

Working in partnership

Touching the lives of people in local communities can only happen through meaningful engagement. By working in partnership with third sector organisations, the Government is better able to understand the needs and issues affecting all parts of society.



The third sector covers a range of not-for-profit organisations, from community groups to charities. Many work at the forefront of public service delivery, driving forward innovative programmes with the potential to transform people's lives.

Leading from the Cabinet Office, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) builds support across government for developing the environment for a thriving third sector. It seeks to empower the sector to excel at what it does best – deliver and transform public services, campaign for change, promote and encourage social enterprise and strengthen communities.

Following the largest ever public consultation with the sector, the Cabinet Office and Treasury published *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: final report* in July 2007. This sets out a 10-year framework for partnership working between the third sector and government, outlining a £515 million programme to support community organisations over the next three years.

v for volunteering

A key element in achieving the report's aims is to ensure that all individuals and communities are enabled to play a full part in civil society. And one way of ensuring such engagement is by encouraging and promoting volunteering.

The document confirms the Government's intention to invest a further £117 million in the youth volunteering charity **v**. This was set up in 2006 with OTS funding to lead in delivering a step change in the quality, quantity and diversity of volunteering opportunities for young people aged 16 to 25 in England. One of the charity's initiatives is an innovative match fund, developed in partnership with the OTS and HM Treasury, which enables it to match – pound for pound – any private sector contributions for youth volunteering. The match fund has enabled several initiatives aiming to strengthen communities.

Volunteering hubs

One such initiative is delivered by the charity Oasis UK with support from Stagecoach Group, Lancaster Foundation and the Cabinet Office's Economic and Domestic Secretariat. **v**'s £117,752 investment will enable Oasis

Over the next three years, the Office of the Third Sector will invest over £515 million in programmes including:

- £130 million in Grassroots Grants, combining small community grants and endowment funds to build sustainability into local grant allocations;
- £117 million in youth volunteering charity **v**;
- over £85 million in Capacitybuilders for third sector infrastructure development;
- £65 million in Futurebuilders, bringing the total value of the fund to support the third sector's role in the delivery of public services to £215 million by 2011; and
- £30 million in community asset development and £10 million in community anchors.

UK to expand volunteering opportunities across hubs in Grimsby, Clitheroe, Enfield and London Waterloo.

One of the charity's drop-in youth clubs provides a safe place for young people to 'hang out' on Enfield's Kettering Estate. Local police and community members approached Oasis UK to start the club, which supports the young people through relationships built with youth workers, mostly volunteers.

"It's a good youth club, you can do different activities and young people from the estate can come. The youth workers are good and you can get along with them easily," says one young person on the project.

The volunteers also do youth work in other parts of Enfield, including Edmonton, which has seen five youth-on-youth murders since Christmas 2007, and Enfield Lock – where crime has gone down by 10% and anti-social behaviour by 14% since Oasis UK started working there. A local police sergeant says: "Thanks to our partnerships with Oasis UK and close working relationships with individual youth workers, we are more successful in making life safer for young people in Enfield Lock."

The OTS strategic funding to **v** is part of a range of programmes outlined in the Third Sector Review that aims to develop an environment in which the third sector can thrive.

To find out more about these programmes and the Office of the Third Sector, visit www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thirdsector

TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Rebuilding shattered lives

Working from the centre of government, the Cabinet Office is leading a Public Service Agreement (PSA) to increase the numbers of chronically excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training.



For the past 12 months, the small but highly effective Social Exclusion Task Force has been influencing government departments and local service providers to drive forward the agreement, which took effect from April 2008.

Adults facing chronic exclusion will often experience problems such as behavioural difficulties, a history of the care system or periods of time in prison. Because they have multiple needs, they may cross several agencies at once, meaning they can bounce from service to service without receiving the tailored help that they need. Accessing the right services at the right time can prevent considerable obstacles to themselves and their families, as well as keeping down the cost to the wider community.

The focus of the PSA is on four client groups who are especially vulnerable to multiple forms of disadvantage, and who may be negotiating difficult life situations involving leaving prison or long-term care:

The four groups are:

- young people leaving care;
- adult offenders on probation;
- adults with mental health problems; and
- adults with moderate to severe learning difficulties.

“This is an issue which requires extensive engagement across central and local government, as well as with external stakeholders,” says Naomi Eisenstadt, Director of the Social Exclusion Task Force. “The Cabinet Office is powerfully placed to coordinate the action. While the Social Exclusion Task Force does not have a service delivery role, it does have a key role in bringing together and influencing those responsible for delivery, both across Whitehall, and in local areas.

“The challenge is to bring together the departments responsible for the key services that will solve the problems: the Department for Work and Pensions for jobs; Communities and Local Government for homes; Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills for the training that will get people into employment; and the departments that have responsibility



for the overall well-being of our four client groups: Health, Ministry of Justice, and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

“Within the Cabinet Office, we work closely with the Office of the Third Sector, which covers charities and voluntary organisations, and with the Strategy Unit, which support us in problem analysis. Indeed, our strength lies in the combination of our intensive contact with frontline service users, provider organisations, and our rigorous analysis of problems and solutions.”

ACE pilots help put lives back on track

September 2007 saw the launch of the ACE (adults facing chronic exclusion) pilot programme, a cross-government initiative designed to tackle social exclusion among society’s most marginalised people. The Cabinet Office is leading the programme in partnership with voluntary and community organisations, local authorities and health authorities across the country.

The 12 projects selected for the pilot cover a range of voluntary, public and private sector organisations, dealing with issues as diverse as domestic violence, autism and sleeping rough. The Home Office, Communities and Local Government, Health and Work and Pensions are providing sponsorship of £6 million over three years to cover all 12 pilots.

Above: Gus O’Donnell at the ThamesReach project visit in Catford

Opposite page: Adults on the ThamesReach team building exercise in Wales



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NAOMI EISENSTADT, DIRECTOR, SOCIAL EXCLUSION TASK FORCE

A national evaluation process will draw lessons from the effectiveness of different approaches.

One of the pilots, based at ThamesReach in London, is working to get deeply excluded adults back on the road to sustainable employment. Jeremy Swain, Chief Executive of ThamesReach, says that one of the most exciting things about the project was that four fifths of the homeless people the organisation supports actively wanted to get back into work.

“We give a lot of emphasis to practical skills and a crucial part of the course is a three-day team building exercise in Wales. We also give people financial incentives. One of our participants wanted to become a locksmith, so we gave him the money for a short course to learn the trade.

“We give participants all the help we can in managing the transition to work, which can be tricky after a long period of unemployment.”



Thinking family

The Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) also launched *Reaching Out: Think Family* in June 2007 as the first stage of its *Families At Risk Review*. It highlighted innovative practice and demonstrated the need for existing services to work together more effectively.



The final report *Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk*, published in January 2008, set out a vision for a local system that helps break the cycle of disadvantage by 'thinking family' at every level.

"The research makes it clear that taking family circumstances into account is of vital importance," says Naomi Eisenstadt, Director, Social Exclusion Task Force. "If an adult with multiple problems is also a parent, then it is essential for the adults' services involved to think of them as a parent rather than as just a person with problems. There has to be effective collaboration not only across adults' services but between adults' and children's services, with support tailored to the whole family. The best children's services, working on their own, can't eliminate the impact on children of parents with severe and entrenched problems – be these drugs, mental health issues or a range of other difficulties."

Family Pathfinder pilots

Partners in government such as the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are leading a £16 million programme of Family Pathfinder pilots in 15 areas to test and develop the 'Think Family' approach set out by SETF in the Families at Risk review. Local authorities and their partners will drive improved outcomes for families at risk, improve coordination between adult and children's services and develop solutions such as whole family assessments. Six Pathfinder areas will also become Extended Family Pathfinders for Young Carers, addressing the specific support needs of families with young carers.

Previous page: Social Exclusion Task Force interviewing young mothers at the Wishes project, Thurrock, Essex

Other innovative approaches

During 2007, the Task Force was instrumental in helping to launch two cross-cutting pilot schemes being led by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and the Department for Health and Communities and Local Government:

- Family Nurse Partnerships – 10 pilots aimed at supporting the most vulnerable mothers-to-be and their children. The programme provides intensive home visits to disadvantaged young mothers from early pregnancy until the child is aged two. The sites went live in April 2007.
- Multi-systemic Therapy Pilots – 10 pilots aimed at promoting behaviour change in young people at high risk of being taken into care or custody. The pilot sites will go live between June and September 2008.

To find out more about the work of the Social Exclusion Task Force, visit:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion.aspx

