

ANNUAL REPORT

ON

SOCIAL INCLUSION

IN WALES

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Communities Directorate

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FOREWORD

Social and economic problems do not come neatly packaged with labels saying *health* or *education* or *housing*. Problems have interlocking causes and so, correspondingly, do the solutions. Devolution and the consequent setting up of the Welsh Assembly means that we can now tackle social exclusion in the round.

Where significant numbers of people feel themselves excluded from participating fully in social and economic life then they are not going to be able to achieve their potential – whether individual or social. This can lead to communities spiralling into decline. Unemployment and poor skills are major causes of social and economic disadvantage. This, in turn, can lead to rising crime, substance misuse, poor health and housing and falling educational standards.

There has been a general rise in living standards across the UK. However, tackling the social exclusion which still exists in many parts of Wales is a priority for Welsh Assembly Government. We have the will to confront our long-standing problems. With a Welsh Assembly we now also have the means by which we can do something about them. Promoting social inclusion, in all its aspects, is central to all the Assembly's policies and programmes.

This Second Annual Report on Social Inclusion sets out the progress we have already made and our plans for moving things forward. Just as the European Union targets areas within Europe for special assistance, so the assembly targets specific areas within Wales. We have set up a Communities First initiative which targets particular communities in Wales for support. Its purpose is to tackle poverty and social disadvantage at a local level in ways that best meet local needs. The only way we can do that is by listening to people in their

homes and in their communities and involving them in the decisions about how their communities can be regenerated.

In Wales we have an economy of scale where it makes sense to look for comprehensive solutions to our social and economic problems. The Welsh Assembly Government believes that the idea of bringing together business, local government, national government agencies and voluntary bodies to tackle problems in a concerted way is one that not only makes perfect sense but is also the most effective and efficient way of creating a happier and more prosperous society.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's "Plan for Wales 2001" sets social inclusion as a guiding theme for its work, alongside its commitment to equality and sustainable development.
- 1.2 This second Annual Report on Social Inclusion in Wales sets out how the Welsh Assembly Government is taking forward its social inclusion agenda in all its relevant policies and programmes and in those of the bodies it sponsors. The report covers the main area of the Welsh Assembly Government's work which have an impact on improving the living conditions and prospects for those living in the less well off areas of Wales and/or who are socially disadvantaged. It provides an analysis of the current situation in each of these policy areas; sets out activities aimed at improving matters; and details measures and targets against which progress can be tracked.
- 1.3 The Welsh Assembly Government is determined to tackle poverty and social disadvantage throughout Wales and to bring the more disadvantaged communities up to the levels of those that are better off.
- 1.4 The Welsh Assembly Government's work in this area is complementary to those national policies and programmes aimed at eradicating poverty which remain the responsibility of the UK Government. These are reported on annually through the "Opportunities for All" publication. There is also concern about poverty and social exclusion at a European level and a recognition of a need for co-operation amongst Member States so National Action Plans on Social Inclusion are now prepared. The Assembly has contributed to the UK Action Plan.

The Problem

1.5 Social inclusion is a term used to describe the experience of individuals who are unable to play a full part in society because of the range of disadvantages they face – be it through a lack of employment, low skills, poor health or discrimination. Despite increases in the wealth of the population as a whole over recent years, the gap between the best and least well off has grown, increasing the extent of potential.

1.6 Figures for 1998/9 indicate that Wales had lower incomes than several other areas of Great Britain, as illustrated by the following statistics:

- ◆ 13 per cent of individuals in Wales had incomes in the top quintile.
- ◆ Wales had 68 per cent of residents living in households with below average income compared with 62 per cent for Great Britain as a whole.
- ◆ 80 per cent of children in Wales lived in households with incomes below half the average income compared with 74 per cent for Great Britain.
- ◆ 22 per cent of adults of working age in Wales lived in households with incomes below half the average income, compared with 19 per cent for Great Britain.

1.7 In Spring 2001, 70,000 of Welsh workless households contained dependant children. The statistics indicate that Wales has a

higher proportion of children under 16 living in Income Support households. The UK figure is 13.5%, compared to 18.9% in Wales. The seasonally adjusted ILO unemployment rate for Wales for October to December 2001 was 6.0% compared to 5.2% in the UK.

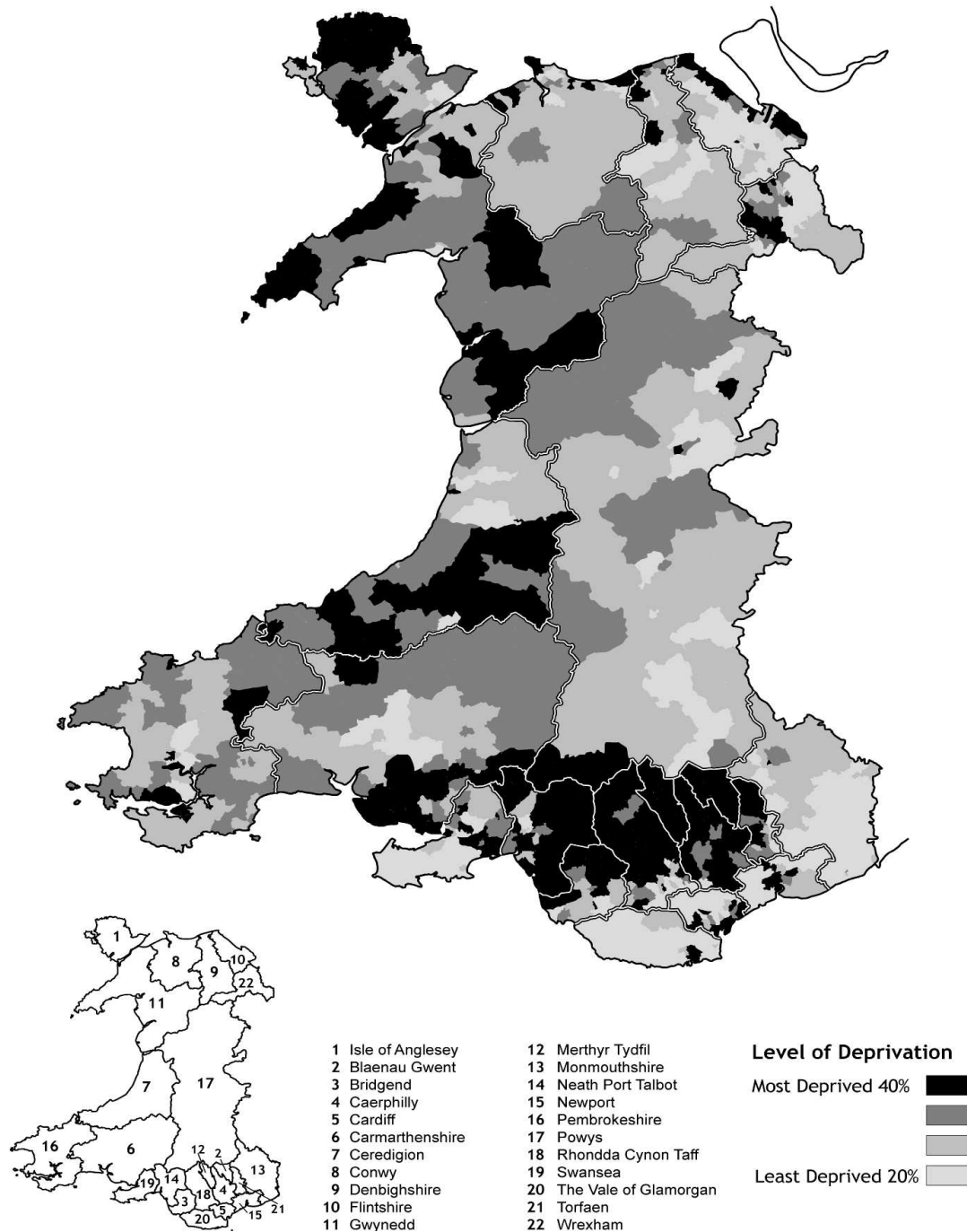
1.8 Problems of exclusion can be exacerbated where whole areas face concentrations of exclusion factors, reducing the prospects for those in these communities to find work or other social outlets. In August 2000, the Assembly published the Welsh Index of Deprivation for all electoral divisions to map the extent of multiple deprivation. This was an important step towards more effective policy development in line with the particular needs of Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government therefore commissioned Oxford University to develop this new Index of Multiple Deprivation covering the distinct areas of:

- ◆ Income deprivation;
- ◆ Employment deprivation;
- ◆ Health deprivation and disability;
- ◆ Education, skills and training deprivation.
- ◆ Housing deprivation; and
- ◆ Geographic access.

The map of deprivation levels in Wales is at Fig. 1.

Fig.1

Wales: Index of Multiple Deprivation



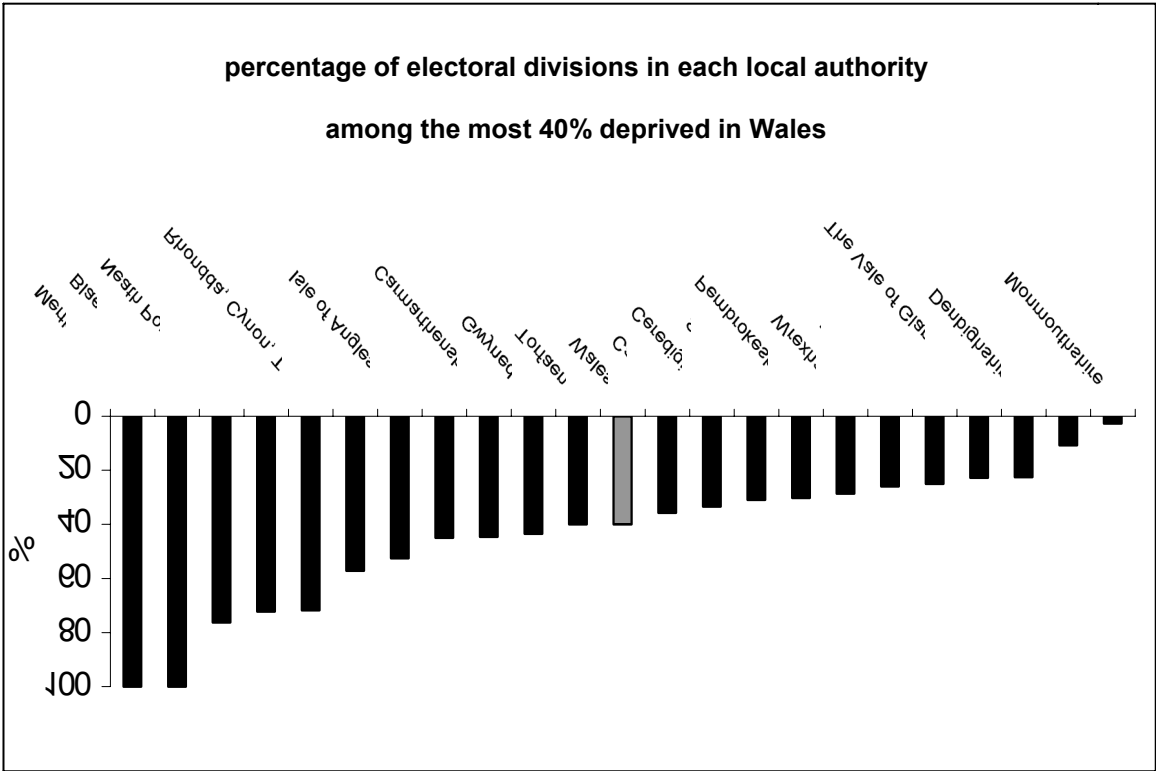
1.9 There are 865 electoral divisions in Wales and 346 of these are among 40% of the most deprived wards in Wales. The following

Fig. 2

9

1.10 The following chart (Fig 3) shows for each local authority the percentage of electoral divisions in the list of the 40% most deprived in Wales.

Fig. 3



1.11 The Index, which is to be updated every three years, shows that there is a concentration of deprivation in the South Wales Valleys, although deprivation occurs in all areas of Wales. Even in the least deprived local authority areas there are concentrated pockets of deprivation. Furthermore, the statistics fail to reveal smaller areas of hidden deprivation.

The Trends

- 1.12 The population of Wales is growing, albeit at a relatively slow rate. However, the growth tends to be in the more affluent areas of Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Ceredigion and Powys, whilst poorer areas such as Merthyr Tydfil and Anglesey are experiencing outward migration.
- 1.13 The age profile of the population is changing with the expectation that over the next twenty years the numbers of:
- ◆ School age children will be down 11%.
 - ◆ Retirement age people will be up 12%.
 - ◆ The number of people over the age of 85 will be up 34%.
- 1.14 The most recent statistics show that employment of those of working age has increased slightly over the last year. During this period there has been a 3% fall in the ILO unemployment figures and a 13% fall in claimant count. This compares with falls of 1% and 6% respectively in the UK over the same period. The Employment Services' New Deal programme is having an impact on these figures. Through the New Deal for Young People between May 1999 and the end of November 2001, 21,400 young men and women either entered an Option or secured a job. Through other New Deal programmes, 5,300 long term unemployed secured jobs between July 1998 and November 2001 and 9,300 jobs were gained by lone parents between October 1998 and November 2001.
- 1.15 A more worrying trend is the extent of those not seeking work – those classed as 'economically inactive'. Wales has areas of inactivity as high as anywhere in the UK, with very high rates of ill-health related activity. Over a quarter of the working age population in 2000-01 were economically inactive. The main reasons for this were long-term sickness and looking after the

family or home. This is closely related to the low skill base. A person with no qualifications is five times more likely to be inactive. This trend is seen throughout the UK where 30% of those with no skills are now inactive.

The Actions

1.16 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to tackling poverty and social disadvantage and is demonstrating that commitment in a number of ways. First, as stated in a number of the Assembly's strategic documents social inclusion is a major theme that flows throughout all relevant public sector policies and programmes. The Assembly Government recognises that the challenge of increasing wealth and improving the quality of life throughout Wales can only be addressed through sustained and long term action undertaken with its local partners, relevant agencies and other Government Departments, such as the Department of Work and Pensions. It has recognised fully that the problems faced cannot be resolved by short term measures. So, there is a long term commitment to tackling the underlying causes of poverty and social disadvantage.

1.17 A number of major steps have been taken to address the root causes of social inclusion. First, in Spring 2001, the Welsh Assembly Government launched Communities First. This unique, long term programme is aimed at ensuring a cross-cutting approach to tackling poverty and social disadvantage in the most deprived areas of Wales. Second, it established a central Communities Directorate within the Assembly to drive forward Communities First and to ensure an integrated approach to the problems. Third, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, Mrs Edwina Hart OBE

AM, has set up a Community Regeneration and Social Inclusion Policy Board which brings together key decision makers in Wales. The role of the Board is to take strategic decisions to ensure that all public sector programmes are tackling social disadvantage across Wales and responding to Communities First in cross-cutting and joined up ways. The Board held its first meeting on 9 January at which it considered the issue of targets for social inclusion and agreed to its forward work programme. Fourth, the Welsh Assembly Government published its Plan for Wales 2001 which updated its strategic document “betterwales.com”. The Plan makes it clear that the Assembly aims to develop a safer and more inclusive society where everyone has the chance to fulfil their potential. There is evident recognition that this can only be done through focusing effort and resources on priority areas in partnership with others over a period of many years.

2.ENSURING A CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH

Plan for Wales

2.1 Plan for Wales 2001 sets out the values and vision of the Welsh Assembly Government. It provides both the strategic direction and a reiteration of its commitment to delivering improved public services within the framework of the Assembly's guiding principles - sustainable development, equal opportunities and social inclusion. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to work towards improved public services, based on the principles of universality and inclusivity, and will make better policy through engaging communities in shaping and delivering that policy.

Social Inclusion

2.2 The underlying causes of social exclusion are many and complex. The symptoms can range from poor health to social isolation, substance misuse or lack of employment opportunities. No single person or organisation alone can tackle

the fundamental issues which have led to people being poor and socially disadvantaged. Partnerships between individuals and institutions are key and it is essential that creative and imaginative approaches are adopted in order to change things for the better and to ensure that change is sustained.

2.3 The Welsh Assembly Government has taken early, positive steps to address exclusion throughout Wales. After extensive consultation in Spring 2001 it launched Communities First, its flagship programme for tackling poverty and social disadvantage in the most deprived areas of Wales. This unique programme is very much focused on people rather than institutions and structures. Its basic aim is to build the confidence of individuals living in the most deprived areas of Wales and empower them to change their lives and improve their living conditions. Through Communities First, the money and support available under various public sector programmes and schemes will be directed at the most deprived areas of Wales.

2.4 Communities First is different from previous initiatives in a number of distinct ways.

- ◆ It is a long term programme which will run for at least ten years.
- ◆ Communities themselves decide what is needed and are helped to realise their ambitions.
- ◆ It aspires to increase the level of participation of local people.
- ◆ It brings in funding and support from a number of different sources.

- ◆ It is about making a long lasting difference to our disadvantaged communities.
- ◆ It encourages creativity, risk taking and imaginative approaches.
- ◆ It involves an integrated approach to addressing poverty and the factors that cause or contribute to it.

2.5 It is fully recognised that change within deprived areas will take some years and that the process will require intensive support. The Communities First programme acknowledges that every community has its own particular set of issues. Nevertheless, there are some common fundamental tasks that must be undertaken if the much needed change is to be achieved. These include:

- ◆ Building the confidence and self esteem of those living in these communities and developing a 'can do' culture.
- ◆ Encouraging education and skill training for work.
- ◆ Creating job opportunities and increasing the income of local people.
- ◆ Improving housing and the surrounding environment.
- ◆ Improving health and well being through an active and healthy lifestyle, and by addressing a range of issues that affect people's health.
- ◆ Making communities safe and secure places in which to live, work and play.

- ◆ Driving forward changes to the way in which public services are delivered.

- 2.6 In June and October 2001, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, Mrs Edwina Hart OBE, AM, announced the areas to be included in the Communities First programme. Throughout Wales about 130 Communities First Partnerships are being established. A full list of the Communities First areas is at Annex 1.
- 2.7 In the six months following identification of the Communities First areas, the Minister allocated £2.78 million for work at a local level; £1.97million over 3 years for the Communities First Support Network to help with the programme's implementation; and £9 million over the next three years for a Community Trust Fund so that local people can access money for community developments easily and speedily.
- 2.8 The Communities First programme was developed on the basis of research evidence and the experience of running the pilot People in Communities and Sustainable Communities programmes. An independent evaluation was carried out of the former programme and the lessons learnt have helped design the implementation framework for Communities First.
- 2.9 Under the People in Communities and Sustainable Communities programmes, there have been a number of successes.
- 2.10 People in Communities (PiC) is an innovative response to tackling social exclusion in deprived communities in Wales. It recognises the need to promote community participation in

policies to regenerate deprived areas. In all sixteen deprived communities across Wales have been selected to take part in the Programme. Examples are:

Caerau, Bridgend

In many ways Caerau is typical of a former mining community in Wales. Like other such communities, Caerau has not recovered from the decline in the mining industry and still experiences high levels of economic and social deprivation.

The Caerau community is characterised by many of the problems associated with social exclusion such as high unemployment, high levels of ill-health and economic inactivity, low educational attainment and family breakdown. In particular the area suffers from high levels of crime, being noted as a “hotspot” area for both criminal damage and for youth problems and crime.

Immediate needs identified which were supported under the PiC programme were the appointment of a Development Co-ordinator and a “Positive Transition Programme” which aims to encourage school attendance of pupils aged 3-11 years and to prevent truancy. The transition project is progressing well, with a new Pupil Support Worker commencing employment in

November 2001. Special support plans for young people at risk have also been developed including home work support at home and attendance initiatives. A substantial additional award has also recently been made to undertake a renovation to a community owned building to convert part of it into a family IT suite.

Nantyglo, Blaenau Gwent

Nantyglo was formerly heavily dependent upon the mining, iron and steel industries.

People in Communities (PiC) grant has funded a Development Co-ordinator, an environmental improvement scheme, a community transport initiative, a childcare project, a crime reduction initiative, improvements to a senior citizens hall and a peripatetic meditation and counselling service.

The Nantyglo Partnership is now well-established. There have been a number of important developments, namely the involvement of the Gwent Police Force on the Partnership regarding crime reduction and the taking forward of a neighbourhood watch scheme. The childcare project is to be developed at two currently available centres and the Council is involved in the development of a large open public space which it is proposed would involve the environmental project.

Sustainable Communities

- 2.11 The Sustainable Communities Programme provides funding for local initiatives and projects to secure the sustainability of communities where there were approved proposals or recent investment in the housing stock. Voluntary Organisations, Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities were eligible to apply for this grant.
- 2.11 There are 74 projects participating in this programme funding a broad range of initiatives such as childcare facilities, mother and toddler groups and a healthy living centre. Many training initiatives have also been developed. Some examples are:

Mount Community Resource Centre, Pembrokeshire

The Mount Community Association, in conjunction with Pembrokeshire Association for Voluntary Services and Pembrokeshire County Council, are working in partnership to refurbish the community resource centre located in the heart of the Mount Estate, employ a project co-ordinator and build the skills of the Management Committee.

The resource centre is due to be opened in May 2002. Age Concern, Shelter Cymru, the Employment Service and other organisations are all arranging regular sessions at the resource centre to provide advice and support for residents.

Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Youth and Community Project

This covers a wide range of community support initiatives such as an school club; a garage workshop; Megabytes Café; parent and toddler group; youth club; football teams; and computer suite.

- 2.13 Although Communities First is very much in its infancy, there are already signs of public sector funding and support programmes being aligned with the needs of the most deprived areas of Wales, as illustrated below:

To Regenerate New Tredegar (TRENT)

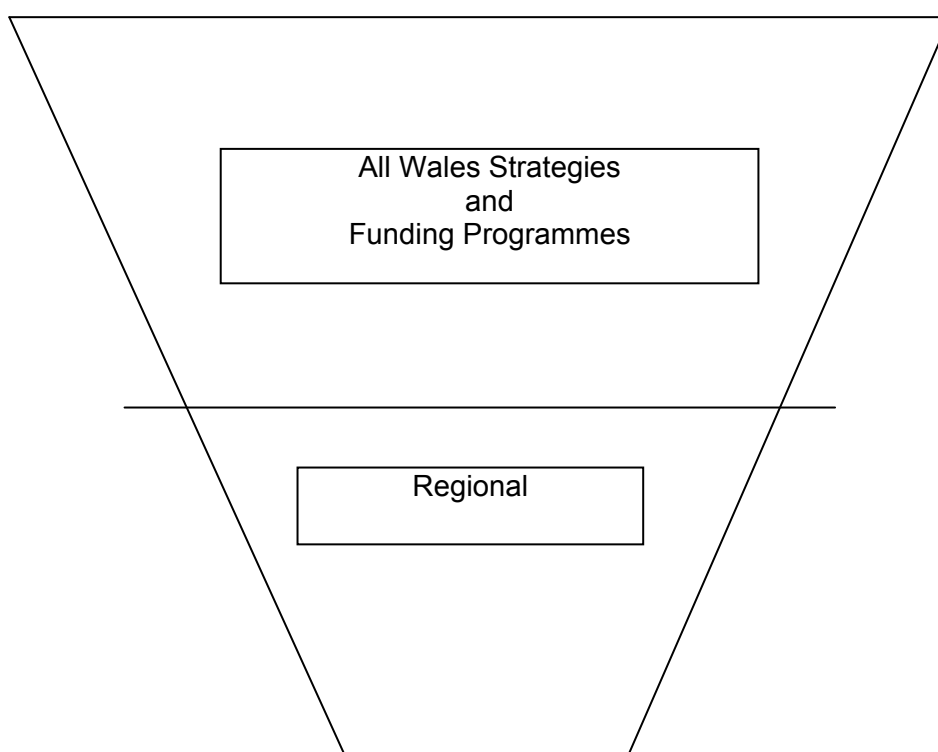
The Local Regeneration Fund is being used to fund the TRENT road scheme. This scheme is well supported by the local community and will be a catalyst for an integrated economic and community regeneration strategy for the town. The construction of the relief road will facilitate the provision of the proposed community school and business incubator units leading to enhanced community and educational facilities and the potential for increased levels of economic activity in the area.

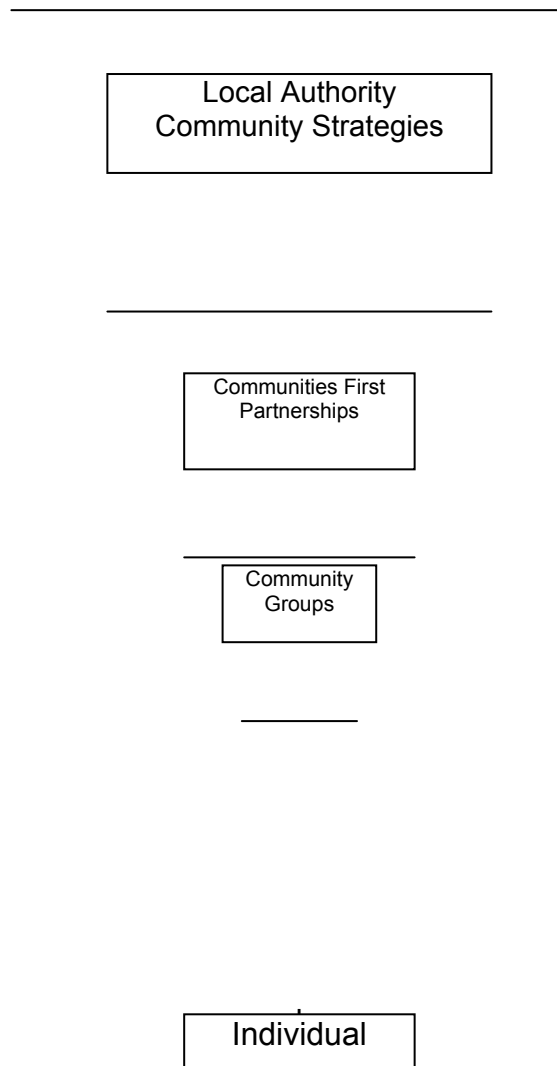
- 2.14 Work is underway to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for Communities First.. In addition to the Multiple Index of Deprivation, the measures will also need to relate to the Communities First Community Vision Framework for:

- ◆ Jobs and business.

- ◆ Education and training.
- ◆ The Environment.
- ◆ Health and well-being.
- ◆ Active community.
- ◆ Community safety.

Although the issues are complex, the aim is to make this as simple and meaningful as possible and to involve communities themselves in the process. This monitoring and evaluation framework should help with the development of Assembly-wide measures and targets for social inclusion. It is likely that there will be a mix of “hard” and “soft” measures captured at all or some of the following levels:





Sustainable Development

2.15 The National Assembly has a statutory duty to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions. That duty is expressed through a formal Sustainable Development Scheme and a related Action Plan. Sustainable development has been adopted as an international principle but Wales is the first country in the European Union to have it as a legal duty.

- 2.16 The idea of sustainable development challenges policy-makers, businesses and individuals to look at the impact of their decisions in the round and over the longer-term. The objective is to take decisions that bring lasting benefits for society, the economy and the environment. It is not about balancing competing claims but finding responses that seek to give all-round improvement.
- 2.17 Sustainable development is particularly resonant for social inclusion and deprived communities as it is often the failure to think long-term and in a joined-up way that has led to poor conditions in communities in the first place – failing to put jobs with housing, a lack of access, poor facilities.
- 2.18 In addition to the work set out in the Sustainable Development Action Plan, the Welsh Assembly Government is pursuing two initiatives that will have a strong bearing on inclusion issues:
- ◆ In April a major conference will be held in Cardiff to prepare for the next World Summit on Environment and Development. The summit will be looking at the social consequences of globalisation and provide a rare opportunity to put Welsh issues in an international context and learn from that wider experience; and
 - ◆ A bid is being put forward to host an inter-European regional network to share experience of all aspects of sustainable development across Europe.

Equality of Opportunity

2.19 The National Assembly for Wales has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in the discharge of its functions. It also acts as an exemplar in its policies and actions to the rest of the public sector and as an advocate for equality for society at large. It is recognised as an organisation that appreciates, promotes and exemplifies the benefits of a diversified society, culture and workforce.

2.20 The people of Wales represent many different ethnic origins and beliefs. As individuals, everyone has different needs depending on their cultural traditions, social-economic status, physical and mental ability, age, education and geographical location. It is, therefore, important that those who are responsible for developing and moulding the social, economic and cultural resources of Wales better understand the influence and responsibility they have to serve and meet individuals' needs.

2.21 The Assembly is taking a number of positive steps to promote equality of opportunity. These include:

- ◆ **Outreach** - work is in hand to promote outreach with BME communities. This includes the Assembly providing opportunities for workshadowing, secondments, and traineeships for people from BME communities;
- ◆ **Consultation** - there have been 2 roundtables established - one for BME communities (chaired by the Assembly's Permanent Secretary) and one for public sector bodies (chaired by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities). Capacity funding has also been provided by the Assembly to four key BME voluntary bodies to enhance the effectiveness of the Assembly's consultation arrangements. The Assembly also part funds the All Wales

Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA) and the Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual Forum Cymru. These are other mechanisms for enhancing consultation from a diverse cross-section of society;

- ◆ **Public Appointments** – the Assembly's public appointments procedures have been reviewed to assist in creating a more diverse representation on public bodies;
- ◆ **Policy Making**- there has been a review of the Assembly's policy making procedures to produce effective tools for policy development which will ensure that equality is built in from the start. There is also a scheme to enhance e-consultation processes.
- ◆ **Access** – There have been improvements across a range of access issues including greater accessibility of information and improved physical access to Assembly buildings, especially at the regional offices.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

2.22 Information and Communication technologies are increasingly important in people's lives. Computers are found within the home or in public centres such as libraries or supermarkets. Other communication technologies such as mobile phones, digital TVs using services such as Sky Interactive are also widespread. Used effectively, ICT can positively help individuals and communities to access services and facilities that may otherwise be difficult to reach. For example:

- ◆ Access to information and services, such as government services for benefit and employment opportunities;
- ◆ On-line training and education facilities allowing individuals to learn new skills without attending education institutions;
- ◆ Rapid access to health advice and support services;
- ◆ Communicating within and between individuals and communities.

2.23 ICT within communities supports sharing of information on facilities and activities and provides the opportunity to develop links outside the community, which could lead to business growth and employment.

2.24 The Welsh Assembly Government believes that effective use of these technologies has the potential to transform communities, society and the economy in Wales. ICT therefore is a key part of the Plan for Wales. Cymru Arlein – Online for a Better Wales sets out the Assembly's strategy for delivering the benefits of an information society in Wales. Its key components are:

- ♦ **Enhancing Communities:** Citizens and communities must have affordable access for education, communication, entertainment, use of public services, and for combating social exclusion;
- ♦ **Building Successful Businesses:** Businesses, whatever their size or location, need to have access to and are encouraged to exploit ICT to expand markets, innovate and grow;
- ♦ **Improving Public Services:** The public sector needs to be innovative and determined in making services available electronically, especially health, education, social services, tourism and the media;
- ♦ **Developing ICT Skills and e-learning:** To develop and retain skilled people, Wales needs to be at the forefront of the transformation ICT will bring to education, offering students access to global services, as well as tailoring new e-services to Welsh needs;
- ♦ **Ensuring First Class Infrastructure:** Trusted, affordable, accessible, first class infrastructure is key.

2.25 Achieving a cultural shift in the way individuals and communities view and use ICT is at the heart of delivering a sustainable and beneficial Information Age Society in Wales. Many people in Wales face physical, social or linguistic barriers to accessing online services and information. Technological change could enable people to overcome those barriers.

2.26 The Welsh Assembly Government is working to ensure that everyone has access to ICT facilities and the opportunity to exploit these to improve their lives. Every library in Wales is to offer free access to the Internet for those that want it; all schools are to be connected to the Internet to give our children better opportunities for the future; learning and access centres are being established in many towns. The Assembly is keen to encourage enthusiastic and dedicated leaders to demonstrate what can be achieved through ICT in a way that makes sense to local people. That is why a number of key activities specifically aimed at supporting communities have been initiated:

e-communities

- ◆ The WDA and ELWa have submitted an Objective 1 bid to support around 100 communities in acquiring and using ICT in their own setting. Many of these will be Communities First areas;

e-placements

- ◆ ELWa is running a programme to place ICT students and recently qualified individuals into communities to help them develop capacity and capability locally and make better use of facilities in libraries, community centres and schools;

Communities of the Future

- ◆ A Communities of the Future conference and workshop is to be held in the spring of 2002 to help develop local understanding and support local champions.

2.27 Further details of all Cymru Ar-lein activities can be found at www.cymruarelein.wales.gov.uk.

Welsh Language

2.28 The Welsh Language Act 1993 established the principle that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality. The Welsh Assembly Government operates a Welsh language scheme which specifies the measures it proposes to take to give effect to the principle of equality and represents what is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable.

2.29 The scheme demonstrates the Assembly's commitment to bilingualism in the delivery of services to the public.

2.30 The Assembly's first Strategic Plan, Better Wales.com set out the Assembly's vision of fostering Wales' unique and diverse identity and the benefits of bilingualism. One of the priority areas was to extend access to and awareness of the Welsh language. Better Wales.com set a target to stabilise the proportion of Welsh speakers by 2003 and sustain the growth in the number of young people who speak the language. These objectives were confirmed in the Plan for Wales 2001 which also set the target of ensuring more people can speak Welsh by 2010 with the sharpest increase amongst young people.

2.31 The Plan for Wales also highlights the relevance of the Welsh language to the Assembly's three guiding principles of Sustainable Development, Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities stating:

“A sustainable, inclusive and equal Wales demands a distinctive and creative culture; one which values diversity, where bilingualism is a growing reality”

2.32 The Assembly Government expects to see sustaining bilingual communities as a central theme in many local authority community strategies. It also sees safeguarding and promoting people's right to use the Welsh language both to access services and to play a full part in the civic and cultural life of their country as an important element of establishing social justice.

3. TACKLING POVERTY AND IMPROVING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Skills, Training and Employment

- 3.1 In order to succeed on a global level Wales needs to have a more dynamic, entrepreneurial economy in Wales and to properly equip people with the skills and adaptability to handle new, and swiftly changing situations, with self-confidence.
- 3.2 All members of the workforce must have the basic competencies necessary to prosper in a knowledge-based economy and the opportunity to refresh them regularly through life-long learning. Key to improving economic prospects, raising the quality of life and tackling social disadvantage is following a genuinely inclusive approach that draws in everyone, values individuals in terms of their potential and helps them to succeed.

Where we are now

- 3.3 The Future Skills Wales report shows that around 30% of employers suffer from skill shortages and that there are significant gaps between the skills employers need and the skills of their workforce. In 2000 almost 1 in 5 of working age adults

in Wales had no qualifications whilst 1 in 10 16-18 year olds had no qualifications. This can mean that there is a tendency for firms to fall into a "low skills trap". They settle for lower skills levels because they cannot readily obtain the higher levels skills they need for high growth. As a result economic growth suffers overall. These factors are one of the main reasons why in Wales we have a relatively low proportion of our working age population in work, and why some people find it hard to find suitable employment.

- 3.4 There is also a significant problem with basic skills in Wales. Too many of our children, young people and adults – around 780,000 – have literacy and numeracy problems, which close doors to a full life and lead to social exclusion. Our challenge is to raise standards of literacy and numeracy for all; to reduce significantly the numbers of individuals in Wales who struggle with their reading, writing and numbers; and to help improve their skills, prospects and quality of life.

What we are doing

- 3.5 The Future Skills Wales Task Force was set up to take a strategic look at skills in Wales. 50 challenging recommendations put skills firmly at the centre of our economic and learning agenda. The Assembly Government has responded to these in the *Skills and Employment Action Plan* and the National Economic Development Strategy '*A Winning Wales*'.
- 3.6 Providing routes into secure and well-paid employment is one of the most effective ways to tackle social exclusion and poverty. The Assembly Government and its partners are helping to improve these routes in a number of ways:

- ◆ By creating more and better-paid jobs;
- ◆ By providing a good quality education for all;
- ◆ Through improving the skills base in Wales by increasing the job-related skills of individuals and by working with employers to develop their workforce; and
- ◆ Through improving the help given to people to find and sustain suitable employment.

3.7 A single post-16 credit and qualification framework for Wales will support the development of an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, assist in removing barriers to progression and promote recognition of the skills required to support economic development in Wales. It will help to focus education and training more effectively, offering parity in the recognition of achievements for learners of all ages, learning in the workplace, community, at school, college or university.

3.8 The Assembly Government's *Skills and Employment Action Plan* sets out its approach to skills and employment issues across Wales. This lists over 50 actions to improve skills and help more people into work. The Assembly Government cannot work alone here – for example, most employment measures such as the New Deal are reserved to the UK Government and delivered by the Employment Service. The significance of these programmes in tackling Welsh unemployment and inactivity should not be understated. Youth unemployment has dropped dramatically since the introduction of the New Deal in 1998. This year has seen the focus shift towards providing work help

for economically inactive people such as those who are claiming incapacity benefit or income support.

3.9 A significant development in this area will be the introduction of Jobcentre Plus in April 2002. This marriage of the Employment Service and Benefits Agency will ensure that, for the first time, people making claims for a wide range of benefits, other than just Job Seekers Allowance, will have an interview with a Personal Adviser designed to establish what help and support each person needs in order to re-enter the labour market. This type of intervention is vital for helping people leave incapacity benefit and income support, whilst striking a balance between allowing those with the capacity to work to do so, and recognising that those in need of support through the benefit system, are treated with sensitivity and dignity.

3.10 The Assembly Government will work in close partnership with Jobcentre Plus to ensure such measures offer effective assistance to people looking to overcome the barriers they face in taking up employment. Such partnerships with a wide range of bodies are essential to make a real difference to the life chances of everyone in Wales and contribute to our overall levels of prosperity.

3.11 Amongst the initiatives being taken forward through the *Skills and Employment Action Plan* are:

- (i) new ways to ensure that the demand and supply of skills are better linked, so that people can obtain the skills that employers really need. New employer-led Sector Skills Councils will be active in Wales and ELWa will ensure streamlined co-ordination of their work;

- (ii) improvements to learning provision to increase quality and make it more user-friendly, for example through credit-based qualifications that provide learning in bite-sized chunks, and re-vamping work-based training programmes using an all-age approach;
- (iii) pilots to assess the impact and value for money of providing free learning for all up to Level 3;
- (iv) consideration to enhancing and extending New Deal programmes in Wales; and
- (v) improving co-ordination of health and employment actions to help people with work-limiting health problems or disabilities to remain in or return to employment.

3.12 The Assembly Government is determined to re-focus investment in people and lifelong learning. The aim is that everyone is encouraged to access the range of knowledge and skills required to fulfil their potential and enable them to prosper in the new economy. For these reasons the post -16 learning systems have been modernised to break down barriers:

- ◆ Barriers that prevent access to flexible, relevant and learner focussed provision;
- ◆ Barriers that inhibit learning provider co-operation; and
- ◆ Barriers between education and vocational learning routes.

3.13 *The Education and Training Action Plan* set the scene in its recommendations for the establishment of the National Council

for Education and Training for Wales. The Assembly's Government's modernisation programme for post -16 learning also included the introduction of local Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs).

3.14 These changes are now reality, and were brought about through a new spirit of real partnership under the Assembly Government. The National Council, working in conjunction with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales under the brand name "Education and Learning Wales – ELWa", is a leading agent of change in the post -16 field. It is already playing a pivotal role in the development of human resources so that individuals, businesses and communities in all parts of Wales are equipped to benefit from new opportunities in knowledge-based enterprises.

3.15 Through wide consultation, the National Council – ELWa is developing strategies and plans which seek to break down the barriers and extend access to learning to all our people; plans which sustain and enhance learning through the medium of Welsh; and plans which enable it to secure better value and quality of learning provision. Its creation opens up tremendous opportunities to strengthen and integrate the academic and vocational learning routes.

3.16 CCETs have been established throughout Wales as partnerships which seek to raise expectations and participation in learning, promote the integration of provision, better respond to needs, and achieve parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning routes. CCETs are already working closely with the National Council – ELWa in the development of new proposals for the better delivery of local learning geared to the needs of individuals.

- 3.17 The Assembly Government is determined to build upon the establishment of the National Council - ELWa and CCETs in ways that will genuinely extend access, increase participation and enhance the learning experience for all our people. At the heart of the proposals is the community approach being developed through CCETs and other Assembly Government initiatives. There are plans to develop that principle in extending the concept of community ownership to complete the modernisation of learning opportunities that will better encourage a coherent and productive society at ease with itself.
- 3.18 It will be part of the Assembly's approach to the modernisation of the curriculum in the latter part of secondary school to develop a flexible framework that generates genuine parity of esteem between vocational and academic fields of study.
- 3.19 To maintain a strong community focus for education and training the wider development of the school within the community is being encouraged to enable more intensive use of school buildings for delivering adult and continuing learning. As further strands to the strategy for strengthening basic skills, parents are being encouraged to become more involved with their children during the school day and business people and voluntary organisations are being encouraged to participate in the delivery of curricula and extra curricula activities.
- 3.20 The Assembly Government launched the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales in April 2001 with the aim of raising standards of literacy and numeracy across the board. The Strategy focuses on helping people of all ages and across all sectors to improve their basic skills, from prevention during the

childhood years to "catch-up" for adults who already have a problem. Its overall aims are to ensure:

- ◆ All young people are prepared for learning when they leave school;
- ◆ A continuing reduction in the number of children leaving primary school struggling to read, write and use numbers;
- ◆ Fewer young people leaving school struggling with basic skills; and
- ◆ A significant decrease in the number of adults with poor basic skills.

3.21 In April 2001, Careers Wales was established to deliver the first all-age advice and guidance service in the UK. Whilst information and advice are available to everyone, additional assistance provided by Careers Wales includes:

- ◆ The Youth Gateway – an enhanced package of assessment and guidance, plus ongoing support, for those finding difficulty in making the transition from compulsory education at age 16 to suitable opportunities in education, training or employment.
- ◆ A range of additional support to young people within compulsory education at risk of dropping-out from formal education or not fulfilling their potential.
- ◆ In-depth career guidance to those economically inactive groups who are not in the New Deal (for example, those

wishing to return to the labour force after taking career breaks).

3.22 Careers Wales has been charged with communicating and marketing its services more effectively, extending common standards under the brand and developing innovative ways of delivering its all-age advice and guidance services particularly through the use of ICT.

The Economy

A Winning Wales

3.23 It is an uncomfortable fact that the Welsh economy is under-performing and lags behind most UK regions. Welsh Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is only 80% of the UK average. A *Winning Wales* - the Welsh Assembly Government's National Economic Development Strategy - seeks to raise Welsh GDP to 90% of the UK average in the next decade.

Where we are today

3.24 *A Winning Wales* has a central vision which provides the focus for the various actions and targets. The vision is:

To achieve a prosperous Welsh economy that is dynamic, inclusive and sustainable, based on successful, innovative businesses with skilled well-motivated people.

3.25 This vision is set to sustain the economic development of Wales over the next ten years and will guide those in the Assembly, Government, ASPBs and other agencies involved in making or delivering economic policy. The strategy is not ‘set in stone’; the diversity and fluidity of modern knowledge-based economies demand imagination and flexibility of any central strategy that seeks to facilitate them. *A Winning Wales* is a living document which will respond positively to changing circumstances.

What we are doing

3.26 The Assembly Government has already committed over £15 billion to help transform Wales over the next decade. Implementation of *A Winning Wales* has already begun – the remit letters of the WDA, WTB and ELWa all emphasise the need to develop the actions contained in the document over the coming years. The Assembly Government is committed to publishing an annual report on progress against the targets and actions in *A Winning Wales*.

Welsh Development Agency

3.27 In its draft 2002-03 Business Plan, the WDA has outlined its plans for supporting communities. It proposes to undertake the reclamation of land, urban and rural renewal projects including Town Improvement Grants, and community initiatives such as the e-communities programme. Key projects will include the Rural Recovery Plan and the Small Town and Villages programme. Land Division services will also provide amenity land to assist community regeneration.

European Union Structural Funds

3.28 The Structural Funds provide grant aid for projects that encourage and facilitate economic regeneration and revival in areas where the decline of traditional industries has caused serious economic and social problems. As one of the poorer regions of the European Union, Wales has received substantial financial help from the EU Structural Funds.

3.29 A number of European Union funded Structural Fund programmes address the issue of social inclusion. One of the headline objectives for the Objective 1 programme for West Wales and the Valleys is to reduce the number of those who are economically inactive by 35,000. £110million has been allocated to Community Economic Regeneration for the duration of the programme (2000 – 2006). These funds have been targeted at the most deprived and peripheral wards in Wales, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation for Wales. Initial activity has focused on capacity building, and this will lead to projects that will assist in the regeneration of deprived areas, and the creation of businesses in the social economy.

3.30 The Objective 2 programme for East Wales contains similar measures to tackle social inclusion:

- ◆ Priority 2 Measure 1 Rural Economic Development
- ◆ Priority 3 Measure 2 Capacity Building and Community Initiatives in Urban Communities

3.31 The Objective 3 programme for East Wales contains a priority of Equal Opportunities for All and Promoting Social Inclusion.

The Entrepreneurship Action Plan

- 3.32 On a number of measures, Wales is not as entrepreneurial as it could be – for example we have one of the lowest rates of business starts in the UK and in Europe. The Entrepreneurship Action Plan, utilising EC Structural Funds, aims to change this by fostering a much stronger culture of enterprise and by helping many more new ventures to start up and to grow successfully in Wales.
- 3.33 The successful implementation of the Entrepreneurship Action Plan will play a major role in tackling social exclusion in Wales. The strategy encourages more people to consider starting a business for themselves and provides advice and assistance to these who decide to go ahead. The strategy recognises and provides for the differing needs of individuals stemming from their social, cultural and economic background as well as age, location and experience. Its aim is to exploit the potential which exists within individuals and communities as a means of enhancing the quality of life for everyone.
- 3.34 In assisting individuals to develop business ideas, the strategy also contributes to the goal of raising the rate of economic activity in Wales. Not only will successful businesses provide an income for the originator but they will provide employment opportunities for others in the labour market.
- 3.35 The Plan highlights the need to encourage and support a diversity amongst entrepreneurs and does this both through mainstreaming equality into its activities and through positive action approaches in a number of areas. The mainstreaming approach is reflected in requirements within the Plan to assist those groups that may seem to be underrepresented in the entrepreneurial community.

3.36 Significant emphasis is being placed upon positive action for lone parents, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, the young, the old and Welsh speakers. The Potentia project is focussing resources on these groups by working in conjunction with Disability Wales, Chwarae Teg, Ethnic Business Support Partnership, the Princes Trust and Prime Cymru.

Credit Unions

3.37 The Assembly Government is tackling financial exclusion through support for the promotion of the Credit Union movement in Wales. Credit Unions are financial co-operatives that offer quality and low-cost financial services to their members. They can be particularly beneficial to those on low incomes or those who find themselves excluded from mainstream financial institutions. They also provide focal points for communities by bringing together people to work alongside each other for their own benefit and that of the community as a whole.

3.38 There are currently 45 Credit Unions in Wales, with over 500 volunteers serving a membership of 12,000. The Assembly contributing the following funding towards their development:

<u>2000/1</u>	<u>2001/2</u>	<u>2002/3</u>
£455k	£450k	£480k

Targets

Skills, Training and Employment

- ◆ To have 14,000 Modern Apprentices in training by 2003-04.
- ◆ Decrease the number of 15 year olds leaving full time education without a recognised qualification by 100% by 2010.
- ◆ Decrease the proportion of adults of working age without qualifications to 1 in 10 by 2010.
- ◆ Increase the proportion of adults of working age with a level 4 qualification to over 3 in 10 by 2010.
- ◆ Work with Employment Service to help 30,000 under 25s leave unemployment for work or training through the New Deal by 2003.

The Economy

A Winning Wales

A Winning Wales contains a number of targets, including:

- raising the stock of Welsh businesses to achieve the UK average of VAT registered businesses per 10,000 people.
- creating an additional 135,000 jobs with particular emphasis on communities and groups with low participation rates.

The Welsh Development Agency

2002-03 (draft business plan)

- ◆ Jobs created - 13,650
- ◆ Jobs safeguarded - 12,600
- ◆ New business starts - 3,640

European Structural Funds

Objective 1:

PRIORITY 3 – key outputs results and impacts by 2008	
Activity	
no of community groups assisted	2,600
no of community businesses given advice/information	5,700
no of community-owned revenue generating assets required	300
Outputs	
no of community organisations' projects supported 1,000	
no of community businesses started	600
gross new jobs accessed by people in targeted areas	3,000
gross jobs safeguarded in the social economy	3,000
Impact	
2,500 net new jobs for people from targeted areas	
50% survival rate for community enterprises surviving after 18 months	
75% community-owned facilities in operation after 2 years	

Targets for the Objective 3 programme include 180 capacity building projects and 40 social economy projects.

Credit Unions

- ◆ Within the next three years:
 - ◆ Membership of Credit Unions to treble from 12,000 to 36,000;
 - ◆ The number of volunteers to double from 500 to 1,000;
 - ◆ 3,000 members to be trained; and
 - ◆ Support to be offered to 1,800 people through financial exclusion projects.

4. SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND IMPROVING HEALTHCARE SERVICES

- 4.1 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to the principle of universal healthcare provision, accessible to all irrespective of circumstances. It is committed to providing additional funding that is targeted at groups with the greatest health and social need.
- 4.2 In pursuit of a healthy Wales there is a need to address economic, social and health challenges. The experience of poverty for some often lies at the root of ill health and unhealthy lifestyles thereby contributing to a lack of well-being. The Assembly is working to close the gap between Wales and the best in Europe in relation to life expectancy and death rates from major and long-term illnesses.
- 4.3 The awareness of health inequalities between communities and between different social groups represents a major clinical and managerial challenge to the NHS Wales. Some changes in access to treatment and advice have taken place for example, through hospital accident and emergency departments, direct

access to clinics and other healthcare professionals and NHS Direct which provides a telephone-based service to complement primary care.

- 4.4 The social and economic determinants of ill health are becoming part of the concerns of the NHS in Wales which is increasingly playing a major role with its partners to address them. The Assembly is committed to providing healthcare to the highest standard and being held accountable for that service and to ensure that people can be actively involved in protecting their own health and the health of their communities.
- 4.5 Last year the Welsh Assembly Government launched *"Improving Health in Wales - A Plan for the NHS with its partners"* which signalled the renewal of NHS Wales and sets out an ambitious agenda for change and improvement over the next ten years.
- 4.6 The Plan presents challenges that demand new approaches based on dynamic partnerships between NHS Wales, local government, the voluntary and independent sectors and the communities they serve. It offers a sense of renewal and purpose for the Service, providing the opportunity and focus to improve health and the health care of people in Wales.
- 4.7 The Welsh Assembly Government's vision for Wales is to create a confident, joined-up, co-operative, sustainable, health and listening nation. To make this vision a reality a number of challenges have to be faced and turned into opportunities. The renewal of the NHS in Wales takes place against this backdrop of these challenges but also in the context of the achievements that have and are being made to improve health and tackle inequality.

4.8 The prime aim of the Plan is to achieve wide scale improvements in patients' services and the quality of care and to be more people focussed. To achieve this fundamental structural changes are required. This will provide a more people-centred and participative health service which will be designed to:

- Craft local solutions for health problems based on evidence of need;
- Ensure that these local solutions fit into an all Wales framework of priorities to achieve equity of access; and
- Puts patients and their families centre stage in partnership with health professionals.

4.9 From 1 April 2003, as part of the renewal of the NHS in Wales, the current five Health Authorities will be dissolved to remove an administrative tier and their functions redistributed. Local Health Groups will be strengthened to become Local Health Boards in each local authority area. Both Local Health Boards and local government will then be required to work together to produce and implement local health and well-being strategies, along with other key stakeholders, to meet the needs of their local people. This will enable a combined and concerted attack to be made on the determinants of health and the inequalities that they cause.

4.10 The Welsh Assembly Government is also reviewing the distribution of money to the NHS in Wales, under the Townsend Review, with the objective of ensuring more equitable access for the entire population of Wales in accordance with their health needs. The Review is an important strand of *"Improving Health in Wales."*

Inequalities in Health Fund

- 4.11 Inequalities in health is the result of several interrelated factors. Action is needed on two fronts. On the one hand, to address factors which are largely within the control of individuals, for example health related behaviours and lifestyle issues; and people taking greater responsibility for their own health. On the other hand, action to address factors that are beyond individuals' direct control, for example social and economic factors.

Where we are today

- 4.12 The *Inequalities in Health Fund* was established in 2001 to stimulate and support new local action to address inequalities in health and the factors that contribute to it, including inequities in access to health services. The Fund actively demonstrates the Assembly's commitment to tackling inequalities in health. It supports a portfolio of local action across Wales in deprived communities and/or work with disadvantaged groups. Partnership action is a key feature of all the projects.

What we are doing

- 4.13 The Fund's priority in its first year (2001-02) was coronary heart disease and action that contributes to the implementation of the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease. For coronary heart disease, there is a budget of £3 million in 2001-02; £5 million in 2002-03; and £6 million in 2003-04.
- 4.14 In contributing to the implementation of the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease, health inequalities

projects include action to help people improve their own health and that of their families. Projects are also helping identify people at risk from coronary heart disease and improving access to services for those already suffering from heart disease. Examples include:

- ◆ Provision of Rapid Access to Chest Pain Clinic.
- ◆ Community based Multidisciplinary Cardiac Rehabilitation.
- ◆ Coronary Heart Disease and Travellers – Redressing the Balance.
- ◆ Heart Attack – Food for Living, Food for Life.
- ◆ Alive and Ticking – Active Living Strategy.
- ◆ Ethnic Minority Coronary Heart Disease Community Project.

4.15 The Minister for Health & Social Services announced a portfolio of 54 projects to be supported in July 2001 and in January 2002 a 2nd tranche of 13 projects. The Fund now supports a total of 67 coronary heart disease projects. An extra £1 million per year has also been made available from the Fund for the expansion of existing dental health initiatives and for a fissure sealant programme for children in areas of high dental decay.

Health promotion/healthy lifestyles

4.16 The national health promotion strategy called for a multifaceted programme of action which included:

- ◆ Targeted programmes promoting healthier lifestyles as part of wider action to address the socio-economic determinants of health.
- ◆ Helping communities and the organisations that serve them to change factors that can help them to improve health.
- ◆ Increasing the skills and knowledge base for health promotion.
- ◆ Promoting health across policy areas and effective health promotion practice.

Where we are today

4.17 In April 2001, the Assembly, in partnership with a wide range of partners from local government, community and voluntary groups, NHS, business and commerce began implementing the strategy.

What we are doing

4.18 A wide range of action has been implemented including:

- ◆ The establishment of community based smoking cessation services which have been specifically targeted in terms of access and location to meet the needs of deprived communities across Wales. In addition, culturally specific training and guidance has been provided for all Smoking Cessation Services so that they can promote the service and encourage access for ethnic minority groups.
- ◆ A Wales wide campaign for Europe Against Cancer week in October 2001 specifically targeted low income women in

deprived and rural communities with messages about giving up smoking.

- ◆ The funding of seven projects under the Sustainable Health Action Research Programme (SHARP) to identify effective local action in tackling poor health.
- ◆ Healthy School Schemes established in all unitary authorities to address healthy lifestyle issues across the life and organisation of schools and their links with their local community.
- ◆ Local Health Alliances established in all 22 local authorities to tackle the determinants of health and health inequalities.
- ◆ The 2002-04 funding round of the Health Promotion Voluntary Grant Scheme set up to build on previous round's priorities of tackling inequalities, the hard to reach and older people.
- ◆ Second round of funding announced for the Community Food Initiative which aims to promote healthy eating at the local level, particularly among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Twenty new projects are being established across Wales, including breakfast clubs and fruit tuck shops for children, teaching cooking skills, community cafes, and food growing schemes.
- ◆ The strategic framework for promoting sexual health in Wales, which seeks to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection, had led to a number of initiatives including the development of new guidance on sex education in schools and public education campaigns to

highlight the availability of emergency contraception and promote safer sex.

Welfare Rights and Benefits

4.19 The report *Better Health; Better Wales* identified that “...a person’s social and economic circumstances are probably the strongest influence on health, avoidable sickness and premature death.” *Better Advice: Better Health* by provision of welfare rights and benefits advice to patients aims to help improve their health and well being. GPs have to deal with many clinical problems where the solution is not medical but dependent more on improving the patient’s quality of life. This initiative is designed to help just such patients.

Where we are today

4.20 *Better Advice: Better Health* aims to improve the availability of information on welfare rights and benefits advice to patients through the existing network of GPs surgeries. It will receive £2 million of funding from the National Assembly for Wales over a three year period and 15 pilot schemes will be in place by April 2002.

4.21 The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) delivers the scheme across Wales in partnership with local authorities, local health groups, voluntary bodies and primary care interests.

What we are doing

4.22 The *Better Advice: Better Health* scheme will enable GPs to refer patients requiring benefits advice and social care services to expert advisers. The primary objectives of the initiative are:

- ◆ Improving the up-take of unclaimed benefits;
- ◆ Improving income levels for some poorer people; and
- ◆ Reducing the time GPs spend resolving non-medical queries.

Primary Health Care

4.23 Primary and community care need to be readily accessible to all. These are the health services most of us need most often. Dentists, optometrists, GPs and pharmacists all deliver vital front line services which both safeguard our health and well being and act as the “gatekeepers” through which we gain access to more specialised services when needed. District nursing and health visitors’ services offer skilled help at some of the most difficult periods of our lives. Most mental health care is provided by skilled community based teams.

4.24 There is evidence that vulnerable and socially excluded people find it hard to access these services and to maintain contact with them. This is a circle that needs to be broken. Outreach and out of hours services can help and we need to develop these. However, the real challenge is to find radical methods of ensuring not only that these groups of people know the services that are available to them, and to which they are entitled, but that services take steps to become accessible to these groups.

Dentistry

4.25 Wales has relatively poor oral health. The high levels of dental disease that exist must continue to be addressed. It is recognised that the general dental service provides around 90% of the NHS dental treatment in Wales.

Where we are today

4.26 The Welsh Assembly Government is ensuring vigorous action is taken to address areas of unmet need and working with the profession to find further ways of addressing the issue. To demonstrate this commitment, the Assembly has:

- ◆ Introduced free dental checks for those under the age of twenty-five and those aged sixty and over;
- ◆ Frozen the maximum patient charges;
- ◆ Introduced a fissure sealant programme in the Communities First areas for children in the six to eight age group at a cost of £450,000 in 2001-02; and
- ◆ Enhanced the services of NHS Direct to enable patients to locate their closest dentist when needed.

What we are doing

4.27 During 2002, the Assembly is continuing to develop strategies that will increase patient access to NHS dentistry, including:

- ◆ The purchase by Health Authorities of additional access sessions from practitioners in the general dental service which will stabilise and enhance access to emergency cover and occasional treatment to those patients who are unregistered with a dentist for continuing care;

- ◆ Introducing an amendment to the NHS general dental service regulations to extend the range of treatments available to unregistered patients as occasional treatment;
- ◆ Enhancing the role of the community dental service by continuing to support the innovative scheme introduced in 1995 to deliver dental treatment in accordance with general dental service terms;
- ◆ Continuing to support the development of the Personal Dental Service in Wales; and
- ◆ Ensuring that children and young people under the age of nineteen in full time education, patients in receipt of income support or other benefits receive NHS dentistry free of charge. Other patients are required to pay 80% of the cost of treatment, although some may receive assistance through the provisions contained in the low-income scheme.

Optometry

4.28 The problems associated with impaired vision and failing eyesight are a key issue in primary care and the health and well-being of a wide range of people.

Where we are today

4.29 Optometric services are provided by a wide variety of professionals operating within different settings, some in the NHS, community services for people with special needs (children in particular) and within the specialist hospital services. In the main services are provided by independent contractors providing

either private services or NHS services under the General Ophthalmic Services contract.

What we are doing

4.30 The Welsh Assembly Government is improving access to and the co-ordination of services to all patients and offering real opportunities to achieve significant improvement in the health and well-being of people with low or impaired vision. The extension of the role of the community optometrist facilitates the delivery of patient eye care in the community thereby avoiding inappropriate and often unnecessary referrals to hospital.

4.31 The following initiatives focused on patients considered to be most 'at risk' are to be introduced during the forthcoming year:

- ◆ Direct referral by optometrists within LGH guidelines to secondary ophthalmology services for patients requiring specialist treatment;
- ◆ A programme of eye examinations at no cost to the patient, available to 'at risk' groups of people in Wales which are specifically designed to detect eye disease;
- ◆ An All-Wales screening programme for diabetic retinopathy;
- ◆ The establishment of an all-Wales low vision service; and
- ◆ Co-management with the secondary sector, under agreed protocols, of certain eye conditions, e.g. cataract and glaucoma.

General Medical Services provided by GPs

4.32 GPs provide access to health care for all patients regardless of their social status. People who are homeless or moving on a frequent basis can still have health care provided by their GP, either as a temporary resident, or as immediately necessary or emergency treatment.

Where we are today

4.33 Section 36 of the NHS (Primary Care) Act 1997 enables Health Authorities to give local GPs financial incentives to provide specified services which meet local needs. Local Development Schemes (LDS) have been initiated for the development of general medical services (GMS) locally to meet particular needs.

4.34 Several model schemes have been developed and agreed, including the provision of GMS services to the homeless, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers. The aims of these schemes are to provide quality care to vulnerable groups so as to enable them to gain optimum advantage from the health and social care system, and become and remain healthy. The schemes do this by:

- ◆ Incentivising GPs to devote extra time and resources to such patients on first attendance, so as to establish a baseline of knowledge and morbidity against which subsequent progress in improved health and familiarity with the NHS can be measured;
- ◆ Encouraging GPs and other primary care practitioners to provide the necessary treatment, investigation and explanations to improve health response to the effects of existing disease and prevent further deterioration;

- ◆ Promoting a continued understanding of the NHS health and social care system so as to encourage its subsequent cost effective use and the utilisation of such long term preventative procedures as cervical cytology and immunisation.

4.35 Health care advice and information is also provided by NHS Direct (Wales) (NHSDW), in the form of a telephone advice line. Vulnerable groups of people can access this advice via health workers, phone boxes in hostels, and at local rate using a public phonebox. NHSDW has a social access reference group as a sub-group to its main reference group and it is committed to establishing and maintaining links with those organisations that support vulnerable people. NHSDW also runs a language line, where simultaneous translation is made as the phone call takes place, enabling those with language difficulties to access the service.

What we are doing

4.36 During 2002, the Assembly is undertaking a review of the provision of primary care services with the representatives of the primary care professions in Wales, the Health Authorities and the charitable organisations working with these categories of people to establish:

- ◆ The level of unmet demand for vulnerable patients in these communities;
- ◆ Accessibility of existing services;
- ◆ How best to improve and enhance awareness of the availability of the existing services;

- ◆ Define additional provision requirements to secure good health in these communities and deliver equality of access.

Pharmaceutical Services

Where we are today

4.37 The Welsh Assembly Government plans to publish a strategy for pharmacy care in Wales later this year, following consultations over the Spring period.

What we are doing

4.38 The key elements of the strategy are likely to include closer working with Social Services to support patients in domiciliary and care settings; promotion of health and well being through Local Health Group (LHG) led activities such as smoking cessation schemes, substance misuse services and contraceptive services; development of the LHG led prescribing role of the pharmacist in respect of repeat prescribing, substance misuse harm minimising schemes and the management of minor ailments; and improved arrangements to ensure timely access to services.

Social Care Services

4.39 Social care services exist to support vulnerable people by:

- ◆ Promoting independence;
- ◆ Providing support to live as near normal a lifestyle as possible;

- ◆ Safeguarding and protecting their well-being.

Where we are now

4.40 The demand on social services particularly by older people has steadily increased in recent years. Just over 80,000 assessments were carried out last year compared with just under half that number 7 years previously. The needs of an ageing population pose particular challenges. The Assembly Government seeks to raise the standards of services provided and to promote greater consistency in access to service around Wales including how they are paid for. It also promotes closer working between local government, the NHS, the independent and voluntary sectors to develop more holistic people-centred services. It seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable people are properly supported and protected.

What we are doing

4.41 The Welsh Assembly Government is:

- ◆ Introducing independent inspection and regulation arrangements for the full spectrum of local care services and developing minimum standards and a new regulatory framework.
- ◆ Requiring the development of local health and well being strategies. Promoting the new powers given local authorities and NHS bodies to bring together services in new ways for the benefit of clients.

- ◆ Developing a single and unified assessment and care management system for people with complex health and social care needs including guidance on assessment processes and eligibility criteria.
- ◆ Seeking to promote greater stability and confidence among domiciliary and residential care providers by developing new commissioning guidance, better planning arrangements and the establishment of a Wales Strategic Care Group involving all those with key roles.
- ◆ Implementing arrangements under which the NHS pays for an individual's registered nursing care irrespective of the setting in which it is provided.
- ◆ Developing statutory guidance to local authorities on their charging arrangements for care services provided in the home. The aim to produce greater consistency in the way that charging systems are designed, for example, in the way that benefits are taken into account in the means test.
- ◆ Taking forward measures in response to the Royal Commission on Long Term Care to ease the pressure on those entering care to sell their home. This will include a 3 month disregard on means assessment and powers for local authorities to take a charge on the property so that it does not need to be sold within the individual's lifetime.
- ◆ Developing an older person's strategy to promote the health and well being of older people particularly under the themes of health and social care, housing and leisure, social inclusion, transport, lifelong learning and non-devolved issues. Following consultation, on the draft strategy the Welsh Assembly Government will issue a response and an action plan around the turn of the year

- ◆ Issuing guidance on the protection of vulnerable adults "In Safe hands". This requires local agencies to produce protocols for action in protecting adults who may have been subject to ill-treatment. The Assembly Government is currently reviewing and monitoring progress in implementation.
- ◆ Establishing the Care Council for Wales from October 2001. This is a new body which has responsibility for improving standards in the workforce through training and through setting a new framework for the practice and regulation of care workers.

Carers

4.42 Informal carers can be among the poorest because their caring responsibilities are difficult to combine with employment responsibilities and they can have insufficient contributions to qualify them for certain benefits. Research shows too that they are often physically isolated and particularly vulnerable to physical illness and injury and to mental illness including the effects of emotional stress and depression.

Where we are now

4.43 In Wales there are around 360,000 informal carers (equivalent to 1% of the population). These carers are predominantly women, their average age group being between 45-64 years, with the largest proportion over the age of 60 years. Approximately 30% spend around 20 hours a week caring, approximately 15% will spend at least 50 hours a week.

4.44 Such circumstances can easily result in the social isolation and exclusion of carers. Research indicates that carers also face dangers to their health, including physical injury such as back strain, which is particularly common in older carers. Carers are also particularly vulnerable to mental health problems. Carers have an important part to play in making communities sustainable. It is necessary to ensure that the needs of the different groups of carers are met within these communities and that they are given opportunities and choices.

What we are doing

4.45 The Assembly has produced the Carers Strategy in Wales Implementation Plan, the principal objective of which is to improve the longer-term health and well-being of carers and those for whom they care. The Implementation Plan is being taken forward in partnership with local government, the voluntary sector and other key agencies. It is reviewed and developed each year. The Carers' Strategy translates values into practical measures to support and assist carers under the main headings of:

- Information
- Health and social care
- Support
- Employment
- Young carers

4.46 The provisions of the Carers' and Disabled Children Act 2000 which extends the rights to an assessment, allows services to be provided direct to carers and allows local authorities to offer

direct payments in lieu of directly provided services are being taken forward. Nearly £21 million is being provided over 3 years to support implementation of the Carers' Strategy including, £5.7 million in the local authority revenue settlement for assessments.

Mental Health

4.47 Mental illness often leads to isolation from the community at large. There is still a great deal of stigma attached to the subject and sufferers from poor mental health often lose employment and housing and can be shunned by friends, neighbours and even close family. This is a vicious circle. Often, homelessness, unemployment or social isolation lead to mental health problems.

Where we are today

4.48 The All Wales Mental Health Strategy outlines mental health services for adults of working age. It established the Community Mental Health Team as the first tier of specialist mental health services and began the process of closing the large Victorian institutions. Today most care is delivered in the community although there will always be a need for specialist in patient services. Latterly, it became clear that a new Strategy was needed to address modern conditions. At the same time, we began to draw up the first –ever All Wales Strategy for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

What we are doing

4.49 A new Strategy for adults of working age was launched in October 2001. This will be followed by a National Service

Framework for Wales which will be the instrument by which the Strategy is put into operation.

- 4.50 The new CAMHS strategy was also launched in October 2001. Implementation Teams have been set up to take forward the aims and recommendations of both Strategies so that we can be sure that they are implemented systematically and thoroughly across Wales. The Implementation Teams are drawing up their priorities and Action Plans, and dates for the stages of implementation will be part of that process.

People with Learning Disabilities

- 4.51 The Welsh Assembly Government is concerned to ensure that people with learning disabilities are able to lead fulfilled lives. It has speeded up the process of supporting resettlement into the community of people with learning disabilities who were inappropriately housed in long stay hospitals and worked to improve the support for people with learning disabilities in the community. In 1983, some 2,089 people lived in long stay learning disability hospitals. Over the last 17 years this total has fallen to 328 (as at 31 March 2001) as people are resettled into more appropriate accommodation in the community. Some hospital residents will however need to remain in continuing health care arrangements.

Where we are today

- 4.52 Since 1997 three long stay learning disability hospitals in Powys and the Ely Hospital in Cardiff have closed. Resettlement from the remaining three long stay hospitals in Wales (Hensol; Llanfrechfa Grange and Bryn y Neuadd) is continuing. The

resettlement programme for the Llanfrechfa Grange Hospital is almost complete. The resettlement programme for Hensol Hospital is continuing and should be completed during 2004. A comprehensive resettlement programme for Bryn y Neuadd Hospital has been commissioned and should be submitted to the Assembly for agreement very shortly.

What we are doing

4.53 In 2001-02, some £21 million in grant has been allocated to support the resettlement programmes. Over the next two years resettlement grant allocations will rise to meet demand and total over £50 million.

4.54 On the needs of people with learning disabilities more generally, in autumn 1999 we established an external Learning Disabilities Advisory Group to develop a framework for services for people with learning disabilities. The Advisory Group submitted its report 'Fulfilling the Promises' to the Minister for Health and Social Services in the summer of 2001. The report assesses progress in implementing the 1983 All-Wales Mental Handicap Strategy and sets out challenges for the future. Great progress has been made in reforming the nature of residential, day and domiciliary services and family support, but the situation across Wales is uneven. The Group have set out their proposals and priorities for achieving their vision of more accessible, responsive and people-centred services for 2010. The consultation on the Advisory Group's proposals and recommendations commenced ended on 18 January 2002. The 150 plus consultation responses will be taken into account by the Welsh Assembly Government in determining its response to the proposals and recommendations contained in the Report.

Disability

4.55 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to helping to ensure that people with physical and sensory disabilities are enabled to lead as full lives as possible, that services are accessible and that individuals' legal rights are promoted.

Where we are now

4.56 The number of people who are registered with local authorities as having or sensory disability has almost doubled since 1987 and is now approaching 30,000.

What we are doing

4.57 This year the Assembly is providing some £2.7 million in grant to support the core activities of 29 voluntary organisations operating on an all-Wales basis in the social care sector. Organisations funded include Disability Wales, the Wales Council for the Blind, the Wales Council for the Deaf, Mencap Cymru, the RNID, Age Concern Cymru, Mind Cymru, the National Autistic Society, SCOVO and the Carers National Association. This grant ensures that not only are some of our most vulnerable people provided with help and support but also with a representative voice to contribute to shaping the Assembly's policies.

Domestic Violence

4.58 The Assembly is committed to reducing the incidence of domestic violence in Wales. It provides core grant to Welsh

Women's Aid for the provision of advice and guidance to local agencies. Grant is also provided to individual women's refuges and to registered social landlords.

Where we are today

4.59 Within the last 5 years, domestic violence fora have been established all over Wales. These have been valuable in encouraging better co-operation between the different agencies involved in the provision of domestic violence services.

4.60 A manual of guidance has been issued to health professionals on how to deal with domestic violence cases. The Assembly also takes into account schemes for the protection of women against violence in its transport grant to local authorities.

What we are doing

4.61 The Assembly is continuing to core fund specialist voluntary organisations, which provide services concerned with support for the victims of domestic violence. It has set up a Working Group (with extensive external representation) to consider the development of all Wales Strategy in respect of domestic violence and violence against women. This is expected to meet for the first time in March 2002.

4.62 The Assembly is represented on the Interdepartmental Group on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women which meets regularly to discuss policy.

Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales

- 4.63 Substance misuse can be linked to poverty, homelessness and lack of work and leisure opportunities, and can lead to criminal behaviour, the break-up of families and the loss of good health. It needs to be addressed within the wider context of community regeneration, crime and disorder, and public health.
- 4.64 The effects of substance misuse are far reaching. It impacts upon the lives of those who misuse substances, those who experiment, those who are heavily dependent, and also upon their families and communities.

Where we are today

- 4.65 The misuse of substances is a common feature of the lives of a significant proportion of children and young people. In 1998, 42% of 15 and 16 year olds reported ever having used some kind of illicit drug and 23% reported having used illicit drugs in the last month.
- 4.66 Multi-agency Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs) provide a focal point for local decision-making in relation to substance misuse and a structure for leading and co-ordinating action against substance misuse. They provide consistency between local and national strategic approaches. DAATs have reviewed the particular problems and needs of their locality and developed a strategy to meet them with the same aims as the refocused Welsh strategy (*Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales: A partnership approach*) which was published in May 2002.

What we are doing

- 4.67 The Welsh Assembly Government is:

- ◆ Monitoring the implementation of a long-term (8-year) Assembly strategy to tackle substance misuse. The strategy covers the full range of substances that are misused in Wales, including drugs and alcohol.
- ◆ Prioritising prevention work with children and young people under 25. One of the 4 key aims of the Assembly's strategy relates to children, young people and adults. The other aims cover families and communities; treatment; and availability.
- ◆ Substantially increasing direct Assembly expenditure on substance misuse to support the implementation of the strategy. By 2003 funding for the Assembly's Drug and Alcohol Treatment Fund will nearly double from its 1999-2000 level of £1.5m.
- ◆ Putting in place an Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse to provide independent and objective advice to the Assembly on the implementation of the strategy and on other issues relating to substance misuse.
- ◆ Brought the Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit into the Assembly. This should lead to a more coherent approach and better communication with the substance misuse field in Wales.

Targets

- Decrease the infant mortality rate from 5.9 to 5.2 per 1000 live births by 2005.
- Increase life expectancy and decrease death rates from major and long term illnesses.

Inequalities in Health Fund

New Projects in Deprived Communities

	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3
Year			
Target	0	30	13
Achieved	0	54	n/a

Disseminate information on project action and encourage links with Communities First.

Health Promotion/Healthy Lifestyles

An Expert Group, chaired by the Chief Medical Officer, is reviewing the health gain targets many of which are of relevance to the Assembly's health promotion programme. New targets will be available for 2003-04.

Strategies for achieving health gain targets are underpinned by setting monitoring and reviewing national standards of care.

The Assembly is implementing a programme of National Service Frameworks (NSFs) which set national standards of care. These are

supported by robust, evidence based standards set by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The Assembly has launched an NSF for coronary heart disease and are developing implementation plans for NSFs for mental health; older people, diabetes, children and renal services.

Primary Health Care

Improving Health in Wales has already set a target for any patient to be able to access an appropriate member of the Primary Care Team within 24 hours of requesting an appointment and much sooner in an emergency.

Social Services

- Introduce new national minimum standards for care services from 1st April 2002.
- Develop by the end of 2002 and subsequently implement a strategy to promote the long term health, social care and well-being of older people.

Carers

- To improve the health and wellbeing of Wales' 350,000 carers, by implementing the Carers' Strategy.

Mental Health

The following short and medium term targets are expected to be developed by the strategy implementation teams:

- An education campaign to tackle stigma.
- A final date for the closure of the last Victorian institutions.
- Strengthening of Community Mental Health Teams to increase their functions and range of therapies.
- Guaranteed access to advocacy services.
- Systematic application of proven methods of early intervention to tackle behavioural and emotional problems in children.
- Refinement of the 4 tier system which is used as the model of CAMHS services so that from Tier 1 (first contact with young people eg teachers) to Tier 4 (highly specialised regional services) the workforce is trained and disorders are treated confidently and effectively at the lowest appropriate Tier.

Learning Disabilities

- Reduce the number of people resident in long stay disability hospitals from 607 in 1997 to less than 200 during 2003.
- Close the remaining long stay learning disability hospitals by 2010.

Domestic Violence

- To merge the Assembly's existing domestic violence funding streams by 2002-03.
- To develop firm proposals for a more cohesive policy, both within the Assembly and among local agencies by 2003.

- Task Group to make recommendations to the Minister for Health and Social Services about new initiatives in 2002.

Substance Misuse

- To reduce the proportion of 11 to 16 year olds who report the use of illegal drugs and other substances by 4% by 2005
- To increase the number of substance misusers participating in substance misuse treatment programmes by 70% by 2005 and 100% by 2008.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5.1 The Welsh Assembly Government launched the consultation document *Children and Young People: A Framework for Partnership* in December 2000. The Framework is designed to ensure a new approach to the planning and delivery of services for children and young people so that they:

- ◆ Contribute effectively to a common objective;
- ◆ Reflect and focus on the needs of children and young people;
- ◆ Are driven by a strategic assessment of need and priorities across the full range of activities at the local level; and
- ◆ Are proactive and positive.

5.2 The Framework states that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child should provide a foundation of principle for all dealings with children. The 41 rights under the Convention fall into three categories:

- ◆ Protection - children and young people are vulnerable and have the right to be protected in various ways;
- ◆ Provision - children and young people have rights to proper standards of physical care, learning and health; and
- ◆ Participation - children and young people are active citizens in the world and have rights to their own opinions, to express them and have them fully taken into account.

5.3 The Framework identifies three broad types of service for children and young people. Most have their needs for protection and development met by their parents, wider families and universal services, including schools and the health service. Other children might be defined as vulnerable, meaning that their life chances could be jeopardised if special action is not taken to offer additional support to them or their families. Finally, a small minority of children have much more fundamental special needs, and are defined under the Children Act as children in need. These include children with disabilities, those looked after by local authorities and those on the child protection registers. To varying extents, the latter two groups need the help of specialist social, health, education and other services if they are to develop and thrive.

5.4 Considerable amounts of money are spent on services for children and young people in Wales and large numbers of staff contribute to them. There are many examples of imaginative

provision with stimulating and highly-effective services. But there are also areas where, because of pressures on services from what are perceived as key users, children's interests are not as prominent as they might be. For example, in the NHS mental health services for children and adolescents do not receive the same attention as acute waiting lists.

Where we are today

5.5 The Welsh Assembly Government proposes that all local authorities should be required to produce a comprehensive children and young strategy (local framework) as part of their community strategy. The local framework would be drawn up by a partnership of representatives of all the relevant groups, including local authorities, the NHS, schools, voluntary organisations and children and young people themselves. The local frameworks would set up a context to embrace planning for all services provided for children and young people. The local framework would:

- ◆ Set joint local strategic priorities for local authorities, the NHS, ELWa, Careers Wales and voluntary sector;
- ◆ Provide opportunities for participation of communities and of children and young people;
- ◆ Set out the local context for other service plans; and
- ◆ Focus on outcomes for children and young people rather than service-led inputs.

5.6 The local framework would not remove the need for all of the more detailed plans for children and young people, but would

set out the overall local objectives, targets and methods of working. One of the widest plans to be produced within the context of the local frameworks will be the young people's plans to implement the proposals in *Extending Entitlement*.

- 5.7 *Framework for Partnership* recognises the widespread desire to see fewer individual funding schemes and associated plans. In line with the principles drawn from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it also includes proposals for developing the participation of children and young people in the decisions that affect them. These include the development of children and young people's forums in each local authority area and school councils in every primary and secondary school in Wales. The document recognises the key importance of the Children's Commissioner in monitoring implementation of the strategy, upholding and promoting the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and keeping in touch with children and young people.

What we are doing

- 5.8 Following publication of the *Framework for Partnership*, four conferences were held across Wales during July 2001 to discuss the proposals. These were attended by over 300 representatives. Over 100 written responses were received in response to the document's publication. At the same time four conferences across Wales were held for young people to give their views on the Assembly Government's proposals for participation in decision-making and the proposals in *Extending Entitlement*. In the light of the responses, draft planning guidance on the local frameworks for children and young people was issued for consultation in the autumn of 2001. Four workshops were held around Wales during November for an invited audience

representing local authorities, health services and the voluntary sector.

- 5.9 In order to reflect at the level of the Welsh Assembly Government the co-ordination of activity that is proposed locally, a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Children and Young People was formed in the spring of 2001. It is chaired by the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and regular members include the First Minister, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language. Other Ministers are invited to meetings of the Sub-Committee to discuss relevant matters within their portfolios.
- 5.10 To take forward the proposal in *Framework for Partnership* to reduce the number of separate funding schemes, the Assembly Government has announced the creation of a unified grant to be known as Cymorth - the Children and Youth Support Fund. The grant will bring together the existing funding for Sure Start, the Children and Youth Partnership Fund, Youth Access Initiative, the Play Grant and the National Childcare Strategy. It will be introduced from 2003-04. This funding programme has been developed on the basis of research evidence which shows that targeted support for children and young people can improve the life chances of children from disadvantaged families. The research also indicates that the most effective interventions are delivered where all the dimensions relevant to the child are addressed.
- 5.11 Funding priority under Cymorth will be given to Communities First areas where appropriate as there is evidence to demonstrate that services made available on an area basis can avoid stigmatising individual families. The indicative allocation, currently over £35 million, in its first year of operation, is aimed at those children whose life chances might be jeopardised if

special action is not taken. The grant will fund project work and some central infrastructure costs within the following themes for activity:

- ◆ Family support;
- ◆ Health promotion;
- ◆ Play, leisure and enrichment;
- ◆ Empowerment, participation and active citizenship;
- ◆ Community development;
- ◆ Training, mentoring and information;
- ◆ Building childcare provision;
- ◆ Inclusion and access.

Proposals for the fund will be incorporated in the local frameworks.

5.12 The Children's Commissioner for Wales, the first such commissioner in the UK, took up his post on 1 March 2001. Following the Assembly's first Wales-only primary legislation to be sponsored at Westminster, the Commissioner has a wide remit. His principal aim is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children in Wales and he is able to make representations to the Assembly about any matter affecting them. His specific functions include:

- ◆ The review and monitoring of arrangements for dealing with complaints, whistle-blowing and advocacy;
- ◆ The review of the effect on children of the exercise of the powers of the National Assembly and a wide range of public bodies;
- ◆ The examination of the cases of particular children;

- ◆ The provision of assistance, including financial assistance and representation in respect of proceedings or disputes in relation to the operation of procedures;
- ◆ The provision of advice and information; and
- ◆ The power, in defined circumstances, to require the provision of information and the disclosure of documents.

Children in need and looked after by local authorities

5.13 Children, defined by the Children Act 1989 as children in need, include children with disabilities, those looked after by local authorities and those on child protection registers. They are amongst the most vulnerable of children and young people.

5.14 The reports *People Like Us* (the Utting Report) and *Lost in Care* (the Waterhouse Report) reported on the poor outcomes for children who had been looked after by local authorities. These include poorer educational attainment and health and a higher incidence of homelessness, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and offending than their peers. These poor outcomes lead to disaffection, social exclusion and long-term problems in adulthood with a heavy cost to society. For example, Utting reported in *People Like Us* that 23% of adult prisoners and 38% of young prisoners had been in care.

Where we are today

5.15 The Welsh Assembly Government's programme to tackle the recommendations of Utting and Waterhouse and to improve outcomes for all children in need, including children looked

after by local authorities, is Children First. It was launched in 1999 as a 3 year programme and has been extended by 2 years to March 2004.

5.16 Children First is part of a much broader strategy to improve the quality of children's social services which include:

- ◆ The new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy;
- ◆ Work to improve services for disabled children;
- ◆ Guidance on the education and on the health of looked after children;
- ◆ A new framework for the assessment of children in need and their families.

What we are doing

5.17 From April 2000, Children First has been supported by grant payable to local authorities. Provision for 2002-3 is £16.4 million, rising to £18.6 million in the following financial year. Local authorities and their partners are expected to set additional local targets in annual management action plans. The Welsh Assembly Government is monitoring the implementation of the programme by local authorities and their partners.

Personal and Social Education

5.18 Personal and Social Education aims to equip children and young people to become more personally effective, healthy and responsible in society.

Where we are today

5.19 The Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) publishes a Framework in 2000 for Personal and Social Education. The Framework identifies how aspects of a person in society can be developed in schools. The Framework covers the social; community; physical; sexual; emotional; spiritual; moral; vocational; learning and environmental aspects of a person's development.

What we are doing

5.20 The Assembly Government has asked ACCAC to advise whether the Framework for Personal and Social Education should be made statutory from 2002. ACCAC's advice is expected in the first half of 2002.

The Assembly Learning Grant

5.21 Wales has a better record than any other part of mainland UK when it comes to attracting youngsters from socio-economically disadvantaged groups into higher education. Our record on attracting mature students from less advantaged backgrounds is the best in the UK, and the drop out rate among this group is lower in Wales.

Where we are today

5.22 The Assembly recognises that there are many reasons why potential students are put off applying for places on courses in both further and higher education. We are concerned that some of the most powerful are linked to student's fears - both real and perceived - of financial hardship. This is particularly true in respect of students from low income families.

What we are doing

5.23 The Assembly is determined to extend access and opportunity to all people in Wales and remove barriers to learning.

5.24 The Assembly has recently announced plans to introduce a new scheme of student support uniquely for Wales. This delivers on one of the key recommendations contained in the report published last year commissioned by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning from the Independent Investigation Group into Student Hardship and Funding in Wales, chaired by Professor Teresa Rees.

5.25 The Assembly Learning Grant will be funded from total provision of £41million in the financial year commencing April 2002, and over £50million in the next. So this year the £20million set aside for discretionary Hardship and Access Funds for this financial year will be more than doubled - which itself doubled provision as against the previous year.

5.26 The Grant will be means-tested, and targeted at the least well off amongst learners as part of the Assembly Government's

ambition to overcome poverty of opportunity, and increase access in low income communities. It will provide support on top of the statutory provisions which are currently available, such as Student Loans. The Grant will be for less well off, Welsh-domiciled students and will be available to them wherever they choose to study in Wales or elsewhere.

5.27 The Assembly Learning Grant will also make a real contribution to delivering on the Assembly's economic and cultural agendas by encouraging people to set low aspiration aside and to aim for their highest level of achievement. It will help to lift the level of education and skills within the Welsh workforce so as better to meet the economic and all the other challenges we face in achieving a truly inclusive society.

5.28 Figures available show that grants will average around £700 - £800 for some 43,000 students, with the maximum grant being £1,500.

Narrowing the Gap in Schools Performance

5.29 The Assembly Government is committed to driving up standards of achievement in schools. In order to achieve this objective, one of the issues to be addressed is the means by which the gap between the performance of schools can be narrowed; that gap relates largely to schools in deprived areas by comparison with those in areas of greater prosperity. There is a strong statistical correlation between schools with lower levels of pupil attainment and deprivation.

Where we are today

5.30 The Assembly's Partnership Council agreed in October 2000 to establish a joint task group to look at the range of performance of schools with a view to identifying educational, social and financial issues and making recommendations for action. The task group is responsible for developing proposals of a strategic nature which, when implemented, can be expected to raise significantly the standards of achievement in schools, particularly in deprived areas, whilst at the same time maintaining and improving the performance of schools which are doing well.

What we are doing

5.31 One of the key issues being looked at is the factors that have contributed to the success of some schools, focusing particularly on what initiatives work in those schools in deprived areas that are successful i.e. the schools that are "bucking the trend". The task group will submit a report of its findings to the Assembly/Welsh Local Government Association Partnership Council with a view to the subsequent dissemination of good practice.

School Attendance and Behaviour

5.32 Ten per cent of (half-day) sessions in Welsh schools in 2000-01 were missed through authorised and unauthorised absence with 1.6 per cent of sessions being missed through unauthorised absence.

5.33 Local Education Authorities are required to have Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) in place giving details of training, consultation, guidance and other services available to schools to help them effectively manage pupil behaviour. The first BSPs

were drawn up in 1998, and LEAs published revised plans in the first half of 2001.

5.34 Funding under the Grants for Education Training and Support (GEST) programme can be used to address challenging behaviour difficulties, attendance, and pupil disaffection in schools. Local authorities determine exactly how this money is spent within their local priorities and circumstances.

Where we are today

5.35 *'The Learning Country'*, outlined a future focus and targeted support for :

- ◆ Schools with serious problems of poor behaviour, low attendance and low attainment;
- ◆ Early intervention to help young children who have problems concentrating and co-operating;
- ◆ Extension of training for practitioners in behaviour and conflict management; and
- ◆ Encouraging parents to take responsibility for their children's conduct.

What we are doing

5.36 In 2001-2 £9.86m was allocated under GEST for *Tackling Social Disadvantage* (which includes activities to address school attendance and behaviour). This has been increased by a further £1m for 2002-03.

5.37 Following a two-day conference on *Tackling Disaffection Together* in October 2001, work is underway to develop a future agenda/action plan for pupil disaffection in Wales. This will address areas such as truancy and attendance, behaviour, exclusions and bullying. Further consultation will be held in developing legislation and procedures relating to school exclusions under the new Education Bill. The Bill will also allow for targeting all absences from school – rather than just unauthorised absence.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Schools

Where we are today

5.38 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to acquire ICT skills which they will need in the workplace, and to make use of ICT in all curriculum areas. The Assembly has provided £40 million over the past three years to help local education authorities provide ICT equipment, training and support for schools.

5.39 All schools in Wales will be connected to the Internet by 31 March 2002. Most are already connected. Pupil-computer ratios are continuing to improve.

5.40 An independent Advisory Panel on ICT in schools has been established to advise Ministers on priorities for future action.

What we are doing

5.41 The Assembly is:

- ◆ Providing continued financial support via the Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) programme to help local education authorities improve ICT facilities and support for their schools.
- ◆ Supporting the development of a broadband network for lifelong learning, including the provision of interactive whiteboards and multimedia equipment for every school in Wales by March 2002.
- ◆ Making ICT facilities more accessible to pupils outside school hours (and learners of all ages) through the establishment of ICT learning centres in over 400 school and community venues, as well as support for projects to extend access to ICT in Communities First areas.
- ◆ Establishing an ICT Task Force to develop a strategic approach to key issues such as ICT procurement by schools, technical support and connectivity targets.
- ◆ Establishing NGfL Cymru to develop and manage a new bilingual education portal for Welsh schools and stimulate the development of digital curriculum resources.

Physical Education and Sport

5.42 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving the health of the people of Wales and attaches great importance to physical education and sport within schools.

Where we are today

5.43 The report produced for the National Assembly by the PE and School Sport Task Force “Action Plan for Wales”, published June 2001, promotes a common vision for improving standards and strengthening the delivery and effectiveness of provision of physical education and school sport for all young people in Wales. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has welcomed the Plan and made resources available to the Sports Council for Wales to take forward a number of the key recommendations.

What we are doing

5.44 The Assembly is:

- ◆ Driving up standards of teaching and learning in all our schools, a Better Wales priority;
- ◆ Giving sports a renewed emphasis in schools and communities;
- ◆ Taking forward a number of recommendations in the PE and School Taskforce Report – including the establishment of curriculum development centres (CDCs);
- ◆ Ensuring that the £48.7 million being made available for PE and sport in Wales through the New Opportunities Fund, complements the efforts of schools, local education authorities and the Sports Council for Wales to promote sport and healthy lifestyles throughout the country.

Arts and Culture

5.45 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving

access to arts and cultural experiences for young people.

Where we are today

5.46 The Minister for Culture Sport and the Welsh Language published her culture strategy “Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol” in February 2002. The strategy reinforced that improving access to cultural experiences for young people was a priority area for the Government. The additional funding for the Arts Council for Wales in 2002-03 and future years will be utilised for improving access to the arts generally, but that providing opportunities for young people was a priority.

What we are doing

5.47 The Welsh Assembly Government is:

- ◆ Providing free access to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales;
- ◆ Reviewing the arrangements for engaging young people in the arts via the Arts Council’s Task Force on “Arts and Young People”;
- ◆ Requiring the national remit companies to have policies in place which exploit their talent base fully for educational purposes ;
- ◆ Establishing a Youth Arts Fund;
- ◆ Supporting redevelopment of Urdd’s Glan Llyn camp;
- ◆ Ensuring all libraries are on line by the end of 2002

Literacy and Numeracy

- 5.48 The Assembly is committed to driving up standards of teaching and attainment in schools by increasing the percentage of 11 and 14 year olds reaching the standards expected of them for their ages.

Where we are today

- 5.49 Evidence from National Curriculum attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 during 2001 indicates a successful approach to raising standards in primary schools. The percentage of 11 year old pupils achieving Level 4 or above in National Curriculum Key Stage Tests has increased considerably in literacy and numeracy; these indicate an all-Wales improvement since 1996 of around 38% in English, 31% in Welsh and 32% in maths, and exceed the targets set for 2002 in *Building Excellent Schools Together* (BEST 1997).

What we are doing

- 5.50 Performance is much slower in Key Stage 3, largely due to the earlier emphasis on raising standards in primary schools. There is evidence that the challenge of coping with transition from primary to secondary school can be associated with the downturn in achievement and the main thrust of our plans for 2002-03 onwards will be to ease that transition and to address the dip in standards through Key Stage 3. Wales-only powers are being taken in the Education Bill which will require the governing bodies of secondary schools and their feeder schools to plan together to facilitate the transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools.

Family Literacy and Numeracy

5.51 Poor literacy and numeracy skills are closely linked to poverty; not just economic poverty but poverty of aspiration and expectation and cultural poverty. The inter-generational impact of poor basic skills is well documented. Children with poor basic skills are far more likely to have parents who struggle with reading, writing and number work. Functionally illiterate and innumerate parents lack confidence and often are too stigmatised and ashamed to let their child's teacher know.

Where we are today

5.52 The successful Family Literacy and Family Numeracy schemes in Wales have shown that parents with few, if any, qualifications are drawn into learning by the opportunity to help their children. They help break the cycle of underachievement and low expectation and although no panacea to all of the problems of low standards in basic skills, they represent a significant contribution to preventing failure.

What we are doing

5.53 Family programmes are a strong and important element of the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales. The number of family literacy and family numeracy courses are being increased, local education authorities are being encouraged to look at their overall strategic planning for them. This includes newly developed family workshops – three-hour taster sessions that encourage parents to take part in the full course, and ‘Keeping up with the Children’ courses to keep parents informed of the

literacy and numeracy skills their children are gaining at school and the methods used by teachers in the classroom.

Work-Related Education

5.54 It is important that pupils are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of employment and adult life. Work Related Education plays a central role in preparing all young people to make a full and effective contribution to adult and working life.

Where we are today

5.55 The non-statutory Framework for Work-Related Education for 14-19 year olds was introduced in September 2000. The Framework offers key learning opportunities;

- ◆ Good quality work experience of at least one week at Key Stage 4;
- ◆ An enterprise activity;
- ◆ Mentoring support, from employers, for action planning and setting personal goals;
- ◆ Vocational or vocationally-related courses;
- ◆ Direct inputs from employers, into the curriculum or coursework assignments;
- ◆ Competitions or projects sponsored by employers; and
- ◆ Out of hours study involving employers.

What we are doing

5.56 The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) will be submitting advice to the Education and

Lifelong Learning Minister in May 2002 about the future status of Work Related Education.

- 5.57 On a wider front *The Learning Country* commits the Assembly to introducing a more flexible framework of education and training for 14-19 year olds which equally values academic, vocational and work-related pathways.

Services for Children with Special Health Needs

- 5.58 “Children with special health need” are defined as those who are physically impaired or who have complex or chronic medical conditions; or who have emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties associated with a diagnosed medical condition. Such children need treatment, care and associated services to develop their full potential and live as independently as possible.
- 5.59 Services for children with special health needs are provided by the NHS, social services, local education authorities and the voluntary sector. There is some evidence that services are not co-ordinated as well as they could be and that there are gaps in service provision.

Where we are today

- 5.60 The Health and Social Services Committee decided in July 2001 to undertake a review of services for children with special health needs. The terms of reference are:
- ◆ To review the availability of primary, community and social care services for children with special health needs.

- ◆ To make recommendations on how these services might be improved so that children with special health needs have the treatment, care and associated services they need to develop their full potential and live as independently as possible.
- ◆ To identify good practice in cross-agency working in meeting special health needs and providing co-ordinated primary care, community and social care services centred on the needs of the individual child.
- ◆ To report to the National Assembly for Wales in Plenary on the above by June 2002.

5.61 The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and the Local Government and Housing Committee have been invited to contribute to the review.

What we are doing

5.62 A consultation paper was issued in October 2001. This asked for responses on 8 key points. Of especial relevance to social inclusion is the first point “The early identification and diagnosis of special health needs”. In many cases early diagnosis and intervention can minimise or eliminate problems, for example with speech, hearing or behavioural disorders. Children who are excluded from access to primary care (e.g. those from groups such as travellers, asylum seekers, some ethnic minorities, homeless or unstable families) may miss the opportunity for early diagnosis.

Extending Entitlement: support for young People Aged 11-25 in Wales

5.63 Young people are our future and the key to the future prosperity of our economy, yet all too often in the past we have failed to invest sufficiently in providing them with appropriate support, information or advice at the point in their lives when they most need it. There are strong links between young peoples’ capacity to achieve, develop skills and contribute through work and voluntary activity as employees, citizens and parents and their health and social well-being.

5.64 To achieve our vision of a prosperous and fairer Wales, we need to work in close partnership across the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to ensure that all young people – irrespective of their circumstances or where they live – have access to the support and services they need to make a success of their lives.

Where we are today

5.65 In November 2000, the Wales Assembly Government launched a consultative document, '*Extending Entitlement*', setting out its proposals to provide better services and support for young people. The basic entitlement for every young person is:

- ◆ Education, training and work experience – tailored to their needs;
- ◆ Basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote social inclusion;
- ◆ A wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship;
- ◆ High quality, responsive, and accessible services and facilities ;
- ◆ Independent, specialist careers advice and guidance and student support and counselling services;
- ◆ Personal support and advice –where and when needed and in appropriate formats –with clear ground rules on confidentiality;
- ◆ Advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings;
- ◆ Recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment;
- ◆ Sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to

develop talents, broaden horizons and promote rounded perspectives including both national and international contexts; and

- ◆ The right to be consulted, to participate in decision-making, and to be heard, on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives

in an environment where there is :

- ◆ A positive focus on achievement overall and what young people have to contribute;
- ◆ A focus on building young people's capacity to become independent, make choices, and participate in the democratic process; and
- ◆ Celebration of young people's successes.

What we are doing

5.66 The Assembly is now working with a broad range of national and local partners to put in place legislation which will come into force from September 2002 together with an infrastructure to turn the vision into reality.

5.67 We have also established a partnership with Caanllaw Online Cyf to deliver a range of high quality information services to all young people in Wales. The contract runs until March 2004 and covers:

- ◆ A guidebook for all 16 year olds;

- ◆ An under-26 Youthcard and discount guide;
- ◆ A fully bilingual interactive information website;
- ◆ Telephone helplines;
- ◆ Support for a range of local information outlets;
- ◆ Consultancy service and training packages for those at local level who are involved in the delivery of information products and services to young people

5.68 By March 2004, the Assembly will wish to monitor each of the 22 local Young People's Partnership's achievements in the following areas:

- ◆ Steps taken to engage young people in decision-making in relation to services and support provided either specifically for them or more generally which they need to access
- ◆ Extent and nature of joint staff training activities undertaken to meet needs specifically identified by the Partnership
- ◆ What steps the Partnership has taken to fill gaps in provision identified, in a comprehensive audit of provision and need including out-of-school activities in its area .

Youth Justice Services in Wales

5.69 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. They are led by Local Authority Chief Executives and consist of five statutory partners: local

authority social services and education; police; probation; and health. YOTs are responsible for the provision of the full range of youth justice services in their areas and are designed to prevent and reduce youth offending by means of close inter-agency co-operation between all the statutory partners. Wales is covered by 16 YOTs which have been in operation since April 2000. Ten of these are based on single local authority areas with 6 based on two authorities combined.

Where we are today

5.70 Primary responsibility for funding YOTs lies with the local agencies themselves. The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales is responsible for monitoring YOTs and provides additional funding to promote good practice.

5.71 About £6.7 million was provided for the construction of the Hillside Secure Centre at Neath, which opened in 1996. This unit is owned and operated by Neath Port Talbot CBC. The local authority has a contract with the Youth Justice Board for the provision of 14 places for young offenders. The remaining 4 places are for young people referred from the civil care system. The Assembly is responsible for the inspection and certification of the premises on a three yearly basis.

What we are doing

5.72 The Assembly maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Youth Justice Board in order to ensure that its policies take full account of the Welsh situation and to ensure a focus on specific Welsh issues. As a result of these discussions the Youth Justice Board is opening a discrete unit for 15-17 year old young offenders within HM Prison Parc in March 2002. Furthermore,

in the longer term, a new Secure Training Centre is expected to be opened in South East Wales in 2005. These developments will at least halve the number of young offenders currently sent to custody in English institutions.

5.73 An All Wales Youth Offending Strategy Group, chaired jointly by the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chair of the Youth Justice Board, has been established to devise a strategy for Wales which fully addresses the cross-cutting aspects of youth justice.

5.74 The Assembly funds NACRO Cymru to supply advice and guidance to youth offending teams in Wales on a wide range of issues. Bids from specialist voluntary bodies are being invited to continue this work over a three year period, commencing in 2002-03.

Young People in Rural Areas

5.75 Both *Better Wales* and the Rural Partnership for Wales recognise the outward migration of young people from Welsh rural communities as a major source of concern.

Where we are today

5.76 In order to assist with the development of a policy agenda for achieving rural development and tackling the issues facing young people in these areas, the Assembly recently commissioned a study to:

- ◆ Explore the factors which lead to outward migration of young people from, and act as barriers to their returning to live in, rural Wales; and
- ◆ Set out a Rural Action Plan proposing a range of solutions which will contribute to halting and reversing this trend.

What we are doing

5.77 The study will cover people in the age range 16-40, will look holistically at rural communities and will be evidence-based. The results will inform the Rural Partnership for Wales' consideration of the issues and contribute towards the Assembly's policies on rural development, social exclusion and youth. It will in turn help form the basis for developing programmes and determining spending priorities in order to give individuals the realistic choice of remaining in, or returning to, rural Wales.

Targets

- Provide free half time education for all 3 year olds by September 2004.
- Increase the number of schools with pupils attaining at least 5 GCSE A*-C grades or equivalent with none having less than 40% by 2010.
- Increase numbers of young people staying in education past the compulsory education stage by at least 10,000 annually from 1999 to 2004 and 12,000 annually from 2004-2010.
- Reduce the numbers of teenage conceptions from 10.2 per 1000 to 9.5 per 1000 by 2003.

Children and Young People: A Framework for Partnership

- Improve access to appropriate quality services for all children and young people, supported by the Framework for Children and Young People and the revamped Llais Ifanc;
- Issue final version of the planning guidance under *Framework for Partnership*, including Cymorth, the Children and Youth Support Fund, in April 2002;
- New planning and funding arrangements under *Framework for Partnership* and Cymorth to be in operation in April 2003;
- Cymorth – the Children and Youth Support Fund to be subsumed within Revenue Support Grant by 2008.

- Publish childcare action plan, focusing on needs of children in disadvantaged areas, by 2002.

Children in Need

- At least 50% of children leaving care aged 16 or over to have two or more GSCE/GNVQ by 2002, and 75% by 2003;
- 100% of children looked after to have appropriate health checks;
- To reduce by 10% the relative rate of offending by children looked after in each local authority area;
- No more than 10% of children looked after should have 3 or more placements by 2002.

School Attendance and Behaviour

- Ensure that all pupils excluded for more than three weeks receive appropriate full-time education from September 2002.
- Reduce absences from school to below 8% by 2004.
- Review and update of National Assembly Circular 3/99 “Pupil Support and Social Inclusion”.

ICT in Schools

- All schools connected to the Internet by 31 March 2002.
- Whiteboard and multimedia equipment for every school in Wales by 31 March 2002.

- All schools connected to the broadband network for lifelong learning.
- Improved ICT provision and connectivity for schools to ensure all pupils are able to have access to high quality ICT resources. Further detailed targets will be subject to advice from the Advisory Panel on ICT.

Physical Education and Sport

- **2001-02:** Sports Council for Wales to appoint a National PE and School Sport Development Team to take forward implementation of recommendations in PE and School Sport task Force Report, including establishment of 3 pilot Curriculum Development Centres (CDCs) by March 2002 (CDCs to promote: good practice, curriculum development, staff development, better use of facilities within schools and the community, effective liaison between key phases of education and to strengthen local partnerships).
- **2002-03:** 13 pilot further pilot CDCs to be established, bringing the total number to 16, by March 2003. The Assembly will work closely with the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) to ensure that this work is taken forward in a manner that links with and complements the £48.75 million being made available for PE and sport in Wales by NOF – with a particular focus on improving sports facilities.
- **2003-04:** Dissemination of best practice in leveraging up standards and evaluation of pupil participation and attainment in PE and school sport.

- **2004-05:** Improved approaches in place for initial teacher training and continuing professional development of staff involved in school sport and PE.
- **2010:** Higher levels of attainment and participation by young people in school sport and PE.

Art and Culture

♦ **By 2002**

- ♦ Review of Young People Task Force completed and proposals for future action presented
- ♦ Ensure all public libraries are on line

♦ **By 2003**

- ♦ National remit companies to have developed policies for exploiting of their talent base fully for educational purposes;
- ♦ A Youth Arts Fund established
- ♦ Support redevelopment of Urdd's Glan Llyn camp

♦ **By 2004**

- ♦ To develop challenging targets for Theatre in education

Literacy and Numeracy

• **By 2002:**

- between 70 and 80 per cent of 11 and 14 year olds to achieve level 4 or 5 respectively in each of the core subjects (BEST and ETAP);
- To identify and promote best practices towards raising standards in core areas of the Key Stage 3 curriculum (working

with the Basic Skills Agency, BBC Wales, National Association for Advisers in English, Welsh Books Council and Techniquet.

- **By 2003:**

- To produce guidance and materials which will assist primary and secondary teachers in raising standards in teaching and learning across the curriculum
- To ensure that LEAs' Literacy and Numeracy strategies and bids for GEST funding contain proposals to raise standards in secondary schools
- To provide additional opportunities for continued In-Service Education and Training for the purpose of strengthening and supporting teachers' skills at the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 transition period and during the course of Key Stage 3 education

- **By 2004:**

- between 80 and 85 per cent of 11 and 14 year olds to achieve level 4 or 5 respectively in each of the core subjects (BEST and ETAP);
- **By 2010** Expansion of family literacy and numeracy schemes to involve 15,000 parents and children.

Work-Related Education (WRE)

- To review the statutory status of the WRE framework by September 2002.

- To produce a new framework for Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) which will assist schools and colleges in developing, delivering and evaluating their provision.
- To consult with all stakeholders on the development of policy in the field of 14 to 19 education and training during 2002.

Services for Children with Special Health Needs

- To report to the National Assembly for Wales in Plenary on the review of services for children with special health needs above by June 2002.

Extending Entitlement

- Collation of baseline data by Spring 2002.
- Setting of measures for tracking progress of individual local partnerships by 1 April 2003.

Youth Justice Services

- Develop and implement the all Wales Youth Justice Strategy by April 2003.
- Opening of a new secure unit for 15-17 year old offenders by April 2002.
- New Secure Training Centre in Wales by end of 2002.

Young People in Rural Areas

- Publication of study and consideration of study findings by Rural Partnership by December 2002; implementation by 2003.

6. WHERE WE LIVE

Housing

6.1 The Welsh Assembly Government has recently issued 'Better Homes for People in Wales', the first national housing strategy for Wales. It sets out a clear vision for housing in Wales, embracing the Assembly's key themes of equality of opportunity, sustainable development and social inclusion.

Where we are today

6.2 The vision contained in "Better Homes for People in Wales" states that "all households in Wales shall have the opportunity to live in good quality homes that are:

- ◆ In a good state of repair
- ◆ Safe and secure
- ◆ Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated
- ◆ Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms
- ◆ Well managed (for rented housing)
- ◆ Located in attractive and safe environments
- ◆ As far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household (e.g. specific disabilities)."

6.2 To tackle the problems of the housing stock condition, the Assembly Government is committed to bringing all Welsh housing up to the new 'Welsh Housing Quality Standard' by 2012. This standard is in keeping with people's expectations of the quality and features of their homes in the 21st Century.

What we are doing

- 6.4 Care and Repair services provide assistance to older and disabled people to enable them to carry out improvements to their homes. This often avoids clients going into supervised care and instead enables them to stay in their own homes.
- 6.5 There are 26 Care and Repair agencies in Wales (giving it all-Wales coverage) and the umbrella body is Care and Repair Cymru. The service provided is wide-ranging and includes practical support within the private sector renewal process, management of building work, advice on reputable contractors and particular emphasis on the caring side of the service.
- 6.6 Most of the agencies have contracts with Eaga Ltd to take forward the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (see below) in Wales. Many also have 'Safety at Home' initiatives and handyperson schemes covering small-scale but important repairs.
- 6.7 The Welsh Assembly Government is:
- ◆ Providing financial support for Care and Repair agencies in Wales from 2002-03 in order to establish continuity and their effective operation.
 - ◆ Increasing the support to Care and Repair substantially from 2003/04 in order that agencies and Care and Repair Cymru can operate with increased confidence and stability.
 - ◆ Introducing the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme from 1 April 2002 to be administered by Care and Repair Cymru and delivered by individual agencies. This new

programme to support older and disabled people is intended to provide immediate response to specific needs. It will provide adaptations such as ramps, stair lifts, and handrails to people who require them either to sustain the occupancy of their existing houses or so that they can be released from hospital or temporary residential/nursing home care.

Fuel Poverty

- 6.8 A manifestation of social disadvantage in housing is fuel poverty. This phenomenon is characterised by those who have to spend in excess of 10 per cent of their gross income in keeping their home adequately heated.

Where we are today

- 6.9 It is estimated that 220,000 households in Wales fall into this category by lacking basic insulation and/or heating in their homes.

What we are doing

- 6.10 **The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme** (HEES) provides grant assistance, via local authorities, to those worst affected. In 2001-02 this totals £9.6 million and is aimed at providing assistance to some 14,000 households.

Homelessness

- 6.11. Homelessness is one of the most dramatic, and often visible, forms of social exclusion. Rough sleeping being a highly visible form but only the “tip of the iceberg” – the Homelessness

Commission defined a homeless person very broadly, as 'anyone who lacks accommodation or where the tenure is not secure'. It emphasised that homelessness is not solely a housing issue requiring housing solutions, but has many deep rooted and wide ranging causes and consequences.

Where we are today

6.12 The Assembly has identified the need to tackle homelessness as one of the key priorities within its national housing strategy. It has extended the statutory protection for priority need for accommodation by expanding the descriptions of homeless persons.

What we are doing

6.13 The Homelessness Commission was established to advise on how the Assembly could meet its objectives in this area. Its report was welcomed by the Assembly, which will have completed its response to the 91 recommendations by April 2002.

6.14 Current grant funding from the Assembly comes mainly through the homelessness and rooflessness programme for voluntary organisations, and Supported Housing Revenue Grant for projects, which provide supported housing for homeless people.

6.15 The Assembly has increased, by over 600% in three years, grants to fund local projects for homeless people. In the coming year the homelessness and rooflessness programme will be increased from £3.2 million to £4.8 million, expanding the existing programme of work by voluntary organisations offering support to homeless people, focussing on advice, outreach and

preventative support including bond schemes. The projects funded are prioritised by local authorities, to ensure that they are relevant to local needs. In 2001-02 the programme included funding for local authorities to develop local homelessness strategies, and funding will be available for this purpose again in 2002-03.

6.16 Funding to provide support services to people at risk of homelessness, and other vulnerable groups, is provided through the Supported Housing Revenue Grant (SHRG), which will be increased by £0.5 million in 2002-03, and by £0.8 million in the two following years, increasing the number of supported bed-spaces by between 100 and 125 per year. This funding will come under the Supporting People arrangements from April 2003, and the Assembly will be having further discussions with partners before future funding plans are set.

6.17 Final guidance on the statutory order extending the homeless persons category will be issued in 2002.

Bond schemes

6.18 Bond schemes contribute to improving access to private rented accommodation for homeless and disadvantaged people.

Where we are today

6.19 The Assembly is undertaking work to establish access to Bond schemes in all parts of Wales. This measure is a priority within the s180 grant programme for 2002-03, for which bids have been invited and assessed against current gaps in provision.

What we are doing

6.20 A review of the best practice on Bond schemes is being co-ordinated by the Assembly with stakeholder organisations. It is anticipated that best practice guidance on Bond schemes will issue following the review and by Autumn 2002.

Accessibility

6.21 The Assembly Government is promoting better access to quality housing for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems, through 'Supporting People' and multi-service initiatives for street homeless people.

6.22 The Assembly wants to ensure that all communities are accessible by everyone. This also involves providing residents with the opportunity of staying in their homes longer, by making their homes capable of adaptation to meet the changing circumstances faced by families throughout their lifetime. All new social housing built from April 2001 incorporates Lifetime Homes principles which promote barrier-free housing through the dissemination of good practice.

Where we are today

6.23 Supporting People is a new unified policy and funding framework for delivering accommodation based support to vulnerable people. It is aimed at consolidating the ad-hoc funding streams that have been in operation.

What we are doing

6.24 Implementation of the Supporting People policy and funding framework will be achieved by April 2003, ensuring the

continued funding of all existing supported housing services during a period of transitional protection and review.

Promoting Equality and Supporting Disadvantaged People

6.25 As one of the Assembly's three key themes, equality of opportunity has special significance in terms of accessibility to housing. Through tackling the difficulties faced by specific disadvantaged groups the Assembly hopes to deal with the evident instances of inequality in housing.

Where we are today

6.26 The National Assembly is committed to working to improve the performance of all social housing providers in responding to the housing needs of all disadvantaged people, and to ensuring the empowerment of tenants and residents.

What we are doing

6.27 The Assembly will work with HOMES (Housing Organisations Mobility and Exchange Services) to overcome the barriers for people with a disability who wish to move home. Participation in a DLTR led project group on HOMES will further assist measures to improve the situation. The Assembly is undertaking consultation about the information and advice services available for people with a disability, and how access to housing services can be improved. Proposals for a pilot project are under consideration.

6.28 The Assembly is encouraging local authorities to adopt information systems that enable the identification of accessible

and adapted properties, and to match them with the needs and choices of disabled people.

Black, Minority Ethnic housing needs

6.29 In April 2001 the National Assembly published and consulted on its BME Housing Strategy. The overall response was welcoming of the positive approach being taken by the Assembly to addressing the housing needs of BME communities. This will be carried forward in the forthcoming National BME Housing Action Plan. 2001 also saw the establishment of the BME Housing Project to explore the feasibility of establishing a black-led housing organisation for Wales.

6.30 By June 2002 we aim to publish a national Housing Action Plan. This will set out the actions that the Assembly, social landlords and other organisations need to take in terms of:

- ◆ Developing and disseminating guidance and good practice;
- ◆ Identifying BME housing needs and demands;
- ◆ Accounting for BME needs in the development of housing;
- ◆ Improving service delivery for BME tenants;
- ◆ Tackling racial harrassment;
- ◆ More fully involving BME people in tenant participation initiatives; and
- ◆ Developing a multi-agency approach to BME housing.

The Plan will contain clear target outcomes and performance indicators to help measure the impact of the Plan on Wales BME communities.

Public Transport

- 6.31 Public and community transport needs to be improved to enhance everyone's accessibility to essential services and facilities, and in urban areas we have an added objective of helping people to make more of their journeys by public transport, rather than private car. It is also likely that a significant proportion of those not in work would have better opportunities to take up further education, training or employment if they had better access to an improved public transport service.
- 6.32 Public transport in rural areas is perceived to be limited, and tends to result in those without access to a car being more isolated, socially excluded and more limited in their work, health, education and social opportunities.

Where we are today

- 6.33 The Transport Framework for Wales was published in November 2001 and reiterated the importance of improving accessibility and mobility for everyone, particularly those without access to a car. In Wales, around 30% of households do not own a car.
- 6.34 In its report reviewing public transport in Wales, the Assembly's Environment, Planning and Transport Committee made several recommendations. These included that a quality kite mark be developed for bus services, initially, and extended subsequently to other modes; that free concessionary travel by pensioners and disabled people should be extended to community transport, and taxis on a limited basis; that an overarching all-Wales passenger group be established to cover all public transport modes; that community transport be developed as part of the

mainstream provision; and that long-distance coach services within Wales be improved.

What we are doing

6.35 The Assembly Government is:

- ◆ Actively considering how to take forward these recommendations. Already, sub-groups of the Welsh Transport Forum have been established to advise on the future of community transport and long-distance bus and coach services in Wales.
- ◆ Bringing together the former Bus Subsidy and Welsh Rural (community) Transport Grant (WRTG) schemes, the Local Transport Services Grant scheme in 2002-03 will allocate £7.520m to local authorities to enable them to subsidise socially-necessary bus services, and to support community transport projects.
- ◆ Continuing to support community transport projects approved under the former WRTG.
- ◆ Supporting the traveline multi-modal public transport information system which provides telephone access to route and timetable information which is available on 0870 608 2 608. Internet access and fares information are to follow.
- ◆ Providing more than £300,000 over three years to enable the Community Transport Association to develop and expand its advice network throughout Wales. Around £40,000 over three years is funding the post of an officer of the National Federation of Bus Users in Wales, to ensure passengers' voices are heard.

- ◆ Enabling local authorities to offer free bus passes and discounts of at least 50% on bus fares for pensioners and disabled people from April 2001. From April 2002, local authorities will be required to guarantee free travel on local bus services by pensioners and disabled people (plus, where necessary, escorts accompanying disabled pass holders who need extra help).

Safe Routes to School Initiative

6.36 Under the Safe Routes to School Initiative, in addition to projects demonstrating active co-operation between schools, parents, teachers and local authorities to determine the approach to reduce car journeys to schools, the initiative should also result in safer communities, especially those in deprived areas. It is especially important that Safe Routes to School projects should contribute alongside the Road Safety Grant and local authorities' own resources in developing safer communities.

6.37 The initiative is particularly important to combat social exclusion as well as tackling congestion and promoting healthier lifestyles.

Where we are today

6.38 The Safe Routes to School initiative was introduced in 1999-2000. As well as tackling the congestion caused by the school run, the safe routes initiative is important for the promotion of healthier lifestyles for children and for helping those families who do not have ready access to private car. By showing children from an early age that alternatives to the car such as walking and cycling are attractive and fun, they can be

encouraged to develop healthy, independent travel habits for the future. To date a total of £7.6 million has been allocated directly to local authorities across Wales.

What we are doing

6.39 In 1999-2000 £800k was allocated to 14 projects covering approximately 47 schools. In 2000-2001 £1.4million was allocated, also to 14 projects covering approximately 48 schools. In 2001-02 £2.7 million was allocated to 19 projects covering approximately 84 schools. An additional £2.7million has recently been allocated to the initiative to support a further 22 projects covering approximately 80 schools across Wales.

Road Safety

6.40 The Assembly has adopted the specific UK target of 40% reduction in total numbers and a 50% reduction in the number of children killed and seriously injured by the year 2010. Our road safety consultation document 'Safe Roads, Safe Communities' has been out to public consultation. We have received nearly 100 responses, which are being analysed; the aim is to prepare a Road Safety Strategy for Wales by Spring 2002.

Where we are today

6.41 A special road safety grant has been made available to local authorities since 2000-01 to provide support for the delivery of local safety strategies with special focus on the safety needs of vulnerable road users. The following funding has been allocated - £3.662 million in 2000-01; £3.038 million in 2001-02; £5.078 million for 2002-03.

What we are doing

6.42 The Assembly has recently agreed that each local authority will receive funding to recruit and retain a new Child Pedestrian Training Co-ordinator. It will be the job of the co-ordinators to train and support parent volunteers who will take young schoolchildren out on the streets to teach them key road safety skills. In the case of this road safety training initiative there will not be an extra burden on already hard pressed teachers because the children will get their training at the road side rather than in the classroom. This will complement the work already being undertaken on Safe Routes to School and road safety in general.

Post Offices

6.43 Renewing and reviving deprived communities is at the heart of the Assembly Government's social inclusion agenda and the important role played by Post Offices is fully recognised.

6.44 Post Offices can often sustain communities which have access to few other shops, acting as an anchor for the last shops in these areas as well as providing a service in their own right. For many people, especially older people, the closure or decline of their local Post Office would have a negative impact on their quality of life. As well as the more clear roles of providing services and anchoring shops that Post Offices play, they also

have a role as providers of advice and help, or simply somewhere people can meet.

- 6.45 The Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit report *Counter Revolution – Modernising the Post Office Network* (June 2000) clearly illustrated the important role that Post Offices play in some areas, particularly in deprived areas. The Government has recognised this and has stated that it will implement measures to assist Post Offices in their social role.

Where we are today

- 6.46 There has been a steady decline in the number of Post Offices over the last few years. In Wales there were around 1445 Post Offices in July 2000 dropping to around 1340 in January 2001. The Post Office network is still the largest retail network in Europe and it has not seen rationalisation over the last 20 years to the same extent as similar businesses such as banks and building societies. The steady decline has been less marked in urban areas than in rural areas.

What we are doing

- 6.47 The Assembly is working closely with the Department of Trade and Industry, the Government Department responsible for Post Office policy. The measures in place designed to support the UK network are:

- ♦ **A £2 million fund** established to support one-off set-up costs of community Post Offices where the sub-postmaster is leaving. There is also provision for transitional support for rural offices from 2003/04, to support Offices with high social value;

- ◆ **Universal Banking Services**, due to come on stream in 2003. There are two elements. First, the banks will make their basic bank accounts accessible at Post Offices. Account holders will be able to withdraw their benefits in cash at Post Offices. Second, for people who are unable or unwilling to open even a basic bank account, there will be an account, available only through Post Offices, to allow benefits claimants to access their benefits in cash at Post Offices using a Post Office based card instead of an order book. The intention is to provide a stepping stone to banks' basic accounts and to financial inclusion.

6.48 In addition the Assembly Government will be examining proposals to establish an *Urban Deprived Fund in Wales* to support those offices situated in our most disadvantaged urban areas.

Retail Outlets

6.49 In the First Partnership Agreement, "Putting Wales First", the Assembly Executive expressed its intention to take measures to protect rural retail outlets from closure. It was agreed that the problem needed to be scoped and a range of possible solutions identified.

Where we are today

6.50 The Wales Co-operative Centre was commissioned jointly by the National Assembly and WDA to undertake a two-stage study to

map the problem and identify measures to address the issue of retaining the retail outlets.

What we are doing

6.51 The final report has now been received and it's findings and recommendations are being considered.

Crime Reduction

6.52 The Crime Reduction Unit within the Assembly, funded by the Home Office and led by a Crime Reduction Director for Wales, is supporting the 22 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships across Wales which are based on unitary authority areas and led by local authority Chief Executives and Chief Officers of police working in partnership with others. The Assembly is committed to supporting these local partnerships and to creating safe environments which are free of crime. The Unit manages Home Office and Assembly crime reduction funding streams which have amounted to over £20 million for the period 1999-2002.

Where we are today

6.53 The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships develop and implement cross-cutting crime and disorder strategies which involve all agencies and communities. The Partnerships are presently preparing revised strategies which should be in place by April 2002.

6.54 The Partnerships are also running Home Office and Assembly funded crime reduction projects many of which focus on areas of greatest social deprivation. These include protecting homes against burglary, action against bogus callers; CCTV schemes, Neighbourhood Wardens and increased security for small retailers in deprived areas. Substantial funding is also going into 'Communities Against Drugs' projects across Wales which are designed to disrupt drug markets and drug related crime. The Partnerships are encouraged to establish a close synergy between their work and other community strategies.

What we are doing

6.55 The Crime Reduction Unit is:

- ◆ Funding capacity building through the Home Office Partnership Development Fund of £1.225 million in 2001-02. Grants are made for development and training within the partnerships. Help with the cost of the crime and disorder audits and all-Wales training events and conferences has also been provided.
- ◆ Supporting the Partnerships in tackling drug related crime and in disrupting drug markets under the **Communities Against Drugs** initiative. In 2001-02 £2.78 million has been shared between the Welsh partnerships according to population and levels of crime. Packages of interventions were developed by the partnerships working closely with their local Drugs and Alcohol Teams. It is anticipated that this funding will continue at this level, at minimum, for the next 2 years.

6.56 A number of Home Office and Assembly initiatives are

supported. These are:

- ◆ **Targeted Policing Projects** which target crime hotspots - £1.2 million. Three projects are running: targeting alcohol related street crime in Cardiff; tackling crime and disorder associated with children in care in Rhondda Cynon Taff and increased security on an industrial estate in Wrexham.
- ◆ **Reducing Burglary Initiative** - £105,000. Projects to target harden homes in St Mellons, Cardiff; Caerau, Bridgend and across North Wales have been completed.
- ◆ **Crime reduction interventions in secondary schools** - £1 million. On-going projects comprising a range of interventions in 9 schools in Cardiff, Swansea, Rhymney Valley and Llanelli which recognise that truancy and school exclusion can be linked to criminality.
- ◆ **Neighbourhood Wardens** - £287,000. Five projects to provide new Neighbourhood Warden schemes in Adamsdown, Cardiff; Caerphilly and Caernarfon and to provide further wardens for Merthyr Tydfil and Swansea.
- ◆ **CCTV** - £9 million. Projects throughout Wales providing CCTV cover for town centres, housing estates and car parks.
- ◆ **Domestic Violence against Women** - £766,000. Eight projects in Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, North Wales, Pembrokeshire and Powys (2) tackling domestic violence against women and rape by a known perpetrator.

- ♦ **Support for small retailers in deprived communities** - £190,000. Projects to enable small retailers in Communities First areas to make their premises more secure by installing such items as shutters, alarms and CCTV.
- ♦ **Partnership Development Fund** - £1.255 million. As outlined above.
- ♦ **Reassurance** - £92,000. Three projects in Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea and Newport to reduce people's fear of crime.
- ♦ **Safer Homes This Winter** - £2 million 2001-02. Wales-wide funding for projects to target harden dwellings against burglary and to take action against bogus callers.
- ♦ **CCTV in Communities First Areas** - £1.455 million 2001-02. Projects to provide CCTV cover for housing estates in 13 Communities First areas across Wales.
- ♦ **"Secured by Design"** - In conjunction with the police, Secured by Design provides best practice in crime prevention in all new housing developments.

Access to National Museums and Galleries and Libraries

6.57 The National Museums and Galleries of Wales has 8 sites which display Wales' cultural, historical, artistic and industrial history. They include the Welsh Slate Museum in Llanberis, Big Pit Mining Museum in Blaenavon, the Museum of the Welsh Woollen Industry at Dre-fach Felindre in Carmarthenshire, the Museum

of Welsh Life at St Fagans and the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff.

- 6.58 Libraries have a long tradition of serving the whole community. They provide a unique, free, local resource offering a non-threatening environment, which provides a sense of place and identity, access to training and confidence building for the whole community. Libraries act as key community-based, customer friendly institutions providing assisted and easy access to information to ensure that citizens can make informed decisions. They are also important in the continuing growth of a bilingual culture, having a crucial role in the distribution and dissemination of printed and electronic information in the Welsh language.

Where we are today

- 6.59 The Welsh Assembly Government provided additional funding to the National Museum to enable it to offer free admission for all visitors from 1 April 2001. The new policy has proved a remarkable success to date with visitor numbers increasing by almost 90 per cent over the previous year. Many thousands of families from all backgrounds and walks of life can now see, learn from and enjoy our national treasures without the barrier of admission charges.
- 6.60 A major step forward has been taken to enable people from all backgrounds, irrespective of income levels, to enjoy the treasures of our heritage, by abolishing entry charges to the sites of the National Museums and Galleries throughout Wales.
- 6.61 Service standards have been produced for public library authorities, in particular to assist disadvantaged groups and

lifelong learners. These also cover the provision of a minimum of children's books; maximum distance or travelling time from home to the nearest library; and conducting separate regular user satisfaction surveys for children.

What we are doing

6.62 The National Museum has been asked to draw up plans to display the national collections at local museums so that they can be enjoyed by local people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to see them.

6.63 Each local library authority will produce a library plan once every 3 years showing how they will meet the standards, followed up by annual progress reports.

6.64 The People's ICT Network in Public Libraries, by introducing free internet access in libraries throughout Wales, will ensure that nobody is excluded from obtaining ICT literacy and gaining access to networked content.

The Physical Environment

6.65 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving the physical and social environment of Wales in partnership with key agencies and organisations, including local authorities. It is particularly concerned to regenerate the more deprived areas of Wales and currently aims to do this through the Local Regeneration Fund and support to organisations such as the Groundwork Trust and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

Where we are today

6.66 Local Regeneration Fund (LRF) funds a wide variety of schemes that contribute to wider regeneration objectives. However, in all cases the promotion of social inclusion is at the heart of the assessment process. LRF will continue to target social inclusion particularly within our most deprived communities by allocating funding to projects which directly contribute to alleviating poverty and social disadvantage.

6.67 Whilst the Groundwork movement has historically been concerned with environmental improvement involving local communities, social inclusion has always been at the heart of its activities. The Groundwork Trusts in Wales are active in up to 70% of the 100 most deprived wards in Wales. The promotion of social inclusion remains a significant aim of national Groundwork initiatives such as the Greencare community environmental network as well as locally developed strategies and projects.

6.68 The Coalfield Regeneration Trust was established to promote the economic and social regeneration of areas affected by the decline of the coal mining industry following the publication of the Coalfield Task Force Report.

What we are doing

6.69 The Welsh Assembly Government provided £584,000 to support the core activities of the Groundwork movement in Wales during 2001-2002. Groundwork Wales, the umbrella organisation, is now a member of the Communities First Support Network funded by the Assembly. Consequently, Groundwork continues

to develop its commitment to socially excluded communities in Wales through a partnership approach.

6.70 The Welsh Assembly Government provided £1.48 m in 2001-2002 to support of the activities of the Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT) during the course of the year. The Trust administers a grant programme that targets the regeneration of deprived communities in former coalfield areas. It administers grants within specified priority areas which target projects that contribute to social inclusion. The following CRT priorities are specifically designed to promote social inclusion:

- (A) Resourced and Empowered Communities;
- (B) Enterprising Communities;
- (C) Lifelong Learning Communities;
- (D) Attractive Communities;
- (E) Working Communities. During the course of its three year programme in Wales the Trust has distributed approximately 95% of its grant allocation to these priority areas.

Access to the countryside

6.71 Implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 creates opportunities to improve access to the countryside for minority and socially disadvantaged groups.

Where we are today

6.72 The Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001 approved by the Assembly require local authorities and National park Authorities to encourage representatives of disadvantaged and minority groups to apply for membership of local access forums.

What we are doing

6.73 Regulations being drafted by the Assembly take into account, wherever possible, the needs of disadvantaged groups.

National Parks

6.74 As well as protecting and improving the landscape, National Park Authorities have a statutory duty to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Parks by the public. In doing so, they are also required to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities within the Park.

Where we are today

6.75 The Assembly has provided the National Parks with an additional £780,000 in direct grant for £2002-03, an increase of 10.75%, to enable them to pursue their statutory purposes.

What we are doing

6.76 The National Park Authorities have implemented various initiatives that impact on social inclusion. There are sustainable transport schemes, such as the Beacons Bus and Pembrokeshire Puffin Shuttle, which allow affordable and

convenient access to the Park without the need for a car, and initiatives such as a community composting scheme that involves the whole community, including school children, in recycling household waste.

Environment Wales

6.77 Environment Wales is an Assembly funded grant scheme, administered by the Prince's Trust – Cymru and delivered through a partnership of six voluntary sector environmental organisations. Within the overall aim of the scheme to achieve sustainable improvements to the local environment, there is a strong emphasis on community involvement and inclusion of all sections of society.

Where we are today

6.78 The Environment Wales scheme is currently worth £694,000 a year. The money funds a wide range of environmental projects across the whole of Wales, in both rural and urban settings. Projects range from recycling initiatives, including furniture recycling, through biodiversity and environmental education, to community gardens and environmental arts.

What we are doing

6.79 Environment Wales offers financial support to approximately 100 projects in 2002-03. The scheme also funds a network of development officers offering practical advice and assistance to these projects and to many others. A diverse range of projects are funded, many of which directly promote the Assembly's social inclusion aims, such as the Radnor Support project, which aims to establish meaningful employment, work

experience and training opportunities for local adults with learning difficulties. The Tree Nursery involves people in realistic community based settings in order to develop their horticultural and social skills.

Environment Development Fund

6.80 In order to develop practical methods of implementing the theory of sustainable development, and translating the idea into tangible models, the Assembly has introduced the Environment Development Fund in the three National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Wales. Priority is given to projects demonstrating community involvement or that are community led.

Where we are today

6.81 The Environment Development Fund provides £1 million per year for three years, to support projects in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The scheme's objectives are to explore ways of pursuing the principles of sustainability and of breaking down barriers that can act as obstacles to sustainability; to develop models for the sustainable management of the countryside that could be applied more widely in Wales; and to generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability.

What we are doing

6.82 The Fund has been operating since June 2000, and interest in the scheme is gaining momentum. By April 2002, the scheme will have supported over 120 projects, which would not have taken place without the help of the Fund. It has contributed to social inclusion by funding such things as projects providing alternatives to the car for reaching and exploring National Parks, projects improving access to facilities, work to recruit and train new volunteers, particularly young people, and the refurbishment of community facilities in an environmentally sensitive way. The scheme will be reviewed in the Spring of 2002, to allow decisions on the future operation of the scheme to be taken.

Rural Wales

6.83 Rural issues have been receiving increased attention in recent years. The rural economy can no longer be seen as simply agricultural, particularly after the problems of Foot and Mouth Disease. The main issues the Welsh Assembly Government needs to address, in addition to the future of agriculture, are: jobs and business development; planning; housing; and the Welsh language. Emerging issues include rural community regeneration and the spatial planning framework as it affects rural areas.

6.84 The conservation of local wildlife in both urban and rural areas is an important part of improving the environment in which we live. We are committed to enhancing biodiversity through the development of local biodiversity action plans, which bring together organisations and communities in partnership to address local conservation priorities. £200,000 is being provided

through the Countryside Council for Wales in 2002-03 to support these local partnerships.

What we are doing

6.85 The Rural Recovery Plan provided £65m, of which £60m was new money, to help the rural economy recover from the effects of foot and mouth disease. Allocations in 2001-02 include:

- ◆ £0.5m for supporting market/small towns and villages;
- ◆ £0.5m for supporting rural businesses and £0.5m for capital grants for Farm Businesses;
- ◆ £1.5m for business planning advice for farm businesses;
- ◆ £2m for the Rural Hardship Fund to 'match' fund voluntary bodies dealing with rural hardship;
- ◆ £1.5m reprioritised funds within ELWa for training and skills support.

6.86 Work is ongoing within Government across the UK to assess the full economic impact of the foot and mouth epidemic.

Where we are today

6.87 The Welsh Assembly Government has taken the lead in addressing rural issues through:

- the Agri-Food Strategy;
- the Rural Development Plan;

- rural social and economic measures within the European Structural Funds;
- LEADER+;
- Farming for the Future;
- A Winning Wales;
- A study into the needs of the rural retail sector from the Wales Co-operative Centre.

6.88 The Minister for Rural Affairs has revived the Wales Rural Partnership, which he now chairs, as a vehicle for developing rural policy. He has taken proposals through the Partnership such as the proposal for the Age Balanced Communities Study, which are now being implemented.

6.89 In addition, the rural agenda is being developed through formal and informal networking, both internally and external to the Assembly, to identify key issues, priorities and solutions. A successful rural policy seminar was held in September bringing together practitioners and academic specialists to brainstorm the issues.

6.90 As part of the recently published Rural Development Plan for Wales, grant schemes were introduced for East Wales to address the needs of farmers identified in the following areas:

- ◆ Preserving and improving the natural environment, hygiene conditions and animal welfare standards; and
- ◆ Promoting the diversification of farm activities.

What we are doing

- 6.91 Specific support will be provided to young farmers and encouragement given to women in agriculture. It is hoped that these schemes, which will also operate in West Wales and the Valleys using funding secured through the Objective 1 Programme, will have a positive effect on the lifestyle of farmers in Wales and boost not only their incomes but also those of their families and their communities.
- 6.92 In East Wales, support will be provided to community partnerships for the cost-effective enhancement of basic services for the rural economy. Measures will support community led projects that widen access to mainstream services for the rural economy and population or marginalised communities. Particular attention will be paid to how services can address aspects of social exclusion within remoter rural areas or provide services that encourage entrepreneurship
- 6.93 Farming Connect was launched in September 2001 and covers the whole of rural Wales utilising either Rural Development Plan funds or the Objective 1 Programme. The aim of the initiative is to improve and/or adapt farming businesses, not just immediately but for the long term. The scheme will specifically target young farmers and will encourage women in agriculture to consider establishing new enterprises. Farming Connect will provide farmers in Wales with a method of accessing a complete range of measures and support to assist their businesses such as farm business development plans; specialist advisory services; training opportunities; demonstration farm network; conservation and pollution control advice and access to capital grants.

Rural housing

Where we are today

6.94 Many housing issues facing our rural communities mirror those of our valleys and urban communities, though there are markedly higher levels of unfitness and disrepair. It is recognised that in-migration and the purchase of second homes have influenced communities in some rural and coastal tourist areas. Right to Buy sales have also reduced the numbers of social housing stock.

What we are doing

6.95 In January 2001, the Welsh Assembly Government introduced greater flexibility within the Homebuy scheme in rural areas, through a new 50 per cent equity threshold. Additional resources of £1.5 million were provided in 2001-02, which enabled 150 Homebuy purchases in rural areas.

6.96 The introduction of a more generous Social Housing Grant in August 2001 and greater flexibility in the need to comply with the new "Design Quality Standards" has improved access to home ownership and rented accommodation in rural areas.

Targets

Housing

- ◆ Bring all social housing up to a good standard by 2012.
- ◆ Care and Repair agencies - estimated projection of people helped in 2002-03 - 16,000.
- ◆ Rapid Response Adaptations Programme 2002-03:

Estimated Grant Spend	Notional Average per Agency	Estimated No. of Jobs overall
£500,000	£15,000	2500

- ◆ Lift 38,000 of the poorest Welsh households out of fuel poverty by 2003.
- ◆ To build on the work of the Homelessness Commission by developing a national homelessness strategy early in 2002.
- ◆ Further targets for tackling homelessness are under review in the light of the recommendations of the Homelessness Commission.

The Physical Environment

- ◆ Reduce the number of days falling below air quality standards from 29 days to 22 days by 2003-04.

Public Transport

- ◆ Increase by 2003-04 subsidised socially necessary bus services in Wales by 60%.
- ◆ Introduce free bus travel for pensioners in April 2002 and extend the concession to men between 60 and 65 in April 2003.

Within five years

- ◆ An improved sustainable public transport system on all modes; safer access; more frequent and better quality services; better links and interchanges; better information; greater accessibility; and improved journey times.

By 2010

- ◆ About a quarter of commuting to work to take place by means other than by car.

Safe Routes to School

2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4
14 projects supported	19 projects supported	22 projects supported	Subject to local authority bids in 2002-03

Road Safety

	2002/2	2002/3	2003/4
No. of child pedestrian training co-ordinators	15	22	22

By 2002-2003

- ◆ Issue Road Safety strategy, continuing Safe Routes to Schools initiative, special Road Safety Grant.

Within 5 years

- ◆ Consideration will be given to linking the Safe Routes to School Initiative, funding of trunk road safety and special grants funding of local authority road safety more closely together. We will look to support innovative proposals leading to safer communities including 20-mph limits outside schools.

By 2010

- ◆ 40% reduction in number of killed and seriously injured casualties.
- ◆ 50% reduction in the number of children killed and seriously injured
- ◆ 10% reduction in the number of slight casualties.

Post Offices

- ◆ Contribute to the maintenance of a viable Post Office network in rural and urban Wales.

- ◆ Ensure Consignia and the Department of Trade and Industry take into account the implications for Wales when developing proposals in relation to Post Offices.

Crime Reduction

2001-02

- ◆ 63 CCTV schemes to be completed throughout Wales including in Communities First areas.
- ◆ 73 small retailers in deprived areas to benefit from improved security measures.

Ongoing

- ◆ CCTV, Neighbourhood Warden and Reassurance projects will work towards reducing people's fear of crime.
- ◆ The Crime Reduction Unit will continue to support stronger and more effective Crime and Disorder Partnerships and strategies.
- ◆ Improve mainstreaming of crime reduction as a major cross-cutting policy issue within the Assembly and in Partnership organisations.

Access to National Museums, Galleries and Libraries

- ◆ Two pilot schemes in Mid and North Wales in 2002-03.
- ◆ Expectation that each public library standard will be achieved by all library authorities in Wales by 2005.
- ◆ All library authorities in Wales to produce Library Plans from April 2002.
- ◆ All public libraries in Wales to provide free Internet access by the end of 2002.

7. MAKING YOUR VOICE COUNT

Consultation and participation

7.1 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to consulting widely and openly on proposed policies and legislation. This commitment rests on a firm legislative foundation within the Government of Wales Act 1998 and its obligations under Standing Orders. Many of the functions transferred to the Assembly under that Act also carry a statutory requirement of consultation.

Where we are today

7.2 The Assembly believes it is vital to work in partnership and has established partnership councils for Local Government, Business and the Voluntary Sector. The Assembly is also committed to widening participation in government, through capacity building and measures such as Llais Ifanc.

What we are doing

7.3 The Assembly is:

- ◆ Developing, in conjunction with external organisations, a suite of IT tools that will provide for a more responsive and consistent consultation procedure.
- ◆ Commissioning research into partnership working, reviewing existing mechanisms and providing tools for more effective arrangements.

- ◆ Funding representative groups, such as Disability Wales, the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association, the Wales Women's National Coalition and the Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual Forum Cymru, and holding events aimed at widening participation in local government.

Involving Young People and Children

7.4 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to involving children and young people in policy development and in ensuring its programmes address the needs of children and young people.

Where we are today

7.5 The Assembly consulted on its proposals for the participation of children and young people in decisions that affect them in the autumn of 2001. These contained three key elements:

- ◆ At national level, Llais Ifanc/Young Voice as a representative body for the whole of Wales;
- ◆ Children and young people's forums in the 22 local authorities in Wales;
- ◆ Proposals for school councils in every primary and secondary school in Wales.

7.6 It is proposed that Llais Ifanc/Young Voice will be made up of representatives from children and young people's forums and national and local peer-led groups. It will be a self-governing body answerable to children and young people, who would

constitute the majority of its board of management. An important challenge will be to ensure that participation includes the involvement of marginalised children and young people. The new body will meet annually with the Assembly and its members will work regularly with officials, enabling children and young people to participate in policy setting and decision-making at the all-Wales level.

7.7 Through its members, Llais Ifanc will ensure effective links between the national and local level participation organisations and with bodies outside Wales at the UK level, in Europe and beyond. Llais Ifanc's council of young people will provide representatives from Wales to the UK Youth Parliament. The first general meeting of Llais Ifanc is likely to take place in the spring.

7.8 The Assembly wishes to see a children and young people's forum in each local authority area become the main vehicle through which children and young people are heard in decision-making at local level. The Assembly has provided funding for £80,000 in a full year to each local authority in Wales to support its work in developing planning partnerships and its forums for children and young people.

7.9 The Assembly has also recently consulted over its wish to establish school councils in every primary and secondary school in Wales, and the findings are being considered at present.

Community Planning

7.10 Community planning is a way of bringing organisations and communities together to agree what they would like their area to be like in several years' time, what has to be done to achieve that and how they are going to work together to make it happen. It covers each local authority area and is facilitated by the local authority.

7.11 This process will lead to a community strategy and an action plan – but it is not the piece of paper that is important. What matters is the process of getting different organisations (public, private and voluntary) to work together within a set of agreed overall priorities. It has to involve local communities as well as communities of interest in agreeing what the priorities and key actions should be.

Where we are today

7.12 This community planning process is getting underway in every local authority area in Wales. Local authorities will be identifying existing partners and working out ways of engaging with other organisations and obtaining the views of different parts of the community. The voluntary sector will have a key role to play and county voluntary councils will work with local authorities in the development of community planning. Each local authority area will need a community strategy partnership to oversee the process and make sure the “vision” is translated into action.

What we are doing

7.13 The Assembly:

- ◆ Has produced guidance on preparing community strategies. It is directed towards local authorities because they have the legal duty to take community planning forward, but it is relevant to all who may be involved.
- ◆ Has given guidance to Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies too, underlining the importance of their being involved in community planning.
- ◆ Has established a working group which includes representatives of the voluntary sector, business and local government is overseeing progress on community planning and advising on support needs.
- ◆ Is holding seminars in every part of Wales to explain why we believe community planning is important and to exchange good practice, for example in setting up partnerships and encouraging the public to take part in the process.
- ◆ Will set up a dedicated website to pool information and ideas and provide contact points.
- ◆ Will make training available for those who want to play a part in communicating the views of individual communities and people whose views might not otherwise be heard, will also be available to support community planning.

Voluntary Sector Scheme and Volunteering

7.14 The Voluntary Sector Scheme was adopted by the Assembly on 5th July 2000. It builds on the success of the Compact and

paves the way for the Assembly's long-term working relationship with the voluntary sector here in Wales. The Scheme is unique to Wales – no other part of the UK has an obligation to prepare such a document – it is understood that it is the only document of its type in Europe.

Where we are today

7.15 Under the Scheme the Assembly has established the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. This puts the voluntary sector on to an equal footing with local government and business in their partnership arrangements with the Assembly. The Partnership Council is chaired by the Assembly's Minister for Health and Social Services, Jane Hutt, AM. It meets quarterly and comprises 11 Assembly Members (reflecting party balance); representatives of 21 identified categories in the voluntary sector and representatives of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

7.16 The Scheme also requires twice yearly meetings between Welsh Assembly Government Ministers and representatives of the relevant voluntary sector networks to look at ways in which the Assembly can address its concerns. At least one of these meetings is tied in with the Assembly's Budget Planning Round and focuses on funding issues. The meetings also provide an opportunity for voluntary sector organisations to outline how they can support the Assembly in meeting the objectives set out in Better Wales and its successor.

What we are doing

7.17 The Assembly has instigated a number of initiatives including:

- ♦ **The Volunteering In Wales Fund** is the promotion of volunteering in Wales, particularly involving unemployed people, to undertake volunteering activities in the fields of health and social welfare. Some £615,000 has been made available for this purpose.

- ♦ **Wales: The Active Community** aims to increase the involvement of the public in community life through promoting a greater degree of voluntary activity within the community and supports projects which address at least one of the four main themes of improving the infrastructure; capacity building; media; and promotion and research. Some £1.652 million has been made available for this purpose.

- ♦ **Exploring involvement in volunteering in Wales** – two research projects are being undertaken which will establish a *baseline* of information relating to voluntary activity and volunteering. The studies will report on volunteering within the adult population and the population of Wales under 18 years of age. The research will identify various aspects including motivation, barriers/reasons which prevent individuals becoming involved and the types of volunteering activities being undertaken. This baseline information will be used both as a measure of activity and provide a focus for future strategy implementation activity.

- ♦ **Millennium Volunteers** – now in its fourth year. Some £250,000 available and the first years are in the process of being evaluated on a Wales and UK basis which will inform the future of this programme.

- ♦ **A Study of Partnerships between the Public, Private and Voluntary Sectors in Wales** – this research will advise the future strategy of partnership working.

Using the Welsh Language

7.18 The Welsh Language Act 1993 provides the statutory basis for the equal treatment of Welsh and English in public life. Public bodies are obliged to produce Welsh Language Schemes setting out how they will, as far as is reasonably practicable and appropriate in the circumstances, treat the Welsh and English language on the basis of equality in providing services to the public in Wales. The purpose of these schemes is to enable the public to use either Welsh or English when receiving public services.

Where we are today

7.19 The National Assembly has set out, in Plan for Wales 2001, its aim of stabilising the proportion of Welsh speakers in the population and sustaining the growth amongst young people.

7.20 The Welsh Language Board has approved a total of 172 public sector language schemes. It also grant aids Mentrau Iaith, which are community based organisations with a remit to promote the language locally and to maximise opportunities for Welsh speakers to use the language, both socially and in community life. By working with the public, private and voluntary sectors in their respective areas, Mentrau Iaith seek to raise the profile of the Welsh language within the broad community and thus increase the opportunities for its use.

What we are doing

7.21 The Assembly Government has a rolling programme of subordinate legislation which aims to extend the number of organisations which can be designated as public bodies for the purposes of the Welsh Language Act.

7.22 Grant aid provided to the Welsh Language Board by the Assembly Government enables the Board to work with the voluntary and private sectors to encourage the maximum use of Welsh by them in their provision of services to the public. The Assembly has also increased funding to develop the work of the Mentrau Iaith throughout Wales.

Targets

Consultation and Participation

- Put in place new IT based consultation procedures – Autumn 2002.
- Publish study on partnership working and best practice recommendations – January 2003.
- Report on the effectiveness of arrangements to engage minority communities.
- Hold at least one event to promote wider interest in standing as local councillors among under-represented groups (Autumn 2002).

Involving Children and Young People

- Promote young people's positive role in society through opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship, ensuring that every child has the benefit of a full prospectus of out of school activities (combining volunteering, enterprise, cultural, musical, sporting and outdoor activities) by 2010.
- The first general meeting of Llais Ifanc will take place in the summer of 2002.

Community Planning

- Ensure effective community planning at the local authority level.
- Establish Community Strategies Website by Autumn 2002.

- Hold 5 Community Planning seminars by the Autumn 2002.

Voluntary Sector

- Final report on "Exploring involvement in volunteering in Wales" by March 2002
- Final report on "A Study of partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors" by January 2003

The Welsh Language

- Increase the number of Welsh speakers, especially young people.
- All counties in Wales should have access to the services of Menterau Iaith by the end of 2003.
- A further 17 bodies should be included in Assembly Subordinate Legislation by the end of 2002.