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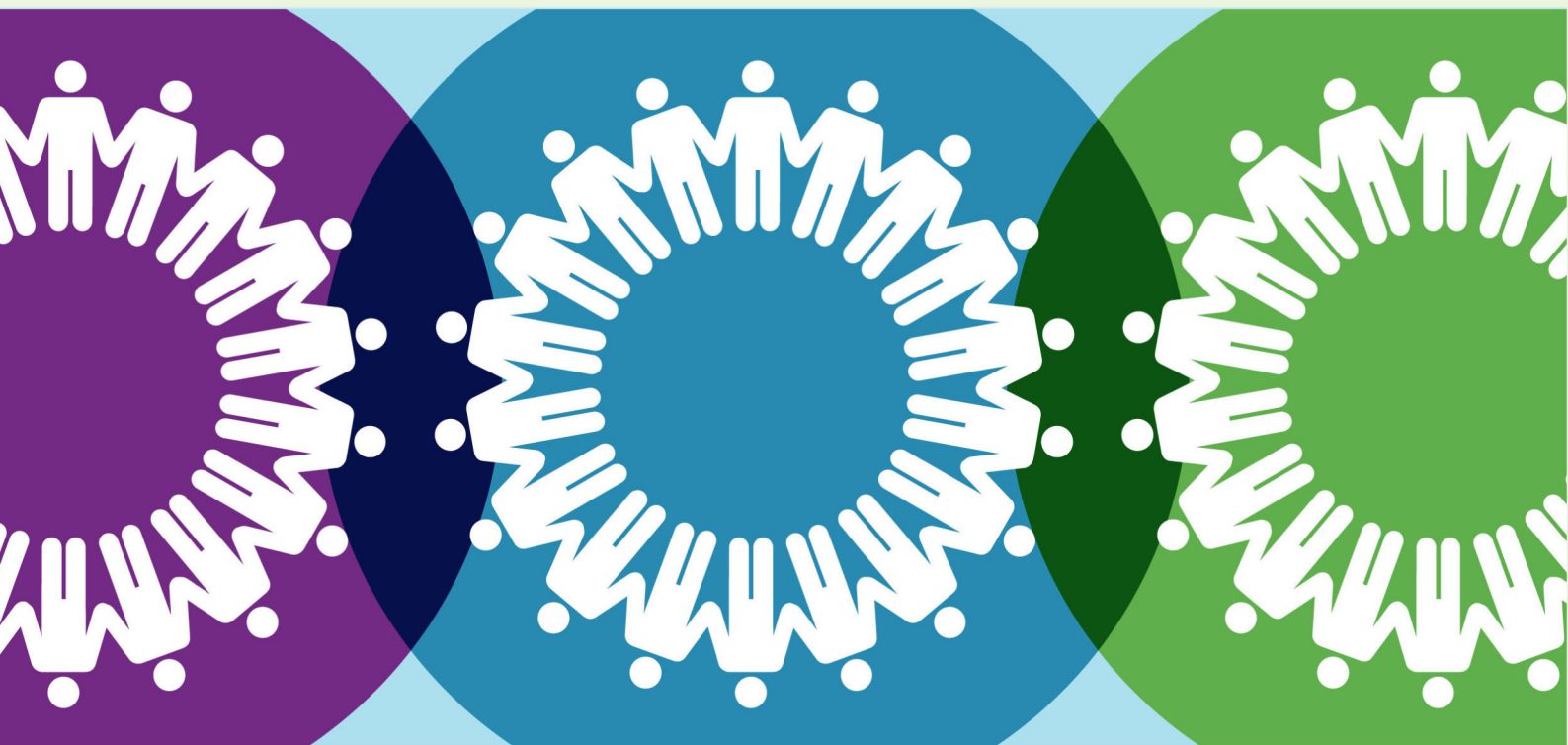
Mainstreaming Community Cohesion

Guidance for Local Authorities in Wales

October 2012

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Contents

Introduction

This guidance is designed to help local authorities in Wales incorporate a cohesion perspective into policy-making and service delivery. It aims to harness the wider work of local authorities and other organisations to build cohesion. The key message is that cohesion affects all communities and to be sustained it needs to be mainstreamed.

Getting on Together, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, recognises that community cohesion is a cross-cutting agenda relevant to all policy areas. There will always be a need to target resources and activities at particular cohesion challenges, but the agenda will only prove sustainable if it is embedded into all local authority policies, programmes and actions.

Why is this guidance needed?

Local authorities in Wales have made real progress promoting community cohesion since the launch of the national strategy in 2009. All have identified a lead officer for community cohesion and in some this has developed into a dedicated role. Cohesion strategies have been developed and some local authorities have made a corporate commitment to improving cohesion. However, evidence from the national evaluation of *Getting on Together* suggests that some local authorities and staff working in certain policy areas remain uncertain about how or why they should contribute. This guidance aims to help overcome these doubts and uncertainties and provide some ideas and examples about how work across the local authority can help promote community cohesion.

What evidence does the guidance draw on?

This guidance draws heavily on lessons learnt during the national evaluation of *Getting on Together*, the community cohesion strategy for Wales. This 18 month evaluation involved three rounds of interviews with Welsh Government staff and local authority officers, including community cohesion leads in all 22 local authorities in Wales, that explored their experiences of delivering *Getting on Together*. It also evaluated outputs and outcomes flowing from the implementation of the strategy across Wales.

This guide also draws on advice and guidance on mainstreaming identified through a review of the evidence base in the UK. This includes guidance for local authorities in England on how to mainstream community cohesion, produced by the Department

for Communities and Local Government in 2009. Finally, a small number of interviews were conducted with local authorities in England identified through the review of evidence as being involved in innovative or interesting work around the mainstreaming of cohesion.

Who should use this guidance?

This guidance is designed to be used by local authorities in Wales, although the ideas and suggestions it contains are likely to be of interest and use to other organisations in Wales and beyond.

In particular, the guidance is designed to support the work of the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators who are responsible for supporting local authorities to mainstream community cohesion across policy and service delivery areas and link and embed community cohesion into Single Delivery Plans and local strategies.

It provides local authority staff with advice about how to take account of community cohesion concerns within their work. It will also be useful to councillors and senior officers who want to know more about how work across the local authority can contribute to building cohesive communities.

How to use this guidance

This is not a step-by-step guide. It provides a framework to guide efforts to mainstream community cohesion and spotlights key success factors. Local authorities are encouraged to use the guide in different ways. Some will already be mainstreaming community cohesion and might only dip into the guide for new ideas or to refresh practice. Others with less experience of mainstreaming might want to work through all sections of the guide.

The guide is organised into three distinct parts:

Part 1 outlines why it is important to mainstream community cohesion and the benefits that can flow from doing so. It introduces and defines mainstreaming and community cohesion in Wales and highlights the close ties between the community cohesion agenda and the responsibilities of local authorities under the Equality Duty.

Part 2 provides a guide to mainstreaming community cohesion across the local authority. It is organised into four sections:

- committed and motivated leadership

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- embedding cohesion

- understanding cohesion

- conducting a mainstreaming review

Part 3 outlines the relationship between community cohesion and different policy areas and outlines how and why people working in different areas of service delivery should engage with the cohesion agenda. The policy areas covered include: equalities; Prevent and far-right extremism; schools, colleges and young people's services; housing; planning, regeneration and renewal; health and social care; and crime and anti-social behaviour.

Discussion relating to each policy area is organised into five distinct sections covering the following issues:

- why the policy area is important to cohesion

- why cohesion is important to the policy area

- shared strategic priorities

- examples of how policy and practice can help tackle tensions

- examples of how policy and practice can help build cohesion

Part 1: Why Mainstream Community Cohesion?

This part of the guidance provides an introduction to the idea of mainstreaming.

It provides a definition of mainstreaming and a definition of community cohesion in Wales.

It outlines why it is important to mainstream community cohesion and the benefits that can flow from doing so.

It highlights the overlaps between the ambitions of the community cohesion agenda and the responsibilities of local authorities under the Equality Duty.

It highlights the benefits that will flow from aligning the two agendas.

Discussion is organised into four sections:

- **what is community cohesion?**
- **what is mainstreaming?**
- **why is mainstreaming important?**
- **what are the links between community cohesion and the Equality Duty?**

What is community cohesion?

According to *Getting on Together*, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, community cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together.

This vision of a cohesive society is based on three foundations:

- people from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities;
- people knowing their rights and responsibilities;
- people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

and on three ways of living together:

- a shared future vision and sense of belonging;
- a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity;
- strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

This apparently simple definition engages with a complex array of issues, including citizenship rights and responsibilities, perceptions of belonging, fairness and trust, relationships between different groups and the challenges posed by material inequalities. It also overlaps with other key concepts that have influenced policy makers in recent years, including social capital and social exclusion[1].

To help clarify the situation, *Getting on Together* identifies five key principles that should underpin efforts to promote cohesion in Wales:

- *the sense of 'shared futures'* - an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them, and prioritising a shared future over divided legacies

- *an emphasis on a new model of responsibilities and rights* - that makes clear both a sense of citizenship at national and local level, and the obligations that go along with membership of a community, both for individuals or groups

- *a new emphasis on civility and mutual respect* - that recognises that alongside the need to strengthen the social bonds within groups, the pace of change across the country reconfigures local communities rapidly - and that means a mutual hospitality within and between groups

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[1] If you want to explore these links further see Ratcliffe, P. and Newman, I (eds.) (2011) *Promoting Social Cohesion: Implications for Policy and Evaluation*. Bristol: Policy Press; Flint, J. and Robinson, D. (eds.) (2008) *Community Cohesion in Crisis? New Dimensions of Diversity and Difference.* Bristol: Policy Press.

- *a commitment to equality* - that sits alongside the need to make social justice visible, to prioritise transparency and fairness, and build trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups

- *putting a commitment citizens at the heart of service provision* - involving a commitment from public bodies and others working across organisational boundaries

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Getting on Together
A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales

Getting on Together was launched in November 2009. The aim of the strategy is to strengthen community cohesion in Wales. To this end it provides local authorities, voluntary and community organisations and other partner agencies with a strategic framework for developing a local approach to community cohesion that identifies and meets local priorities.

The strategy spotlights five key themes as central to efforts to build community cohesion in Wales:

- *housing and cohesion* - recognises the links that can exist between housing availability, well-being and opportunity and social and community relations;

- *learning and cohesion* - recognises the potential of education (in schools, colleges and universities) to serve as a means of promoting integration and mutual respect;

- *communication and community cohesion* - emphasises the importance of being able to use a shared language to communicate in helping to promote engagement with and participation in society and shared understandings and respect;

- *promoting equality, social inclusion and community cohesion* - recognises the links between low cohesion and experiences of poverty and deprivation;

- *preventing violent extremism and strengthening cohesion* - focuses on opposing messages of division and hate from wherever those views might originate.

The Programme for Government 2011 renewed the Welsh Government's commitment to *Getting on Together*. Delivery of the strategy was recognised as a key action required to create a fair society free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and with cohesive and inclusive communities.

What is mainstreaming?

Mainstreaming involves infusing the principles and priorities of the community cohesion agenda into the collective consciousness of a local authority so that responsibility for building cohesion is embedded within the everyday duties and functions of all departments and partners. The aim is to build consideration of cohesion issues into strategies and plans, policy and practice from the outset in a bid to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs for community cohesion of strategy, policy and practice.

Mainstreaming community cohesion involves mobilising general policies and measures for the purpose of promoting cohesion by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of different groups and communities of place, interest and identity.

Practically, it is about asking the right questions so that you can see how best to actively promote, and avoid undercutting, community cohesion through your plans and activities. It is also a way of improving the effectiveness of mainstream policies by making visible their cohesion consequences. Central is the assessment of the implications for cohesion of any planned action.

Why is mainstreaming important?

It is important that local authorities and their partners take every opportunity to promote cohesion. There is clear evidence of close links between low cohesion and problems such as crime and anti-social behaviour, low educational attainment and poor health outcomes. Problems with cohesion can undermine efforts to tackle these issues. Improvements in cohesion can promote improvements in these and other policy areas (see Part 3 of the guide for examples).

There is no dedicated department to deliver community cohesion and most local authorities only have a very small budget to support cohesion projects. This limits how much can be done to build cohesion. By mainstreaming cohesion into the work of the local authority and its partners, much more can be done to build cohesion. Mainstreaming cohesion can also help improve the effectiveness of policies and practice across all local authority programmes and actions.

Community cohesion and the Equality Duty

Under the Equality Duty, all public sector bodies are required to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. Other duties include a requirement to assess the impact of

policies on local people and make sure they to do not discriminate and take every opportunity to promote equality and good relations. Local authorities are also required to develop and publish equality objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan. Under the Equality Act 2010, equality objectives must be set, and subsequently reviewed and revised at least every four years. The equality objectives must consider the three aims of the general Equality Duty.

The Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act.

The Act includes a new **public sector equality duty** (the 'general duty'), replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality.

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. This aim is to achieve better outcomes for all.

Public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act

2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics covered by the new general duty are: Age; Gender reassignment; Sex; Disability; Pregnancy and maternity; Sexual orientation; Race (including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality); and Religion or belief (including lack of belief).

For further information see the Equality and Human Rights Commission report *Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans: A guide for listed public authorities in Wales*.
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/wales/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-in-wales/

Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission advises that these aims should be mainstreamed through inclusion in key strategies and organisational documents. Local authorities are also required to set out the steps it has taken or intends to take to meet the objectives and how long it expects to take to meet each objective. They must also make appropriate arrangements to monitor progress towards meeting its objectives and to monitor the effectiveness of its approach.

SIGNPOST: For more information about the responsibilities of public bodies in Wales in relation to the Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans see http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Wales/PSED_Wales_docs/2._psed_wales_equality_objectives.pdf.

The Equality Duty clearly overlaps with the aims and ambitions of the community cohesion agenda. The Equality Duty focuses on issues of discrimination and inequality, which are well known to undercut community cohesion. Community cohesion emphasises the importance of positive attitudes and good relations between groups, which are critical to the pursuit of tolerance and equality. It therefore makes sense to align efforts to mainstream community cohesion with delivery of the Equality Duty.

Various practical benefits are likely to flow from this relationship:

- *it recognises the overlaps between the agendas* – there are clear overlaps between the three aims of the Equality Duty (tackle discrimination, promote equality, foster positive relations) and the priorities of the community cohesion agenda in Wales

- *it makes practical sense* - it avoids duplication of effort and minimises the expectations placed on strategy and service delivery teams

- *it will help overcome scepticism* – doubts persist in some local authorities in Wales about the relevance of the community cohesion agenda. This scepticism could undermine commitment to the idea of mainstreaming cohesion. Highlighting that the Equality Duty places a legal responsibility on public bodies to address cohesion concerns (for example, the requirement to foster good relations) will help overcome doubts and promote willingness to engage

- *it will strengthen the equalities assessment* - concerns about the impacts of policies and practice on the individual will be supplemented with analysis of the impact on the wellbeing of particular groups and communities. Attention to community cohesion will also prompt consideration of key factors underpinning equality and good relations and therefore extend and strengthen

analysis. Examples include: people from different backgrounds having similar opportunities; knowing and being able to exercise their rights; trusting in local institutions to act fairly; and having a shared vision and sense of belonging

Opportunities to realise these benefits are identified throughout the guidance.

Part 2: Mainstreaming Cohesion Across Your Local Authority

This part of the guidance outlines how to go about mainstreaming community cohesion across your local authority so that it becomes part of the everyday duties and functions of all departments.

The approach is sensitive to local and national priorities and to policies and practices in Wales.

It builds on lessons learnt by local authorities across Wales and beyond.

The key elements and broad principles of an approach are outlined. The specifics of how you apply the approach will depend upon existing policy and practice in your area.

This is not a step-by-step guide. It is a framework, which spotlights key factors critical to success in mainstreaming cohesion.

The four key elements of the framework are:

- leadership on cohesion

- embedding cohesion

- understanding cohesion

- mainstreaming review

Leadership on Cohesion

Comitted and motivated leadership is critical to the mainstreaming of community cohesion. Without effective leadership it will not be possible to mainstream cohesion across your local authority.
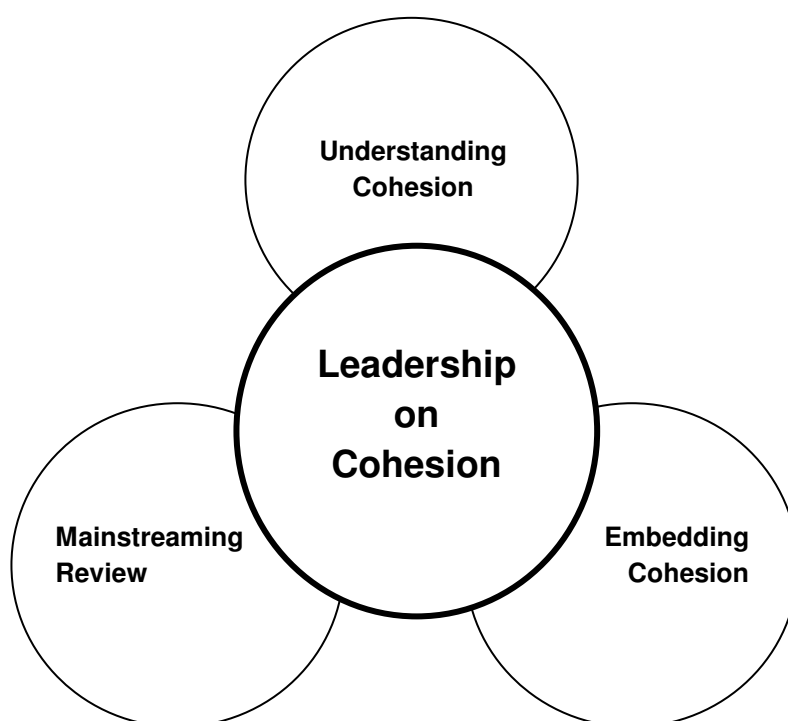
Councillor and Chief Executive Commitment

Visible and vocal leadership will be required to mainstream what is still a relatively new policy agenda in Wales. Strong leadership will also be required to ensure the local community cohesion strategy or action plan is carried through into practice. Councillor and Chief Executive involvement is therefore vital if progress is to be made mainstreaming cohesion. Experience from across Wales indicates that without the clear and explicit support of councillors and senior officers it can be very difficult for community cohesion officers to promote mainstreaming across the local authority.

Members have a very important role to play in championing community cohesion and demonstrating that this is part of how the council goes about its day to day business and not just another initiative. Allocating responsibility for championing community cohesion to a Cabinet Member is a good idea. This might be the Cabinet member responsible for the equalities or community safety portfolios. However, all Cabinet Members should retain a responsibility for improving community cohesion within their portfolio.

Councillors may need persuading about the relevance of the community cohesion agenda to their area. To this end, Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators and colleagues should brief members directly and point to positive outcomes that can and have flown from community cohesion activities in the local area.

Ideally, leadership on community cohesion should come from councillors and the executive team, supported by senior officers and a community cohesion lead officer or team. However, experience suggests that a clear action plan and commitment from service delivery managers can lessen the problems caused by a lack of commitment from political leaders.

Barriers to Mainstreaming
Evidence from the Evaluation of *Getting on Together*

Key barriers to mainstreaming identified by local authority community cohesion leads in Wales include:

- the failure of senior officers to buy-in to the agenda
- the limited power and influence of lead officers for community cohesion
- the failure to appoint a dedicated community cohesion officer to drive forward the agenda
- limited understanding among colleagues about the community cohesion agenda in Wales
- scepticism about whether the agenda is relevant outside major towns and cities
- the opinion that mainstreaming cohesion is not a priority and will be a drain on scarce resources
- limited awareness among service delivery teams about how they can help build cohesion

Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator

A dedicated community cohesion lead is critical to efforts to mainstream cohesion. This officer should play a key role educating, guiding, cajoling and challenging service delivery teams and managers about their attention to community cohesion in service planning and delivery.

The aim of mainstreaming is to make community cohesion the responsibility of everyone. In response, it might be argued that no single person or department in a local authority should have responsibility for community cohesion. A designated lead or distinct team might also serve to shift responsibility away from service delivery managers, resulting in a lack of commitment to promote community cohesion. In this context, community cohesion might come to be regarded as an add-on, rather than a sustained aspect of service delivery. However, evidence from Wales and England suggests that the most effective approach to embedding community cohesion is through a dedicated community cohesion lead or team. The evaluation of *Getting on Together* found that local authorities in Wales with a dedicated community cohesion lead had made far more progress embedding community cohesion into the work of the local authority and its partners.

From April 2012, **Regional Cohesion Coordinators** have played this role in Wales. One or two Coordinators are working across each of the new regional clusters of local authorities. Their responsibilities include:

- supporting local authorities to mainstream community cohesion across policy and service delivery areas
- linking and embedding community cohesion into Single Delivery Plans and local Strategies
- working with local authorities to identify methods of data collection and intelligence to support the development of community mapping and tension monitoring
- facilitating the provision of specific training programmes for community cohesion
- linking with agencies and partnerships to strategically drive work on hate crime and far right extremism, including mapping existing work throughout the region
- making links with local or Regional Prevent Boards and disseminating relevant information
- supporting and linking with the delivery of Specific Equality Duties for public sector organisations related to community cohesion

The Regional Cohesion Coordinator should also work to ensure that communities and community-led organisations are consulted and involved in local policy and

delivery. This approach will serve to promote community empowerment, a goal in itself, as well as improving the relevance and appropriateness of service delivery.

Local Authority Community Cohesion Champion

The notable achievements of community cohesion officers in local authorities in Wales have been secured by responding sensitively to local issues through a combination of strategic and front-line work. The most effective officers have possessed a good understanding of local communities and good working relations with colleagues across the local authority and in partner agencies. It will be difficult for Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators to replicate this approach. They are working across local authority boundaries and in some cases covering large geographical areas. They are less engaged on the front-line and more reliant on others to deliver the agenda. Regional Coordinators will therefore need the support and assistance of colleagues within local authorities to build community cohesion.

A senior officer should take responsibility for championing the mainstreaming agenda within the local authority. This might be the Chief Executive or another senior council officer who would be responsible for promoting mainstreaming among senior managers and strategic leads across all departments. This champion should also lead the review of success mainstreaming community cohesion across the local authority.

The **community cohesion champion** should be a senior officer in a relevant department who is committed to the cause and is not afraid to challenge anyone on cohesion issues. Through words and deeds, this officer will make it clear to staff that community cohesion is being taken seriously and that everyone needs to engage with the agenda to be successful in their job and to make a positive difference to people's lives. This is the approach adopted in the local authorities in Wales and England that have made the most significant progress mainstreaming community cohesion in recent years.

Experience suggests the champion needs to be an individual who is diplomatic and has the status and ability to influence colleagues. Their key role will be to guide and encourage attention to community cohesion, rather than service delivery, which will remain the responsibility of existing service departments. They should also have the power to challenge a department or partner agency if they are not adhering to expectations. Ideally, they will be able to draw on established links with senior officers in different departments.

The cohesion champion might be assisted by **a network of cohesion champions** in each service area, an approach that has proved productive in some local authorities in England. These officers could operate as a visible group within the local authority charged with challenging, educating and assisting on cohesion issues and providing specialist advice and guidance where necessary. Their role would focus on support,

encouragement and guidance. This approach would reflect the role that equalities leads in different service areas play in many local authorities.

The champion will work closely with the Regional Cohesion Coordinator, assisting them with efforts to persuade colleagues that attention to community cohesion should be integral to service planning and provision. This should help to overcome the problems that some community cohesion leads have experienced in the past getting more senior colleagues to pay attention to community cohesion.

Other responsibilities might include helping the Regional Coordinator to embed cohesion principles into the performance management of services and ensuring population measures or indicators relevant to cohesion are included in the results based accounting systems that many local authorities in Wales are developing.

Embedding Cohesion

Mainstreaming cohesion demands a corporate approach that engages all staff. It also demands that the agenda is embedded into management structures, is referenced in corporate documents and strategies and reflected in targets and indicators.

Staff

Mainstreaming cohesion demands a corporate approach that engages all staff. Everyone involved in strategy, policy and service delivery will need to have a clear understanding of the local community cohesion priorities and be aware of how work in their field can make a positive contribution to improving cohesion.

Senior managers need to understand the community cohesion agenda, specific local priorities and the potential for their department to make a positive contribution. The experiences of community cohesion leads in some local authorities suggests that this can prove a challenge. Try and make the agenda relevant to them. Provide practical examples of how the local vision for community cohesion can be translated into practice within their particular service area. This will help officers understand the importance of community cohesion and the benefits of buying into the agenda (see section 3 for examples). Measuring progress against outcomes and communicating the effectiveness, relevance and ongoing importance of efforts to build community cohesion to staff across the local authority and to partner organisations can also help maintain buy-in to the community cohesion agenda.

Getting your message across might involve briefing sessions or staff training, as well as communication through day to day encounters. Experience suggests that optional training events are not always well attended. One approach is for all staff to receive an introduction to community cohesion as part of their diversity and equality training. Managers should also be provided with advice and guidance on an ongoing basis and be challenged wherever progress is limited. This is a specific responsibility of the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator, working in partnership with the local authority cohesion champion.

Staff and elected members who are up to date about the local area, how it is changing, emerging cohesion challenges and how the council is responding will be

well placed to pass this information on to local people. Councillors and front line officers regularly engage with the local population and are well placed to convey a clear message and challenge myths and prejudices. Voluntary and community organisations, including Communities First partnerships, are also well placed to play this role. It is therefore important to ensure that they have good accurate information and advice so that they can speak with confidence on controversial issues.

Communications to staff and elected members about community cohesion should be both proactive (providing information or guidance) and reactive (in response to misinformation and rumour). General principles for communicating with staff and councillors relevant in either case include:

- be clear, unambiguous and well-reasoned
- be informed and knowledgeable
- be in line with relevant legislation and national and local priorities
- relate messages to local policy and practice
- be accessible and offer practical support
- encourage feedback

Do not assume familiarity with the community cohesion agenda. Evidence from the evaluation of *Getting on Together* suggests that staff in some local authorities are still unfamiliar with the concept of 'community cohesion' and possess only limited understanding about its relevance to their area. In some places this has represented a major barrier to efforts to mainstream cohesion.

SIGNPOST: Lancashire County Council has produced a guide to support service managers mainstream community cohesion into their services. See: www.**lancashire**.gov.uk/corporate/web/viewdoc.asp?id=33419

Management Structures

Mainstreaming community cohesion demands that the agenda is embedded into management structures. It should be referenced in corporate documents and strategies and reflected in targets and indicators. Embedding community cohesion priorities into all strategies will make clear and reinforce the overlaps and synergies between community cohesion and other policy agendas (see Part 3). It will help ensure that promoting cohesion is truly a shared responsibility, is a regular item on meeting agendas and informs target setting, indicators and action planning checklists.

If the local vision and priorities for community cohesion are to be at the heart of corporate planning you will need to integrate them into the **Community Strategy** or the **Single Integrated Plan** that local authorities are now producing and which

combines all statutory plans. These integrated strategies bring together all those who can contribute to the future of communities within a local authority area to agree on the key priorities for the area and pursue them in partnership. They provide the over-arching strategy for each local authority area and their priorities are reflected in other (statutory and non-statutory) strategies or action plans.

This approach would be consistent with guidance from Equality and Human Rights Commission that efforts to promote equality, tackle discrimination and nurture positive relations should be mainstreamed through inclusion in key strategies and organisational documents. It would serve to mainstream cohesion into the long term strategic vision for improving economic, social and environmental well-being in the local area and ensure that cohesion priorities are reflected in other (statutory and non-statutory) strategies.

Understanding Cohesion

Efforts to mainstream cohesion should be informed by a good understanding of the cohesion issues in the local area, clear agreement regarding priorities for action and a statement of actions and targets, in the form of a strategy or action plan.
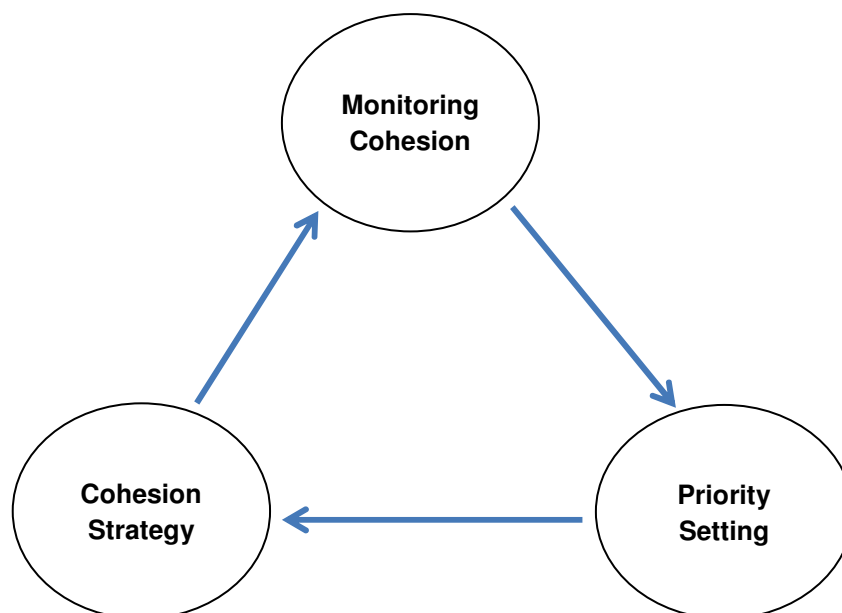
Building a Picture of Community Cohesion

Embedding community cohesion considerations into the policies and everyday practice of a local authority demands a good understanding of equality and cohesion issues within the local area. This includes understanding the communities living in the local area and the factors known to inform community cohesion. It is also important to find out about the views and perceptions of local people in a bid to identify any pressing issues that could result in local tensions. This understanding will allow you to:

- identify local cohesion priorities

- determine the focus and emphasis of your community cohesion strategy or action plan
- monitor progress in promoting cohesion
- review and revise your strategy or action plan

Recognising the importance of a good understanding of community cohesion to the development of a strategic approach to promoting community cohesion, the Welsh Government has generated guidance for local authorities. The step-by-step guide makes the most of the knowledge and expertise of local authorities and builds on good practice from across the UK to provide an approach to understanding community dynamics, trends in cohesion and emerging tensions.

The approach is designed to be implemented by local authority officers and to demand minimal resources. It recognises that the local knowledge and information fed back from officers on the front-line is important. However, this kind of information often provides only a partial picture about what is actually going on and needs to be supplemented with more robust information, for example, from community statistics and consultation about the full range of issues with the potential to impact on cohesion.

SIGNPOST: for a practical guide and sourcebook of information and ideas for Welsh local authorities on community mapping, monitoring cohesion and tension monitoring see: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/111103mappingen.pdf

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Priority Setting

The mainstreaming effort should focus on clear and consistent community cohesion priorities. The evaluation of *Getting on Together* revealed three factors to be critical to success setting cohesion priorities:

1. Identifying priorities - successful community cohesion strategies and action plans are rooted in good local intelligence about the area and communities. This can come from statistics (such as census data) or information from partners (such as patterns of racist incidents and hate crimes). Engagement with local communities can also help to identify issues that should become priorities, as well as gather feedback on draft priorities to make sure they are the right ones. In addition, statutory duties should be reflected in community cohesion priorities, along with any improvement targets issued by the Welsh Government. Some local authorities in Wales are already very effective at mapping local issues and have a rich evidence base that you will be able to tap into.

It is also important to recognise the links between community cohesion priorities and other local authority priorities and targets. You should also pay due attention to the priorities of partner organisations, understand them and find ways of identifying priorities in common. This is particularly important for priorities relating to quality of life issues (such as reducing crime and anti-social behaviour), which cut across a range of organisations. Shared priorities have a greater chance of being achieved.

2.   *Prioritise priorities* - It might not be realistic or possible to address all priorities simultaneously. You should therefore rank priority areas into some kind of order. Be realistic and ask yourself if all the priorities can be achieved at the same time. If not, which are of particular importance and most pressing? Avoid having too many priorities and no clear idea of how they will all be delivered. Perhaps timetable priorities in stages by having short, medium and long term priorities and associated targets.

Remember to be specific - priorities are more than a vision, they provide a plan of action. This plan should identify key policy areas where action will be required, such as housing, education or health, as well as key delivery partners. The plan might also identify particular neighbourhoods where activities will need to be focused and a locally relevant approach devised that is sensitive to the particulars of the situation.

3.   *Maintain focus* - once priorities have been established, it is essential that the local authority throws its weight behind achieving these priorities. Corporate strategies should recognise cohesion priorities and associated targets. As discussed above, this will be helped by having a leading councillor and officer responsible for championing community cohesion. Successful delivery involves linking priorities to service planning and ultimately to individual staff development plans. Ensuring that the performance management scheme works to deliver priorities, and that it reports to key officers and councillors, are other success factors.

Keep everyone in the council and key partnerships aware of the priorities and progress on these. This might be done via a range of methods, such as staff briefings and newsletters, the intranet and email. Key messages need to be championed by the leadership team, with priorities stated and restated.

It is important to revisit and review priorities at regular intervals, assessing progress and making changes to them as appropriate. If aims have been achieved then it is important to let them make way for more pressing priorities. There is an important role for scrutiny to keep an overview of progress against priorities, and to investigate and identify any blockages that are preventing progress from being made. Priorities might need to be revised or refocused in response to an unforeseen crisis or new pressure.

Cohesion Strategy

A strategy or action plan articulates the cohesion challenges in your area and your agreed priorities for action. Evaluation evidence suggests that local authorities in Wales with a clear strategy or action plan have been more effective promoting cohesion.

An effective strategy summarises your intentions and aspirations and will help you get this message across to colleagues in the local authority and beyond. It provides a clear statement about how local issues are translated into local authority priorities. It will help service teams align delivery against priorities and allow performance to be evaluated. This is particularly important given that there is no dedicated cohesion delivery team and limited resources targeted at community cohesion.

Creating and promoting a community cohesion strategy should be a shared responsibility. It should be developed in consultation with strategic and service delivery departments across the local authority. Elected members and partners in the Local Service Board also need to own and champion the strategy.

The strategy should include an implementation plan, covering the following issues:

- a list of your actions and targets
- an outline of how each action and target relates back to your stated priorities
- individual responsibilities for actions and targets
- any resource allocation implications
- key milestones and a timeline for delivery
- procedures for reviewing progress and delivery

Many local authorities in Wales already have a community cohesion strategy or action plan. Progress with delivery should be reviewed and the strategy updated, where appropriate. Regional Community Cohesion Officers might also want to agree some overarching priorities and actions across the region. Local authorities without a community cohesion strategy or action plan will need to develop one.

Your community cohesion strategy should make explicit the links between its strategic objectives and operational priorities and the aims and ambitions of

other strategies. This will serve to highlight the relevance and importance of community cohesion to success in meeting objectives in other policy areas (see Section 3). In turn, the strategic priorities for community cohesion should be placed at the heart of corporate planning via their integration into the Community Strategy or the Single Integrated Plan (see discussion above under Management Structures).

Whatever approach you take, the cohesion strategy should be closely aligned with the **Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan** that all local authorities are now required to develop, publish and review every four years (see page 8). Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission advises that these aims are mainstreamed through inclusion in key strategies and organisational documents.

SIGNPOST: For information about the Welsh Government's Strategy Equality Plan and Objectives (2012-2016) see
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/publications/120405sepfinal.pdf

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Mainstreaming Review

The aim of a mainstreaming review is to ensure that your local authority is developing policies, strategies, action plans and practices that actively contribute to the promotion of community cohesion. It involves interrogating your policies and practices to assess and ensure due regard is given to the implications for community cohesion. It is an aspect of good practice largely missing from work on cohesion in Wales.

The principles of a mainstreaming review are consistent with the requirement under the Equality Duty that all public authorities in Wales assess the impact of their policies on local people and make sure they to do not discriminate and that they take every opportunity to promote equality and good relations. Recognising this fact, a logical option is to integrate the community cohesion mainstreaming review into the equalities assessment. This approach makes sense for a number of reasons:

- it recognises the clear overlaps between the three aims of the Equality Duty (tackle discrimination, promote equality, foster positive relations) and the priorities of the community cohesion agenda in Wales

- it avoids duplication of effort and minimises the expectations placed on strategy and service delivery teams

- highlighting that the Equality Duty places a legal responsibility on public bodies to consider cohesion will help overcome doubts that still persist in some local authorities in Wales about the relevance of the community cohesion agenda

- supplementing concerns about the impact of policies and practice on the individual with analysis of the impact on the wellbeing of particular groups and communities will serve to strengthen the equalities assessment. Attention to community cohesion will also prompt consideration of key factors underpinning equality and good relations and therefore extend and strengthen analysis. Examples include: people from different backgrounds having similar opportunities; knowing and being able to exercise their rights; trusting in local institutions to act fairly; and having a shared vision and sense of belonging

This last point is important. Community cohesion overlaps with the Equality Duty, but it is not only about equalities. There are some aspects of cohesion, such as promoting opportunities for meaningful interactions between individuals and groups, that are not explicitly covered by the Equality Duty. However, they are important to the Equality Duty because they are a means to an end, in that success promoting these aspects of cohesion will bolster efforts to deliver on equality objectives.

**Equality and Community Cohesion
Means and Markers**

Equality and community cohesion are mutually dependent and reinforcing objectives.

EQUALITY is a **means** to promoting community cohesion, in that success tackling discrimination, enabling equality and promoting positive relations is critical to community cohesion. Equality is also a **marker** of cohesion because success in relation to the three strands of the Equality Duty is indicative of success building community cohesion.

COMMUNITY COHESION is a **means** to promoting equality, in that success promoting opportunities for meaningful interactions between individuals and groups, nurturing a shared sense of belonging, promoting social and economic inclusion is critical to equality. Community cohesion is also a **marker** of equality because success in these activities is indicative of success promoting equality.

General Principles

Assessing impact on equality and cohesion should not be a one-off exercise. The general Equality Duty and the building of cohesion are ongoing challenges and policy contexts and circumstances in the local area can change over time. Equality and cohesion considerations should be taken into account both when decisions are made and **after** policies are in place. The findings should be given active consideration during policy development and decision making processes, otherwise there is no point in considering the impact of policies on equality and cohesion. Rather than a burden, this process should be beneficial to policy development and the delivery of services.

Assessing the impact on equality and cohesion is most effective when it is integrated into day-to-day policy making, business planning and other decision-making arrangements. It should not be an administrative task, but a core part of policy making, in the same way that resources and risks are considered.

Service heads might be made responsible for the review within their own service area. Designated equality and cohesion leads can provide useful expertise, but it is good practice for people across the organisation to take ownership of this work as an integral part of policy development. This could lead to the identification of service-level priorities. Staff will benefit from clear advice and information about the approach they should take when assessing impact on equality and cohesion in their day-to-day work.

Key Elements of an Impact Assessment

Guidance produced by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission on meeting the Equality Duty in policy and decision-making summarises a good method as:

- being integrated into mainstream policy development and decision-making
- having the backing and buy-in of senior staff (including sign-off)
- drawing on relevant equality and cohesion information and the results of any research and analysis activities
- ensuring timely and informed consideration of the aims of the general Equality Duty and keeps a record of this
- recording the reasons for any decision that a policy has no relevance to the aims of the general Equality Duty or cohesion
- requiring decision-makers to consider taking steps to mitigate adverse impacts on equalities and cohesion where they have been identified
- documenting how information about the actual impact of the policy will be used to review the policy in future, if necessary
- being regularly reviewed to ensure that it is effective and up-to-date

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Undertaking an Assessment

There is no prescribed or required approach to conducting an equalities or cohesion impact assessment. Reviewing available guidance, however, it is possible to identify key elements of a standard approach. These can be summarised as:

- screening to prioritise policies
- gathering relevant information
- reviewing information and making a judgement
- determining a course of action
- monitoring and review

a). Screening to Prioritise Policies - All policies will need to be screened to establish their relevance to equalities and community cohesion. The aim is to differentiate between policies that are particularly important to promoting equality and cohesion and those that are not highly relevant. The following questions will help you to determine relevance to equality and cohesion:

- does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community? The relevance of a policy to equality and cohesion depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them.
- is it likely to affect people from particular backgrounds, belonging to specific communities or living in certain locations?
- is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- will the policy have a major impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality and cohesion?
- does the policy relate to functions that research and analysis has identified as being important to people from particular backgrounds or belonging to specific communities?
- does the policy relate to issues around which there are known inequalities or tensions?
- does the policy relate to any equality objectives that have been set?

If there is a lack of knowledge, understanding and evidence on which to base the policy screening you should consider commissioning specific research, engaging with groups or representatives to get their views and opinions and securing data and insights from other departments or agencies. The fact that no information is available is not adequate justification for deciding that a policy is not relevant to equality or cohesion. Transparency should be promoted by recording the reasons for why a policy is deemed not relevant.

b). Gathering Relevant Information - Assessment of a policy will be based on a review of evidence and research. Gathering relevant information will involve discussions with the people likely to be involved in developing and implementing the policy. It should also include the collation of information about the situations, experiences and likely consequences of the policy for different people, groups and communities. Gaps in information might be filled, in the short term, through small studies or engagement work. In the longer run, equality and cohesion information should be collected as part of mainstream information collection and analysis.

When gathering evidence you should take into account:

- the need for evidence relating to different protected characteristics or groups under the Equality Duty and relating to different communities and places

- to what extent the policy or practice addresses the principles of fairness, dignity and respect
- the potential for policy and practice to be perceived as unfair or unequal and to undermine trust

When exploring these issues, it may be useful to look at:

- the views of key stakeholders related to your policy or practice area
- evidence relating to similar policies in other departments or authorities to help you identify relevant equality issues
- analysis of enquiries or complaints from the public to help you understand the needs or experiences of different groups of people
- recommendations from inspections or audits to help you identify any concerns
- information about the local community to help you establish the numbers and profile of people belonging to different groups and communities and with different protected characteristics
- recent research from national, regional and local sources that includes information on relevant equality and cohesion issues
- the results of engagement activities or surveys to help you understand variable needs or experiences
- information from the public, and voluntary organisations

c). Reviewing Information, Making a Judgement - The aim of reviewing evidence is to establish whether:

- the policy or practice could result in unlawful discrimination, directly or indirectly
- the policy or practice could result in a negative or less favourable outcome for some people
- the policy or practice could have a disproportionate negative impact on a particular community
- the policy or practice could undermine relations between different groups and raise tensions
- there are opportunities to promote equality and good relations between different groups that need to be recognised and maximised

The results of these considerations might include actions to minimise or remove differential negative impacts on particular groups or communities and actions to maximise the positive contribution of a policy to equality and cohesion.

A strong evidence base and transparency about how you reached your decision should help you to explain and justify your decisions internally and externally. Having

your decisions and rationale easily accessible should also help to counter any misconceptions.

d). Determining a Course of Action - As a result of your assessment, you may determine to take one of the following courses of action:

- **Continue the policy** – your assessment demonstrates that the policy shows no potential for discrimination or undermining community cohesion and you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people and communities. Document the reasons for this and the information you used to make this decision.
- **Justify and continue the policy** – there may be factors (such as other policy aims or financial constraints) which make it reasonable for you to decide to adopt the policy despite its adverse equality impact. This is an option where your policy does not unlawfully discriminate, or where the discrimination can be objectively justified. If your decision is challenged, you will need to be able to satisfy a court that you had due regard to the aims of the general Equality Duty when you reached your decision. It is therefore particularly important that you document your reasons and the information you used to reach them. You may find it helpful to seek legal advice before adopting this approach.
- **Change the policy** – This involves making changes to the policy to ensure it does not adversely affect certain groups of people, or miss opportunities to affect them positively and promote positive relations and cohesion. This can involve taking steps to mitigate adverse impacts, or to bolster or tailor positive ones. Document the reasons for this and the information you used to make this decision.
- **Stop the policy** – If a policy shows unlawful discrimination that cannot be changed or objectively justified or consequences that are undermining community cohesion and promoting tensions and conflict, consider stopping it. Document the reasons for this and the information you used to make this decision.

All decisions should be documented. Equality information is required to be published to demonstrate compliance with the general Equality Duty.

e). Monitor and Review - Assessing the impact on equality and cohesion is an ongoing process that does not end once a policy has been approved or implemented. The owner of the policy or practice should set out an appropriate review date and ensure that a review is undertaken. The aim is to identity any unforeseen adverse or negative impacts. Evidence of actual impacts might prompt a revision of policy if unexpected negative impacts occur.

SIGNPOST: For more information and ideas about conducting an equality and cohesion impact assessment or review see:

Equalities and Human Rights Commission on meeting the Equality Duty in policy and decision-making
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/PSED/ehrc_psed_policy_making_web.pdf

Welsh Government guidance on Inclusive Policy Making, which contains useful ideas and suggestions about how to embed the Equality Duty into policies and practice http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/100607ipmrev2en.pdf

The Department for Communities and Local Government community cohesion impact assessment tool
http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/communitycohesiontool.pdf

Part 3: Mainstreaming Cohesion into Different Service Areas

This part of the guide considers the overlaps and potential synergies between community cohesion and a number of other service areas.

It illustrates why policy and practice across a range of policy areas should pay attention to community cohesion.

It brings together lessons from the evidence base and reported by local authorities in Wales and beyond.

Attention focuses on seven key policy realms:

- equalities
- Prevent and far-right extremism
- schools, colleges and young people's services
- housing
- planning, regeneration and renewal
- health and social care
- crime and anti-social behaviour

Discussion within each policy area is organised into five sections:

- importance of the policy area to community cohesion
- importance of community cohesion to the policy area
- shared strategic priorities
- examples of how work in the policy area can help tackle tensions
- examples of how work in the policy area can promote cohesion

Key sources drawn on in this section of the guide include:

- DCLG (2009) **Guidance for Local Authorities on how to Mainstream Community Cohesion into Other Services**. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.
  http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1303527.pdf

- Demack, S., Platts Fowler, D., Robinson, D., Stevens, A. and Wilson, I. (2010) **Young people and Community Cohesion**: *Analysis from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England* (LSYPE). London, Department for Education.
  https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR033.pdf

- Laurence, J. and Heath, A. (2008) **Predictors of Community Cohesion**: *Multi-level Modelling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey*. London: Department of Communities and Local Government.
  http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/681539.pdf

- Lloyd, C. (2010) **2008-09 Citizenship Survey. Community Cohesion Topic Report**. London: London: Department of Communities and Local Government.
  http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1473353.pdf

- Ratcliffe. P., Newman, I. and Fuller, C. (2008) **Community Cohesion: A Literature and Data Review.** Report commissioned by the Audit Commission. Warwick Business School.
  http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/lgc/latest/community_cohesion_-_a_literature_and_data_review_.pdf

- Wedlock, E. (2006) **Crime and Cohesive Communities.** Home Office Online Report 19/06. http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/rdsolr1906.pdf

Equalities

Why Equalities is Important to Community Cohesion

- equality and freedom from discrimination are prerequisites for community cohesion; actual or perceived inequalities and unfairness undermine cohesion
- the Equality Duty places a legal requirement on local authorities to address matters critical to community cohesion (equality, discrimination and community relations)
- the Equality Duty requires local authorities to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by protected groups, taking steps to meet their needs and encouraging their participation in public life

Why Community Cohesion is Important to Equalities

- community cohesion is a means to promoting equality
- community cohesion is a marker of success in delivering equality
- community cohesion work is already focused on tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in a bid to foster good relations between groups

Equalities and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

The *Programme for Government* commits the Welsh Government to pursuing the creation of a fair society free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation with cohesive and inclusive communities. This commitment is line with the requirements of the Equality Duty (see information box on page 8).

The main strategies and policies promoting the equalities agenda in Wales and guiding the activities of local authorities recognise the close links between equality and community cohesion:

Working for Equality in Wales. Inclusive Policy Making Guidance – Second Edition (2010) Inclusive Policy Making represents the Welsh Government's approach to Equality Impact Assessment. Its purpose is to embed consideration of the equality duties in all policy. It prompts attention to the ways in which new, revised or existing policy could affect people in different ways on the grounds of age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, race, religion or belief or non-belief and sexual orientation. This involves making sure that policies do not discriminate and that they take every opportunity to promote equality and good relations, two cornerstones of the community cohesion agenda.

http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/100607ipmrev2en.pdf

The Refugee Inclusion Strategy (2008) and Action Plan update (2012) aim to support and enable refugees to rebuild their lives in Wales and make a full contribution to society. They speak directly to the community cohesion strategy in the commitment to promote positive relationships between refugee/asylum seeking populations and receiving communities.

http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/communitycohesion/publications/refugeeactionplan/?lang=en

Travelling to a Better Future: Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan (2011) outlines how the Welsh Government will deliver on its commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. It addresses ways and means in which Gypsy and Traveller communities can be enabled to access resources by ensuring services are flexible enough to respond to their needs. Speaking directly to the community cohesion agenda, a key objective of 'Travelling to a Better Future' is to improve mutual understanding and trust between Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities so there is an increase in the sense of belonging and acceptance within the Gypsy and Traveller community.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/110928gypsytralleren.pdf

The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2008-2013 speaks directly to the priorities of the community cohesion strategy through a focus on the 'mainstreaming' of ageing. This includes attention to the economic status, well-being, independence and engagement of older people. The aim is to ensure that older people participate as fully as they wish in their communities, giving them a stronger sense of engagement and influence, and ensuring older people feel part of social networks within communities. This includes engendering greater understanding and respect between the generations.
http://wales.gov.uk/strategy/strategies/2166490/olderpeopleII.pdf?lang=en

'The Third Dimension' - A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme (2008). This document presents the Welsh Government's strategy and programme of action that will underpin its support for, and working relationship with, the third sector. The Welsh Government aims to support the further growth and development of the third sector's capacity to strengthen communities of place and interest. There are clear synergies between this approach and the priorities of community cohesion strategy. As the action plan recognises, the varied activities of voluntary and community organisations can make an important contribution to a vibrant, cohesive and self-supporting society.
http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/voluntary/thethirddimension/plane?lang=en

Examples of How Equalities Work Can Help Tackle Tensions

Equalities work is critical to addressing problems with cohesion and tackling rising tensions.

Equality expertise can help support the effective management of divisive issues that hold the potential to raise tensions between groups and undermine cohesion. This includes consultation, myth-busting and mediation.

An effective communications strategy and the management of relationships with local media can help counter misinformation and rumour that fuel local tensions and foster hostility.

Equalities leads and liaison officers working with protected groups can have close working relations with groups, such as Gypsy and Traveller populations, that can be the target of prejudice and hostility. They can provide early warning of rising tensions, a nuanced understanding of the problems that a group is facing and advise on appropriate responses designed to challenge prejudice and persecution, protect the affected group and defuse the situation.

Examples of How Equalities Work Can Promote Cohesion

There is a close relationship between equalities work, delivery of the Equality Duty and efforts to build community cohesion. Equality is a means to promoting community cohesion.

Local authorities in Wales will be actively promoting community cohesion if they deliver on their responsibilities under the Equality Duty to promote equality, tackle discrimination and to promote good relations.

Efforts to understand the local community and map and monitor equalities will provide intelligence about factors undercutting community cohesion.

Equalities work involves maintaining the right focus in the right places and on the rights groups. This ensures that the resources of the local authority are targeted where they are most needed and to their full potential to improve the life chances of local citizens. This will also serve to generate a more prosperous and cohesive society.

Pursuing equality involves local authorities mainstreaming equality and fairness into everyday working practices. According to the Equality Improvement Framework for Wales (2011) this involves local authorities knowing their communities, shaping places so they provide a positive and inclusive environment, delivering customer focused services, employing a modern diverse workforce and

promoting community engagement. These activities will contribute to building a more prosperous, cohesive local community

The myth-busting work of local authorities can help counter the prejudice that fuels tensions and conflict between groups, particularly when used as part of a wider strategy to tackle prejudice and promote cohesion. The production of booklets, leaflets or visual media can help challenge myths perpetuated by negative media reporting and other sources.

Equalities work that promotes a more positive image and enhances the participation of protected groups in society and involvement in their communities promote greater social inclusion and cohesion.

SIGNPOST: The Equality Improvement Framework for Wales is produced by the Welsh Local Government Association and can be found at: http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-publications/the-equality-improvement-framework-for-wales-new-version/

Prevent and Far Right Extremism

Why Prevent is Important to Community Cohesion

- the Prevent Strategy for Wales explicitly recognises community cohesion as critical to efforts to prevent and effectively counter (Al-Qa'ida and far right) extremism
- the Prevent Strategy is conceived as being about ensuring community safety and community cohesion
- it seeks to challenge messages of division and hate, wherever such views may originate from, and to provide safe communities for the people of Wales to live in
- the Prevent Delivery Plan in Wales centres on educating and empowering communities through local initiatives aimed, in particular, at young people

Why Community Cohesion is Important to Prevent

- without community cohesion it is difficult to engage communities in efforts to challenge extremism
- more resilient communities are better able to challenge extremism and manage the tensions that extremist voices might seek to exploit
- tackling perceptions of unfairness, particularly in relation to access to scarce resources, can help increase resilience to extremist views
- Regional Cohesion Coordinators are responsible for developing links with agencies and partnerships to strategically drive forward work on hate crime and far right extremism, including mapping existing work throughout their region. They also are expected to make links with local or Regional Prevent Boards and disseminate relevant information

Prevent and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

The aims of working with communities to reduce barriers that stop people living and working together and preventing violent extremism are clearly consistent with the ambition of creating more inclusive and cohesive communities. The Prevent and community cohesion agendas are also both committed to ensuring that Wales is a safe place where people can talk about their differences without causing fear or hate.

The main strategies and policies guiding the work of local authorities and partners recognise these links between Prevent and community cohesion:

Prevent Strategy (2011). The Prevent agenda is a non-devolved element of the UK's counter terrorism policy. The new Prevent Strategy, published in June 2011, has three main objectives: to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it; to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate support; and to work with a wide range of sectors and institutions (including education, faith, health and criminal justice) where there are risks of radicalisation which need to be addressed.
http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary

Getting on Together **(2009)** outlines the Welsh Government's approach to Prevent. It recognises the overlaps between the aim of preventing extremism and promoting cohesion, arguing that without community cohesion it will not be possible to engage communities in efforts to prevent violent extremism. The Prevent agenda in Wales focuses on cross-community activities that strengthen community cohesion and develop capacity to resist support for violent extremism. This includes efforts to educate and empower communities through a wide range of initiatives including those specifically aimed at supporting young people.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/091130ccstratenv1.pdf

Examples of How Prevent Can Help Tackle Tensions

As well as supporting the capacity of communities to resist support for violent extremism, Prevent work also focuses on countering extremist messages and the tensions that they promote.

Cohesion programmes can play an important role countering extremism, but cannot on their own always prevent violent extremism. Complementary programmes aimed specifically at preventing violent extremism respond to a specific threat and are aimed at building the resilience of communities at a grass-roots level as well as challenging ideology and extremist versions of theology.

Local authorities and their partners on the local tension monitoring group can help safeguard and protect specific groups of individuals being targeted by violent extremists. Tension monitoring mechanisms can highlight emerging issues and partnership arrangements can support the development of a coordinated and strategic response sensitive to the particulars of the local situation.

Schools, colleges and universities should ensure that they understand the nature and extent of any problems within their institution and wider community, and challenge extreme ideologies, wherever such views originate from. They should try and identify learners who are exploring or receiving extremist views particularly those that advocate violent extremism or might be vulnerable to pressures linked to violent extremism. Schools and colleges should have an

updated ICT acceptable use policy which makes reference to learners not accessing inappropriate sites especially those which promote violent extremism (see the following section on Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services for more information and guidance).

Examples of How Prevent Can Promote Cohesion

There are many positive steps that Prevent work is taking to help build cohesion.

The Prevent Strategy encourages local authorities to implement an appropriate and proportionate preventing violent extremism action plan, which involves activities designed to promote cohesion. Examples might include: community tension assessment; media and communication work to address the myths and misconceptions that help build support for extremist organisations; strengthening faith institutions; outreach work to prevent young people from joining extremist organisations; community-led debates on Islam and Muslim politics within safe, accessible spaces; and developing leadership in the Muslim community. The range of activities will vary depending on scale of the challenges in the local area and work might be focussed on women, leaders, young people, or the community more generally.

Schools and colleges are in a good position to know what is going on in the communities they serve, through their relationships with learners, families, employers and community organisations. They can bring this expertise to bear through active engagement in local partnership working on the prevention of violent extremism. They can also use teaching, learning and the curriculum to build resilience to violent extremism and guide staff and students toward specialist advice and support about different types of extremism. For further information see the following section on schools and colleges.

Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services

Why Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services are Important to Community Cohesion

There is lots of evidence that the experiences of young people at school and college are important to community cohesion:

- whether or not a person enjoys school is an important predictor of low cohesion among young people
- the ethos, approach and quality of teaching can positively impact on cohesion among young people
- social mix within the school population has a positive effect on cohesion
- educational attainment of a school is a significant predictor of cohesion among the school population
- a difficult school experience (bullying, suspension or exclusion) can undermine perceptions of fairness and inclusion in society
- schools and colleges can provide young people and the communities they live in the skills and knowledge they need to unlock their talents. This can help address deep-rooted issues of inequality and disadvantage
- schools, youth services and colleges represent places where local people from different backgrounds come together and interact. Promoting positive encounters can help to counter misconceptions and misunderstanding that underpin intolerance and prejudice

There is also evidence that the experiences of young people outside school and college are also important to community cohesion:

- emotional problems, involvement in personal risk behaviours (alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis) and involvement in anti-social behaviour are all predictors of low cohesion among young people
- a strong and consistent relationship exists between young people's perceptions of fairness, belonging and opportunity in society and levels of community cohesion

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SIGNPOST: For detailed insights into the predictors of cohesion among young people see the research report *Young People and Community Cohesion* https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR033.pdf

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Why is Community Cohesion Important to Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services?

- the attitudes and behaviour of children and parents in education is informed by the context and situations in which they live
- problems with cohesion in the local community can spill over into the school or college environment and impact on the ability of teachers to provide a safe and stable environment in which to educate young people and support them to fulfil their potential

Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

Helping everyone reach their potential, reduce inequality, and improve economic and social well-being is a key aim of the *Programme for Government.* To this end, Welsh Government policy aims to support the physical and emotional well-being of children and young people and ensure that they have the best start in life. This approach is rooted in a commitment to the seven core aims of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many of these core aims are of immediate relevance to community cohesion. Examples include a commitment to ensuring that children have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities; are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised; have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing; and are not disadvantaged by poverty.

The main strategies and policies supporting this approach and informing the work of local authorities recognise these links between the well-being of children and community cohesion:

Respect and resilience: Developing community cohesion – a common understanding for schools and their communities (2011). *'Getting On Together - a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales'* sets out the links between community cohesion and learning. The Welsh Government sees learning as a potentially powerful tool in promoting integration and mutual respect. Schools which are community focused, and the teachers and staff who work with young people, are seen to have a crucial role to play in ensuring that they have a safe and supportive environment in which to question things, but also to understand and foster tolerance and respect for others. This guidance and good practice document aims to support the development of community cohesion and prevention of violent extremism in all secondary schools, pupil referral units, special schools and other educational settings.
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/respectresilience/?lang=en

Creating safe learning communities: guidance for further education institutions in Wales (2011). This guidance and good practice document is aimed primarily at Further Education Institutions in Wales. Colleges are understood to be in a good position to know what is going on in the communities they serve, through relationships with learners, families, employers and community organisations. They should therefore be aware of the tensions and concerns facing these communities, and the events and activities which could give rise to concerns. The guidance seeks to aid the development of community cohesion and prevent violent extremism in further education institutions and vocational training providers in Wales. The guidelines aim to ensure that colleges build and maintain cohesive learning communities whose core values are based on respect, equality and social inclusion, as well as excellence in learning, support and achievement.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110504saferlearningen.pdf

Guidance on Extending Entitlement: Support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales (2002). This Guidance accompanies the Youth Support Services Directions (Wales) 2002. Under its terms, local authorities and others involved in the provision of youth support services must have regard to the Guidance. The Guidance speaks explicitly to the community cohesion concerns of rights and opportunities and engagement in society and cultural life. It requires all local authorities in Wales to work in partnership with other agencies to ensure the provision of a comprehensive network of services for young people within their area in order to enable them to: participate effectively in education or training; take advantage of opportunities for employment; and participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities. The overarching aims are stated as being to: equip young people to be able to make an effective transition into independent adulthood; ensure they can access their full entitlement; and contribute to the social and economic prosperity of Wales and enhance its cultural life.
http://wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/4038232/4038211/extending_entitlement/DGEE.pdf?lang=en

Child Poverty Strategy for Wales (2011). The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 placed a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish a new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. This strategy aims to give a clear account of what the Welsh Government can achieve in helping to reduce poverty, particularly in the areas of improving health, education and economic outcomes for children in low-income families during the three years 2011–14. The strategy recognises that the experience of poverty and social exclusion can be linked to lower levels of cohesion within economically deprived communities. It also suggests that the experience of poverty and social exclusion can lead children and young people to be vulnerable on a number of levels including from violent extremism.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/policy/110203newchildpovstrategy2en.pdf

Children and Young People's Planning guidance 2011–14 (2011) . This guidance has been produced for local authorities and all relevant partners from the statutory and third sector who provide services to children and young people from birth through to 25 years. It is particularly concerned with the new duties in relation to the eradication of child poverty prescribed in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. It emphasises how Children and Young People's Plans (CYP Plans) should be aligned

with Health Social Care and Well-being (HSCWB) strategies, and will thereby promote the priorities and themes of Our Healthy Futures (OHFs). OHF places importance on health and wellbeing through the life course, creating sustainable and cohesive communities, reducing inequities in health, and prevention and early intervention to reduce avoidable ill health.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/110728cypplanningen.pdf

Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales (2009). This document, and the associated action plan, sets out the agenda for the future of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Acknowledging the correlations between disengagement, poverty and cohesion, it identifies how 'area factors' (poor and disadvantaged communities) influence a young person's chances of being NEET in Wales.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/090430youngpeoplenotineduen.pdf

Statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education: A practical toolkit to help identify children and young people missing education (2010). The guidance is aimed at promoting inclusion by ensuing equality of access to education and effective learning opportunities for all. Of particular relevance to community cohesion and the Equality Duty is the focus on the needs of children from a range of vulnerable groups (including those with a Gypsy, Traveller or Roma background, children from transient families, those living in temporary accommodation) to ensure their access to education and sense of belonging thereby preventing social exclusion.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/101419missingeducationen.pdf

Tackling Child Poverty: Guidance for Communities First Partnerships (2009). The Welsh Government's Communities First Programme exists to provide local people with opportunities to play an active role in shaping the future of their community. This guide aims to support Communities First partnerships gain a better understanding of issues that impact on child poverty and identifies activities that will impact on the life experiences of children and young people. The guidance speaks to the community cohesion agenda through an emphasis on improving the health of the community (for example, raising awareness within the local community about myths and facts relating to Asylum Seekers and Refugees), and providing support and opportunities to participate in the life of the community.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/091009childpovertyguiden.pdf

Examples of How can Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services help Tackle Tensions

There are many positive steps that schools, colleges and young people's services can take in response to problems with cohesion and rising tensions. Many of these are already current practice in Wales, but it is important to recognise and maximise the potential of these activities to help manage problems as and when they arise.

Schools, colleges and youth services are often first to hear about rising tensions and have a key role to play in tension monitoring. They are often first catch wind of the 'word on the street' and to hear rumours and stories about how local young people are reacting to local, national or international events. Teachers and youth workers will also be privy to evidence of racially or religiously motivated offences or incidents, gang and turf conflicts and information about political extremism. This intelligence could be critical in predicting tensions that can be addressed before they manifest into conflict between different groups.

Schools and colleges can play a key role countering tensions and minimising the risk of extremism. Welsh Government guidance suggests that this will involve specialist and targeted support. Examples include raising staff awareness on key issues; forming good links with families, police and other partners to share information; and, where necessary, accessing external support from statutory or voluntary organisations. It is also suggested that schools and colleges should also seek to use curriculum opportunities to challenge extremist narratives, allow space for debate and increase staff confidence in discussing controversial issues, understand local issues and tensions with help from local authority and police, and develop a network of community contacts and links with mentors and role models.

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to promote and protect the well-being of individual students. Fulfilling this responsibility involves having effective and fair support processes for those who are harmed or affected by the actions of others. Steps should also be taken to ensure that learners are kept safe from the harmful influences that they could be exposed to within the school or college. Staff will need to know and understand what to do when they have concerns relating to a young person whom they believe to be at risk. In some instances it will be necessary to provide learners with access to specially trained staff and specialist advice and support outside the school or college.

Examples of How Can Schools, Colleges and Young People's Services Promote Cohesion

There are many positive steps that schools, colleges and young people's services can take to help build cohesion. These include removing barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement.

Teaching and learning in schools and colleges can help build community cohesion. This will demand that staff understand their roles and are confident to address and explore a wide range of issues relating to ethnic, cultural, religious and economic diversity. The curriculum can be used and adapted to ensure that community cohesion issues are addressed. This should include teaching and learning strategies that enable learners to raise questions in a safe, non-threatening environment where wide-ranging issues and alternative views can be discussed and

evaluated. Schools and colleges can also help improve equality of opportunity, inclusiveness and cohesion by supporting young people to learn English and Welsh.

Schools and colleges can promote fairness, belonging and opportunity through the teaching of citizenship. This should involve complementing efforts to promote political literacy and participation and strengthen notions of identity, with efforts to support young people to recognise and realise the rights and opportunities of citizenship. Helping young people to recognise their citizenship rights and to overcome the challenges that might prevent them from exercising these rights will help to promote perceptions of fairness and inclusion which are positively associated with community cohesion.

An effective anti-bullying policy can improve personal safety and well-being, an important determinant of community cohesion among young people. Bullying within schools can also spill out into the local community, promoting concerns about well-being and safety among young people and, potentially, informing perceptions of crime that are so important to notions of local cohesion. Efforts to prevent and respond to bullying at play and leisure amenities, at youth activities and during journeys to and from school are therefore also important to promoting cohesion.

The ethos, approach and quality of teaching (as perceived by pupils) and enjoyment of school can affect levels of cohesion. This fact would appear to support the aim of ensuring that in every school there will be good behaviour, strong discipline, order and safety. It is also a finding that points to the importance of inspection regimes focusing on 'softer' measures of the school experience, in addition to core concerns around academic achievement, leadership and management.

Schools and colleges can build an ethos of respect for cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity. This involves having high expectations for all pupils regardless of their backgrounds, promoting a strong sense of belonging, shared community care and responsibility for others, and removing barriers to access and participation in learning. School and college leaders play a key role by ensuring that these core values are communicated effectively within institutions and ensuring that key decisions and actions are consistent with these values. Colleges and schools should ensure that activities take place which showcase the diversity of the college community, emphasising the differing strands, including age and gender, rather than focussing simply on ethnic and cultural issues. Institutions should ensure that they have a coherent and comprehensive set of mechanisms to allow for the expression of the Learner Voice.

Socially mixed schools promote cohesion. Children who attend comprehensive schools have been found to be more positive about local cohesion than children who live in areas that operate selective education and attend either a grammar school or

a secondary modern (or 'community') school. This finding suggests that cohesion benefits would flow from an end to selection. It also points to the importance of ensuring that admission arrangements in non-selective schools do not permit selection or "cherry picking" of the wealthiest or brightest children by covert means.

Schools and colleges can provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally. Institutions should ensure that they engage with families and community groups when necessary and maintain good relationships with statutory outside agencies, including the local authority and police, and with the voluntary sector, and those organisations who have an advocacy role for specific groups within the community.

Youth services have an important role to play engendering community cohesion and promoting a sense of common belonging among young people from different communities. Youth work takes place with young people who voluntarily choose to participate, in their own areas, and it works with friendship and peer groups, rather than just individuals. It can provide an opportunity for young people to create links with people outside their immediate circle of friends and from other communities. Young people of different social and ethnic backgrounds can be brought together and given opportunities to develop dialogue and understanding across boundaries in a manner, and at a pace, over which they have control. Providing access to positive activities for young people which resonate with disengaged and disaffected you people, such as sports, culture and the arts, can promote engagement and raise hopes and aspirations.

Local authorities should ensure young people feel able to influence decision-making. Engaging young people about their concerns over tolerance between different groups in their community can make a difference to levels of local social cohesion and social justice.

SIGNPOST: For more information about how FE institutions can build community cohesion and deal with the challenges of violent extremism see the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills 'The Role of Further Education providers in promoting Community Cohesion, Fostering Shared Values and Preventing Violent Extremism' consultation document
http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/ec_group/111-08-FE_on

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Housing

Why Housing is Important to Community Cohesion

There is lots of evidence that housing is important to community cohesion.

Housing issues can negatively impact on cohesion:

- competition for scarce housing can raise tensions, particular towards new arrivals in an area;
- tensions can arise if allocation policies are perceived to be unfair and benefiting one group over another;
- the perception that renewal activities are benefiting a particular group or neighbourhood can fuel resentment;
- failing to tackle problems of harassment and abuse and other forms of anti-social or criminal behaviour can undermine security and limit the residential choices of certain groups;
- poor maintenance of housing can undermine health and well-being;
- poor maintenance of external environment and a lack of community facilities can limit opportunities for engagement and interaction.

Housing policy and practice can also help promote cohesion:

- new developments and the renewal of existing properties can improve individual health and well-being and community sustainability;
- the neighbourhood management activities of social landlords can help counter the anti-social behaviour and crime (including hate crime) that undercuts community cohesion;
- social landlords can draw on their strong community links to monitor tensions and feedback information to the local tension monitoring group;
- tenant engagement and participation can promote positive relations between local people and help foster a shared sense of place.

Why Community Cohesion is Important to Housing

Problems with community cohesion can undermine housing policy objectives and impact on the work of social landlords:

- problems with cohesion can undercut neighbourhood sustainability and result in a rise in turnover, relet times and void rates. The financial costs for landlords can be significant;

- problems with cohesion can undercut efforts to meet local housing needs, for example, limiting the housing choices of people who are unwilling to move to particular neighbourhoods or towns because of fears of harassment or abuse.

Housing and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

The *Programme for Government* sets out a vision for the future of housing in Wales which focuses on ensuring that people have a high quality, warm secure and energy efficient home to live in. To this end, it prioritises efforts to increase supply and choice, improve quality and improve housing services and support. These are goals clearly in line with the community cohesion strategy priorities of promoting equality and inclusion.

The main strategies and policies supporting this approach recognise these links between housing and community cohesion:

Housing White Paper and Housing Bills 2012 – The Housing White Paper (May 2012), recognises that Wales is a diverse and multi-cultural society and that fairness, social justice, equality and inclusion should be promoted. The Strategic Equality Plan is high-lighted along with the important role that housing has to play in providing stable communities. The Paper responds to the impact of anti-social behaviour within communities and gives a commitment to reduce anti-social behaviour in all its forms, address domestic abuse and tackle poverty. It also raises the possibility of introducing a requirement that local authorities provide sites for Gypsy and Traveller Communities where need has been identified.
http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/housingcommunity/housewhitepaper/?lang=en

The National Housing Strategy 'Improving Lives and Communities - Homes in Wales' (2010) - a strategy from Welsh Government setting out the priorities and action that will be taken to meet housing need in Wales. There are clear overlaps between themes running through the strategy and the priorities of the community cohesion agenda in Wales. The strategy focuses on promoting equal access to housing and services for all people, improving services and tackling poverty and inequalities. Housing investment is recognised as holding the potential to improve places, provide local jobs, improve skills and help strengthen community well-being. New housing is also acknowledged as central to efforts to create sustainable communities.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/100421housingstrategyen.pdf

Preparing Local Housing Strategies (2007) -it is no longer a statutory duty on local authorities to develop a strategy, but the Welsh Government encourages local authorities to do so and this guidance contains a number of provisions that local authorities and housing associations should follow in order to promote and maintain community cohesion. These include reference to the potential for effective policies to tackle anti-social behaviour (including racial harassment) to promote community cohesion within and between different groups. Social landlords are also recognised as

having a role to play minimising the cohesion challenges arising from the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers by preparing the host community, being proactive in promoting good neighbour relations, and by anticipating issues with contingency plans to address them (including effective housing management practices). Publicity and language and communication strategies are recognised as important to facilitating equality of access to housing and support services. Effective housing is also identified as being able to make a contribution to reducing social exclusion by improving the quality of life for those in deprived areas.

Regulatory Code for Housing Associations Registered in Wales (2006) - sets out how the Welsh Government expects housing associations to operate in Wales. Expectations of immediate relevance to community cohesion include associations helping to safeguard the quality of life of residents and neighbours. This should involve an association doing everything it can to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood disputes and harassment.   Associations should actively promote respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, the elimination of discrimination in all their activities and good relations between people from different ethnic backgrounds. This will involve ensuring compliance with legislation relating to equality issues. Associations are required to treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality and make appropriate use of the Welsh language in relation to the needs of customers and communities it serves.
http://wales.gov.uk/desh/publications/housing/regulatorycodehas/codee.pdf?lang=en

Examples of How Housing Can Help Tackle Tensions

Being on the front line of neighbourhood working, housing officers are in an ideal position to read the signs and signals of rising tension. The neighbourhood activities of social landlords can also help tackle these tensions:

Housing officers, neighbourhood wardens and other front line housing staff are in an ideal position to monitor relations and provide early warning of rising tensions and the risk of conflict. They are often first to catch wind of the 'word on the street' and to hear rumours and stories that might be circulating. They are well placed to understand how local people are reacting to local, national or international events. Officers will also be privy to evidence of racially or religiously motivated offences or incidents, gang and turf conflicts, neighbour disputes and information about political extremism. This intelligence could be critical in predicting tensions that can be addressed before they manifest into conflict between different groups.

SIGNPOST: For more information about monitoring and assessing tensions and feeding back insights to the local Tensions Monitoring Group see the Welsh Government guidance:
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/111103mappingen.pdf

The neighbourhood management activities of social landlords can help counter the anti-social behaviour and crime (including hate crime) that undercuts community cohesion. Social landlords can draw on their strong community links to monitor tensions and feedback information to the local tension monitoring group. Support for vulnerable tenants can help them manage challenges moving into a new area or coping with problems of harassment.

Examples of How Housing Can Promote Cohesion

There are many positive steps that housing agencies can take to help build cohesion. Many of these will be current practice, but it is important to recognise and maximise the potential contribution of these activities.

The provision of new housing in areas where choices are limited or housing is in short supply can serve to limit tensions caused by competition for a scarce resource. New developments can improve living conditions and therefore individual health and well-being. They can also provide an opportunity to provide new community facilities and to introduce design changes that might make people feel safer.

Renewal activities and repairs and maintenance can improve living conditions, well-being and health and help counter negative views about a neighbourhood. However, it is important to ensure that the targeting of these activities is transparent and fair. The perception that renewal activities are benefiting a particular group or neighbourhood can fuel resentment. Provide information to counter such perceptions and to explain how resources are being targeted and why.

Make sure that social housing allocations are fair and transparent. Provide clear information so that people know the facts about local housing, how it is allocated and how to apply. Challenge misconceptions through information initiatives. Provide information in formats relevant to different groups within the area. The Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness published by the Welsh Government suggests that local authorities consult with local people on the development of allocation policies and have a transparent approach to lettings.

Tenant engagement and resident involvement can be a positive force for cohesion by bringing people together to interact in a shared interest, promoting positive relations between local people and helping foster a shared sense of place. These are not inevitable outcomes and attention is needed to ensure that different groups can get involved on an equal basis and that interactions are positive and help breakdown, rather than reinforce, barriers.

Tenancy management and support activities are vital to the promotion of community cohesion. By providing a punitive response to criminal activity, anti-social

behaviour and racial harassment, tenancy management can extend the housing choices of households traditionally excluded from certain neighbourhoods by fear of harassment and abuse. Tenancy support can help ensure that new opportunities result in long-term positive housing outcomes and, together with tenancy management, can help with efforts to foster a common sense of place and belonging and to develop understanding between different people from different backgrounds.

Enforce standards in the private rented sector to minimise issues that can impact on cohesion. For example, Houses in Multiple Occupation can generate noise, refuse and car parking problems. This can cause particular problems in a neighbourhood traditionally occupied by families.

SIGNPOST: For examples of how housing can help promote cohesion see
http://www.amicushorizon.org.uk/media/adobepdf/e/8/H_Corp_Good_Practice_Guide_Community_Cohesion__Housing.pdf

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Planning, Regeneration and Renewal

Why Planning is Important to Community Cohesion

There is lots of evidence that planning is important to community cohesion. Planning and regeneration activities can help promote cohesion:

- regeneration and renewal programmes can improve the physical environment and quality of life of local residents and foster community sustainability
- planning can support efforts to provide new housing stock to better meet the needs of the local population and to provide appropriate housing opportunities for all
- engagement activities associated with planning and regeneration can provide local residents with an opportunity to discuss and agree shared priorities for their neighbourhood. This can help promote social networking within neighbourhoods and strengthen the local social infrastructure and help engender a shared sense of purpose and belonging.
- organisations working at the neighbourhood level, such as Communities First, can be a useful resource of local information about local perceptions, worries and concerns and rising tensions

Planning and regeneration can also undercut cohesion:

- the competition between areas for renewal funds can cause frustration and resentment and result in perceptions of unfair treatment
- new build and clearance programmes can promote population change, which can being unsettling for residents and undermine cohesion
- consultation, participation and active involvement can serve to raise expectations. Failing to meet these expectations can have serious consequences for trust in local institutions, willingness to engage in future programmes and the sustainability of an area, if people perceive it will not benefit from the help of local agencies
- failure to ensure the representation of all local interests on participatory structures can result in a particular group wielding undue power or influence. This risks resentment and tensions between groups, particularly if one is perceived to be benefiting at the expense of another

Why Community Cohesion is Important to Planning

- people's willingness to engage and participate is linked to how they feel about the place they live and sense of local belonging

- communities lacking cohesion can struggle to arrive at a shared understanding or vision for their neighbourhood
- community planning is likely to prove less productive, more divisive and raise tensions and conflict in neighbourhoods lacking cohesion

Planning and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

The *Programme for Government* places sustainable development at the heart of government policy. To this end, it calls for improvements to the planning system to promote the sustainability of communities and the environment. These are goals clearly in line with commitments in the national housing strategy and *Getting on Together* to build sustainable communities.

The main strategies and policies guiding the work of local authorities recognise these links between planning and community cohesion:

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4, February 2011). This document sets out the land use planning policy for Wales. It provides the policy framework for the effective preparation of development plans by local planning authorities. The policy states that effective land use planning contributes not only to sound economic development and the conservation of natural assets but also to the quality of life and well-being of individuals and communities through sustainable development and inclusive design. Planning is identified as having a key role to play in supporting delivery of socially inclusive, accessible and, thus, cohesive communities.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/110228ppwedition4en.pdf

Wales Spatial Plan People, Places, Futures (2008) provides a framework for delivering sustainable development. It aims to contribute to better public services in a number of ways, including the shaping of policy, promoting and facilitating engagement, and aligning investment to spatial priorities. In discussing the challenges and priorities for different areas of Wales, the Plan recognises the importance of promoting cohesion and sustainability. Examples provided include: celebrating and promoting the vibrancy of cohesive communities; ensuring that newcomers understand the communities they have become part of and how they can play their full part, both in order to maintain cohesion and to strengthen and enrich an area; targeting work in pockets of deprivation, to reduce poverty, deprivation and exclusion, and promoting cohesion; and developing tailored support for people in diverse communities to become economically active and to improve their linguistic skills in English or Welsh.
http://wales.gov.uk/dpsp/wspatialplan/documents/wsp2008update/wsp2008updatee.pdf?lang=en

One Wales: One Planet - The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (2009). This document sets out how the Welsh Government intends to promote sustainable development. It outlines an approach to sustainable development consistent with the priorities of the community cohesion agenda. This includes a focus on enhancing the economic, social and environmental well-being of

people and communities and achieving a better quality of life for current and future generations in ways which promote social justice and equality of opportunity.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/090521susdev1wales1planeten.pdf

Manual for Streets (2007).   This document looks closely at how the relationship between buildings and the street is essential in creating places that are good for people. *Manual for Streets* (MfS) is used predominantly for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets, but it is also applicable to existing residential streets subject to re-design. The manual is consistent with efforts to build community cohesion in that it aims to assist in the creation of streets that: help to build and strengthen the communities they serve; meet the needs of all users, by embodying the principles of inclusive design; form part of a well-connected network; are attractive and have their own distinctive identity; and are safe.
http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/manual-for-streets/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

Communities First Guidance (2007). This document spells out the key principles of the Communities First programme and provides guidance for local partnerships on all aspects of delivery. The overall vision for the programme, which is intended to provide direction to Communities First Partnerships when considering local priorities and actions, speaks directly to the concerns and priorities of the community cohesion agenda.   Key principles underpinning the version are identified as including the promotion of social justice, the creation of an equitable environment, and the promotion of a culture in which diversity is valued and equality of opportunity is a reality. It also promotes active engagement of local people, who are expected to lead the process.

http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/communityregendevelop/cfguidance07/guidancee?lang=en

Examples of How Planning Can Help Tackle Tensions

Spatial patterns and neighbourhood design have long been central to national debates on community cohesion. The physical development of residential areas and planning policy can help to create the foundations for cohesive and integrated communities, but if not careful can undercut these values.

Local authorities and their regeneration partners will need to work to avoid the tensions that can arise because of real or perceived biases in the focus of renewal activities, by clearing spelling out the basis on which funding decisions are made and allocating resources through an open and transparent process.

New developments can promote the residential segregation that can feed tension. Examples include 'gated' communities, 'secured' apartment blocks and retirement villages. These can increase a sense of isolation, fear and distance between residents within the same neighbourhood. By working in consultation with local residents, planners can provide free, safe and welcoming shared spaces that encourage neighbour interaction and social integration.

The design and layout of new properties will need to recognise the requirements of different sections of the population if housing opportunities are going to provide for all groups and interests in the area and the resentments that can arise from certain groups perceiving that an initiative is not meeting their needs and they have 'lost out' are to be avoided.

Consultation, participation and active involvement can serve to raise expectations. Failing to meet these expectations can have serious consequences for the sustainability of an area. It is therefore important to be honest and realistic regarding proposals for the neighbourhood and keep residents informed about ongoing developments, successes and failings.

The changing social profile of the local population and the inward movement of new residents could create tensions that will need to be carefully monitored and managed, through resident support and management initiatives targeted at new and long-standing residents. Some new residents will need support when moving into the area, to forge social networks, to access services and facilities and to foster a commitment to the area. Work may also be necessary with existing residents to limit suspicion and tensions between new and existing residents.

SIGNPOST: The Commission For Racial Equality's formal report *Regeneration and the Race Equality Duty* (2006) provides examples of the potential for regeneration activities to both undercut and promote equality and positive relations. See: http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/documents/regenwm/media/documents/1276004936---creregenerationreport.pdf

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Examples of How Planning Can Promote Cohesion

There are many positive steps that planning departments and regeneration partnerships, including Communities First, can take to help build cohesion. Many of these will be current practice, but it is important to recognise and maximise the potential contribution of these activities.

The involvement of a cross-section of residents in participation activities at the neighbourhood level can help foster a shared understanding and a common sense of purpose and vision. Participation activities can also help foster improved appreciation of the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances and how they might be better appreciated in service provision. Drawing together between people from different backgrounds in a working partnership can help foster improved relations between people in the local neighbourhood. As part of this process, different sections of the community need to be able to air grievances and concerns about contested spaces. Such fora can help

promote community relations, for example, by working to prepare local residents in advance for the arrival of new immigrants in their neighbourhood.

Planning can help tackle the existence of populations that are physically and socially divided along the lines of ethnic, religious and political identity and affiliation. Although tackling residential segregation is complex and spatial planning alone cannot on its own address major issues of segregation, it can be an important dimension of a broader response. Developers can challenge segregation by, for instance: facilitating the removal of any existing physical barriers between communities, subject to local community agreement; remodelling existing housing provision to deliver a range of housing opportunities that might appeal to different groups of people; promoting a ppositive image of a neighbourhood through the removal of markers of division and physical dereliction; and, avoiding inadvertently bolstering the insularity of neighbourhoods through duplicating services and facilitating internal development. A detailed understanding of local neighbourhoods and careful preparatory work and ongoing support and dialogue with residents is essential when moving people out of an area, for example, to undertake demolition and building work, in order to avoid undermining local social networks and driving local people away from the area

Planners can ensure that the physical environment does not negatively shape social relations, by preventing or hindering social interaction and community relations. Spaces should be 'shared', accessible and open to all members of the community, and offer a forum for a range of interactions whether both informal and structured. Spaces should also be developed in ways that reinforce civic identity and give people a sense of place in their locality linking them with mainstream services together in an inclusive way. Developing these spaces could include revitalising the common locations e.g. key services, shopping precincts, cultural, arts and leisure facilities.

Planners and developers should ensure that shared spaces are accessible to residents by cycling or walking. This is likely to support the development of social networks and ensure residents feel comfortable using public spaces. Public transport infrastructure should however also assist in providing safe and equitable access to services.

SIGNPOST: For more information about implementing area based initiatives in a way that promotes community cohesion see the iCoCo *Building community cohesion into Area Based Initiatives* toolkit
http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/DownloadDocumentsFile.aspx?recordId=89&file=PDFversion

Health and Social Care

Why Health and Social Care is Important to Community Cohesion

- limiting long-term illness or disability is a strong negative predictor of community cohesion
- health tends to decline in communities where levels of interaction are low and where people feel insecure or unsafe
- local myths can emerge, for example, about particular groups receiving special treatment by health or social care services, which can undermine relations between groups and raise tensions

Why Community cohesion is Important to Health and Social Care

- a cohesive community with strong support networks can help people maintain their mental health and cope with and recover from illness
- in cohesive communities it can be easier for health and social care services to develop a dialogue with local people and ensure services are meeting their needs
- positive relations and social networks can have healthy benefits, including contributing to feelings of happiness, helping inhibit depression and assisting people to cope better with traumas

Health and Social Care and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

A primary objective of the *Programme for Government* is ensuring better health for all with reduced health inequalities. Key policy priorities include giving everyone equal access to health facilities and developing 'healthy sustainable communities'. Central to this is the promotion of healthier lifestyles and the development of 'health assets' in communities. Recognition of the links between the kind of community that people live in and individual health and well-being is clearly in line with logic of the community cohesion strategy.

The key health and social care strategies and policies directing the work of the local authority, the NHS and health and social care agencies recognise these links between health and community cohesion:

Together for Health: A five year vision for the NHS in Wales (2011) sets out how the NHS in Wales will look in five years' time, with primary and community services at the centre of delivery. The emphasis is on promoting health, as well as treating

sickness. Mirroring the logics behind calls to mainstream community cohesion, NHS bodies are encouraged to work closely with all their partners to tackle the roots of poor health, such as inadequate housing or poor educational attainment. Welsh Government departments are also encouraged to focus more on how health can be improved through policy alignment. The strategy documents *Our Healthy Future* and *Fairer Health Outcomes for All* set out how this will be achieved.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/111101togetheren.pdf

Our Healthy Future (2009) is about the health of the whole community. It renews the Welsh Government's commitment to ensure that everyone in Wales has a fair chance to lead a healthy life. It sets a long-term vision which includes the desire to develop healthy sustainable communities – places where people want to live, work, play and flourish. It highlights the positive impacts that a strong community, where people feel safe, involved and have access to a range of services, can have on both physical and mental health well-being. Community Cohesion is therefore central to this agenda and is recognised as having a major contribution to make to health and wellbeing.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/phhs/publications/100527technicalen.pdf

Fairer health outcomes for all: Reducing Inequities in Health Strategic Action Plan (2011). This plan seeks to mainstream consideration of health issues in all policies across Government, in order to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequities.   One of the plan's action areas is developing health assets in communities.   Health assets are factors or resources which enhance the ability of individuals, communities and populations to maintain their health and wellbeing. They include the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in a community. The Plan acknowledges that a key support for the health assets approach is the Community Cohesion Action Plan for Wales, which supports local efforts encouraging people to live alongside each other in mutual understanding and respect.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/phhs/publications/110329working2en.pdf

Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action (2011) - this ten year strategy puts in place a framework for meeting the challenges faced by social services, including demographic change and the challenge of working within reduced budgets.   The aim is to help re-shape and re-focus social services to ensure they remain strong and continue to meet citizens' needs. The Welsh Government intends to introduce a Social Services (Wales) Bill in 2013 to deliver the programme of change set out by the framework. The Bill will be based around the concept of well-being, and will, as far as is possible, integrate social care services for both children and adults. It will aim to simplify social care legislation in Wales, whilst making access to services much easier and more understandable.
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance1/services/?lang=en

Examples of How Health and Social Care Services Can Help Tackle Tensions

Equalities work is critical to addressing problems with cohesion and tackling rising tensions.

Problems with health and wellbeing (e.g. harm caused by alcohol or drug abuse) can cause significant friction and can divide communities, undermining community cohesion and generating fear amongst many residents. Effective responses to these issues can promote understanding and cooperation between different communities, but requires a clear strategy developed by a partnership of agencies including Local Health Boards.

Health inequalities can feed into myths, resentment and friction within communities. Projects and services that create chances for people to meet, talk about and tackle issues they have in common can help build bridges and enable mutual support. Health services can provide opportunities for positive contact where people come together to address their health needs. Health leaders should also address specific issues through the media to combat myths that may lead to tension and resentment (e.g. providing facts about how needs vary and how resources are distributed)

Decisions about priorities can benefit some groups more than others and this can lead to resentment if the process is seen as unfair. Consideration should be given to how health services can promote a sense of fairness in the way they allocate resources and address the needs of diverse communities. Health services need to be clear how they will address health inequalities ensuring that the process is open and transparent, and that all interests are taken into account.

Examples of How Health and Social Care Services Can Promote Cohesion

There are many positive steps that health and social care services can take to help build cohesion. Many of these are current practice, but it is important to recognise and maximise the potential contribution of these activities.

Health and social care planning that is culturally sensitive and based on a clear understanding of the diversity and different health and wellbeing needs of communities within the locality can help build cohesion. This should include understanding and responding to the effects of conflict, racism and prejudice on the well-being of communities. Services also need to develop a dialogue with local people to be sure that services are meeting local needs and to understand the

effects of their decisions on different groups within a community, for example, whether actions they are considering to meet the needs of one group may generate negative perceptions in other groups and enable them to address the issues that might arise. Health and social care policies and strategies should encourage integration and positive contact between people from different backgrounds.

Recruiting and developing a workforce that is representative of, and sensitive to the needs of, all parts of your community can help promote cohesion. This might include the recruitment of health trainers from communities who do not normally interact with health agencies and professionals. Appropriate training and support for staff who have direct contact with patients and public will ensure that they adopt behaviours that make people feel welcome and valued by the NHS. Health and social care managers should promote and reinforce a culture of respect for difference and harmonious interaction within the NHS

Health services can work with the statutory and the voluntary sector to promote community cohesion through the development of community assets. Asset based working promotes health and well-being through community building and development. It works by engaging with communities, building community capacity and social capital, promoting face-to-face community networks, encouraging civic participation and citizen power.

SIGNPOST: For more advice about how health services can help build community cohesion see the Institute for Community Cohesion and NHS guidance *Better Together*:
http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/DownloadDocumentsFile.aspx?recordId=5&file=PDFversion

Also see the Scottish Government's 'Promoting equality, good relations and community cohesion in the NHS: A Review of Good Practice' paper
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/924/0079929.doc.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Why Tackling Crime is Important to Community Cohesion

- there is a strong and consistent link between fear of crime and levels of community cohesion. As the fear of crime increases, so does the likelihood of low cohesion
- there is a strong and consistent link between concerns about racially or religiously motivated crime and cohesion
- fear of crime can make people less willing to go out in their neighbourhood and interact, contributing to lower levels of trust and raising tensions
- lower levels of cohesion are apparent among young people involved in anti-social behaviour
- effective policing and community action which tackles crime and anti-social behaviour can improve cohesion

Why Community Cohesion is Important to Tackling Crime

- more cohesive communities experience lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. In part, this might be related to the greater willingness of residents to challenge or report inappropriate or suspicious behaviour.
- improving community cohesion can serve as a form of social control which influences the behaviour of individuals and serves to reduce the levels of particular crimes.
- an improvement in community cohesion is likely to result in a reduction in the fear of crime
- major cost savings are likely to flow from the Police and other elements of the criminal justice system from an improvement in community cohesion

Crime and Cohesion - Shared Strategic Priorities

The *Programme for Government* commits the Welsh Government to making communities safer through reductions in anti-social behaviour, crime (including the fear of crime), substance misuse and the incidence and impact of fires. *Getting on Together* recognises the importance of safe communities to community cohesion priorities and seeks to actively promote community safety in line with this commitment.

Policing and criminal justice are non-devolved matters, but many of the factors that can affect community safety are devolved to the Welsh Government. Key strategies and policies promoting community safety include from the Welsh and UK Governments include:

All Wales Youth Offending Strategy (2004) is the cornerstone of all Welsh Government youth justice policies, which was jointly published by the Welsh Government and the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The strategy promotes a series of principles that speak directly to the priorities of the community cohesion agenda, including the principle that children and young people from Wales who serve a custodial sentence should do so within an environment that maintains their connection with their families and communities. It also promotes social inclusion through the expansion of effective resettlement programmes.
http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/commmunitysafety/youthoffendingstrategy/strategye?lang=en

The **All Wales Youth Offending Strategy: Delivery Plan 2009-2011 (2009)** sets out the priority themes to be addressed and the actions to be taken to deliver the Youth Offending Strategy. It recognises the importance of preventing and tackling youth offending to community safety and the important role that communities can play in promoting the rehabilitation of young offenders.[2]
http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/youth-justice/monitoring-performance/yot-management-board-guidance-consultation/All-Wales-youth-offending-strategy-delivery-plan092011.pdf

Youth Crime Prevention in Wales: Strategic Guidance (2008) offers strategic guidance for prevention services in Wales. It builds on the All Wales Youth Offending Strategy and is underpinned by a holistic approach to end-to-end youth justice in Wales aimed at improving the quality of life in deprived communities. To this end, it recognises the importance of ensuring children have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and improving the life chances of socially excluded children and young people.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/090903youthcrimepreventionguidanceen.pdf

The Right to be Safe (2010) is the Welsh Government's six year integrated strategy for tackling all forms of violence against women. This document seeks to extend the reach of the domestic abuse strategy and ensure that there is sufficient focus on some of the most damaging and hidden forms of violence in communities in Wales. As part of delivering this strategy the Welsh Government has committed to making 10,000 Safer Lives by embedding 11 minimum standards for frontline agencies working with victims to adopt. These standards will pave the way for implementing the Ending Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women Bill, which will turn into law the principles of leadership, education and delivery needed to protect victims.
http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/100325besafefinalenv1.pdf

Working Together to Reduce Harm: The Substance Misuse Strategy for Wales 2008-2018 is the Welsh Government's 10 year strategy for tackling and reducing the harms associated with substance misuse in Wales. The strategy has relevance to the priorities of the community cohesion strategy with its recognition of both the harm to

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[2] The Welsh Government and the YJB are in the process of reviewing the need for a new strategy, taking account of new policy imperatives from the UK Government and the Welsh Government's developing policies on children and young people.

communities that is caused by substance misuse but also the need for misusers to re-establish themselves in the community and for users to not be stigmatised.
http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/commmunitysafety/strategy/strategye.pdf?lang=en

A New Approach to Fighting Crime (2011). The UK Government's approach to fighting crime involves a radical shift in power from Whitehall to local communities. Central to this approach, and reflecting the focus of the community cohesion agenda on helping people become actively involved in their communities, the strategy promotes community engagement and the idea that the public should have more power to hold the police and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to account and feel empowered to reclaim their communities.
http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/new-approach-fighting-crime?view=Binary

Examples of How Tackling Crime Can Help Tackle Tensions

Working on the front line at the neighbourhood level, police officers and Community Safety Officers are in an ideal position to understand and respond to evidence of rising tension. Partners in the criminal justice system can help tackle these tensions.

Local systems for monitoring community tensions help to ensure a rapid response to tensions so that they can be quickly diffused without risk of conflict. Intelligence collected about the factors triggering tensions and conflict can help target efforts to build cohesion.

The police and neighbourhood policing teams, in particular, can play a key role to play in situations where people are fearful of their communities. In more segregated communities, there can be a tendency for one part of the community to 'blame' another for crime and disorder problems. Particular aspects of neighbourhood policing, such as the introduction of neighbourhood wardens into disadvantaged areas can have a positive effect on community cohesion as well as providing a contribution to well-being and local safety. They work particularly well in communities where there are high levels of distrust between residents and the police, as well as high rates of crime and anti-social behaviour.

The aim of community safety interventions is to increase in the level of trust, empowerment and inclusion within a community, but sometimes the outcome is increased suspicion. Interventions targeting young people, for example, might serve to stigmatise and alienate young people if not handled sensitively. It is therefore important that the effects of interventions are monitored and evaluated.

In areas affected by youth crime and anti-social behaviour, youth inclusion programmes and activities can work to promote mutual respect, and enhance relationships with others, including schools, police and the wider community and, in turn, foster a sense of community belonging. This type of community safety work

can be critical to building communities that people feel safe in and a part of. It can break down barriers between diverse communities which have previously struggled to integrate. Youth inclusion projects can address the way in which older generations perceive young people by aiming to discourage the automatic interpretation of the presence of young people as a warning signal or 'threat'.

Examples of How Tackling Crime Can Promote Cohesion

There are many positive steps that the Police, Community Safety Partnerships and other partners can take to help build cohesion.

The work of Community Safety Partnerships with local residents to help identify safety priorities can help to unite people locally around shared values and can play an important role in developing stronger communities making them more able to deal with local community safety issues that do arise. Engagement processes should ensure that the interests of all sectors of the community are identified and underpin strategies so that these do not exclude, blame or isolate marginal groups such as 'dangerous' youth. These structures should strive to include new and marginalised groups, such as refugees or young people. Partnerships of this kind have the potential to affect community cohesion and can be particularly effective in helping tackle those crimes which affect vulnerable groups such as racism and discrimination, and hate crime experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. It is important to create safe and trusted spaces for groups and communities to meet together so that potential tensions can be pre-empted, and when tensions do emerge, work to reduce them effectively.

Community safety and criminal justice partnerships working together in a strategic manner with a range of other agencies have the potential to affect community cohesion. This can be through a range of interventions, including the effective resettlement of young people back into the community on release from prison. Another example is the identification of children and young people at risk of offending and to develop appropriate responses to avoid them ending up in custody.

Initiatives pursued in a bid to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime have the potential to impact positively on cohesion. Particular examples likely to impact positively on cohesion include the provision of more opportunities for young people to get involved in extra-curricular activities and the running of targeted police initiatives at times when the risk of youth crime and disorder is highest, including the all-Wales School Programme and after-school patrols.

Restorative justice in the youth justice system can help those who have offended to understand the effect of their offence on others, and to allow them to make reparation to community or individual for the damage and distress they may have caused helping them to reintegrate into the community.

Summing Up

Mainstreaming is no easy task. It can be hard to overcome the doubts and uncertainties of colleagues about how and why they should engage with the community cohesion agenda, but it important that you do. Without a dedicated budget or department to deliver community cohesion, the only way to improve cohesion is to harness the wider work of the local authority and partner organisations. This guide provides some ideas and examples to get you started and help you move forward, building on your achievements.

The following actions will help Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators in their work to support local authorities mainstream cohesion:

- secure the commitment of councillors and senior officers - their support is vital if progress is to be made mainstreaming community cohesion

- work with a senior officer who is willing and able to champion the mainstreaming agenda within the local authority

- build a local picture of community cohesion and identify local cohesion priorities

- communicate a clear understanding of cohesion priorities to strategy, policy and service delivery staff. Don't assume familiarity with the agenda

- integrate community cohesion priorities into the Community Strategy or Single Integrated Plan

- review policies and practices to ensure that, wherever possible, they actively promote cohesion and, at very least, do not undercut cohesion. This mainstreaming review could be integrated into the equalities assessment that all local authorities are required to conduct under the Equality Duty

- evaluate the effectiveness of your work and amend it where necessary

Finally, if colleagues ask what's in it for them the answer is simple; improvements in cohesion feed improvements in outcomes across the full range of policy and service delivery areas.

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