Wales Safer Communities Network:

Training Needs Assessment

Authors:

Ella Rabaiotti,

Mike Harrison,

Deborah Jones,

Swansea University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Training Needs Assessment (TNA) for community safety professionals across Wales was undertaken by Swansea University on behalf of Wales Safer Communities Network ('the Network'). The TNA was based on mixed-methods research including a survey and focus group. Despite broad circulation, 93% of survey respondents worked within a local authority, police force or office of police and crime commissioner. The focus group was representative of community safety partners across Wales. The key findings include:

Skills training welcomed despite high level of confidence in appropriate skills

- 74.3% of participants felt confident to very confident in appropriate skills
- 65.1% of participants would like more training in all appropriate skills
- 72.5% of participants would like training in strategic assessment and 71.8% would like more training in research skills (including data collation, sharing and analysis), problem solving; and risk assessment.

Good level of overall community safety knowledge evident - strongest in ASB

- 59.5% of participants were knowledgeable about all relevant topic areas
- 58% knew where to find training in community safety topic areas
- 49.2% of participants thought current training provision could be improved
- 70% of participants thought training in information sharing could be improved

Community safety training should encompass five key thematic areas

- Five sequential training areas are identified (see figure 1 overleaf), commencing with **core community safety** - skills based training (strategic assessment, research skills, problem solving and risk assessment) which includes relevant legislation, duties and powers, crime prevention & safeguarding (including contextual safeguarding), as well as basic knowledge of relevant and emerging topics
- **Integrated approaches** – two separate but interlinked training areas, including **multi-agency problem solving** training and **partnership working** involving a practical understanding of community safety partnership roles and responsibilities, partners individual and group contributions to support the implementation of partnership activity and problem solving approaches
- **Project and programme management** - Basic project management training to support implementation of partnership plans with a focus on project evaluation skills and measuring impact. Inclusion of programme management to support strategic and operational management of multiple projects.
- **Governance and leadership** to support decision making and help manage risk. To include knowledge sharing at leadership level to strengthen community safety response and clarity of governance and escalation routes.

Professionals prefer flexible, practice based training delivery and CPD recognition

- Most people access community safety partnership related training primarily through their own organisation (56.8%)
- Opportunity exists to strengthen informal and formal training opportunities within the Network and Associated Networks
- Participants would prefer 'in person', flexible and practice based training
- Train the trainer is a common multi-agency delivery method but relies on shared resources, appropriately identified staff, plus a developed feedback and quality control mechanism.
- 92.8% of participants would like recognition through continuous professional development (CPD). There is an opportunity for further professionalisation of the sector (particularly local government) through a qualifications framework

Figure 1: Suggested Training Needs Framework

Recommendations

- To adopt the five key training building blocks for community safety (core community safety, problem solving, partnership working, project management and governance and leadership) (see figure 1)
- To co-produce the detailed content of the five training building blocks with a range of community safety practitioners and leaders to ensure training meets practice based needs
- To work with an appropriate provider to qualitatively review and evaluate the training materials, with a view to providing accreditation and a qualification framework to support the professionalisation of community safety professionals
- To consider the resources and delivery options required to take forward the findings and recommendations of the Training Needs Assessment