

Chapter three: Working in partnership

Introduction

1. The United Kingdom (UK) Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion is based on joined-up working across all parts of government and with the voluntary and community sector. We are also committed to working effectively with other member states in the European Union (EU) to share good practice in reaching the EU's historic commitment to make a decisive impact on poverty and social exclusion by 2010.
2. The *UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2003–2005* sets out the anti-poverty strategy in the context of EU common objectives and common agreed indicators¹. Based on the participation of the Devolved Administrations, local authorities, the voluntary and community sector and people with direct experience of poverty, it seeks to complement *Opportunity for all* by drawing on good practice across the UK in support of a long-term strategy from an international perspective.
3. Devolution has now been in place for four years and the partnerships formed between the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are crucial to delivering on our shared social inclusion agenda².
4. In broad terms in Great Britain, the UK Government continues to have responsibility for employment, fiscal and economic policy, taxation, benefits

and pensions, all of which impact on poverty and social exclusion. The Devolved Administrations, in varying degrees, have responsibility for health, education and training, law and order, housing and economic development. These too are all fundamental to tackling poverty and social exclusion and creating opportunity for all.

5. The Devolved Administrations produce their own reports, covering devolved issues. These reports should be read in conjunction with *Opportunity for all*, which concentrates only on those matters that continue to be reserved to the UK Parliament. The following is just a very brief reflection of the social inclusion strategies of the Devolved Administrations.

Northern Ireland

6. New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) is the Northern Ireland Executive's main policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion³. It has influenced and shaped the Programme for Government, being built into the Executive's priority areas such as Growing as a Community, Investing in Education and Skills, and Securing a Competitive Economy.
7. New TSN aims to tackle poverty, social need and social exclusion by targeting efforts and available resources at people, groups and areas in greatest social need. This means government departments using more of their resources to benefit

the most disadvantaged people, groups and areas. It is also about changing the way things are done so that programmes and services are organised and delivered in ways that are more helpful to disadvantaged people.

8. The New TSN policy is being advanced through three complementary elements: tackling unemployment and increasing employability, tackling inequality in other policy areas such as health, housing and education, and Promoting Social Inclusion.
9. Through both the Programme for Government and Making it Work, the Northern Ireland Executive made clear its commitment to evaluate New TSN by December 2002. The aims are to assess the way in which the policy has been implemented so far, and to examine its impact, with a view to informing future thinking.
10. A targeted consultation document *Interim Evaluation of New Targeting Social Need* was published in 2002. The evaluation findings are currently under consideration. Any proposed change in policy will be the subject of public consultation.

Scotland

11. *Social Justice... a Scotland where everyone matters* set out the Scottish Executive's long-term strategy for tackling poverty and injustice in Scotland⁴. The strategy provides the framework to achieve the Scottish Executive's goals:
 - the elimination of child poverty;
 - full employment by providing opportunities for all those who can work;
 - securing dignity in old age; and
 - building strong, inclusive communities.
12. This strategy includes ten long-term targets, underpinned by 29 milestones covering a wide range of issues at different lifecycle stages. The third Social Justice Annual Report outlined progress on the milestones and explored key themes of the social justice agenda⁵. *Closing the Opportunity Gap: Scottish Budget for 2003–2006* set out in detail – by Ministerial portfolio, with objectives and targets – how the Scottish Executive's spending plans would tackle poverty and build strong, safe communities⁶. The Cabinet Delivery Group on Closing the Opportunity Gap will drive forward the delivery of this agenda across the Scottish Executive.

13. *A Partnership for a Better Scotland* now sets out how the Scottish Executive will tackle the social, educational and economic barriers that create inequality, and work to end child poverty by tackling deprivation and social need⁷.
14. The Scottish Executive fully believes that the best way out of poverty is through work, and so much of its strategy is aimed at providing people with the necessary education, skills and confidence to serve them best in the labour market. The Scottish Executive aims to achieve this by working in collaboration with the UK Government through New Deal and other active labour market programmes such as progress2work, which looks to help recovering drug misusers into the labour market. In addition the Scottish Executive will work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to pilot the Pathways to Work: Helping People into Employment initiative. One of the pilots will be in the Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, and Argyll & Bute Jobcentre Plus district.
15. As part of this strategy the Scottish Executive has allocated around £30 million in 2003 for the Training for Work programme, which is designed to help unemployed and disadvantaged adults improve their work-related skills and employment chances. The Scottish Executive's New Futures Fund plays a key role in helping young people who face serious disadvantage in the labour market, move towards work. It has already helped over 6,000 young unemployed people.
16. A lack of affordable and flexible childcare is often the most significant barrier that people, especially lone parents, face in taking up education, training or employment. This is why the Scottish Executive is currently piloting interventions in two areas, one urban and one rural, to decide how best to allocate its £20 million Employment and Childcare Package, aimed at helping disadvantaged parents in the most deprived areas into education, training or employment. It is also taking forward the Mentoring Initiative for Lone Parents, which will provide face-to-face and telephone support to disadvantaged lone parents.
17. In education, Sure Start Scotland, the Changing Children's Services Fund, and the roll-out of the New Community Schools approach to all Scottish schools, are helping children to overcome the barriers to learning and positive development. The delivery of integrated children's services, for example in education and health, aims to give children the best possible start in life.
18. From 2004, Educational Maintenance Allowance will give financial support to all 16–19-year-olds from households with a lower income, allowing them to continue their education. And greater participation in learning and employment by young people with additional support needs is being promoted, through the implementation of the Beattie Report recommendations⁸.

19. Over the next three years the Scottish Executive will invest some £25 million to develop the skills of unskilled people through Modern Apprenticeships, thereby increasing their chances of employment. This will help to alleviate the burden of poverty caused by unemployment by increasing the number of Modern Apprenticeships in training and employment to 30,000 by 2006.
20. The Scottish Executive will also use Regional Selective Assistance to address areas of relatively high disadvantage and unemployment, to create and safeguard 6,000 jobs a year to 2006. New initiatives under this framework will have a direct link to the New Deal programme, which has already seen almost 100,000 people in Scotland find employment.
21. In community regeneration the new executive agency, Communities Scotland, is leading the implementation of the community regeneration statement, *Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap*⁹.
22. At the forefront of this regeneration strategy, Community Planning Partnerships (which comprise a range of public, private and community and voluntary bodies) are responsible for working with communities to determine local priorities and put together a strategic planning framework for the delivery of change. These will take on the functions of the present Social Inclusion Partnerships, which target support to the most disadvantaged areas.
23. Additionally, the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund aims to improve the quality of services in particularly deprived local authorities through the support of initiatives – for example the Glasgow City 'Class Connections' scheme, which provides free transport for school children travelling to leisure and recreation venues.
24. Improvement and replacement of poor housing stock is providing decent, affordable housing for homeless people and those on low incomes. This will be supported by the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Standard, ensuring a minimum set of quality standards for tenants of all social landlords. An Anti-Social Behaviour Bill will also bring safer, cleaner communities to Scotland's people, reducing crime and the fear of crime. These measures are complemented by the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003. All homeless people will be entitled to permanent accommodation by 2012 and no one will have to sleep rough.
25. The *Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement* commits the Scottish Executive to a 30 per cent reduction in the number of households in fuel poverty by 2006, with eradication by 2016¹⁰. As part of this strategy, the Central Heating Programme is providing free central heating to pensioners and will ensure that every pensioner has been provided with free central heating by 2006. This is being assisted by the Warm Deal package of home insulation grants for low-income households and pensioners.

26. The Scottish Executive is also helping older people to live healthy, independent lives within Scotland's communities. It has made a commitment to free personal and nursing care for the elderly, and there will be a national free off-peak bus travel scheme for older people and people with disabilities.
27. Finally, to promote financial inclusion the Scottish Executive will support Credit Union development and community banking, to ensure alternatives to mainstream banking are available. Those burdened by multiple debt are being helped through the increased provision of free money advice, to support the implementation of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002.

- improving the nation's health and well-being;
- giving every child the best possible start in life;
- providing flexible and accessible learning opportunities;
- ensuring access to better, more open and responsive public services;
- empowering people to shape their own futures and achieve their full potential; and
- successfully tackling economic inactivity.

Wales

28. *Plan for Wales 2001* set out the values and long-term vision of the Welsh Assembly Government¹¹. The aim is to create communities in Wales that are safe and a pleasure to live in, and where everyone is actively involved in creating the community they want. This is being achieved through:
- regenerating the most deprived communities in Wales;
 - providing employment and training opportunities for all those able to work;
29. The Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to tackling poverty and community regeneration is underlined by the recent appointment of a dedicated Minister with a wide and cross-cutting range of responsibilities to carry forward and deliver the social justice agenda for Wales in an integrated and co-ordinated way.
30. Through a combination of government and community action, the aim will be to encourage and support the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. Issues will be addressed through a range of initiatives, including the Communities First programme, Credit Unions and co-operatives. In taking forward this new portfolio the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration will be considering the range of policies and programmes that support regeneration in Wales.

31. All of the policies and programmes of the Welsh Assembly Government – health, education, economic development, transport, housing, the Welsh language and culture, and the environment – have focused on building stronger and more sustainable communities across the length and breadth of Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government publishes an Annual Report on Social Inclusion in Wales, which sets out how it is taking forward its social inclusion agenda in all its relevant policies and programmes and in those of the bodies it sponsors. The latest – the *Third Annual Report on Social Inclusion in Wales* – was published in 2003¹².
- working with the European Commission and other EU member states to develop our understanding of effective interventions that really make a difference to people at risk of social exclusion; and
 - making full use of the opportunities provided by the European Union Action Programme on social exclusion.
33. We believe that it is critically important to engage individuals, families and communities in the democratic process and promote genuine self-determination. For this reason, we are committed to providing communities with the capacity and skills to play an active role in national and local decision-making processes. We are looking to put in place systems that will enable communities, including those in the most deprived areas, to identify what they see as the particular concerns in their area, and to play an active role in addressing those concerns.

Partnership working

32. The *UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2003–2005* sets out our plans for developing the social inclusion agenda across the UK over the next two years. These will include:
- building on the work of the Active Communities Unit and others to extend the involvement of the voluntary and community sector and people experiencing poverty in the evaluation and development of government strategy;
 - strengthening the links between the European Social Fund and work to tackle poverty;
34. Our agenda for modernising public services also requires an increase in the voluntary and community sector contribution to service delivery. An action plan for achieving this was set out in the report of the cross-cutting review of *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery*¹³. This involves building demand in government departments, local authorities and other statutory agencies for services to be delivered through the voluntary and community sector. It will encourage new partnerships for shaping and delivering

services, co-ordinated through the growing number of local strategic partnerships being developed both in neighbourhood renewal areas and beyond.

35. The capacity for the voluntary and community sector to play an appropriate role in this process will be increased, with a modernised funding and procurement process in place, a reduction of bureaucracy, and the introduction of a fit for purpose legal and regulatory framework for charities and other voluntary and community sector organisations. This recognises that voluntary and community sector organisations have a distinct role to play, for example by widening access and by involving volunteers and service users in their work.
36. We are also looking to develop sustainable improvements to local service delivery, making services more accountable to local communities. Information on public service performance will be more freely available and transparent, with service providers held accountable for poor performance. Floor targets (minimum standards) will be set, below which standards should not be allowed to fall. Most importantly, communities will be encouraged to engage with the design, delivery and political accountability of public services.
37. The Adventure Capital Fund is a partnership between government and key organisations in the voluntary and

community sector, exploring a new approach to investment in community activity. The Fund provides 'patient capital' – investment that recognises the long-term nature of community development and the importance of linking funding with support for organisational development.

Case study – Action for Business Ltd

Action for Business Ltd (ABL) in Bradford is using a £300,000 loan received from the Adventure Capital Fund to buy the Carlisle Business Centre in Manningham. Taking over ownership will act as a springboard for a range of new initiatives and projects for this multi-ethnic community. Acquisition of the business centre will secure the capital asset base of ABL, nearly triple the turnover and double the projected surplus. The additional funding will be used to provide small grants to support local community activities.

38. A further £4 million has been made available to the fund from the Recovered Assets fund. The second round of investments will include a main focus on building capacity in ethnic minority community organisations, and encouraging growth in community-based service delivery in priority areas such as crime reduction, childcare, education and training, and job creation.

