

# Annex G

## Communities of Interest

### Young People

As the Assembly recognised, we need to start young on active citizenship. Future outcomes can be strongly influenced by a focus on children and young people. The capacity of tomorrow's communities will be affected by the social inclusion of today's young people. Local partnerships should aim to engage young people in discussion, planning and the implementation of outcomes that they have identified as solutions to their problems. For our part, we will want to involve young people in the work of Connexions and Children's Fund Partnerships throughout the region. Over time, we will want the participation and achievement of young people at risk (including young people with learning disabilities) to converge with their peers. We will also want to ensure that the life chances of disabled children are maximized, through educational opportunities and health and social care and that they, and their parents, receive comprehensive and culturally appropriate information about services on a multi-agency basis, from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

### Older People

Growing older, of course, does not necessarily lead to exclusion. Increasingly, older people will have spending power. And they have skills and experience which their communities can use. Through the Community Champions' Fund, we will be supporting people over 50 to build on these skills and encourage them to help others to become more involved in the regeneration

of their communities. However, they can be denied choice and lose their independence where appropriate services are lacking.

Local partners need to be aware that when elderly people are from an ethnic minority, are disabled or living in an area of deprivation they are more likely to experience exclusion. As a minimum, local authorities and partnerships need to ensure that the elderly have access to the services they need. In many cases, there will be a particular focus on ensuring that older people have safe, warm, housing (whether or not they are living in supported housing or in their own homes) and affordable, accessible, available and acceptable transport. We would also look to local partnerships to know how many older carers there are in the local area, in order to plan services in partnership with them.

### Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

As a region, we have not engaged sufficiently with black and minority ethnic communities. Although much good work has been done, we have failed to get enough regeneration projects led by people from ethnic minorities; failed to get enough people putting themselves forward in potential positions of influence and leadership; failed to provide good enough services to support the development and growth of BME businesses; and failed to provide people from minorities with the services they need. From a regional perspective, we will want to ensure, therefore, that funding in neighbourhood renewal and other areas fairly reflects the interests and needs of black and minority ethnic groups. We will also work to establish a strong regional voluntary/community sector network, to help inform our policies and practice, working with black and minority ethnic groups directly and through regional networks. We will also want to continue to concentrate on finding people from ethnic minority backgrounds to act as Community Champions.

## Disabled People

We have recognised in earlier sections of this statement the needs of disabled people, for example on accessing transport. This section has identified particular issues around disabled younger and older people. More generally, we will encourage local authorities to enable people with learning difficulties to have as much choice and control as possible over their lives. This can be achieved by, among other means, advocacy and advice and direct payments. It can also be achieved through better service provision, such as increasing the range and choice of housing so that disabled people can live as independently as possible, and increasing access to education and lifelong learning in order to promote greater independence and employment opportunities. We will also want to ensure that social and health care staff working with people with learning disabilities are appropriately skilled, trained and qualified. Local Learning Disability Partnership Boards will need to be established to take responsibility for the delivery of services to improve the support given to people with learning disabilities.

These issues are faced by people in urban and rural areas alike. But we are very much aware that because issues of rural exclusion can often be dispersed, and as a consequence hidden, we will be encouraging and supporting the early formation of a Local Strategic Partnership in a predominantly rural area (East Hampshire) to help us identify the issues facing rural areas and promote lessons and good practice learned, particularly in service delivery, around the region.

Wherever people are, in town or country, in a deprived ward or an otherwise affluent area, excluded people are vulnerable to isolation and stigmatisation. We want to end this – for its own sake. But it is also the case that the South East cannot endlessly import its labour needs. Unless we have a trained workforce, that is able to access work easily (by IT or transport), economic growth will

be held back and the environment harmed. Social, physical and economic development needs to take place in parallel. In some cases, the starting point for individuals may be basic literacy and numeracy skills rather than customer focus and computer programming.

But the goals are the same for everyone:

- the enhancement of individuals through the development of their skills;
- local pride in their communities and the achievements of people living in them.