



communities *first* cymunedau yn gyntaf

# Communities First – The Future

## Your Short Consultation Guide



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

[www.cymru.gov.uk](http://www.cymru.gov.uk)

### What is Communities First?

Communities First is a Welsh Government Programme for tackling poverty and social disadvantage in the most deprived communities across Wales. Since it began in 2001 the programme, which works through local partnerships, has been successful in helping local people gain the skills and knowledge needed to make positive changes to their communities.

The time has now come for the programme to move forward, building on the success of the early years, capitalising on what has been achieved across Wales and using every avenue available to transform the lives of those in our most deprived communities. It also needs to take into account the lessons learned from reports produced on how the current programme has operated.

### The Future of Communities First

From April 2012 Communities First will run as a Community Focused Programme supporting the Welsh Government's Anti-Poverty Agenda. It will support the most disadvantaged people in our most deprived areas with the aim of contributing to alleviating persistent poverty. Focused on community-supported actions, it will work alongside other programmes to narrow the **education, skills, economic and health** gaps between the most deprived and more affluent areas of Wales. In relation to education and skills, the focus will be on supporting work that will ultimately improve the employability of individuals.

## Key developments

Achieving the programme aims will depend on a range of factors, summarised as follows:

- **Whole Government Support:** There will be a Welsh Cabinet commitment to prioritise Welsh Government policies and programmes to support Communities First areas and activities.
- **Shared objectives:** Community leadership and involvement will remain crucial, but so will working with local, regional and national agencies.
- **Effective partnership working:** To help engage key partners and maximise resources the new programme structure will be based on fewer, larger Communities First areas which will be called 'Clusters'. Each Cluster will have flexibility to decide the best structures (such as local partnerships, public meetings etc.) that will enable local people to be fully involved in the programme in future. Resources, including staff, will be allocated to each Cluster.
- **Targeting of resources to support disadvantaged people:** There will also be greater flexibility of boundaries to ensure the programme supports the individuals, families and groups who are most disadvantaged, and actions will be based on clear evidence of need.
- **Community programmes and Hubs:** There will be scope for each new Communities First cluster to develop programmes which reflect the needs of their area and aims of their local communities and partners. Local community organisations (to be known as "Community Hubs") will play a key role in some areas.
- **Demonstrating the impact of the programme:** The programme must be able to clearly demonstrate its contribution to addressing education, skills, economic and health needs, and how much the community has been engaged in delivering the programme. A new monitoring framework will be introduced to show how local actions contribute to key outcomes.
- **Supporting the Communities First workforce:** The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that those supporting the programme have access to appropriate training and guidance for their personal development and so that they can support the aims of the programme.

- **Simplified management structure, co-ordination and support:** A simplified management structure will be introduced to reduce bureaucracy and ensure more consistent delivery of the programme across Wales, with a focus on devoting resources to the front line. Unified national support arrangements will also be introduced.

## How to comment on the proposals

We want to hear your views on the proposals. We welcome responses from individuals, community groups, organisations, or just anyone with an interest. If you need more information the full consultation document is available online at **[www.wales.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations)**, Communities First – the Future.

To make responding to 'Communities First – The Future' easier we have devised a series of questions for you to answer. The key questions can be found at the above link.

## Where to send your responses

The closing date for comments on the consultation is 26 September 2011.

We would prefer responses to be made online via the Consultation area of the Welsh Government website - **[www.wales.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations)**, Communities First – the Future and an online response form can be found under "housing and community", we will also accept written responses to this consultation.

### Please respond to:

By e-mail to: **[Communities.first@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Communities.first@wales.gsi.gov.uk)**

Or, in writing to:

Communities First Unit, 2nd Floor, Welsh Government Office,  
Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UZ.

Further information on the Communities First programme can be found at **[www.wales.gov.uk/communitiesfirst](http://www.wales.gov.uk/communitiesfirst)**.

**Please note that your response may be published. If you would prefer them not to be, please state this in your response.**

# Proposed Organisation Structure post March 2012

