

## COMMUNITY COHESION FUND GUIDANCE 2010/11

### Background

Wales needs strong, resilient and harmonious communities that can respond effectively to the increasing pace and scale of economic, social and cultural change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. 'Getting On Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales' which was launched in December 2009, is part of the Welsh Assembly Government's 'One Wales' commitments to achieve a fair and just society in which all citizens are empowered to determine their own lives and to shape the communities in which they live.

A copy of the Community Cohesion Strategy is available at <http://wales.gov.uk/communitycohesion>

### Purpose of the Fund

The purpose of the Fund during 2009/10 was to enable local partnerships to pump prime cohesion work in local communities in order to support the implementation of the Community Cohesion Strategy.

During 2010/11 partnerships should adopt a strategic approach to enable them to map community cohesion issues in their local area and draw up plans to tackle these. Projects funded during 2010/11 should be identified using a robust evidence base and should be outcome focused.

### Criteria for Use of Funding

The Fund should be used to support activities that meet the overall aims and objectives of the Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.

Local authorities should continue to work closely with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Communities First (CF) Partnerships to form local partnerships or a community cohesion sub-group. They should also engage with relevant Third Sector organisations who will be well placed to help identify local cohesion problems and possible solutions, for example local voluntary councils, Community and Town Councils and equality groups. A full list of groups that could be invited to join a local cohesion partnership can be found on p14 of the Strategy. Local authorities could also explore working across boundaries to develop activities.

Potential projects that undertake a strategic approach to developing a local community cohesion action plan could include:

- Work to develop and support local partnership working and to share best practice on cohesion. Undertaking community mapping activities, working with communities to establish local priorities for action;
- Establishing local methods of data collection and information gathering to support community mapping;
- Undertaking activities to address locally identified cohesion priorities, as outlined in the Local Authority Action Plan;
- Mainstreaming community cohesion across policy and service delivery areas.

Partners are encouraged to determine what their particular needs are at a local level in terms of community cohesion in consultation with local communities and to decide on actions that best meet these needs. Research commissioned by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion has indicated that individual factors alone have a relatively small impact on the perceptions of cohesion and it is therefore suggested that there should be an emphasis on tackling multiple issues simultaneously.

Funding should be aligned with the core aims and objectives of the Community Cohesion Strategy. The Strategy focuses on the policy and service delivery areas which have been identified as having a positive impact on local cohesion. Funding should look to provide positive links to these areas, including:

**Housing** – An approach to consider how to create safe, inclusive communities, including how to reduce anti-social behaviour and to look at projects to increase community interaction, so that local decisions can be made to influence local need.

**Learning** – Funding could be targeted to improve understanding and knowledge across schools, higher education and lifelong learning. Projects could focus on how to increase basic skills and how to ensure that young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are fully involved in cohesion activities.

**Communication** - An example of this type of action would be a project which provides additional resources for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Funding could also be targeted to support the Welsh Language, to engage with the media and to utilise written information to communicate effectively.

**Equality and Social Inclusion** - Partners should also consider how cohesion impacts on the most disadvantaged groups in a community, this could include projects that address one or more of the six themes of the Equalities and Human Rights Framework, which are age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, disability and religion and belief. The fund could also be used to support projects that focus on social inclusion such as identifying the cohesion priorities in deprived communities as defined by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**Preventing Violent Extremism** - This could include addressing all forms of violent extremism, including the influence of far right extremism in some local areas, where it is threatening community cohesion. Links could also be made with the Prevent work being carried out by CSPs and to increase resilience within local communities.

An analysis of projects from 2009/10 is available at [www.wales.gov.uk/communitycohesion](http://www.wales.gov.uk/communitycohesion)

### **Special Conditions**

At least 50% of the funding should be used to benefit the designated CF areas, or residents from those areas where services are being provided elsewhere. CF Partnerships should be consulted before proposals for use of this money are brought forward, and the proposals should be in line with needs of the CF areas regarding community cohesion. Evidence should be provided during the monitoring and evaluation of projects that demonstrates how CF areas have benefited from the funding.