

# FOREWORD BY THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

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This Government introduced Public Service Agreements (PSAs) in 1998, setting ambitious goals for key service improvements across the whole of Government. The PSAs in this document explain what what departments plan to deliver in return for the significant extra investment in public services over the next three years as set out in the 2002 Spending Review White Paper.

In each area of service delivery from housing to education, from policing to defence, we are tying new resources to new reform and results, developing a modern way of running good efficient public services. This requires effective monitoring of performance through independent and open audit and inspection; giving front line staff the power and flexibility to deliver results; extending choice; rewarding success and turning round failing services and organisations.

But it starts with demanding national targets. The PSAs set out here provide these targets, reflecting the Government's key priorities and focusing on the outcomes that matter most to the public – on education, health, crime and transport and right across public services. Departments will be producing delivery plans for all the targets published here, with clear milestones and trajectories showing how the targets will be met, which will be summarised in published Service Delivery Agreements.

These PSAs represent an agreement between the Government and the public. Accountability is key. Previously departments have published progress against their targets annually. From now on, they will provide these reports twice a year, and we plan to introduce regular web-based reporting of progress against all PSA targets so that the public can access the information in a single place.

Since 1998, PSAs have focused efforts and helped to deliver results. Specific targets on health have helped to deliver a decline in the death rates from cancer and heart disease, and maximum waiting times for hospital treatment have fallen from 18 months to 15 months. The targets for attainment at age 11 have helped to bring about a 10 and 12 percentage point increase since 1998 in the number of children reaching the expected levels in English and maths for their age.

And alongside commitments on overall improvements in public services, PSAs also concentrate on leveraging up the performance in the most deprived neighbourhoods towards the national average - ensuring that wherever people live they benefit from the extra investment and improved delivery of public services.



