

# Supporting strategic partners to promote community cohesion

Community cohesion is a cross cutting issue and involves all local agencies. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have a responsibility to embed the principles of cohesion into the sustainable community strategy (SCS) and local area agreement (LAA).

Elected members are increasingly adopting a community leadership role within their own areas and contributing a wealth of community intelligence to LSP priorities and the SCS. This includes how cohesive their neighbourhoods appear to be.

Community cohesion may be defined and understood differently by partners so getting them around the table is a good place to start. The next stage is to develop a common action plan with practical outcomes.

## **iCoCo now offers tailored support and training to help LSPs:**

- Understand community cohesion better
- Consider how partners can work together to understand the profiles of communities and sub communities
- Explore potential projects based on local needs
- Make the link with LAA targets and Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) – to demonstrate the LSP's work towards creating cohesive communities

## The iCoCo approach to community cohesion and partnership working

We recognise that all areas are different. Partner organisations deliver services in rural, coastal and urban areas, with very diverse levels of wealth and deprivation. This makes for diverse communities and different challenges in promoting cohesion, it cannot be done on a 'one size fits all' approach.

The local authority often adopts the lead partnership role within the LSP, but we recognise the varying political dynamics and organisational cultures within different councils.

Although the Government legislates that LSPs have a 'duty to co-operate' and a 'duty to involve', culturally and behaviourally this can be difficult. Even where the context of the partnership is healthy, the complexity of the agenda, the sensitivity of relationships, and the pressures of accountability can hamper the LSPs ability to share an area vision for cohesion.

### How iCoCo can help

Leading national and local government experts will support and guide the development of tailored solutions for your local area.

We will meet with you to discuss the issues within your partnership.

The meeting should ideally include the person who manages the LSP, the LSP chair, the chief executive or a senior officer from the lead authority, a senior representative from the other partner organisations. Generally we try to include:

- Health
- Police
- Voluntary sector
- Education
- Faith group/s represented on the partnership
- Business sector
- The local authority elected member who leads on partnership and/or community cohesion

The meeting will agree:

- The most suitable package of support for your LSP
- The number and duration of events
- Who from the partnership should participate
- The logistics such as dates, venues and timescales

### **Our approach**

iCoCo will agree with you the best approach to deliver support and training. But, based on our experience, we would recommend a combination of:

- Input of contextual community cohesion knowledge – getting everyone up to speed about the background and current issues
- Making the content relevant to total beginners and the more experienced – we work with you from the level you are now
- Practical exercises based on real case studies
- Encouraging you to explore your local context and think about opportunities for projects or initiatives to improve community cohesion in your area
- Exchanging ideas, examples from other areas and with all participants receiving relevant handouts and guidance material
- Action planning with practical outcomes
- And being supportive and friendly – so that everyone learns

We are happy to work with other neighbouring LSPs if you would like to work collaboratively. This is a good way of exploring cross boundary issues and sharing experience.

## Find out more

For more information about iCoCo visit

[www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)

To arrange a meeting to discuss the cohesion issues in your local area, contact us at:

**024 7679 5757**

**cohesion@coventry.ac.uk**

## About iCoCo

The Institute of Community Cohesion was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race, diversity and multiculturalism. Our work focuses on building positive and harmonious community relations. iCoCo represents a unique partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, combining the experience and expertise of four universities with practitioners from a range of diverse backgrounds and professions.

**iCoCo is a not for profit partnership, which aims to build capacity at all levels and in all local and national agencies to promote community cohesion.**

# iCoCo

Institute of Community Cohesion

