

## Section 15 – Partnership Working

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### Introduction

15.2. The following section gives an outline how you must engage with a wide range of other organisations to understand their respective roles and identify shared local (and national) objectives.

### Overview

15.3. You must gain an understanding of what other provision is being offered locally so that the support you offer through the Flexible New Deal (FND) complements and does not conflict, including integrating employment and skills to move people into

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sustainable employment and help them progress. This will involve working very closely with Jobcentre Plus (JCP), employers and other organisations from the Public, Private and Third Sectors.

- 15.4. You are expected to develop your contribution as significant local partners, gaining credibility and standing at a local level, and contributing to the development of local initiatives. Through local partnership arrangements, you will increasingly enable DWP customers to access other relevant local services to which they are entitled, reducing hand-offs and streamlining referral routes.
- 15.5. Key (UK) relationships to be managed will include:
- DWP/Jobcentre Plus;
  - Business Innovation and Skills (BIS);
  - employers;
  - City Strategy consortia;
  - local authorities;
  - devolved governments; and,
  - other local public sector service providers.
- 15.6. In England, key relationships to be managed will include:
- Local Strategic Partnerships;
  - Skills Funding Agency (formerly Learning Skills Council (LSC))
  - Local and Multi Area Agreements;
  - Employment and Skills Boards;
  - Regional Development Agencies; and
  - Government Offices.
- 15.7. In Scotland, key relationships to be managed will include:
- Skills Development Scotland;
  - Community Planning Partnerships (and the fit with local Single Outcome Agreements);
  - Workforce Plus (Employability) Partnerships; and
  - Scottish Enterprise.
- 15.8. In Wales, key partnerships/relationships to be managed will include:
- The Welsh Assembly Government;
  - The Wales Employment and Skills Board;
  - Jobcentre Plus Office for Wales;
  - Communities First Partnerships; and
  - Careers Ladders Wales.
- 15.9. **Please Note:** These are not definitive lists.

### Working with DWP

#### Diary Administration Support Officers

- 15.10. The role of the Diary Administration Support Officer (DASO) is primarily to arrange JCP PA related interview appointments. The role also involves providing effective diary management and support to the PA.

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15.11. For the purpose of FND, the DASO main activities are to:

- action JCP system prompts on customer records;
- conduct JCP pre interview activity, checking benefit eligibility and booking interviews/ meetings with customers;
- where notified, notify you of any change of circumstances;
- collect and transfer information, when a customer has moved to another JCP district;
- invite customers to their end of provision reviews with JCP after completing FND; and,
- request up to date copies of customer action plan when they come to the end of their FND activity.

### **JCP Personal Advisers**

15.12. The role of the JCP Personal Adviser (PA) is to act as a caseworker for JCP customers.

15.13. For the purpose of FND, the PA main activities are to:

- work with a customer throughout the enhanced jobseekers regime;
- agree action plans with customers;
- inform the customer about FND and give an overview of your services; and,
- complete referral activities following the pre-provision interview.

### **Disability Employment Advisers**

15.14. The role of the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) is to provide support to customers who, because of severity or complexity associated with their disability, need specialist provision.

15.15. They can also advise you on the appropriateness of support for customers ([further information regarding further support and specialist provision can be found in: Section 07 – Accessing other Programmes, Schemes, Grants and Incentives](#)).

### **Advisory Services Managers**

15.16. The role of the Advisory Services Manager (ASM) is to act as your point of contact within JCP offices.

15.17. For the purpose of FND, the ASMs main activities are to:

- manage JCP PA;
- manage the referral of customers to FND;
- manage the referral of customers to any extension periods; and,
- consider entitlement doubts that you may raise and ensure JCP investigates where necessary.

### **Third Party Provision Managers**

15.18. The role of the Third Party Provision manager (TPPM) is to act as the link between you and JCP.

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15.19. For the purpose of FND, the TPPMs main activities are to:

- ensure the continued successful relationship between yourselves and JCP;
- ensure that where problems may arise these are rectified or escalated immediately;
- discuss with you cases where customers have not had a start registered within 4 weeks of referral and establish why;
- discuss with you cases where customers who have reached 45 weeks of participation who have not satisfied their MWRA requirement and establish why;
- escalate quality issues raised by customers and advisers;
- liaise with you to resolve any customer complaints.

### **Benefit Delivery Officers**

15.20. The role of the Benefit Delivery Officer (BDO) is to process and maintain benefits within a Benefit Delivery Centre (BDC).

15.21. For the purpose of FND, the BDO main activities are to:

- complete benefit processing activity;
- apply and lift benefit sanctions;
- notify you of sanctions being applied and lifted;
- notify you of any change of circumstances; and
- notify you if benefit ceases.

### **Labour Market Benefit Delivery Experts**

15.22. Labour Market Benefit Delivery Expert makes decisions on sanction doubts that you have referred ([further information regarding sanction doubts can be found in: Section 08 – Customer Benefit Sanctions and DMA](#)).

### **Engaging with Employers, JCP and customers**

15.23. It is vital to the success of your provision that you understand and meet the needs of both employers and customers. It is therefore important that you take steps to engage with the labour market in your area.

15.24. There are some activities, which must be included in this context, but there are also areas in which you have significant discretion to bring your own experience to bear and DWP will welcome innovative ways of doing so.

15.25. Your contract with DWP will specify the activities that must be carried out, but in general we expect to see you carry out activities that:

- enable the needs of employers to be met by involving them in the development of provision including, in particular, the identification of skills gaps such that provision can be shaped to fill them;
- market your provision to promote the benefits to employers, customers and others with a role to play. This might involve, for example, participating in open days or jobs fairs, or working with other agencies dealing with employers and/or customers;

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- develop the understanding of DWP staff, including advisers, of what you have to offer by working with them and thereby help ensure a good match between customers and your provision;
- deliver effective and appropriate supervision and support to customers during their time on your provision. You should help them to participate as fully as possible, taking steps to ensure they benefit from their participation and ensure they progress as expected. You might want to offer post participation support and continued learning to those participants who leave your provision to move into work; and,
- support customers in their search for work.

15.26. In general terms these areas are where you have the opportunity to add significant value to the operation of DWP programmes. You can do this by encouraging employers to become involved and customers to participate to the fullest extent possible.

### Engaging with professional services

15.27. If you have not done so already it is important to engage and work with professional services in your area. Examples of whom this may include are:

- Social Services;
- Police; and,
- Probation Service.

15.28. **Please Note:** This list is not exclusive and you will be able to identify other professional bodies that offer specific support to participants.

### Childcare Partnership Managers

15.29. DWP recognises the importance of childcare as a key enabler to work and also its importance of improving outcomes for children, particularly from disadvantaged families. Along with JCP you have an important role to play in ensuring that a work focus is integrated into the planning and delivery of local childcare services, and in connecting child poverty and the childcare agenda.

15.30. Childcare Partnership Managers were introduced in 2003 to carry forward this work and have a strategic remit to help join up service delivery and focus on taking forward the childcare agenda for JCP with local authorities' childcare partnerships, other relevant agencies and employers.

15.31. Childcare Partnership Managers can provide support to organisations such as yours by providing expert JCP resource and a dedicated point of contact for childcare issues, improving the flow of childcare information to and from JCP.

15.32. Childcare Partnership Managers work together with their partners in a unified approach, which creates a unique opportunity to develop strong and effective business links that in the longer term lead to an improvement in the growth of childcare where it is needed.

15.33. Childcare Partnership Managers have a key role to play in helping to improve access to childcare and overcome childcare barriers to work for unemployed

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parents. A fundamental part of this is the gathering of intelligence about the local childcare market and customer needs, using this to ensure that key issues for disadvantaged parents seeking to move into work are addressed within local childcare provision.

- 15.34. Childcare Partnership Managers have an important role to play in influencing internal as well as external relationships, to reflect the role of childcare as a key enabler to both labour market participation, and enhanced life chances for children living in low-income households and thus central to the achievement of key Government targets.
- 15.35. Childcare Partnership Managers have developed strong and effective business links with local childcare partners, in particular the Local Authority Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, Sure Start and the Children's Information Service. These links have brought many benefits to JCP and our customers, including the ability to help parents overcome childcare barriers to work, via our network of advisers.
- 15.36. As you can see from the above information the value of forming a close working relationship with your Childcare Partnership Manager cannot be underestimated.

### Regional Press Officers

- 15.37. Regional Press Officers are responsible for co-ordinating all relations with the regional media (main regional newspapers, television and radio) and local media as well as providing direct guidance to local managers and their press liaison and marketing teams. Specifically the units are split as follows:
- London and South East;
  - East of England;
  - Scotland;
  - North West;
  - Wales;
  - South West;
  - North East;
  - Yorkshire and Humber;
  - West Midlands; and,
  - East Midlands.
- 15.38. You are required to work together with JCP in developing and maximising media opportunities. Regional media activity will increase awareness of the FND service and will complement other marketing and media activity ([further information regarding Media, Marketing and PR can be found in: Section 18 – Marketing and PR](#)).

### Skills agenda - England

- 15.39. [Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work](#) builds on the Government's commitment to integrate employment and skills and specifies how DWP and DBIS will work together (in England) to ensure that more people gain

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the training and support they need, to move from benefits to work and then to progress in work. The key messages from this document are:

- to succeed in the emerging world economy and achieve our 80 per cent employment aspiration we must use the skills, talents and aspirations of all our people;
- the ability to get, and keep, a job and then to progress in work is the best route out of poverty. This is why a key principle of the welfare reform agenda is a focus on retention and progression, not just job entry. Enhancing skills is vital to achieve this;
- it is a priority to encourage JSA and other customers to become active 'skills seekers' as well as jobseekers, and to match the talents of those on benefits to the needs of local employers. The Government will put new duties on individuals to get the skills they need and to look for a job;
- the key commitment to customers and employers is a joined up employment and skills system with immediate, flexible help which is work-focused and tailored to individuals' and employers' needs.

### **Integrated employment and skills service (IES)**

15.40. DWP are working with DBIS to develop a new adult advancement and careers service in England to drive progression in learning, work and careers support. The service will support both those in work and looking to progress in their careers, as well as people out of work. It will draw together a range of advice and support on jobs, skills, financial issues, childcare, housing and personal issues to address the broad needs of its customers.

15.41. In England, The Skills Funding Agency (formerly LSC) and JCP are developing a joint approach to employment and skills support for employers and individuals. This will help employers to be confident that their employees will have the skills they need to do their job and help employees remain and progress in employment to higher skilled, better paid work.

15.42. DWP is working with DBIS and JCP to develop pilots to test aspects of the new IES service in England, including skills screening for all new customers, Skills Health Checks and Skills Accounts.

15.43. The current IES trials Districts are:

Black Country

- Staffordshire
- The Marches
- Coventry and Warwickshire
- Birmingham and Solihull
- Cambridge and Suffolk
- Greater Manchester Central

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- Greater Manchester East and West
- Central London
- Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth
- Norfolk
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight

It is recommended that you maintain contact with your local JCP TPPM to ensure you are kept informed about IES developments in your local delivery area.

### **Mandatory Training Pilots**

15.44. As part of the broader IES agenda, Mandatory Training Pilots will be run in some IES trial areas in England. These pilots will be aimed at JSA customers with an identified skills need. The exact locations have yet to be decided.

### **Delivering Skills within the Flexible New Deal**

- 15.45. In addition to the requirements of the enhanced JSA regime and the FND, customers should still be able and encouraged to seek skills advice through the adult advancement and careers service in England or equivalent in Scotland and Wales, and access appropriate training in line with JSA requirements. You will need to consider how you can build upon any skills-related activity that has already started when the customer begins the FND and utilise the support that is available to address any skills gap, where this is proving to be a barrier to sustainable work.
- 15.46. You must also work in partnership with the adult advancement and careers service in England or equivalent in Scotland and Wales and other local skills and training suppliers, with a view to referring customers for skills-related support. This might be in the form of a referral for a Skills Health Check, use of a Skills Account or onward referral to training.
- 15.47. The longer term ambition for the new type of skills provision in England is that it should be flexible, demand led, employment focused and responsive to the needs of the local labour market. A customer should be able to access the provision on a full or part time basis, to address their individual skills needs in order to find a job, to remain in that job and to progress further within employment. This provision will be free to FND customers and FND suppliers.
- 15.48. You may identify that a customer needs to undertake full-time skills training as part of the action plan. If so, you should ensure that the training provision is relevant and addresses the customer's specific skills gaps. The rationale for undertaking the training should be reflected in the customer's action plan.

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15.49. If the training is full-time, the customer will be required to move off JSA and onto a training allowance for the duration of the provision. ([further information regarding moving customers from JSA onto a training allowance can be found in: Section 05 – Training Allowance](#)).

### Employment and Skills Boards

15.50. As outlined in the Leitch Review of Skills, below national level in England, there are numerous bodies involved in delivering employment and skills services to individuals and employers. To integrate these services better, it was recommended that the [UK Commission for Employment and Skills](#) should support a new network of local employer-led Employment and Skills Boards.

15.51. A 'light touch' approach has been taken to implementing proposals on Employment and Skills Boards to allow partners to develop models that suit them. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

### Employability and skills in Scotland

15.52. The employment and skills approach in Scotland varies from that in England. This means that local arrangements for the delivery of skills support and the interaction of FND suppliers and skills bodies will vary.

### Workforce Plus (Employability) Partnerships

15.53. Workforce Plus is the Scottish Government's employability framework for Scotland. In summary, it aims to ensure that all the relevant agencies, both at local and national/UK levels, work together better and make better use of existing resources aimed at helping people into work. Currently 26 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas operate employability partnerships on the Workforce Plus model.

15.54. In terms of the UK policy dimension, you should note that Workforce Plus overlaps with all three City Strategy areas in Scotland (i.e. Glasgow Edinburgh and Dundee). It also overlaps with the following contract areas/packages of FND Phase 1 Inverclyde, South Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, Scottish Borders and Edinburgh.

15.55. More information on Workforce Plus can be found in [Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland](#).

15.56. Workforce Plus Partnerships fit within the Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) structure which operates at the local authority level.

### Skills delivery

15.57. The new skills body, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), draws together a range of functions delivered by pre-existing bodies. These functions include all-age careers advice (formerly delivered by Careers Scotland), management of the Scottish Government's national training programmes (formerly delivered by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise) and skills brokerage

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(delivered by learndirect Scotland). Whilst there is no current intention to introduce Employment and Skills Boards in Scotland, SDS is looking to establish strong links with the local employability partnerships.

- 15.58. SDS delivers two national training programmes specifically for unemployed people:
- **Training for Work** – a voluntary vocational training programme for people over 18 who have either been unemployed for over three months or face some form of disadvantage in the labour market.
  - **Get Ready for Work** – a voluntary programme with a strong vocational element for 16-18 year olds who require tailored support to improve their prospects of employment.
- 15.59. Both programmes are in the process of being reviewed.
- 15.60. A body with which SDS intends to build strong links is the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education (SFC). The SFC is the non-departmental public body responsible for funding Scotland's 43 further education colleges and 20 universities/Higher Education Institutions. It also works closely with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) to ensure that a high quality of provision is maintained in both sectors. The Scottish Government provides strategic guidance to the SFC on an annual basis.
- 15.61. SDS is also likely to make increasing links with adult literacy and numeracy provision, which is currently delivered through local authority funded partnerships. Adult literacy and numeracy provision is comparable to basic skills provision in England. However, it is important to note that Scotland operates a 'social practice' model, with less of an emphasis on qualifications than on distance travelled.
- 15.62. All skills delivery in Scotland, from early years provision through to higher education and beyond, is embraced within the Scottish Government's Skills Strategy, [Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy](#). Updates on progress are available on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy>.

### Skills agenda in Wales

- 15.63. The skills agenda in Wales is a devolved responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government and is therefore distinct from the undertakings in England. The Welsh Assembly Government's approach is outlined in the paper: [Skills that Work for Wales](#), published on 16th July 2008.
- 15.64. Skills provision in Wales is wide ranging, and is a combination of UK nationally delivered programmes and those supported by the Welsh Assembly Government. The latter includes initiatives such as Skill Build, aimed at unemployed learners of all ages and designed to meet basic skills needs and other vocational skills issues. Future progress of the skills agenda in Wales will be informed through the Welsh Employment and Skills Board which will act as a key advisor to the Welsh Assembly Government.

### **The Wales Employment and Skills Board**

- 15.65. The Wales Employment and Skills Board was established to advise, influence and help Welsh Assembly Government ministers drive-up skills and employment and business performance in Wales. It will:
- monitor and contribute to the development of the implementation of future skills strategies and action plans in Wales;
  - advise on business support, skills and employment priorities (and related business support) in Wales; and,
  - consider the role and performance of Sector Skills Councils in Wales, including progress in implementing Sector Skills Agreements and Sector Qualification Strategies.

### **UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)**

- 15.66. The [UK Commission for Employment and Skills](#) was launched on 1 April 2008 to assess UK progress towards achieving world class skills with full employment and to advise on how employment and skills services can best work together to deliver an integrated service for employers and individuals. The Commission will promote employer investment in people and the use of their skills and to do so will fund and manage the performance of the Sector Skills Councils and the Councils' re-licensing. A network of employer-led Employment and Skills Boards report to the Commission.

### **Strategic partnership working**

- 15.67. We are moving away from a basic contract compliance model and into an approach where we will be able to share future strategic thinking and insights from other delivery/management experience, jointly identifying opportunities for efficiency gains or better outcomes. We will be looking to you to signal changes you are experiencing in customer characteristics so that we can factor those changes into policy development.
- 15.68. By working more strategically, you will need to understand and behave in a way that recognises that they are delivering part of the Government's wider agenda – social cohesion, social inclusion, sustainability, progression, equality and diversity, and joined-up government. In particular, you must demonstrate an understanding of the integrated employment/employability and skills agenda in England, Scotland and Wales.
- 15.69. Just as JCP will engage its key local partners in the delivery and supported job search (stage three of the enhanced JSA regime), you will be expected to engage and work with other local strategic partners in the delivery of the FND. This will involve working within Local Strategic Partnerships with, for example, City Strategy consortia, Local Area Agreements, Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Community Planning Partnerships, Communities First Partnerships and Careers Ladders Wales. These bodies are summarised below.

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## Local Strategic Partnerships (England only)

- 15.70. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiative and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively.
- 15.71. Further information relating to LSPs can be obtained from the LSP Government Guidance: <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=187>.

## City Strategy

- 15.72. The City Strategy, also mentioned in the Green Paper, In work, better off: Next steps to full employment, brings together the public, private and voluntary sectors through a consortium to improve the way support for individual jobless people is co-ordinated and delivered on the ground. By pooling or aligning budgets with some DWP funding, we aim to get more or better outcomes from existing resources.
- 15.73. Local consortia will be expected to provide the drive and focus for cross agency activity to help jobless residents move into and progress through work, and in doing so contribute to the achievement of the government's long-term employment and child poverty goals. JCP will be an important member of each local consortium.
- 15.74. It will be important that there is a cohesive service offered in those areas covered by a City Strategy. You will need to ensure that the service you provide enhances and does not replicate existing provision. Working with the consortia you will need to identify gaps in provision and ensure that these gaps are suitably filled where appropriate.

## Local Area Agreements (England only)

- 15.75. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level. LAAs simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances. Through these means, LAAs are helping to devolve decision making, move away from a 'Whitehall knows best' philosophy and reduce bureaucracy.
- 15.76. LAAs set out the local priorities that will make specific towns, cities or communities better places to be; they have been negotiated between all the main public sector organisations each area, each local authority and central Government. The ideas behind them are to:
- recognise that 'one size does not fit all' and local services should reflect what local people want;
  - give more flexibility to local authorities and other public sector organisations in the ways they deliver services for local people;

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- make local authorities and other public services more accountable to local people;
- reduce red-tape and improve value for money; and
- enable local people to get more involved in decisions about local services.

15.77. For more information see: [Local Area Agreements](#)

### **Multi area agreements (England only)**

15.78. A multi area agreement (MAA) is designed to be cross-boundary local area agreement (LAA). They bring together key players in flexible ways to tackle issues that are best addressed in partnership, at a regional and sub-regional level. The major issues that MAAs can tackle include:

- skills deficits;
- housing market imbalances;
- transport and infrastructure projects; and,
- economic development.

15.79. MAAs complement and do not duplicate the work of existing LAAs, the new performance framework or existing regional strategies. MAAs are not needed where existing sub-regional partnerships are sufficient. The wider environment can include partners across towns, cities or sub-regions.

15.80. MAAs are similar to LAAs in that strategic partners across boundaries can agree targets and pooling of funding arrangements with their Government Office. There is a particular attraction to aligning rather than pooling funding at MAA level to ensure control of spending.

### **Working Neighbourhoods Fund (England only)**

15.81. The Working Neighbourhood Fund replaces the current Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. It provides resources to local authorities to tackle worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise in their most deprived areas. The fund will provide the basis for a new approach, recognising the need to tackle worklessness on a community wide basis and including those claiming JSA and those on incapacity benefits.

15.82. For more information visit: [Working Neighbourhoods Fund](#).

### **Community Planning Partnerships (Scotland)**

15.83. Workforce Plus Partnerships fit within the Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) structure, which operates at the local authority level. There are 32 local authorities in Scotland, each with its own CPP. As well as local authorities, a range of other bodies, including health boards, police and fire services, enterprise and transport agencies, have a statutory duty (under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003) to participate in community planning.

15.84. CPPs are responsible for the allocation of monies from the newly created Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF). Similar in aim to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund in England, this simplified fund (which is worth £435m over the period 2008-11)

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replaces seven previous Scottish Government funding streams, namely: the Community Regeneration Fund, Community Voices Fund, Working for Families, Workforce Plus, More Choices More Chances, Financial Inclusion, and Changing Children's Services.

15.85. Allocation of 75 per cent of the fund is based on area measures of deprivation from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2006. The remaining 25 per cent is based on individual measures of deprivation using the income domain of SIMD 2006.

### **Communities First Partnerships (Wales)**

15.86. Communities First is a long-term programme undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government. Its aim is to improve opportunities and quality of life in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales, as identified by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

15.87. The Partnership is the group of people who will take on the main responsibility of the running of the Communities First programme in their area. A Partnership needs to be made up of the following:

- one third community members;
- one third statutory agencies (e.g. council, health authority or the police); and
- one third representatives from voluntary organisations and businesses.

15.88. The number of community representatives must be at least equal to any other group.

15.89. For more information visit: [Communities first Partnerships](#)

### **Careers Ladders (Wales)**

15.90. The Careers Ladders Wales model is part of the Welsh approach to integrated employment and skills and is outlined in [Skills that Work for Wales](#) the Welsh Assembly Government's skills and employment strategy.