



Community Work Ireland working collectively to support and promote community work as a means of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality and advancing human rights

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## Introduction

Established in 1981, Community Work Ireland (formerly the Community Workers' Co-operative) is the leading national organization that promotes and supports community work as a means of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality and ultimately as a means of achieving social change that will contribute to the creation of a more just, sustainable and equal society. CWI has in excess of 800 individual and organisational members working in and with the most disadvantaged communities throughout Ireland (urban, rural and issue based). Since its establishment, Community Work Ireland has been concerned to promote best practice and a commitment to social justice and inclusion in policies, programmes and measures with the remit and/or potential to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

## Community Work

Community Work Ireland acts as Secretariat and is a member of the All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work that seeks to promote standards for professional community work education and training.

The standards for the community work profession are outline in All Ireland Standards for Community Work<sup>1</sup>, where community work is defined as, 'A developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way'.

We hope that this submission will make a positive contribution to the development of the National Strategic Framework for Health Workforce Planning.

## Submission

Are there any other key interfaces between the health sector and other sectors nationally that should be taken account of?

The work to address health inequalities (see Healthy Ireland Goal 2) has been underpinned by community work and community work organisations for many years. Community work has been a critical element in addressing the significant health inequalities faced by marginalised groups such as Travellers, migrants, asylum seekers, older people, members of the LGBTI+ community and others.

Qualified community workers in the HSE and now in Tusla have been critical in development and supporting this approach. These community workers work collaboratively with the NGO sector, supporting them to develop appropriate and culturally appropriate approaches to very pressing health and wellbeing inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://communityworkireland.ie/all-ireland-standards-for-community-work/>

Community workers in the health sector are critical members of interagency, collaborative forums designed to address inequalities in health, wellbeing and beyond, such as Local Community Development Committees, integration forums and regeneration boards.

In order to ensure the consolidation and ongoing development of this work, it is crucial that suitably qualified community workers are named as one of the professions in the National Strategic Framework for Health Workforce Planning.

## Recommendation

Include professional community work as one of the profession disciplined named in the National Strategic Framework for Health Workforce Planning and plan for the development and expansion of the discipline where appropriate in all areas of the country.

Yours sincerely,



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