b> Analyse and disseminate findings from community research
3	 Group work and collective action	<b>S10</b> Organise community events and activities <b>S11</b> Support communities to effectively manage and address conflict, within and between communities or community groups <b>S12</b> Support communities who want to bring about positive social change <b>S13</b> Facilitate community leadership
4	 Collaboration and cross-sectoral working	<b>S14</b> Promote and support effective relationships between communities and public bodies and other agencies <b>S15</b> Encourage and support public bodies to build effective relationships with communities <b>S16</b> Support collaborative and partnership work <b>S17</b> Strategically co-ordinate networks
5	 Community learning for social change	<b>S18</b> Promote opportunities for community development learning <b>S19</b> Facilitate community learning for social and political development
6	 Governance and organisational development	<b>S20</b> Advise on organisational structures to support community development <b>S21</b> Plan and gain resources and funding for sustainability <b>S22</b> Strengthen the organisational development of groups <b>S23</b> Monitor and evaluate community development activities <b>S24</b> Manage internal organisational development and external relationships <b>S25</b> Supervise and support community development practitioners

## Appendix B: Set Hours for Roles

Type of Programme	Information and Hours
1. Short/ non-accredited taster type courses	These are short courses – lasting up to 3 - 4 days in total. There would be one Reader who also visited the programme. <b>8 hours</b> for reading, co-ordination, visit, report writing and Panel attendance
2. Medium length programmes	<p>There are essentially 2 types of medium length programmes that we might endorse. The first is where the submitter has designed their own programme from scratch and written the details of the content.</p> <p>The second is where the submitters are creating a programme from units from the RQF which have already been agreed within the CD qualifications framework, and therefore the content has already been accepted by ESB.</p> <p>In the first case there would be more reading, so the Reader would be allocated <b>5 hours</b> to read and complete forms, chasing additional information as required.</p> <p>The second Reader would also be a reporter and would be allocated <b>10 hours</b> to read, undertake visit, complete reports and attend panel.</p> <p>Depending on the size of the programme there may need to be a second reporter; that would be decided upon when the submission is received; <b>4-5 hours</b> would be allocated to the second reporter.</p> <p>In the second case there would be less reading, so the Reader would be allocated <b>3 hours</b> to read and complete forms, chasing additional information as required.</p> <p>The second Reader would also be a reporter and would be allocated <b>8 hours</b> to read, undertake visit, complete reports and attend panel.</p> <p>Depending on the size of the programme there may need to be a second reporter; that would be decided upon when the submission is received; <b>4-5 hours</b> would be allocated to the second reporter.</p>
3. One year and two year HE programmes, degrees including foundation and masters	<p>2nd Reader/ Lead Reporter <b>11 hours</b>, Complete reports, liaise with submitters and other Readers and Reporters, undertake visit and report back; attend Panel meeting</p> <p>2nd Reporter <b>7 hours</b>. Read reports, liaise other Reporter, undertake visit and report back</p>
4. Full honours degrees	<p>Lead Reader <b>8 hours</b>, to read. Complete reports, liaise with submitters and other Readers and Reporters</p> <p>2nd Reader/ Lead Reporter <b>11 hours</b>, Complete reports, liaise with submitters and other Readers, and Reporters, undertake visit and report back; attend Panel meeting</p> <p>2nd Reporter <b>7 hours</b>. Read reports, liaise other Reporter, undertake visit and report back</p>
5. Accreditation / Recognition Programmes	<p>Reader <b>3 hours</b> to read submission and check for additional information, complete form.</p> <p>Reporter <b>5 hours</b> for co-ordination over visit, visit, reports and attendance at Panel meeting</p>