



ECM Essentials

Voluntary and Community

Helping form local authority alliances

After a year of development with authorities and voluntary agencies, INTEC is pleased to introduce an important new solution for those tasked with delivering the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. **ECM Essentials: Voluntary and Community** helps authorities to forge alliances with all those groups and agencies that work in the community for the benefit of children but that fall outside of direct authority funding.

The voluntary and community sector is key in the delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda, which legally demands a duty of cooperation from all managers of services for children – even where services fall outside of local authority funding (and thus employer-driven standards and protocols). The diverse, distributed and autonomous nature of the voluntary and community sector provides a significant challenge for local authority professionals charged with bringing about change with such providers.

ECM Essentials: Voluntary and Community enables organisations to:

- » **engage** all managers and workers in the voluntary and community sector
- » **review** the development needs of all workers within the sector in a non-threatening manner
- » **support** managers and workers by ensuring a core level of competence, enabling a unified and integrated approach to supporting children.

ECM Essentials: Voluntary and Community comprises two practical tools, **ECM Priority** and **ECM Profile**, and a supplementary CPD programme.

Outcome 1 Collaborative working

All managers of services or activities involving children, however informal in nature, are required to understand both their obligations for the care of children, and the expectation that they will share (through appropriate channels and using strict protocols) any concerns that they have. Many barriers, both real and perceived, have previously prevented such cooperative working.

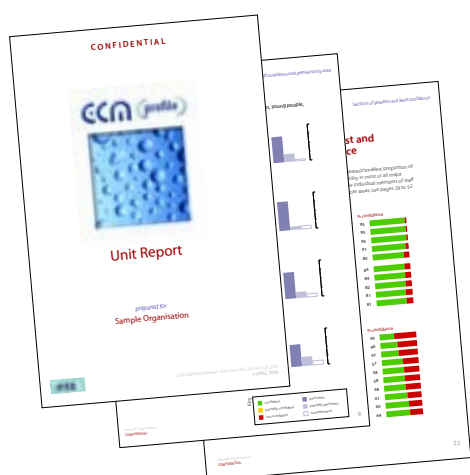
ECM Priority helps to ensure that collaborative working can flourish. It identifies potential barriers to integration, as seen through the eyes of those who manage child-orientated activities, and provides the strategic information needed to lead, manage and implement the ECM agenda.



Outcome 2 Identifying development needs

ECM Profile is designed to help assess the core competences needed to cover Every Child Matters and fill in any gaps. It is a simple but sophisticated self-evaluation tool which helps to catalyse improved practice at both individual and organisational level. It provides analysis of each individual practitioner's activity and confidence with respect to the skills and knowledge contained in the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* (Common Core prospectus).

ECM Profile offers a chance to celebrate good practice, and to find out where and how provision might be improved.



Outcome 3 Addressing development needs

ECM Essentials: Voluntary and Community also includes a set of simple and effective resources which will enable managers of services or activities to address any development needs identified. This may particularly be in areas required for effective multi-agency collaboration, such as sharing information and ensuring that children stay safe from harm.

The materials enable any organisation or individual to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and understanding required to meet the Common Core prospectus, and to improve the support that they give to children and young people.

Case study

A Community Care Forum in London is using **ECM Essentials: Voluntary and Community** to help foster a greater awareness of ECM in 60 of its partner organisations. The project is also acting as a catalyst for more effective alliances in the future. Each member of staff and volunteer in every organisation will be given the opportunity to participate.

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