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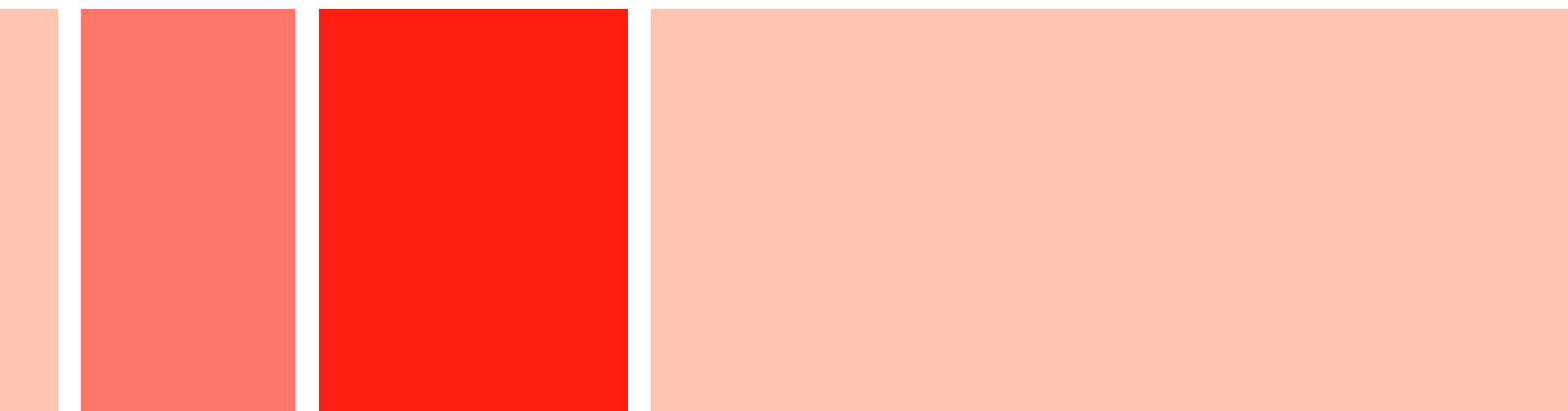
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# An Evaluation of Getting on Together: The Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales



# **An Evaluation of Getting on Together: The Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales**

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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# Executive Summary

## Background

This report details findings to emerge from a two year evaluation of the delivery and impact of *Getting on Together*, the Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales. An evaluation of *Getting on Together* was commissioned by the Welsh Government in summer 2010 and was charged with:

- informing understanding of community cohesion issues in different parts of Wales, within and between different communities, and factors strengthening and weakening cohesion
- conducting a process evaluation of the implementation of the strategy
- conducting an outcome evaluation of the impact of the strategy in the first two years
- giving advice on more effective implementation of the strategy, monitoring and evaluation.

There were three major strands to the evaluation approach, each focusing on a key component of the framework developed to support delivery of *Getting on Together*. The *Welsh Government* strand of work focused on the activities of the Community Cohesion Unit and its success in delivering on the core objectives of mainstreaming community cohesion within the Welsh Government and providing a framework to support local delivery of *Getting on Together*. The local authority strand of work focused on local engagement with *Getting on Together* and approaches to promoting community cohesion. Three rounds of interviews were conducted with the community cohesion lead in all 22 local authorities in Wales. A *case study* strand evaluated the delivery of a sample of projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund and associated outcomes. A fourth strand of work focused on monitoring trends in cohesion through analysis of survey and administrative data.

## Community Cohesion in Wales

Analysis revealed the level of cohesion within Wales to have varied through time, dipping in 2005 and falling again in recent years. No obvious measure of community cohesion at the local level was found to be available in Wales. However, proxy measures of cohesion at the local level can be generated using administrative data. On the basis of this data, it is possible to identify four types of local authority in Wales based on cohesion factors: Rural Wales, Penurban Fringes; Large Towns and Cities; and Welsh Valleys.

## Getting on Together - A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales

*Getting on Together*, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, was launched in December 2009. It provides an understanding of community cohesion that is distinct and different to the agenda in England, in that it recognises the potential for deprivation and social exclusion to undermine community cohesion.

A Community Cohesion Unit was established in the Welsh Government and charged with overseeing delivery of the strategy. The work of the Community Cohesion Unit was guided by an action plan that accompanied *Getting on Together*, which prioritised efforts to provide a framework to support the local strategic approach to promoting community cohesion; mainstreaming cohesion across Welsh Government; and the provision of guidance on community cohesion. Local authorities were recognised as the agency best placed to take the lead on promoting community cohesion at the local level and received an annual allocation from the Community Cohesion Fund to support local efforts to promote cohesion.

### **The Welsh Government Role in Promoting Community Cohesion**

The Community Cohesion Unit in the Welsh Government has encountered various challenges in delivering against the key objectives outlined in the Community Cohesion Action Plan. The limits of available data have undermined efforts to promote the mapping and monitoring of community cohesion, certain policy areas within the Welsh Government have proved resistant to engaging with the agenda, and it has not always proved possible to ground guidance in an understanding of what constitutes best practice. However, significant progress has been made against the majority of action plan objectives and most have been successfully delivered.

The Community Cohesion Unit in the Welsh Government successfully developed a framework for supporting local delivery of community cohesion. The Community Cohesion Fund was key to this success. It captured the attention and promoted the engagement of all 22 local authorities with the community cohesion agenda. Advice and guidance about mapping and monitoring cohesion has been shared with local authorities via the community cohesion internet site and through specially commissioned guidance. Regional community cohesion practitioner networks have provided local authorities with an opportunity to share insights and information. The Community Cohesion Unit has informed, guided, cajoled and challenged colleagues across Welsh Government to engage with the community cohesion agenda, although some have remained sceptical about the relevance of the agenda to their work. Best practice has been shared through the practitioner networks and a toolkit of examples on the Welsh Government cohesion website, although the projects detailed have not been subject to evaluation and cannot necessarily be considered examples of best or good practice.

### **Local Delivery of Getting on Together**

Most local authorities have made progress advancing the community cohesion agenda in their local area through some combination of targeted interventions, the appointment of dedicated staff, and mapping and mainstreaming activities. The Community Cohesion Fund and associated guidance has been the key catalyst for these activities. There has been variation in the extent to which local authorities have engaged with and actively promoted the community cohesion agenda, and local approaches to delivering *Getting on Together* varied widely. Rural authorities have typically been less engaged, in terms of analysing and understanding cohesion issues, determining priorities and mainstreaming the agenda. Frequently, rural authorities have struggled to identify cohesion priorities. Large towns and cities

tended to be the most engaged, followed by the Welsh Valleys and the Penurban Fringes.

A series of factors were identified as critical to effective local delivery. In particular, progress was most evident in areas with a dedicated community cohesion officer, a community cohesion action plan or strategy, and where systematic attempts had been made to map local needs and identify priority issues. Real progress mainstreaming community cohesion had been made by many local authorities. However, staff in certain policy areas remained uncertain about the relevance of community cohesion to their work or how they might contribute to efforts to promote cohesion locally.

### **Local Interventions and Impacts**

The Community Cohesion Fund was allocated to the 22 local authorities in Wales and supported more than 600 local projects between 2009/10 and 2011/12. Local authorities chose to utilise the Fund in different ways, some supporting a large number of small projects and others allocating the majority of the Fund to one or two projects.

Projects were typically aligned with local community cohesion priorities but this was not always the case. Projects which were developed in local authority areas with no community cohesion strategy or action plan and no dedicated cohesion officer, failed to speak to clearly identified local priorities, struggled to make a wider strategic contribution, provided little additionality and failed to support efforts to mainstream cohesion. In some cases, the Community Cohesion Fund appeared to be regarded as just another source of grant income.

The 10 case study projects provided evidence of additionality. Some of the projects were unlikely to have taken place without support of the Fund. There were also examples of ongoing projects that approached the Fund for help bridging a gap in funding and consequently assumed a more explicit focus on promoting cohesion. The achievements of the case study projects can be summarised under four key headings:

- *responsive local services* - promoting greater understanding and responsiveness among local service providers to the priorities of the community cohesion agenda
- *promoting understanding* - increasing understanding between different groups, such as new arrivals and settled populations, or between young and old people
- *integration support* - advice and assistance for newcomers, including language training, in a bid to help them better understand and live in their new town, access key services and seek work
- *managing tensions* - mediating between different groups and resolving emerging conflicts

In some cases the gains secured by case study projects appear likely to be sustained. A number of the projects secured alternative funding and continued following the end of Community Cohesion Fund support. The Fund had also pump-

primed new projects, which subsequently extended the scope and reach of the service they were providing.

## **Conclusions**

Great strides have been made promoting community cohesion and delivering *Getting on Together* since it was launched in late 2009. The key facets of the Welsh approach to community cohesion have been outlined and widely disseminated. A more joined-up approach to community cohesion has been nurtured across department boundaries within the Welsh Government. Local authorities and their partners have been provided with a framework to support the development of a local approach to community cohesion. All 22 local authorities in Wales have engaged with the agenda and hundreds of local projects have been delivered in a bid to strengthen community cohesion in Wales.

Key success factors supporting efforts to raise awareness of community cohesion and promote attention to the agenda at local and national level have been revealed to include:

- high level commitment within the Welsh Government
- the success of *Getting on Together* in providing a clear, Welsh specific understanding of community cohesion
- the generation of an action plan to support delivery of *Getting on Together*
- the creation of a dedicated unit within the Welsh Government, which has handed responsibility for leading on the delivery of *Getting on Together*
- the Community Cohesion Fund, which proved critical in securing the engagement of local authorities with the cohesion agenda
- the work of community cohesion lead officers at the local level and, in particular, the important role played by dedicated community cohesion officers

Various challenges have also been encountered along the way and progress has been mixed on some priorities. Success in mainstreaming cohesion within the Welsh Government has been variable. Commitment to the agenda has been limited among some local authorities. Progress developing systems for monitoring cohesion has also been slow.

## **Recommendations**

Sustaining the gains secured through delivery of *Getting on Together* and overcoming some of the more irretractable problems that have inhibited progress will require:

- high level commitment to the agenda within the Welsh Government
- a dedicated team in the Welsh Government to lead on community cohesion
- renewal of the community cohesion action plan
- a dedicated community cohesion lead in every local authority

- collection of perception data on community cohesion at local and national levels
- maximising links between cohesion objectives and the Communities First programme
- linking efforts to promote and mainstream community cohesion to delivery of the Equalities Duty



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report details findings to emerge from a two year evaluation of the delivery and impact of Getting on Together, the Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales. Getting on Together was launched in December 2009 with the aim of shaping and supporting local efforts to improve community cohesion across Wales. A Community Cohesion Unit was established in the Welsh Government and charged with overseeing delivery of the strategy. This involved setting out a framework supporting a partnership approach to community cohesion at the local level, as well as promoting a more joined-up approach to cohesion across departmental boundaries within the Welsh Government. Local authorities were identified as best placed to take the lead on promoting community cohesion at the local level.

An evaluation of Getting on Together was commissioned by the Welsh Government in summer 2010 and was charged with:

- informing understanding of community cohesion issues in different parts of Wales, within and between different communities, and factors strengthening and weakening cohesion
- conducting a process evaluation of the implementation of the strategy
- conducting an outcome evaluation of the impact of the strategy in the first two years
- giving advice on more effective implementation of the strategy, monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluation was carried out by a team from the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University.

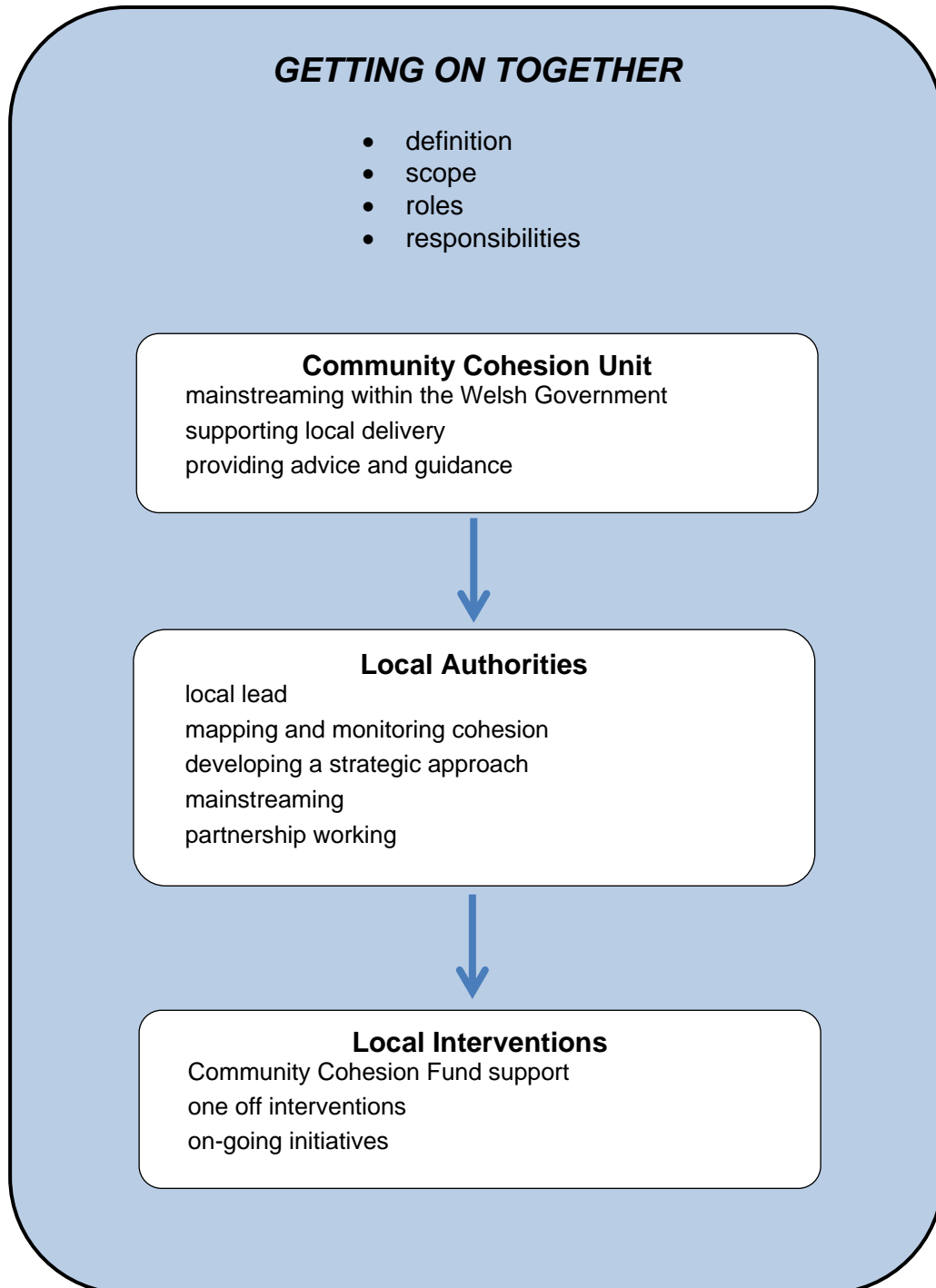
## 1.2 Promoting Community Cohesion in Wales: An Overview

Figure 1.1 summarises the framework for promoting community cohesion developed and implemented by the Welsh Government. Four key components are identified:

- **Getting on Together** provided the impetus, rationale and logic of the approach and through its focus and content served to scope the Welsh Government's ambitions for the agenda.
- **The Community Cohesion Unit** in the Welsh Government was tasked with leading on delivery of the strategy, its responsibilities including the mainstreaming of cohesion within the Welsh Government and the generation of a framework to support local efforts to promote community cohesion across Wales.
- **Local authorities** were identified as the agency best placed to take the lead on promoting community cohesion at the local level, supported by advice, guidance and resources provided by the Community Cohesion Unit and working in partnership with other local agencies.

- **Projects and interventions** were recognised as necessary, in addition to mainstreaming activities, to target particular problems or challenges. Delivered by local authorities, other statutory agencies and third sector organisations, hundreds of projects were supported across Wales by the Welsh Government's Community Cohesion Fund.

**Figure 1.1: Delivering Community Cohesion**



### 1.3 Approach to the Evaluation

There were three major strands to the evaluation approach, each focusing on a key component of the framework developed to support delivery of *Getting on Together* (see Figure 1.1):

- 1. The Welsh Government** - this strand of work focused on the activities of the Community Cohesion Unit and its success in delivering on the core objectives of mainstreaming community cohesion within the Welsh Government and providing a framework to support local delivery of *Getting on Together*. In addition to regular contact and discussion with the Community Cohesion Unit, three rounds of interviews (October/November 2010, May/June 2011 and February/March 2012) were conducted with all members of staff within the Unit and colleagues working in other policy areas within the Welsh Government, including Prevent, education, regeneration, equalities, housing, health and social research. The focus of the first round of interviews was on exploring the history of the Strategy, clarifying its aims and objectives and gaining an overview of the implementation process. Subsequent interviews reviewed progress made with implementation and meeting community cohesion objectives and sought to uncover challenges encountered and problems overcome. The majority of interviews were conducted face to face, recorded and transcribed to facilitate analysis. The team also conducted a review of the Welsh Government consultation documents and strategies for the purposes of exploring success in mainstreaming community cohesion. Finally, analysis was also carried out of local authority submissions to the Community Cohesion Unit, including applications for Community Cohesion Fund support.
- 2. Local authorities** - this strand of work focused on local engagement with *Getting on Together* and approaches to promoting community cohesion. Three rounds of interviews were conducted with the community cohesion lead in all 22 local authorities in Wales (October/November 2010, May/June 2011 and February/March 2012). The first round of interviews involved a member of the evaluation team visiting each local authority and interviewing the community cohesion lead face-to-face. In subsequent rounds of interviews, a sample of local authorities from across Wales were visited and interviewed face-to-face, while other interviews were conducted over the telephone. The visits allowed the team to engage in in-depth discussions with community cohesion leads and also meet with partners within and outwith the local authority. Discussion covered a range of topics, including: interpretations and definitions of community cohesion and local authority 'buy-in' to the agenda; thoughts and comments on the national strategy; the local approach to implementation (including, mainstreaming, partnership working, strategy development); the roles of different agencies (local authority departments, voluntary sector, local communities); and efforts to map key challenges and identify priorities for action. Wherever possible, interviews were recorded and transcribed into verbatim text for analysis.
- 3. Case studies** - the Community Cohesion Fund was central to the Welsh Government's approach to delivering *Getting on Together*. The Fund allocated around £1.5 million per year across the 22 local authorities in Wales to support

local projects designed to promote community cohesion. A case study approach was adopted in evaluating the delivery of these projects and associated outcomes. Ten case study projects were selected through the application of a sampling frame designed to ensure the inclusion of a selection of mainstreaming activities and targeted initiatives that were: addressing different priorities outlined in *Getting on Together* (for example, housing, Prevent, English language training, learning and schools); being delivered by local authorities and their partners located across Wales; located in different cohesion contexts; and targeted at different population groups.

A fourth strand of work focused on monitoring trends in cohesion:

4. **Analysis of survey and administrative data** - this strand focused on exploring and pursuing the possibilities for tracking trends in community cohesion. This involved the exploration and analysis of what data are available at local and national level. The lack of perception data on community cohesion led the team to explore the potential of proxy measures to be employed to monitor changes in cohesion. This strand of work also involved the development of a local authority typology to facilitate understanding of social trend data in the context of community cohesion and to gauge outcomes over time. Guidance on monitoring cohesion was fed back to the Welsh Government during the course of the evaluation, including recommendations about perception questions on cohesion to be included in the National Survey for Wales and proxy measures of cohesion to inform Results Based Accounting at the local level.

#### 1.4 Structure of the Report

Discussion starts with a review of community cohesion in Wales. The subsequent four chapters present the substantive findings to emerge from the evaluation, each focusing on a key component of the delivery framework for *Getting on Together* outlined in Figure 1.1:

- **Chapter 3** describes the development of *Getting on Together* and outlines the delivery framework in more detail.
- **Chapter 4** evaluates the role and contribution of the Community Cohesion Unit to the delivery of *Getting on Together*.
- **Chapter 5** evaluates local delivery, focusing on local authority engagement with the agenda and approaches to promoting community cohesion.
- **Chapter 6** presents findings from the analysis of local projects and interventions delivered by local authorities, other statutory agencies and third sector organisations supported by the Community Cohesion Fund.

A final concluding chapter reviews the overarching findings regarding the implementation and outcomes related to the first two years of delivering *Getting on Together*.

## 2 Community Cohesion in Wales

### Key Findings

- the level of cohesion within Wales has varied through time, dipping in 2005 and falling again in recent years
- there is currently no obvious measure of community cohesion at the local level in Wales
- proxy measures of cohesion at the local level can be generated using administrative data
- it is possible to identify four types of local authority in Wales based on cohesion factors: Rural Wales, Penurban Fringes; Large Towns and Cities; and Welsh Valleys

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the community cohesion situation in Wales. The problems and challenges of generating a picture and monitoring trends in community cohesion at the local and national level are outlined, before discussion goes on to present an overview of recent trends in cohesion at the national level. Attention then turns to the local level and draws on a series of proxy indicators constructed from administrative data to generate a local authority cohesion typology.

### 2.2 Monitoring Community Cohesion: Limits and Possibilities

Community cohesion is the term used to describe how everyone in a geographical area lives alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect. This apparently simple definition engages with a complex array of issues, including citizenship rights and responsibilities, perceptions of belonging, fairness and trust, and relationships between different groups. This complexity, and the fact that it is a concept rooted in perceptions and attitudes, renders the measurement of community cohesion a real challenge.

In 2003, the Home Office set out a list of 10 indicators to be used by local authorities in England and their partners to help build a picture of community cohesion in their area. A headline indicator was presented as capturing the main essence of community cohesion in a single survey question: "*to what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area (within 15/20 minute walking distance) is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together*" (Home Office, 2003<sup>1</sup>). A further nine indicators were grouped under the themes of the broad definition of community cohesion which appeared in guidance to local authorities in England issued in 2002.

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office (2003) Building a Picture of Community Cohesion. A Guide for Local authorities and Their Partners. London: Home Office.

This headline indicator is the most widely used measure of community cohesion. It has been used to gauge community cohesion at the regional level across England and Wales via the Citizenship Survey; and at the district level for English local authorities via the *Place Survey* (replacing the *Best Value User Satisfaction Survey*). Both of these surveys have now been discontinued. The last year of the Place Survey was 2008-9, and the final year of the Citizenship Survey was 2010-11.

The National Survey for Wales (formerly the Living in Wales Survey, until 2009) has in some years included a question similar to the headline indicator, but no cohesion question has been consistently used across years. More importantly, for this evaluation, sample sizes for the National Survey for Wales have previously been too small to provide reliable findings at the district level for any single year; although there are plans to remedy this in future years.

This means that, to date, the only national trend data for Wales on community cohesion is available through the Citizenship Survey, between 2003 (when the cohesion question was first used) and 2010-11 (when the survey concluded).

At the local level, there is currently no obvious measure of cohesion. In response, the Welsh Government officials and cohesion leads in all Welsh local authorities were asked about other, perhaps non-publically available, data that might serve as a measure for community cohesion at the local level. Some local authorities (e.g. Rhondda Cynon Taff) reported working with a range of administrative data to map and monitor cohesion issues locally, and some local authorities had explored perceptions of cohesion using Citizen's Panels<sup>2</sup> and targeted surveys in particular neighbourhoods. However, no source of perception data was uncovered that consistently measured cohesion across all the Welsh local authorities.

### **2.3 Generating a Picture of Community Cohesion in Wales**

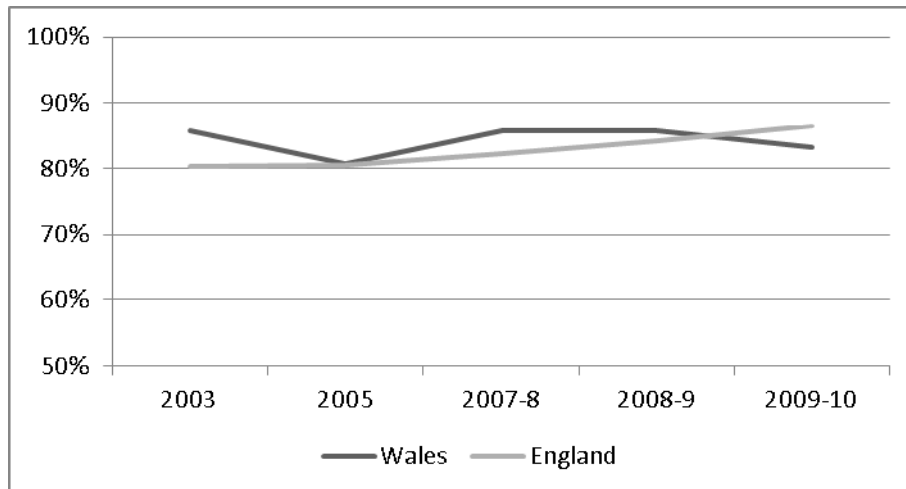
Using the Citizenship Survey it is possible to gauge how perceptions of cohesion have changed over time at the national level for Wales. In addition to the headline measure of cohesion - whether people from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area - the survey allows us to look at questions relating to social relationships and networks at the neighbourhood level and attachment to community life.

Table 2.1 gives an indication of the levels of neighbourhood cohesion in England and Wales at five time points between 2003 and 2009-10. Based on the headline indicator, it is suggested that the level of cohesion in Wales varied by five percentage points across the whole period, with between 81 and 86 per cent of respondents to the Citizenship Survey strongly agreeing that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their local area. Cohesion dipped to its lowest level in Wales in 2005, rising again subsequently, but falling again between 2008-9 and 2009-10; and falling for the first time below the level in England, where neighbourhood cohesion gradually increased across the five time points.

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<sup>2</sup> A Citizens' Panel usually refers to a large, demographically representative group of citizens, which are regularly consulted to assess public preferences and opinions.

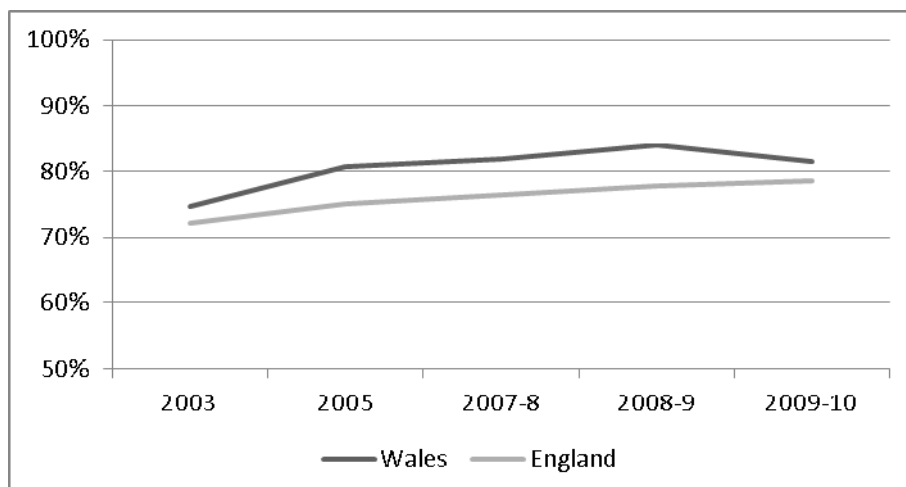
**Figure 2.1: % of respondents who agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (definitely/tend to agree)**



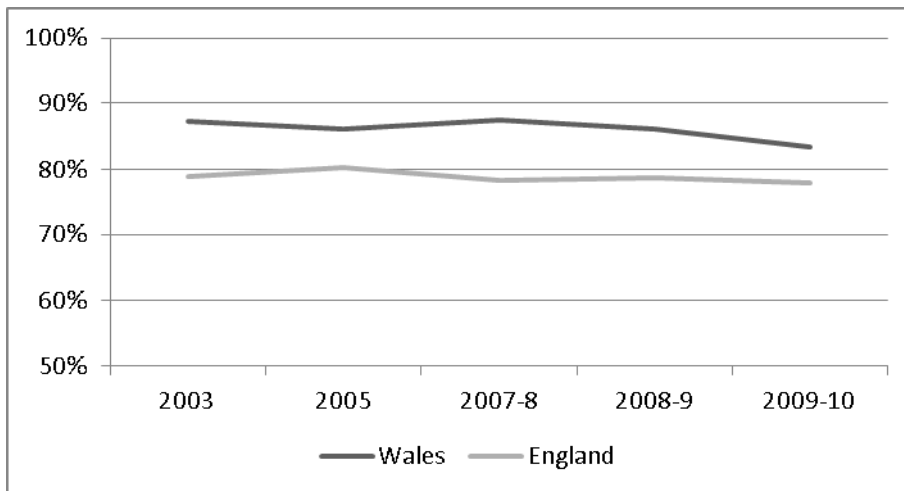
Three aspects of social capital were examined across the same period. Belonging has been gauged by how strongly people in England and Wales felt they belonged to their neighbourhood. Trust has been gauged by the proportion of survey respondents who felt people in their neighbourhood could be trusted. Collective action, or the propensity for collection action, has been gauged by the proportion of respondents who agreed people in their neighbourhood pulled together to try and improve things locally.

Figures 2.2 - 2.4 show that, as with the headline cohesion measure, there was a decrease across all three of these social capital variables for Wales between 2008-9 and 2009-10. This recent downward trend was not mirrored in England for neighbourhood belonging and collection social action, which actually increased in England over the same period. The level of trust in local people, however, did likewise decline in England, although not quite as steeply as in Wales.

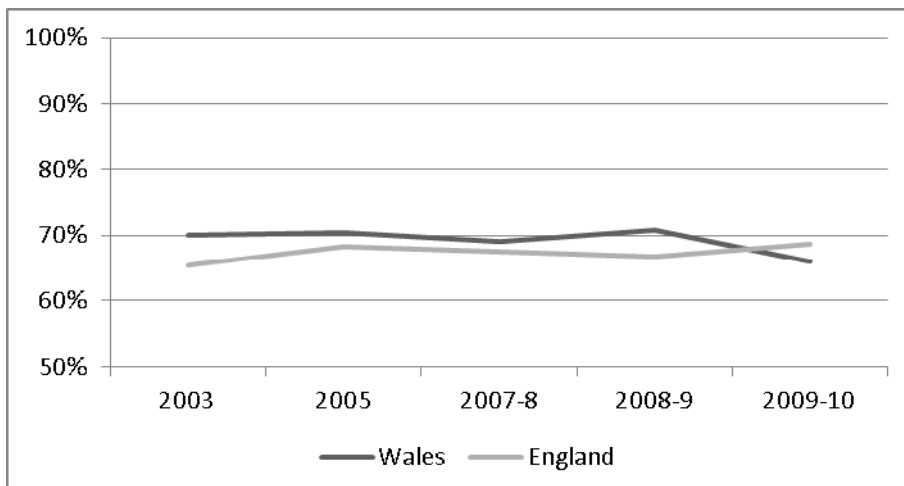
**Figure 2.2: % of people who felt they strongly belonged to their neighbourhood (very/fairly strongly)**



**Figure 2.3: % who felt people in their neighbourhood could be trusted (many/some people can be trusted)**



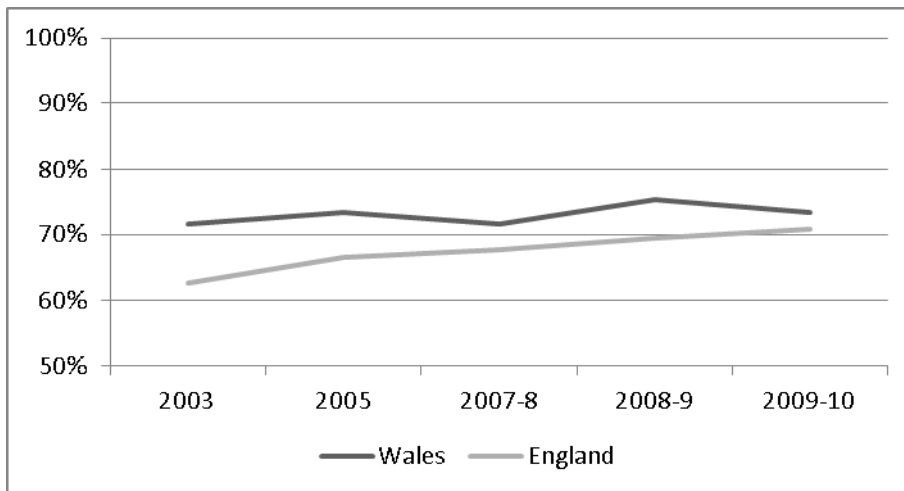
**Figure 2.4: % who agreed people in their neighbourhood pulled together to try and improve it (definitely/tend to agree)**



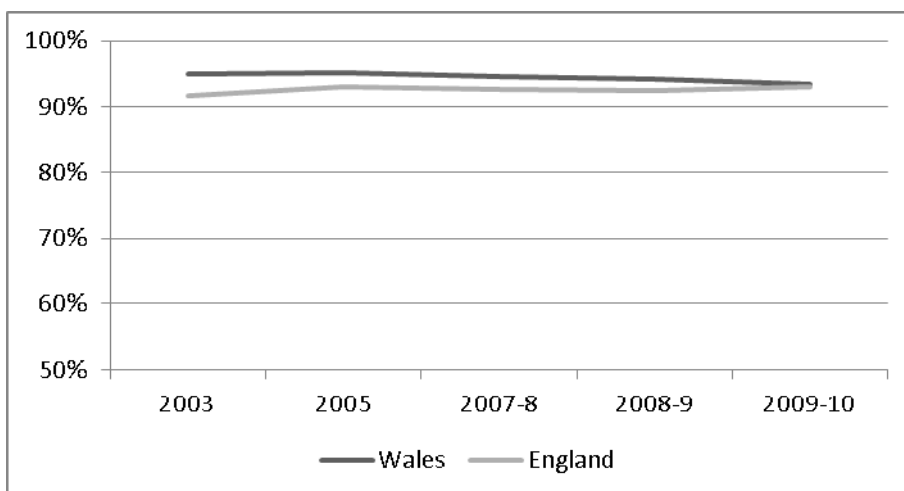
Two other neighbourhood variables were examined - feeling safe and overall enjoyment living in the local area - because these have highly correlated with community cohesion in previous research. As with the headline cohesion measure, perception of personal safety declined in Wales between 2008-9 and 2009-10, but only returning to levels seen in earlier years. That said, the trend in England was upwards over the same period. People's enjoyment living in their neighbourhood was high in both countries across the period (over 90 per cent). The level of enjoyment was higher in Wales across the first four time points, but decreasing over time to converge with England in 2009-10.



**Figure 2.5: % of people who felt safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark (very/fairly safe)**



**Figure 2.6: % of people who enjoyed living in their neighbourhood (definitely/to some extent)**



In summary, perceptions of community cohesion have generally been higher in Wales than in England, but with some convergence in more recent years. Based on what is known to undermine cohesion, administrative data points to some possible explanations for these dips in cohesion in Wales. Between 2003 and 2005, both Wales and England experienced a sharp increase in the in-migration of Eastern European migrants, arriving under the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). It is possible that this development impacted more on cohesion in Wales than England, given pre-existing levels of deprivation in Wales and the country's more limited recent history of receiving new migrants. Between 2008-9 and 2009-10, there was a steep rise in the rate of unemployment in both countries, but which resulted in a higher overall level of unemployment in Wales.

*Getting on Together* was only implemented in 2009, and because of the time lag associated with the publication of official data sources it has been impossible to gauge its impact within the timeframe of the evaluation through analysis of perception data. Monitoring the impact over future years will be complicated by

recent events - the global economic crisis, a double-dip recession, and the Coalition Government's deficit reduction plan - which will undoubtedly impact on cohesion. Monitoring impact will be made additional difficult by the discontinuation of the Citizenship Survey, which allows comparison with England and the English regions. The British Crime Survey, which will continue as the Crime Survey for England and Wales, contains the headline cohesion indicator but not all of the other neighbourhood variables referred to above.

## 2.4 A Local Authority Cohesion Typology

The national picture undoubtedly masks variation across the Welsh local authorities. Knowing which local authorities and neighbourhoods have rising or falling levels of cohesion could help target resources and inform interventions. Thus, in the absence of perception data, there is a strong rationale for identifying cohesion proxy measures using administrative data (i.e. data collected routinely by Government and public services). Various studies have revealed certain factors to be important predictors of community cohesion<sup>3</sup>. The findings of these studies provide a useful guide for selecting the proxies.

Table 2.1 shows the factors that have been revealed by previous research to have a statistically significant relationship with cohesion, the nature of the association, and potential data sources that have been identified to represent these factors at the district level. The research does not claim these are the only factors associated with cohesion, but rather these are the only factors that have been confirmed by the evidence so far. Migration was not explicitly identified as a predictor of cohesion in the two studies referenced above. However it has been included as a predictor on the basis that it is recognised as an important driver of change at the community level in Wales. Other factors might be added to this list, based on local knowledge of specific cohesion issues identified by Welsh local authorities, such as voter turnout, and proportion voting for far right-wing parties.

In the absence of perception data, the data proxies can be employed to 'indicate' the level of cohesion locally. The datasets identified in Table 2.1 are based on what can be publically accessed. There may be additional datasets available locally that better represent these factors and which are available at sub-neighbourhood levels and can be accessed on an on-going basis. These indicators could then be tracked over time to observe trends - upwards and downwards - and identify where there are any rapid changes. Rapid change, as opposed to gradual change, presents a cohesion risk, because communities may not have had enough time to adjust, and this can trigger problems. Rapid change for some cohesion indicators, such as in-migration, point to potential cohesion issues. Rapid change in other indicators, such as violent crime rates, might point to a tear in the fabric of a local community and associated cohesion problems.

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<sup>3</sup> 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; Demack, S., Platts-Fowler, D., Robinson, D., Stevens, A., Wilson, I. (2010) *Young People and Community Cohesion: Analysis from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)*. London: Department for Education.

**Table 2.1: Factors Associated with Cohesion and Proxy Measures**

Cohesion factor	Relationship with cohesion	Potential admin data proxy	Dataset(s)	Data owner	Web Sources
<b>Age</b>	Older people are more likely than younger to feel cohesive, but younger people feel more cohesive than middle-aged people	Young / middle / older people as a % of resident population	Mid-year population estimates	ONS	Nomis
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Non-UK born and people from BME backgrounds feel more cohesive; and ethnic diversity generally has a positive effect on cohesion, although this is dependent on the type of ethnic mix in an area	% Born in Wales	2001 Census	ONS	Nomis
		% Speaks Welsh (aged 3+)	2001 Census	ONS	Nomis
		BME as a % of 16-64 population	Annual Population Survey (APS)	ONS	Nomis
		% Non UK born	Annual Population Survey (APS)	ONS	ONS website (local area migration indicators)
<b>Migration</b>	Areas with a greater proportion of non-UK born in-migrants has a negative effect on cohesion in the area	Net Internal migration as a % of resident population	Migration Data, Population Estimates Unit (PEU)	ONS	ONS website (local area migration indicators)
		Net International migration as a % of resident population	Migration Data and Population Estimates Unit (PEU)	ONS	ONS website (local area migration indicators)
		Migrant NINO registrations as a % of resident population	Migrant NINO registrations	DWP	ONS website (local area migration indicators); DWP Tabtool
		Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) as a % of resident population	Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)	Home Office	ONS website (local area migration indicators)
<b>Economic disadvantage</b>	People living in areas of higher deprivation feel less cohesive; individual level disadvantage (housing tenure and income) is also linked with lower cohesion	% LSOAs in the most deprived 10%	LSOA distribution using WIMD 2008 by Region and LA (Revised)	Welsh Govt	StatsWales
		% Owner-occupied & private rented Vs Local Authority & Registered Social Landlord (RSL) dwellings as a % of all tenures	Dwelling Stock Estimates for Wales, by local authority and tenure	Welsh Govt	StatsWales
		Unemployed as a % of resident population aged 16-64	Claimant Count Estimates	DWP	Nomis
<b>Crime and disorder</b>	Higher levels of crime and disorder are linked with lower cohesion	Violence Against the Person offences as a % of population	Recorded Crime at Local Authority Level	Home Office	Home Office website
		All notifiable offences as a % of population	Recorded Crime at Local Authority Level	Home Office	Home Office website
		Anti-social behaviour incidents as a % of population	Anti-social behaviour incidents; and mid-year population estimates	UK Police ONS	Police.uk website Nomis
<b>Education</b>	Higher qualifications are linked with higher cohesion	% of 16-64 population with no qualifications	Annual Population Survey (APS)	ONS	Nomis
		% pupils aged 15 who achieved five or more GCSEs grade A*-C or vocational equivalent	Examination achievements of pupils aged 15, by year (gender, LEA) NS	Welsh Govt	StatsWales
<b>Occupation</b>	People in upper occupations feel more cohesive than people in lower occupations	Upper occupations (SOC 2000 groups 1-5) Vs lower occupations (SOC 2000 groups 4-9) as a % of all in employment	Annual Population Survey (APS)	ONS	Nomis
<b>Disability</b>	People with long-term illnesses feel less cohesive	% of population entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	DLA Claimants	DWP	Nomis

The evaluation drew on these proxies to generate a cohesion typology of local authorities. All 22 Welsh local authorities were grouped into four types based on cohesion factors, as identified in Table 2.1, using the technique of cluster analysis. This process aims to group objects (in this case Welsh local authorities) together into subsets or 'clusters', so that the objects within each cluster are more closely related to one another than objects assigned to different clusters. Central to the goal of cluster analysis is the notion of degree of similarity (or dissimilarity) between the individual objects being clustered. Clustering is a recognised statistical technique based on sound mathematical principals, which can also involves subjective decisions being made, for example, about the final number of clusters.

The four cohesion clusters identified through this process were assigned descriptive labels:

- Cluster 1 - Rural Wales
- Cluster 2 - Penurban Fringes<sup>4</sup>
- Cluster 3 - Large Towns/Cities
- Cluster 4 - Welsh Valleys

While each of the clusters is distinct, there are some similarities between Clusters 1 and 2, and between Clusters 3 and 4. The main characteristics associated with each cluster are summarised in the tables below.

**Table 2.2: Local Authority Cohesion Clusters**

1. Rural Wales	
Local Authorities	Characteristics
1. Anglesey 2. Gwynedd 3. Conwy 4. Denbighshire 5. Powys 6. Ceredigion 7. Pembrokeshire 8. Carmarthenshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Below average born in Wales, but high Welsh speaking</li> <li>• Low ethnic (non-white) and non-UK born population</li> <li>• Low deprivation</li> <li>• low crime</li> <li>• High proportion of owner-occupied / private rented tenure</li> <li>• Low net internal (within UK) and high international migration</li> <li>• Low overall migrant labour, but high EU accession state (A8) migrants</li> <li>• Diverse occupations: high proportion managers &amp; senior officials; highest proportion of skilled trades &amp; personal service occupations</li> <li>• Highly qualified workforce</li> <li>• Low disability rate</li> <li>• High GCSE attainment</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Penurbia is a geographical term that describes rural areas that are influenced by migration from and links to metropolitan centres.

<b>2. Penurban Fringes</b>	
<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
1. Flintshire 2. Vale of Glamorgan 3. Monmouthshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Below average born in Wales and low Welsh speaking</li> <li>• Low ethnic (non-white) and non-UK born population</li> <li>• Low deprivation</li> <li>• Low crime</li> <li>• High proportion of owner-occupied / private rented tenure</li> <li>• High net internal (within UK), but low international migration</li> <li>• Low overall migrant labour, but high (-est) A8 migrants</li> <li>• Most skilled occupations: senior managers and professional</li> <li>• Highly qualified workforce</li> <li>• Low disability rate</li> <li>• High GCSE attainment</li> </ul>

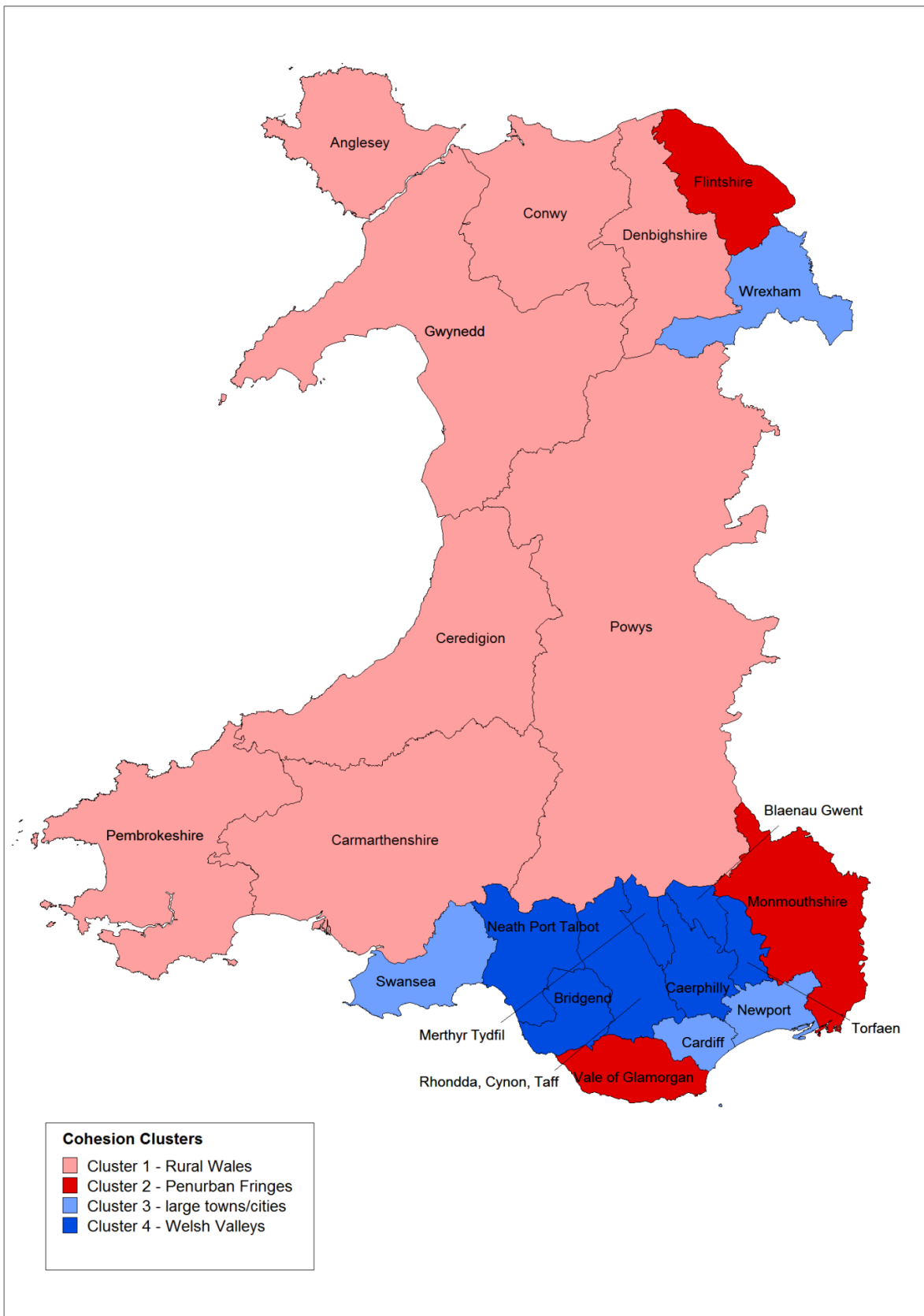
<b>3. Large Towns and Cities</b>	
<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
1. Wrexham 2. Swansea 3. Newport 4. Cardiff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Above average born in Wales, but low Welsh speaking</li> <li>• Highest ethnic (non-white) and non-UK born population</li> <li>• High social housing</li> <li>• Highest crime (all and Violence Against the Person - VAP)</li> <li>• Lowest internal (UK) net migration; highest international migration</li> <li>• High overall migrant labour, but low A8 migrant workers</li> <li>• Higher than national average qualified workforce</li> <li>• Most diverse occupations: including professional and technical occupations; sales and customer services; elementary occupations.</li> <li>• High unemployment rate</li> <li>• Low disability rate</li> <li>• Low GCSE attainment rate</li> </ul>

4. Welsh Valleys	
Local Authorities	Characteristics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Neath Port Talbot</li> <li>2. Bridgend</li> <li>3. Rhondda, Cynon, Taff</li> <li>4. Caerphilly</li> <li>5. Torfaen</li> <li>6. Merthyr Tydfil</li> <li>7. Blaenau Gwent</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Above average Welsh born, but low Welsh speaking</li> <li>• Low ethnic (non-white) and non-UK born population</li> <li>• High social housing</li> <li>• High crime (all and VAP)</li> <li>• Low net internal (UK) migration and lowest international migration</li> <li>• Lowest overall migrant labour, and low A8 migrant workers</li> <li>• Low qualified workforce</li> <li>• Least skilled occupations</li> <li>• Highest unemployment rate</li> <li>• Highest disability rate</li> <li>• Lowest GCSE attainment rate.</li> </ul>

Figure 2.7 shows the geography associated with the four cohesion clusters. The 'Welsh Valleys' cluster represents a concentrated geographical cluster. Local authorities in the Rural Wales cluster form a contiguous area that stretches across the country. The 'Large towns/cities' and 'Penurban Fringes' clusters comprise local authority areas at opposite ends of the country.

The typology points to which local authorities share cohesion characteristics, and provides a rationale for how the local authorities might be grouped together to learn from each other in addressing cohesion issues. For example, although Wrexham is adjacent to Denbighshire, these neighbours are unlikely to make the best partners in the context of cohesion, because their cohesion challenges will be quite different. Despite the logistical challenges of arranging meetings with people at the other side of the country, Wrexham would benefit more by working with the other three large towns/cities in cluster three.

Figure 2.7: The Welsh Cohesion Clusters



### 3 Getting on Together - A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales

#### Key Findings

- *Getting on Together*, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, was launched in December 2009.
- *Getting on Together* provides an understanding of community cohesion that is distinct and different to the agenda in England.
- A Community Cohesion Unit was established in the Welsh Government and charged with overseeing delivery of the strategy.
- the work of the Community Cohesion was guided by an action plan that accompanied *Getting on Together*, which prioritised efforts to provide a framework to support the local strategic approach to promoting community cohesion; mainstreaming cohesion across Welsh Government; and the provision of guidance on community cohesion.
- local authorities were recognised as the agency best placed to take the lead on promoting community cohesion at the local level
- local authorities annually received an allocation from the Community Cohesion Fund to support local efforts to promote cohesion.

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the development and delivery of *Getting on Together*. After a brief overview of the strategy's development, discussion moves to consider the definition of community cohesion outlined in the strategy, which has served to scope the agenda in Wales. Finally, the role and responsibilities of the Welsh Government and local authorities in delivering the strategy are described.

#### 3.2 The History of *Getting on Together*

*Getting on Together*, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, was published in December 2009. It was developed in response to a commitment in the One Wales agreement reached by Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party Wales in 2007, although its roots can be traced back to the discussions between the Welsh Government and various faith and community groups in the aftermath of the disturbances in the Pennine mill towns of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001. The agreement provided a programme for the coalition government and included a commitment to enhance citizenship and community cohesion as part of its efforts to promote a fair and just society. In order to deliver on this objective, it was agreed that the Welsh Government would develop and implement "an overarching, all-Wales community cohesion strategy" (p27).

Initially, development of the strategy was led by a team of three - a Welsh Government officer with experience of equalities work, a contract researcher and a secondee from the Police - who reported directly to the Head of Social Justice and



Local Government in the Welsh Government. In August 2008, an officer was appointed to head up the team, which was subsequently referred to as the Community Cohesion Unit. The Unit was charged with developing the strategy in line with the One Wales agreement and was also handed responsibility for taking the lead on the development and implementation of the Prevent agenda in Wales. A 'task and finish' group, whose members included the UK Border Agency, Home Office, Cytun and Welsh Government officials, was set up to inform and advise regarding the development of the strategy. The draft strategy that emerged was informed by review and analysis of evidence and guidance published in England, discussions with local authorities and stakeholder groups (including faith groups and other interest groups, organisations and partnerships) and consultation with colleagues in the Welsh Government working across different policy domains.

In early 2009 a draft community cohesion strategy was published and written responses were invited. In addition, three consultation events were held for public service providers and a series of smaller consultation events were held with young people, refugees/asylum seekers and migrant workers, voluntary sector groups and Muslim women. The conclusion to emerge was that the guidance should address a broader range of differences and diversity apparent within Wales, explicitly address the issue of inequality and exclusion and attend to far right extremism as well as Al Qaida extremism. These recommendations were taken on board and *Getting on Together*, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, was launched in November 2009.

### **3.3 Scoping the Agenda: A definition of Community Cohesion for Wales**

*Getting on Together* states that, at its simplest, community cohesion is the term used to describe how everyone in a geographical area lives alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect. The strategy then goes on to state that the Welsh Government supports the UK government's formal definition of community cohesion:

Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents to adjust to one another (p.10).

The vision of an integrated and 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.

*CLG (2008) The Government's Response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.*

To promote a shared understanding, the strategy also endorses the four underlying principles expressed by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion<sup>5</sup>:

- the sense of ‘shared futures’ which we believe is at the heart of our model and our recommendations - 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 we believe will be fit for purpose in the 21st Century - one 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; and
- 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.

In addition, *Getting on Together* established a fifth principle for Wales:

- a commitment by public bodies and others working across organisational boundaries to putting citizens at the heart of service provision.

Further clarification regarding the understanding of community cohesion informing the agenda in Wales is provided by the scope and focus of the strategy. The strategy contains five substantive chapters focusing on explicit themes:

- *housing and cohesion* - recognising the links that can exist between housing availability, well being and opportunity and social and community relations;
- *learning and cohesion* - recognising the potential of education (in schools, colleges and universities) to serve as a means of promoting integration and mutual respect;
- *communication and community cohesion* - emphasising 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* - recognising 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 Welsh approach diverges from the community cohesion agenda in England by recognising the potential for deprivation and social exclusion to undermine community cohesion. *Getting on Together* addresses one of the principal criticisms

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<sup>5</sup> Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2008) Our Shared Future. Available on the National Archive website (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>)

levelled at the community cohesion agenda in England; the failure to engage with issues of inequality and disadvantage and the role that policy might play in promoting cohesion by tackling these problems.

### **3.4 The Delivery Framework**

The stated aim of *Getting on Together* is to strengthen community cohesion in Wales by providing local authorities and their partners with a strategic framework for developing a local approach to community cohesion. In other words, primary responsibility for delivering community cohesion is devolved to the local level, with the Welsh Government providing advice and assistance to help local agencies promote community cohesion. This section describes how the Welsh Government and local authorities have set about meeting these responsibilities. The effectiveness of this approach is evaluated in subsequent chapters.

#### *The Welsh Government*

The Community Cohesion Unit, which was originally formed to oversee the development of *Getting on Together*, was subsequently tasked with leading on delivery of the strategy. The unit was originally contained within the Community Safety team, located in the Department for Social Justice and Local Government. The Head of the Unit was supported by a Community Cohesion Policy Officer. The Prevent lead for Wales was also located within the team, reflecting the close links between the Welsh approach to Prevent and the pursuit of community cohesion, and the ambition of mainstreaming Prevent within community cohesion practice. Subsequently, the Unit moved into the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division and the Head assumed additional responsibilities across this wider portfolio. In 2011, the Prevent lead was relocated into the Community Safety team, leaving the Community Cohesion Policy Officer to lead on cohesion issues.

The work of the Community Cohesion Unit was guided by an action plan that accompanied the Strategy. The plan set out what the Welsh Government would do to shape and support local efforts to improve community cohesion across Wales. Four key actions were identified:

#### **1. *Setting out a framework supporting a partnership approach to the development of community cohesion strategies at the local level across Wales***

The *targeted outcome* associated with this action was that local authorities, Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and other stakeholder organisations would understand the Welsh Government's commitment to community cohesion, and how to implement community cohesion at a local level, and would have three years funding to enable local plans to be put into action.

*Delivery* was pursued through the allocation of a Community Cohesion Fund (£2million in 2009/10; £1.5million in 2010/11; and £1.5 million in 2011/12) to local authorities. Local authorities, in consultation with local partners, submitted proposals to the Welsh Government for projects that should be supported by the Fund up to a predetermined amount. Proposals were assessed against

guidance issued annually to local authorities by the Welsh Government and for relevance to the core objectives of *Getting on Together*.

A further requirement placed on local spending plans was that at least 50 per cent of funding be used to the benefit of Communities First areas, or residents from those areas where services are being provided elsewhere. Community Cohesion partnerships were also required to consult Communities First Partnerships before proposals were brought forward, and proposals were required to be in line with needs of the Communities First areas. This requirement reflected the fact that the Community Cohesion Fund was resourced through the top-slicing of the Communities First Equality and Diversity budget, together with some monies from the Social Justice and Local Government portfolio area.

In addition to the Community Cohesion Fund, an annual Community Cohesion Grant of £50,000 was allocated from 2009-2012 to the four most ethnically diverse local authority areas (Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham) in order to kick-start cohesion work. Three local authorities used the Grant to fund a community cohesion officer, while Swansea used the resource to fund an Ethnic Youth Support Team to work with vulnerable youths. The Welsh government agreed the aims and objectives for the three year period 2009-2012 with the four local authorities. Progress was monitored and support provided through quarterly monitoring and bi-annual meetings with local authorities.

## **2. *Providing guidance on community mapping and tension monitoring and evaluating community cohesion***

The *targeted outcome* associated with this action was an increased understanding of how to map communities and consult with all groups within a community.

*Delivery* focused on the development and publication of guidance for local authorities on community mapping and tension monitoring and the development of data and indicators to evaluate community cohesion at the local level. Evaluations were also commissioned of Prevent work being undertaken by the Muslim Council of Wales and of process and outcomes associated with the delivery of *Getting on Together* (this report represents the final output of this evaluation).

## **3. *Mainstreaming cohesion across the Welsh Government***

The *targeted outcome* associated with this action was a more joined-up approach to cohesion across departmental boundaries in the Welsh Government, with stakeholders across Government becoming fully involved in the development of cohesion policies. In addition, the action plan also identified a number of outcomes relating to specific policy realms. Children, young people and adults in Wales were to be made aware of the benefits that participating in learning can bring to living in a cohesive society, health and well-being were to be used to support action on cohesion and greater understanding of mutual benefits, and a strategic approach was to be promoted to meet the needs of particular groups.

*Delivery* was pursued through a range of activities. The Community Cohesion Strategy was taken through the Welsh Government's Policy Gateway process, which is designed to make sure that the development and implementation of an activity - a policy, strategy, programme or project - contributes in the round to addressing the needs of Wales and supports delivery against the Welsh Government's objectives. During the development of *Getting on Together*, the Community Cohesion Unit was required to consult with representatives of other Welsh Government departments to confirm it did not contradict any existing Welsh Government strategies. Subsequently, the policy gateway process was expanded to include community cohesion within the criteria used to identify policy links.

The community cohesion team pursued active dialogue and joint working with other departments within the Welsh Government. Particular attention focused on education. For example, a Cohesion Education Programme Board was set up to explore ways of joined up working to disseminate information about cohesion and to act on identified issues. The needs of particular groups were targeted through the active dissemination of *Getting on Together* to a range of stakeholders and groups and the representation of the Community Cohesion Unit on strategic forums.

#### **4. *Sharing best practice about community cohesion in Wales***

The *targeted outcome* associated with this action was an increased understanding of what works and does not work in the Welsh context for community cohesion.

As well as the Community Cohesion Unit participating and presenting at local events and workshops, *delivery* against this target involved the development of a repository of good practice examples published on the community cohesion pages of the Welsh Government website. A virtual network of local authority community cohesion lead officers and relevant partners was established and e-bulletin updates circulated on cohesion work throughout Wales. Regional sub-groups were also formed in North/Mid, South-West and South-East Wales for local authority practitioners. The aim of these groups was to share good practice and to examine where resources might be shared. The Community Cohesion Unit also led on the delivery of various information sharing and learning events for local authorities and other stakeholders.

##### *Local Authorities and Partners*

*Getting on Together* extols the virtues of pursuing a local approach to community cohesion. Local agencies are recognised as being more likely to be alive to community concerns and as being best placed to understand and respond to these issues, given that they are already involved in work that will support cohesion in local communities. It is argued that by adopting a proactive approach to community cohesion local agencies will be assisted in their efforts to deliver on their statutory duties under the Equality Act. It is also suggested that engagement with the community cohesion agenda will assist delivery of local strategies aimed at improving economic, social and environmental well-being.

*Getting on Together* identifies local authorities as the agency best placed to take the lead on promoting community cohesion at the local level. However, it acknowledged that developing and implementing a local approach to community cohesion should not be the responsibility of just one organisation. A successful approach should involve all relevant organisations working in the community, including those with a specialist role supporting particular groups. To help facilitate this partnership approach, Community Safety Partnerships were identified as the most appropriate body to locally manage the Community Cohesion Fund.

No legislation has been enacted requiring local authorities in Wales to develop and implement a community cohesion strategy. The Welsh Government's approach has been to encourage and incentivise, guide and support local engagement with the agenda. *Getting on Together* spelt out the fundamentals of what this approach might involve:

- *working in partnership and developing a strategic approach* - *Getting on Together* encourages local organisations to work in partnership to take a strategic approach to promoting community cohesion. It advises that partnerships should include organisations that are working in the community, have first hand knowledge of local issues and are therefore able to provide early intelligence regarding cohesion problems, and are working with particular disadvantaged groups.
- *mapping and monitoring* - *Getting on Together* suggests that the first step for any partnership convened to promote community cohesion will be to develop an understanding of the communities in their area through community mapping. This will involve identifying who lives in the area, what their cohesion priorities are and what work is already ongoing to promote cohesion. This will also inform the development of a baseline against which the progress and impact of interventions can be monitored and changes in cohesion evaluated. The Community Cohesion Fund guidance issued in 2010/11 reinforced this point by advising partnerships to focus attention on mapping community cohesion issues in their local area. The Welsh Government published guidance on community mapping and tension monitoring to support local authorities with this task.
- *mainstreaming* - *Getting on Together* recognises community cohesion to be a cross-cutting agenda relevant to many policy areas and concludes that it makes sense to embed cohesion into policy and service delivery. Good practice, it therefore argues, involves mainstreaming cohesion considerations across "the full public service partnership".

All 22 local authorities in Wales have engaged with the community cohesion agenda and been involved in the delivery of *Getting on Together* at the local level. The specifics of this engagement - for example, in relation to mapping and monitoring cohesion, strategy development, mainstreaming and partnership working - varied between areas and are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

### *Local Interventions*

Between 2009/10 and 2011/12, £5 million was made available by the Welsh Government through the Community Cohesion Fund to support local interventions designed to promote community cohesion. More than 600 projects were delivered in

local authority areas across Wales, ranging in size and duration from small, one-off events through to ongoing activities that were responsible for the majority of Community Cohesion Fund spending in an area (such as the funding of a dedicated community cohesion officer). As discussed above, proposals were assessed against guidance issued by the Community Cohesion Unit for relevance to the core objectives of *Getting on Together*. The hope also was that projects would be aligned to local cohesion priorities, detailed in a local strategy or action plan. The profile of projects funded and the achievements of a sample of case study projects are discussed in Chapter 6.

## 4 The Welsh Government Role in Promoting Cohesion

### Key Findings

- the Community Cohesion Unit in Welsh Government has successfully developed a framework for supporting local delivery of community cohesion. The Community Cohesion Fund has been key to this success. It captured the attention and promoted the engagement of all 22 local authorities with the community cohesion agenda.
- advice and guidance about mapping and monitoring cohesion has been shared with local authorities via the community cohesion internet site and through specially commissioned guidance. Regional community cohesion practitioner networks have provided local authorities with an opportunity to share insights and information. The absence of any obvious measure of community cohesion in Wales at the local level has made it difficult to advise on monitoring cohesion.
- the Community Cohesion Unit has informed, guided, cajoled and challenged colleagues across Welsh Government to engage with the community cohesion agenda. Success has been variable. Some policy areas recognise the relevance of the agenda to their work and have actively contributed to efforts to promote cohesion. Scepticism remains in other policy areas about the relevance of the agenda to their work and there is a lack of awareness about how to help promote cohesion.
- best practice has been shared through the practitioner networks and a toolkit of examples on the Welsh Government cohesion website. The web pages are a useful source of ideas and information, but the projects detailed have not been subject to evaluation and cannot be considered examples of best or good practice.

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the activities of the Welsh Government and, in particular, the work of the Community Cohesion Unit, against the objectives and outcomes detailed in the action plan for delivering *Getting on Together* (see Chapter 3). Discussion is organised into four sections that review performance against key action plan objectives:

- setting out a framework for a partnership approach to develop local cohesion strategies across Wales
- providing guidance on community mapping and monitoring and evaluating community cohesion
- mainstreaming community cohesion across the Welsh Government
- identifying and sharing best practice about community cohesion in Wales

Experiences of working within this framework and delivering community cohesion at the local level are explored in Chapter 5.



## 4.2 Developing a Local Approach to Promoting Cohesion

The Community Cohesion Unit was set the target of developing a framework for a partnership approach to developing local community cohesion practice across Wales in line with the aims and objectives of *Getting on Together*. This objective appears to have been successfully delivered. Local authorities and their partners were generally found to be familiar with the concerns and priorities of *Getting on Together*. All received three years of funding from the Community Cohesion Fund that enabled local plans to be put into action. In addition, Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham received three years of Community Cohesion Grant funding to support additional cohesion and Prevent activities.

The **Community Cohesion Fund** proved critical to success in meeting this objective. The offer of funding served to secure the attention and promote the engagement of all 22 local authorities in Wales with the community cohesion agenda, despite some local authorities initially being sceptical about the relevance of the agenda to their area. Only one local authority remained unconvinced about the relevance of community cohesion in their area at the end of the three years of funding. The requirement that local authorities submit proposals for projects to be financed through the Fund provided the Community Cohesion Unit with an opportunity to ensure the priorities of *Getting on Together* were addressed and to encourage a strategic approach to promoting cohesion at the local level. To this end, the Community Cohesion Unit issued annual guidance, against which proposals were assessed.

A consistent theme in the annual guidance was that local authorities should work closely with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Communities First (CF) Partnerships to form local partnerships or a community cohesion sub-group. They were also encouraged to engage with relevant Third Sector organisations (for example local voluntary councils, Community and Town Councils and equality groups), who were recognised as being well placed to help identify local cohesion problems and possible solutions. Partners were expected to work together to determine local needs in terms of community cohesion, in consultation with local communities, and to agree on how best to meet these needs. Another key theme in the guidance was that funding should be aligned with the core aims and objectives of the Community Cohesion Strategy, including the strategy's focus on the policy and service delivery areas of housing, learning, communication, equality and social inclusion and preventing violent extremism. Increasing emphasis was also placed on the importance of taking a strategic approach and mainstreaming community cohesion across other service areas at the local level:

- in 2009/10 the stated purpose of the Fund was to enable local partnerships to pump prime cohesion work in local communities in order to support the implementation of the Community Cohesion Strategy. Approximately £2 million was allocated to 241 projects across Wales in 2009/10.
- in 2010/11 partnerships were advised to adopt a strategic approach to enable them to map community cohesion issues in their local area and draw up plans to tackle these. Approximately £1.5 million was allocated to projects in 2010/11. Projects funded during 2010/11 were to be identified using a robust evidence base and were to be outcome focused.

- in 2011/12 Fund guidance reiterated the importance of community mapping activities, understanding cohesion challenges, sharing best practice on promoting cohesion, delivering interventions to address identified priorities and mainstreaming community cohesion across policy and service delivery areas. Approximately £1.5 million was allocated to projects in 2011/12.

A local infrastructure had been developed in all local authorities across Wales to support the promotion of community cohesion. All 22 local authorities had a designated community cohesion officer who led on the authority's efforts to deliver on these requirements. In ten local authorities, this was a dedicated position. More typically, the lead officer combined responsibility for community cohesion with other duties.

In the majority of areas, the community cohesion lead was supported by a partnership of local organisations working together to develop and take forward the local strategic approach to community cohesion. In some instances, the partnership was a pre-existing group or forum, which assumed responsibility for cohesion issues. In other cases a partnership had been specially formed to take forward the community cohesion agenda locally. Membership of these groups varied, but was rarely found to include the wide range of potential partners identified in *Getting on Together* (p14). In some cases membership was limited to representatives from the CSP and Communities First partnership. In other cases membership included representatives from across the local authority, the Police, third sector organisations and health care providers.

As well as providing a vehicle through which the Community Cohesion Unit was able to promote attention to community cohesion, the Community Cohesion Fund and Grant facilitated the delivery of hundreds of projects that addressed local cohesion priorities. These projects are profiled in Chapter 6.

In summary, the Community Cohesion Unit has successfully delivered on the objective of developing a framework to support the local delivery of *Getting on Together*. The Community Cohesion Fund proved critical to this success, securing the attention of local authorities and ensuring their engagement with the agenda. However, as will be revealed in Chapter 5, the depth of commitment to the agenda was found to vary dramatically between local authorities.

### **4.3 Providing Guidance on Mapping and Monitoring Cohesion**

*Getting on Together* asserts that the first step to promoting cohesion is to develop an understanding of who lives where in the local area, the cohesion priorities of residents and what community cohesion work is already going on at the local level. *Getting on Together* also recognises tension monitoring as an essential component of efforts to promote and support community cohesion. In response, the action plan committed the Welsh Government to provide guidance on community mapping and monitoring tension to help local authorities and their partners to take these first steps toward promoting cohesion. The action plan also identified six key priorities for action to support delivery of this commitment. Success delivering against these targets is reviewed below.

1. ***Develop the community cohesion internet site to provide information on how to map communities*** - information and guidance on community mapping has been uploaded onto the Welsh Government community cohesion internet site. Information on and links to administrative data sources and national statistics are provided, along with advice about possible local level data sources. Advice is provided about existing surveys that might be drawn on to gain insight into people's perceptions and attitudes, as well as links to relevant guidance. The emphasis is on signposting local authorities to data sources and other relevant information, rather than providing guidance on how to undertake a community mapping exercise. One example is provided, the Newport Local Service Board's multi-agency community profiling group, along with contact details in case more information is required. In addition, advice and guidance on mapping activities and how to engage with 'hard to reach' groups was shared through Good Practice Events during 2010/11.

Local authority community cohesion leads were aware of the good practice pages containing advice on community mapping, but little evidence emerged to suggest that these pages informed either the decision to undertake a community mapping exercise or the particulars of the adopted approach. Far more important was pre-existing knowledge and expertise within the local authority, combined with a commitment to the community cohesion agenda. As discussed in Chapter 5, local authorities that were more committed to the agenda and possessed relevant data management and analytical skills were far more likely to have undertaken a community mapping exercise. The Welsh Government sought to encourage other local authorities to follow suit by commissioning guidance on community mapping and tension monitoring, which was made available as a free download on the community cohesion site. The approach outlined was designed to be implemented by local authority officers, rather than specialist researchers, and to demand minimal resources.

2. ***Share good practice among local authorities and their partners*** - delivering on this objective involved the establishment of three regional community cohesion practitioner networks, where community cohesion leads and other agencies, for example, the Police, come together to share intelligence, information, and experiences (see section 4.5). Best practice examples have also been identified from around Wales by the Community Cohesion Unit and summaries made available on a Good Practice section of the community cohesion website (see section 4.5).
3. ***Commission research to map cohesion and Prevent activities within the education sector*** - research was commissioned to explore understandings of community cohesion in the school sector and approaches to managing and promoting cohesion and delivering Prevent activities. This research informed the development of community cohesion guidance for schools and further education colleges, which sought to build on and enhance existing practice (see section 4.4). An evaluation of Prevent work undertaken by the Muslim Council of Wales was commissioned from the Office of Public Management.
4. ***Provide advice and guidance about using the Ffynnon performance management system for community cohesion monitoring*** - Ffynnon was launched in 2007 as a nationally procured software solution to meet the

performance management requirements of local authorities and key partners. One of its main objectives is to enable information-sharing within and across organisational boundaries. Advice and guidance on using the Ffynnon system to monitor cohesion was included in *Getting on Together*.

The Community Cohesion Unit also sought advice and guidance on the use of the system by local authorities to develop data and indicators to evaluate community cohesion. The conclusion to emerge was that the system could facilitate this type of exercise but local authorities would need to decide which datasets would best support cohesion mapping and monitoring. They would also need to be willing to share their own local data sources to facilitate comparative analysis, which is essential for benchmarking and performance tracking. Limited progress has been made on this front.

5. ***Providing advice and guidance on monitoring and evaluating community cohesion at the local level*** - there is currently no obvious measure of community cohesion in Wales at the local level. The National Survey for Wales (formerly the Living in Wales Survey) has not always included a cohesion question. Furthermore, the sample sizes have been too small in previous years to provide reliable findings at a district level, although there are plans to address this. In response, this evaluation has generated a series of proxy indicators of community cohesion that can be constructed from administrative data and employed to build a picture of community cohesion at the local level (see Chapter 2). These proxies are being drawn on by the Community Cohesion Unit to inform the development of a set of outcomes and appropriate indicators for community cohesion to feed into a Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach to performance management.
6. ***Establishing evaluation criteria and carrying out a process and outcome evaluation of Getting on Together*** - A team from the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research was commissioned in September 2010 to deliver this action point. In addition to this report, the evaluation generated interim reports in January 2011 and November 2011. Both contained conclusions and recommendations relating to all aspects of Community Cohesion Unit's work and the local delivery of *Getting on Together*. The Unit subsequently worked with local authorities and partners to implement recommendations. The advice of the evaluation team was also sought on a range of issues during the course of the evaluation, including approaches to monitoring community cohesion using survey questions and using administrative data at the local level, in response to the current lack of perception data.

In conclusion, the Community Cohesion Unit has provided guidance for local authorities on mapping and monitoring cohesion. This has included commissioned guidance on community profiling and tension monitoring. Pointers and suggestions have also been provided on the community cohesion website. Local authorities have consulted this information, but local efforts to map and monitor cohesion have relied more on existing knowledge and expertise. The result, as we will see in Chapter 5, is variable practice across local authorities in Wales. Efforts to promote local monitoring of community cohesion have been somewhat undermined by the absence of local level data on community cohesion.

## 4.4 Mainstreaming Cohesion Across The Welsh Government

### *Delivery Mechanisms*

The action plan requires the Welsh Government to mainstream community cohesion across departments and service areas. The Community Cohesion Unit has led on this objective, employing four key mechanisms that were identified in the action plan:

- engagement with other departments in the Welsh Government through participation in the policy gateway;
- the establishment of a Cohesion Education Programme Board;
- establishing and maintaining specialist fora;
- strengthening the links between community cohesion and Our Healthy Futures.

**The policy gateway process** is designed to make sure that the development and implementation of an activity - a policy, strategy, programme or project - contributes in the round to addressing the needs of Wales and supports delivery against the Welsh Government's objectives. Officers in the Community Cohesion Unit reported that the policy gateway process had helped to maximise synergies and limit tensions between *Getting on Together* and other Welsh Government strategies. However, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of the policy gateway process in promoting the mainstreaming of community cohesion across the Welsh Government. There are a number of examples of recent Welsh Government strategies that fail to reference *Getting on Together* and to recognise the role that policy and practice might play in promoting cohesion. However, just because a particular strategy does not reference *Getting on Together* does not necessarily indicate a failure to consider cohesion issues; the policy gateway process might have concluded that the strategy is 'cohesion neutral' and that no explicit reference to *Getting on Together* is required. Added to this, the ambiguous nature of community cohesion as a concept can make it difficult to be clear what links and associations one might expect to see between community cohesion and other policy areas. Furthermore, cohesion concerns might be addressed without explicit reference to *Getting on Together*. These difficulties are well illustrated by the example of the National Housing Strategy.

The National Housing Strategy – Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales - was launched in April 2010. The document sets out the challenges in meeting housing requirements in Wales and identifies priorities and actions to be taken. *Getting on Together* makes explicit reference to the National Housing Strategy, recognising the potential for housing issues to negatively affect cohesion and the potential for housing policy to actively strengthen communities. The National Housing Strategy makes no reference to community cohesion and there is no evidence of any attempt to read across to the priorities of *Getting on Together*. On the face of it, this is a surprising omission, given the importance that *Getting on Together* attaches to the role of housing policy and provision in promoting cohesion. Community Cohesion Unit officers commented that the first draft of the strategy did make explicit reference to community cohesion issues, but that this link was lost following a decision to 'slim down' the document. This was confirmed by a housing strategy officer in the Welsh Government, who explained that the decision was taken to keep the strategy short and to focus on providing a high level guide to housing

priorities in Wales. As a result, there are no references to any other strategies within the National Housing Strategy, although there is reference to the priority of creating sustainable communities, to which community cohesion is likely to be key. This might be a valid approach, but an obvious risk is that the overlaps and synergies with community cohesion remain unclear to the agencies responsible for delivering the strategy on the ground. Housing organisations and professionals were certainly less likely than some other policy areas to be represented on local partnership groups responsible for delivery of cohesion activities and relatively few housing focused projects were supported by the Community Cohesion Fund, although the reasons for this were unclear.

A **Cohesion Education Programme Board** was established to identify and act on cohesion issues of concern across the education sector. The Board commissioned research exploring the views of head teachers and school governors in relation to community cohesion in education in Wales. Events were also held in 2010 across Wales with higher and further education sectors on Prevent and community cohesion to raise awareness and secure feedback and comment. This information informed the production of a guidance and good practice document to support schools in their role of supporting strategic approaches to promoting and maintaining community cohesion and preventing violent extremism. The guidance was published in February 2011 and a similar toolkit for Further Education was published in March 2011. The development of the guidance documents was led by the Department for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, but an officer from the Community Cohesion Unit sat on the programme board overseeing the development of both documents. The guidance for schools works within the definition and understanding of community cohesion spelt out in *Getting on Together*, which is noted as setting out the links between community cohesion and learning. The aim of the guidance is stated as being to support schools and colleges to review practice and develop partnership working that promotes community cohesion. With the launch of the guidance the work of the Programme Board came to an end, but the intention is to form a reference group that brings together people from across and beyond the Welsh Government to ensure the pursuit of community cohesion remains central to the work of the Department and the education sector more generally.

The commitment to mainstream through **establishing and maintaining specialist** fora was intended to support efforts to ensure a strategic, coordinated and effective approach to supporting the successful inclusion within Welsh society of particular vulnerable groups, such as migrants. In the event, the decision was taken to focus on ensuring community cohesion concerns were considered and addressed by existing fora rather than creating new groups. A member of the Community Cohesion Unit, for example, pointed to the pre-existence of a migrants forum, faith forum and a hate crimes steering group. Rather than duplicating these groups, the Unit reported successfully working to ensure that they were represented on or consulted by these groups. Membership of these groups also provided the Community Cohesion Unit with an opportunity to liaise and consult with colleagues in other policy areas within and beyond the Welsh Government. The migrants forum, for example, includes senior Welsh Government officers from the fields of housing, child protection, community safety, mental health, social inclusion and digital inclusion, as well as representatives of external agencies, including Welsh Local Government Agency (WLGA), UK Border Agency, CAB Cymru, Communities First,

TUC, and the Wales Recruitment and Employment Confederation. Problems have been encountered securing access to and representation on boards and groups in some policy areas.

Efforts to ***strengthen the links between community cohesion and 'Our Healthy Futures'*** have centred on the involvement of the Community Cohesion Unit in relevant networks and meetings. Meetings have been held between Community Cohesion Unit and colleagues responsible for delivering Our Health Futures to scope potential links between the two agendas. Information about work in the two fields and possible synergies has been shared. A key outcome has been the inclusion of a commitment to explore the scope for developing health assets through the community cohesion programme in *Fairer Health Outcomes for All: Reducing Inequalities in Health Strategic Action Plan*, which seeks to develop a health aspect to all policies across Government, to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequities. Beyond this, progress appears to have been limited, although the Community Cohesion Unit has consulted with the regional community cohesion practitioner networks about how to get local health boards involved in the cohesion approach at the local level. Health would appear to be one of a number of policy areas where potential synergies with the community cohesion programme are not immediately obvious and where it has proved more challenging creating any momentum behind joint working.

### *Outcomes*

The work of the Community Cohesion Unit has been critical to efforts to mainstream community cohesion across the Welsh Government. The Unit had educated, guided, cajoled and sometimes challenged colleagues across the Welsh Government in a bid to persuade them that community cohesion is an agenda they should engage with, to promote attention to community cohesion in strategy development and service planning and to ensure that key stakeholders within the Welsh Government are involved in the development of cohesion policies. This has involved meetings to discuss overlaps and synergies, scoping work on potential links, attendance at relevant events and forums to strengthen understanding and working relations, and representation on Programme Boards and other groups and fora. Community Cohesion Unit officers also reported that the promotion of synergies and minimising of tensions between the priorities of *Getting on Together* and other strategies and action plans was helped by the Unit being located in the Department for Social Justice and Local Government, alongside colleagues leading on related policies, including measures to tackle child poverty and financial inclusion, community safety, regeneration and equalities.

Welsh Government officers in policy areas including Prevent, education, regeneration, equalities, housing, health and social research all confirmed that they had received a briefing about the community cohesion strategy from the Community Cohesion Unit and had met subsequently with the Unit. In some instances meetings were regular and ongoing. As a result, the officers interviewed reported being familiar with *Getting on Together* and the content of specific chapters in the strategy document relating to their own policy area. One lead officer expressed concern about the chapter in the strategy relating to his/her own policy area, commenting that it did not accurately "reflect what was going on the ground". The strategy was also interpreted as demanding action on issues that were already being addressed by

policy and practice. More typically, officers read the strategy as a statement of principles and broad objectives rather than a critique of work in their area and did not report any concerns or issues with its content.

Effective mainstreaming not only demands that staff are aware of an agenda or strategy but that they also have a clear understanding about how they can contribute to its delivery. In relation to community cohesion, the situation was found to vary between two extremes. At one extreme, there were some officers working in a policy area where there appeared to be a clear understanding of the potential for policy and practice to both positively promote and to negatively impact on community cohesion. These officers reported a close working relationship with the Community Cohesion Unit and could point to initiatives implemented with the express intent of promoting cohesion. Two obvious examples are Prevent and education. This is, perhaps, not surprising. Links between the community cohesion agenda and these two policy areas have long been promoted by the UK government. This reflects the focus of the Prevent agenda and education policy on specific contexts (the school; the neighbourhood; the town or city) where people from different backgrounds come together and mix, and their concern with promoting greater understanding and positive relations between people from different backgrounds.

At the other extreme were officers who struggled to articulate the relevance of the community cohesion agenda to their own area of work. One of these officers expressed scepticism about the relevance of the agenda to the policy area he/she was working in. Another officer acknowledged that the community cohesion agenda was directly relevant to his/her area of work, commenting that "everything we do is about community cohesion", but struggled to expand on this point. Little thought appeared to have been given to how community cohesion priorities might be integrated into policy and practice. In between these two extremes were examples of policy areas where links had been drawn between specific policy concerns and the priorities of the community cohesion agenda, but more general questions about the potential for variations in cohesion to impact on policy goals or policy and practice to promote cohesion did not appear to have been addressed.

#### **4.5 Sharing Best Practice**

The action plan commits the Community Cohesion Unit to identify and share best practice about community cohesion in Wales. A key vehicle for delivering on this requirement has been the establishment and coordination of a **practitioner network**. Regional Community Cohesion Panels have been formed in the South West, South East and North/Mid Wales. The Panels met for the first time in late 2010 and subsequently met on a quarterly basis. Meetings have been attended by local authority officers with lead responsibility for community cohesion, other local partners, such as the police, and officers from the Community Cohesion Unit.

Most lead officers confirmed that they had some involvement with the regional panels, although officers in rural authorities expressed some discontent about the distance they had to travel to the panel meetings and some officers reported not being able to spare the time and therefore not attending all meetings. Local authority officers reported that the panels had provided an opportunity to compare and contrast experiences and share lessons learnt recognising and responding to local community cohesion challenges. Two officers reported using the panel



meetings as a means to develop relations with lead officers in neighbouring authorities, resulting in the development of cross-boundary work.

The Community Cohesion Unit reported that the Panel meetings provided an opportunity to update local authorities about the Community Cohesion Fund and any developments in national strategy and for local authorities to feedback comments, raise concerns and seek clarification. Local authorities were also reported to have shared experiences and discussed efforts to mainstream cohesion at the local level and to explore ways in which they could work more closely together.

The Community Cohesion Unit has also delivered on the objective of sharing best practice by developing a **toolkit of best practice examples** on the Welsh Government's community cohesion website. Examples are organised under the five policy areas highlighted in *Getting on Together*: communication; equality and social exclusion; housing; learning; and preventing violent extremism. More than 60 examples are provided of projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund or delivered by local authorities or partner agencies. Each example includes a project outline, summary of outcomes and contact details of the lead organisation who can be contacted if more information is required. The vast majority of interventions do not appear to have been subject to any form of evaluation, making it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about what works, where, why and in which circumstances. The website cannot, therefore, be said to represent a repository of 'good' or 'best' practice. However, it does provide a useful source of information and ideas, that local authorities did reporting consulting, although it was suggested that it could be better organised.

The Community Cohesion Unit has also shared information and advice with local authorities through **briefings, meetings and bulletins**. The Unit has participated and presented at local authority and partner agency led events about the community cohesion agenda in Wales. For example, in 2010, the Unit hosted events in South and North Wales reflecting on lessons learnt from the first year of implementing *Getting on Together* and planning for the future, which included the dissemination of good practice advice and associated examples. Subsequently, a report was produced highlighting key action points for taking forward the national and local level.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The Community Cohesion Unit has encountered various challenges delivering against the key objectives outlined in the Action Plan. The limits of available data have undermined efforts to promote the mapping and monitoring of community cohesion, certain policy areas within the Welsh Government have proved resistant to engaging with the agenda, and it has not always proved possible to ground guidance in an understanding of what constitutes best practice. However, the overall conclusion to be drawn is that significant progress has been made against the majority of action plan objectives and most have been successfully delivered.

On the separate question of whether focusing on these specific objectives represented an effective approach to delivering *Getting on Together*, the answer appears to be a qualified yes. Local authorities and their partners have been provided with a framework for developing a local approach to promoting cohesion. *Getting on Together* scoped the challenge, guidance from the Community Cohesion

Unit detailed the essential ingredients of a local approach and the Community Cohesion Fund supported interventions to promote cohesion at the local level. As a result, all 22 local authorities in Wales have engaged with the agenda and worked to promote cohesion at the local level. This is a notable feat given that the agenda is new to Wales and bearing in mind that local authorities are under no legal duty to promote community cohesion. However, an important rider has to be placed on this conclusion. Local authority commitment to the community cohesion agenda has varied tremendously across Wales. As Chapter 5 reveals, some local authorities have remained sceptical about the relevance of the agenda to their area and have lacked the commitment necessary to develop a local strategic approach to promoting cohesion. It is difficult to see how the Community Cohesion Unit might have overcome this resistance, without additional resources or statutory backing, in the form of a requirement that public bodies actively promote community cohesion.

Efforts to mainstream the community cohesion agenda across the Welsh Government have met with variable results. Some policy areas remain unconvinced or unclear about the relevance of community cohesion to their work. Critical success factors promoting effective mainstreaming were found to include: early recognition of the potential for a particular policy area to promote community cohesion; the inclusion of an explicit objective relating to the policy area in the action plan; the inclusion of community cohesion within the responsibilities of the appropriate policy group or Board; focusing attention on an explicit objective (such as the production of guidance for schools and colleges); and the commitment of resources and a dedicated team to meet this explicit objective.

## 5 Local Delivery of *Getting on Together*

### Key Findings

- most local authorities have made progress advancing the community cohesion agenda in their local area through some combination of targeted interventions, the appointment of dedicated staff, and mapping and mainstreaming activities. The Community Cohesion Fund and associated guidance has been the key catalyst for these activities.
- there was variation in the extent to which local authorities had engaged with and actively promoted the community cohesion agenda, and local approaches to delivering *Getting on Together* varied widely.
- Rural authorities were typically less engaged, in terms of analysing and understanding cohesion issues, determining priorities and mainstreaming the agenda. Frequently, Rural authorities struggled to identify cohesion priorities. Large towns and cities tended to be the most engaged, followed by the Welsh Valleys and the Penurban Fringes.
- local authorities became more strategic in their approach to community cohesion over time.
- a series of factors were identified as critical to effective local delivery. In particular, progress was most evident in areas with a dedicated community cohesion officer, a community cohesion action plan or strategy, and where systematic attempts had been made to map local needs and identify priority issues. The support of senior officers (department heads and executive officers) was also important.
- real progress mainstreaming community cohesion had been made by many local authorities. However, staff in certain policy areas remained uncertain about the relevance of community cohesion to their work or how they might contribute to efforts to promote cohesion locally.
- concerns about the ongoing reliability of support provided by the Community Cohesion Fund undermined a more strategic approach in some areas.

### 5.1 Introduction

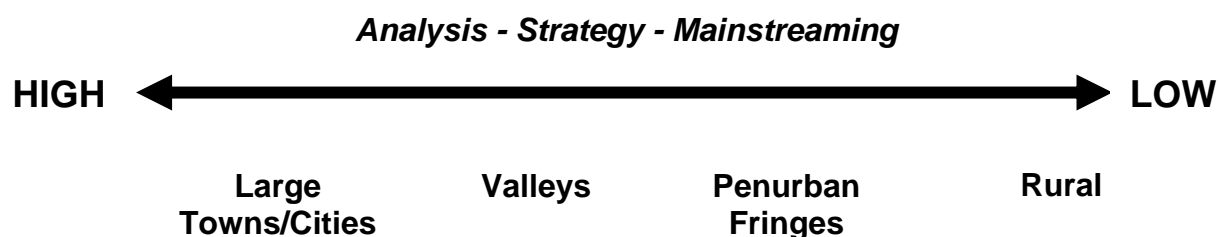
This chapter reviews the delivery of *Getting on Together* at the local level, focusing on the work of local authorities and their partners to promote community cohesion. Findings detail local authority experiences of working within the delivery framework established by the Welsh Government. Discussion begins by highlighting the variable level of engagement with the community cohesion agenda across local authorities in Wales, before going on to review the factors underpinning this variability.

### 5.2 Engagement with the Community Cohesion Agenda

Local authorities in Wales can be placed along a continuum in terms of the degree to which they have engaged with the community cohesion agenda. Generally

speaking, at one end of the continuum are Rural authorities<sup>6</sup>, which were typically less engaged with the agenda, in terms of analysing and understanding cohesion issues, determining priorities, developing an action plan or strategy and mainstreaming the agenda within the local authority. At the other end are Large Towns/Cities, which tended to be more engaged with the agenda. In between are the Valleys and Penurban Fringes (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1: Continuum of Local Authority Engagement with Community Cohesion**



It is important to point out that there were exceptions to this rule. For example, there were Rural authorities that were engaged with and committed to the agenda. There were some Valley authorities that evidenced a more advanced understanding and analysis of cohesion issues than authorities in the Large Town/City cluster. Some authorities had moved along the continuum through time, as they became more strategic in their approach to community cohesion. In the year following the launch of *Getting on Together* many authorities (by their own admission) had no strategic framework to guide their activities, including the allocation of the Community Cohesion Fund. Subsequently, increasing numbers developed action plans or adopted a Community Cohesion Strategy. These strategies were typically informed by efforts to identify priority issues. This had sometimes been achieved through comprehensive mapping exercises (sometimes externally commissioned). Other local authorities brought relevant partners together (for example at a specially constituted meeting, or a larger consultation event) to determine priorities. The comments of one Community Cohesion lead officer recorded during 2011 capture the shift that took place in many local authorities through time:

*"we're trying to think about it, rather than just randomly distributing it [Community Cohesion Fund resources] on the four winds to a couple of things that sounded plausible; what could we strategically pick, what are the main issues? How could this have some lasting effect? Hence the event we held in March where we got everybody together..."*

However, the continuum usefully summarises the general picture revealed by the evaluation when reviewing engagement with the community cohesion agenda across the 22 local authorities in Wales.

<sup>6</sup> The evaluation team developed a local authority cohesion typology. Four cohesion clusters were identified: Rural Wales; Penurban Fringes; Large towns/cities; and Welsh Valleys. See Chapter 2 for further information about the characteristics of the different clusters.

### 5.3 Factors Supporting Effective Local Delivery

The evaluation sought to identify factors critical to the effective promotion of community cohesion at the local level; factors that helped explain why local authorities were at the positive end of the continuum described above. These were found to include:

- officer and councillor commitment;
- a dedicated community cohesion lead;
- mapping and monitoring to provide an understanding of community cohesion in the local area;
- agreed local priorities;
- development of a local community cohesion plan or strategy;
- targeted initiatives to address specific challenges and promote cohesion;
- mainstreaming community cohesion.

Inevitably, these factors were present in different combinations in different local authorities, but as a general rule the more factors that were evident within policy and practice the more likely it was that a local authority was located at the positive end of the continuum. In addition, working in partnership to promote cohesion locally was an important cross cutting theme, supporting each of these factors.

The following sections consider each of these factors in turn. Variations in policy and practice across local authorities are described and, wherever possible, explained.

### 5.4 Commitment

The commitment of council officers, councillors, other statutory agencies and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to the community cohesion agenda varied considerably. The commitment of local authority officers, local councillors and the local VCS was reported to be high. Nineteen out of 22 community cohesion leads reported that local authority officers were ('very' or, more commonly, 'reasonably') committed to the community cohesion agenda and 16 reported that local councillors were committed to the agenda. Commitment was also strong among VCS organisations, lead officers reporting few problems engaging with VCS partners. Furthermore, staff from VCS organisations interviewed by the evaluation team typically demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of, and commitment to the community cohesion agenda. Asked in 2012 for their views about the level of commitment to community cohesion amongst different partner agencies, the VCS emerged as the most committed; 11 lead officers reported that the sector was 'very committed' and only one lead officer suggested the sector demonstrated 'little commitment'.

'Other statutory partners' emerged as the least committed to the agenda (but see comments below about the involvement of the Police) with seven lead officers reporting 'little commitment' to community cohesion amongst statutory partners. In some areas, this was a consistent theme across the two years of the evaluation, with

lead officers pointing to the limited involvement of statutory partners in community cohesion groups and activities, and difficulties engaging with them. As one officer explained:

*"It hasn't been broader than the council agenda yet and it needs to be. The strategy talks about health, housing, RSLs are a huge impact, we haven't had any of that communication, they have been involved in some of the things we've done but not formally and RSLs, I would say they'd bend over backwards to be involved cos obviously the local authority pays them grants so they would definitely want to be involved"*

Analysis of commitment to community cohesion across the different cohesion clusters revealed commitment to be lowest in 'rural' and 'affluent fringe' authorities. Lead officers in all three of the 'affluent fringe' authorities reported little enthusiasm or interest in community cohesion amongst statutory partners. The two local authorities where commitment to the agenda was found to be most limited were in the Rural cluster and ambivalence to the very idea of the community cohesion agenda remained strong in some rural authorities. This was in sharp contrast to the situation in the Welsh Valleys or Large Towns/Cities. The consequences were clear to see in Rural authorities, with little enthusiasm for mapping or understanding local cohesion challenges, developing strategies and action plans, or for driving forward mainstreaming activities. In contrast, in the Welsh Valleys, a wide range of stakeholders were typically engaged in the agenda, although lead officers did report that more work was required to promote the agenda to all relevant agencies.

In some cases, lack of commitment within Rural authorities reflected a very limited interpretation of the community cohesion agenda as relating only to issues of race and ethnicity. As a result, it was concluded that community cohesion was a matter for urban authorities, not relevant to their area and not deserving of officer time or attention. However, there were examples of lead officers working in the Rural and Penurban Fringes clusters who demonstrated drive and commitment and were doing what they could to promote community cohesion. However, their efforts were sometimes hampered by lack of interest amongst Councillors and partner agencies and by limited understanding of the agenda in Wales. Officers in two rural authorities reported that many local agencies were still unfamiliar with the term and one lead officer reported that *"the term community cohesion doesn't mean anything for many local authority employees"*

Many lead officers reported strong commitment to the community cohesion agenda amongst local agencies, although commitment did vary between partners. Partners with a community safety responsibility (the Police in particular) were most frequently cited as being committed to the agenda and easy to engage with. This perhaps reflects the fact that the Community Safety Partnership took the lead on community cohesion issues in many areas. In contrast, housing and health agencies were commonly reported to be disengaged. Asked whether all agencies on the Community Safety Partnership have 'bought into' community cohesion, one officer made the following observation:

*"Not fully, I think the police more so cos it's something they see more through their work and they've got their own hate crime officers and those issues that tie in, so they're naturally linked to it a bit more but I would say probably not"*

*so much with people like the health board or fire brigade or probation, they're aware of it but I don't think it's got the level of people absorbed into business quite yet."*

Some officers reported that partners only engaged with the agenda around a specific issue such as equalities, hate crime and the settlement of new migrants.

The importance of commitment at a senior level was also apparent, with a lack of senior officer commitment found to be one of the main barriers to securing commitment of local authority colleagues. Thus, even in areas aggressively driving forward the community cohesion agenda and developing mainstreaming activities, lack of senior officer buy-in was limiting the effectiveness of these activities and the extent to which they could be taken forward.

The study team gauged commitment to the community cohesion agenda at various points during the evaluation and there was evidence of increased commitment over time. The provision of Community Cohesion Fund resources emerged as a critical spur behind initial engagement. The development of a more strategic approach subsequently helped to promote greater understanding and awareness. The engagement of certain policy domains was also promoted by activities at the national level, the generation of guidance on community cohesion for schools being a prime example.

Despite the variable picture across local authorities, and an apparent need to engender greater commitment to community cohesion in some geographical locations and amongst some stakeholders, it is worth considering the 'distance travelled'. In some authorities, the concept of community cohesion and the relevance of the agenda to the local context were scarcely understood when *Getting on Together* was launched. In this context, the presence of community cohesion on the agenda of the local authority and partner agencies represents significant progress. Indeed, when asked to reflect on the main achievements of the Community Cohesion Fund, 'raised awareness of community cohesion' was frequently mentioned by lead officers.

## **5.5 Dedicated Community Cohesion Officer**

The presence of a dedicated community cohesion officer with responsibility for and capacity to promote community cohesion across the local authority and partner agencies in the local area was key to effective delivery at the local level. Local authority areas with a dedicated community cohesion officer were more likely to have developed an action plan or strategy; more likely to have forged positive links with partner agencies; and mainstreaming activity was more evident in these areas. The additional capacity provided by dedicated officers emerged as crucial to their impact on local delivery. This included the advice and guidance they frequently provided to organisations bidding for and receiving assistance from the Community Cohesion Fund. This was in sharp contrast to the experience in areas without dedicated staff, as one lead cohesion officer explained:

*I know in some areas they've taken the bold steps to put cohesion officers in place, that's something that to this point we've not done, and I think it's to our detriment in a sense of, by now we probably could have had somebody in*

*place for a year developing the cohesion agenda, whereas at the moment it seems to be being split out....it's difficult because we're having to do more with less so we're finding that the amount of time we'll be able to give to cohesion now it's set up is reducing"*

Expertise, knowledge, and existing links with partner agencies were also important features of dedicated community cohesion officers but capacity was found to be the primary benefit, from which other activities and positive impacts flowed. Areas with no dedicated officer were reliant on the local authority staff member designated the 'lead officer for community cohesion' and limited capacity to take community cohesion issues forward was a recurrent theme in discussions with these respondents. All had other responsibilities (many were community safety officers), to which community cohesion had been added. Many reported having only a few hours a week to dedicate to their community cohesion role and some, feeling overburdened in their substantive role already, were displeased at being given additional workload, affecting motivation in some instances. Several had also seen their workload rise due to staffing changes as a result of local authority cuts. The consequence in some (but certainly not all) authorities was that only rudimentary attention was paid to community cohesion issues, centred on basic administration of the Community Cohesion Fund. As one lead officer explained:

*"I don't have much time to devote to this area of work. I manage to get the work done and what we need to fulfil grant-wise but I wouldn't say I'd gone into it in any detail"*

Nearly half (ten) of local authorities were employing a dedicated (full or part time) community cohesion officer by the third year of the Community Cohesion Fund. The Large Towns and Cities were most likely to do so, reflecting the extra funding received through the Community Cohesion Grant, while only one (Anglesey) of the eight Rural authorities appointed a dedicated officer (one other had previously employed officers on a temporary basis). Dedicated community cohesion officers were employed in one of the four 'Affluent Fringe' authorities and four of the seven Welsh Valleys.

Community Cohesion Officers were generally funded through dedicated community cohesion resources (the Fund or the Grant), although in a small number of cases the post was co-funded or wholly supported by other funds. The Community Cohesion Officer in Flintshire, for example, was funded by the local authority and in Powys two Community Cohesion Officers were temporarily employed by the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations. This was very rare, however, suggesting that without dedicated community cohesion funding, few authorities would have committed resources to such a post. Only one local authority used all of its Community Cohesion Fund allocation to support a dedicated community cohesion officer.

Exploring local authority decision making in more detail, a number of factors influenced decisions whether to appoint a dedicated officer.

*Firstly*, employing a dedicated community cohesion officer in areas perceived by local stakeholders to have few cohesion issues, and where agencies were relatively disengaged with the agenda, was not seen to be an effective use of resources. The obvious counter argument is that employing a dedicated officer to improve



awareness and understanding of community cohesion (cohesion affects everyone and every location - areas suggesting they have no cohesion issues do not, therefore, fully understand what cohesion is) and to engage local stakeholders would, perhaps, be most effective in these circumstances.

*Secondly*, The Community Cohesion Fund provided relatively limited resource in each local authority area. Costs associated with dedicated staff are substantial, leaving little, in some areas, to support local projects. Opinion was divided on the relative merits of dedicated staff versus local projects as a way of promoting community cohesion. In one rural authority, for example, the lead officer explained that they had considered funding a dedicated Community Cohesion Officer but felt they would get "better results" from local projects. In contrast, the lead officer in another rural authority expressed the view that *"Projects come and go and the year after everyone has forgotten about them, but the officer can keep things going"*. Another, in the Welsh valleys, made a similar point, suggesting that local projects leave less of a legacy:

*"We felt that if we'd actually splintered it off into different projects, we had a feeling that they would have been more event focused rather than having any residual, sustainable effects. And it helps to keep it constantly on the agenda, rather than something that comes and goes."*

*Thirdly*, the structure of Community Cohesion funding deterred several authorities from employing dedicated staff, despite believing this to be the most effective use of resources and a better way to promote community cohesion and achieve cohesion outcomes. Funding was only guaranteed on an annual basis and lead officers, including several of those in the Rural authorities, did not appoint dedicated staff because of concerns about the uncertainty, and short-term nature of the Community Cohesion Fund. As one explained:

*"We were hoping to appoint a project coordinator or somebody that would, part of their role would be administering the grant but part of it would be in terms of development work, but then because the Assembly said they couldn't guarantee we'd have funding in 11/12 we had to knock that on the head because we wouldn't be able to advertise for a post knowing that it could end in March so we would probably have been advertising for a six or eight month post and once you start doing that then people start looking for another job when they're approaching...so that was a very real problem for me, that's meant basically that we haven't been able to take the work forward strategically and that we're just administering the grant..."*

Despite clear evidence of the positive benefits which flow from the presence of an officer dedicated to community cohesion, some challenges and problems were also identified, limiting the potential for positive impacts. In particular, the relatively junior position of some Community Cohesion Officers, and the associated lack of authority, was found to hamper their efforts. With little authority or influence over the content of strategies being developed by policy colleagues, for example, and no automatic invite to senior management and strategic groups, the community cohesion agenda was reported to sometimes progress somewhat incrementally. As one Community Cohesion Co-ordinator explained:

*"[X city] has placed the community cohesion co-ordinator in a place where I have to go through about six different levels [to reach senior executives] whereas in Newport I know the Chief Exec sits on the same panel as the [community cohesion] co-ordinator so they're able to push the agenda forward"*

One authority sought to minimise these challenges by having their dedicated cohesion officer work to a senior manager who possessed the power and authority to influence strategic and resource allocation decisions.

## **5.6 Mapping Local Cohesion Issues**

*Getting on Together* suggests that the first step for any partnership convened to promote community cohesion is to develop an understanding of the communities in their area through community mapping. This involves identifying who lives in the area, what their cohesion priorities are and what work is already ongoing to promote cohesion. This can also inform the development of a baseline against which the progress and impact of interventions can be monitored and changes in cohesion evaluated. The Community Cohesion Fund guidance issued in 2010/11 reinforced this point by advising partnerships to focus attention on mapping community cohesion issues in their local area.

To support this objective, the action plan that accompanied *Getting on Together* committed the Welsh Government to producing information, advice and guidance to support the mapping and monitoring of issues and challenges of relevance to community cohesion (for example, community profiles and change and emerging tensions and conflicts) and the evaluation of interventions intended to support cohesion objectives.

The guidance was produced in May 2011 - during the third and final year of the Community Cohesion Fund. This was too late to inform and guide allocation of the Community Cohesion Fund, or local approaches to promoting and addressing cohesion issues in the three years preceding the launch of *Getting on Together*. In the meantime, then, local cohesion partnerships adopted different approaches to mapping and monitoring cohesion.

As suggested in *Getting on Together*, mapping represents a *first step*, and should be a pre-cursor to developing interventions and local approaches to cohesion. Priorities and appropriate responses can only be determined if the local community and the issues it faces are understood. It appears that no local authority used the Community Cohesion Fund to resource mapping exercises in the first year, moving instead directly to funding local projects.

This partly reflects delays in confirming the availability of the fund and the very short timescale in which local authorities had to allocate and spend the first year of funding. For many authorities, this meant little time for strategic thinking. In this context, funding local projects which were 'ready to go' and which spoke broadly to community cohesion issues represented the best, or only feasible way of using the resource. This was very common in 2009/10 across local authority areas. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4.2, the stated purpose of the Fund in 2009/10 was to pump prime cohesion work in local communities and it was only in the second

year of funding that the Welsh Government guidance emphasised the need for a more strategic approach, mapping cohesion issues and drawing up plans to tackle these. An officer in one local authority explained they had made a conscious decision not to spend Community Cohesion Fund monies in 2009/10 on identifying and mapping problems and priorities. Local partners were concerned about raising the profile of cohesion problems without being sure that the local authority would have the resources to address identified concerns, a worry rooted in uncertainties about the future of the Community Cohesion Fund.

Although no local authority used the Community Cohesion Fund to map local issues and needs in Year 1, some made use of available secondary data or resourced mapping and consultation exercises in other ways. In most cases, however, mapping activities only got under way in 2010/11 (eight local authorities used the Community Cohesion Fund to support such mapping work in that year). The Welsh Government guidance was still being developed at this time and activity continued to be patchy over the next two years. Community cohesion officers in the majority of local authorities were able to point to information and evidence about local communities but comprehensive community or cohesion mapping was very rare. Rhondda-Cynon-Taff was one exception, recognised by Welsh Government as representing good practice and featuring in the Community Mapping and Tension Monitoring Guidance. RCT developed a community cohesion mapping database which collated an impressive range of cohesion relevant datasets allowing them to identify and monitor cohesion issues at a local level. An associated 'cohesion index' generates a cohesion score and rank for every lower layer super output area (Lsoa). Further research and intervention is then conducted in neighbourhoods indicating low cohesion, ensuring that resources are targeted where they are most needed.

Several other local authorities (in the Welsh Valleys and Large towns/cities) indicated plans to carry out or complete comprehensive mapping exercises, and in at least one case this was a key objective, but activities were delayed and it was unclear how far each authority had progressed by the end of 2011/12.

Local partners' understanding of what constituted mapping varied widely. In some instances stakeholders reported having mapped local community needs and issues but further investigation revealed this to be relatively small scale or localised resident or stakeholder consultation. Activities carried out by local authorities between 2009-2012 and cited as examples of community mapping included:

- externally commissioned and in-house research profiling and mapping the local population, or specific sections of the local population (particularly the local migrant or minority ethnic population), community cohesion issues, and local needs
- one-off consultation and similar events such as workshops and stakeholder days (these were very common)
- impact assessments of specific impending changes/developments (for example the proposal, later dropped, to build a power station in Anglesey)
- analysis of secondary data such as local and national surveys, multiple deprivation index, crime statistics

- linking with existing monitoring systems to flag emerging issues. In Pembrokeshire, for example, the local authority monitor migrant registrations with GPs which helps them identify patterns in migrant arrival and settlement
- ongoing community engagement (through focus groups, local groups and fora, and community development workers), as well as the on-the-ground activities of dedicated community cohesion officers, who often worked closely with and learnt from the agencies delivering projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund
- professional knowledge, formally sought through forums and network groups
- informal 'local knowledge/intelligence'

It was beyond the remit of the evaluation to evaluate each local authority's community mapping activity but it is clear that more work is needed and that robust knowledge and understanding of cohesion challenges is still partial in the majority of areas. In many areas there was a tendency to 'map' issues and communities already thought to raise cohesion challenges rather than using mapping activity to *reveal* those issues and communities. For this reason, much evidence gathering focused on communities such as young people, minority ethnic communities and A8 migrants, or on issues such as hate crime. It was not, however, always clear how or why these had been identified as priority issues. Focusing attention on pre-identified issues can represent an effective use of limited resources and was seen in this way by lead officers. There is also a risk, however, that important cohesion challenges are never identified, the experiences of particular people are places are neglected, and neighbourhoods and communities in need of resources lose out.

On a more positive note, there was evidence of increased attention to, and prioritisation of the accrual of robust evidence and understanding over the three years of the evaluation. Combined with the recently published Welsh Government guidance, improvements and progress are therefore likely to continue.

## **5.7 Identifying and Agreeing Local Priorities**

Community cohesion officers in most local authorities could point to cohesion issues in their area but the extent to which these had been identified through robust mapping work (see above), had been agreed by relevant partners or partnership group, and translated into local priorities against which the Community Cohesion Fund could be allocated, or cohesion work planned, was often questionable. Certainly, very few local authorities were operating in such a strategic way in the first couple of years of Community Cohesion Funding.

However, identifying local priorities is a process (ideally involving consultation, community mapping, and the development of a strategic framework within which local priorities sit) and one which takes time. It is, therefore, unrealistic to expect rapid progress, particularly in areas with little history of engaging with the community cohesion agenda. In addition, the Community Cohesion Fund had to be allocated and spent in a short timescale in 2009/10 leaving little time for local authorities and partner agencies to identify priorities for action for that year.

Those authorities convening a specially constituted community cohesion partnership group were more likely to have clearly identified and agreed local priorities than those where no such group existed (as was the case in five of the eight Rural authorities). Some community cohesion groups may have been established with the express purpose of agreeing local priorities which partly explains the strong correlation.

The development of a community cohesion strategy or action plan was also an important catalyst prompting local authorities and their partners to determine priorities for action. In fact, only those authorities with cohesion strategies or action plans could point to *stated* local priorities (others reported that local priorities had been agreed but there was no supporting documentation). There was significant overlap between those authorities with cohesion partnerships and those having developed strategies or action plans. In several authorities (including Anglesey, Bridgend and Blaenau Gwent) a coherent chain of action was clearly evident from establishing a community cohesion group, through efforts to map local issues, to developing a strategy, to identifying priorities. The Welsh Valley authorities appeared most effective at taking this more considered, and strategic approach.

The local community cohesion priorities reported by lead officers were wide ranging although integration issues (with regard to new and established communities), issues associated with new migrant settlement, intergeneration conflict, racism and hate crime, and equalities were commonly cited. Only one lead officer (in a Rural area) reported that no priorities had ever been identified or agreed, reflecting the local view that the area faced no cohesion challenges. Another explained their reluctance to set priorities in rather different terms, expressing concern that communities would expect them to take action once priorities had been established and that resource constraints would prevent them from doing so:

*"I think the issue also is in terms of raising expectations of local communities and groups and one thing that we have been accused of in the past is going out and raising expectations in local communities, we don't want to go out and say 'this is a new area, new term, different way of working that we want to implement and work with local communities' find out all the priorities and then find out you haven't got any resources or finances or staff to actually deliver on it."*

When asked whether priorities for action had been determined and agreed locally, most cohesion lead officers could point to a series of priority issues. However, the extent to which these issues had been evidenced, consulted upon, and agreed was questionable, particularly in areas with no strategy or action plan. On closer inspection, the 'priorities' cited sometimes represented little more than officers' views on local cohesion issues. At other times the list of 'priorities' was so long as to render to term 'priority' somewhat meaningless. In addition, a relationship between mapping activity, the priorities identified, and projects funded could not always be established. There were examples, however, of local authorities with no strategy or action plan identifying key priorities for action through a consultation process and using these to inform Fund allocation. One Rural authority, for example had no capacity to develop a cohesion strategy. In an effort to ensure effective use of the Fund they held a stakeholder consultation event, attended by the Welsh Government, to establish

priorities. Bids for the Community Cohesion Fund were subsequently assessed against these priorities.

In the final year of the evaluation (and third year of the Fund) there was a notable shift of priorities away from specific issues and communities towards mainstreaming and sustaining progress made in the preceding years. Typically, this was a response to the end of the Community Cohesion Fund and recognition that, in the absence of dedicated funding, mainstreaming was the most effective way to take the community cohesion agenda forward. This shift, which appears to demonstrate commitment to sustaining community cohesion activity, was not uniform across all 22 local authorities.

## **5.8 A Local Community Cohesion Plan or Strategy**

The development of a community cohesion strategy or action plan emerged as a key factor promoting effective and coherent local delivery of community cohesion activities. There was a clear correlation between those authorities without a working definition of community cohesion, who could not point to locally agreed priorities, and whose projects demonstrated a poor fit with local community cohesion challenges, and those with no strategy or action plan. The process of developing a strategy prompted local authorities and their partners to agree working definitions of community cohesion, map issues in the local area and agree priorities.

There was evidence that local authorities became more strategic in their approach to community cohesion over time. In the year following the launch of *Getting on Together* most authorities had no strategic framework to guide their activities, including the allocation of the Community Cohesion Fund. Over the three years of the evaluation, increasing numbers of local authorities developed action plans or adopted a Community Cohesion Strategy. These strategies were typically informed by efforts to identify priority issues, but the emphasis placed by the Welsh Government in the Fund guidance on developing local plans to tackle cohesion issues in the Fund guidance issues in 2010/11 was also found to have promoted increased strategic thinking. Strategic developments had not always percolated through into decisions about the allocation of Community Cohesion Funds, however (see Section 5.9 below). Problems were particularly apparent in situations where the local authority's Community Cohesion lead was not a member of the partnership group responsible for allocating the Community Cohesion Fund.

By 2011/12 (the final year of the Community Cohesion Fund and the evaluation) 12 of the 22 local authorities had developed a community cohesion strategy or an action plan or both. It was more common for local authorities to have developed action plans than strategies (seven had a strategy and ten had an action plan with five of these having developed both). Ten local authorities had neither an action plan nor a strategy, although in one case both were in development.

Local authorities with a dedicated Community Cohesion officer were more likely to have developed an action plan or strategy. Of the ten authorities with neither, nine had no dedicated Community Cohesion Officer (the dedicated officer in the final authority was in the process of developing a strategy).

The Welsh Valley authorities and the Large Towns/Cities were taking a more strategic approach to community cohesion than their colleagues in Rural areas and Penurban Fringes. Six (out of seven) of the Welsh Valley authorities and three (out of four) of the Large Towns/Cities had a strategy or action plan by 2011/12. In contrast, few authorities in the Rural areas or Penurban Fringes had developed action plans or made efforts to approach cohesion issues strategically (two of the six Rural authorities and one of the three Affluent Fringe authorities had done so). Exploring the reasons why these authorities had not developed a strategic framework to guide their activities, the following explanations emerged:

- the view (evident in five local authorities) that community cohesion does not require a stand-alone local strategy as cohesion relevant issues are covered in other local and national strategies (the ALL Wales strategy, local Community Strategies, *Getting on Together*, the Community Safety Strategy). In some cases this view reflected limited commitment and motivation to promote community cohesion but in others the decision was the product of careful consideration, consultation and concerns that a stand-alone strategy would hamper efforts to mainstream. The lead officer in one Rural authority, for example, explained that:

*"The trouble is when you do something as an extra on its own it does tend to be bolted on rather than mainstreamed so I think we would just focus more if we had more resources on trying to actually get it within the equalities plan and within the key plans that work for our partner agencies really so it's integrated rather than somebody seeing it as an additional plan...we'd like to see it as a core business within everybody's plans"*

- limited capacity (evident in four authorities, three of which were Rural). There was no dedicated cohesion officer in three of these areas.
- the view that a strategy was unnecessary because there are no cohesion challenges in the local authority area (one Rural authority)

Local authorities adopted different approaches to drawing up their strategies and action plans. Some were led by the Community Safety Partnership or cohesion partnership groups, others were written by the dedicated cohesion officer following consultation with partners, and some were the product of an event or the work of an external consultant. Several used existing strategies (such as those developed by other local authorities, or *Getting on Together*) as a template or drew on guidance produced by the Welsh Government.

## **5.9 Targeted Initiatives to address Specific Challenges**

All local authorities used their allocation of the Community Cohesion Fund to support direct interventions in the form of local projects delivered by a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. These projects are profiled and some of outcomes flowing from them are showcased in Chapter 6. As discussed above, some funding was also allocated locally to strategic activities such as dedicated staff, cohesion mapping and development of strategies and action plans, but this represented a much smaller allocation of the overall resource.

In 2009/10 commissioning of targeted initiatives was (by local authority's own admission) somewhat haphazard and lacking in coherence, with a rather disparate

range of projects funded, often unconnected to local issues or priorities. One lead officer described commissioning in this year in terms of *"randomly distributing it [the Fund] on the four winds to a couple of things that sounded plausible"*. Objectives were often subsequently applied to proposals rather than underpinning them. The Welsh Government's role in approving all projects ensured they were broadly aligned with community cohesion objectives but the extent to which some projects addressed cohesion issues was questionable. The Welsh Government acknowledged that local authorities had been given very little time to develop a coordinated approach before being required to have allocated and spent the Fund in Year 1. Accordingly, the expectation placed on local authorities for anything more progressive or strategic was not high. The Welsh Government did, however, expect this to shift over time.

In line with expectations, there was evidence of more strategic commissioning in Years 2 and 3 insofar as the projects funded more readily addressed the cohesion issues reported by lead officers. In 14 local authorities the interventions supported by the Community Cohesion Fund in 2010/11 were found to reflect the local issues identified by the lead officer. In addition, at the end of the three years funding, lead officers in all local authorities reported that funded interventions had addressed local priorities 'a lot' or 'a little'.

Although the general trend towards better targeting of resources is evident, exploring this issue in more detail suggests a more complex, and less positive, picture. For example, the local issues cited by lead officers had not always been arrived at through systematic assessment (see sections 5.5 and 5.6). Interventions may fit closely the issues identified but if the issues identified represent the impressionistic views of a few stakeholders with a narrow interpretation of community cohesion then cohesion will not be advanced in that locality and key communities and issues will remain neglected. In addition, there was a mismatch between the priorities identified by officers with lead responsibility for community cohesion and the profile of local projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund in many instances. In eight local authorities, for example, the projects commissioned bore little relationship to the cohesion issues identified.

In some local authorities this reflected a lack of strategic thinking or limited commitment to the community cohesion agenda. But in other some areas officers explained that the short-term and uncertain nature of the funding prevented them being more strategic. For example:

*"But, for me, I would have liked to have seen a more progressive and dynamic approach to funding, which would have allowed us to carry through projects, rather than lurching from one year to the next. We can't do it in one-year slices, or even in three year slices"*

*"Because WAG couldn't guarantee that we'd have funding next year then it stopped us from implementing certain things"*

The community cohesion lead officers typically had responsibility for administering the Community Cohesion Fund but *Getting on Together* encouraged relevant local organisations to work in partnership to take a strategic approach to supporting community cohesion. It advises that partnerships should include organisations that



are working in the community, have first-hand knowledge of local issues. These organisations are able to provide early intelligence regarding cohesion problems, and are working with particular disadvantaged groups. Such partnerships existed in most local authorities and, alongside dedicated cohesion officers took the lead in developing a local approach to community cohesion and to promoting and administering the Fund. The vast majority of local authorities bids for Community Cohesion Funds were reviewed, and funds allocated, through a partnership group, although the processes and mechanism developed varied across Wales.

In some instances these were specially convened cohesion groups or panels. In others pre-existing partnerships or fora had assumed responsibility for cohesion issues. Typically this was the Community Safety Partnership (or a sub-group of). In one case, decision making had been devolved to a voluntary sector partnership but in most cases statutory partners were involved. Membership of the groups varied but Communities First and Community Safety were usually represented. Membership rarely include the wide range of potential partners identified in *Getting on Together* (p14), particularly in cases where applications for support from the Community Cohesion Fund were reviewed and approved by an existing group, initially convened with a different remit and with the membership reflecting this.

Many authorities advertised the availability of funding in an 'open call' but a minority chose instead to approach organisations known to them or thought to be well placed to deliver community cohesion interventions.

*"To be honest the level of interest isn't massive so it tends to be people we already know that are working on things"*

*"What has tended to happen is we've gone out to the various groups and so on that we're involved in and various organisations and asked them to make bids for this funding so it's not as strategic an approach as it should be."*

This can represent strategic targeting and effective management of limited resources but in most cases it did not. Rather, it tended to reflect limited attention to community cohesion and to scoping the issues locally, and narrow definitions of what cohesion is. In areas where this is the case, non-competitive commissioning, rather than an open call can be to the detriment of locations and communities potentially in need of community cohesion intervention.

One local authority had used the fund as an opportunity to support and engage the voluntary sector and had actively promoted the fund to voluntary and community organisations.

There were significant variations in the quality of applications and the quality of the appraisal and decision-making process. This was particularly true in authorities in which a partnership group with no explicit remit for community cohesion was given responsibility for Fund allocation, and in areas with no strategy or action plan. This is not to say that the resource was not put to good use, but to point out that there was sometimes a lack of strategic coherence binding together the projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund.

## 5.10 Mainstreaming

*Getting on Together* and subsequent Community Cohesion Fund guidance from the Welsh Government made clear that community cohesion is a cross cutting agenda and should be embedded within the everyday duties and activities of all local authority departments and their partners. Real progress has been made in this regard since the launch of *Getting on Together* but some local authorities and staff in certain policy areas remain uncertain about the relevance of community cohesion to their work or what they have to contribute to efforts to promote cohesion locally.

Towards the end of the evaluation lead officers were asked to reflect on how well community cohesion had become embedded in the work of the local agencies. The majority (17) reported that community cohesion was very or relatively well embedded in the work of the local authority and 13 reported that community cohesion was very or relatively well embedded in the work of other agencies. The majority of those reporting that community cohesion was not embedded in the work of the local authority or other agencies had no dedicated officer or senior lead, once again reinforcing the importance of dedicated staff, and in particular the capacity they bring, in promoting community cohesion with other agencies. Progress with mainstreaming was most evident in the Welsh Valleys.

Commitment to mainstreaming amongst local authority lead officers and local partners increased over the three years in which the evaluation took place. This was partly in response to the Community Cohesion Fund coming to an end but also reflected the development of a more sophisticated understanding of community cohesion amongst local authority colleagues and partners. Illustrating this point, one stakeholder explained that initially there was a sense that community cohesion was “*something that WAG dreamed up*” but that “*now it is part of what everyone does*”. Another reported that “*It has come from ‘Community what?!’ to being something we deal with on a day-to-day basis*”

Cohesion lead officers had, in some authorities, worked hard to ensure community cohesion was mainstreamed within policy and practice across the local authority and this had clearly paid dividends. Activities included attendance at policy groups and panel meetings, maintaining regular contact with colleagues in other policy domains, providing input during the development of new strategies, and developing and delivering training courses. Only those with significant time to dedicate to the task were able to make such progress, however.

In some local authorities, limited progress had been made. In a very small number of these, there was little evidence of any real commitment to community cohesion by the lead officer or local partners, nor interest in promoting the agenda. In others, however, limited progress had been made despite concerted efforts of the lead officer who had done all they could to promote the agenda with limited resources and in the face of limited understanding or interest among local authority colleagues and officers in statutory and voluntary and community sector partners. Colleagues in other policy areas (including housing, health and education) often failed to see the relevance of their own work to community cohesion, or did not prioritise cohesion issues. In a small number of authorities the lead officer suggested that local partners were still relatively unfamiliar with the term which presented a significant barrier to mainstreaming cohesion. One expressed the view that “*there is a lack of knowledge*

*about the community cohesion agenda, not many people are familiar with the phrase community cohesion".*

The failure of local and national strategies to foreground community cohesion as a priority also emerged as a barrier to mainstreaming, as illustrated by the following comments:

*"[it is difficult] getting them not to just have it as an add-on but to integrate it into their main policies".*

*"[The national] strategy is designed with mainstreaming in mind so the idea of the four priorities is all about bringing the key service areas that might deal with community cohesion related issues into one place. But actually the cohesion strategy is not referenced in the housing strategy and the equalities and disability strategy so it's not quite joined up is it? It feels to me that the intention is good, they were trying to promote a more coherent approach to cohesion but in reality it's not really feeding through"*

Limited capacity was found to have significantly hindered the efforts of lead officers to promote community cohesion to partners and was reflected in the neglect of community cohesion issues in the activities and strategies of other agencies. This was particularly true in small (typically rural) authorities, with few staff. Lead officers were unable to afford the time to meet with groups or attend meetings within and outwith the local authority, something that was considered vital in their efforts to promote mainstreaming. Similar reasons explained limited attendance at the regional community cohesion group although the relative importance of limited capacity versus limited interest/commitment to the agenda (also evident in some authorities - see Section 5.3) was not always clear.

Three factors were found to be crucial in explaining why some community cohesion lead officers had greater success in promoting the mainstreaming of community cohesion within their local authority. *First*, as mentioned above, mainstreaming activity and progress in mainstreaming in the three years since the launch of *Getting on Together* was more evident in authorities with a dedicated community cohesion lead officer. *Second*, the explicit support of the Leader of the council, the Chief Executive officer, a senior officer with responsibility for cohesion and senior officers in different departments proved a key determinant of whether or not colleagues in different policy areas were willing to engage and committed to the agenda. *Third*, Community Cohesion lead officers with established links into and working relations with colleagues in different departments of the local authority had made more headway in mainstreaming community cohesion into the core business of other policy areas.

## **5.11 Conclusion**

The overarching objective of *Getting on Together* is to strengthen community cohesion in Wales, with primary responsibility for delivery devolved to the local level. Supported by advice and guidance from the Community Cohesion Unit in the Welsh Government, the aim was for local authorities and their partners to commit to and promote the community cohesion agenda, and implement cohesion activities at a local level.

In many respects this has been achieved. Significant progress has been made locally to promote and improve community cohesion. Community Cohesion officers have engaged voluntary and statutory partners, secured their commitment to the agenda and convinced them of the ways in which cohesion is relevant to their policy area and the work they do. Hundreds of local projects have been developed, supported by the Community Cohesion Fund, which have addressed cohesion challenges. Critical success factors were: dedicated resources and capacity (the Fund and a dedicated officer); efforts to map local communities and needs, resulting in sophisticated understanding of the nature of cohesion issues locally; Executive and senior support; and a strategic framework (an action plan or strategy) to guide local activities and Fund spending.

The picture was, however, variable. Evidence suggests there is still some way to go in effecting a coherent and strategic approach to cohesion across Wales. In some areas, there had been no effort made to systematically map and understand cohesion issues, agree cohesion priorities or commissioning local projects to address agreed priorities. The new Regional Co-ordinators will need to make concerted efforts in such circumstances to secure commitment to the community cohesion agenda.

## 6 Local Interventions and Impacts

### Key Findings

- more than 600 local projects were supported by the Community Cohesion Fund between 2009/10 and 2011/12
- the majority of case study projects addressed local cohesion priorities, but three out of 10 evidenced only tenuous links to *Getting on Together*
- the case study projects actively mainstreaming community cohesion were longer in duration and larger in scale than other projects
- the mainstreaming of cohesion emerged as an unintended consequence of some projects
- seven of the 10 case study projects provided evidence of additionality, addressing issues and delivering outputs unlikely to have been forthcoming without the support of the Community Cohesion Fund
- all case study projects were reported to have had a positive impact and appeared to have promoted community cohesion at the local level
- the main achievements of the Community Cohesion Fund identified by community cohesion lead officers included: raised awareness of community cohesion within the local authority and among local voluntary and community organisations; improved community capacity and participation; improved community relations and more positive attitudes to diversity and difference; and tackling a pressing cohesion concern

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the delivery and impact of the local projects and interventions supported by the Community Cohesion Fund and delivered by local authorities, other statutory agencies and third sector organisations across Wales. Discussion commences with a review of the projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund between 2009/10 and 2011/12. It then goes on to review and draw conclusions about the delivery and impact of projects based on the evaluation of 10 case study projects. This sample was selected to include projects addressing key themes identified in *Getting on Together* and being delivered in local authority areas across Wales. The projects ranged in size and scale, from a one-off event bringing together new migrants and settled residents, through to the funding of a dedicated local community cohesion officer. Details of the projects and key achievements are outlined in Table 6.3.

## 6.2 An Overview of Community Cohesion Fund Projects

Between 2009/10 and 2011/12 each local authority in Wales received an annual allocation from the Community Cohesion Fund (Table 6.1 presents the allocations for 2011/12). As outlined in Chapter 3, local authorities, in consultation with local partners, submitted proposals to the Community Cohesion Unit detailing the local projects they proposed to support through their Fund allocation. These bids were reviewed by the Unit and proposals either accepted or declined. Typically, most projects received approval, but there were instances of multiple projects being declined. In 2011/12, for example, nine out of 19 projects proposed by one local authority were declined by the Community Cohesion Unit. Not all local authorities spent their annual allocation from the Community Cohesion Fund in full.

**Table 6.1: Community Cohesion Fund Allocations to Local Authorities (2011/12)**

Local Authority	Fund Allocation
Blaenau Gwent	£83,388
Bridgend	£52,523
Caerphilly	£117,757
Cardiff	£173,510
Carmarthenshire	£73,549
Ceredigion	£32,643
Conwy	£43,161
Denbighshire	£31,882
Flintshire	£52,229
Gwynedd	£50,510
Merthyr Tydfil	£64,292
Monmouthshire	£24,378
Neath Port Talbot	£96,586
Newport	£84,947
Pembrokeshire	£36,258
Powys	£44,986
Rhondda Cynon Taff	£159,139
Swansea	£126,552
Torfaen	£34,786
Vale of Glamorgan	£35,050
Wrexham	£50,290

More than 600 local projects were supported by the Community Cohesion Fund between 2009/10 and 2011/12. The majority of these projects were funded under the equality and social inclusion theme of *Getting on Together* (Table 6.2). Local authorities utilised the Fund in different ways. Some determined to fund a large number of small projects. One local authority in 2011/12, for example, supported 22 projects through the Fund, the largest allocation to a single project being £6,100 to a local school based project. At the other extreme were local authorities who allocated

the majority, if not all, of the Community Cohesion Fund allocation on funding a dedicated community cohesion officer. An increasing emphasis on funding learning related and strategic projects, such as a dedicated cohesion officer, was apparent across the three years of the Fund.

**Table 6.2: Projects Supported by the Community Cohesion Fund (200910-2011/12)**

Project Theme	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12*
	No. projects	No. projects	No. projects
Equality & Social Inclusion	140	106	97
Communication	24	32	22
Learning	26	27	35
Strategy	0	21	24
Prevent	8	13	9
Housing	14	11	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>196</b>

Analysis of the projects funded in 2010/11 revealed that most were aligned with local community cohesion priorities identified by the local cohesion lead. However, analysis suggested that in eight local authorities the projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund were not well aligned with local cohesion priorities. Most of these local authorities had not developed a local community cohesion or action plan to guide local efforts to promote community cohesion.

### 6.3 Attention to Local and National Priorities

A key reason for evaluating a sample of case study projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund was to explore the local impacts of the community cohesion agenda and the degree to which the priorities of *Getting on Together* had percolated down to and were informing activities at the local level. All 10 case study projects were addressing priorities of *Getting on Together* and the outcomes flowing from these projects appeared likely to impact positively on community cohesion (see section 6.6). Attention to the priorities of *Getting on Together* should come as no surprise. The Community Cohesion Unit made it very clear in guidance on the Community Cohesion Fund issued to local authorities that applications should directly address the priorities of *Getting on Together* and approval for local spending plans was granted on this basis. However, closer inspection revealed that in some cases these links were weak and rather tenuous and little attention had been paid to local cohesion priorities.

Six of the 10 case study projects attended directly to local cohesion priorities, which had been detailed in a local community cohesion action plan or strategy. These included projects that were developed in reaction to emerging cohesion concerns and projects that were more strategic in their objectives and were, for example, seeking to prevent cohesion problems or mainstream cohesion within local policy and practice. The presence of a dedicated community cohesion officer, who possessed an understanding of local cohesion issues and had the capacity to spend time engaging with agencies and nurturing projects that directly addressed strategic

priorities, proved key to the development of these projects. Officers often continued to offer support during project delivery, helping to ensure that projects kept on track and delivered against priorities. This ongoing involvement resulted in the accumulation of knowledge and understanding about what works, where and when, in terms of tackling local challenges and promoting cohesion. Two local authorities also ensured that projects attended to cohesion priorities by requiring all applicants to evidence in their application of how their proposal fit with local, as well as national, cohesion priorities.

In contrast, three projects failed to speak directly to local cohesion priorities and evidenced only tenuous links to *Getting on Together*. These three projects were all developed and delivered in local authority areas with no local cohesion strategy or action plan. Local cohesion priorities had not, therefore, been clearly defined. All three were pre-existing projects and sought Community Cohesion Fund support in reaction to a shortfall in funding. The statutory agency delivering one of these projects had become aware of the Fund by virtue of its membership of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). It was encouraged to apply when it became apparent that the CSP was struggling to spend its Community Cohesion Fund allocation. The project was consistent with the CSP's priorities. The other two projects were delivered by a third sector agency, which was encouraged to apply to the Fund by the local community cohesion lead. The lead officer in this rural authority appeared to be working within a very narrow definition of community cohesion, which focused on issues of race and ethnicity, and identified the agency as one of the few in the area working with minority ethnic residents. The support received secured the immediate future of two projects working with new migrants that had been struggling for funding and were revealed to be providing an important service. However, discussions with staff revealed that they were unclear about the specific objectives of the Community Cohesion Fund and regarded it as just another source of funding.

The other case study project fell somewhere between these two extremes, in terms of its attention to local and national cohesion priorities. The project was developed by a Communities First partnership in response to intergenerational tensions and misunderstanding, which were identified as a local cohesion priority by project workers. The staff consultation that identified these priorities appeared to have been undertaken for the express purpose of informing the partnership's application to the Community Cohesion Fund, a finding that provides further evidence of the role played by the Fund in promoting engagement with the agenda at the local level. The Communities First partnership was aware that under the terms and conditions of the Fund 50 per cent of all support had to be allocated to benefit Communities First areas, putting them in a strong position to secure support from the Fund. There was no local community cohesion strategy or action plan to align the application with, but the project was consistent with the priorities of the local Community Safety Plan, contributing to efforts to tackle damage to the outdoor environment and reducing the fear of crime. The Communities First partnership also reported reviewing *Getting on Together* when developing the bid and identifying synergies between their proposal and priorities identified in the chapters in *Getting on Together* on equality and social inclusion, housing and learning.



### **Case Study 1: The Intergeneration Initiative**

A Communities First Partnership in North Wales received funding from the Community Cohesion Fund to run a series of activities aimed at promoting understanding and greater tolerance between older and younger residents. The activities involved 95 participants, and created a team of 11 adult mentors with a variety of skills to engage older and younger residents. Funding was first received in 2009/10 and a further application was made to the Community Cohesion Fund in 2010/11 to fund a project worker for six months (£16,865). The project worker led a series of activities aimed at creating opportunities for older and younger residents to undertake activities together and share their skills and experiences. Partners included the local college, High School, the Police, the Council's Youth Services, Older People's Strategy Development Team and the Community Safety Partnership. Activities included:

- a community skills audit to identify issues that local people were needing help with and ways that other residents could help
- a dialogue between older and younger people on issues affecting the neighbourhood (delivered in partnership with the Council and local schools)
- ICT training days in conjunction with local training providers, where younger people assisted older people with computer training
- woodworking activities, where older and younger people worked together to build bird boxes and planters
- a 'pampering' day for older volunteers, delivered by young people with assistance from the local FE College
- organised litter picks by younger people around older people's accommodation in the area
- a bicycle maintenance project, in which local volunteers assisted younger people with repairing and maintaining bicycles. The second-hand bicycles were provided by the Police, and donated to the younger people who fixed them
- an intergenerational lunch, where younger and older residents prepared food and waited-on together
- the development of a toolkit for future intergenerational projects

The projects were regarded as successful and enjoyable to be involved in by beneficiaries. The beneficiaries and project workers interviewed suggested that outcomes included a greater shared understanding of the day-to-day experiences of different generations, and that the opportunity to get involved in joint activities had proved a positive experience.

Of particular interest were a series of workshops in which younger and older people mapped their perceptions of each other through group work and perception surveys, and then worked to dispel myths, find things they had in common, and share experiences. During one session, younger and older people established that there were several negative experiences that they had in common. The exercise also identified changes that the group would like to see to their lives or their neighbourhood. This followed an 'aim, plan, study, do, act' formula to ensure that

group members were realistic about what could be achieved, what the likely barriers were and thought about the best way to achieve it. At the end of the project, the same surveys were used by the group which demonstrated that previous negative attitudes had been reversed.

Interviews with project workers and beneficiaries and evidence from monitoring data collected by Communities First suggested a number of other outcomes of the intergenerational projects. These were:

- several younger people had become local volunteers and several had enrolled in training courses in computing and painting and decorating at the local FE college
- Several older people became more involved with other community activities/projects running in the area, and so were transferring their skills and experiences to younger people
- a number of older participants reported improvements to their health and wellbeing as a result of increased involvement in local activities and projects
- The project engaged older and younger residents who had no previous contact with Communities First.

#### **6.4 Mainstreaming Community Cohesion**

Mainstreaming community cohesion was an explicit goal of two case study projects. These projects were longer in duration and larger (in funding terms) than the other case study projects. Mainstreaming involves infusing the principles and priorities of the community cohesion agenda into the collective consciousness of organisations so that responsibility for building cohesion is embedded within their everyday duties and functions. One case study project sought to mainstream cohesion through the appointment of a dedicated community cohesion officer. This was one of a number of areas that took the decision to spend their Community Cohesion Fund allocation on a dedicated officer.

Notable achievements have been secured by dedicated community cohesion officers, who have often combined strategic and front-line responsibilities. They have played a critical role in promoting the mainstreaming of community cohesion within the policy and practice of local agencies, as well as prompting attention to specific cohesion challenges. The effectiveness of a dedicated officer is inevitably dependent upon their individual skills and attributes. The vast majority of dedicated officers interviewed across Wales were found to possess a good understanding of local communities and good working relations with colleagues across the local authority and in partner agencies. This was very much the case with this case study.

## **Case Study 2: Dedicated Community Cohesion Officer**

The Community Cohesion Officer was appointed to drive forward delivery of the local community cohesion action plan, which was already in place. The officer was charged with raising awareness of the strategy within the local authority and across statutory and third sector agencies in the area. This objective was delivered through a mix of duties at the strategic level and on the ground, out in the community. Strategic responsibilities included:

- raising awareness of and attention to cohesion priorities with the council
- liaising with local strategic partnerships to promote awareness and engagement with the cohesion agenda and the local action plan
- raising awareness and understanding of the agenda among voluntary and community groups, for example, through the development of a training package, presentations, posters and web-based information
- reviewing the Prevent strategy and action plan with Police colleagues
- coordinating and servicing the local community cohesion forum

The blending of strategic and operational responsibilities was not unusual among dedicated cohesion officers. An officer in another local authority reported having a similar spread of responsibilities, ranging from leadership on efforts to promote the mainstreaming of community cohesion within the local authority, through to community mediation in neighbour disputes, in response to an explicit objective in the cohesion action plan.

Beneficiaries in the local authority, other statutory services and third sector organisations reported numerous benefits that had flowed from the work of the dedicated officer. Key among these was the officer's role in promoting understanding and awareness of the community cohesion agenda and local priorities for action within the local authority and across other agencies working in the local area. A Police inspector who sat on the local community cohesion forum reported that the officer had played an invaluable role informing and driving forward the work of the group and keeping community cohesion on the agenda locally.

The other case study project with an explicit mainstreaming brief focused on the education sector. The project was closely aligned with both the priorities of *Getting on Together* and the local community cohesion strategy. It was originally developed in response to evidence derived from a needs analysis of all primary and secondary schools carried out by the dedicated community cohesion lead. The analysis revealed a lack of knowledge and understanding and limited awareness of good practice about how to deal with a range of issues known to inform levels of cohesion among young people, including racism, harassment and bullying. In response, the project sought to raise awareness and promote good practice through a series of workshops for teachers and pastoral care staff from all local schools, as well as education welfare officers, youth workers and third sector organisations working with young people.

One of the striking features of this case study was the buy-in secured from a range of statutory and third sector agencies, which was vital to efforts to mainstream community cohesion within the policy and practice of agencies working with young people. Four factors appear to help explain this success:

- the project spoke to priorities and concerns raised by local schools and other agencies working with young people
- the community cohesion agenda already had a high profile in the area. The local authority had worked to actively raise awareness of the agenda, a dedicated cohesion lead had been appointed, mapping and monitoring of community cohesion had been undertaken and a cohesion strategy had been launched
- as discussed in Chapter 4, schools provide a setting where people from different backgrounds come together and mix. They are therefore on the front line of efforts to manage and limit the challenges that can arise in such circumstances. They also provide an ideal context in which to promote greater understanding and positive relations between people from different backgrounds. Schools have therefore long been recognised as having a role to play in promoting community cohesion
- the project was consistent with and reinforced the work of the Welsh Government, which identified education as a priority area within the action plan supporting delivering of *Getting on Together*. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Welsh Government commissioned research exploring the views of head teachers and school governors on community cohesion in education in Wales. Events were also held in 2010 across Wales with higher and further education sectors on Prevent and community cohesion to raise awareness and secure feedback and comment. This information informed the production of a guidance and good practice document by the Welsh Government to assist schools in their responsibility to promote community cohesion and prevent violent extremism, which was published in February 2011. As a result, people working in the education sector recognised the relevance of the community cohesion agenda to their work and were therefore keen to attend the events.

### **Case Study 3: Young People and Cohesion in Schools**

The project was developed and led by the community cohesion officer. This helped ensure relevance to local and national cohesion priorities. The original project provided workshops, free of charge, which addressed issues including:

- dealing with Bullying workshop
- equality in Welsh schools
- reporting and responding to racist and other bullying incidents
- Show Racism the Red Card DVD showing and discussion and guidance on using related resources in the classroom
- ideas for anti-racism and PSE lessons centred on respect

- dealing with terminology and name calling

Every school in the local authority was invited to attend. Participants were reported to have included teachers, welfare officers, school liaison officers, pastoral support and child protection officers. Subsequently, the project was extended to include other stakeholders, including youth workers and the Police.

The original workshop disseminated knowledge and understanding and raised awareness of community cohesion issues. It also served to identify key issues that schools and other agencies were struggling to deal with, particularly racism and bullying. In response, a wider programme of events was developed. These included workshops and conferences focusing explicitly on racism and on bullying.

The institutional affiliations of the 366 delegates attending one particular event provides an insight into the range of organisations and interests engaging with the programme:

- |                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • primary Schools         | • voluntary council                   |
| • secondary Schools       | • Education Welfare Officers          |
| • college and university  | • Women's Aid                         |
| • Healthy Schools Workers | • Victim Support                      |
| • Youth Offending         | • Crown Prosecution Service           |
| • YMCA                    | • Terrence Higgins Trust              |
| • Crime Prevention        | • LA Housing Team                     |
| • Councillors             | • Youth service                       |
| • Carers                  | • voluntary youth sector organisation |
| • housing associations    | • Health Board                        |
| • Police                  | • Regional Cohesion group             |
| • Communities First       | • Integrated Family Support           |
| • race equality charity   | • LA Human Resources                  |

Delegates left the workshop sessions with resources, including information and tools designed to help with action planning and more practical guidance, such as teacher lessons packs.

Delegates attending one of the events spoke positively about the experience. It was reported to have provided up to date information and provided an opportunity to learn from the experiences of others. It was also reported to have provided an opportunity to catch up on local issues and scope potential collaboration on future projects. The chance to gain first hand practical knowledge on how to handle real situations was also welcomed by delegates.

A number of other case study projects had not set out with the explicit objective of mainstreaming community cohesion but had served to raise awareness to the priorities of the community cohesion agenda within mainstream policy and practice. One example was a project providing research and analysis, which helped promote greater understanding and responsiveness among local service providers to the priorities of the local migrant population. Another example was a project that helped to bind a Muslim community association into the local community cohesion

partnership and improve awareness, understanding and attention to this population within the workings of the group.

## 6.5 Additionality

In three cases the Community Cohesion Fund appeared to have been regarded as little more than a source of funding to be drawn upon to help sustain on-going projects. This is not to suggest that these projects were not making an important contribution to the promotion of community cohesion, but to question their additionality. The Community Cohesion Fund had replaced, rather than added, to other funding sources and the aggregate impact on cohesion had not been enhanced; there was no apparent additionality.

The other seven case study projects provided evidence of additionality, addressing issues and delivering outputs unlikely to have been forthcoming without the support of the Community Cohesion Fund. This additionality took two essential forms. First, some of the case study projects would not have gone ahead without Community Cohesion Fund support. In total, 13 out of 22 local authorities reported that the Community Cohesion Fund had supported projects in their local area that would not otherwise have taken place. One example among the case studies was a project delivered by a national third sector organisation that provided support to new migrants to access services and develop their social networks. It was reported that without support from the Fund the project would not have been developed. The project proved to be a major success and follow-on funding was subsequently secured from alternative sources, allowing the project to expand. Additional outcomes flowing from the follow-on project included intelligence regarding local cohesion issues, which helped with efforts to map and monitor cohesion in the area and informed development of the local cohesion strategy. Second, additionality was also apparent in projects that would likely have gone ahead without Community Cohesion Fund support, but which assumed a more explicit focus on the goal of promoting cohesion than might otherwise have been the case. In short, engagement with the Fund served to enhance the relevance of these projects to the cohesion agenda.

### **Case Study 4: Migrant Integration**

The aims of the project were to:

- promote access to services for new migrants
- improve the awareness of local services about the situations and needs of new migrants in the area
- help isolated families to develop social networks
- improve community cohesion and support integration

The project was developed and delivered by a national third sector organisation. Delivery focused on three key activities.

**1. The Open Door Project** was a drop-in service offering general support and advice to minority ethnic residents (including new migrants). It was open for two hours every Friday. Workers and volunteers speaking a range of languages (Welsh, Polish, Czech, Slovak and Russian) provided information, advice, signposting to

other agencies and interpretation support. The drop-in also provided a venue for social interaction. **2. Regular group sessions** took place that aimed to create opportunities for people to come together in a relaxed atmosphere to establish support and friendship networks and take part in a variety of social activities. Two regular groups were organised: a friends and family group; and a senior group. **3. Language classes** were delivered to help new migrants and minority ethnic residents improve their written and spoken English. This was in response to concerns about local ESOL provision. The main focus was on learning English, but participants were also introduced to the Welsh language.

In-depth interviews were conducted with six project users. The project was reported to be the only service in the area providing specialist support to new migrants. Of particular importance to users was access to advice workers with community language skills. All talked positively about the help they received:

- advice and help was received with workplace problems, filling in forms, engaging with statutory services, accessing medical care and applying for tax credits. Two users reported that help received had enabled them to secure employment.
- all reported that the drop-in session provided vital contact with other people, and reduced isolation. One young woman said that she had benefitted from having a place to meet other people; that it had increased her confidence and helped her develop her English language skills.
- three interviewees had attended befriending group sessions. They were reported to be a good way to meet other people, make friends and have fun. One woman with young children had accessed SureStart through the Family and Friends group.
- four users had attended language classes offered by the project. All reported that their English had improved. One person commented that he had been able to communicate a little more with his neighbour as a result and felt more at ease with where he lived. Another said that she had finally 'made some English [speaking] friends'.

The project subsequently secured funding from alternative sources and expanded its services and activities to include:

- an extensive mapping of cohesion issues affecting the local minority ethnic and new migrant population
- training and advice to other services with the aim of improving their responsiveness to the needs of the local minority ethnic population, including new migrants
- engaging with the settled population to improve understanding and awareness of the new migrant population
- developing links and delivering services with other agencies. For example, working closely with SureStart Centres to run the befriending groups and working with Shelter and the Council to provide housing advice and support

## 6.6 Project Impacts

Community cohesion leads in 17 local authorities reported that Community Cohesion Fund projects had actively promoted community cohesion in their local area and 16 officers reported that cohesion had improved as a result of these projects. Officers not responding positively, reported being unable to say whether projects had improved cohesion. Demonstrable outputs identified by community cohesion lead officers reflected the variety of projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund and ranged from research reports and strategy documents through to training events and new community associations.

Views varied about the main achievements of the Community Cohesion Fund. The most common response (10 out of 21 officers) was that the Fund had raised awareness of community cohesion within the local authority and among local voluntary and community organisations. Other commonly referenced achievements included improved community capacity and participation (8 officers) and improved community relations and more positive attitudes to diversity and difference (6 officers). Six officers pointed to specific projects that were reported to have been key in addressing a pressing cohesion concern in the area and three officers pointed to the importance of a particular officer whose appointment had been supported by the Fund. The case studies provided an opportunity to explore these achievements in more detailed.

The 10 case studies were supported by the Community Cohesion Fund in 2010/11. They were evaluated through a mix of methods. All projects were visited by a member of the evaluation team. The case study projects were discussed with the local community cohesion lead. Staff in the delivery agency and project beneficiaries were also interviewed and focus group discussions were sometimes held with service users. In most cases these were local residents, but in some instances included representatives of organisations who benefited from the project. Fund applications were reviewed and, wherever available, project monitoring data was analysed.

As already revealed, the case study projects were not always strategic in focus, attentive to local cohesion priorities or provide additionality. However, all case study projects were reported to have had a positive impact and appeared to have promoted community cohesion at the local level. The numerous and varied achievements of the case study projects are detailed in Table 6.3.



**Table 6.3: The Achievements and Impacts of Case Study Projects**

Case Study	Aims and Activities	Achievements, Impacts and Sustainability
<p><b>1. Intergenerational Initiative</b> £16,900</p>	<p><b>Engaging younger and older people to develop skills and share experiences</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = the creation of a series of opportunities for older and younger residents to undertake activities together and share their skills and experiences (for further information see the case study box above). The Project was delivered by a Communities First partnership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beneficiaries reported that the projects were a success and enjoyable to be involved in</li> <li>• beneficiaries and project workers suggested that a key outcome was greater shared understanding of the day-to-day experiences of different generations and the challenging of negative attitudes</li> <li>• several younger participants had become local volunteers and some had enrolled in training courses in computing and painting and decorating at the local FE college</li> <li>• several older participants became more involved with other community activities/projects running in the area and some older participants reported improvements to their health and wellbeing as a result of their involvement</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - funding has been secured from an alternative source to fund a development worker, who will continue to deliver the project and similar interventions</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Dedicated Cohesion Officer</b> £35,000</p>	<p><b>Leadership on cohesion strategy and delivery, through strategic leadership and front-line work</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = raising awareness of community cohesion within the council and across statutory agencies and third sector organisations, promoting attention to cohesion in local strategies, developing and delivering cohesion training, addressing specific priorities in the local cohesion action plan (for further information see the case study box above). The Project was delivered by the local council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• broadened local understanding of the community cohesion agenda</li> <li>• promoted the engagement of statutory and third sector agencies with the agenda and raised attention to local priorities</li> <li>• increased sensitivity and responsiveness to emerging cohesion issues and challenges, through engagement with local people and community groups</li> <li>• improved understanding and awareness of community cohesion within the local council</li> <li>• prompted attention to specific cohesion challenges, through support for targeted initiatives (for example, helping community groups with funding applications) and direct, on-the-ground action alongside fellow council officers</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the dedicated local officer is due to be replaced by the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Young People and Cohesion in Schools</b> £8,000</p>	<p><b>Training for teachers and related agencies on racism, bullying and harassment</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = delivery of workshop sessions on community cohesion, equalities and Prevent to local schools and other agencies in the education and youth service sectors (for further information see the case study box above). The project was delivered by the local community cohesion officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raising knowledge and awareness about community cohesion</li> <li>• practical advice and information about putting national guidance on community cohesion in schools into action</li> <li>• sharing and disseminating good practice on tackling specific problems, including harassment, racism and bullying</li> <li>• identifying cohesion issues that agencies are struggling to deal with and developing targeted support</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the project has served to pump-prime the development of a wider programme of events and activities for teachers and service providers, as well as work in schools with young people</li> </ul>

<p><b>4. Migrant Integration</b> <b>£2,000</b></p>	<p><b>Promoting access to services for new migrants and improving the awareness of local services to their needs</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = a drop-in service offering general support and advice to minority ethnic residents (including new migrants); group sessions where migrants come together in a relaxed atmosphere to establish support and friendship networks; and language classes to help new migrants and minority ethnic residents improve their written and spoken English (for further information see the case study box above). The Project was delivered by a national third sector organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice and help was provided with workplace problems, filling in forms, engaging with statutory services, accessing medical care and applying for tax credits. Two users reported that help received had enabled them to secure employment.</li> <li>• users reported that the drop-in session provided vital contact with other people, and reduced isolation.</li> <li>• group sessions were reported to be a good way to meet other people, make friends and have fun.</li> <li>• language classes helped migrants to improve their English language skills, allowing them to engage with services and socially, for example, with neighbours</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the project subsequently secured alternative funding and expanded its services and activities to include: the mapping of local cohesion issues affecting new migrants; training and advice to other services to help improve responsiveness to the needs of new migrants; improving understanding and awareness of the new migrant population among the settled population; developing links and delivering services with other agencies</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Migration Project</b> <b>£13,500</b></p>	<p><b>Making connections with the local migrant population and improving understanding</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = provision of drop-in advice sessions, initially once a week but subsequently increased to three times a week, attended by over 50 clients per month; profiling the situations and experiences of new migrants through the surveying of project users. The project was delivered by the local equalities council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• challenging the neglect of the new migrant population by mainstream services and by local services focused on the minority ethnic population</li> <li>• positive user experiences - "It was wonderful, in 10 minutes all the things that had kept me awake at night were solved. If this service goes away there will be a lot of people with nowhere to turn. My English is not bad but I struggle to explain complicated problems so this was so good for me and my family to get help from someone who could speak our language."</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - funding secured to continue provision beyond the end of Community Cohesion Fund support</li> <li>• <b>question</b> - is the project excusing the neglect of the new migrant population by mainstream services?</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Cultural Interaction</b> <b>£8,300</b></p>	<p><b>Facilitating cross-cultural activities to help improve relations</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = delivery of a programme of activities (for example, a cookery session) in three Communities First areas, focused on bringing people from different backgrounds together to discuss cultural differences and common interests. The Project was delivered by the community development team of the local association of voluntary organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• user outcomes reported to include meeting people they would not have otherwise met; increased understanding about the situations and challenges faced by new migrants; and improved cooking skills</li> <li>• participants reported that the focus on cooking served as a catalyst for learning more about different cultures in the neighbourhood</li> <li>• provision of advice during the cooking sessions on subjects such as healthy eating and hate crime (and how to report it) improved participant's knowledge of local diversity and awareness of hate crimes</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - young people in one of the areas are now helping to run a luncheon club for elderly residents; the group in one area continues to meet to share food and chat with each other</li> </ul>

<p><b>7. Muslim Association</b> <b>£3,000</b></p>	<p><b>Mosque visits and information sharing about Islam, to raise understanding and challenge myths</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = 10 workshops at a local mosque involving 10-15 participants, including council officers and politicians, Police, other religious groups. The aim was to address tensions arising following the opening of the mosque. The Project was delivered by a local Muslim Association.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring by the local CSP suggested that the project proved "an excellent way of improving knowledge, dispelling myths, and taking steps to developing positive relationships with local groups and organisations and the Muslim Association".</li> <li>• the Council reported no notable increase in tensions in relation to the development of mosque, as evidenced by the local Community Tension Monitoring system</li> <li>• participants reported that fears about the impact of the mosque on the local area had been allayed and they were reassured about the Association's plans for preserving the cultural heritage of the building's former use as a Miners' Institute.</li> <li>• question and answer sessions allowed discussion of perceptions of Islam, which Association members suggested represent a key barrier to the integration of the Muslim population in the town</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the project has helped establish the Muslim Association within the town. The Association now regularly attends local meetings, is involved in a local organisation of Church groups, attends regular Police briefings and regularly hosts school-trips to learn about Islam. A member of the Association commented that <i>"the money was important, but more important was the help from the Community Cohesion [team] helping us to engage with others and pointing us in the right direction. Even promoting us as a sensible group of people that were willing to be involved in the wider community."</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Communication Class</b> <b>£2,600</b></p>	<p><b>Providing new migrants with an opportunity to meet English speaking people and improve their language skills</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> - provision of 'survival English' language training for migrant workers. The Project was delivered by a local third sector organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70 people attending conversation class on weekly basis taught by a qualified Polish speaking ESOL teacher. English and Welsh speaking volunteers attend classes to help participants test and hone their skills.</li> <li>• helped users overcome problems accessing ESOL training in the area - the English of some migrants was not good enough to commence ESOL Foundation level classes</li> <li>• improved English language skills relevant to everyday life, which was reported to have improved relations with neighbours</li> <li>• opportunity to make friends at the classes</li> <li>• reduction in vehicle/driving offences committed by migrants as a result of information and advice provided during language classes (identified by local Police Officer)</li> <li>• anecdotal evidence suggesting reduction in hospital admissions among migrants as a result of increased ability to engage their GP before problems become critical</li> <li>• increased awareness of rights among migrants (for example housing and employment) as a result of advice and guidance provided during language classes.</li> <li>• the community organisation delivering the project is increasingly called upon to provide advice on setting up similar services elsewhere in Wales</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the project was well established when it applied for Community Cohesion Fund support. Subsequently, further support was secured from the Fund and another source, allowing a second language class to be provided each week.</li> </ul>

<p><b>9. Tackling Alcohol Related Crime</b> <b>£2,600</b></p>	<p><b>Raising awareness of and improving responses to alcohol related crime in the town centre</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = the publicising of a new scheme to monitor licensed premises, the aim being to reduce the incidence of drink related crime and disorder. Publicising the scheme was deemed critical to its success and focused on various enforcement related functions of the local authority responsible for sanctioning non-compliant licensees, departments within the Police, licensees in the town and local residents. The Project was delivered by the Police.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaflets advertising the scheme were produced and circulated across town, licensees were invited to comment on the new system and a launch event was held to raise awareness</li> <li>• the relatively large number of cases brought to review in the following year (10) was reported to be testament to awareness and engagement with the new system</li> <li>• the introduction of the scheme was reported to have coincided with a six per cent reduction in violent crime in the town centre</li> <li>• the impact of the scheme appeared to be most apparent in relation to incidences of violent crime at the most problematic establishments in the town, which fell dramatically. For example, the number of violent assaults in one licensed establishment fell from 23 to none following the introduction of the initiative (between Feb 2010 to April 2012)</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the launch and advertising of the initiative was a one off event. The initiative is ongoing and has been introduced to neighbouring authorities</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Promoting Understanding</b> <b>£1,100</b></p>	<p><b>Day trips to promote interaction between migrants and settled residents</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> = the Community Cohesion Fund supported a free day trip for migrants and settled residents to an historical theme park. This was one of a series of day trips for migrant workers and local people. The Project was delivered by a local third sector organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the day trip supported by the Fund was attended by 23 new migrants and 23 long-standing residents of the area</li> <li>• the trip provided an additional incentive for migrants to attend language classes run by the same organisation, helping the project reach more participants</li> <li>• migrant and settled residents were provided with an opportunity to mix and interact</li> <li>• migrants reported better relations with neighbours and fellow residents as a result of interaction promoted by the trips</li> <li>• <b>sustainability</b> - the programme of trips was already ongoing when the application was made to the Community Cohesion Fund and efforts have been made to sustain the programme with grant funding from other sources.</li> </ul>

## 6.7 Conclusion

The Community Cohesion Fund was allocated to the 22 local authorities in Wales and supported more than 600 local projects between 2009/10 and 2011/12. Local authorities chose to utilise the Fund in different ways, some supporting a large number of small projects and others allocating the majority of the Fund to one or two projects.

Projects were typically aligned with local community cohesion priorities but this was not always the case. Among the case study projects, those developed in local authority areas with no community cohesion strategy or action plan and with no dedicated community cohesion officer failed to speak to clearly identified local priorities, struggled to make a wider strategic contribution, provided little additionality and failed to support efforts to mainstream cohesion. In some cases, the Community Cohesion Fund appeared to be regarded as just another source of grant income. These projects still secured important achievements and appeared likely to have impacted positively on community cohesion.

The case study projects provided evidence of the additionality provided by the Community Cohesion Fund. Some of the projects were unlikely to have taken place without support of the Fund. There were also examples of ongoing projects that approached the Fund for help bridging a gap in funding and consequently assumed a more explicit focus on promoting cohesion.

The achievements of the case study projects were numerous and varied, but can be summarised under four essential headings:

- *responsive local services* - promoting greater understanding and responsiveness among local service providers to the priorities of the community cohesion agenda
- *promoting understanding* - increasing appreciation and understanding between different groups, often involving a two-way exchange, for example, between new arrivals and settled populations, or between young and old people
- *integration support* - advice and assistance for newcomers, including language training, in a bid to help them better understand and live in their new town, access key services and seek work
- *managing tensions* - mediating between different groups and resolving emerging conflicts

In some cases the gains secured by case study projects appear likely to be sustained. A number of the projects secured alternative funding and continued following the end of Community Cohesion Fund support. The Fund had also pump-primed new projects, which subsequently extended the scope and reach of the service they were providing.

In conclusion, the case studies suggest that the relatively small amount of money made available through the Community Cohesion Fund not only helped fund worthy initiatives likely to promote community cohesion, but also served to promote the engagement of voluntary and community sector organisations and the local people they serve with the community cohesion agenda and enhance understanding of local challenges and approaches to tackling them.

## 7 Conclusions

### 7.1 Key Findings

The broad conclusion to emerge from this evaluation is that great strides have been made promoting community cohesion and delivering *Getting on Together* since it was launched in late 2009. The key facets of the Welsh approach to community cohesion have been outlined and widely disseminated. A more joined-up approach to community cohesion has been nurtured across department boundaries within the Welsh Government. Local authorities and their partners have been provided with a framework to support the development of a local approach to community cohesion. All 22 local authorities in Wales have engaged with the agenda and hundreds of local projects have been delivered in a bid to strengthen community cohesion in Wales.

These are notable achievements, particularly considering the resources dedicated to delivering *Getting on Together*. The Community Cohesion Unit in the Welsh Government tasked with leading on delivery of the strategy has for much of its existence consisted of only one dedicated, full time officer. The resources at this officer's disposal were relatively limited, beyond the £1.5 million made available annually through the Community Cohesion Fund to support local interventions across the 22 local authorities and the £50,000 Community Cohesion Grant made available to Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. Yet, support, assistance and guidance has been provided to local authorities and the community cohesion agenda has been promoted within the Welsh Government.

Key success factors supporting efforts to raise awareness of community cohesion and promote attention to the agenda at local and national level have been revealed to include:

- high level commitment within the Welsh Government to the community cohesion agenda, evidenced by explicit reference to cohesion in the programme for government issued by the 2007 and 2011 administrations
- the success of *Getting on Together* in providing a clear, Welsh specific understanding of community cohesion, which went beyond the limits of the agenda in England and addressed more comprehensively the factors known to inform cohesion levels
- the generation of an action plan to support delivery of *Getting on Together*, which served to focus attention on specific, achievable objectives and provided a yardstick against which to measure performance, both locally and nationally
- the creation of a dedicated unit within the Welsh Government, which has handed responsibility for leading on the delivery of *Getting on Together*
- the Community Cohesion Fund, which proved critical in securing the engagement of local authorities with the cohesion agenda
- the work of community cohesion lead officers at the local level and, in particular, the important role played by dedicated community cohesion officers, who proved critical in promoting a more strategic, partnership approach to community cohesion in many local authorities

Inevitably, various challenges have been encountered along the way and progress has been mixed on some priorities. Success in mainstreaming cohesion within the Welsh Government has been variable, with some policy areas committed to the agenda and others less involved. Some local authorities have evidenced limited commitment to the agenda. This fact is reflected in the limited effort they have put into mapping and monitoring cohesion, identifying local priorities, developing a strategy or action plan and coordinating Community Cohesion Fund projects. Progress developing national and local systems for monitoring cohesion has also been slow. Factors helping to explain these problems were found to include:

- scepticism in some policy areas within the Welsh Government regarding the relevance of the community cohesion agenda to their work and a lack of awareness both about how cohesion might be important to priorities within their field or how policy in their area might help promote cohesion
- scepticism among some local authorities about whether the community cohesion agenda was of any relevance to their area. This perception was often rooted in a very narrow understanding of community cohesion, which focused on issues of race and ethnicity and was indicative of a failure to engage with *Getting on Together*
- the decision of some local authorities not to appoint a dedicated community cohesion officer, a key factor informing the progress made by local authorities promoting a strategic approach to the agenda and maximising the additionality provided by Community Cohesion Fund projects
- the absence of any obvious local measure of community cohesion in Wales, which has made it difficult to monitor variations in levels of cohesion and to understand factors informing cohesion at the local level
- the limited capacity of the Community Cohesion Unit, with only one dedicated officer whose responsibilities ranged across the full span of the action plan. With additional resources it is possible that the Unit could have remedied some of the problems outlined above

It is not possible to comment on the impact of *Getting on Together* on levels of cohesion in Wales. Analysis of the headline measures of community cohesion at the national level, and various associated proxies of cohesion, point to a decline in levels of cohesion in Wales since 2008. However, various factors are likely to be behind this trend, including the recession, rising unemployment and public sector retrenchment, and it should not be read as evidence that *Getting on Together* has failed in its overarching objective of promoting cohesion. Indeed, delivery of *Getting on Together* may well have served to soften the impact of these factors on cohesion in Wales.

What is not in doubt is that the Community Cohesion Fund supported hundreds of projects that buoyed local efforts to mainstream cohesion and to address pressing cohesion priorities. On the basis of the insights garnered from the case study projects and the reflections of cohesion leads, it appears that these projects helped to promote community cohesion on the ground across Wales.



## 7.2 Recommendations

Sustaining the gains secured through delivery of *Getting on Together* and overcoming some of the more irretractable problems that have inhibited progress will demand ongoing local and national commitment to the agenda. In some areas of Welsh Government policy and in a number of local authorities community cohesion has been mainstreamed; it is embedded into management structures, is referenced in corporate documents and strategies and reflected in targets and indicators. However, there are many areas of policy and some local authorities, where scepticism remains about the relevance of the agenda, where there is little evidence that staff have a clear understanding of cohesion priorities or understand how work in there are might make a positive contribution to improving cohesion, and cohesion is not embedded into management structures. Findings from this evaluation, suggests that factors critical to ensuring that these gains are secured and remaining challenges are tackled include:

- *high level commitment to the community cohesion agenda within the Welsh Government* - this has been provided by the renewed commitment to the agenda in the Programme for Government and exemplified by the commitment of resources to support the appointment of Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators
- *a dedicated team in the Welsh Government to lead on community cohesion* - it can be argued that a designated lead or team (such as the Community Cohesion Unit) frees other policy areas from responsibility for community cohesion and excuses their disengagement from the agenda. However, the evidence from this evaluation is that a dedicated community cohesion team is critical to efforts to embed community cohesion and that the work of the Community Cohesion Unit is far from done
- *renewal of the community cohesion action plan* - a new action plan should be developed to support ongoing delivery of *Getting on Together*. This would provide an opportunity to focus attention on some of the areas where progress has been more limited, as well as challenging the Welsh Government to sustain the progress that has already been made
- *a dedicated community cohesion lead in every local authority* - the funding of Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators will ensure that every local authority in Wales is covered by a dedicated cohesion officer. This will represent a positive development in local authorities where there has been no dedicated officer. However, there is the risk in some local authorities that the Regional Coordinators will replace the authority's own dedicated cohesion officer and therefore represent a diminution of the cohesion officer role. This situation will need to be monitored
- *collection of perception data on community cohesion at local and national levels* - this is critical to efforts to monitor trends in cohesion, understand drivers of cohesion and consider the interventions likely to promote cohesion
- *maximising links between community cohesion objectives and the Communities First programme* - long-standing links between the community cohesion agenda and the Communities First programme were reinforced in 2012 by the designation of Communities First as a Community-Focussed Tackling Poverty

Programme. The focus on promoting prosperous, healthier, learning communities and the emphasis on community involvement are all objectives that overlap with the goals of the community cohesion agenda. Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators should work with the new Communities First Clusters to ensure their delivery plans recognise and maximise these synergies, building on the achievements of Communities First partnerships in promoting community cohesion

- *linking efforts to promote and mainstream community cohesion to delivery of the Equalities Duty* - the Equality Duty clearly overlaps with the aims and ambitions of the community cohesion agenda in Wales. It foregrounds issues of discrimination and inequality, which are well known to undercut community cohesion, and requires public bodies to work promote good relations, a cornerstone of the cohesion agenda. Highlighting that the Equality Duty places a legal responsibility on public bodies to consider cohesion should help overcome the doubts that persist in some local authorities about the relevance of the community cohesion agenda and promote willingness to engage