

Annex 2.4

Devolved Administrations Anti Poverty Strategies

4.1 Scotland

1. The Concordat between the Scottish Government and The Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and the development of single outcome agreements has established a new relationship between central and local government. This is a relationship based on trust, mutual respect and full partnership working on the development of strategic approaches and achievement of shared outcomes. It also recognises the strategic role of local authorities in pursuing their own policy priorities for tackling poverty and providing services to address the needs of the most vulnerable. **CoSLA** is therefore working as a full partner with the Government in taking forward this work.

2. The Scottish Government will set the direction of policy and overarching outcomes and stand back from micro-management. Local government will have less bureaucracy to deal with and will be free to meet varying local needs and priorities.

3. The concordat describes a move to an outcome-focused approach which brings benefits to the people of Scotland and which empowers local authorities and their partners (e.g. health) to work together on planning and delivering improved outcomes through high quality and integrated services.

Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation

4. The Scottish Government launched a discussion paper “Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy (GES): A Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland” on 31 January 2008.

5. This discussion paper is designed to inform the development of a framework for delivering on the aspects of the GES related to tackling poverty including child poverty, inequality and deprivation in Scotland. It is aimed at a broad range of key stakeholders with an interest in the area of poverty and social inclusion in Scotland and will support a period of engagement and discussion over the coming weeks and months. At the core of the Anti-Poverty Framework will be a delivery plan for the Scottish Government’s Solidarity Target:

“To increase overall income, and the proportion of income, earned by the bottom three income deciles as a group by 2017”.

6. Recommendations in the Anti-Poverty Framework will be focused on making a real difference to people’s lives using the outcomes-based approach we are developing with local government and their community planning partners, and through levers on income, education, health and employability etc that are available to us under the devolution settlement.

Fairer Scotland Fund

7. The Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF) totals £145m per year for 2008/09 - 2010/11 and replaces seven separate funding streams which were aimed at regenerating deprived communities and getting more people into training and employment, e.g. the Community Regeneration Fund, the Financial Inclusion Fund, Working for Families and More Choices More Chances. Amalgamating these funding streams will reduce the administrative and bureaucratic burden on stakeholders associated with managing and monitoring several individual programmes.

8. The FSF will be deployed by Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), comprising a range of public, private, community and voluntary bodies, and will help them to work together with local communities to tackle area based and individual poverty and help more people access and sustain employment opportunities. In particular, the FSF will be used to tackle the causes of poverty, not its symptoms; improve the life chances of individuals and groups experiencing poverty and disadvantage; and improving employability, especially for young people and other hard to reach groups. CPPs have the flexibility to address local issues and the discretion to target FSF resources where they think they will be most effective in achieving these priority outcomes.

9. The FSF will also be used to drive improvements in local mainstream services provided by local authorities, the health sector and others. The Scottish Government is clear that funding of successful activities is the responsibility of all Community Planning partners and over time successful projects should attract more funding from their mainstream budgets.

Multiple and Complex Needs Programme (MCN)

10. The Scottish Government's Multiple and Complex Needs initiative aims to improve public services for those with multiple and complex needs – some of the very hardest to reach in society who may not have benefited from recent improvements to service delivery because they find it difficult to access services and/or to maximize their own benefit from them.

11. Over £5 million is being made available to explore ways in which different services can better meet the multiple and complex needs that some individuals and families in society present. A range of pilot/demonstration projects, representing a wide range of services, settings and client groups – all of whom face particular barriers, have been chosen to receive funding under the initiative, over the two years 9 months to 31 December 2008. The aim is to improve the way in which they engage with service users and attract them to use their services, how they assess and deal with their particular set of service needs/problems and, hence, how they improve service outcomes for them. All projects will explore how they can better meet the needs of those with multiple and complex needs and will monitor and evaluate their impact on the target client groups. All will take steps to ensure that the

lessons learnt for their particular service/setting are learnt from and disseminated to a wider audience.

The programme will fund:

- A review of existing knowledge about how services deal with multiple and complex needs – including good practice examples;
- 14 pilot/demonstration projects that will explore how services in different settings cater for those with multiple and complex needs;
- An overarching evaluation of the programme to identify general principles which can be applied to improve other public services in Scotland and elsewhere.

All projects will explore how they can better meet the needs of those with multiple and complex needs and will monitor and evaluate their impact on the target client groups. All will take steps to ensure that the lessons learnt for their particular service/setting are learnt from and disseminated to a wider audience.

4.1.1 Increasing Labour Market Participation

Employment services and skills

12. The Scottish Government launched “Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy” in September 2007. The strategy promotes equality of opportunity and focuses on the elimination of discrimination. It also provides a framework showing how all of the constituent parts of the education and learning systems can contribute to giving Scotland a skills base that is world class. The Strategy sets out what is required to develop a cohesive lifelong learning system centred upon the individual, but responsive to employer needs. All providers – Scotland’s Colleges, universities, Community Learning and Development, schools, private training providers, voluntary sector organisations and the Scottish Prison Service - are part of one and the same **learning system**, geared towards helping individuals develop the skills they need and with all providers understanding and supporting the transitions individuals make both into and out of particular courses or programmes.

13. A recent study ‘New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland: Evidence from the 2004 survey of the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)’ produced by the Scottish Government showed the effects of the intergenerational impact of poor literacy and numeracy and revealed that ‘Poverty and its consequences ensure that the low-literacy and numeracy, poor-education problem is being re-cycled from one generation to the next. Parents’ aspirations for their children’s educational success are soon

squashed as the means of achieving them through educational support at home is too often lacking.”¹

14. The response to this evidence is a call to action and the Skills for Scotland strategy focuses on improving the literacy and numeracy skills and practices of the adult population. £51 million pounds of new resources were invested over five years (2001-6), with a further £37.1 million from 2006-8 – by far the biggest initiative in the field for over 20 years. 15,000 learners were engaged in literacy programmes across Scotland in 2001 and more than 137,000 learners were supported by 2006. The target is to support 200,000 adult learners by 2008.

4.1.2 Child Poverty

15. On 18 March 2008 the Scottish Government and COSLA published a joint statement on early years and early intervention, which set out the principles of early intervention, and their commitment to develop an early years framework based on these principles. Four task groups have been developing policy proposals, each focusing on one of the themes of the framework: building parenting and family capacity; creating communities that provide a supportive environment for children and families; delivering integrated services that meet the needs of children and families; and developing a workforce that can support the framework. The early years framework will support and complement the Government’s development of a framework for tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation. The Scottish Government remains committed to doing what it can to deliver on the UK 2010 and 2020 child poverty targets, and will set out its approach in the Anti-Poverty Framework, expected later this year.

4.1.3 Equalities / Gender

16. We have a number of high level priorities in our Gender Equality Scheme, with associated actions. Our 10 overall gender equality objectives include tackling occupational segregation, the gender pay gap, and women and poverty.

17. Addressing low pay for women cuts across many policy fields. The Scottish Government has recognised that it needs a root and branch approach tackling the gender stereotyping that affects life choices (in the early years, throughout education and into employment and old age); horizontal and vertical job segregation; and the under-valuing of roles and occupations that are perceived to be “women’s work”. It also needs to raise employer and employee awareness of rights and responsibilities and policies to address the gender pay gap. The three main avenues for progressing this are through funding the Close the Gap project, the Scottish Government Cross-Directorate Working Group on Occupational Segregation (due to report on proposed

¹ New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland: Evidence from the 2004 survey of the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) Parsons, S and Bynner, J, Scottish Government, 2008.

actions during 2008) and the Scottish Government's Gender Equality Scheme.

18. Tackling low pay for women will contribute positively to other key social inclusion issues such as child poverty and poverty in old age.

Race

19. In Scotland, Glasgow has the largest ethnic minority population. It is seen as a key area where action can be taken as the majority of Scotland's black and ethnic minority population lives in Glasgow. For this reason the Scottish Government has been working with the BME sub-group of Glasgow Works, the Glasgow City Strategy Consortium, to agree a strategy for engaging, recruiting and progressing ethnic minorities in the labour market.

20. The Glasgow Works BME sub-group has developed an action plan around engagement and progression. It will work with other Glasgow Works sub-groups on employer engagement and progression/retention of ethnic minorities once in the workplace. The action plan outlines key steps as to how those actions will be achieved. The action plan has a particular focus on women and young people from a BME background as they have low economic activity rates. A range of strategic BME and mainstream agencies are represented on the sub-group. These include Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS), Careers Scotland, Glasgow Anti Racist alliance (GARA), Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Community Planning Ltd, Jobcentre Plus, NHS Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government. The BME sub-group has mechanisms in place to engage with and build on experience of delivery organisations involved in helping BME clients.

21. To help with the implementation of the action plan, the Scottish Government is providing Glasgow Works with funding for a BME Policy Manager post. This presents the Scottish Government with an opportunity to learn what works and how this can be taken forward in future policy developments.

4.1.4 Children and Education

22. There is a range of initiatives underway in relation to children's services generally and to education. The *Getting it right for every child* programme promotes a shared approach to meeting the needs of all children and young people. It builds from universal services through existing policies, strategies, legislation and practice. *Getting it right* supports a positive shift in culture, systems and practice so that children get the help they need when it is needed. It calls for processes to be streamlined, practitioners to be alert to all the needs of a child, to share information as needed and deliver appropriate, proportionate and timely help with integrated action as necessary.

23. In education, the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) supports early intervention and a personalised approach to additional support needs, in

order to address inequality and promote positive outcomes for children and young people. Underpinning that, the transformation of the education system through Curriculum for Excellence provides a strong vehicle for improving life outcomes for all young people. The design of Curriculum for Excellence will, place the child at the centre and:

- enable schools to work effectively with partners, including young people and families, to build a flexible system which can deliver a unified package of learning and support for young people;
- provide more engaging and personalised learning both in and out of school, for example through youth work and volunteering;
- provide a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, with every teacher taking responsibility for delivery across the curriculum;
- enable all young people to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work;
- take a holistic approach to health and wellbeing outcomes, covering learning in mental, emotional, social and physical health to promote resilience, confident, independent thinking and positive attitudes;
- recognise young people's broader life skills and achievements beyond qualifications;
- provide continuity and progression through school to post-school, aimed at retaining young people in learning after the age of 16.

Looked After Children & Young People

24. *Looked After Children & Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* is intended for everyone who is concerned with looked after children and young people and their families. This action plan raises many important issues and contains 19 action points across its five themes. The five themes and Scottish Ministers' vision around each are as follows:

- Working together – it is essential that the individuals and agencies who form the corporate parent for Scotland's children and young people are more aware and alert to their children's needs and work together to deliver for them.
- Becoming Effective Lifelong Learners – Scotland's looked after children and young people should be encouraged and supported throughout their lives to maximise their educational potential. All of our looked after children and young people should have the required skills, knowledge and confidence to become effective lifelong learners.
- Developing into Successful and Responsible Adults – Scotland's looked after children and young people will be encouraged and supported as they approach adulthood; they will be provided with the same types of opportunities as other children and young people so that they may grow into valued, effective lifelong learners and successful and responsible adults.

- Being Emotionally, Mentally and Physically Healthy - Scotland's looked after children and young people will benefit from access to a range of appropriate services designed to meet their emotional, mental and physical needs. Professionals, foster carers, residential workers, teaching staff and parents will be trained to understand the importance and value of meeting these needs. All of our looked after children and young people should grow to be emotionally, mentally and physically healthy.
- Feeling Safe and Nurtured in a Home Setting - Scotland's looked after children and young people will live somewhere they feel safe and nurtured; a place that they can call home, a place free from abuse and harm, a place where they feel safe and confident to express their views to develop into well-rounded, successful and responsible adults.

25. An external reference group is also working on aspects of the National Fostering and Kinship Care Strategy:

- Updating recruitment and assessment processes for foster carers
- Assessing training needs of kinship and foster carers
- Developing assessment guidelines for kinship carers of looked after children
- Advising on models support for kinship carers of non-looked after children

As well as this kinship carers of 'looked after' children will be eligible for allowances. Local authorities will decide on the timescale for implementation and the specific detail of their own allowance scheme. We will also work on welfare benefits with DWP and HMRC to help support all kinship carers.

4.1.5 Health services and health inequalities

Tackling Health Inequalities

26. A committed cross-government approach underpins the Scottish Government's strategy to tackle health inequalities. The report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities, *Equally Well*, was published in June 2008 and sets out a series of recommendations for implementation building on evidence about what works in reducing health inequalities. The recommendations were prepared in conjunction with local authorities, NHS Scotland and the Third Sector and will see the Government working in partnership with all of these sectors in the delivery. The report focuses on the Task Force's priority areas for action: children's very early years; mental health and wellbeing; the harms associated with drug and alcohol abuse; and, the big killer diseases (heart disease and cancer). Central to the ethos of the report is the importance of addressing the social determinants of health inequalities and the focus on public sector services working across traditional boundaries to ensure that responsive and co-ordinated pathways are in place for the most vulnerable in society.²

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25104032/0>

27. As well as the multi-sector approach to addressing the social determinants of health, Scotland's health services play a vital role in both responding to ill health and in rolling out anticipatory care approaches to tackle health inequalities. Scotland's key inequalities target for the NHS is to reduce mortality from coronary heart disease among those under 75 living in the 15% most deprived areas (based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) and inequalities are measured within other targets eg smoking, breastfeeding. The Scottish Government's *Keep Well* programme is offering comprehensive GP health checks for those aged 45-64 living in the most deprived areas. Patients are assessed for risk of preventable ill health and referred onto further services including smoking cessation, alcohol interventions and diet/weight management or are prescribed appropriate medications. The approach will shortly be refined to offer interventions on anxiety, stress and depression. Scotland's acute sector settings are becoming health promoting health services through the implementation of 6 key actions which seek to ensure that all patient contacts are health promoting opportunities, and the creation of hospital environments which promote the good health of patients, carers, staff and the wider community. Our health services are also supporting social inclusion and reducing inequalities by operating pre-employment training for the long-term unemployed to offer employment opportunities for marginalised groups. Tackling health inequalities is the priority for the health service and all NHS Boards, and their planning and delivery partners, have a range of innovative programmes in place to address inequalities locally.

Better Health, Better Care Action Plan

28. Health-promoting schools have developed in the context of community planning and Integrated Children's Services in recognition of the role that schools can play in promoting and sustaining the health of children and the wider community. The place of health promotion in schools and the importance of sound nutritional guidance to ensure accessible high quality food and drink within schools has now been enshrined in legislation with the passing of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Act places a duty on Scottish Ministers and local authorities to endeavour to ensure that schools are health promoting. The Act goes on to state that a school is 'health promoting if it provides on its own or in conjunction with health boards, parents or any other person, activities, an environment and facilities, which promote the physical, social, mental and emotional well-being of pupils'. Consequently, health promotion will permeate every aspect of school life.

29. We have already increased provision of free healthy school lunches to all Primary 1-3 pupils in our trial scheme in five Scottish Local Authority areas. In 2009/10, provided the evaluation of the trials is positive, legislation will be introduced to allow extension of the nutritious free school meals to all pupils in P1 to P3. Assuming the legislation is passed, local authorities will provide free school meals to all P1 to P3 pupils from August 2010. Subject to necessary legislation being passed, entitlement to free school meals will be extended to

all primary and secondary pupils of families in receipt of both maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit from August 2009.

Drugs

30. The Scottish Government published a new drugs strategy entitled "The Road to Recovery" on 29 May. It sets out a fresh vision for tackling drug misuse, based on consensus and informed by the best national and international evidence. Central to the strategy is the idea of 'recovery'. This means that, more than just reducing risk and harm, services should help people to move on towards a drug-free life, as active and contributing members of society. Employment, education and training have a key role to play in promoting recovery. The strategy also recognises the strong and clear links between problematic drug use and deprivation. It sets out action that is being taken across all arms of the Scottish Government that will contribute to reducing long-term demand for drugs such as increasing economic growth; enhancing children's experience in their early years; reducing health inequalities; and improving universal services for young people.

4.1.6 Housing with a focus on homelessness and rough sleeping

31. In October 2007, the Scottish Government published its consultation document, *Firm Foundations: the Future of Housing in Scotland*, which sets out proposals to increase the supply of housing across Scotland. In a statement to the Scottish Parliament on 25 June 2008 we confirmed our proposed goal of increasing the rate of new housing supply in Scotland to at least 35,000 a year by the middle of the next decade. As part of our Low cost Initiative for First-Time Buyers (LIFT) scheme, in January we announced the expansion of our shared equity pilot to cover an additional six local authority areas. Meeting a significant proportion of the overall need for affordable housing through low cost home-ownership schemes should ease pressure on the social rented sector. In order to further ease pressure on this sector, we are looking to offer local authorities incentives to build new council houses, and to this end, as confirmed in our recent parliamentary statement, we are also providing £25m to kickstart a new generation of Council house building after years of decline. As well as ending the Right to Buy for new build properties, we have also undertaken to review the scheme more broadly. With these proposals we seek to re-invigorate the social rented sector in Scotland, in order that it is no longer the "tenure of last resort" and instead, provides choices for those seeking to establish a home. We are also improving the choice available to homeless people, by making measures available to landlords in the private rented sector to offer accommodation which is suitable for those presenting as homeless. Overall, our major policy emphasis is on making the whole housing system function better in order to modernise the housing and planning system, increase significantly housing supply and improve affordability. Investment of more than £1.5 billion in housing during the spending period 2008-11 will help realise this.

You can access a copy of Firm Foundations on line at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/30153156/0>

32. This will help to contribute to the Scottish Government's ambitious target to abolish the distinction between priority and non priority homeless households by 2012 with the aim of ensuring that everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless is entitled to settled accommodation.

In 2001, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation which placed a duty on Councils to provide temporary accommodation to all those assessed as homeless. This, and the expectation that higher proportions of applicants are likely to be assessed as priority need in order to meet the 2012 commitment are likely to have contributed to a rise in the number of applications to councils for assistance between 2000 and 2006. The most recent figures indicate that this rise is levelling out with about 59,500 applications recorded for 2006-07, representing a drop of 2% over the previous year.

33. Recorded numbers of households in temporary accommodation have risen gradually since the early 1990's as councils began implementing their new duties to provide temporary accommodation although more recently there has again been some indication that this increase may be tapering off to some extent. Under the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 local authorities cannot put households with children and pregnant women into "unsuitable" temporary accommodation unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Statistical information for applications made to local authorities under the homeless persons legislation during the period April to September 2007 can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/04/21161438/0>

4.1.7 Employment services and skills

Working for Families

34. Following a successful pilot in 10 local authorities, the Working for Families Fund in Scotland was rolled out to a further 10 local authorities. The aim was to help disadvantaged parents in areas with high levels of deprivation towards or into training, education and employment by removing childcare and other barriers. The core model of the fund was the provision of key workers who performed a two fold role in establishing and sustaining childcare for parents and acting as a link to pull in additional employability related help that might be required. Working for Families provided support across a wide range of services including personal development, money and debt advice, childcare, volunteering opportunities, health and disabilities, substance misuse and transport.

35. Engagement with the programme was voluntary, and did not have a time-based cut-off point for assisting parents on their route towards work, as there is recognition that this may be a long journey for some parents.

36. Funding for the programme ran from 2004 to 2008. Up to 31 March 2008 the programme engaged with 25,508 clients. Of these, 16,877 (66%) had achieved a positive outcome and progressed towards education, training, or employment*. The final evaluation of Working for Families is expected to be completed by Summer 2008.

37. From April 2008 Working for Families became part of the Fairer Scotland Fund, which is a new £145m catalyst fund to help Community planning Partnerships tackle area based and individual poverty.

Workforce Plus

38. The Scottish Government's strategy for helping more people into work: *Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland* was launched, after extensive consultation, in June 2006. It sets out actions at both national and local levels on how Scotland must be more ambitious in making better use of existing resources for employability services, helping more vulnerable and disadvantaged people into work. The emphasis is on better partnership working particularly at a local level as well as co-operating with the UK Government, which has lead responsibility for the administration of the benefit system and helping unemployed people with job search.

39. Workforce Plus was initially targeted in 7 priority areas (Glasgow, Dundee, North & South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire). However, another 12 areas had voluntarily worked with the team to implement Workforce Plus actions locally. From April 2008, employability funding has become part of the new Fairer Scotland Fund and all 32 Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) will be encouraged to tackle the Workforce Plus agenda. Progress for Workforce Plus is currently measured using reductions in the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits. As of May 2007 data shows, the seven areas have performed better than the overall figures for Scotland: a 14.9% reduction in the number of benefit claimants since August 2004, compared to a 9.6% reduction across Scotland as a whole. Future measurement arrangements will be agreed as part of the Single Outcome Agreement process.

40. To support and oversee the implementation of Workforce Plus; a National Partnership Board consisting of key influencers of employability in Scotland has been set up. In its 1st year, it concentrated on setting the direction of implementation through approving local action plan and addressing 3 national priorities; *employer engagement, linking health and employability and a review of education and skills*. The local partnerships feed back to and are supported by the National Workforce Plus Partnership Board. The 7 priority areas plus Edinburgh as a DWP Cities Strategy area comprise the National Delivery Group (NDG). The NDG is addressing challenges around *joint procurement, common assessments, joint tracking & management information systems and benefit complexities*.

More Choices, More Chances

Employability and young people

41. More Choices, More Chances is the Scottish Government's strategy to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. There are several key elements –

- the early identification of young people who are at risk of disengaging
- the targeting of additional support at those young people
- an improved and personalised offer of learning, responsive to an individual young person's needs
- the right support and guidance before, during and after transition points, especially as young people leave school
- the right financial support and incentives for young people
- a strong partnership approach at a local level

42. 16+ Learning Choices is our new model for supporting young people as they approach their school leaving date. More Choices, More Chances committed to a review of the youth training guarantee; Skills for Scotland commits to encouraging all young people to stay in learning post-16 as the best way of ensuring their long-term employability and contribution to society. 16+ Learning Choices takes this forward by making a commitment to all young people, well in advance of their school leaving date, of an appropriate offer of learning post-16.

43. There are three crucial elements to ensure that this happens: young people must have access to the right learning provision – which might include staying on at school, entering further or higher education, taking part in one of our national training programmes, volunteering, participating in community learning and development, or following a more tailored programme of personal and social development. Young people must also have the right information, advice and guidance – from Careers Scotland and other support agencies – to help them make the right choices. Some may need ongoing support to help them sustain and progress their learning. Young people must also be able to access right financial support so that staying in learning is a viable option.

44. We will be working with a number of local authorities and their partners to implement 16+ Learning Choices from December 2008, with the model in place across Scotland by December 2010.

Offender learning

45. The Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005, the Workforce Plus framework and the More Choices More Chances strategy all place a strong emphasis on improved integrated working between agencies with a responsibility for working with offenders/ex-offenders. They also state the importance of ensuring that there is joined up planning and delivery of

services between organisations with a responsibility for improving the employability prospects of individuals.

46. It is in order to ensure this more integrated and effective approach to learning and skills provision for offenders in Scotland that the Scottish Government made a commitment in *Skills for Scotland* to work towards achieving this goal.

47. If offenders are to gain the skills and qualifications they need to make a positive contribution to society we must look at how best to deliver effective integrated learning, skills and employability provision for young people and adults who are in or leaving the justice system.

48. The Offender Learning and Skills Report, which we are in the process of developing, will set out recommendations for all those involved in offender learning in Scotland in order that offenders can improve their prospects, obtain fulfilling and sustainable employment and develop a strong appetite for lifelong learning.

Services for older people

49. *All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population* (March 2007) sets out how the Scottish Government will deal with the issues around the demographic ageing of the population. Older people are forming an increasing proportion of the population, and will play an increasing role in Scotland's prosperity and future.

50. *All Our Futures* sees older people as contributors to life in Scotland both now and in the future, and seeks to break down barriers between generations. It also acknowledges that as people get older, they have a higher need for healthcare and other services, associated with chronic disease and long term conditions. This can be planned for, and consequently *All Our Futures* aims to ensure that services are in place so that people can live life to the full as they grow older.

4.1.8 Transport

51. One of the strategic outcomes set out in Scotland's National Transport Strategy is to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of public transport, achieving this will ensure that we provide sustainable integrated and cost effective public transport alternatives to the private car, connecting people, places and work across Scotland.

4.1.9 Fuel Poverty

52. The Scottish Government aims to eradicate fuel poverty as far as is reasonably practicable by 2016 and has spent over £380 million providing free central heating to almost 98,000 homes and insulating almost 284,000 under the Warm Deal. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing published a

review of fuel poverty on 22 May 2008. The review concluded that current programmes are not effectively targeting the fuel poor. The Cabinet Secretary re-established the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum who will meet regularly over the summer and present recommendations for the future of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Programmes by September. In the meantime applications to the Central Heating Programme will be prioritised to ensure that those most at risk are assisted first. Central heating and insulation measures will be provided to homeowners and private renters over 60 who are without central heating along with those with broken systems who are over 80, or claim the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit. The Warm Deal continues to provide a package of insulation measures for low income households. With estimates that 40,000 households become fuel poor for every 5% increase in energy prices, energy providers in Scotland are encouraged to continue to take robust measures to assist vulnerable households.

4.1.10 Financial Inclusion

53. SG will continue to fund national infrastructure for the money advice sector, including training, second tier support, and embedding the National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. We will develop the delivery of money advice through telephone and email channels, as well as the traditional face to face model. Financial education will be embedded in the Curriculum for Excellence. This aims to provide a seamless education from age 3 to 18, ensuring that all young people can be successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Through the “learning outcomes” for Social Studies, pupils are to be taught how to manage budgets and to reconcile that they may not always be able to afford things that they want. These outcomes sit alongside promoting numeracy across the curriculum which, among other things, is intended to help pupils manage money and plan their finances.

Rural

54. The Scottish Government continues to improve its understanding of the problems in rural areas, such as access to services, fragility and sparsity in order to identify, and tackle, rural poverty and deprivation more effectively. Characteristics that define rurality can create specific challenges and require streamlining overlapping delivery arrangements. We will work collaboratively on tackling the issues of poverty and deprivation in rural areas within the framework resulting from the ‘Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy: A Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland.

4.1.11 CASE STUDIES

Case study: *All Our Futures*

Dumfries and Galloway Older People's Services Development Group

55. Dumfries and Galloway is a large rural area of Scotland with a rapidly ageing population. Since 2003, its Older People's Services Development Group has provided a formal partnership of older people working together with service providers. The Group is a full partner in the formal planning network, and has worked to ensure that older people's issues are taken seriously. It has increased the influence older people and their carers have on matters that are important to them, including informing strategic decision-making. Among its other activities, the Group collates and disseminates the views of older people and their carers, and strives to improve the quality and standard of life for older people in Dumfries and Galloway

Case Study: A City for All Ages

56. A City for All Ages is Edinburgh's Joint Plan for Older People. The Plan is a joint arrangement between The City of Edinburgh Council and its partners in NHS Lothian and the voluntary and commercial sectors. It is about improving opportunities and services for older people, removing discrimination and overcoming barriers. Particular attention has been paid to recognising the diversity of older people through involving all equality strands.

57. The new initiatives stemming from A City for All Ages have all involved older people. That includes membership of steering groups and funding panels, contributing to research methodology, and monitoring the progress of the Plan.

Case Study: Angus 50 + IT Project

58. The Angus 50+ project has used Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as the engagement and delivery tool to involve the 50+ age group in developing and improving services in their local area.

ICT Training has been given to small groups in places where the learners are comfortable, including sheltered housing complexes and day care centres. Courses are tailored to meet each learner's needs, and a number of users with accessibility issues are being supported to learn how to access and use the internet. This has helped build their confidence and remove the barriers of cost, transport and mobility. Testing and development of a website using inexperienced and frail users has led to enhancements to the site, to meet access and usability needs of the older age group.

59. Participants have also been involved in developing a Smartcard, with service access and local and national discounts, and in developing a Health and Wellbeing publication for the over 50 age group. Involvement of those over 70 has been particularly high in the Angus 50+ project. Older people involved have gained increased self confidence, social contact and mental stimulation. The Scottish Government funded the project.

Case Study: Workforce Plus

60. Renfrewshire was one of the Workforce Plus priority areas and its Employability Action Plan has made some significant inroads due to the development of a strong local partnership to address the Workforce Plus agenda.

61. The plan has enabled partners in Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership to identify and develop a range of new and innovative programmes enabling them to deliver on the aim of the plan to “provide a seamless and wrapped around provision of services that meets the needs of participants, partners, funders and employers alike”

Some examples include:

62. The provision of a Public sector Link Officer based within Renfrewshire Council Corporate Services (Human Resource) that has:

1. Developed a Public Sector pre-recruitment model that identifies vacancies within the Council (currently Environmental Services) and the necessary skills required for these vacancies;
2. Supported partners to identify participants wishing to access these vacancies; and
3. Supported partners to identify and provide any additional training and/or support required by participants to ensure they sustain the vacancies

The development of a Renfrewshire Management Information System (REMIS)

63. In response to the Workforce Plus agenda for smarter, more efficient collation and reporting of management information and the need to identify and track participants as they access the various employability support services, Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership has invested time and resources on the development of the Renfrewshire Management Information System (REMIS).

This system will support partners to:

- Build an holistic view of clients across Renfrewshire;
- Manage sources of funds and understand where and how funds are being spent; and
- Engender closer working and culture change between service organisations.

64. The system will track and monitor the progress of individuals and services in order to improve planning and strategy across Renfrewshire. The system will also track, monitor, enable partners and providers to improve plans and strategies. It will capture ‘enough’ information to assess the progress of services, service providers and individuals.

65. Common data sets and management input information has been identified and adopted by the partners and will enable a more consistent view

of distance travelled by participants as they progress through Renfrewshire's employability support structure.

The development of a school transitional model.

66. Workforce Plus partners supported the provision of a range of information sessions across the 20th & 21st November 2007 that saw Erin Riehle, the Director of Project Search, and the Division of Disabilities Services at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital share her experience as an employer pioneering a new approach to the employment of people with learning disabilities. Her work is increasingly recognised across America as setting a new standard for employers and intermediaries.

67. The Cincinnati Children's Hospital, through its internal programme called Project Search have developed a model of training and support that has enabled people with learning difficulties to become truly integrated into organisations, working to a standard that which challenges widespread assumptions regarding their potential.

68. From these sessions a pilot programme funded by More Choices, More Chances has been established between ENABLE and Kersland School that will see In the first year of the pilot, five pupils identified by Kersland School who will undertake placements within ENABLE's Paisley Office and a range of activities including.

1. Develop the employability skills of young people whilst at school, preparing them for potential employment;
2. Develop awareness amongst participants in Health and Safety at work, Bullying at work and disability awareness;
3. Develop support structures which lead to real (supported) open employment outcomes on leaving school, through referral, at least during the pilot stage, to the Paisley OPEN supported employment project, once pupils reach school leaving age;
4. Develop an individual employment focused personal plan for each young person accessing the pilot project; and
5. Build the capacity of key personnel within Kersland School in all aspects of supported work experience and employment for pupils

4.2. Wales (Cymru)

4.2.1 Increasing Labour Market Participation

Labour Market Strategy

69. The Welsh Assembly Government is introducing radical and effective policies across the board. We are also working very closely with UK Government Departments on non-devolved matters, particularly with the Department for Work and Pensions.

70. The Welsh labour market performance has been impressive over the last 10 years. Employment has risen significantly to stand at nearly 1.2 million jobs. Our unemployment rate remains below the UK average. The employment rate has increased significantly in recent years to 71.1% of the working age population. And Wales is the only part of the UK to have seen a bigger percentage increase in private sector employment than public sector employment since 1999 – up 9% over this period compared to 5% for the UK as a whole. By international standards Wales and the rest of the UK have relatively high levels of employment.

71. Despite this success story we still face major challenges. Not least that of reducing our levels of economic inactivity and welfare dependency. Our inactivity rates are around 4 percentage points worse than the UK as a whole, and the comparison is even more adverse with the stronger economic regions. This is holding back our dynamic and entrepreneurial spirit. It is consigning too many of our people to a life of poverty and disadvantage. And along with this come the problems of ill health, crime and anti-social behaviour.

72. To some extent this is a result of our industrial legacy. So there are concentrations of inactivity in our former coal mining areas and industrial towns. Some wards within Wales have frighteningly high levels of inactivity. But there are also indications that the malaise goes wider and deeper. We are no worse than many other parts of the UK with a similar industrial history.

73. The Welsh Assembly Government has set itself the long term goal of achieving an 80% employment rate. This will require around 150,000 more people to be moved from welfare to work.

74. Like the UK we see skills as a top priority. We are working closely with the UK government their new approaches regarding welfare to work.

75. We are developing integrated employment and skills trials which helps inactive individuals to get themselves employable, particularly to obtain the skills they need.

76. We are in the process of preparing a new skills and employment strategy – *Skills That Work for Wales*. Our aim is to create a highly-skilled, knowledge-based economy. With full employment, an adaptable workforce

and lively businesses that are able to respond to the fast-moving global economy. And we want to be at the cutting edge of sustainable development.

77. The Welsh Assembly Government are working with DWP on a joint labour market strategy that will help many thousands of people across Wales into employment and give many more the skills, careers advice and the qualifications the need to progress in the labour market.

78. We have worked in close partnership with Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and the private sector. We will be continuing to put in place innovative programmes such as ant2Work.

79. In terms of Economic Inactivity our new ESF programmes. In the Convergence Area £217m of ESF has been earmarked to tackle inactivity and unemployment. A proportion of the funding has been set aside to help people with work-limiting health conditions to remain in work.

80. Support systems for employers is critical if they are to offer opportunities for unemployed or workless groups. Although many of our private sector businesses are already very supportive the Assembly would encourage them to do more. And some of our public sector employers could also learn from the private sector.

81. We are working with DWP on new projects, for example the City Strategy pilots in the Heads of the Valleys and Rhyl. These are developing new ways of tackling the problems on the ground and building yet stronger local partnerships.

82. These activities are helping to build a strong confidence in Welsh communities. There is a growing recognition that Wales is in a better position now to meet new social and economic challenges. The main need now is to roll-out all the good practice that has been identified in recent years. And to do that in an integrated way so that individuals receive a total package that provides all the elements of support they need.

4.2.2 Child Poverty

Child Poverty Strategy & Implementation Plan

83. Policy has been shaped in recent years by the report of the independent Child Poverty Task Group in June 2004; the Assembly Government's Child Poverty Strategy, 'A Fair Future for our Children', published in February 2005 and by the proposals set out in the Child Poverty Implementation Plan, published in May 2006.

84. The Implementation Plan, published in May 2006, was developed by the then deputy Minister for Social Justice, Huw Lewis AM. The Plan contained a number of general and specific policy proposals to take the child

poverty forward. The proposals were presented to the previous Assembly Government Cabinet and to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee.

85. Many of the Implementation Plan proposals have been taken forward – publication of specific cross cutting milestones and targets on child poverty, child poverty proofing of strategic policies and programmes through amendments to the Policy Gateway Tool, and reviewing the role of Cymorth. Other proposals have been reflected in our ‘One Wales’ agreement and work is ongoing.

Assembly Government Child Poverty Milestones and Targets

86. One of the proposals in the Child Poverty Implementation Plan was that the Assembly Government would measure its progress towards the 2020 child poverty eradication target by developing a series of medium term milestones and longer term targets across a range of policy areas.

87. The comprehensive and cross cutting milestones and targets, published in October 2006 in ‘Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales – Measuring Success’, cover four main policy areas of Income and Work; Education; Health and Housing. Many are based upon existing targets informed by Departmental strategic plans such as ‘The Learning Country – Vision into Action’ and the Road Safety Strategy. The Assembly Government is committed to monitoring progress against the targets and it has been agreed that, from 2008, monitoring will form part of the proposed Child Well Being Monitor for Wales.

Childreb & Young People Well-being Monitor

88. In November 2008, the Assembly Government will be producing a Children & Young People Well-being Monitor for Wales, to track the quality of life of children and young people in Wales across a range of dimensions, including child poverty. Specifically, the Monitor will provide a high-level perspective on different aspects of child well being and child poverty in Wales. A second Child Well Being Monitor for Wales will be published in 2010. Thereafter, the Monitor will be published on a three yearly basis to fit in with the planning cycle for Children and Young People’s Plans.

89. The new Child Poverty Expert Group which met for the first time in May 2008 will also have a key role in monitoring the targets and peer review the child Wellbeing Monitor.

Child Poverty Expert Group

90. Delivering on a ‘One Wales’ commitment the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government announced the establishment of a Child Poverty Expert Group to monitor the Assembly Government’s child poverty targets and provide it with evidence based advice on further and wider policy requirements necessary to meet the targets. The Group will also be asked to advise upon the development of the Child Well Being Monitor, given its status

as the key vehicle for measuring progress in reaching the child poverty targets.

Save the Children LA Pilot

91. In March 2007, the Assembly Government approved funding of £106k for a 2 year pilot project that seeks to take the first steps in supporting local government to build on existing work and to take forward the child poverty agenda at a local level.

92. It is hoped that the pilot will help maximise the leverage of local government power in order to increase family income, improve children and young people's access to better quality services and their opportunities to participate. The pilot project will focus on two local authority areas, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Gwynedd.

The specific aims of the project are to:

- *Develop a Local Authority Draft Guide*
- *Establish a Pilot Project*
- *Scale Up Impact across the 22 Local Authorities*

4.2.3 Access to quality services

Education

Children and young people's participation within the work of the Welsh Assembly Government

93. The main aim of the Participation Project within the Welsh Assembly Government has been to mainstream children and young people's participation into all relevant areas of work. Part of this work has been achieved by working across six 'themed' areas within the WAG including recruitment, producing young person friendly documents and consultation. Work to mainstream participation activity is also achieved through providing advice and support to all WAG departments.

94. With a view to "mainstreaming" children and young people's participation into routine WAG activity, the Participation Team are now working with officials in different policy areas who have volunteered to act as a Divisional Link Officers (DLO) for Children and Young Peoples Participation, in addition to their existing duties. The responsibility of the DLO in each division is to co-ordinate the activity of children and young people within their policy area by identifying new policies that are being developed or consultations that are taking place at an early stage so that children and young people's involvement can be built into the process from the beginning.

95. An European funded (ESF) project called 'Your Voice Your Choice' has also been in existence since 2005 and aims to involve more young people

aged 11-25 in decision making on services that directly affect them. We are planning to build on what the project achieved from early 2008-13 with the new round of ESF Convergence funding.

96. In 2006/07, five Senior Civil Servants from across WAG also took part in a 12 month Self-Managed Learning Programme devised by the Carnegie Institute's Young People's Initiative. The aim of the project was to support officials to apply their leadership and business management skills to the children and young people's participation agenda and therefore to take forward the process of embedding participation within the organisational culture of the Welsh Assembly Government. On-going support for the SCS set members will be available via the DLO network. YALO are working to persuade the WAG Human Resources Directorate to make the programme available to further SCS and middle management officials as a routine option within the staff personal and professional development toolkit.

Children and Young People's Participation across Wales

The Children and Young People's Participation Consortium for Wales

97. The Consortium, hosted by Save the Children, was established in 2003 and is a multi agency strategic body aiming to promote coordination and the sharing of good practice while avoiding duplication and acknowledging diversity. The Consortium recently agreed its priority areas for action in 2008 which include raising awareness of the importance of children and young people's participation in training professionals across all aspects of the children and young people's workforce, in practice in a range of primary healthcare settings, and developing the understanding and use of the standards by all of the Welsh Inspectorates.

Participation Standards

98. The Participation Standards for Wales are a set of 'core principles' for participation activity. They are quality standards that can provide a means for assessing and measuring participatory practice. They also provide guidance on good practice for children and young people's participation. There are seven standards which include 'feedback', 'No discrimination' and 'respect'. The Participation Standards were developed and piloted by young people and were endorsed by the Children and Young People's Cabinet Sub Committee in 2006. In January 2007 the former Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and Skills launched the Standards at a national seminar.

Local Participation Strategy (LPS) Guidance

99. This Guidance has been developed by the Welsh Assembly Government working collaboratively with a range of national and local partner organisations and with children and young people. It is a key piece of the infrastructure jigsaw designed to support and drive forward children and young people's participation in Wales. The guidance aims to ensure that all

children and young people aged 0-25 have opportunities to contribute to and have their voices heard in decision making on issues which impact on their lives at local level. The guidance was issued in August 2007 and in two versions suitable for children and young people. Most importantly, the LPS Guidance expects local Children and Young People's Partnerships to establish sustainable mechanisms to support children and young people's participation across all partner organisations locally.

School Councils

100. Welsh Assembly Government Regulations made School Councils statutory in Wales in December 2005 as part of the Assembly's commitment to Article 12 of the UNCRC which states that children and young people should have a say on matters which affect them. Since 2005 further guidance has been issued to schools, and a project has been set up in the Assembly to support schools, LEAs and Governors in implementing pupil participation. This has included the development of a designated School Councils web-site, the developing and piloting of training materials, work with Governors, Training the Trainers, and the production of a DVD and accompanying pack for school councils across Wales.

101. A school council is a democratically elected group of pupils whose role is to represent all pupils in their school, to ensure that their voice is heard in decisions that affect them, and to be an active channel of communication between pupils, senior management and the governing body.

102. Through their school councils, pupils across Wales are having a say and taking part in decision-making about things that affect them in school. School councillors gain self-esteem, confidence and personal and social skills such as communication and working in a team. All pupils in the school gain from the achievements of the school council, which are often linked to other school initiatives such as Healthy Schools, Eco-schools, Playground Pals and other such initiatives. Some examples of things that pupils have done can be found on the School Councils Wales web-site:
www.schoolcouncilswales.org.uk.

Flying Start

103. 'Flying Start' is targeted at the 0-3 age group within the most deprived communities in Wales, recognising the evidence that children within areas of multiple deprivation suffer additional effects of disadvantage and that support in the early years of a child's life can significantly influence positive outcomes in the medium and long term.

104. The main elements of the programme are prescriptive, drawing on a menu of a range of options that have demonstrated effectiveness. At the centre of the programme is quality centre-based childcare for 2 year olds on a part-time basis for all children in the target areas. Health visiting is also a key

part of the programme, and caseloads for each Flying Start health visitor have been set at 1:110 to ensure that each child receives additional input. Parenting programmes are also being provided. Programmes used must have demonstrated effectiveness for child outcomes and be delivered by trained personnel, such as health visitors.

The revenue budget for 2008-11 has been set as follows:

2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
26,960,998	28,144,002	31,044,000

The settlement also provides for continuing capital investment within Flying Start to make sure that facilities support the high quality required, and that the childcare settings needed are within the disadvantaged areas targeted.

105. Joined-up working across disciplines is crucial to Flying Start's effectiveness. Local Children and Young People's Partnerships lead the development of local plans for delivery of Flying Start and oversee delivery. This approach brings together education, childcare, health and social services interests and combines the voluntary, private and statutory sectors, and there are strong roles for schools, health, social services, and the voluntary sector in delivering this programme.

106. In the long term, the aim is to reduce the number of people with very poor skills that probably contributes to the relatively high levels of income inequality found in Britain; reduced rates of criminal behaviour, truancy and drug use, and foster higher employment, increased earnings and better qualifications at the end of schooling.

107. In the medium term, significant savings can be made through earlier identification of needs; through the avoidance of reception into the care system; and through the avoidance of other crisis remedial systems such as youth offending teams or substance misuse services.

108. Each local authority has been given a Flying Start allocation of funds. They also have had discretion over which school catchments were chosen, through reference to recognised poverty indicators to ensure that the most disadvantaged communities were covered.

109. There is a cap on the number 0-3 year olds that should be served, to prevent dilution of the funding and to ensure consistency of approach across Wales. Partnerships have identified nearly 16,000 of our most deprived 0-3 year olds as potential recipients. The 10% increase in the scope of the programme over the next three years allowed by the increase in budgets will allow an additional 1,600 to be included in the scheme.

Free School Meals

110. The Welsh Assembly Government's policy is that free school meals should be available to children in 'non-working' families, whom we consider most in need of this additional help. The criteria for free school meal eligibility applied by the Welsh Assembly Government is the same as the criteria used across the rest of the UK.

111. School meals and the provision of free school meals in particular, are an important aspect of our antipoverty strategy. The Appetite for Life Action Plan recognises that a number of children are not taking up their free school meal entitlement, and that more work needs to be undertaken to identify why children do not take up this entitlement, and to develop strategies to help address this.

112. We have introduced an electronic system for Local Authorities, to provide a national checking system which will reduce bureaucracy for schools, parents and Local Authorities; encourage take-up of entitlement by removing the perceived stigma of the application process; and reduce the scope for fraud and error.

113. Part of the Appetite for Life Coordinator's role is to work with Local Authorities and schools to develop and implement a marketing and communications strategy to address such issues as Free School Meals take-up.

114. We are examining reasons for non take-up of free school meals with a view to commission research aimed at identifying reasons affecting take-up of free school meal entitlement. This information will help inform the development of appropriate strategies to increase take-up of free school entitlement. We need to fully understand the reasons why children do not take up their entitlement before developing and introducing strategies to overcome them.

Primary Schools Free Breakfast Initiative

115. Over 54 per cent of primary schools have signed up to provide their pupils with the opportunity of a free healthy breakfast at school each day;

This is not a stand alone initiative but supports our whole school approach to improving nutrition in schools in Wales.

116. In addition to the positive impacts on behaviour and concentration reported by teachers, we have been given examples of pupils who have developed relationships with staff at the school through attending the scheme. For these pupils the educational experience has been improved at this stage however this may not have translated into educational outcomes at population level.

RAISE 2008-2011

117. As a result of the recent budget settlement, £16.25 million became available to allow the RAISE programme to continue for a third year (2008-2009). Thereafter, there will be £6.59 million for RAISE in 2009-2010 and £1.03 million in 2010-2011. In each of these years, at least £1 million is committed to continuing our support for the education of looked-after children.

118. In determining how we should use the funding for schools in 2008-2009, we consulted, through our national RAISE steering group, with the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education Wales. Their view was that the best approach would be to extend the current programme for an additional year, whilst developing a strategy for the use of the £5.59 million that would be available for related work in 2009-2010. That would mean keeping to the original cohort of RAISE schools. An important consideration in recommending this was the need for these schools to embed good practice developed during the original two-year period. The steering group supported the principle that during the third year, schools “should focus on developing exit strategies that give far greater emphasis to collaborative working, capacity building and sustainability.”

119. The gradual reduction in RAISE funding, over the next three years, does not allow us to extend grant aid meaningfully to additional schools, as socio-economic circumstances change in various localities. To do so would provide very short-term funding that could do very little to further the vision of RAISE as both a support and a developmental programme. Therefore, the Minister concluded that the advice from the national steering group was sound and that we should neither add schools to, nor remove any from, the current RAISE cohort and that the third year of funding should focus clearly on developing and implementing exit strategies.

Education of Gypsy and Travellers

120. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently published guidance reflecting on the particular needs of Gypsy and Traveller learners, which are broadly defined by cultural issues, values and practice, and by the tendency for learning to be interrupted rather than being continuous.

121. The profile of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Wales has changed in recent years. Overall, there appears to be less travelling for work as the traditional sources of seasonal work have reduced and, consequently, a higher proportion of Gypsies and Travellers are becoming more settled on local sites, or in social housing. There is also an increase in migration of workers from European accession countries, including some Gypsies and Travellers, and a reported increase in European Roma Gypsy Travellers arriving in the UK, some of whom come to Wales.

122. This revised guidance is based on the recommendations of three significant reports. The first was the outcome of a comprehensive review by the Equality of Opportunity Committee of service provision in Wales for

Gypsies and Travellers in 2003, which made several recommendations in relation to education, including that Circular 52/90 be revised. The Welsh Assembly Government subsequently commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake specific 'Research into the Education of Gypsy Traveller Children in Wales' which was published in February 2007. Estyn also undertook 'A Survey of Provision made by Schools and Local Authorities to meet the needs of Gypsy Traveller Learners' in 2005. The recommendations of these three reviews are reflected in this revised guidance.

123. This guidance also reflects the commitment, in the Welsh Assembly Government's education strategy 'The Learning Country - Vision into Action' (2006), to making Wales a learner focused, community-orientated country and also towards an inclusive approach to education and learning to ensure that young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The strategy also commends the collaboration of regional authorities in promoting best practice and sharing ideas. The Welsh Assembly Government strategy 'Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries', published in response to the Beecham report, also informs this guidance which aims to create a citizen-focused education service which can be responsive to individual educational needs, including those of Gypsy Traveller children. Good practice examples are drawn from current service provision in Wales and also from similar guidance documents produced for England and Scotland.

124. The guidance takes fully into account the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Children Act 2004.

4.2.4 Health Services and Health Inequalities

Inequalities in Health Fund (IIHF)

Background

125. The proposal for an Inequalities in Health Fund emerged as part of work to review the resource allocation formula in Wales. That work, and Peter Townsend's report (Targeting Poor Health), advocated a dual strategy approach and action inside and outside the NHS to improve health, tackle inequalities and contributory factors including inequities in access to services.

126. Established in 2001, originally as 3-year pilot programme, the Fund's first priority and the focus of project action has been coronary heart disease. Project funding was extended in 2004 and again in 2006.

127. The Fund has supported a total of 67 projects providing diverse action or services including screening and risk assessment, workplace health, exercise, lifestyle change and cardiac rehabilitation. All projects were targeted at Wales' most disadvantaged communities.

128. The Fund's coronary heart disease portfolio of projects was drawn to a close on 31 March 2008.

Results and Achievements

129. Significant elements of work developed through the projects have been subsumed into mainstream services or other strategies / programmes.

Summary reports are currently being prepared and will be available on the Chief Medical Officer's website www.wales.gov.uk/cmo/ / www.cymru.gov.uk/cmo shortly.

A Healthy Future: Public Health Strategic Framework 2020

130. In Autumn 2006, the Welsh Cabinet signalled that a strategic framework for public health should be developed as part of the Making the Connections agenda. In February 2008 the Minister for Health and Social Services approved the approach and detailed proposals for the development of a framework.

131. The Welsh Assembly Government's Public Health and Health Professions Department headed by the Chief Medical Officer are leading on the development of a public health strategic framework with two over-arching goals: They are to;

- Improve the Quality and Length of Life
- Improve Equity in Health

132. 7 themes have been identified representing the greatest challenges and opportunities for public health to 2020. These are:

- Socio-Economic, Cultural and Environmental Conditions
- Children and Young People
- Healthy Eating, Food and Fitness
- Health Related Behaviours and Risk
- Limiting Long-Term Health Conditions
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Strengthening Local Public Health Delivery

133. The themes are not necessarily the only ones which will feature in the final framework, but they do already have a significant impact on public health, or are likely to in the future. They will be considered in the wider context of public health and in conjunction with the vital routine of health protection.

The framework is scheduled for publication in March 2009.

4.2.5 Housing – with a focus on homelessness and rough sleeping

The National Homelessness Strategy 2006-8 sets out the agenda for tackling homelessness in Wales.

134. The Strategy sets out the aims and principles for tackling homelessness, and sets a small number of targets against which the strategy can be measured.

The Strategy places emphasis on prevention of homelessness and the need for joined-up services to meet the needs of homeless people.

135. The Strategy includes an action plan which addresses a range of cross-cutting policy areas as they impact on homelessness, and under each section this plan contains commitments by the Welsh Assembly Government with timescales, and expectations of other organisations to enable the Strategy to be delivered.

136. The Strategy was formulated through broad consultation involving service users and organisations working with homeless people, including the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, and covering other sectors such as health, social services, substance misuse and criminal justice.

137. Progress has been monitored by an external advisory group of practitioners and people with relevant expertise.

138. Progress against the Strategy's objectives and targets has been highly successful. We have reduced the numbers of households qualifying for full homelessness assistance by 37%, applications for homelessness assistance by 43%, and the numbers of households placed in bed and breakfast accommodation have fallen by 64%.

139. We are now building on this success by preparing a ten year plan to confront homelessness. We will be consulting widely on this plan in the summer 2008, and it will be finalised for implementation from January 2009.

4.2.6 Employment services and skills

Skills

140. Within Wales we realise that we need to raising our game on skills is vital to getting more people into work. If we are to make progress towards full employment, we must help many more people get the right skills to find – and keep – a job.

141. Less than half of people with no qualifications are in employment, compared to well over 80 per cent of people with level 4 qualifications or better.³

³ The Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults in Wales, 2006

142. In a changing world, the prospects for the unskilled seem likely to worsen. Economists argue that technological developments are increasing the demand for skilled workers, and decreasing the demand for unskilled labour. A report for Lord Leitch's review of skills in the UK concluded that there is likely to be an absolute decline in elementary occupations over the next few years.⁴

143. We can already see these trends in Wales. Since 2001, there has been a substantial increase in the number of highly-skilled professional and managerial jobs in Wales, but a reduction in many lower-level occupations such as process, plant and machine operatives.⁵

144. In many respects, this is a good news story: we welcome better jobs in Wales, and the new wealth they bring to our people and communities. However, as Lord Leitch highlighted, we cannot afford to ignore the low skilled. There is a risk that they will be left behind, creating a more unequal Wales. For a Government with a firm commitment to social justice, this is unacceptable.

145. This puts *Skills That Work for Wales*, the Assemblies new strategy for skills and employment, at the heart of the Assembly Government's agenda for a prosperous and fair society. We published a draft strategy on the 17th January; the consultation period closed on 10th April. The Welsh Assembly are currently reviewing the responses, and we are looking to publish our final action plan on skills and employment in summer.

146. In terms of the Skills and Employment Strategy for Wales, we've recognised that skills and employment services must meet the evolving needs of their customers – the people, businesses, and communities of Wales.

147. The idea of 'responsiveness' is right at the heart of our proposals. It's the reason why we're proposing:

- our 'Careers Ladders Wales' concept of integrated skills and employment services, offering more flexible, comprehensive support for individuals;
- simplified and streamlined business support that can help firms grow and create jobs; and
- a stronger employer voice on skills and employment policy, through, for example, a clear role for SSCs and the advice of the Wales Employment and Skills Board.

148. Secondly, we have to deliver in partnership. The Assembly Government, the Department of Work and Pensions, and our partners and providers 'on the ground' need to continue to work together closely. Partnership, is the only way we can realise full employment and a Wales where all can prosper.

⁴ Alternative Skills Scenarios for 2020 for the UK economy. Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) research on behalf of the Leitch Review from Cambridge Econometrics and the Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

⁵ Statistics on Job Quality in Wales, 2001 to 2006

149. Thirdly, we need to engage employers, and indeed individuals. We want people and businesses to invest in skills alongside us, and to work with the public sector – for example, businesses getting involved in the Local Employment Partnerships that are offering out-of-work people new opportunities to get into jobs.

150. The skills and employment agenda is a big challenge, but the potential rewards are huge. If we get things right, then:

- people who are out of work will have a better chance of finding a job;
- low-skilled employees will have more opportunities to improve their skills and make progress at work;
- employment and productivity in Wales will increase; and
- families and entire communities will be lifted out of poverty.

151. *Skills That Work for Wales* is about moving on to the next stage. It's about reaching out to the most challenging clients. It includes new proposals to help diverse groups of workless people enter the labour market, including older people, lone parents, and Incapacity Benefit claimants.

In particular, we're emphasising:

- better partnership working between the public, private and third sectors – especially in helping the 'hardest to reach' access learning and job opportunities;
- new types of advice, guidance, and support for jobseekers through our proposal for a comprehensive Employment Gateway;
- new types of Employability Skills learning that will address motivation, barriers to learning, basic skills and social skills needed in the workplace;
- an Ambitions programme to match out-of-work people into job opportunities created by major local developments; and local initiatives to target the areas of greatest need, such as our Communities Next programme

4.2.7 Services for older people

152. A programme of Citizenship for Older People is one of the key themes of the Strategy for Older People in Wales – both in its initial phase from 2003- 2008 that focussed on the United Nations Principles for Older people, and in its second phase 2008-2013 launched on 13 March 2008. This has 4 key aims, Valuing Older People, Maintaining and Developing Engagement, The Economic Status of Older People and Well-Being and Independence.

153. The Strategy fully involved older people in its development and subsequent review and evaluation of Phase 1. An important feature of the Strategy is that it has citizenship for older people at its heart, including measures to improve engagement and participation of older people in society particularly in decisions that affect them. Local authorities are making good progress in engaging more effectively with older people, in many cases

through Age Concern and Help the Aged. All local authorities in Wales have structures to support implementation of the Strategy and have local Forums for Older People, Older People Partnership Groups as part of their planning arrangements and Older Peoples Champions from within their local Cabinet. A wide variety of older peoples forums have been developed in Wales in recent years building on existing forums and there are now over 70 across the country.

154. A National Partnership Forum for Older People in Wales was established in November 2004 through a process of Public Appointments. It meets regularly to provide a focus for debate about ageing and a source of expert advice to the Assembly Government on a range of issues impacting on older people. Its membership includes pensioner representatives, lay older people and sector nominees and more than 50% are older people themselves – an important principle.

155. The Wales Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CCIP) was established in May 2004. It is an initiative of the Beth Johnson Foundation, funded by the Wales Assembly Government as part of the Strategy for Older People for Wales, and is administered and hosted by the University of Glamorgan.

156. The Centre aims to support the development of Intergenerational Practice (IP) throughout Wales and sees intergenerational approaches as an effective tool in promoting sustainable community development and in reducing social exclusion. Key to understanding of intergenerational work is that it aims to bring generations together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and help to build more cohesive communities. An Intergenerational Strategy is being developed and will go out to consultation in Wales in June 2008, with the launch coinciding with UN Day for Older People on 1 October 2008.

4.2.8 Transport

157. In the context of the recently launched Wales Transport Strategy the Welsh Assembly Government will over the next 12 months be developing its National Transport Plan. The plan will aim to identify ways of improving public transport services for all. Some of the areas we are currently considering are a pilot concessionary fares scheme for the disabled and those aged 16-18 years and a review of our existing scheme for the elderly. We will also be looking for ways in which we can engage more effectively with community transport across Wales.

6.2.9 Fuel Poverty

158. As set out in the Fuel Poverty Commitment for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government's target is, that as far as reasonably practicable, no household in Wales should be living in fuel poverty by 2018.

159. The target remains challenging and the Assembly Government is committed to reviewing its fuel poverty strategy, and the policies and programmes it deploys to support the strategy, as part of the work of drawing up a national energy efficiency and saving plan for Wales.

160. The Assembly Government does not have control over all of the factors that influence the level of fuel poverty in Wales, which is affected by fuel prices and income levels as well as the energy efficiency performance of the home. The Assembly Government's main vehicle for helping improve energy efficiency for vulnerable householders in Wales is the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme.

Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES)

161. Since the Welsh Assembly Government became responsible for the Scheme in Wales in 2000 some £95million will have been made available to HEES by the end of 2007-08. This will have allowed the Scheme to assist approximately 93,000 households to date.

162. The main groups eligible for assistance are pensioners, the sick and disabled and low income families. The scheme offers energy efficiency advice and cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing, central heating, energy saving light bulbs, smoke alarms, and security measures.

163. HEES had a particularly successful year in 2007-08, greatly exceeding targets for households assisted, referrals, surveys, inspections, repairs, insulation and heating works and repairs completed. Over 18,000 households were assisted in 2007-08 against a target of 10,000. Almost 15,000 of these households received insulation measures, and over 6,000 HEES insulation measures were traded with energy suppliers to achieve maximum benefit from the budget available.

164. Since August 2004 the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme has offered a Benefit Entitlement Check to all applicants to the Scheme. In 2007/08 3,357 households took up the offer of a check. Where additional benefits were identified the checks estimated that households were eligible for an average of £17.88 per week in extra benefit income. This is equivalent to an annual increase of £1,513,788 to households receiving the checks.

Progress in Wales.

165. The 2004 Living in Wales survey estimated that there were 130,000 households in Wales in fuel poverty. Modelling to produce projections from the 2004 data for the number of households in fuel poverty in Wales in 2005 and 2006 has also been carried out. This modelling estimates that there were 166,000 households in fuel poverty in Wales in 2005 and 243,000 in 2006 and took into account increases in gas and electricity prices since 2004.

166. As with the 2004 survey, the 2008 Living in Wales survey will include a property survey which will enable the number of households in fuel poverty in Wales to be calculated. The results of the fuel poverty analysis of the 2008 survey are expected to be available in 2010.

167. The Assembly Government is also developing a local area fuel poverty indicator for Wales, which should assist national and local government in identifying areas with the highest concentration of fuel poverty. Work on the indicator is being led by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and is expected to be completed in summer 2008.

Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre (ESTAC)

168. The Welsh Assembly Government has provided funding to the Energy Saving Trust (EST) in 2007 to accelerate development of the Sustainable Energy Network in Wales. South East Wales Energy Agency was contracted to run the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre for Wales and has been working in partnership with other agencies to deliver the service since December 2007. The ESTAC was launched by the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing in February 2008. The accelerated rollout in Wales will enable households in Wales to benefit from EST's Green Homes Service in 2008.

Fuel Poverty Advisory Group for Wales

169. The Fuel Poverty Advisory Group for Wales was established in 2004 to monitor and review the strategy and to promote a partnership approach to tackling fuel poverty in Wales. A public appointments exercise is underway to appoint a new Chair, who is expected to take up appointment in September 2008.

4.2.10 Financial Inclusion

170. The profile of financial inclusion has risen markedly over the past 10 years and there have been major developments since 2004 with the UK Government and Scottish Government investing significantly in Financial Inclusion.

171. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently developing the first Financial Inclusion Strategy for Wales during 2008. Key actions will include:

- Overseeing the ongoing roll-out of free-to-use ATMs by both LINK and high street banks;
- Introducing financial literacy education in schools and establishing the Welsh Unit for Financial Education;
- An integrated approach to income maximisation to ensure people take up the benefits to which they are entitled;
- Introducing a Child Trust Fund Welsh premium; and
- Supporting the further development and diversification of credit unions.

172. A Welsh Financial Inclusion Steering Group is being established to oversee the implementation of the Strategy across the Assembly Government, public and third sectors and other agencies. The Steering Group will review progress and seek to identify areas where a joint approach could be brought to bear to address the Strategy's priority areas.

4.3 Northern Ireland

'Lifetime Opportunities' – Governments Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland was launched by, the then Secretary of State, Peter Hain MP on Monday 13th November 2006.

173. The strategy replaced New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) which was Governments former high level policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland.

The strategy retains:

- the key principle of New Targeting Social Need which is to target resources and effort within programmes at those areas, groups and individuals in greatest objective need; and
- 'Promoting Social Inclusion' as an approach to working in partnership with relevant sectors to tackle exclusion of different vulnerable groups such as lone parents.

The two strategic targets of 'Lifetime Opportunities' are to:

- work towards eliminating poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by 2020; and
- end child poverty by 2020.

A 'Lifecycle' approach:

174. 'Lifetime Opportunities' focuses on the different priority needs at four key stages in peoples lives - Early Years (0-4), Children and Young People (5-16), Working Age Adults, and Older Citizens

'Skewing of Resources'

175. Like its predecessor New TSN 'Lifetime Opportunities' does not have a specific budget but instead requires the Northern Ireland Departments to target resources and efforts towards those areas, groups and individuals in greatest objective need.

Executive Adoption

176. In line with its statutory duty under Section 28E of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 the Northern Ireland Executive Committee will shortly consider proposals in respect of its adoption of a strategy to tackle poverty, social exclusion and patterns of deprivation based on objective need.

4.3.1 Increasing Labour Market Participation

177. In Northern Ireland, the modernisation of New Deal will be in the form of a new 'Steps to Work' Programme offering unemployed jobseekers the opportunity to engage in modular based provision, better tailored to the individual's needs, and with a clear emphasis on increasing the participant's job prospects. From September 2008, this provision will be extended to the economically inactive including those in receipt of Incapacity Benefit.

178. In areas where unemployment/deprivation is highest, Northern Ireland's public Employment Service partners the community sector in delivering community-based 'intermediary' services for those who are deemed economically inactive. The LEMIS (Local Employment Intermediary Service) initiative provides client centred support to individuals to help them address barriers preventing them joining the labour market.

179. Consideration is being given to introduce Learner Access and Engagement arrangements, on a pilot basis, commencing in September 2008. Under these proposed arrangements, FE Colleges will be able to contract for additional learner support services. The programme will focus on engaging 'hard to reach' adult learners, not in work, who do not hold a qualification at Level 2 or above, to encourage them to enroll on employment related FE courses. Overall, the programme is being introduced to help improve retention, achievement and progression rates in FE.

180. Bridge to Employment provides customized training courses to equip unemployed, in particular long term unemployed people, as well as those returning to the labour market, with the skills necessary to compete for new employment opportunities on an equal basis with others.

4.3.2 Child Poverty

181. The Northern Ireland Executive's determination to tackle child poverty is reflected within its Programme for Government 2008–11 which commits to:

- Work towards the elimination of child poverty in Northern Ireland by 2020 and reducing child poverty by 50% by 2010; and
- Work towards the elimination of severe child poverty by 2012.

Child poverty in Northern Ireland will be tackled through both tax and benefit policies set by the UK government and a wide range of local Departmental programmes, such as New Deal, Sure Start and Neighbourhood Renewal, being targeted at those areas, groups and individuals in greatest objective need.

4.3.3 Equalities

Gender Equality

182. The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government undertakes to implement the Northern Ireland Gender Equality Strategy 2006-2016.

183. Cross-departmental gender equality action plans covering the period 2008-2011 are currently being developed. Thereafter progress will be reported on an annual basis, with an in-depth mid-term review, as envisaged in the Strategy, in 2011.

Sexual Orientation Equality

184. Northern Ireland Executive Ministers have clearly stated their commitment to tackling discrimination on ground of sexual orientation. Widespread consultation on an Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Strategy on Sexual Orientation has been accompanied by the development of action plans.

Disability

185. In closing the European Year of Disabled People in 2004, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Paul Murphy established a cross sectoral working group to examine the barriers to participation experienced by disabled people in Northern Ireland which contribute to their relative poverty , disadvantage and social exclusion.

186. Consequently, the then Minister John Spellar constituted the Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on Disability (PSI Disability) in November 2004, bringing together a range of voluntary organizations, all Government Departments, trade unions, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, to address the relevant issues.

187. The remit of the Working Group is to examine the barriers to, employment, education, transport, housing, access to information and lifelong learning for disabled people in Northern Ireland and to make recommendations on how these might be removed. A number of Subgroups have been established to take forward the work and additional organisations have been co-opted onto the Subgroups to examine the issues in detail:

- Access to Employment;
- Children, Young People and their Families;
- Housing, Transport, Information and Access;
- Legislation, Citizenship, Language and Attitudes; and
- Lifelong Learning, Arts, Sports and Culture.

188. The Subgroups have conducted research into existing provision and have consulted with employers and disabled people. The Subgroups are currently finalizing their individual reports and the key issues will then migrate

into recommendations for Northern Ireland Departments, Public Bodies and Statutory Agencies as to how the barriers will be removed.

Race

189. Following Northern Ireland Assembly debates on 'A Shared Future' and the 'Racial Equality Strategy' during the summer of 2007, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is refreshing these policies for the new situation represented by the devolved government, and developing a programme of cohesion, sharing and integration for a shared and better future. This programme will tackle issues of sectarianism and racism and will bring together policy on community relations and racial equality.

190. Work on developing this new programme (tentatively named the 'Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration') is at an advanced stage, and it is intended to bring it forward for discussion with the Assembly shortly. The programme will provide an increase in investment over the period to promote inclusion and integration, and will build on some excellent work, particularly at local level, to address the challenges which local communities are facing.

191. The six shared aims previously identified in the Racial Equality Strategy (published in 2005) – elimination of racial equality, equal protection, equality of service provision, participation, dialogue, and capacity building - will be revisited in the context of the new programme.

192. Direct expenditure on good relations and good race relations by OFMDFM in the past 3 years was in the region of £21 million. Additional funding of almost £7.5m over the next 3 years from 2008/2011 has been provided; total investment will therefore be approximately £29m, to meet the PSA target of a shared and better future for all.

193. Progress in tackling sectarianism and racism will be monitored through a comprehensive set of good relations indicators and measured against the Baseline Report published in January 2007.

Age

194. A variety of procedures have been established to safeguard the needs of Northern Ireland's older people in areas such as employment, housing, social services and benefit uptake.

195. On 18th December 2007, the First and deputy First Ministers announced their intention to establish a Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland to "deliver a strong independent voice for older people".

196. While the role and powers of the Commissioner have yet to be finalised and agreed it is anticipated a key function will be to provide a focus for individual older people and representative groups from the voluntary and

community sector to highlight issues that are of concern for older people and provide independent advice to Ministers.

197. A public consultation on the possible role, remit and powers of a Commissioner will take place during 2008 and when these issues have been finalised the process of preparing the necessary primary legislation will begin. It is anticipated that an Older Peoples Commissioner will be established by the end of 2009.

198. In the intervening period a temporary post of Older People's Advocate will be created and a suitable candidate recruited by Autumn 2008.

4.3.4 Access to quality services

Education

Further Education

199. The statutory Further Education (FE) Sector continues to deliver a wide and varied curriculum in Northern Ireland. Provision is delivered through the Sector's main campuses and 850 Community Outreach centres, and is tailored to suit community needs.

200. To further widen access and increase participation consideration is currently being given to introduce Learner Access and Engagement arrangements within each of the six Further Education (FE) College areas, on a pilot basis, commencing in September 2008.

201. Under the proposed arrangements, FE Colleges will be able to contract for additional learner support services.

202. This programme will focus on engaging 'hard to reach' adult learners, not in work, who do not hold a qualification at Level 2 or above, to encourage them to enrol on employment related FE courses. Overall, the programme is being considered to help improve retention, achievement and progression rates in FE.

Widening participation in higher education

203. Widening participation in higher education by students from those groups who are currently under-represented, in particular, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities, is one of the Department's key strategic goals. Since 2000, the Department has been addressing this issue through a number of policy initiatives and a range of specific funding mechanisms. The Department pays the universities a widening participation premium for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and a widening access premium for students with disabilities. The Department also provides funding to both Northern Ireland universities for special projects aimed at increasing participation in higher education by under-represented groups. Special

projects include the Step-Up programme, Discovering Queen's and Let's Work.

204. The Department is now taking forward the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council (NIHEC) Expert Group Report on proposals for the future direction of the Department's widening participation policies. The Department is currently seeking the commitment of three other Departments to work with them on the development and implementation of a regional integrated strategy to widen participation. If this commitment is forthcoming, a Widening Participation Steering Group of key stakeholders will be established to oversee the implementation of the strategy and a Widening Participation Regional Co-ordinator will be appointed to take forward its implementation.

4.3.5 Health services and health inequalities

205. In December 2004 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety published a twenty-year regional strategy for health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland, focusing on:

- investing in public health, with an emphasis on cooperation across organisational and sectoral boundaries to tackle the determinants of inequalities in health and wellbeing;
- involving people and communities to improve health and wellbeing;
- developing new, more effective and efficient ways of working through multi-disciplinary teams
- developing responsive and integrated services which will aim to treat people in communities rather than in hospitals, and
- improving the quality of health and social care services.

206. The Government aims that all residents should receive consistent, high-quality services. There has been a statutory duty of quality in place in NI since 2003. Improvements in quality and safety of local services are centred on five broad themes

- Improvements in governance arrangements within health and social care [HSC] organisations;
- The setting of standards to improve services and practices;
- New arrangements for the regulation, inspection and review of services by establishing a new, independent body to assess the quality of health and social care - The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority [RQIA]
- Changing the way in which an organisation is held to account for the services they commission or provide through the Duty of Quality; and
- Links with national standard setting and patient safety bodies.

207. To support HSC organisations in this work, a full suite of controls assurance standards has been in place since 2007/08. Support to HSC

organisations in implementing clinical and social care governance has been provided by a local dedicated team. A Safety Framework, launched in 2006, sets out a clear policy statement on safety in the HSC, based on the promotion of an informed safety culture which recognises the social economic and human cost of adverse incidents. The associated Safety Action Plan has been substantially implemented and will now be reviewed. The Quality Standards for Health and Social Care were introduced in 2006 and RQIA commenced its reviews during 2006/07 using its assessment of compliance with the Standards to report on the quality of care provided by HSC organisations. New care standards on residential and nursing homes have been published, with more to follow shortly for other regulated services. All of these standards assist HSC organisations in assessing risk and in the reporting on the quality of service provision. They also provide greater transparency for the public on what care they are entitled to expect from HSC services, and facilitate organisations in the demonstration of good governance. Formal links have been established with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Existing links with the National Patient Safety Agency have been strengthened. A local Safety Forum has been established to support HSC organisations in implementing internationally recognised measures that save lives and reduce harm to patients. This links with the work being taken forward by the National Patient Safety Forum.

208. Implementation of the Northern Ireland Public Health strategy Investing for Health strategy, which seeks to improve health and reduce health inequalities, is ongoing. In addition, a wide range of underpinning strategies, programmes and activities have been developed and are underway. These strategies and action plans promote particular activities targeting vulnerable groups and disadvantaged areas across Northern Ireland.

Issues being addressed include –

Smoking/ Tobacco

209. The decision to introduce smoke-free legislation in April 2007 has undoubtedly contributed to the 59% increase in the number of smokers presenting to cessation services in 2006/07 and setting a quit date. Work will continue to explore ways of encouraging difficult to reach groups to seek professional help with attempting to quit.

Teenage Pregnancy

210. The number of births to teenage mothers has fallen in recent years. Of the 24,451 live births in 2007 there were 1405 to teenage mothers, a small decrease on the 1427 births in 2006, and a decrease of more than 21% from the high of 1791 such births in 1999.

211. Work to date has been guided by the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy and Action Plan. The Plan will be reviewed during 2008

and will complement and be integrated with the new Sexual Health Promotion Action Plan, which is due to be published later this year.

Mental health promotion

212. A Promoting Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan was issued in 2003 and contains 20 actions to improve people's mental health and emotional well being.

It is intended that this strategy will be updated in the light of a review of mental health services and of recent work on suicide prevention.

Suicide Prevention

213. The suicide rate in deprived areas is substantially higher than the NI average at 16.8 per 100,000 compared to 11.4 per 100,000. The Suicide Prevention strategy "Protect Life – A Shared Vision" published in 2006 contains a number of actions including a community support package and a regional Crisis Reponse helpline.

Obesity

214. The issue of obesity is increasingly being recognised as a particular challenge in Northern Ireland where around 60% of adults have a weight problem, and almost 1 in 5 are obese - an increase from under 1 in 4 in 1997. Initially childhood obesity is being addressed through the Fit Futures strategy, but development is due to start on an over-arching strategic framework to prevent obesity across the rest of the "life course".

Alcohol and Drugs

215. Alcohol and drug misuse remain major public health issues, impacting at the individual, community and societal level. The New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD) was launched in 2006, and a number of regional and local activities and programmes are underway to achieve its aims, priorities and outcomes. Action plans are also being developed to address emerging issues such as Hidden Harm (i.e. supporting the children of substance misusing parents and carers), underage drinking, and cocaine misuse.

216. Achieving the significant health improvements which Investing for Health envisaged requires a co-ordinated and long term commitment. A recent update shows that while there have been some relative improvements, there is a continuing health gap between the most deprived areas and the Northern Ireland average.

4.3.6 Housing with a focus on homelessness and rough sleeping

217. Following the restoration of devolution in May 2007, Margaret Ritchie MLA assumed responsibility at the Department for Social Development and immediately made the supply of housing her first and foremost priority.

218. The Minister chaired a cross Departmental Affordability Review Group and established an Independent Panel of housing experts to assess each of the 80 recommendations contained in Sir John Semples' report on affordable housing which was published in April 2007.

219. Following the completion of this work, the Minister unveiled her new Housing Agenda in February 2008, an agenda described as 'radical and energetic' providing the best opportunity in a generation to solve the housing crisis.

220. Some of the new initiatives announced include plans to increase the supply of social housing over the next 5 years to meet the Programme for Government commitment of 10,000 new homes during this period. Other plans announced include an extension of the current House Sales Scheme, an expansion of the NI Co-ownership Scheme, the first ever eco-village in Northern Ireland and the introduction of a Mortgage Rescue Scheme to support those home owners who have been encouraged to climb onto the housing ladder.

221. The Minister also announced plans to work with her Ministerial Colleague Sammy Wilson to bring Northern Ireland into line with the rest of Great Britain and Ireland through the introduction of a developer's contribution in new housing developments.

222. The Minister has said that everyone should have the right to live in a decent, warm home that is affordable to them. The package of measures announced in February 2008 will go some way to delivering this, but with 38,000 applicants currently waiting for housing, 9,000 of whom officially homeless, (as of December 2007), it is clear that it will take some time to achieve this objective.

Homelessness

223. An inter-Departmental cross-sectoral group was established in October 2007 to address the issue of homelessness in the context of promoting social inclusion. The steering group is taking forward the strategy "Including the Homeless" which aims to ensure public and non-government agencies work together to ensure that the risk of homelessness is reduced and that the full range of services is available to homeless people in Northern Ireland.

4.3.7 Employment services and skills

224. 'Training for Success' is the Department for Employment & Learning's (DEL) professional and technical training provision. The programme was launched in September 2007, and seeks to give young people the skills that they need to progress into work. It is based on workplace apprenticeships and a range of training opportunities for young people, who train as they work with a view to gaining industry-led qualifications.

225. DEL is currently carrying out a review of this provision, in consultation with all stakeholders and delivery partners, to ensure that the structure of the provision is suitable to the diverse needs of its participants. Whilst the current provision is available to all 16-24 year olds, the Department will also be introducing Adult Apprenticeships to ensure that provision is available for participants of all ages.

4.3.8 Services for older people

Long-Term Care for Elderly

226. Health and Social Care (HSC) bodies have a duty to provide, or secure the provision of social care services designed to promote the social welfare of the people of Northern Ireland. Any resident of Northern Ireland who is assessed by their local HSC Trust as requiring social care is entitled to have those needs met subject to available resources. Social services are also required to carry out regular reviews, including a reassessment of the individual's needs, to ensure that any changes to the client's needs are being met.

227. These services are provided in a range of care settings: residential (in a residential or nursing home), domiciliary (at home or in supported housing) and day care. Whereas there is a general, permissive legislative authority to recover such charges as are considered appropriate, Trusts are specifically required by Regulation to assess the ability of each client to pay for the cost of those services where they are delivered in a residential setting. There are nominal charges for services such as meals on wheels, and meals provided by Trusts to those in day centres and for persons aged under 75, there may be a charge for home help services.

228. In May 2001 the former Northern Ireland Assembly Executive asked that an Inter-Departmental Group be established to examine the costs and other implications of introducing free personal care for residential care and nursing home residents. This work was suspended during direct rule. Following the restoration of devolution in May 2007 the Minister commissioned a report on the cost of introducing free personal care. This report has been completed and the Minister is currently giving consideration to its conclusions within the context of the recent Budget settlement.

229. Direct Payments, which are cash payments in lieu of social care provision, have been available in Northern Ireland since 1996, however, the

uptake among service users has been historically low. The Department initiated a Review of Direct Payments in 2004 in order to promote their use in Northern Ireland and to increase uptake. The work of the review group has resulted in the number of users increasing by almost 800% in four years.

230. Many older people with long-term care needs rely on the assistance of a friend or family member who adopts the role of an informal carer. The latest census figures for Northern Ireland show there to be approximately 185,000 informal carers providing an extremely valuable service, which would otherwise fall to HSC bodies. In January 2006, the Department published a strategy document setting out a long term plan of action to deliver a range of practical support services to carers. In addition, it has:

- allocated increased recurrent funding to Health and Social Services Boards to allow for the provision of responsive and flexible respite services for carers; and
- brought into force legislation in 2003, which provides the right for carers to have their needs assessed. In response to assessment, HSC bodies are empowered to provide a range of services within local priorities and available resources. In addition, carers have also been able to access Direct Payments in lieu of services from April 2004.

231. Comprehensive and consistent assessment of care needs is absolutely central to the development and delivery of appropriate, safe and effective care services. With this in mind, the DHSSPS in Northern Ireland commissioned the development of a single comprehensive assessment process. The principle product of this work will be a single tool for assessing the health and social care needs of older people but the learning and outcomes arising from this project could also inform further projects to apply common principles to the assessment of needs amongst other groups. The development of the Northern Ireland Single Assessment Tool (NISAT) is in the final stages of completion and the project will then move into an implementation phase.

232. Recognising that older people prefer to remain in their own homes wherever possible, the Department established a Public Service Agreement target stating that by 31st March 2010 45% of people in care management should have their assessed care needs met in a domiciliary setting.

233. There have been substantial increases in the level of Government funding provided for social services for older people in recent years. Actual expenditure rose by 7.1% to £422.4m in 2006-2007 and further increases are projected.

4.3.9 Transport

234. In Northern Ireland the Department for Regional Development's Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) has the vision: 'to have an accessible transport system that enables older people and disabled people to participate

more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life'. In developing the ATS five main areas were identified that constituted significant barriers for older people and disabled people with mobility difficulties -

- physical barriers that prevented people from getting access to transport services;
- attitudinal or psychological barriers that prevented or discouraged people from using transport services;
- information needed by users and potential users of accessible transport services both in the details and the way it is provided;
- the types of transport services needed; and
- the affordability of accessible transport services

235. In order to achieve the aim of the Strategy an Action Plan was put in place for 2005/ 07. Progress has been achieved e.g. the number of accessible public transport vehicles and services has increased, Audio Visual systems have been installed on all new trains, a Travel Safe Guide has been produced for people with learning difficulties etc. The Action Plan for the Period 2007-09 focuses on the provision of Information and Training and is due to be published in July 2008..

4.3.10 Fuel Poverty

236. In Northern Ireland, Government continues to deliver the Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Strategy. This aims to alleviate fuel poverty which is defined as where a household has to spend more than 10 % of its income to maintain an adequate standard of warmth. Over 17,000 households received assistance in 2007-08 to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Work is also underway to ensure that fuel poor households are in receipt of the social security benefits to which they are entitled.

4.3.11 Debt Advice

237. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland has awarded a contract to Citizens Advice, with effect from 1 April 2008, to maintain a free face to face debt advice service over the next three year period. This service will be available at 12 participating Citizen Advice offices and at 2 other independent advice outlets throughout Northern Ireland. The previous contract, which ended on 31 March 2008, was heavily subscribed at all participating outlets and dealt with almost 4000 new clients in total covering £30m of consumer debt.

4.3.12 Governance

Ministerial led Poverty and Social Inclusion Forum

238. In line with a commitment made within the anti-poverty strategy 'Lifetime Opportunities', a Ministerial led Poverty and Social Inclusion Forum

was established to monitor the progress being made towards the strategy's objectives, goals and targets. Membership of the Forum includes representatives from the key voluntary and community sector organisations in Northern Ireland.

Executive Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Exclusion

239. The Northern Ireland Executive will shortly be considering proposals to adopt an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland and it will also consider the establishment of an Executive Sub-committee to agree and monitor key actions in relation to poverty. These actions will be taken forward in a co-ordinated way across Northern Ireland Departments to deliver on the Executive's commitments within its Programme for Government 2008-2011 to eliminate poverty.