

Benefits of Membership

The Community of Communities (CofC) is a standards-based quality improvement network bringing together a diverse group of therapeutic communities in the UK and abroad. Members engage each other in service evaluation and quality improvement using methods and values that reflect their philosophy.

1. Service Standards

The Service Standards represent international consensus on minimum standards for a range of communities and provide statements of best practice.

2. Self- and Peer-review

Each community evaluates themselves against the standards and then hosts a peer-review. The community also provides a peer-review team for another member service. The peer-reviews are intended to validate self-review scores and to identify problem areas and areas of achievement in an atmosphere of reflection and shared learning.

3. Local Report

Scores and comments from the self- and peer-review are collated into a detailed local report and specific areas of achievement and areas for improvement are identified. The report is the basis for action planning and provides evidence of internal quality assurance and external evaluation.

4. National Report

Aggregated data from all member communities is summarised in a national report, which allows communities to benchmark their service against others. It identifies common themes for member communities and informs relevant regional and national strategy.

5. Accreditation Service

CofC works in conjunction with HM Prison Service, Department of Health and the Royal College of Psychiatrists to accredit Democratic Therapeutic Communities in Prisons and the NHS.

6. Information and Support

- CofC maintains an up-to-date service directory of members and provides a central point of information for health and social care professionals.
- CofC works closely with national and international professional bodies such as the Association of Therapeutic Communities and UK based statutory agencies such as the Health Care Commission and the Social Care Inspectorate to keep members informed of important initiatives and to respond quickly to relevant legislation and policy.
- Members share information and keep each other in touch with developments and new initiatives through the **website**, **discussion list** and **newsletters**.
- CofC provides support to new communities through Associate Membership and developmental visits and to existing members who may be experiencing difficulties.

7. Annual Forum

The largest event of its kind in the UK, the forum provides an opportunity to meet other members of the network and attend a variety of specialist workshops. It also provides a forum for discussion about the overall findings of the peer-review cycle and for members to contribute to the development of the network.

8. Continuing Professional Development

CofC provides training and placements to develop the professional expertise of staff and client members including opportunities to become lead and specialist reviewers. Other training events based on findings from peer-reviews are planned.

9. Certificate of participation and logo

On completion of the annual cycle communities receive a certificate of participation which demonstrates commitment to on-going evaluation and quality improvement. The community is also eligible to use the relevant Community of Communities logo on all literature.

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