

THE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ADULTS PSA AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS
Guidance Note for Government offices and Local Areas
December 2007

INTRODUCTION

1. The Socially Excluded Adults Public Service Agreement (PSA) was agreed as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), and sets out the Government's key priorities on tackling exclusion among vulnerable adults over the coming three-year spending period (2008/9 - 2010/11). The core aim of the PSA is to increase the proportion of the most socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and in employment, education and training (EET). This underpins a long-term vision of ensuring that vulnerable adults have the foundations they need to get their lives back on track and avoid more entrenched exclusion.
2. In central government the lead department for the PSA is the Cabinet Office, and it is also jointly owned by: the Department for Work and Pensions; Communities and Local Government; the Department of Health; the Ministry of Justice; the Department for Children, Schools and Families; and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.
3. Local authorities and their partners have an important responsibility for tackling social exclusion, and have a key role to play in the delivery of the PSA. To reflect this role, the PSA performance indicators are included in the new national indicator set (NIS) for local government that will form the basis of the new model Local Area Agreements (LAA) being negotiated between Government Offices and local areas.
4. This guidance note has been produced to support Government Offices (GOs) and local areas in the negotiation of LAA priorities linked to the Socially Excluded Adults PSA. It is intended to inform discussions on local priorities and feed into LAA negotiating briefs by providing a clear rationale and evidence base for focusing on the employment and housing outcomes of excluded adults. In conjunction with baseline data, it is intended to help GOs and localities to identify areas of low performance and understand where there may be a strong case for setting LAA improvement targets for the PSA indicators. The note covers:
 - The vision and rationale of the Socially Excluded Adults PSA
 - The implications for Local Area Agreements
 - Building the case for prioritising social exclusion within LAAs
 - Some key principles for target setting
 - Some key guiding principles for delivery¹
 - A brief FAQ on the PSA and indicators (Annex A)

THE PSA VISION AND RATIONALE

5. The vision of the Socially Excluded Adults PSA is to ensure that the most socially excluded adults are offered the chance to get back on a path to a more successful life, by increasing the proportion who are in:

¹ This guidance note is primarily intended to support GOs and localities in the negotiation of LAA priorities relating to the Socially Excluded Adults PSA. Although some initial guidance on delivery is included, a more detailed best practice resource on working with excluded adults will be produced in early 2008.

- settled accommodation; and
 - employment, education or training.
6. A home and a job are the core foundations of normal, everyday life which the majority of people take for granted. The Government wants to extend this expectation and aspiration to the most excluded, for whom a settled home and the opportunity to work can often seem out of reach.
 7. The PSA focuses on four client groups who are particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of disadvantage, and who may be negotiating a difficult transition such as leaving prison or long-term care. These factors make them particularly at risk of falling into persistent exclusion, but also mean that they are in contact with the services that could and should make a difference. The four client groups are:
 - Young people leaving care
 - Adults offenders under probation supervision
 - Adults in contact with secondary mental health services
 - Adults with moderate to severe learning difficulties
 8. Adults with multiple disadvantages often come into contact with a range of local services, but tend to benefit less from the support they receive because their lives and engagement with these services are too chaotic. A key part of the PSA vision is to embed some core priorities across local service providers, encouraging them to work together to provide a more coherent and personalised response to the housing and employment needs of excluded adults.
 9. The PSA focuses on four key client groups and is not intended to cover all those experiencing social exclusion. The Government is working across the CSR07 framework to ensure that the needs of other groups, such as those experiencing homelessness, are also addressed.

Why focus on social exclusion?

10. The Socially Excluded Adults PSA forms a key part of the Government's renewed drive on tackling exclusion. As set out in *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*², the improvements in outcomes for the vast majority of the population over the last ten years have highlighted the need to focus on a small group of individuals who are still experiencing more entrenched disadvantage.
11. These individuals often suffer from a range of complex problems, which can become mutually reinforcing and lead to further negative outcomes in the future. For this small group, social exclusion is about more than just poverty – it is about lacking the personal capacity, self-confidence and aspiration to make the most of the opportunities, choices and options in life that the majority of people take for granted.
12. The consequences of failing to tackle persistent exclusion are significant, not only for individuals themselves but also for their families and for society more widely. For the children of excluded adults, evidence shows that growing up in poverty and disadvantage means that they are likely to go on to experience the same negative outcomes as their parents. For society, long-term exclusion creates a significant drain on statutory services and generates negative external impacts for the communities in which excluded individuals live.

²http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications/reaching_out/index.asp

13. Tackling social exclusion is a major challenge for public services, but cycles of disadvantage can be broken. *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion* set out some key principles which need to underpin a new approach in the way central and local government addresses social exclusion. These include:
- A greater focus on identifying those at risk, and on intervening early to help prevent the onset of severe exclusion
 - Performance management systems which are more attuned to poor outcomes for the most disadvantaged
 - More effective multi-agency working to ensure a holistic approach to dealing with the complex needs which underpin poor outcomes
14. The Socially Excluded Adults PSA is guided by these core principles, and represents an important commitment from across Government to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable adults over the 2008-11 spending period.

Why focus on these client groups?

15. The PSA is targeted at four specific client groups: young people leaving care, adult offenders, adults with serious mental health problems and adults with learning disabilities. Although this focus is not intended to capture all people who experience social exclusion, it reflects a range of evidence which suggests that these groups are particularly at-risk:

Adults falling within these four groups are:

- More likely to be unemployed: For example, around 60% of care leavers are in EET compared to over 80% of all young people, and only about one in ten people with learning disabilities in touch with services are doing any form of paid work.
- More likely to not be living in settled accommodation: Around a third of prisoners about to leave prison said they had nowhere to stay, while one in four tenants with mental health problems has serious rent arrears and is at risk of losing their home.
- Likely to experience multiple forms of disadvantage: For example, around 40% of rough sleepers in London in 2005 had been in prison, and around 30% to 50% of people misusing drugs also have mental health problems
- Likely to experience a difficult transition away from intensive contact from services: Adults undergoing transitions, such as leaving prison or long-term care, are often vulnerable to slipping into more severe forms of exclusion. For example, evidence suggests that 20% of care leavers experience homelessness within two years.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

16. The Socially Excluded Adults PSA is underpinned by eight performance indicators which will be used to measure progress on improving employment and housing outcomes for the target client groups.
17. As these indicators cover services delivered by local authorities (both alone and in

partnership with others), they are also included in the national indicator (NIS) set for local government. This reflects the important role of local authorities and their partners in tackling social exclusion at local level. The indicators are detailed below, and data for each will be available at both national and local level from 2008.

Client group	Settled Accommodation	Employment, Education or Training ³
Offenders	Proportion of offenders under probation supervision in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence	Proportion of offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence
Young people leaving care	Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in suitable accommodation	Proportion of former care leavers aged 19 who are in employment, education or training
Adults with mental health problems	Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation	Proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment
Adults with learning disabilities	Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation	Proportion of adults with learning disabilities in employment

18. Detailed information on each PSA indicator is available on the Social Exclusion Task Force website⁴. In line with the timescales set by Communities and Local Government (CLG), full technical guidance on all indicators in the national indicator set will be published in the final handbook of definitions by February 2008. It is expected that this will clarify the final reporting and data collection arrangements.
19. As part of the national indicator set for local government, the eight PSA indicators will be amongst those from which Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) will choose when setting improvement targets for their Local Area Agreement (LAA). As set out in the Local Government White Paper '*Strong and Prosperous Communities*', each locality will agree, in negotiation with Government Offices, up to 35 designated LAA improvement targets⁵.
20. These targets will build on the locally-agreed priorities set out within Sustainable Communities Strategies, and should reflect a combination of local aspirations, the views of local communities and services, a shared evidence base, and national policy objectives. Where these factors suggest the need to focus on improving outcomes for excluded adults, LSPs are encouraged to consider setting appropriate designated targets for some or all of the PSA indicators within their LAA. More detailed guidance on how to identify whether these indicators should be included as priority targets is provided elsewhere in this note.
21. Where priorities around social exclusion are not included in the up to 35 designated targets, local authorities and partners should assess whether the PSA indicators could be included as additional local 'non-designated' targets. As set out in the LAA operational guidance, these local targets should not be seen as 'second-tier', as

³ To reflect the PSA's long-term vision of enabling more excluded adults to enter paid and meaningful work, the indicators for the offender, learning disability and mental health client groups specifically measure employment status only. Education, training and volunteer activity, however, play a vital role in the journey toward paid employment and it is expected that they will form an important part of local delivery strategies.

⁴ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/psa.aspx

⁵ Plus the statutory educational and early years targets.

named partners will be under the same statutory duty to have regard to them.

22. Although the eight PSA performance indicators have been developed as a coherent package to help drive delivery of the Socially Excluded Adults PSA, there is no expectation that LSPs would have to choose all eight as a single set. In line with the LAA framework, areas will select indicators on the basis of local priorities and in light of key local data. Areas may therefore choose to include any of the eight indicators which reflect these locally-determined priorities and any key patterns of performance.
23. For example, an area with a significant number of adults with learning disabilities may wish to include both or either of the learning disabilities indicators within their LAA. However, it may not wish to give a similar focus to the offender indicators where there are a relatively small number of offenders in the community, or where outcomes are already positive. The sections below and appendices to this guidance note provide some local data which has been compiled to help areas and GOs in assessing current patterns of performance for the PSA client groups.
24. A key part of the PSA vision is embedding a more effective joined-up approach to helping the most excluded adults, so that services can work together to meet their multiple and complex needs. Local Area Agreements are a key vehicle for driving this multi-agency approach, and both GOs and LSPs are encouraged to strongly consider whether setting LAA improvement targets can help drive a significant step-change in outcomes for vulnerable adults in their areas.

BUILDING A CASE FOR PRIORITISING SOCIAL EXCLUSION AT LOCAL LEVEL

25. In developing their LAAs and selecting improvement targets it will be important that local areas undertake a detailed assessment of the case for prioritising exclusion. In line with wider guidance on setting LAA priorities, LSPs should work with Government Offices to:
 - review the existing evidence base and patterns of performance;
 - assess how the PSA priorities fit with the vision and the ambition of the area;
 - consider the wider benefits of focusing on excluded adults; and
 - build on the existing knowledge of partners and GOs on key areas for improvement

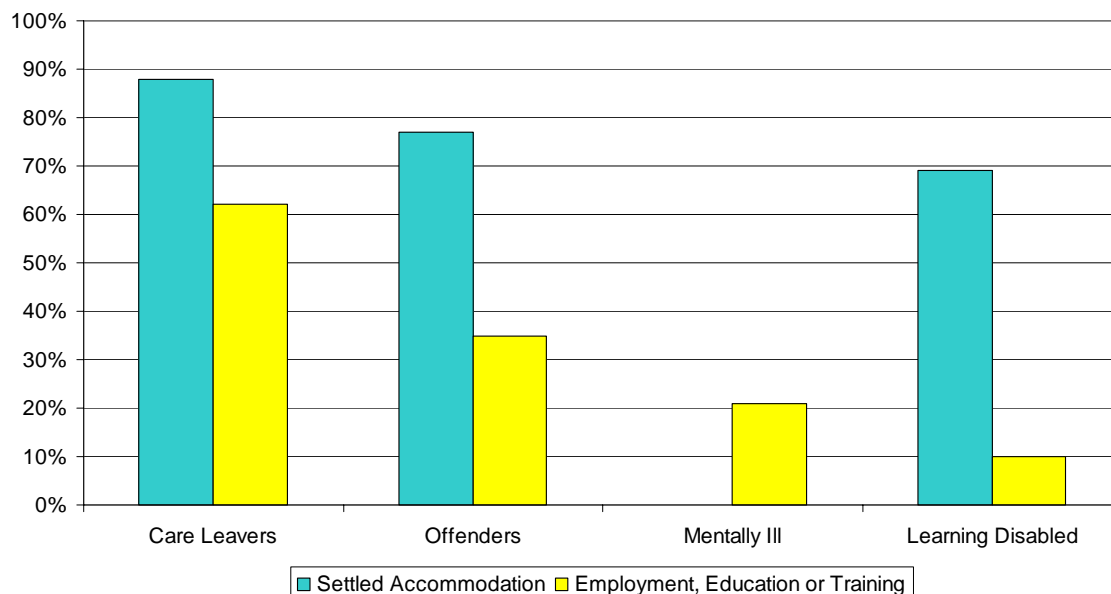
Building a shared evidence base

26. An important starting point for LAA negotiations is a shared evidence base which can be used to help identify local priorities. GOs and localities should review a range of data to help build a detailed picture of current performance for the PSA client groups and assess the scope for improvement.

National baseline data

27. The table and chart below show national baselines for the two PSA outcomes. For both offenders and care leavers, figures are based on the actual PSA indicators. However, as the indicators for adults with mental health problems and for adults with learning disabilities are new, figures are based on proxy data (where available).

Client Group	Latest Data	Size of Group	Outcome 1: Settled Accommodation	Outcome 2: Employment / EET
Care Leavers	2005/6	5,300	88%	62%
Offenders	2006/7	55,408	77%	35%
Mentally Ill	2004/5	464,780	N/A ⁶	21% ⁷
Learning Disabled	2005/6	122,155	69% ⁸	10%



28. While national baselines indicate that employment outcomes are significantly lower than those linked to accommodation, it is important to recognise the critical underpinning role that housing plays for vulnerable adults. Settled housing is a key foundation which can provide the stability that excluded individuals need to improve their lives across a range of outcome areas, including employment. Driving further progress in rates of settled accommodation is therefore a vitally important part of the PSA

The local evidence base

29. To support the identification of trends at local level, a short data pack has been compiled for each of the Government Office regions. These set out performance against the PSA indicators (and proxies) across all top-tier authorities, and provide regional and national benchmarks. They also include data on the size of the client groups within each local area. The regional data packs are available on the Social Exclusion Task Force website⁹, and should be shared with LSPs to provide a resource to guide initial priority setting.

30. In addition to the data packs, annexed to this guidance note is a short summary

⁶ no data is currently available on the settled accommodation status of those with mental health problems

⁷ proxy data from HCC survey of community mental health services

⁸ proxy data on % living in the community and receiving services

⁹ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx

analysis for each Government Office region identifying particular 'hot-spots' where performance is particularly low on each indicator (Annex B). These provide a traffic light assessment of each upper-tier authority based on which national quartile of performance they are currently in, and are intended to provide a quick reference tool for GOs for identifying areas where it may be most helpful to set local improvement targets.

31. As with all baseline data this should be used a guide to start discussions with local areas, and a range of other factors should also feed into the priority setting process. Alongside current performance, GOs and local areas should pay particular reference to the size of the client group in their area.
32. A spreadsheet containing all the baseline data is included with this guidance at Annex C. GOs are encouraged to feed this data into any existing diagnostic tools or analyses that they are using to improve their understanding of key priorities for their local areas, and in the development of LAA negotiating briefs.

Using other data sources

33. While baseline figures for the PSA indicators are an important part of identifying priorities around social exclusion, they should form one part of a wider statistical evidence base which draws on related data and sources linked to the PSA priorities. In considering the need to focus on employment / housing outcomes for the four client groups, it may also be useful to reflect upon a range of linked outcome and contextual measures, such as:
 - Overall employment rates
 - Incapacity benefit claimant rates
 - Homelessness rates
 - Rates of reoffending
 - Educational attainment for children in care
 - Overall NEET rates
 - CSCI inspection reports on mental health services
 - CSCI inspection reports on learning disability services
 - Health-led Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)
34. In addition to reviewing baseline data, local areas will also need to consider other less quantitative sources in assessing whether any of the PSA indicators should be prioritised. For example, areas may wish to draw on the results of service user consultations or residents surveys.

Limitations of existing data

35. In using existing baseline data to review performance and set improvement targets, GOs and local areas should be aware of a number of important limitations around the existing data. These partially result from the fact that these are new indicators and / or are being published at local authority level for the first time. Work is continuing to ensure that the indicators and data are as robust as possible for the start of collection in April 2008, including through the current CLG consultation on the NIS handbook of definitions.
 - Use of proxy data for baselines: For both the mental health and learning disabilities client groups, the indicators for the PSA are new. The current baseline

data is therefore based on proxy indicators¹⁰, and the first year for which data will be available for the new indicators will be 2008/09. In setting improvement targets LSPs should be aware that the new indicator will not be directly comparable with currently available proxy baselines.

- **Historical data:** The availability of historical data varies for each of the indicators. For the care leavers client group data is available from 2001/02, and for the offender client group data is available for 2005/6. In both case historical data is provided within the regional data packs, and should be used by local areas as part of the target setting process. However, as above both the mental health and learning disabilities indicators are based on proxies, and no directly comparable historical data is currently available.
- **Small client numbers for care leaver data:** For the care leaver indicators, the sample size for data in a number of local areas is very low. Where this is the case data will be subject to significant historical variation and caution should be applied in using data for target setting. The focus for setting specific improvement targets will be areas where performance is low and numbers of the client group are high, which should ensure that data is more robust where any targets are set.

Linking social exclusion to the wider vision and priorities of local areas

36. While the specific vision of the PSA is to improve the life chances of the most excluded adults, the outcomes and indicators which it covers are strongly linked with:

- a number of wider outcome areas which are likely to be a focus for localities;
- other Public Service Agreements announced as part of CSR07; and
- other indicators within the new national indicator set (NIS).

37. Prioritising the PSA indicators and working to deliver improved outcomes for excluded groups can therefore have a significant impact on the achievement of a range of broader outcomes. For example, where an area has identified community safety as an overarching local priority, tackling the accommodation and employment needs of ex-offenders can form a crucial part of a long-term, preventative approach to reducing reoffending, delivering against PSA 23 ('Make Communities Safer'), and making progress against the safer communities indicators in the NIS (NI15 – NI 49). Evidence suggests, for example, that addressing severe accommodation problems for offenders leaving prison can reduce re-offending by up to 20%¹¹.

38. Similarly, where tackling worklessness is identified as a local priority, areas should be encouraged to consider the benefits of focusing on vulnerable client groups who are likely to form a significant part of those experiencing recurrent or long-term economic inactivity. It has been estimated, for example, that offenders comprise between 2 and 3 per cent of the average monthly in-flow to the unemployment pool¹², and around 40% of IB claimants report a mental health condition as their main health issue.

39. Including some of the PSA indicators as part of a broader 'package' of LAA targets focused around these broader outcomes can also be important in helping areas to

¹⁰ Sources for the proxy indicators are provided at the end of each of the regional data packs

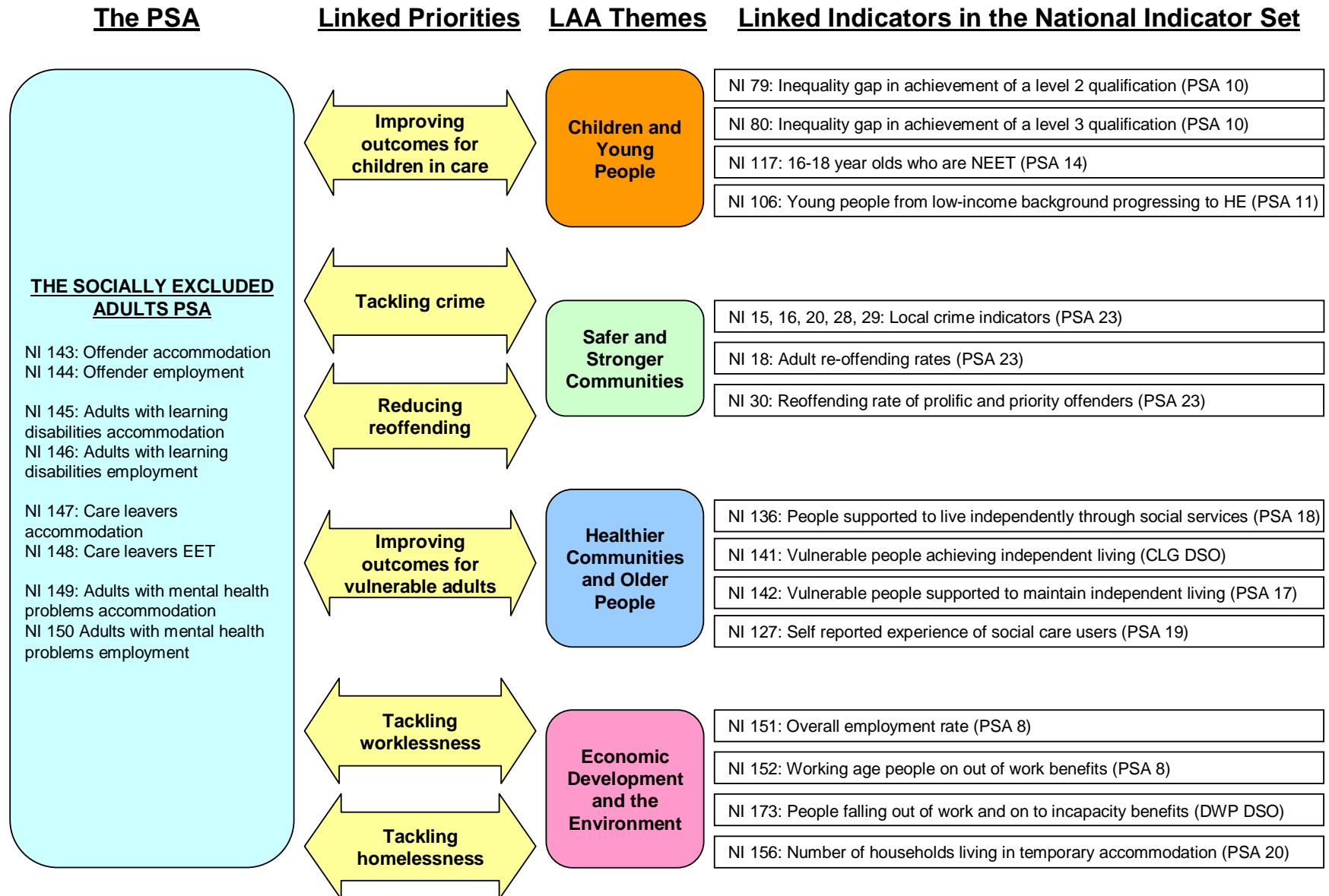
¹¹ Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives (ODPM, 2005)

¹² Employment and Training for Ex-offenders (JRF, 1998)

target particularly vulnerable groups as part of their wider delivery. The indicators on care leavers participation in employment, education and training, for example, could form part of a wider approach on tackling NEET rates and help to ensure an appropriate focus on this particularly vulnerable group.

40. It will be important that areas fully understand these links when considering how a focus on exclusion can fit with the high-level priorities agreed through their Sustainable Community Strategies. The diagram below illustrates how the Socially Excluded Adults PSA feeds into wider local priorities, and can have a positive impact on a number of other indicators in the NIS.
41. Given the significant overlap between the PSA and other outcome areas, it is likely that work to deliver against other indicators and PSAs will also contribute to improving employment and housing outcomes for excluded adults. Where LAAs do not include the PSA indicators in the set of 35 improvement targets, LSPs should be encouraged to consider how delivery against other priorities, such as educational attainment for care leavers, can help drive progress against the social exclusion indicators.

The Socially Excluded Adults PSA: Key links across the local outcomes framework*



* Please note that this diagram is for illustrative purposes only and provides some initial examples of links across the new performance framework. There will be a range of areas which will be impacted by or will contribute to delivery of the Socially Excluded Adults PSA.

The wider benefits of tackling exclusion

42. As well as recognising the links between the PSA and wider local and national priorities, local areas should also be encouraged to consider a range of other positive impacts which can result from a focus on reducing long-term social exclusion:

Prioritising positive outcomes for socially excluded adults can:

- **Promote enhanced joined-working across key local partners:** The PSA sets out a shared, cross-government commitment to helping the most excluded adults, and should provide an impetus for improved multi-agency working across key local services such as probation, mental health trusts and Jobcentre Plus.
- **Generate significant long-term savings in downstream costs:** Persistent and severe exclusion amongst vulnerable adults can present substantial costs to local services. Case study work showed that some adults can be in contact with up to ten different agencies, with a sample of clients of one voluntary agency estimated to generate an average annual cost to services of £23,000 per case. Tackling exclusion before it has become entrenched can help reduce costs to services in the long-term. A number of research studies have highlighted the significant costs to services associated with vulnerable client groups, and the positive cost benefits of a more preventative approach¹³. The SETF are currently exploring further ways of assessing the long-term costs associated with the specific PSA client groups.
- **Promote community cohesion:** By helping to avoid the negative external effects of a small number of highly excluded individuals
- **Generate positive outcomes for the children and families of excluded adults:** Many of the excluded adults in the four client groups will be parents. Securing positive outcomes for them will have an important positive impact of their children. In particular, helping more vulnerable adults into work can significantly contribute to tackling child poverty.

Building on existing knowledge on key priorities for improvement

43. An important part of developing Sustainable Community Strategies and agreeing LAA priorities is drawing on the knowledge held across local partners around key areas for improvement. The client and outcome focus of the PSA means that the following local partners will have a particular role in agreeing potential priorities around social exclusion, and in driving the delivery of improved outcomes for the PSA client groups:

- Leaving Care Services
- Primary Care Trusts
- Third Sector Partners
- Mental Health Trusts
- Local Prison and Probation Services
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

¹³ See, for example:

- SQW (2006) The Costs and Benefits of Independent Living: Final Report to the ODI
- Hogg et al. (2005) Cost savings associated with improving appropriate and reducing inappropriate preventive care: cost-consequences analysis
- The Prince's Trust (2007) The Cost of Exclusion Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK

- Jobcentre Plus
- Registered Social Landlords
- Housing and Supporting People Services
- Adult Social Services
- Learning Disability Partnership Boards

SETTING LAA IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

44. As set out in the Delivery Agreement, no specific national targets are being set for the eight PSA indicators. At local level, where any of the indicators are included in LAAs, appropriate 3-year improvement targets should be negotiated between Local Strategic Partnerships and Government Offices.
45. As stated in the LAA operational guidance, in setting targets partners should reflect the ambitious but realistic levels of improvement they hope to achieve over the 3 year LAA period. The level of improvement target set will therefore depend on local circumstances, and in setting and signing-off targets, local authorities and GOs should consider a range of factors including:
- Evidence on existing patterns of performance, including current baselines, historical trends and regional / national benchmarks (all available in the regional datapacks)
 - The capacity of key delivery agencies and the LSP to deliver improvements needed to drive progress, and the level of local resources available
 - External trends which may influence the achievement of targets, such as wider economic conditions
 - The views of key delivery partners, and any related targets they may be working toward
46. Where performance for an area is significantly below the national or regional average, it would be expected that targets agreed should represent a reasonably ambitious narrowing of the performance gap. In some cases areas and GOs may wish to compare performance across particular 'statistical families' (e.g. large urban areas, or those with similarly large numbers of particular client groups). Baseline data for all upper-tier authorities is included at Annex C and can be used for comparative purposes.
47. As four of the indicators are new measures of performance, no directly comparable baseline data is currently available. The regional data packs contain proxy data for three of the four new indicators and GOs and LSPs will need to use these to assess current levels of performance.
48. The IDeA have produced a useful guide to help local areas in target-setting, which can be downloaded at: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=845670>. Links to some further resources and guidance on target setting and local performance management are provided below:
- HMT (2003) Setting Key Targets for Executive Agencies: A Guide
 - HMT (2001) Choosing the Right Fabric
 - IDeA : <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=1174238>

SOME KEY PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

49. A key ambition of the new LAA framework is to empower local partnerships to “take responsibility for identifying the means by which local priorities are tackled”. The Socially Excluded Adults PSA and the indicators within the new NIS articulate the key outcomes for excluded adults that the Government wants to see delivered over the coming spending period, and it will be for local areas to agree the most effective ways of achieving these.
50. However, the PSA Delivery Agreement¹⁴ does highlight some key principles which can help to guide effective delivery at local level. These build on initial analysis of the delivery chain for each of the client groups, and reflect some key messages from the consultation with service providers, the third sector and service users carried out as part of development of the PSA.

Some Key Principles of Effective Delivery

- ⇒ More effective inter-agency working: Joint-working is crucial in ensuring a coherent and personalised response to the wider needs of excluded adults. It will be important that effective partnership arrangements, and a shared focus on employment and housing outcomes, are in place across key service providers such as Jobcentre Plus, PCTs, prisons and probation, Mental Health Trusts and RSLs. Local areas should also consider specific ways of facilitating greater inter-agency co-operation, such as improved data sharing to help identify excluded individuals and tailor support to their needs.
- ⇒ A focus on helping excluded adults to access and maintain settled accommodation, across both the social and private sector: It will be important that local areas work across the social housing sector to ensure that the supply of homes and specialised support most effectively meets the needs of excluded adults. Local areas should also consider ways of improving access to private sector housing for vulnerable adults. Rent deposit and accredited landlord schemes can play an important part in promoting the use of the private sector, and LSPs are strongly encouraged to ensure that these are in place and accessible to vulnerable client groups.
- ⇒ A focus on improving access to jobs, particularly through working with employers: Working with partners like Jobcentre Plus and the LSC, LSPs will have an important strategic role in coordinating skills and employment support and ensuring provision meets the needs of excluded adults. It is also vital that partnerships fully engage with employers, using vehicles like Local Employment Partnerships to tailor support to their skills needs, and to increase the number of opportunities offered to excluded adults.
- ⇒ Engaging the third sector in delivery: The third sector can make a significant contribution to improving employment and housing outcomes for excluded adults, and are often best placed to provide the tailored support which meets their complex needs. Local areas are encouraged to explore ways of better involving the sector in both delivery and commissioning of services for excluded groups.

Learning from best practice

51. Identifying and disseminating what works for socially excluded people was one of the key guiding principles set out in the Government’s 2006 action plan on social

¹⁴ A copy of the delivery agreement is available on the Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pbr_csr/psa/pbr_csr07_psaopportunity.cfm

exclusion¹⁵. There is significant evidence that many areas have already developed effective and innovative ways of better supporting excluded adults from the four PSA client groups, and it will be vital that the spread of best practice is further encouraged.

52. Some initial good practice examples around employment and accommodation, identified through the development of the PSA, have been provided below. To help further identify and disseminate effective delivery, the SETF will be producing a more substantial best practice resource early next year. This will be particularly aimed at supporting LSPs in the development of their own plans for delivery once the new national indicator set comes into force from April 2008.

Box 1: HARP (Housing and Returning Prisoners) Protocol

The HARP protocol strategy has been developed in the Tyne & Wear area by local authority housing departments, the voluntary sector, the prison & probation service and GONE. It brings together statutory and voluntary housing providers with prison and probation services, to create a common approach to planning for the housing of returning prisoners.

The Protocol seeks to address:

- statutory housing authorities' duties towards the prevention of homelessness;
- prison and probation's commitment to effective resettlement;
- the promotion of community safety; and
- maximising the contribution of RSLs and the voluntary sector to housing and supporting offenders.

A copy of the protocol can be downloaded from the web at: <http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/harp-protocol>

Box 2: Improving housing outcomes for care leavers

Oxfordshire has a "joint Housing Team" funded by Children's Services (County Council) and local district councils. Leaving care and housing staff work together to identify young people at risk of homelessness to assess need, offer advice and where necessary make the right plans to meet future housing need. The team had developed a range of accommodation options for care leavers

- dedicated supported housing (Key2 Housing Oxford);
- housing with private landlords;
- flats for care leavers with housing associations; and
- development of supported lodgings (family based placements)

Housing support is linked with wider services to provide young people with like skills, to raise their self esteem and prepare them for training and employment.

In 2004/05 23% of care leavers were living in unsuitable housing. Following the development of the Joint Housing Team, in 2006/07 only 8% of care leavers were living in unsuitable accommodation

¹⁵ Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion

Box 3: Promoting employment for adults with learning disabilities

North Lanarkshire Council started with the assumption that people can and in most cases want to work, and has placed in excess of 120 people with learning disabilities who were previously using their day centres into full time employment. They work on average 24 hours a week and are on average £101 per week better off than on benefits.

About one third of the jobs have been in the local authority itself; other jobs have been in the manufacturing, retail and other parts of the service sector. This success has been achieved through a combination of belief, sound welfare rights advice based on maximising income not benefits, and the local authority setting a good example as an employer.

Box 4: Bridging practice in mental health and housing

Supporting People in Nottinghamshire are piloting a new service, providing specialist housing support within the Crisis Resolution Home Treatment (CRHT) team in Mansfield. Two workers from Building Blocks Solutions are located for half of their week in the office of the CRHT, providing specialist knowledge of housing issues and tenancy sustainment skills to complement the specialist mental health assessment and support skills of the CRHT.

Building Blocks Solutions are a social enterprise who provide services to a whole range of people including children up to the age of 14, those who have enduring mental health needs or emotional difficulties and the over 65's. The new service within the CRHT was commissioned by the local authority.

The role of central government: Removing barriers to delivery

53. As set out in the PSA Delivery Agreement, the Government is taking forward a range of actions to support activity at local level, and to help address some of the barriers to delivery which have been identified by key stakeholders. These include, for example, exploring ways of tackling the finance gap faced by offenders leaving custody, and promoting the role of the public sector in employing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
54. In conjunction with local areas and Government Offices, the Social Exclusion Task Force are keen to identify other barriers linked to national policy which can helpfully be addressed to drive further progress in supporting the PSA client groups to enter work and maintain settled accommodation.

Appendices:

Annex A: FAQ

Annex B: Hotspot analysis by Government Office region

Annex C: Raw data (excel format)