

**Welsh Assembly Government**

**Child Poverty Strategy: Update On Progress**

**April 2006**

## STRATEGIC AIMS

**Reflecting Wales: A Better Country; Making the Connections; guiding principles of social justice, equality and sustainability; progressive universalism; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Strategic Objectives	Policies and Programmes in Place	Update
<p>To ensure child poverty is mainstreamed across Welsh Assembly Government</p>	<p>Launch of Child Poverty Strategy Implementation Plan linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welsh Assembly Government Annual Social Justice Report</li><li>• Children and Young People: Rights to Action</li></ul> <p>Proposals will be produced in 2006/07 for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty proofing of policies;</li><li>• Programme bending;</li><li>• New policies (see Annex A).</li></ul>	<p>Progress against the 2020 eradication target to be measured through the annual report</p> <p>The Assembly Government's 7 Core Aims include - 'We aim to ensure that all children and young people are not disadvantaged by child poverty.'</p>

<p>To raise awareness of the issues and engage partners in action to tackle child poverty</p>	<p>Report annually to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh Assembly Government's Cabinet and Social Justice &amp; Regeneration Committee through the Social Justice Annual report;</li> <li>• Welsh Assembly Government's Cabinet Sub-Committee for Children and Young People;</li> <li>• Children's Commissioner for Wales.</li> </ul>	
<p>To ensure Welsh perspective is taken into account and UK Government level</p>	<p>Ensure links made to UK Government work (and make representations)</p>	<p>Assembly Government has made written representations to UK Government departments on the non-devolved issues emanating from the Child Poverty Task Group. In addition, written representations have been made on issues such as tax credits and clawback arrangements.</p>
<p>To share and disseminate evidence-based practice</p>	<p>Assembly Government jointly Chairs</p>	<p>Workplan developed by Assembly Government officials – to be</p>

<p>To take forward the equality agenda across all areas of Government and to support targeted services for children, young people and their families (disabled, minority groups, rural, looked after, refugees/ asylum seekers)</p>	<p>the British Irish Council Social Inclusion Strand. New work theme for next 18 months to cover Child Poverty, with a particular focus on lone parents.</p> <p>Assembly Government initiated Race Equality Impact Assessments</p> <p>Cymorth programme funds targeted services.</p> <p>Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, Asylum Seekers Grant and Travellers and Displaced Persons Grant - all in place.</p>	<p>finalised by next officials meeting on 13 June 2006.</p> <p>Cymorth allocations in 2006-07 increased to a total of £55 million, over £11 million more than in previous year</p>
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## INCOME POVERTY

Low income denies children opportunities, and both children and adults agree that better job opportunities are the main route out of the poverty

Strategic Objectives	Policies and Programmes in Place	Update
<p><b>Access to Employment</b></p> <p>To improve access to employment by focusing on:</p>	<p>Relevant policies – European Structural Funds; Wales: A Vibrant Economy'; Skills &amp; Employment Action Plan; Basic Skills Strategy; Learning Pathways; Youth Gateway; JobCentre Plus Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising skill levels by boosting the quality of learning provision,</li> <li>• getting more people into lifelong learning;</li> <li>• more educational choice for 14-19 year olds;</li> <li>• re-engaging with 16- 18 year olds not in learning or employment;</li> <li>• tackling basic skills problems;</li> <li>• better and more affordable childcare;</li> <li>• Health initiatives aimed at improving health and well being of parents and thereby capacity to work having a positive effect</li> </ul>	<p>The priorities for the 2007-2013 Structural Fund Programmes in Wales, including increasing employment, tackling economic inactivity and improving skills levels.</p> <p>The new EU programmes offer considerable scope to enhance what the Assembly Government and its partners do in this area.</p> <p>Skills and Employment Action Plan 2005 published which sets out a comprehensive programme for helping more people into skilled employment.</p> <p>The new Basic Skills Strategy for Wales, <i>Words Talk, Numbers Count</i>, was published in April 2005 and will run until 2010. £40 million is being made available in the first three years to take a wide range of action to drive up levels of</p>

	<p>on child poverty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-focused schools;</li> </ul>	<p>numeracy and literacy at all ages.</p> <p>Learning Pathways providing wider curriculum choice for 14-19 year olds, helping those from deprived backgrounds in particular.</p> <p>The new childcare strategy, “Childcare is for Children” was launched on 29 November 2005. The strategy sets out the vision of childcare as part of the modern welfare state, available to all parents who need it.</p> <p>The Strategy includes 19 specific and timed actions. These include actions on regulation, the needs of disabled children, local authority duties, the workforce, information for parents, links with Communities First and the needs of ethnic minority communities.</p> <p>Guidance on the £3.6 million available for community-focused schools in 2006-07 has recently issued, linking this initiative with Flying Start and the Foundation Phase</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a more flexible New Deal – welfare to work – programme;</li></ul>	<p>In Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff the DWP's new <i>'Pathways to Work'</i> pilot, brings together Jobcentre Plus and the NHS in helping people with a work-limiting health problem to find and retain work. Through this partnership, help and advice on condition management, employment and benefits is being provided to customers participating in the programme.</p> <p>In light of early encouraging performance in the pilot areas, the initiative is being extended to a further 14 Jobcentre Plus districts across the UK. In Wales, the additional Jobcentre Plus districts will be Swansea Bay and West Wales (due to merge into one district) from April 2006, and Eastern Valleys from October 2006. DWP has secured additional funding for the rollout, including the cost of establishing and providing in each location the Condition Management Programme delivered by the NHS.</p> <p>The joint Assembly Government and Jobcentre Plus European Social Fund <i>"Want to Work"</i> project, which operates</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• better public transport to help people get to where jobs are available;</li></ul>	<p>in four local authority areas is providing support for those existing recipients of inactive benefits to find work, and exploring ways of working with partners to bring advice on benefits and services to their mutual customers.</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government has launched 2 pilot schemes to identify and test the practicality and affordability of implementing a half fare scheme for 16 to 18 year olds on buses. The pilots – in north east Wales and in Bridgend – will run between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2008. The emerging findings will be analysed by the reconvened Concessionary Travel Implementation Group which will in due course make recommendations to Ministers about whether and how to roll-out the pilots to the rest of Wales. One of the key objectives of testing this Top Ten commitment is to see how effective the pilots will be in improving accessibility for the young pass holders, including to and from education, training and employment. In addition, the hugely successful free travel scheme for elderly and disabled people has helped to turn</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with employers to improve work/life balance and ensure equality</li> <li>• raising the educational outcomes for Looked After Children by targeting support through schools.</li> </ul>	<p>around a long term decline in the number of bus passenger journeys in Wales. As a result, bus operators have safeguarded some services that would otherwise have been withdrawn and extended others so that all bus passengers are benefiting.</p>
<p><b>Financial inclusion and adequate income levels</b></p> <p>To give families and young people access to adequate income and help in managing their finances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the dispersal in Wales of the appropriate proportion of the funds available under the DTI's Face to Face Debt Advice Fund;</li> </ul>	<p>DTI was allocated £45 million from the UK Government's Financial Inclusion Fund to support the expansion of free face-to-face debt advice in both England and Wales. Of this, Citizen Advice Cymru have been awarded over £3.1 million to increase the number of debt advisers in Wales and the hours that they are available. This provision is targeted at areas of high financial exclusion. Those residing in financially</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More effective PSE classes in school</li> <li>• Piloting a new framework for “Adult Financial Capability”</li> <li>• Tackling financial skills deficits via the National Basic Skills Strategy</li> <li>• National Information and Advice Project for 11-25 year olds, covering debt and related issues</li> </ul>	<p>excluded areas will be able to take advantage of the expanded provision.</p> <p>The ‘Clic’ project has recently reviewed and revamped the money section of its website for young people aged 11-25. This has resulted in the production of a leaflet which is currently being distributed to information and advice shops for young people across Wales. A pilot project is also underway which is being jointly funded by the Assembly, Legal Services Commission, Basic Skills Agency and the Public Finance Education Group. The FSA have also provided an input into the project. This has produced a CD ROM based on the needs identified by young people. The CD-ROM is currently being piloted in the three areas of Flintshire, Caerphilly and Neath Port Talbot in informal educational settings for young people. The pilot and its evaluation are due to</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued support for the growth of the Credit Union network</li>   <li>• Further increase in the minimum wage from October 2006</li>   <li>• A UK study underway on possibility of low interest loans for low income families</li>   <li>• Implementing the Deputy</li> </ul>	<p>complete in the autumn of 2006.</p> <p>The public funding of credit unions has been a difficult issue since the decision was made in September 2004 to cease funding until a state aid compliant method could be found. The publication in November 2005 of a block exemption for services of general economic interest provides a state aid compliant method of funding for credit unions. The Credit Union Development Programme operated by the Wales Co-op Centre can now be revisited and funding delivered under the new block exemption. The Welsh Assembly Government will then assess the future funding needs of the credit union sector in Wales.</p> <p>Recommendation 1 urged the Assembly</p>
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<p><b>Tax and Benefits</b></p> <p>To work with the UK Government on planned tax and benefit measures including:</p>	<p>Minister's Review Over-indebtedness recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Disability Living Allowance for carers of disabled children;</li> <li>• Reforms to link Housing Benefit with Working Tax Credit;</li> <li>• Assembly Government working with LSC and others on provision of accessible and integrated advice services to encourage full benefit take-up</li> </ul>	<p>Government to investigate the possibility of local authorities in Wales adding to the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) of children in their care.</p> <p>The Assembly Government is presently consulting local authorities in Wales on arrangements to establish a new CTF grant scheme from Autumn 2006 to encourage local authorities to make annual contributions to the CTF accounts of certain categories of children for whom they have responsibility.</p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions is considering these proposals</p> <p>Assembly Government officials provided LSC with information on 7 April 2006 about WAG support for advice services. Awaiting first draft of proposals for roll-out of new Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks across Wales</p>
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<p><b>Grants for Further and Higher Education</b></p> <p>To introduce new measures improving young people's access to post-16 education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £700k p.a available from Assembly Government for GP scheme to refer patients to Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) on benefit issues;</li> <li>• CAB bases in new and accessible community-focused schools</li> <li>• New study of barriers to ethnic minorities gaining benefit advice</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Assembly Learning Grants to help young people in low income households into further or higher education</li> <li>• Fortnightly Education Maintenance Allowance to encourage 16 - 18 year olds from lower income households to continue their education after 16</li> </ul>	
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<p>To promote the benefits of learning and to provide readily accessible information and advice to potential learners of all ages on learning opportunities available.</p>		<p>Library works with education sector at all levels to provide information on health promotion and public health free to all learners of all ages. Accessible electronically as well as in print formats</p> <p>Article on Health Promotion Library Services contributed to April issue End Child Poverty Network newsletter to raise awareness of services available.</p>
<p>To create a network of community learning centres throughout Wales in line with local need</p>		
<p>To promote and develop the availability of IT facilities in communities and IT skills for children and young people</p>	<p>Through initiatives such as <a href="#">Communities @one</a> and Cymru ar Lein the Assembly Government will ensure that people in the most deprived areas of Wales can acquire the skills and understanding to participate in and benefit from the Information Age.</p>	<p>Communities @One has recently been launched and community brokers are working in the eligible areas. There is little in the way of grant funded projects to date as the brokers are working with local groups to identify their priorities. In future, updates will refer to specific projects that are of benefit to children and young people.</p>

## **PARTICIPATION POVERTY**

**Children from poor families often feel left out of activities others enjoy. This can be even more acute for disabled and ethnic minority children. We are working to ensure that all children can participate fully in play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities as well as the full range of learning opportunities. Our plans are set out in the paper: “Children and Young People; Rights to Action.”**

Strategic Objectives	Policies and Programmes in Place	Update
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<p><b>Leisure and Social Activity</b></p> <p>To get all youngsters involved in leisure and social activity including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce specific actions through the Climbing Higher Action Plan which focus on young people participating in sport and physical activity.</li> <li>• Introduction of the Coaching Plan for Wales.</li> <li>• Extra curricular sporting activities under the Dragon Sport programme.</li> <li>• Local council discount cards for sports and leisure pursuits.</li> <li>• Free swimming during school holidays.</li> <li>• Community Facilities and Activities Programme grants to create or upgrade multiple-use community facilities.</li> <li>• Programmes to spread good practice for community action against anti-social behaviour by young people.</li> <li>• £3.5m new investment in Safe Routes for cycling or walking to school.</li> </ul>	<p>The Climbing Higher strategy on sport and physical activity will be backed by an action plan, which will be announced shortly. This will provide key actions to help achieve the long term targets and aims of the strategy. Some of these targets will involve participation in sport and physical activity by young people.</p> <p>£3.8million has been made available under the Safe Routes to School initiative for 2006-07.</p>
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<p><b>Anti-Discrimination and Bullying</b></p> <p>To ensure children are not stigmatized at school because of their background or circumstances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cashless school cafeteria to avoid embarrassment for pupils receiving free school meals;</li> <li>• Low interest loans or grants for school uniforms;</li> <li>• Teachers' equality training extended to classroom assistants;</li> <li>• New guidance for school governing bodies on policies regarding equality and keeping disadvantaged pupils from dropping out;</li> <li>• Regional anti-bullying conferences;</li> <li>• Mentoring and friendship schemes for vulnerable pupils;</li> </ul>	<p>This investment will enable an additional 50 schemes to be developed. The Assembly Government is building on its commitment to make walking and cycling to school not only a healthy option for children, but also a safe option</p> <p>This proposal contained in 'Appetite for Life Report' to be considered by Cabinet shortly.</p>
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<p><b>Listening to Young Voices</b></p> <p>To enhance the engagement with and participation of children and young people in society and at all levels of government to make their views known, locally, regionally and nationally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head teacher training on Assembly Government anti-bullying guidance;</li> <li>• Guidance for educationalists to maximise participation by groups such as ethnic or disabled people, travellers and young parents.</li>   <li>• Ensuring disadvantaged young people take part in these forums;</li> <li>• Preparing guidance so all groups can participate in school councils;</li>   <li>• Taking the views of young carers into account through the Young Carers Advisory Panel and Carers</li> </ul>	<p>During 2006-07 all Young People's Partnerships (YPPs) across Wales are required as a national priority to take steps to extend the arrangements supporting participation of young people in decision making to include more young people from special interest and hard to reach groups. This must include BME young people and may also include, for example, homeless young people, asylum seekers and others in low income situations.</p> <p>Following discussion with young carers across Wales the consultation and participation arrangements were changed</p>
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<p>To expand young people's rights to an advocate to complain about public services and further improving the advocacy service</p>	<p>Focus Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing the commissioning of advocacy services at local and regional level through local Framework Partnerships and in collaboration at regional level.</li> </ul>	<p>during 2005-06. Three regional groups have now been set up, consisting of representatives from every Young Carers Project in the region. These groups will identify issues and concerns that they want raised with the Carers' Strategy Review Panel, and also elect representatives to attend Panel meetings. Links will be maintained with Funky Dragon and with the Young Carers Workers' Network.</p> <p>These arrangements are facilitated by Children in Wales under a service level agreement with the Welsh Assembly Government.</p> <p>Funky Dragon have worked during 2004-06 to act as a catalyst to engage young people from special interest groups in their activities. They have had limited success.</p>
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## SERVICE POVERTY

To develop joined up public services that are tailored and integrated to meet the needs of children and young people through strong partnership arrangements

Strategic Objectives	Policies and Programmes in Place	Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing significant extra resources from 2005-2008, for better provision for children in their early years, particularly in the most deprived areas.</li>   <li>• Cymorth – Children and Families Support Fund</li>   <li>• Children's Information Service to point parents towards local provision.</li>   <li>• New guidance to help schools get involved in providing these facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>£46 million is available in 2006-08 under the 'Flying Start' initiative for 0-3 year olds in the most deprived areas. The central offering will be free part-time care for two year-olds. It will also include parenting support and extensions of health visiting and the Books for Babies scheme.</p> <p>Cymorth allocations in 2006-07 increased to a total of £55 million, over £11 million more than in previous year.</p> <p>CIS exist in all local authority areas, and the Childcare Bill is extending the range of services they are required to cover.</p> <p>Guidance on community focused schools issued in 2006 and the allocation letter for 2006-07 linked this initiative with Flying Start and the Foundation Phase.</p>

<p>To provide an inclusive curriculum that motivates all children and young people and prepares them for life and work as well as continuing education and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better Schools Fund (grant to LEAs for measures to support innovation and implementation of new initiatives). Allocation formula includes deprivation weighting across all 6 Activity Areas (weighting ranges from 20% to 33.3%). Overall programme value is £39m.</li> <li>• At least one Integrated Centre in each local authority area, providing a combination of childcare, play, early years education, community education and family support services.</li> <li>• Appointment of a lead director for Children and Young People and a Children and Young People's Framework Partnership in all 22 areas.</li> <li>• Support for accessible leisure, social and play activity in isolated areas, such as mobile youth clubs, toy libraries and day trips for youngsters.</li> </ul>	<p>41 centres are either open, under construction or planned to open by the end of 2007.</p> <p>Framework Partnerships and lead directors are in place in all areas and will become a statutory requirement in the autumn of 2006.</p> <p>Provided through Cymorth</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Parenting Action Plan” to develop parenting skills</li> <li>• Better access to health surveillance to spot delays in child development;</li> <li>• Ten-year All-Wales Strategy for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to ensure all professionals involved work closely together;</li> <li>• Confidential advice for young people on emotional well-being;</li> <li>• Close monitoring of existing mental health service effectiveness;</li> <li>• New guidance for schools on promoting good mental health;</li> <li>• Grant for confidential domestic abuse Helpline;</li> <li>• All-Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy” for co-ordinated victim</li> </ul>	<p>Published in December 2005, including commitment to free training for 120 trainers in Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton) Parenting Programme this year.</p>
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	<p>support ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education to prevent domestic abuse</li><li>• Guidance to help education professionals identify and deal with child poverty issues in non-stigmatising ways;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning Pathways providing wider curriculum choice for 14-19 year olds, helping those from deprived backgrounds in particular;</li><li>• Learning coaches to help reduce truancy, exclusions and drop-out;</li><li>• Pilot projects to tackle truancy and bad behaviour including electronic registration and enhanced role for the Education Welfare Service;</li><li>• More freedom for Governors to provide community services from school premises and grants to encourage this</li></ul></li></ul>	
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<p>To improve and make more accessible a range of important services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sure Start – a comprehensive service delivering confidence and skills- building support from mothers’ pregnancy through pre-school years including peer support on issues such as breastfeeding or childhood illnesses.</li> <li>• Improving the Welsh housing stock to improve quality of life and promote the Assembly Government’s Social Justice agenda;</li> <li>• All new houses built in Wales by Registered Social Landlords must meet minimum quality requirements set out in the Welsh Assembly Governments Development Quality Requirements;</li> <li>• Housing – reduction and elimination of bed &amp; breakfast and other temporary accommodation, new guidelines to social landlords on legal obligations and mediation for young people to prevent homelessness;</li> </ul>	<p>The Cymorth fund, which includes Sure Start, is being increased by over £11 million between 2006 and 2008.</p> <p>The Assembly Government’s National Housing Strategy provides a vision for the Welsh housing stock that gives all households in Wales the opportunity to live in good quality homes, which, amongst other things are fuel efficient and well insulated. The Assembly Government will expect social housing landlords to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for all their dwellings by 2012.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security - £5million Assembly Government investment in hard-wired detection equipment in more than 60,000 social housing properties;</li> <li>• Food and Fitness – expanding the successful Free School Breakfast initiative to all interested primary schools by January 2007;</li> <li>• Expanding network of " Health Promoting Schools" to all parts of Wales;</li> <li>• Rural services - new Rural Development Plan 2007 – 2013, to spread prosperity, strengthen communities and improve public transport</li> </ul>	<p>Increased funding has been provided to all 22 local healthy school schemes, which have all been accredited as part of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes, to enable them to meet the declared targets of 75% of all maintained schools involved by March 2008 and all by March 2010</p> <p>As the new Plan will not be operational until January 2007, activity during the next 12 months will focus on developing the individual schemes and delivery mechanisms that will deliver the support available under the Plan. This will mean working closely with key stakeholders and local groups to develop the detail of the schemes and agreeing the best delivery option. Officials will also be working with</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop better community transport as part of an integrated transport system for Wales including planning, public information and availability.</li> <li>• Targets published in 'Designed for Life' that 3/4 of maintained schools will be involved in the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes by March 2008 and all by March 2010.</li> </ul>	<p>stakeholders for Axes 3 and 4, which target community regeneration and social exclusion, to agree how the local Partnerships and Leader Action Groups will be selected and agreeing the content and format of Local Development Strategies that they will need to prepare to secure funding under these Axes. The stakeholder group will be discussing ways of involving young people in the consultation process.</p> <p>Assembly Government's Local Transport Services Grant allocations to local authorities in 2006-07 total £9.4 million. This is additional to local authorities' own funding of socially-necessary bus and community transport services and helps boost the number and range of such services.</p> <p>Assembly Government recently provided increased funding to local healthy school schemes to enable them to meet these targets.</p> <p>The Inequalities in Health Fund is funding twenty-four projects. Of the twenty-four 7 are in North Wales; 5 in Mid and West Wales; 12 in South-East Wales. The emphasis of these is on physical activity and diet.</p>
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	<p><b>Communities First Programme</b> by encouraging children and young people to become actively involved in developing and implementing regeneration projects in their areas.</p>	<p><b>Communities First Guidance</b> The revised guidance for Communities First will be published in summer 2006. The guidance will contain detailed advice for Communities First Partnerships and Co-ordinators on a range of issues including the involvement of children and young people in the activities of the Partnerships. The guidance will be distributed widely.</p> <p><b>Cymorth Guidance</b> The Cymorth guidance has been re-written and states that representatives of Children and Young People's Partnerships should meet annually with representatives of Communities First Partnerships within the local authority area, in good time to influence the dispersal of Cymorth funds. The purpose of the meeting is for Communities First Partnerships to appraise the Children and Young People's Framework Partnership to explain their agreed priorities for children and young people in general, and for Cymorth investment in particular. The Cymorth plan should take account of the Communities First priorities set out in the meeting.</p>
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