



A – Z Introductory Guide to Health and Social Care in Scotland

Social Inclusion

Brief description

Social inclusion is about reducing inequalities between the least advantaged groups and communities and the rest of society by closing the opportunity gap and ensuring that support reaches those who need it most.

National Policy

Social inclusion as a theme is subsumed within the Scottish Executive's broader *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (CtOG) strategy for tackling poverty and disadvantage.

The strategy operates at three levels:

- A theme cutting across all Executive Departments and Ministerial portfolios;
- A commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020, shared with the UK government;
- A focused work programme, with 6 objectives and 10 targets, to drive particular action on: economic inactivity; youth education, training and employment; low pay; health inequality; vulnerable children; educational attainment, children in care; rural services; community regeneration; and financial inclusion.

Implications for Joint Working

Delivery of the CtOG targets relies heavily on partnership working.

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) are delivering the area-based CtOG targets for community regeneration and rural services. CPPs are now absorbing the functions of Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIP), with SIP and Better Neighbourhood Service funding being drawn together into the Community Regeneration Fund. Community and voluntary organisations have a role as CPP partners.

The delivery of integrated children's services will require the cooperation of social work services, health and education authorities. Improving the lives of children in or leaving care is a particular priority.

Several targets have an employment and health dimension. Those people on incapacity benefits living in areas where there are concentrations of worklessness, but who are able to work, will be encouraged to do so. The NHS will provide a number of job opportunities with support for training and progression once in post. Reductions in cancer and chronic

heart disease (CHD) will improve the quality of life of people in deprived communities, and their employability prospects.

More generally, health authorities will soon be given a role in helping deliver the Executive's Employability Framework, which is intended to increase the opportunities for sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including those with physical or mental disabilities. Framework delivery will build upon the Glasgow Welfare to Work Forum model, which brings together the work of Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, Jobcentre Plus, Greater Glasgow Health Board, Glasgow City Council, the UK government and the Scottish Executive.

Many of the CtOG target delivery plans contribute to eradicating child poverty, though a wider range of activities are underway across the Executive and its agencies. For example, Sure Start, Starting Well, and free fruit for all school children in primaries 1 and 2 are helping give children the best start in life. Childcare for disadvantaged parents is being provided through our Working for Families programme.

Other Executive activities contribute to the wider CtOG theme, such as free personal and nursing care for older people, homelessness strategy, or the Active Schools programme for engaging children in physical activity.

How can I find out more?

To find out more, you can visit the Scottish Executive Closing the Opportunity Gap website, which provides contact details for the policy team:

www.scotland.gov.uk/closingtheopportunitygap

The National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-Being:

www.wellontheweb.net

Communities Scotland, the Executive's Community Regeneration agency:

www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

Details of the Partnership Representatives' Network (PRN), the national network for community and voluntary sector representatives involved in SIPs are available on the website of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO):

www.scvo.org.uk/

Details of additional social inclusion research projects can be found in the Scottish Executive's Social Inclusion Research Bulletin, which provides details of recently completed and ongoing research projects funded by the Scottish Executive:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/03/3183430/34329

London School of Economics: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion:

<http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/publications/case.asp>

UK Social Exclusion website:

www.socialexclusion.gov.uk