



Together We Can - The Government action plan to bring people and government closer

Appendix

The 'Together We Can' action plan set out below marks the beginning of a new relationship between citizens and public institutions. It signals a commitment from across the Government to build the capacity of communities to influence public policies and services, and to develop more opportunities for that capacity to be exercised.

The action points detailed in the plan represent an important selection of initiatives to empower the public to shape policies which affect them. But they are by no means the sum of our ambition. Their

implementation will pave the way for a broader culture change to strengthen the democratic voice of citizens in determining what is to be done in the public realm.

Building on the experience of communities and public agencies involved in delivering these transformative actions, further reforms will follow to ensure that the philosophy of Together We Can is fully embedded in the governance of our society.

The scope of Together We Can

Together We Can sets out eight key public policy areas to strengthen citizens' engagement in delivering success across those policies (see overleaf).

These will be carried out by 12 Government departments and delivered regionally and locally by the nine Government Offices of the Regions in England. The action plan will be reviewed and developed with the relevant Government departments and a national network of citizen organisations and public service user groups. Taking into account the findings of the once every two years Citizenship Survey, the action plan will also be updated every two years.

Citizens and public bodies - *Together We Can*

- Ensure children and young people have their say
- Strengthen our democracy
- Revitalise neighbourhoods
- Increase community cohesion and race equality
- Build safer communities
- Reduce re-offending and raise confidence in the criminal justice system
- Improve our health and well-being
- Secure our future

1 Together we can ensure children and young people have their say

The outcome we want

Children and young people are given opportunities to participate and influence decision making as confident and responsible citizens¹.

What will be done

- 1.1 Ensure that children and young people are directly involved in the design and delivery of integrated services under Children's Trusts and that those services are responsive to their needs in accordance with the principle 'all organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and their families' (Every Child Matters: Change for Children, December 2004)² (DfES, DH, HO, HMT, ODPM, Defra, DCMS).
- 1.2 Promote opportunities for children and young people to have a real say in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services by supporting mechanisms through which their voices can be heard, developing good practice and funding the development of innovative participation approaches³ (DfES).

¹ Learning to Listen (published 2001) sets out the government's guidelines for involving children and young people when developing policy. Government departments have developed action plans demonstrating their commitment to designing policies and services around the needs of children and young people and setting out their plans to increase young people's participation in their design, delivery and evaluation. Some of the actions are referred to in this section.

² This is underpinned by the rationale that greater participation, joined up across all children's services will contribute to significant improvements in the five outcomes for children and young people (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being). This will include children and young people's participation in the development of Children and Young People's Plans.

³ Supporting mechanisms for participation – through the Children and Youth Board to enable children and young people to advise government on policy development; the UK Youth Parliament; and Mock Elections in Schools. Promoting good practice – supporting the development of a 'participation practice centre' and network for participation workers. Funding innovative participation approaches – supporting VCS organisations through the Consultation Fund to run consultation events with young people to inform decision making; and the development of comprehensive training and tools for young people to increase their skills and confidence to participate and for those working with young people.

- 1.3 Ensure that children and young people are involved in the development of Defra policies and service delivery through an 'action learning set' of government officials aiming to explore and implement good practice methods of participation⁴ (Defra).
- 1.4 Connexions providers ensure that young people have a clear role in influencing decisions about the services they receive⁵ (DfES).
- 1.5 Develop and implement, in partnership with young people, Positive Futures, a national sports-based social inclusion programme, designed to support and direct the most marginalised young people in the most deprived neighbourhoods into appropriate education, training and employment opportunities, and address the multiple issues associated with problematic substance misuse⁶ (HO).
- 1.6 Develop proposals through the Youth Green Paper to widen opportunities for young

people to participate actively in their local community or wider society by influencing decisions that affect them and having more of a say in the design and development of services provided for them (DfES).

- 1.7 Ensure that young people are involved in shaping the new volunteering opportunities to be made available to them in accordance with the recommendations of the Russell Commission (HO).
- 1.8 Encourage the participation of young people in dialogue about their aspirations and concerns related to emerging areas of science and technology through the Sciencewise programme for public engagement with science and technology (DTI).
- 1.9 Provide young people with the chance to get involved in and shape public library services locally and nationally with young people participating in library design and planning, staff recruitment and training, through Framework for the Future - the government's ten year strategy on libraries (DCMS).

⁴ This is being led by the Carnegie Young People Initiative and builds on existing work to identify good practice in, and set organisational standards for children and young people's participation, and to develop methods for measuring and evaluating participation outcomes. The action learning set will develop plans to show how and where they will involve young people in policy development.

⁵ Most Connexions partnerships are very effective in ensuring that they take account of young people's views in the development of their services. Partnerships have established Youth Boards, representative of local networks for young people, to actively involve them. Their representation on the main Connexions strategic boards ensures a youth voice at the highest level. The Youth Boards are made as diverse as possible and generally participate in inspections of services. Young people are also consulted on strategic and practical developments including: volunteering (Millennium Volunteers), substance misuse and youth crime.

⁶ This includes (a) ensuring that lead agencies are supported by strong local partnerships which acknowledge the need for sustainability and a monitoring and evaluation strategy that captures the impact of the project, in particular by involving young people themselves in its development; and (b) ensure that young people are not just recipients of the service but are genuinely and actively involved in its delivery.

How success will be measured

- Evaluation of VCS projects supported by the Consultation Fund (through Changemakers) showing young people's involvement in decision making processes (DfES).
- For Positive Futures: **(a)** referral and retention rates and the achievements of young people on the programme - including finding work, volunteering, joining sports clubs, and returning to full time education; **(b)** through Project Health check carried out annually in order to assess the programme of activities, exit routes to established sports clubs, accredited training awards, partnership arrangements (HO).
- Evaluation of the Sciencewise programme; and monitoring the number of projects involving young people in dialogue on science and technology issues and the number of young people taking part in those projects (DTI).

Leads

DfES, Defra, HO, DTI, DH, HMT, ODPM and DCMS.

2 Together we can strengthen our democracy

The outcome we want

Communities and citizens of all ages and backgrounds are more confident, able and interested in understanding public policy issues and influencing the governance of public institutions and services.

What will be done

- 2.1 Empower more people through citizenship education in schools and adult learning opportunities such as Active Learning for Active Citizenship⁷ to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to engage in policy discussions and influence public services (DfES, HO).
- 2.2 Develop and implement the Citizen Governance Initiative to improve the co-ordination and support for the recruitment and retention of citizens in taking on public governance roles (HO). This initiative will support the related work to:
 - Develop patient and public involvement in shaping health services (DH). (See also section 7).
 - Support school and FE college governors to encourage diversity and set appropriate baselines to measure progress (DfES).
 - Ensure citizens from diverse backgrounds come forward and contribute effectively as magistrates, probation board members, Youth Referral Panel Members, Police Authority Members and in other capacities in the CJS (DCA, HO, YJB).
- 2.3 Promote public dialogue through establishing or supporting deliberative fora on specific topics:
 - Design and run a deliberative forum in 2006 focusing on sustainable lifestyles (Defra).

- Through the Sciencewise programme support public dialogue on climate change, nanotechnology, the use of animals in medical experiments and trust in the use of IT and the internet, and further topics to be agreed in 2005 (DTI).
- 2.4 Increase democratic engagement by raising understanding of political processes and promoting voter registration through the development and implementation of the recommendations of the Voters and Voting Project (DCA, ODPM).
 - 2.5 Develop the role and capacities of local and parish councillors (ODPM, Defra).
 - 2.6 Provide opportunities for people everywhere to get involved in the democratic life of their community through neighbourhood arrangements, building on what exists already (see neighbourhood engagement programme under section 3.3). (ODPM).
 - 2.7 Develop the Civic Pioneer initiative to encourage local authorities to extend their community engagement activities and promote learning from successful outcomes across local and central government (HO).
 - 2.8 Support partnership working, adopting the approach of Better Government for Older People, which promotes the active involvement of older people, both in the shaping and evaluation of services, and in contributing as citizens to improving local quality of life⁸ (DWP).

- 2.9 Support the development of Community Empowerment Networks, where they exist, to build the capacity of local people and help communities participate in local neighbourhood renewal strategies (ODPM).
- 2.10 Develop and publish the Government's response to the recommendations from the Council for Science and Technology's report, Policy Through Dialogue, to adopt an explicit framework for the use of public dialogue to inform science and technology related policies. Explore options around:
 - developing a corporate memory based on formal and informal evaluations of dialogue processes that have been used to inform science and technology policy.
 - sharing of this information across government and its non-departmental public bodies.
 - generating a change in culture where dialogue is seen as a normal part of government's policy development processes on science and technology related issues (DTI).

How success will be measured

- Evaluation of citizenship education in schools (DfES).
- Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS) measure of the percentage of people involved in different types of civic activity (HO).
- HOCS measure of the percentage of people who believe they can influence decisions affecting their local areas (HO).

⁷ Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) is an action research programme designed to promote the learning of practical citizenship skills beyond the school education system. For details, see www.active-citizen.org.uk

⁸ BGOP is a movement of organisations committed to working in partnership to change attitudes and services in order to achieve an improved society for older people across the UK. This partnership is made up of BGOP's Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG) and organisations that subscribe to BGOP and work in alliance, including older people's groups, local authorities, 'Age Sector' organisations, Local Strategic Partnerships, Health Trusts, Housing Associations, Police and Fire Services, Government departments and agencies



- More people, of all ages, understanding and engaging with democratic processes. (Measure being developed by DCA).
- Comparative participation levels of ethnic minority or other under-represented groups in governing bodies (DfES).
- The revised CPA process to be introduced in 2005 includes key lines of enquiry under the shared priority 'Older People' which will examine local authorities' engagement with older people in developing a strategic approach to services and to their position as citizens.
- Research within the OST into public attitudes to science and technology will measure the percentage of people who believe they can influence decisions affecting the pace and direction of science and technology (DTI).
- Percentage of parish clerks having attained a recognised qualification (Defra).
- Percentage of all Town and Parish Councils having achieved Quality Parish status (Defra).

Overall lead

HO to develop arrangements with DCA, ODPM, DfES, Defra and CO.

3 Together we can revitalise neighbourhoods

The outcome we want

Citizens in urban and rural areas are able to play a successful part in guiding, directing and supporting the effective deployment of resources and delivery of services in their local communities.

What will be done

- 3.1 Build on the experience of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, and the lessons from community-based regeneration projects, to help more neighbourhoods tackle deprivations through community empowerment, neighbourhood management and neighbourhood wardens (ODPM).
- 3.2 Continue to develop Local Area Agreements and the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund⁹ in ways that engage communities in tackling local problems and that ensure that individuals, communities and the voluntary and community sector are enabled and empowered to participate in the design and delivery of the agreements (ODPM, HO).
- 3.3 Develop and implement a neighbourhoods programme to offer more opportunities for engagement at neighbourhood level everywhere so as to secure improvements in our public services and re-engage citizens with the institutions of government. Neighbourhoods will be offered an enhanced range of powers, opportunities and resources from which they can choose, including powers for local people to trigger action in response to persistent local problems and new powers to own and manage community assets (see also Community Action 2020 initiatives under section 8). The neighbourhoods programme will be closely linked to the roll out of neighbourhood policing. (see section 5.1). (ODPM in lead, along with HO, DfES, DfT, Defra, HMT).

⁹ LAAs (where they are in operation) and the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund in other areas, simplify the number of additional funding streams from central government going into an area, help join up public services more effectively and provide greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances. Following the success of phase 1 of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), they are being rolled out to a further 40 areas with effect from 1st April 2006.

- 3.4 Encourage the involvement of communities in the development of cultural elements of regeneration strategies, taking forward the work of Culture at the Heart of Regeneration (DCMS, ODPM).
- 3.5 Provide opportunities for rural citizens and communities to influence local policies and services, by continuing to support parish planning and ensuring that parish and other local action-plans are taken into account in the development of sustainable community strategies and spatial planning frameworks¹⁰ (Defra).
- 3.6 Build on the success of the Home Zone Pilot and Challenge programmes by encouraging more local authorities to engage local communities in the development of Home Zones for their residential streets (DfT, ODPM).
- 3.7 License and fund community radio stations, so that they create direct links with their listeners, offer training opportunities and make sure that members of the community take part in running the station¹¹ (DCMS, OfCom).
- 3.8 Provide support to people in rural communities, through the work of Rural Housing Enablers, to help them identify their affordable housing needs, consider possible options, and work with housing associations and local authorities on implementing the chosen solution (Defra).
- 3.9 Encourage the active involvement of local citizens and communities in the development of extended schools – open to pupils, families and the wider community during and beyond the school day, at weekends and during school holidays – in ways that ensure a broad range of services that meet local needs, and a continuing community 'ownership' (DfES).
- 3.10 Promote capacity building for the community sector to engage with public policies in line with the Firm Foundations report's recommendations, including the development of better support to facilitate the transfer of community assets to local community anchor organisations (HO, DTI, ODPM).
- 3.11 Disseminate learning from the Testbed Learning Communities (TLCs) which are trying out new approaches to raise the aspirations of those in disadvantaged communities, give them a voice in deciding local education and learning provision and help co-ordinate funding and delivery to improve their impact (DfES).
- 3.12 Implement the commitment in the DfES five-year strategy to mandate competitions for new schools, so that it is easier for new promoters, including parents groups, to open new schools in response to local demand¹² (DfES).

¹⁰ This is expected to be carried forward from April 2006 as part of Defra's new rural and social community programme.

¹¹ Community radio stations have the potential to play a central role in their communities, helping to engage people with local issues and contribute to greater accountability of service providers at local level.

¹² Competitions will enable local people to express views about a range of options, rather than about a single option put forward by a local authority or promoter as now. They will also create opportunities for parents and community groups to put forward proposals of their own. DfES will provide support for promoters, including parents and community groups, to develop their proposals.



3.13 Implement the Guide Neighbourhoods Programme to demonstrate effective and sustainable ways for experienced residents in successful regenerated neighbourhoods to share their knowledge and skills with other residents to support them in tackling their own local problems (HO).

3.14 Create a framework within which delivery partners will operate so as to ensure that the good track record of parental involvement in planning and implementing services for families that has been established by the Sure Start local programmes, is maintained in the roll out of children's centres (DfES).

How success will be measured

- NRU evaluation of community empowerment practices
- NRU evaluation of neighbourhood management
- Through the monitoring of engagement processes by Government Offices and LAA Statements of Community Involvement; through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment; and through measurement arrangements against agreed national/local targets
- NAO review of New Deal for Communities
- Increased opportunities for activity at the neighbourhood level, citizens more able to influence the decisions that affect them in their neighbourhoods (to be developed as part of ODPM's work on neighbourhood engagement)
- The Guide Neighbourhoods Programme will be subject to real-time evaluation.

Overall lead

ODPM (with input from Defra, DfT, DCMS, DfES, DH, HMT and HO).

4 Together we can increase community cohesion and race equality

The outcome we want

All communities including new arrivals are positively involved in developing a sense of common belonging and mutual respect for cultural diversity, and helping to reduce any tension which may otherwise persist.

What will be done

- 4.1 Tackle misinformation and racism by "myth busting" – based on a national template, encouraging local authorities to work with local people, including the local media (HO).
- 4.2 Involve local people and community groups in planning and preparation for new arrivals, including encouraging local employers to contribute, developing mentoring and similar initiatives to help new arrivals settle into their new community, and finding opportunities for them to give something back to the community (HO).
- 4.3 Develop the Time Together project to provide volunteer mentors from within the community to work with refugees, and to give them greater confidence in engaging with those communities (HO).
- 4.4 Improve national and local engagement between faith communities and public institutions¹³ (HO, Defra).

4.5 Encourage local authorities and their partners to ensure communities play an active part in the planning and implementation of local cultural and community strategies (see The Good Life: Guidance on Integrating Cultural and Community Strategies), (DCMS, ODPM).

4.6 Work with community groups to develop a shared approach to the interpretation of museum collections (DCMS).

How will success be measured

Measures are being developed to help assess the impact of emerging policies¹⁴ in line with the Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy – Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society (2005) and the Refugee Community Development Strategy (to be published in late 2005).

Overall lead

HO with input from DCMS and Defra.

5 Together we can build safer communities

The outcome we want

Communities are safer and feel safer because the police, CDRP/DAATs, and other local partners work together to involve local people effectively in addressing their concerns about crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

What will be done

- 5.1 Provide a citizen focused police service which responds to the needs of communities and individuals and inspires public confidence in the police, supported by the roll out of neighbourhood policing so that by 2008 every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams (HO)¹⁵.
- 5.2 Identify and improve effective practice in CDRP community engagement by:
 - Providing in partnership with the Government Office Network good practice seminars to capture and disseminate CDRP community engagement methods (HO).

¹⁴Tracking two projects in Sunderland: the REWIND project which is designed to combat racism by challenging the myths that fuel racist beliefs, and stresses the impact of cross-cultural contact, and the Hive project that works to bring people together from different backgrounds creating a better understanding and acceptance of different lifestyles and cultures.

¹⁵Citizen Focused Policing is one of five key priorities within the National Policing Plan. This will include:

- rolling out a neighbourhood policing approach across all forces by 2008; and
- ensuring the public have a real say in how they are policed with opportunities for community participation by:
 - placing a joint duty on the police and local authorities to ensure they have in place sufficient mechanisms for engaging with local communities
 - developing a statutory trigger mechanism at neighbourhood level
 - introducing a statutory minimum requirement on what each household can expect to receive in terms of local policing information, and
 - supporting the ongoing development and sharing of practical guidance - in particular via the National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement in Policing - on how frontline practitioners can engage with their communities in a more effective and locally appropriate way.

¹³ Including £3 million new Home Office funding for capacity building, and research by Defra looking at the relationship between faith communities and social cohesion in rural communities.

- Identifying and developing recommendations in respect of good practice examples of CDRP community engagement through the research project commissioned from the Thames Valley Partnership and National Community Safety Network (HO); and
- Developing a range of measures for improving the overall effectiveness of CDRPs, including their approach to community engagement (HO)¹⁶.

5.3 Support the development of Neighbourhood Watch in co-operation with ACPO, NACVS and other partners, including the promotion of model policies and service level agreements between the police, CDRPs and Neighbourhood Watch through the new National Forum organisation for the Watch movement¹⁷ (HO).

5.4 Promote the messages of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) Together campaign that public agencies must respond to communities' concerns about ASB and that communities themselves have responsibility to tackle it, building on lessons learnt in the 10 Together

Trailblazers and 50 Together Action Areas about involving neighbourhoods in making a difference; and promoting the third year of the Home Office Taking a Stand awards¹⁸ (HO).

5.5 Ensure community engagement underpins the development of the Gun Crime Connected Fund's support for selected neighbourhoods, and the delivery of a crack house campaign 'Operation Crackdown' and associated enforcement action against Class A drugs and gun crime (HO).

5.6 Develop the Drugs Strategy Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Forum, with the objective of strengthening the input of the voluntary and community sectors to the Drugs Strategy; a particular focus of the forum will be ensuring that small community and user groups have a voice in the Strategy¹⁹ (HO).

5.7 Develop targeted Neighbourhood Prevention Programmes to prevent youth crime and anti-social behaviour (particularly first time entrants to the youth justice system) involving communities, families, victims and young people in their design and management (YJB).

¹⁶ As part of the commitment in the Police Reform White Paper Building Communities, Beating Crime, Home Office, November 2004.

¹⁷ To include, where appropriate, the facilitation of communication networks for Neighbourhood Watch groups.

¹⁸ This will involve encouraging the development of similar local initiatives recognising the contribution of victims and witnesses taking action against ASB.

¹⁹ This will include encouraging input from VCS organisations and smaller community/user groups on policy developments and assessing delivery within the Drug Strategy; and the development of a reference group to contribute to the implementation of the Young People's Substance Misuse Delivery Plan (which sets out proposals for a more joined up approach at local, national and regional level to young people's drugs services from early intervention to specialist treatment).

How success will be measured

- Through measures in the police performance assessment framework on user satisfaction; public confidence; and fairness and equality and frameworks in the HMIC Baseline Assessments on customer service and accessibility; neighbourhood policing and community engagement (HO).
- Through proposed periodic surveys of partnership activity in this area conducted by the National Community Safety Network (HO).
- Use questions in the British Crime Survey (BCS) to show the level of active involvement in Neighbourhood Watch and to monitor changes over time. Monitor the number of police forces that have plans drawn up or in place for service level agreements or policies setting out the mutual rights and responsibilities of police, CDRPs and Neighbourhood Watch²⁰ (HO).
- Use BCS data to explore the relationship between perception of ASB, community cohesion and the willingness of people to get involved in tackling problems (HO).
- Provide case studies for Connected Fund projects and police force actions in Operation Crackdown that have made an impact in their local communities (HO).

²⁰ To include exploring equality of opportunity and access to Neighbourhood Watch schemes, in particular how representative they are of the communities they serve and the extent of their coverage of higher crime areas.

²¹ The Liverpool CJC pilot went live on 9 December 2004. The centre will open end August 2005 with the aim of putting the community at the centre of justice and justice back into the heart of the community, through a dedicated CJC housing the local CJ agencies and support services. The Salford Community Justice initiative is at a very early development stage but due to go live at the end of November 2005 within the existing Magistrates' court structure. One aim is to give justice a more local focus by engaging in a dialogue with local people to enable agencies to align their priorities to meet community needs, building on existing successes.

- Monitoring the Youth Justice Board's corporate target to reduce the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system (YJB).

Overall lead

HO.

6 Together we can reduce re-offending and raise confidence in the criminal justice system

The outcome we want

Communities have more understanding and influence over the activities of the Criminal Justice System and are able to work with CJS agencies in reducing re-offending.

- 6.1 Support Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) in their work to engage and involve local people, particularly those from BME communities, through promoting good practice and drawing on existing networks such as CDRP/community safety partnerships (OCJR).
- 6.2 Develop the pilot Community Justice Centre (CJC) in Liverpool and the Salford Community Justice initiative, to tackle the issue of making the CJS more responsive to local needs and to promote effective practices in other areas²¹ (Tri-lateral programme, hosted within the DCA Community Justice Division).



- 6.3 Improve sense of justice and repair harm through victims and offenders engaging in restorative justice processes, with clearer evidence of reparation to individual victims (YJB and HO).
- 6.4 Ensure effective use is made of community engagement in establishing and implementing offender management policies and practices (HO and YJB).
- 6.5 Involve local people in improving public confidence in the multi-agency public protection measures in place to manage potentially dangerous offenders (HO).
- 6.6 Develop opportunities for work by prisoners and compulsory unpaid work by offenders subject to community sentences, specifically to meet local concerns, improve the local environment and be made more visible (HO and YJB).

(A draft NOMS and YJB communities and civil renewal strategy was produced for consultation in March 2005 and will be formally launched by November 2005.)

How will success be measured

- British Crime Survey (BCS) and Home Office Citizenship Survey data on public perceptions of the criminal justice system. This includes data on how confident the public are in aspects of the system, how good a job the agencies are doing and how fairly they feel they would be treated. The BCS confidence data can be broken down to the level of individual criminal justice boards (OCJR).

- Evaluating the North Liverpool CJC to assess changes in public attitudes to the Centre and the CJS in general through an attitude tracker. This will include looking at confidence in the CJS and its local delivery agencies (DCA).
- Proposals for local NOMS measures to be developed to contribute towards the national targets to reduce re-offending and raise confidence in the CJS (HO).

Overall lead

OCJR and HO working with DCA, CPS and YJB.

7 Together we can improve our health and well-being

The outcome we want

Communities and citizens work in partnership with public agencies to improve everyone's health and wellbeing regardless of their backgrounds and ensure the concerns of those in need of care are heard and taken into account.

What will be done

- 7.1 Ensure that the White Paper Choosing Health²² is implemented in a way which is underpinned by constructive partnerships and the active engagement of communities, the voluntary sector, faith organisations, as well as local government, business and the media. (Cross government - DH lead).

As part of Choosing Health we will:

- Pilot in 24 localities from spring 2005 the Communities for Health programme – a new approach to tackling locally chosen health priorities through joint action by local authorities, the NHS, local chambers of commerce, the media, voluntary organisations, community groups and community leaders. Current projects involve children and adults in promoting activities for health including healthier eating, exercise, reductions in smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, and safer sex. Further support over 2005-8 will expand the programme, promote learning from good practice and encourage creative working between pilot areas (DH).
- Implement and expand the Healthy Communities Collaborative by supporting the development of community teams bringing together local residents and health practitioners in particular areas. This will aim to achieve health improvements, both through prevention and better self management, on specific topics such as falls, diabetes and nutrition. The community development method used involves applying evidence-based good practice and adapting it to local circumstances²³ (DH).
- Provide clear, understandable and timely information about local health trends and needs to enable local communities to take action to improve health, with a particular focus on

securing better access to healthier choices for people in disadvantaged groups or areas (DH).

- Recruit people from local communities, from 2006, to act as health trainers to offer people practical advice and good connections into the services and support available locally, and to help members of their community to make the changes they want. Health trainers will be accredited by the NHS and will operate initially within the areas of highest need, and from 2007 progressively across England (DH).
- 7.2 Deliver the Department of Health strategy on black and minority ethnic health services using the community engagement approach developed by the University of Central Lancashire²⁴. Explore ways in which this approach can be used more widely in supporting related strategies (DH).
- 7.3 Tackle the social exclusion experienced by people with mental health problems by bringing together local communities and citizens with mental health needs in partnership with the relevant public services. The community engagement methods developed by the University of Central Lancashire (see 7.2 above) will enhance equal access to employment and social participation faced by those with mental health problems and also improve public understanding and reduce levels of stigma and discrimination within communities as a whole (DH).

²² Choosing Health was published in November 2004, following large-scale consultation. It sets out a comprehensive approach to the health of the public which respects the freedom of individual choice in a diverse, open and questioning society, which recognises the realities of the impact of the consumer society on those choices, which addresses the fact that too many people and groups have been left behind or ignored in the past, and which moves forward at the pace which the people of England want and will support. The White Paper identifies explicit links to other areas of Government policy which are referred to elsewhere in this action plan, such as Local Area Agreements and Children's Trusts.

²³ The Healthy Communities Collaborative (HCC) originated from the NHS Plan(2000) under the heading 'New Partnerships to tackle inequalities'. It went live in 2002 led by the National Primary Care Development Team (NPDT), then part of the Modernisation Agency, and was supported by evidence provided by the Health Development Agency (HDA).

²⁴ The Centre for Ethnicity and Health at the University of Central Lancashire has developed and successfully deployed a community engagement methodology to better identify and meet the needs of drug misusers in a diverse range of groups and settings. Following positive evaluation of a three-year pilot project, this method now forms the basis for delivering the DH strategy on BME mental health services.

- 7.4 Establish NHS Foundation Trusts (NHSFTs)²⁵ as free standing, not for profit, public benefit corporations, so as to:
- devolve more power and responsibility for the delivery of NHS services to the local level, so that NHS hospitals are better able to respond to the needs of patients and bring about improved access to higher quality services
 - devolve accountability to local stakeholders – NHSFTs operate governance arrangements that give NHS patients, the public, staff and partner organisations (eg PCTs, Local Authorities) the opportunities to influence the overall stewardship of the trust and its strategic development
 - support patient choice by increasing the plurality and diversity of providers within the NHS (DH).
- 7.5 Support the involvement of citizens in influencing local health priorities and service quality through patient and public involvement. This includes PPI forums which are established to provide a patient perspective on the quality of the NHS, and also a duty on the NHS to involve and consult patients and the public in the planning and development of services, and to consult them in decisions affecting the operation of services (DH).

- 7.6 Ensure patients and the public are fully involved in the process of deciding on the nature and location of new NHS buildings to be constructed through the LIFT process²⁶ (DH).

How success will be measured

- Implementation of the Choosing Health White Paper – to ensure public accountability and demonstrate continuing progress, DH will publish a six-monthly progress report on key indicators for the targets that relate directly to improving health. These reports will reflect the joint contributions of all departments involved
- The Healthy Communities collaborative (HCC) will measure success by evaluation, including indicators to measure changes in the social and human capital of participants, as well as topic specific outcome measures (eg reduction in the number of falls or improvement in diabetes).
- The community engagement approach developed by the University of Central Lancashire incorporates mechanisms for measuring the programme's effects on building community capacity and for assessing its impact on service change.

Overall lead

DH.

²⁵ NHS Foundation Trusts have a duty to engage with their local communities and encourage local people and staff to become members of the organisation. The Board of Governors is elected by and from the members of the organisations and represents their interests in the governance of NHSFTs. NHSFTs also have a duty to co-operate with other NHS bodies and Local Authorities which ensures that they continue to be fully integrated in the local health economy.

²⁶ The NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) programme aims to develop a new market for investment in primary care and community-based facilities and services.

8 Together we can secure our future

The outcome we want

Communities play an active part in local, national and international action which improves quality of life and meets sustainable development objectives.

What will be done

- 8.1 Provide co-ordinated support through the Community Action 2020 – Together We Can programme to help community groups and voluntary sector organizations across the country contribute to sustainable development, as set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy (Defra).
- 8.2 Provide opportunities for communities to help shape a more sustainable future for their area through Sustainable Community Strategies, parish plans, neighbourhood engagement opportunities and Local Development Documents (Defra, ODPM, HO).
- 8.3 Improve training (formal and informal), information, toolkits and best practice advice on sustainable development for community development officers, regeneration practitioners, professionals who have contact with communities, cultural and sports organisations, faith groups, BME and many other groups including volunteers and mentors who provide a frontline contact with communities (DfES, Defra, DCMS, HO).
- 8.4 Through Community Action 2020 – Together We Can, inspire and recognise community action which saves energy, recycles, tackles climate change, improves local neighbourhoods, supports healthy eating and exercise, promotes fair trade, improves access to local and organic food, promotes

sustainable procurement and contributes to a wide range of other sustainable development issues (Defra, DH, DCMS, ODPM).

- 8.5 Link with ODPM and the Academy for Sustainable Communities to enhance sustainable development skills and knowledge in local government and Local Strategic Partnerships through the development of new learning opportunities, new guidance on Sustainable Community Strategies, Shared Priorities, sustainable procurement, etc (Defra, ODPM and Academy for Sustainable Communities).
- 8.6 Implement the Community Rail Strategy to bring together rail operators and local communities in Community Rail Partnerships to encourage the development of local rail services (DfT).
- 8.7 Ensure that there is appropriate investment in community involvement in economic development/regeneration projects at a local, sub-regional and regional level (HO, DTI, HMT, ODPM, Defra, RDAs).

How success will be measured

- Reduction in the subsidy levels on lines managed by Community Rail Partnerships compared to the amount of revenue they generate, along with shared objectives of improving social inclusion and economic development (DfT).
- Further indicators are to be developed as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy, with regional and local indicators as appropriate (Defra).

Overall lead

Defra.



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*People and government,
working together to make life better*