

Sound governance and accountability arrangements are critically important – they provide a strong foundation for setting priorities, allocating resources, engaging with your community and partners, with the ultimate aim of better outcomes for communities.

'Governance and Accountability' is one module within The Safer Communities Programme, a wider series of guidance developed by the Scottish Government's Community Safety Unit to help support multi-agency strategy level groups dealing with community safety issues, and staff from partner organisations who support and deliver partnership activity.

This briefing reiterates the importance of good governance within a community safety partnership and summarises the accompanying guidance.

## Who is this for?

This summary is for senior managers working in community safety partnerships and wider community planning – those who are empowered to make decisions and agreements around partnership structures, partnership interactions, staff resources, finance and for performance monitoring and reporting.

The supply of timely guidance, information and support across all employees and partners can encourage trust, respect and confidence and help partnerships work effectively towards the complex and wide-ranging outcomes for their local community.

Senior staff should ensure that the employees and agencies involved in the community safety partnership understand:

- the principles of governance and accountability;
- the relevance to their day-to-day work; and
- how to assess and improve the partnership's effectiveness.

# Safer Communities Programme

*Governance and Accountability*

*Summary for Senior Partnership Managers*



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## Why is this important?

Since their introduction in 1996, community safety partnerships (CSPs) in Scotland have grown and evolved to adapt to social, political and economic changes. The introduction of the Single Outcome Agreement, changes to funding arrangements and financial pressures have all impacted on the work of CSPs.

As community safety partnerships accommodate various organisations (and organisational cultures), and individuals with a variety of backgrounds and levels of experience, they have expertise, resources, capacity for efficiencies and opportunities to adopt innovative approaches. These attributes are no doubt desirable when tackling multi-faceted community safety issues, but are accompanied by the risks and complexities of working across organisational boundaries.

There is no statutory requirement for community safety partnerships in Scotland, however since 2009 both national and local indicators have been geared towards a partnership approach to tackle issues.

Now more than ever, public sector organisations need to ensure and evidence that public money is being spent properly, so collaborative approaches need to demonstrate how the partnership is 'more than the sum of its parts' by making the most efficient and effective use of resources to deliver outcomes.

It is therefore prudent for partnerships to take stock and assess their current position when renewing strategies and action plans in order to prepare for, set and meet the priorities and challenges ahead.

## Policy Background

The overarching policy framework in Scotland is the Government's National Performance Framework which has five underpinning strategic objectives – to make Scotland **wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger**, and **greener**. Although effective governance can and does contribute to achievement of all of these objectives the key area of priority lies within the **safer and stronger** objective and, in particular, three of the national outcomes:

- *"We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger"*
- *"We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society"*
- *"We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others"*

While community safety partnerships, as an organisation, are not subject to specific Best Value assessment, most partner organisations involved will be aware of the requirements set out by Audit Scotland.

Best Value 2 provides judgement on the pace and direction of change within local authorities, and prospects for future improvement. It is key that the organisation can show self-awareness and can provide plans or pathways towards improvement.

The Best Value 2 Toolkit: Governance and Accountability<sup>1</sup> will be applied as part of Best Value audits of public bodies, and will inspect performance in relation to:

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Appropriate values and behaviour
- Support for members and elected officials to be effective in their role
- Effective decision making
- Effective challenge, scrutiny and review processes
- Engagement with stakeholders and how it supports accountability
- Effective governance arrangements when services are delivered by third parties

Related concepts have also been used as a background to the guidance. Collaborative Gain, primarily developed by the Improvement Service in Scotland, emphasises the need for partnership working to provide added value to the community<sup>2</sup>. It focuses on:

- The need for clear positive vision, positive leadership and strong governance
- The need to de-clutter the partnership landscape, clarifying partner contributions, including both those made individually and collectively
- The exploitation of common objectives and high inter agency trust, based upon good communications and mutual understanding
- The most effective and efficient use of resources

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.audit-scotland.co.uk/docs/best\\_value/2010/bv\\_100809\\_governance\\_accountability\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.co.uk/docs/best_value/2010/bv_100809_governance_accountability_toolkit.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/collaborative-gain/>

## What does the guidance include?

The guidance module highlights the innovative and successful work already undertaken in Scotland, and considers a number of useful toolkits previously published for use in other parts of the UK. As the community safety landscape is complex and different in every local authority area, the guide is not intended to be prescriptive, or exhaustive, instead providing suggestions for assessing the effectiveness of the partnership, towards making informed decisions on any adjustments or improvements required in order to effectively deliver on indicators within the Single Outcome Agreement.

It is designed for those within a partnership responsible for establishing and running programmes, projects and groups, and for those involved in reviewing strategies and action plans. It can also be included in induction materials for new members of staff.

The guide is split into sections as follows:

- What is good governance? – defining how good governance provides clarity and understanding to those involved, and a strong partnership foundation towards assessing, setting and delivering outcomes.
- The need for partnership – emphasising how and when a partnership approach should be used, and its importance in the community safety context.
- Managing the CSP – the importance of strong links and alignment within community planning partnership, and establishing a strong Partnership Board and Chair.
- Structuring the CSP – choosing the right type of group to enable partnership staff to take forward strategic priorities and operational tasks.
- Involving different partners – using stakeholder mapping to establish partners' motivations and potential opportunities and barriers to effective working relationships.
- Responsibilities of the individual – qualities to consider and adopt when working in partnership.
- Involving elected members – the importance of including local elected representatives in the partnership, and staying abreast of developments in related committees and scrutiny bodies.
- How well is your partnership working? – troubleshooting checklists to find potential solutions to barriers and issues within the partnership.
- Self-assessment tools for partnerships – a review of a number of tools already used by different organisations and partnerships, to help choose the right self-assessment process for your CSP.

### Contact us

Visit [www.scotland.gov.uk/communitysafety](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/communitysafety) and follow the link to “Information for practitioners” for access to the latest community safety information, tools and guidance.

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