



Roles and Responsibilities for Community Panel Co-Opted Members

Thank you for your interest in the role of Co-opted member at one of Cumberland Council's Community Panels. Before you complete and return your expression of interest, please take a moment to read the following document, which outlines the role of a Co-opted member and outlines eligibility and recruitment criteria.

It is important to us that Co-opted members have a strong commitment to the Community Panel area to which they are applying. If your local panel is not listed on the expression of interest document, it means that this panel is not recruiting for Co-opted members at this time. There will be future rounds of recruitment when different panels will be inviting expressions of interest.

We are keen to invite a range of experiences and backgrounds, and you may feel that your own experience is not accounted for in the outline below. There is no one template for a Co-opted member, so if you believe you can bring something to the role, whether or not it is outlined here, we encourage you to apply.

If this document is not accessible to you, please get in touch by emailing communities@cumberland.gov.uk

Core Role

As a Co-opted member you will:

- Bring any specialist knowledge, skills, experience and expertise you may have to the development of the panel's decisions.
- Ensure that there is an effective independent challenge to the Community Panel and that this challenge is constructive, to support the panel in carrying out its role.
- Act as a non-party-political voice for those who live and/or work in the panel area.

Responsibilities

- Attend all formal meetings of the Community Panel (approx. 4 per year). Meetings are usually held in the evenings.
- Establish good relations with other members and officers.
- Attend additional induction and training sessions as required.
- Prepare for each meeting by reading the agenda and additional information to familiarise yourself with the issues to be covered during the meeting.
- At meetings you will need to listen carefully, ask questions in a way which is non-judgemental, respect confidentiality and help the panel to reach decisions which are for the best of the local community.
- Keep abreast of local issues and act as an advocate for those lesser heard voices in shaping Community Panel decisions.

Co-opted members are not able to vote on decisions, but will be treated equally in all other respects, and will have the same level of support and information as elected members on the panel.

Required competencies, personal skills and qualities for Co-opted members of a Community Panel.

Who is eligible?

- You must be at least 18 years old by 1st April 2024.
- You should ideally live or work in the Community Panel area to which you are applying. If you work in one area and live in another, you should apply to the area with which you believe you have the strongest connection and explain the rationale for this in your application.
- You must not be:
 - A current employee of Cumberland Council or Westmorland and Furness Council.
 - A serving member of a Community Panel.

What qualities do I need?

- As well as being of good character, you will should be able to:
 - **Think strategically** - to have breadth of vision, to rise above detail, and to see problems and issues from a wider, forward-looking perspective.
 - **Make good judgements** - to take a balanced, open-minded and objective approach - for example, in evaluating the priorities of a Community Panel and the varied needs of the local community.
 - **Be open to change** - to be able to challenge accepted views constructively without becoming confrontational, and to recognise and respond positively to the need for change.
 - **Scrutinise and challenge** - to be able to rigorously scrutinise and challenge constructively, and to put the needs of the local community at the heart of all decision making.
 - **Communicate effectively** - to be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing - and to interact positively with other members of the panel, officers and members of the public.
- The following personal skills and qualities are also very important:
 - Team working.
 - Community focus.
 - Self-confidence.
 - Enthusiasm and drive.
 - Respect for others.
 - Integrity.
 - Decisiveness.