

***UK Follow-up to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
(MIPAA)***

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Abstract

Strategy

In 2005, the UK launched Opportunity Age, our strategy for improving older people's independence and well-being and ensuring that we both adapt to and benefit from an ageing society. This provided a framework for existing government activity and paved the way for a more coordinated approach. This cross-government strategy aims to maximise older people's contribution to society, ensure that later life is healthy and fulfilling and to end the perception of older people as dependent.

Central to our approach are the achievement of a fair, simple, affordable and sustainable pension system to support current and future pensioners; a focus on tackling pensioner poverty; high employment rates to underpin incomes, the promotion of healthy lifestyles to support older people's active participation in society; and a range of joined up and effective services that enable older people to maintain their independence.

Strategy Implementation

The UK Government has a comprehensive programme to implement this strategy¹ to improve the situation of older people, including:

- Income and work:
 - The Government has introduced a new benefit, Pension Credit, to provide security for the poorest pensioners and is continuing to reform the pensions system to foster improvements in the retirement incomes of both today's and tomorrow's pensioners.
 - To promote a more flexible approach to retirement, older people have the option of deferring their state pension and receiving either a higher pension or a lump sum payment. Age discrimination legislation has introduced a Default Retirement Age of 65 combined with a new "duty to consider" procedure which gives employees the statutory right to request not to be retired with employers having a duty to consider such a request.
- Active ageing:
 - The Department of Health's (DH) Healthy Ageing Project has been launched, promoting healthy active life using social marketing techniques to encourage people throughout life to increase levels of physical activity and eat more healthily. The update to the Department of Health's National Service Framework (NSF) for older people reinforces the Government's intention to provide more opportunities for older people to increase their levels of physical, mental and social activities.

¹ Please see appendix for details of the strategies for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- Government is acting to address the issues that affect older people's ability to get the most from life, including rooting out age discrimination, tackling fear of crime and poor housing.
- The introduction of free bus travel for the over 60s will help facilitate older people's active engagement with their communities.
- Services:
 - The Government is committed to delivering services that enable older people to retain independence and control over their lives, even when they come to need support or healthcare. A number of new service delivery models are being or have been trialed. For example, Individual Budgets put the person who is supported, or given services, in control of deciding what support or services they receive; the LinkAge Plus pilots are testing ways of building fully integrated services from health and benefits to leisure and learning.

Impact on older people

- For the first time ever in the UK during a period of sustained economic growth, pensioners are now no more likely to be living in poverty than people of working age. This is due to a package of measures, including increased state pension, pension credit, winter warmth initiatives for the over 60s, and free TV licenses for over 75s.
- Older people's wellbeing has improved over the last decade:
 - Older people are better off, less likely to be in poverty, less likely to be in fuel poverty, have more assets (houses, cars), are able to work longer (e.g. less likely to be on Incapacity Benefit)
 - get quicker health care when they need it (e.g. waiting times significantly reduced for hip operations, cataracts)
 - are more likely to remain independent in their own home if they have care needs (now a third can do this; only 7.8% in 1998/9)
 - the quality of their home is likely to be better (over 1 million fewer living in substandard homes). In 1996, 46 per cent of older people (aged 60 and over) lived in a home that did not meet the set standard of decency. This has since fallen to 29 per cent in 2004
 - they are less at risk of crime and fear crime less. There are over 4 million fewer victims of crime in 2005/06 than 1997. People aged 60+ are at the lowest overall risk of burglary compared with other age groups. Between 1998 and 2005/06, the percentage of those aged 60+ who said that their life was greatly affected by fear of crime fell from 10% to 6%.
 - can get around better and fight the risk of isolation - free bus passes (for 1.1 million disabled and older people), access and mobility changes (100% of London buses already low floor, national fleet accessible by 2017, all new trains and trams since January 1999 accessible)

- Free TV licences and eye tests all help to improve quality of life.
- We have also made real progress in improving the labour market position of older workers. Since 1997 the employment rate of people aged 50 to State Pension Age (SPA) has risen faster than the overall employment rate, and there are over one million people in work past SPA.

Engagement of Older People

The UK has also acted to ensure that older people are embedded in the development of government policies on ageing. Better Government for Older People (BGOP) was set up in 1998 as a unique UK wide partnership of central and local Government, the voluntary sector, the academic world and older people. BGOP aims to engage older people in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, to change attitudes and services, in order to achieve an improved society for older people across the UK. BGOP's Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG) works at the core of the BGOP partnership to reflect the views of older people. OPAG is made up of approximately 200 voluntary elected members from older people's forums and groups across the UK, and is a resource frequently called upon by BGOP subscribers, partners, academics and Government. The BGOP Partnership is made up of BGOP's Older People 's Advisory Group (OPAG) and the broad range of organisations that subscribe to BGOP and work in alliance locally, regionally and nationally, including: Government departments and agencies, older people's forums and groups, Local Authorities, 'Age Sector' organisations, Local Strategic Partnerships, Health Trusts, Housing Associations, Police and Fire Services.

Next Steps and outlook

The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, that will report in autumn 2007, will set the framework for government action and spending over the next three years (2008-2011) and will explicitly address the challenges posed and opportunities provided by an ageing society.

A comprehensive set of outcome indicators has been developed to monitor the progress of government, agency and NGO activity. These will continue to inform policy development and service plans.

We will continue to build on the success of existing policies, pension reforms will be implemented and service reforms will continue to be piloted and implemented.

1. Situation, Activities and Priorities Related to Ageing

a) National ageing situation

A: The Ageing Population in the UK

The UK population is projected to reach around 70 million by 2055. Demographic shifts mean that the age breakdown of the UK population will change considerably over the next 50 years.

Past and projected changes in the age composition of the population are shown in Table 1. The data shows that there will be increasing numbers of people over pension age, particularly among those aged over 85.

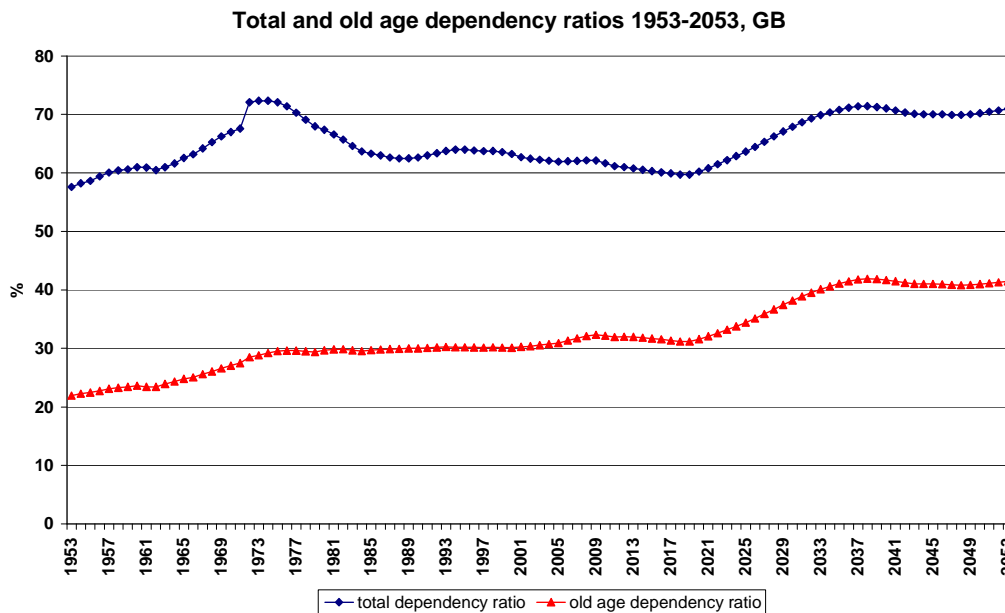
Table 1: Past and Future population trends in Great Britain (Millions)

Age Group	1955	1975	2005	2015	2025	2055
Children	11.3	13.5	11.2	10.8	11.1	11.0
16 – SPA*	31.2	31.8	36.3	38.3	39.5	39.1
Over SPA	7.0	9.4	11.0	12.1	13.3	17.6
..over 85	0.3	0.5	1.1	1.5	2.0	4.4
Total population	49.5	54.7	58.5	61.2	63.9	67.7

Note: Population estimates and 2004- based projections, mid-year age at last birthday

* State Pension Age

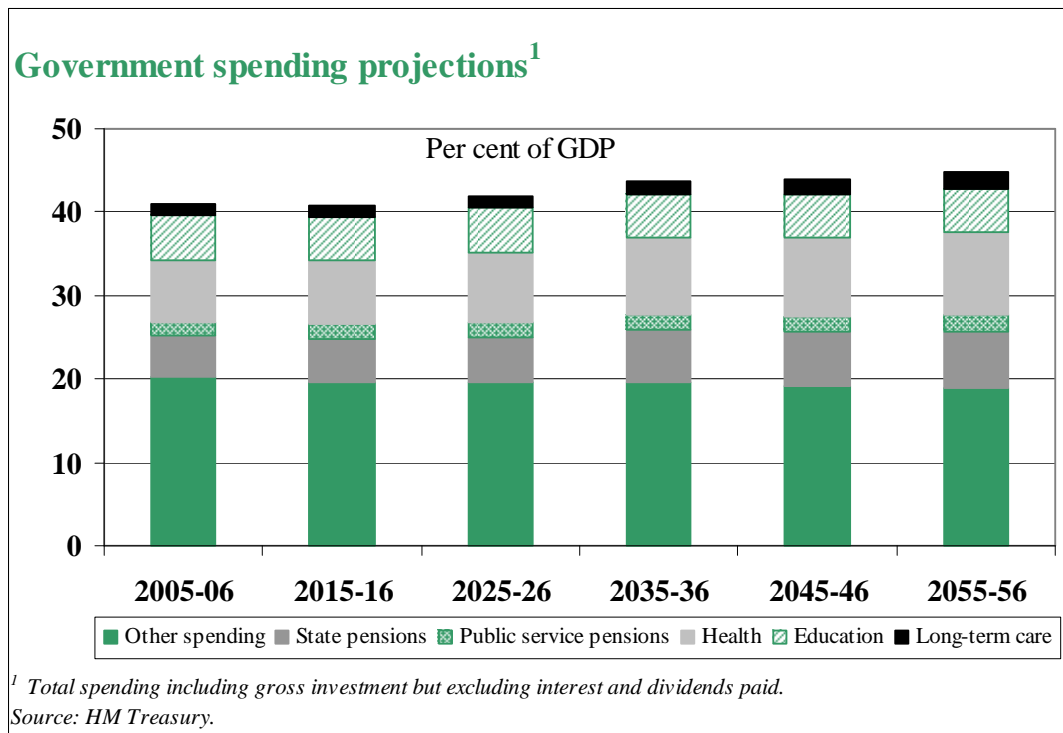
Chart 1



Both measures of the dependency ratio show that, going forward, the UK faces a significant increase in the ratio of dependents to non dependents. This is a significant change from the last 30 years which have been characterised by a very stable dependency ratio.

It is important to remember that an ageing population will not only lead to higher pensions bills but also higher bills for expenditure on health and care. Chart 2 sets out the latest projections of Government expenditure over the next 50 years. The chart shows that, if current policies remain in place, overall government spending remains broadly stable until 2020, at around 41.7% of GDP. Expenditure is then projected to increase to reach 44.6% of GDP by 2050/51 as the large cohorts of baby boomers retire and place greater burdens on state pensions and the National Health Service.

Chart 2



B: Drivers of the Ageing Population in the UK

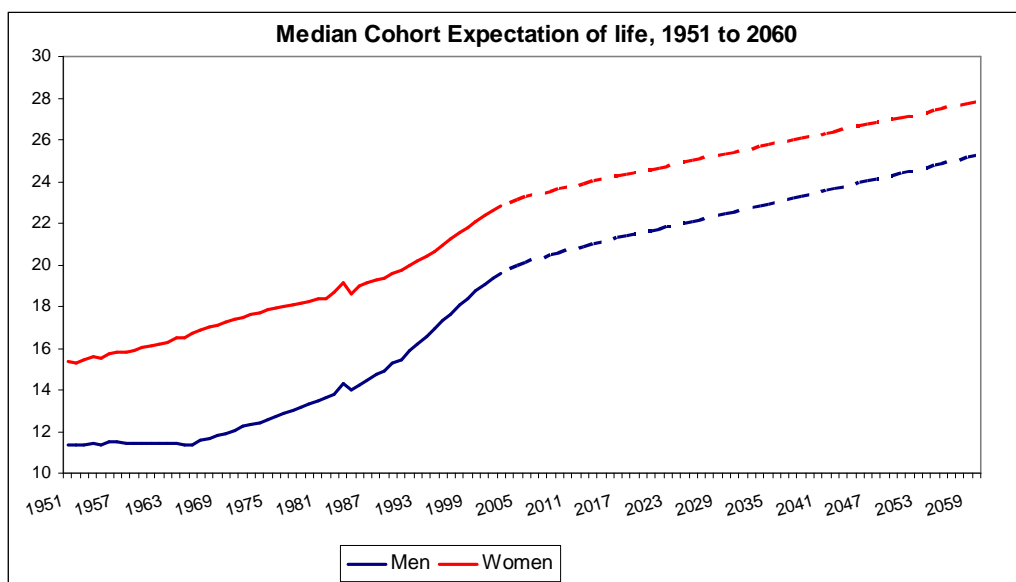
A country's dependency ratio depends on:

- The level of and trends in fertility rates
- Levels of and trends in life expectancy

- Baby booms (a short lived increase in fertility)
- Levels of and trends in net migration

Chart 3 shows trends in life expectancy in the UK.

Chart 3



Source: GAD 2004-based long-term mortality templates

The chart shows that increases in longevity have been occurring for the last 50 years (and longer) and are expected to continue to increase. To this extent, the country has already been dealing with the challenge of an ageing population for several decades.

The long run decline in fertility rates that occurred between 1880 and 1930 significantly increased the dependency ratio during the latter half of the 20th century but this effect is now largely complete. Historically the size of net migration in the UK has been too small as a proportion of the population to have a significant impact on the UK dependency ratio. However, recent trends, if maintained, are likely to act to slow the rate of growth of the dependency ratio.

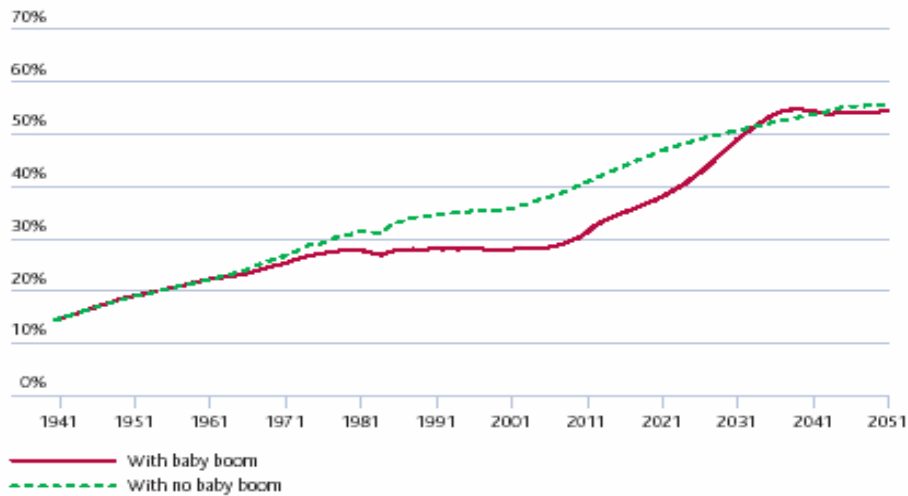
Taken together, over the next thirty years, it is increased longevity and the ageing of the baby boom cohort that are driving the projected increases in the dependency ratio. In the very long term, increases in life expectancy will be the main drivers. It should be noted that the UK has no explicit policies aimed at influencing fertility and migration to reduce the dependency ratio.

Chart 4, below, illustrates this point. It shows that without the post-war baby boom, the dependency ratio would have increased steadily between 1940 and 2050 as declines in fertility and increases in longevity resulted in a gentle ageing of the population. The impact of the baby boom has been twofold: it acted to suppress the

rise in the dependency ratio over the last 30 years but will act to accelerate rate of increase over the next 30. It is this reversal that provides policy makers in the UK with such a significant challenge.

Chart 4

Figure 1.9 Impact of the 1940s-1960s Baby Boom on the Old-Age Dependency Ratio



Source: Pensions Commission analysis based on a synthetic model of the England and Wales population.

b) Instrumental assessment

There are a wide range of cross-Government initiatives which are coordinated and led by the Secretary of State of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in his role as Champion for Older People and the Deputy Prime Minister as the chair of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Ageing Policy.

Poverty amongst Older People

Pension Credit was introduced in 2003 to help tackle pensioner poverty and is composed of two elements: the 'Guarantee Credit' element (payable from age 60) and the 'Savings Credit' element (payable from age 65). The Guarantee Credit guarantees a minimum income for those on low income, while the Savings Credit rewards those with modest savings.

The Government has a number of policies aimed at alleviating fuel poverty, most of which were enacted prior to 2002. The Warm Front grant – a grant available for heating and insulation improvements to private homeowners or renters on low income – was originally introduced in 2000 and amended in 2005 to cover central heating.

OPPORTUNITY AGE

DWP leads on the Government's strategy for an ageing society as set out in 'Opportunity Age: Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century', which was published in March 2005.

The ageing strategy is focused on the following main areas:

- Work and Income;
- Active Ageing;
- Services that promote independence and well-being

Work and income

Extending Working Life

The Extending Working Life (EWL) strategy aims for a world-leading 80% employment rate that will include an extra 1 million older people in work over and above the increases due to demographic change. This will be critical to ensuring the economic prosperity of our society in terms of both work and pensions.

The Government's pensions policy is inextricably linked to employment policy for the over 50s. This is because unless people can obtain or stay in work, they will be less likely to save for their retirement.

The EWL strategy for helping older people to remain in or rejoin the labour market employs a number of approaches:

- New Deal 50+ is a programme for people aged 50 or over who have been out of work and claiming benefits for at least six months. Since it was introduced in April 2000, we estimate that the New Deal 50 Plus has supported over 164,000 job starts amongst older people;
- treating people aged 60-64 as active labour market participants as the State Pension age for women, and Pension Credit age for both men and women, is gradually increased from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020;
- Improved State Pension deferral terms – The 2004 Pensions Act provided for more attractive state pension deferral options from April 2005. The rate of increment will rise to around 10.4 per cent (from 7.5 per cent) for every year a person defers. In addition, for the first time there will be an option for people who defer claiming their State Pension to receive a lump sum instead of a weekly increase, if they defer claiming their Pension for 12 months or longer;
- changes to tax rules - tax changes from April 2006 will mean that, where scheme rules allow, people will be able to draw part of their occupational pension and continue working for the sponsoring employer; and
- Rising the age for drawing a private/occupational pension – the earliest age from which a pension can be taken will be raised from age 50 to 55 by 2010. This applies to all non-state pensions. The normal pension age for members of public sector pension schemes will increase from 60 to 65, initially for new members.
- Legislation currently before Parliament proposes that the State Pension Age will increase over a two year period to 66 from 2024, 67 from 2034 and 68 from 2044.

In addition, we will bring forward further measures to address the key barriers which prevent people staying in work for longer and encourage more people to work up to, and beyond, State Pension age, by:

- enabling greater flexibility to allow people to choose a phased approach to retirement;
- providing improved communications and information in support of working longer; and
- Working in partnership with employers to encourage them to retain older workers and to offer them greater flexibility around retirement.

Age Discrimination Legislation

Legislation was introduced on 1 October 2006 that made it unlawful to discriminate on the ground of age in employment and vocational training. The legislation covers people of all ages, and applies to all employers.

Active ageing

Our collective task is to remove the barriers that can inhibit participation by older people in society. In order to make that a reality, central government and local authorities, and the voluntary sector where appropriate, will work together to:

- identify and tackle issues that limit older people's ability to get the most out of life, including rooting out age discrimination and tackling poor housing and fear of crime;
- ensure that older people can be actively engaged locally in influencing decisions that affect their lives, such as planning local public transport;
- ensure that older people have access to opportunities locally, such as learning, leisure and volunteering; and
- promote healthy living at all ages – older people are better able to enjoy good health in later life if they looked after themselves when they were younger.

The “Health, Work and Well-being Strategy”, launched in October 2005, focuses on the needs of the working age population, including those who wish to work beyond State Pension Age. This report forges a cross-Government partnership between the DWP, the Department of Health (DH) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), linking their agendas and helping to break down the traditional demarcation between occupational and public health. Its vision is to gain recognition for the benefits of work to health and well-being - there has long been evidence that, overall, those in work are healthier than those not in work.

The DH White Paper for Health and Social Care “Our health, our care, our say” (OHOCOS), published 30th January 2006, sets out a vision to provide people with good quality social care and NHS services in the communities where they live.

The DH report “A new ambition for old age: Next steps in implementing the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People” sets out the priorities for the second phase of the Government’s ten-year NSF for Older People under three themes: Dignity in Care, Joined-Up Care and Healthy Ageing.

Bus travel

In April 2006, the Government extended the existing statutory minimum requirement to guarantee people aged 60 and over in England free off-peak travel on their local area bus services, with no charge for the pass. This will benefit an estimated nine million people. The Government is providing an extra £420m to implement this measure. This is being extended to cover off-peak national bus travel in England for all people over 60 from 2008.

Services that promote independence and well-being

LinkAge Phase 1 (December 2003 – June 2006)

LinkAge Phase 1 was a new approach aimed at changing the delivery of government services towards a more holistic, person-centred approach. The components of this approach, alternative offices and joint teams are flexible working partnerships aimed at moving towards a whole-systems approach.

Alternative Offices

Alternative Offices are offices authorised by DWP to receive and verify social security claims made by older people. Such a process means that the date the application is received by our partners can be accepted as the date of claim, thus minimising any potential delay or loss of benefit to the customer. Partners may be voluntary organisations or local authority benefit departments.

Joint Teams

A Joint Team is an integrated partnership between The Pension Service Local Service, a primary tier local authority and sometimes the voluntary sector. It is dedicated to developing processes that reduce duplication and focus on improving the service to the customer.

There are many benefits to joint working and that is why we are proposing Joint Teams as the model we wish to pursue for the future delivery of our services because they can:

- increase our ability to contact and support the most vulnerable members of society;
- increase net take-up of entitlements and services;
- reduce duplication of effort;
- enable customers to provide details of their personal circumstances only once;
- improve the quality of life and independence of older people, by intervening before the time of acute need;
- provide an integrated service to today's and future pensioners.

The Partnership Fund

In 2004, the DWP announced the availability of short-term funding for local or national organisations and the voluntary sector for projects designed to improve take-up of entitlements and services among older people.

LinkAge Plus

The DWP are piloting the 'LinkAge Plus' programme, to test ways of building fully integrated services from health and benefits to leisure and learning. It will put older

people at the heart of the process. This means working with older people to identify effective models that meet their needs and aspirations and involving older people in their design. The programme is based on partnership working – with older people, National key stakeholder organisations and agencies and Local Authorities all playing a crucial role in this work.

A Sure Start to Later Life

The Social Exclusion Unit report 'A Sure Start to Later Life' was published 26th January 2006. It provides new evidence on exclusion in older age, 30 agreed cross government actions and recommendations for all involved in services for older people and best practice case studies. It also sets out a new, responsive service model, a Sure Start approach, as part of a wider government action plan to address exclusion.

Individual Budgets

The Government is also piloting the introduction of Individual Budgets. The central idea behind individual budgets is to place the person who is supported, or given services, at the centre of the process and to give them the power to decide the nature of their own services.

Partnerships for Older People Projects

The DH's Older People and Disability Division is leading a project 'Partnerships for Older People Projects' (POPP). The strategic aim of the project is to test and evaluate (through pilots to be established during 2006/07 and 2007/08) innovative approaches that sustain prevention work in order to improve outcomes for older people.

Organising government to deliver

Transformational Government Strategy

The Transformational Government strategy, published in November 2005, is the Government's strategy for seizing the opportunity provided by technology to transform the business of government. It uses technology to deliver services that are designed around the needs of citizens.

Local delivery

The overall effectiveness of service delivery locally is assessed – for local authorities in England – through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Assessments are carried out by the Audit Commission, and local authorities are awarded an overall categorisation ranging from zero to 4 stars. The performance of local authorities, with their partners, in improving the quality of life for older people is a discrete part of the corporate assessment. In 2009 CPA will be replaced by a new approach to assessing the delivery of public services in an area - Comprehensive Area Assessment".

Assessing achievements

National Indicators of Older People's Independence and Well-being

We have published a set of headline indicators of older people's independence and well-being that we intend to use to us to assess progress towards improved quality of life as people age. These indicators will be further developed, periodically reviewed and reported against biannually, starting with a baseline report in 2006 and a progress report in 2008.

Details of these indicators can be found on the DWP website at www.dwp.gov.uk/opportunity_age

c) Identification of areas for in-depth evaluation

UK Government national priorities for ageing

Pensioner poverty

Pension credit: The Pension Credit, launched in 2003, is the foundation through which the Government provides security for the poorest. It is made up of the standard minimum guarantee (Guarantee Credit), which ensures a minimum income for those aged over 60, and the Savings Credit, which rewards those who have built up small savings for retirement. 2.7 million pensioner households currently receive Pension Credit; 2.1 million receive the Guarantee Credit, a take-up level achieved a year ahead of target; and 1.9 million receive the Savings Credit.

Employment: Employment serves as a means of staying active, of increasing income and of increasing savings. A variety of policies have been enacted in recent years to increase the employment rate of older people (those aged 50-69):

- The 2002 Green Paper "Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement" (available in the appendix) sets out a number of initiatives that we have now introduced or are in the process of introducing.
- New Deal 50 plus
- Age discrimination legislation
- Increased State Pension deferral rate for those working beyond state pension age who do not draw their SP at the earliest opportunity.
- We are also encouraging employers, through our Age Positive initiative, to adopt flexible approaches to work and retirement that bring benefits both to their business and their employees.
- Working Tax Credit: This is a payment to top up the earnings of low paid working people (whether employed or self-employed), including those who do not have children. Working Tax Credit helps to make work pay for low income workers. Those aged over 50 who are returning to work after a period on benefit are entitled to working tax credit. There is also additional credit available for those with disabilities.

Health and social care

Intensive home care: Evidence suggests that older people would rather be supported to remain in their own home as their frailty increases than move into residential care. With this in mind, the DH has a commitment (under Spending Review 2004) to

increase the percentage of older people receiving intensive home care support relative to those in residential care².

Life expectancy (mortality rates): DH has targets to reduce mortality rates from heart disease and stroke and related diseases by at least 40% in people under 75, with a 40% reduction in the inequalities gap between the 20% of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators (the Spearhead Group) and the population as a whole

Going forward

The Government is considering how the performance framework, which uses Public Service Agreements (PSA) to ensure central and local government focus on key priorities over a three year period, can promote greater independence and well-being in later life and ensure that we adapt to and benefit from an ageing society

A PSA covering later life would be intended to bring together across Government a wide range of action that affects older people, and performance would be measured by indicators reflecting the programmes of several Departments. Pensioner incomes, the employment of older people, health and care services, and older people's housing would be major elements, as well as other social programmes such as transport, culture and crime prevention.

The Government has also announced major reforms for implementation in the future. These tackle long term issues, are being implemented progressively, and include:

- Introduction of measures to align employment support for older long-term unemployed with the support available to younger workers, including Face to Face pilots that will provide one-to-one support
- Pensions reform - In November 2006 we introduced legislation for long-term pensions reform, making the state pension fairer and more generous and providing a solid foundation for private saving.

Specifically the Government will:

- introduce low cost personal accounts into which employees will be automatically enrolled, giving those without access to occupational pension schemes the opportunity to save;
- restore the link between basic state pension and earnings during the next parliament;
- improve the coverage of the basic state pension so many more people, particularly women and carers, can be confident of their entitlement to the full rate;
- increase the State Pension Age by one year over a two year period in each decade beginning in 2024, 2034 and 2044 to reach age 68 in 2046.

² Please note that, as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, all UK Government spending priorities and budgets are under review.

The Transport Bill introduces free transport for older people across Local Authority boundaries from April 2008.

The Leitch Review of Skills (available in the appendix) was published on 5 December 2006. The review recommended the development of an integrated employment and skills service; a basic skills screening of all those applying for benefit; a more demand-led approach to skills training; and the creation of a Commission for Employment and Skills. The Government is planning a timetable and process for implementing the report's recommendations.

2. Methodology of In-Depth Evaluation of Identified Priorities

Quantitative information

Pensioner Poverty

Concentrating resources on the poorest pensioners has contributed significantly to reductions in pensioner poverty. Between 1996-97 and 2004-05, over 1 million pensioner households were lifted out of relative poverty and 2 million pensioner households were lifted out of absolute poverty. Half a million pensioner households have been lifted out of relative low-income poverty since the introduction of Pension Credit. The risk of a pensioner household being poor has fallen to 17 per cent, and a pensioner is now no more likely to be poor than the population as a whole.

As a result of measures implemented since 1997, the Government is spending around £11.5 billion a year more in real terms on pensioners, focusing support on those who need it most. From April 2007, the poorest third of households will be on average £2,200 a year, or around £42 a week, better off. Overall, pensioner households will be on average £1,500 per year, or around £29 a week better off. Women pensioners have also particularly benefited from the Government's support for older people. 3.2 million women have gained an average of £32 a week, while 1.1 million men are £30 per week better off.

Since 1997, the employment rate of people aged between 50 and State Pension Age has risen from below 65 per cent to over 70 per cent. Furthermore, there are now more than 1.2 million people over state pension age in employment. The increase in the UK female state pension age from 60 years to 65 years between 2010 and 2020 is expected to lead to significant growth in female labour market participation rates.

Health and social care

Older people supported intensively to live at home

In England, the number of older people supported intensively to live at home in 2005/06 shows a strong upward trend, increasing to 33.8% of the total supported by councils in residential care and in their own homes, 0.2 percentage points below the target of 34% by March 2008.

Heart disease, strokes and related illnesses

The 1995-97 baseline figure for overall mortality for heart disease in people aged under 75 in England was 141.0 deaths per 100,000 population. In 2003-05 (3 year average latest available data) the rate had fallen to 90.5 deaths per 100,000 – a fall of 35.9%.

Cancer

The 1995-97 baseline figure for overall mortality for cancer in people aged under 75 in England was 141.2 deaths per 100,000 population. In 2003-05 (3 year average, latest available data) the rate had fallen to 119.0 deaths per 100,000 – a fall of 15.7%.

Qualitative information

The following are summaries of the qualitative assessments of the government's strategy for older people that have been made by the Better Government for Older People group, and the charities Help the Aged and Age Concern.

BGOP

The overall assessment from BGOP was that the Opportunity Age strategy gives a clear platform for policy. They welcome the whole person approaches being employed by, for example, the Audit Commission. LinkAge Plus, the Transformational Government initiative (details in the appendix) and the Housing strategy (details under RIS commitment 2) were also given a favourable reception

BGOP would like to see further progress made in the areas of pensioner poverty, mental health, transport and age discrimination. They have also raised some concerns about resources going forward, the perceived focus of education and training policies on younger people and a sometimes overly health focussed approach to older people's issues.

Help the Aged (HtA)

HtA identify their top 10 Government policies/programmes on ageing as being:

- 1) National Service Framework for Older People (DH)
- 2) Our Health, Our Care, Our Say White Paper (DH)
- 3) Pension Credit / creation of the Pensions Service
- 4) Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 /Age Positive campaign
- 5) Human Rights Act
- 6) Opportunity Age
- 7) Sure Start to Later Life
- 8) Making the connections – SEU report leading to accessibility planning
- 9) Nationwide availability of concessionary fares
- 10) Older People's Housing Strategy

On the success of these policies:

- 1) HtA state that good progress has been made and it is important that progress continues to be made.
- 2) HtA indicate that it is not possible to tell yet whether the intentions of the White Paper are being achieved.
- 3) HtA welcome the impact that Pension Credit and related Pension Service reforms have had on pensioner poverty, and indicate that it is important to continue to tackle pensioner poverty.
- 4) The age discrimination legislation is welcomed as an important step forward by HtA, although they have some reservations about a mandatory retirement age of 65. They would also like to see of domestic legislation on age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services and a positive duty on the public sector in respect of age discrimination
- 5) HtA would like to see the coverage of the Human Rights Act extended to include private care providers.
- 6) HtA describe the development of the Opportunity Age strategy is an enormous step forward in bringing together cross-Government work on ageing. Work should continue to further embed the intentions of the strategy across Government.
- 7) HtA welcome the Sure Start to Later Life report as bringing a welcome focus to the extent to which older people suffer from social exclusion. They particularly praise the LinkAge Plus pilots as taking forward work to join up service provision for older people and comment that the housing strategy for older people is progressing well. They would like to see further elements of the cross-government action plan set out in the report taken forward.
- 8) Too soon to assess impact.
- 9) HtA welcome the provision of free bus travel, stating their belief that this will have an extremely positive impact on older people. They would like to see progress towards flexible concessions.
- 10) HtA would like to see further progress made in extending the range of housing options available to those in later life.

Age Concern:

Opportunity Age

Age Concern identify the adoption of the UK's first ageing strategy as being a significant achievement, and note that Opportunity Age is now leading the testing of new joined-up approaches to tackling social inclusion, monitoring indicators of older people's outcomes and coordinating the development of cross-Government proposals for spending and targets in the 2008-2011 spending period. They also view the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review as being an important opportunity to strengthen the coordination role of the strategy.

Income

Pension Credit is identified as having significantly increased the incomes of many older people and the long-term pension reform proposals are welcomed as a positive step forward, although they raise concerns at the pace of implementation. Age Concern would like the Government to look beyond Pension Credit in terms of income maximisation.

Equality and Human Rights

Age Concern also welcome the age discrimination legislation covering employment and education that came into force in October 2006 as an important step in the right direction, while questioning the mandatory retirement age of 65 and the fact that it does not cover goods, facilities and services which still permit age-based practices. They also believe that public services should have a 'positive duty' to promote age equality.

Age Concern welcome the review of equality legislation as part of a slow shift to age having parity of esteem with other areas of discrimination, but are uncertain whether the Single Equality Bill will go as far as to create legal parity between age and other equality strands.

Age Concern believe that public services should be more proactive in protecting older people's human rights and, in common with HtA, believe that the current loophole in the Human Rights Act exempting contracted services needs to be closed.

Transport

Age Concern welcome the introduction of free bus travel for the over 60s, and suggest that alternative arrangements be offered to those who are unable to use public transport. Also, further efforts could be made to taken account of older people's ability to access key services in local transport plans.

Employment

Age Concern welcome the fact that the employment of those aged 50+ has risen rapidly and note that the creation of Jobcentre Plus and incapacity benefit reforms have the potential to help many older people. They believe that more could be done to ensure the efficacy of the New Deals in achieving employment outcomes for older people.

Lifelong learning

Age Concern believe that more could be done to address demographic change, while acknowledging that this issue was highlighted in the Leitch skills review (see appendix). They also express concerns about the seemingly low impact of skills programmes on older workers and note that the number of older learners engaged in learning for personal development has been affected by cuts in funding.

Health and Care Services

Age Concern welcomes the increased investment in the NHS as having benefited older people, who are its largest client group. The 2001 commitment to root out age discrimination in the NHS has also led to some improvements, however further progress needs to be made in tackling ageist attitudes and practices. Age Concern would like to see greater priority placed on funding for services that are particularly important for older people (e.g. palliative care; dentistry; chiropody).

Age Concern welcomes the Government's commitment to improving the connections between healthcare and social care and to bringing health services closer to people's homes and would like to see continued progress in this area.

Age Concern commends the Government's vision for social care (independence, wellbeing, choice, dignity) and recognises that there have been improvements in recent years in the number of older people supported to live at home rather than in institutions. Further reform will be needed to ensure that social care services can meet the needs of an ageing society.

3. National Capacities for Follow-up to MIPAA/RIS

The DWP, in its role as coordinator of the cross-Government ageing strategy, is responsible for coordinating the follow-up to MIPAA/RIS. Better Government for Older People, Help the Aged and Age Concern are involved in the follow-up activities and are part of the monitoring mechanism in place.

A large amount of research is available on older people and the ageing situation in the UK, for example, the Office for National Statistics' "Focus on Older People", "A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending inequalities for older people" by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Opportunity Age evidence publications (these are available from the appendix).

There is a wide variety of data available to support such analysis.

4. Review and Appraisal by Subject Area

RIS Commitment 1: Mainstreaming ageing

An holistic, person-centred approach:

At least seven different government departments have responsibility for major services directed to older people. That is why, in 1998, we established an Interministerial Group on Older People to co-ordinate activity across government. The group sponsored the Better Government for Older People network to inform ministers on older people's issues and to spread best practice locally, and the Older People's Advisory Group to give older citizens a channel to government.

In 2001, the Interministerial Group was superseded by a formal Cabinet Sub-Committee on Older People. In late 2004, an additional Cabinet-level group was charged specifically with driving forward the strategy document Opportunity Age. The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Older People continues to co-ordinate Government action (further information on the Cabinet Sub-Committee can be found in the appendix).

Although the strategy is a cross-government one, the DWP leads on taking it forward. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is the Government's Champion for Older People and the Minister for Pensions supports him. He is advised by a Partnership Group made up of key stakeholder organisations and older people themselves.

Opportunity Age is the Government's strategy for an ageing society and aims to strengthen central government coordination. The strategy aims to end the perception of older people as dependent; ensure that longer life is healthy and fulfilling; and that older people are full participants in society. It was first published in 'Opportunity Age: Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century' in March 2005 (a copy of the strategy is available in the appendix).

The strategy focuses on three key areas:

- work and income
- active ageing
- services

National Service Framework for Older People

In 2001, the Department of Health (DH) published a *National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People* (details of this framework are supplied in the appendix). This ten year strategy set out the best practice in providing treatment and care to older people and had the twin aims of raising standards of care and reducing inconsistencies in the levels of care between localities. In April 2006, the "Next steps" document, *A New Ambition for Old Age*, was published, which identifies the key challenges for the next stage. These, together with the work planned as a result

of the White paper, *Our health, our care, our say*, create the opportunity to align the planning, commissioning and delivery of health and care for older people.

White Paper: Our Health, our care, our say (OHOCOS)

The White Paper sets a new strategic direction for health and social care. It directs organisations towards providing better prevention services, earlier intervention, and more support for people with long-term needs and strongly promotes a “whole system” approach to care that enables people to live more independently in their own homes. Further details of this White Paper are supplied in the appendix

Partnerships for Older Peoples Projects

The Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPs) are a £60 million scheme over 2 years that will provide us with evidence of what preventative interventions work in order to maximise people’s quality of life and to support older people to lead healthy, active and independent lives for longer. Three of the nineteen new POPPS are focusing on mental wellbeing. The first set of pilots is underway (started May 2006) and a further set will run from May 2007.

Individual budgets

Individual budgets are currently being piloted in 13 local authority areas. The central idea behind the individual budget concept is to provide greater choice and control for people needing support and to place the person who is supported, at the centre of the process. People will be enabled to design their own support with the knowledge of what finance is available, and to manage the funding to provide that support. The concept builds on the successful features of direct payments and on other initiatives to develop self-directed support.

Direct Payments

Direct payments are cash payments in lieu of services a person has been assessed as needing by the social services department of their local council. Individuals can use this money to purchase the care and support they need which gives them much more control over their lives. Direct payments were introduced in 1997 for disabled people under 65 but were extended to other groups, including older people, in 2000.

Age discrimination:

The UK government has taken a number of steps to address age discrimination.

Age discrimination in employment and vocational training

Age discrimination legislation came into force on 1 October 2006. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations apply to employment and vocational training. They prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, and all harassment and victimisation on grounds of age, of people of any age, young or old. The regulations:

- Remove the upper age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights;

- provide for a default retirement age of 65 and introduce the statutory right to request working beyond this age;
- remove the age limits for Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Adoption Pay and Statutory Paternity Pay, so that the legislation for all four statutory payments applies in exactly the same way to all;
- provide exemptions for many age-based rules in occupational pension schemes.

Full details of the Age Regulations are contained in the appendix.

Age Positive

In preparation for the introduction of age legislation in October 2006, the DWP funded a National Guidance campaign. The 'Be Ready' initiative was launched in May 2005 and ran an active media and information campaign through to the introduction of the legislation. Although the active media campaign has now ended, DWP will continue to distribute this range of practical advice through the Age Positive initiative as employers continue to learn and adapt to their new responsibilities. The campaign and the products are currently being evaluated, with early findings due in Spring 2007.

Dignity in Care

The DH recognises that there remains work to be done to ensure that older people are treated with dignity and respect. And, although overt age discrimination is now uncommon in our care system, there are still deep rooted negative attitudes and behaviours towards older people. In recognition of this, the NSF for Older People includes a commitment to "...seek to challenge deep-seated negative cultural attitudes towards older people, the root cause of failure to treat older people with respect for their dignity and human rights." Much progress has been made already and through tackling age discrimination, older people are receiving better access to treatment and services in greater numbers than ever before.

Older people's participation in policy development:

Older people are involved in the development of policy and strategy in the UK at both local and national level. At national level, the Opportunity Age Strategy Partnership Group (OASPG) is comprised of relevant Government departments and key external partners. It acts as an advisory body feeding into the DA(AP). The setup of BGOP has also provided a means for older people to participate in the policy process.

As part of the policy development process, Government departments often run consultations to enable members of the public to submit their views on policy proposals. For example, as part of the pension reform process, the DWP launched a National Pension Debate to raise awareness of the pensions challenges facing society and to understand public views on the Pensions Commission's proposals for reform to the UK pension system. As part of the Dignity in Care campaign, the DH launched an online survey of the extent to which people were shown dignity in care. A number of listening events were held nationally during the development of the

White Paper OHOCOS and these continue to inform developments in the OHOCOS work streams.

At local level, there are structures in place that are intended to encourage local authorities to provide a forum for older people to have a voice.

Older People's Champions

In general, champions are people with a desire to improve older people's services and are willing to work together and use their influence to stand up for the interests of older people. They have a role in ensuring older people have access to information about local services and plans for older people. Champions can be older people's representatives, an elected council member, an NHS non-executive director or a clinical or practice champion. All champions are committed to rooting out age discrimination in access to treatment and services and helping to implement the National Service Framework for Older People (NSF) and related improvements in services for older people.

NGOs and the private sector:

NGOs and the private sector contribute to the development of a variety of Government programmes in different ways. For example, the Government set up the independent Pensions Commission to review the longer-term challenges faced by the pensions system and make recommendations for reform.

When running pilots, such as the LinkAge plus pilots, private sector organisations are often employed to undertake the evaluation. For example, the contract to evaluate the DH's Electronic Transmission of Prescriptions (ETP) pilots was awarded to the Sowerby Centre for Health Informatics at Newcastle (SCHIN) and eHealth Horizons Ltd, in collaboration with the Industrial Statistics Research Unit at the University of Newcastle (ISRU), the University of Manchester School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (MSPPS) and QinetiQ.

RIS Commitment 2: Integration and participation of older persons

The promotion of a positive image of ageing:

Age Positive

The Age Positive campaign, in addition to providing guidance on age legislation in employment, promotes to employers the benefits of employing a mixed-age workforce that includes older and younger people.

Local initiatives

There have been a variety of local initiatives aimed at promoting a positive view of ageing in their area. For example, in 2005, Manchester City Council launched a positive images of ageing campaign. Further information on this can be found in the appendix.

Older people's views on services:

Dignity in Care survey

In June 2006, DH launched an online survey to hear directly from the public about their own experiences of being treated with dignity in care services, or about care they had seen provided to others. Views were sought to help understand where to focus efforts to improve standards of dignity in the care of older people.

Over 500 people (both members of the public and professional health and social care staff) took part in the survey before it closed. It proved to be a valuable exercise in listening to what people had to say about the issues around dignity. Work is now ongoing with a number of stakeholders including the social care inspectorates, professional organisations and others to see how best we can address people's concerns and support staff to deliver care in all health and social care settings that respects dignity.

Satisfaction with the Pension Service (TPS)

The TPS Customer Survey is conducted every two years. In 2005, face to face interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 2400 people who had recently been in contact with the service.

The interview is based on a very detailed 30 minutes questionnaire that explores a wide range of issues such as general satisfaction levels; ranking and marking of what aspects of delivery customers regard as important as well as their rating of how TPS performed against these aspects; methods used to contact and preferred methods; what they consider to be the best and the not so good parts of their experience. These findings are then used along with data from other sources (e.g. operational data and mystery shopping data) to help assess how the service is performing.

It has also helped guide other research projects with older people to help assess their service needs and experiences. In the last few years, stand alone projects have been conducted with older people from ethnic minority groups; those with health problems and disabilities; and with people who represent older people and contact services on their behalf.

Findings from all of these projects are published in the DWP research report series at: <http://www.workandpensions.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrs-index.asp>.

Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

CSCI is engaging with older people and seeking their views by, bringing together assessment of council performance in commissioning and the inspection and regulation of care services. CSCI is the single inspectorate for social care in England. CSCI places the views of and experience of people using services at the heart of everything it does. This entails a considerable amount of engagement with older people and carers throughout its own activities as well as carrying out its duty to encourage improvement in those it inspects.

PSS user experience surveys

In 2000-01 and 2001-02 councils in England were asked by DH to carry out nationally comparable surveys of recently assessed social services clients and to return summaries of their responses to 2 key questions. At the time it was made clear that the 2000-01 survey was a first step in a broader programme of surveys of PSS user experiences. The survey in 2002-03 focussed on the user experiences of the elderly in receipt of home care services. The Social Services User Survey Group is responsible for developing the programme of surveys.

Older people's participation in society, culture and the economy:

Lifelong learning

There has been a developing culture of learning in the UK. Successive surveys have shown increased participation rates in learning. For example, the 2005 National Adult Learning Survey (NALS), showed that 80% of adults had participated in some form of learning over the previous 3 years, an increase from 76% in 2002. In the same period the, proportion of 60-69 year olds reporting some learning increased from 51% to 64% (comparable figures for 50-59s are 74% and 77%). The increasing ways in which people can learn, the internet, broadcasting, private providers, have contributed to this.

The Department for Education and Skills supports the Lifelong learning website www.lifelonglearning.co.uk which provides information on lifelong learning opportunities to people of all ages and aims for the "encouragement, promotion and development of lifelong learning".

Extending working lives

As people are living longer, healthier lives, it makes sense to give people the option of working flexibly up to and beyond State Pension age if this is what they want to

do. In the longer term, we seek to have a further 1 million older workers in the workplace as part of the aim for an 80% employment rate. The 2006 Welfare Reform Green Paper (details in the appendix) set out the Government's approach to promoting the employment of older people. This will be covered in greater detail under RIS Commitment 5.

Volunteering

Similar percentages of younger and older people volunteer formally each month (apart from the over 75s where formal volunteering declines more significantly). The Government's "Volunteering for All" programme is a two year cross-government programme worth £3 million. The programme aims are to:

- identify and tackle barriers to volunteering through cross government action
- fund high quality 'exemplar' volunteering opportunities for excluded communities
- fund awareness raising work aimed at increasing positive awareness of voluntary activity within excluded communities.

The Government is committed to helping more people at risk of social exclusion and enabling them to have equal opportunity to undertake voluntary activity. Voluntary activity is activity by individuals that includes both informal volunteering (giving unpaid help to an individual who is not a member of the family) and formal volunteering (giving unpaid help to groups, clubs or organisations).

This programme will therefore specifically target the largest groups of people that tend to be at risk of exclusion:

- people with disabilities or limiting long term illness
- people with no formal qualifications
- people from black and minority ethnic communities. Within the BME group there will be a specific focus on Asian and Chinese communities, particularly those not born in the UK

The political participation of older people:

In the UK, older people are considerably more likely to vote in general elections than younger people. More than 80% of those aged 65 or over voted in the 2001 general election compared with a little over 60% of those aged 18 to 54.

Mechanisms/organisations giving older people a political voice

The organisations that give older people a political voice are voluntary organisations, such as Help the Aged, Age Concern, and BGOP as well as the DWP, which is responsible for the coordination of government policy on ageing. Older people's organisations are represented on the Opportunity Age Strategy Partnership Group (OASPG), which contributes to the development and delivery of the Opportunity Age strategy for an ageing society.

Older people's housing and rural areas:

National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society

The SEU report *A Sure Start to Later Life – Ending inequalities for Older People* (January 2006) committed Communities and Local Government, working with DH, DEFRA and external partners, to developing a strategy for housing and older people. Work on the strategy is now underway and we plan to publish the strategy in Summer 2007.

The strategy will review current provision and plan for the future in the context of an ageing society. It will look at all tenure groups and will cover the whole spectrum from independent households in the community to sheltered housing and residential care. It will cover both bricks and mortar issues and housing support services.

Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV)

Communities in collaboration with DH has continued to sponsor and support HOPDEV as a way of ensuring older people's housing needs and issues are taken account of. HOPDEV was formed in May 2001 as an independent advisory group to help Government deliver on the strategic framework *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing*³ - a vision for older people's housing and housing-related support.

HOPDEV (and Communities' support for it) continues as a reference group, to assist on development of the Government's national strategy for housing in an ageing society. It has an option to link up with other relevant groups or bodies, as and when appropriate, during the course of its work.

The *Supporting People* Programme and housing-related support for older people

- The *Supporting People* programme was introduced in April 2003. It is developing and improving services for vulnerable people, including older and disabled people. It also gives them a greater say in how this is done. Getting the views of service users is a key part of this.
- The *Supporting People* programme offers vulnerable members of the community, including older and disabled people, the opportunity to improve their quality of life through greater independence. It promotes housing-related support services which are strategically planned, high quality and cost-effective. These can help to prevent problems that lead to social exclusion, hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness by effective early support.
- Major improvements for older and disabled people through the programme include supporting them in sheltered and extra care housing, or giving support to those who wish to continue living in their own homes but need some help to do so. These options can also involve the provision of facilities such as community alarm systems.

³ Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework, DETR & DH, January 2001.

- These changes for the better are being achieved through:
 - developing a more flexible range of services, based more around individual needs, for example, by giving support to people in their own homes or separating support from particular forms of tenure through *floating support*;
 - planning services locally, starting with a clear assessment of local needs for support; developing local *Supporting People* strategies closely linked to community plans, health improvement programmes, community safety plans and other local strategies;
 - planning services strategically, alongside plans for housing, for care services and for health services, through developing local *Supporting People* strategies closely linked to community plans, health improvement programmes, community safety plans and other local strategies;
 - a strategic framework – allowing improved understanding, recognition and strategic relevance for existing services, for example, recognising the diverse nature of sheltered provision and its preventative role within health and social services’ strategic programmes, plus the chance of promoting the provision of Home Improvement Agencies and encouraging innovation and diversity in their service delivery;
 - introducing new quality and monitoring arrangements, alongside clear guidance on best practice in improving services, and having a simple and common administrative system backed by IT.
 - new and innovative services which are preventative and avoid or delay moves to institutional care;
 - increased choice for older and disabled people and better information on their options;
 - opportunity to recognise and meet the culturally specific needs of black and minority ethnic elders.

Floating Support

A newer form of support - floating support - is being developed through Supporting People. This has broken the link between support and tenure and therefore provides more flexibility. This provides support services not dependent on residency in a particular property, or type of property, which can be especially relevant to older people.

Home Improvement Agencies

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) help homeowners and private sector tenants who are older, disabled or on low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes. They are usually small, locally based non-for-profit organisations; some are independent organisations, some are in-house LA agencies, and some are managed by e.g. a Housing Association. HIAs receive most of their revenue funding from local government through Supporting People (SP) and general housing funds.

Over the past few years, the HIA sector has undergone substantial re-structuring. In 1999 only 54% of local authorities had a HIA, rising to 69% by 2001 and 90% by 2006. The proportion of the population over 75 years old covered by HIAs has risen from 61% in 1999 to 92% in 2006. The restructuring process has included both the expansion of existing HIA services and creation of new HIAs. HIAs are now on average larger, more robust organisations

Communities and Local Government sponsors a national co-ordinating body for HIAs (Foundations) to support the work of HIAs in a number of ways, including promoting and raising the profile of HIAs, increasingly with local service commissioners and local area agreements; representing the movement in dealing with government and other stakeholders, and building HIA capacity.

HIAs support older and disabled people to live independently, in safety and comfort, in their own homes for as long as they wish. HIAs' core role is to advise people on improvements and adaptations which they may need in their homes and to assist them to apply for local authority grants or loans in order to carry out the required work. They also help to identify reputable local contractors to undertake the work, thereby helping vulnerable people to avoid 'cowboy' builders. They then oversee the work being carried out to ensure that their clients are completely satisfied. The outcome of an HIA intervention will often be the facilitation of improvement or adaptation works that will enable the client to remain living independently in their own home. These works will be funded either by grants (Local Authority capital budgets) or by some form of loan, which may be an equity release product.

Many agencies also run low-cost handyperson services to carry out small jobs around the home, or operate specific schemes to improve home safety and security, prevent falls in the home, improve energy efficiency or make homes suitable for people to return to after a stay in hospital.

81% of HIAs report that their primary client group is older people with support needs, with a further 9% giving their primary client group as people with a physical or sensory disability and 5% the frail elderly.

Planning

Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing, published 2006, explicitly recognises importance of understanding demographic change as part of the planning process.

Strategic Housing Market Assessments – practice guidance, published in 2007, sets out a framework that local authorities and regional bodies can follow to develop a good understanding of how housing markets operate. Authorities are asked to consider all their equality and diversity obligations and where appropriate, to undertake specific analysis on groups from different ethnic backgrounds, families with children, older people, and people with special housing needs. It provides pointers to specific datasets that may be useful.

Lifetime Homes

Some of the Lifetime Homes standards (level thresholds, wider doors and corridors, electrical switches and sockets at accessible heights) were introduced into the Building Regulations in 1999. The Lifetime Homes standards in their entirety have been incorporated into the Code for Sustainable Homes as an optional element. Voluntary assessment against the Code took effect from 10 April 2007.

Regarding the rural dimension, the outcomes of older people in rural areas are not significantly different from other areas of the country. Rural areas are, on average, less deprived than their urban counterparts and few pockets of concentrated deprivation exist in the rural parts of the UK. Therefore, policy is focussed on the mainstreaming of services, with a requirement that departments “rural proof” their policies.

RIS Commitment 3: Promotion of equitable and sustainable economic growth in response to population ageing

Fiscal policy

The Government's medium term fiscal policy objectives are to ensure sound public finances and that spending and taxation impact fairly both within and between generations. In practice, this requires that: the Government meets its key taxation and spending priorities while avoiding an unsustainable and damaging rise in the burden of public debt; and those generations who benefit from public spending also meet, as far as possible, the costs of the services they consume.

Over the short term, fiscal policy objectives involve supporting monetary policy, where possible, by: allowing the automatic stabilisers to play their role in smoothing the path of the economy in the face of variations in demand; and where prudent and sensible, providing further support to monetary policy through changes in the fiscal stance. For example, it is likely to be more appropriate to change the fiscal stance in this context if the economy is projected to be operating some way from trend.

The medium and short-term objectives are linked. For example, the scope for, and likely success of, using fiscal policy to support monetary policy during a downswing in the economic cycle is likely to depend on the soundness of the medium-term fiscal position.

The Government has also specified two key fiscal rules that accord with the principles. These are: **the golden rule**: over the economic cycle, the Government will borrow only to invest and not to fund current spending; and **the sustainable investment rule**: public sector net debt as a proportion of GDP will be held over the economic cycle at a stable and prudent level.

To assess the sustainability and inter-generational impact of fiscal policy, the *Code for fiscal stability* (1998) requires the Government to publish illustrative long-term fiscal projections covering a period of at least ten years. In principle a 30-year horizon has been chosen. The illustrative long-term fiscal projections are published each year as Chapter A of the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report (EFSR) as part of the Budget (see appendix).

To complement and enhance the illustrative projections, the Government has published the Long-term public finance report each year since 2002, most recently alongside the 2006 Pre-Budget Report (see appendix). The Long-term public finance report provides a detailed discussion of likely future demographic trends and examines how these might affect the sustainability of the public finances over the coming decades.

The publication of the Long-term public finance report is motivated by the Government's belief that sustainable public finances are a prerequisite to achieving high and stable rates of long-term economic growth, which are shared by all, and to ensuring that spending and taxation impact fairly between generations. It is therefore

important for the Government to have a good understanding of potential future social and economic trends, and the fiscal implications of current policy for future generations. A better understanding of these trends also assists the Government in making strategic policy decisions. Moreover, additional information on long-term fiscal trends – particularly when updated on a regular basis – greatly improves fiscal transparency and credibility.

Monetary policy

Monetary policy in the UK is set by the operationally independent Bank of England. The Bank's monetary policy objective is to deliver price stability – low inflation – and, subject to that, to support the Government's economic objectives including those for growth and employment. Price stability is defined by the Government's inflation target of 2%. The remit recognises the role of price stability in achieving economic stability more generally, and in providing the right conditions for sustainable growth in output and employment. The Government's inflation target is announced each year by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the annual Budget statement.

Productivity

The Government's approach to improving the UK's long-term productivity performance has two broad strands: maintaining macroeconomic stability to enable firms and individuals to plan for the future, and implementing microeconomic reforms to remove the barriers which prevent markets from functioning efficiently. These microeconomic reforms address historic weaknesses in five areas that affect the rate of productivity growth: enterprise, competition, innovation, investment and skills.

Skills

Our skills strategy (England) is designed to meet the challenges of the global economy by ensuring we have the skills needed to further economic prosperity, reduce that part of the productivity gap with other nations that is due to lower skills levels and to promote social justice. The priorities for public funding of adult learning are to help those who need it most, i.e. those without the employability skills represented by basic literacy and numeracy and a first full level 2 (intermediate level) qualification. The policies are age neutral and apply equally to older people seeking to remain, progress in or return to the workforce.

Our aim is to raise the sustainable rate of employment for workers aged 50 to 69 (including those over State Pension Age), and to significantly reduce the employment gap between people aged 50 and over and the overall working age population. Although the employment rate among older people is now one of the highest in Europe, we need to do more to address the demographic challenge. We aim to increase the number of older workers by 1 million over and above the increases due to demographic change. Further details of the Government's strategy for older workers can be found under RIS Commitments 4 and 5.

RIS Commitment 4: Adjustment of social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences

Welfare reform

In January 2006, the UK Government published the Welfare Reform Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work". It marked the third stage of the Government's Welfare Reform programme, building upon the introduction of the New Deals in 1998 and the creation of Jobcentre Plus in 2002. Proposals contained in the Green Paper provide the foundation upon which we can build towards the aim of an 80 per cent employment rate.

To achieve this we intend to embark upon a further programme of radical reform.

- A reformed benefits system will remove perverse incentives, balance rights and responsibilities and combine back-to-work help for those who can work with support for those who cannot, while respecting the rights of disabled people.
- A modernised delivery system – with the public, private and voluntary sectors working together – actively engages with employers.
- We will provide a new unified menu of support, accessible to all people who find themselves out of work.
- A radical reform of the Housing Benefit system will make it simpler and more flexible, and will address some of the perverse incentives of the current system.
- Over the longer term there will be a much simpler benefits system. The next stage of benefits reform will further incentivise work and ease transitions in and out of work, while ensuring effective support for those who cannot work.

Older people's income

Encouraging people to extend their working lives helps them to improve their financial position both in work and in retirement. Incentives for extending working life include: National Insurance contributions are not paid by individuals who work after State Pension age; tax free personal allowances rise at the age of 65; more generous State Pension deferral options introduced in April 2006.

For those older people who are retired, those on low income are entitled to various benefits. Those aged 60 or over can receive the guarantee credit element of pension credit, which guarantees a minimum income to those on low income. Those aged 65 or over may receive the savings credit element of pension credit, which rewards those with modest savings. Women aged 60 or over and men aged 65 or over receive a state pension partly dependent upon contributions during working life. There are additional payments to assist in paying for fuel costs during winter, i.e. winter fuel payments, warm front grants. Those on low income may also receive other benefits, such as council tax benefit and housing benefit. Pensioners are now 40% less likely to live in poverty than 10 years ago.

Housing:

Extra Care Housing (ECH)

ECH is supplied by local councils and provides:

independence and choice by providing older, frailer people with their own flat

care and support delivered to meet residents' individual needs

24-hour support, meals, domestic help, leisure and recreation facilities and a genuinely safe environment

flats for rent or sale on a leasehold or shared ownership basis

ECH can:

provide a base for out of hours or outreach services to the local community including intermediate care facilities - to prevent avoidable admission to hospital or to help people return from hospital to their own home more quickly

enable people to retain the capital value of their home, by investing it in an ECH flat (which they can sell at a later date) rather than having to use their capital to pay for residential care

The Government is supporting the development of new ECH through the Department of Health ECH Fund and the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme.

In total, the Government is providing **£376m** funding for ECH between 2004-08 - **£147m** from DH and **£229m** from the Housing Corporation. Between 2004 and 2006, **£87m** has been made available by DH to local authorities and their housing partners to provide new ECH units. The Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme provided funding of **£93m** towards 1,432 new extra care housing units in 2004-06. Total Government provided funding for ECH in 2004-06 was **£180m** through these two programmes. An additional **£60m** for new ECH was announced in the DH Spending Review for 2006-08. The Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme is providing funding of **£136m** in 2006-08 for 2120 units.

Proposed schemes must also:

provide a significant and demonstrable health impact for older or other people with long term conditions

provide independent housing with access to on-site 24 hour support and care

contribute to the range of solutions to prevent unnecessary admissions into hospital or residential care and/or assist in reducing delayed transfers of care from hospitals

demonstrate an inclusive approach, as, although the fund is primarily focussed on older people, bids for extra care housing for adults with long term conditions including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, dementia, mental health and other conditions are eligible for consideration

Long term care

Long term care describes a package of care tailored to meet the future assessed needs of the individual. It can include:

- fully funded NHS continuing care
- NHS funded nursing care
- personal care, which can be provided as part of the package of continuing care, although this type of care is not provided on its own by the NHS.

In England, the Government has accepted each of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care (except the recommendation to provide free personal care in all settings). We believe that alternative proposals to improve standards of care and ensure fair access to care services will generate important benefits for older people now and in the future. We have therefore invested in a range of new initiatives in addition to making nursing care for people in homes free. This includes the deferred payment scheme which means that since October 2001, no one has been 'forced' to sell their own home in order to pay to enter a care home. Councils can instead waive the fees and offset the debt against the proceeds of selling the property on the death of the owner.

Independent living for disabled people

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (further details in the appendix)

In April 2005 a new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed by Parliament, which amends or extends existing provisions in the DDA 1995, including:

- making it unlawful for operators of transport vehicles to discriminate against disabled people
- making it easier for disabled people to rent property and for tenants to make disability-related adaptations
- making sure that private clubs with 25 or more members cannot keep disabled people out, just because they have a disability
- extending protection to cover people who have HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis from the moment they are diagnosed
- ensuring that discrimination law covers all the activities of the public sector
- requiring public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people

Independent Living Review

The Office for Disability Issues (which operates from within the DWP) set up the Independent Living Review in July 2006, which will finish in the summer of 2007. It is developing a five year strategy for delivering independent living for disabled adults

of all ages (including disabled young people in transition to adulthood and also older people).

The **aims** of the review are to:

- Look at the case for investing in independent living for disabled people;
- Develop an action plan for support and advocacy services that people need to help them access independent living;
- Make proposals for how disabled people can get better access to transport, housing, employment and healthcare;
- Look at whether any changes to legislation are needed to support independent living;
- Make proposals about how the aim of independent living can be championed; and
- Make recommendations for action to improve access to independent living choices for disabled people.

The review is taking into account the particular issues for different people in different situations e.g. disabled people from black and minority ethnic communities, older people with high support needs, mental health support needs, learning difficulties and so on.

Pensions Reform

The Government has taken significant steps to improve aspects of the pensions system in recent years. The State Second Pension was introduced in 2002, crediting in low earners and some carers who missed out on its predecessor, the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS). Consequently, some 4 million people now have the chance to build up a decent additional pension for the first time.

Stakeholder pensions were introduced in 2001 that required all employers with five or more employees to provide access either to a stakeholder pension or to an occupational scheme.

The Pensions Act 2004 has improved security and confidence for occupational pension scheme members. The Pension Protection Fund (PPF) means that over 10 million members of salary-related pension schemes know that they will receive compensation if their employer becomes insolvent and the pension scheme is underfunded. The Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) will help groups close to retirement who lost out before the PPF was established.

The Pensions Regulator will help to protect members' benefits and promote good administration of work-based pension schemes. It has wide powers to investigate schemes and take action where necessary and takes a proactive, risk-focused approach to regulation. The Regulator also provides practical support for the regulated community.

And the Finance Act 2004 swept away the complexity of many separate taxation regimes, replacing them with a single, flexible regime based on the simple concept of a lifetime allowance of £1.5 million for tax-privileged pension saving.

We have also supported private saving by helping people to make better informed choices about their retirement, introducing a range of pension forecasts to give individuals an understanding of the income they are likely to receive in retirement.

Further reform is needed to:

- **promote personal responsibility:** tackling the problem of undersaving for retirement;
- **be fair:** protecting the poorest, and being fair to women and carers, to savers, and between generations;
- **be simple:** clarifying the respective roles of the State, the employer and the individual;
- **be affordable:** maintaining macroeconomic stability and striking the right balance for provision between the State, the employer and the individual; and
- **be sustainable:** setting the basis of an enduring national consensus, while being flexible to future trends.

To address these challenges, we established the Pensions Commission in December 2002. We asked it to review the operation of the UK pensions system and make recommendations for reform. In November 2005 the Commission published its recommendations. Having assessed the recommendations of the Pensions Commission, we will:

- Introduce low-cost personal accounts to give those without access to occupational pension schemes the opportunity to save.
- Reform the state pension system by uprating both the guarantee element of Pension Credit and the basic State Pension in line with earnings growth, rather than prices. We will make the State Pension fairer and more widely available and we will raise the State Pension age in line with increasing longevity.

The Pension Reform White Paper sets, published in May 2006, set out the government's proposals for further reforms. On 28 November 2006 the Government introduced the [Pensions Bill](#) into Parliament. The Bill legislates for long-term pensions reform, making the state pension fairer and more generous and providing a solid foundation for private saving. On 12 December 2006, the Government published a second White Paper, [Personal accounts: a new way to save](#). This White Paper sets out proposals for a new national system of low cost personal accounts.

Mandatory retirement

State pension age in the UK is currently 65 for men and between 60 and 65 for women. Women's State Pension age will gradually increase to 65 between 2010 and 2020.

We are working to prepare for an evidence-based review of the Default Retirement Age that was introduced by the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations. The review will take place in 2011. Our aim over time is to move to a position where there is no compulsory retirement unless it can be justified by individual employers. We intend

to remove the default age as soon as we can show that it is no longer necessary or appropriate.

Support for carers:

Those with fragmented employment patterns, e.g. women who give up work or have career breaks to care for children, are likely to face lower retirement incomes as both private and state pension payments tend to be linked with contribution history. Although married women have previously been able to claim pensions through their husbands, this meant that women who were divorced and widowed were more likely to face poverty in old age. Government policy has aimed to support those with caring responsibilities in a number of ways:

Family friendly employment measures

Rights to Adoption Leave and Pay may allow one member of an adoptive couple to take paid time off work when their new child starts to live with them. Paternity leave and pay may be available for the other member of the couple, or an adopter's partner. Adoption and paternity leave are available whether a child is adopted from within the UK or from overseas.

Maternity Leave and Pay Regulations provide protection for employed women who are pregnant or on maternity leave. Rules also apply to employers to help them plan ahead and manage maternity leave and pay.

Paternity Leave and Pay Regulations were introduced in April 2003 under UK domestic law. They allow eligible employees to take paid leave to care for their baby or to support the mother following birth. Additional Paternity Leave and Pay Regulations will entitle employed fathers to a new right of up to 26 weeks Additional Paternity Leave, some of which could be paid, if the mother returns to work. Parental Leave is the right for parents to take up to 13 weeks unpaid time off to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare.

Flexible Working Regulations were introduced in April 2003, enabling parents with a child under 6 or a disabled child under 18 to make a request for flexible working, and placing a duty on employers to consider such request seriously and reject them only for good business reasons. From 6 April 2007, the law will extend the right to carers of adults.

Respite care/short break services

This Government recognises that caring can be detrimental to a carer's own health, especially over a longer period. The Carers Grant was introduced in 1999 to give local councils the money to support carers locally to take a break from caring. The grant has increased over the years and is currently worth £185m (in 2006/07 and in 2007/08).

However, in addition, in the White Paper, OHOCOS, we recognised the considerable evidence that the lack of proper planned alternative care provision in the event of anything untoward happening to carers was one of the most important factors in

limiting their freedom to have a life of their own. We therefore undertook to ensure that short-term, home-based respite support is established in each council to cover crisis or emergency situations.

We are working with stakeholders to identify the key principles that should apply to the provision of such emergency respite care. We plan to issue guidance to local authorities in the summer of 2007 to help them design services based on principles that reflect best practice in the provision of such planned emergency cover. We are making £25m available to support implementation of the guidance from October 2007.

RIS Commitment 5: Enabling labour markets to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing

Active labour market policies and older people

The UK has one of the highest employment rates in Europe for people over 50. Recent years have seen a significant improvement in the employment rate of 50-69 year olds, which has risen by 6.8 percentage points from 48.4 per cent in 1997 to around 55.2 per cent in 2006. There are presently some 767,000 more people aged 50-69 in work than there were five years ago. Over half of the increase in employment in the past year was amongst those aged over 50.

A variety of policies have been enacted in recent years to increase the employment rate of older people (those aged 50-69):

- The 2002 Green Paper "Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement" (available in the appendix) sets out a number of initiatives that we have now introduced or are in the process of introducing.
- The New Deal 50 plus programme provides back-to-work help for people who are aged 50 or over and have been out of work and on benefits for more than 6 months. Since its launch in April 2000, we estimate that New Deal 50 plus has supported over 164,000 job starts amongst older people.
- Increased State Pension deferral rate for those beyond state pension age not drawing SP at the earliest opportunity.
- Working Tax Credit: This is a payment to top up the earnings of low paid working people (whether employed or self-employed), including those who do not have children. Working Tax Credit helps to make work pay for low income workers. Those aged over 50 who are returning to work after a period on benefit are entitled to an over 50s return to work element of working tax credit. There is also additional credit available for those with disabilities.
- DWP customers seeking work with basic skills or English language needs are signposted to local provision as appropriate. Also, the Adviser Discretion Fund can be used to remove barriers that prevent a customer from actively seeking or taking up employment. Advisers can grant awards of up to £100 in any 12 month period which may be used to support customers taking up employment focussed training.
- The Skills Coaching trial, one of the New Deal for Skills initiatives, offers an enhanced guidance service for low skilled jobless people. It provides the opportunity to analyse in more depth the skills needs that an individual may have and to improve the choices they make, linked to the skills required in local labour markets. Coaches support customers through training and even into work, if needed. The aim is that this more targeted approach will improve retention rates in training and work, as well as increasing qualification and job

outcomes. Figures from November 2006 show that 15% of customers on Skills Coaching are aged over 50.

Raising participation rates

Policies described under RIS commitment 4 that support carers and families will assist in raising participation rates.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Green Paper mentioned under RIS commitment 4 contains a number of proposals aimed at raising the employment rates of older people and ill or disabled people (around half of those aged 50 and over and claiming benefits are claiming incapacity benefits). Unemployment for people aged 50 and over is low but inactivity is high, and many people leave work early due to ill health. Those out of work tend to face greater barriers returning to work than people in other age groups do. We will boost support for people returning to work and provide better information to people about the work and retirement options available to them:

- align additional employment support for older long-term unemployed people with that for younger age groups by requiring people aged 50 to 59 to take up the additional jobseeking support available through New Deal 25 plus;
- improve back-to-work support for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and their dependent partners who are aged 50 and over;
- pilot face-to-face guidance sessions with people in work approaching 50 or over 50, to deliver tailored and relevant information on working, training and planning for retirement; and
- work with employers to extend flexible working opportunities to older workers.

Steps will be taken to reduce the numbers claiming incapacity benefits:

- improvements to workplace health,
- reform of the gateway to benefits,
- increased support for claimants,
- remove perverse incentives in the system

The new Employment and Support Allowance will simplify the current system. From 2008, this new integrated contributory and income-related allowance will replace Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on the grounds of incapacity for new claimants. It will be paid to most people in return for undertaking work-related interviews, agreeing an action plan and, as resources allow, participating in some form of work-related activity. If benefit claimants do not fulfil these agreed responsibilities, the new benefit will be reduced in a series of slices, ultimately to the level of Jobseeker's Allowance. But for those claimants with the most severe health conditions or disabilities, the benefit will be paid without conditionality and they should get more money than they do now.

Increasing skills

Amongst the other main barriers to effective participation in the workforce are low skill levels. We have two key targets to reduce those without a first full level 2 qualification and/or basic literacy and numeracy including older people. We have met our interim target to help 1.5 million people to improve their basic skills by 2007, measured by the number of learners achieving a first national Skills for Life qualification in literacy, language or numeracy. In addition we have made significant progress with the Adult Level 2 target and are on course to comfortably exceed the 2006 interim milestone - 1 million more adults in the workforce between 2003 and 2006.

Individuals who find work through New Deal 50 plus can apply for an in-work Training Grant of up to £1500 to be used towards job-related training and lifelong vocational skills.

The UK has strong policies to promote employability and lifelong learning. For example Train to Gain is the new national employer training programme that offers employers easy access, via a free skills brokerage service, to training for their employees. Training is free for employees working toward a basic skills or first full Level 2 qualification equivalent to 5 good GCSEs. There is no upper age limit applied to employee eligibility.

The most recent management information report (April – November 2006) showed that 62,379 learners had started either a Level 2 or Skills for Life qualification. Of these, 17% were in the 50+ age which equates to 10,604 learners.

Evaluation of the Train to Gain pilots showed that the initiative did have particular benefits for older workers. Participants aged over 56 were 21% more likely to complete their training and achieve the target qualification than those in younger age groups.

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) is also particularly successful in supporting older workers' training needs. The 2006 evaluation of the ULF found that the largest age group represented amongst learners was the 45 to 54 year old range, which accounted for over one third (36%) of all respondents, with the next highest representation among the over 54s, who composed 27% of the response. An estimated four fifths of ULF learners have qualifications below NVQ level 2 or equivalent.

We want to build on this success and that is why we are supporting the TUC's new learning organisation unionlearn, which will bring together the many different aspects of trade union learning and education and lead to a real step change in the number of working people engaged in learning.

The University for Industry (Ufi), through its learndirect services, uses technology to help transform adults' skills and employability, e.g. through Skills for Life and increasingly Level 2 qualifications. The learndirect national advice service provides information, advice and guidance to potential learners by phone and over the web. 43% (148k) of those registering for courses are over 40.

RIS Commitment 6: Promotion of life-long learning and adaptation of the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions

There is a safeguarded budget of £210m pa for learning for personal and community development including meeting the learning needs of those approaching retirement. There is a network of 6000 UK Online Centres to improve access to IT and to the Internet. Each year there is a Silver Surfers Day sponsored by the European Social Fund designed to ease 10,000 "digitally excluded" older people into a digital life by showing them how technologies might add to their lives.

The whole basis of our Skills strategy is that people need to continually reskill and upskill if they are to adapt to the changing needs of the labour market. We are increasingly putting employers in the driving seat through Train to gain and the development of Sector Skills Councils. This will accelerate as Government develops its response to the Leitch Review of our skills needs till 2020. Our targets on basic skills and level 2 are specifically designed to help those who did not succeed at school to attain the employability skills they will need to obtain and retain employment.

School Retention Rates

The 14-19 reforms will give all young people the opportunity to choose a mix of learning which motivates, interests and challenges them, and which gives them the knowledge, skills and attitude they need to succeed in education, work, and life. The reforms are designed to create an exciting new curriculum relevant for all young people. They will extend traditional learning routes to be more inclusive and engaging.

The Implementation Plan takes forward reforms outlined in the White Paper 14-19 Education and Skills (February 2005) to meet the Government's ambition to ensure that post-16 participation rates rises from the current 76 per cent to 90 per cent by 2015. These reforms will be based on consensus, evolution, careful planning and the trialling of new models to: improve the basics (functional English, maths and ICT); to improve the provision of vocational education; to provide greater stretch in A levels; and to tackle disengagement.

Raising attainment now includes: ensuring that by age 19 all young people achieve a level 2 qualification (5 GCSEs grades A*-C) the threshold for employability and a stepping stone for achievement at higher levels; through the Key stage 4 engagement programme, helping those for whom the mainstream curriculum is unappealing by providing a work focus to learning; and piloting financial support for 16-19 year olds through Activity and Learning Agreements.

The development of functional skills will be at the heart of all qualifications. £335m is available through the Dedicated Schools Grant for the next 2 years to personalise learning for pupils at KS3, including extra support for those falling behind in the basics.

Employer-designed Diplomas will provide an exciting, aspirational and stretching programme of learning for all young people, appealing to the most capable students preparing for the most demanding university courses, students planning to enter the workforce directly at 18 and those who are currently not well engaged with the current school-based provision. The first five Diplomas will be ready for first teaching in 2008, the next five by 2009 and remaining 4 by 2010.

Supporting local delivery: Collaboration is key but we will give local areas the flexibility to decide how best to deliver the entitlement. Local Authorities and Learning and Skills Councils will work together to deliver 14-19 education, to identify gaps in provision and commission provision to fill these.

RIS Commitment 7: Striving to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being

A cross-government approach

DH works in partnership with relevant policymakers to ensure that ageing issues are integrated and strives to influence policy formulation across government departments and other bodies. Please also refer to information supplied under RIS commitment 1.

Reducing inequality of access to health and social services

The Government completed a cross cutting review (CCR) on health inequalities (2002) which assessed the progress that had been made and identified priorities for future action. As a result of the Review the two national targets were revised into a single target on health inequalities. *Tackling Health Inequalities: A Programme for Action* was launched in July 2003 by the Secretary of State for Health as part of the wider national drive for improving social justice. Backed by twelve departments, the Programme lays the foundation for meeting the government's targets to reduce the health gap on infant mortality and life expectancy by 2010. Reversing this widening gap between social groups is a major challenge and the Programme emphasises the need to improve health and the factors that contribute to health faster in disadvantaged areas than elsewhere.

The Health Inequalities Unit's task is to **drive delivery** of the government commitments outlined in the Programme, ensuring their implementation and that they achieve the required results necessary to achieve the Public Service Agreement (PSA) health inequalities target.

The "Tackling Health Inequalities: Status Report on the Programme for Action" includes information on progress in reducing inequalities. This is available in the appendix.

Long term care services

We have put into practice most of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care including:

- Making nursing care free in all settings from October 2001
- Substantial investment in intermediate care
- An increase in funding to support carers
- The implementation of the Fair Access to Care Guidance
- Free nursing care in all settings
- A three-month disregard on property for adults entering residential care

Please also refer to information supplied under RIS commitment 4.

Coordination of services

We are developing a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for adults by building on, and extending the scope of, the Single Assessment Process (SAP) for Older People. It is proposed that, as with the existing SAP, an assessment in line with the CAF will cover a number of domains in order to take a holistic view of an individual's circumstances and to identify any risks to his or her independence and the need for support."

See also National Service Framework for Older People and OHOCOS above – as other examples of improving services in general.

Training for carers

We are determined to ensure that the 1.2m strong social care workforce continues to develop to meet future demands and our reform agenda. This year (06/07) we are investing £220m on social care development and training.

In May 06, a National Training Strategy Grant (NTS) of £108m was issued to Local Authorities to contribute to employers' costs in ensuring appropriate levels of training and qualification in the social care workforce

In 06/07, we will continue to support NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) training in the private and voluntary sector via the £15m Training Strategy Implementation grant managed by Skills for Care (S4C) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

In 06/07, we are investing £80m to continue to support social work education and training and provide financial support to social work students. £3.5m of this £80m will support the new Post Qualifying framework coming into force in September 2007.

Older people's ability to undertake self-care

The Expert Patients Programme is a self-management programme for people with long-term health conditions. It helps people to develop the skills and confidence to better manage their long-term condition on a day-to-day basis. The EPP has been available through the NHS since 2002 when it was piloted.

Internal monitoring data collected during the pilot phase showed that 80% of course participants were aged 45 or over. 75% of participants had 2 or more long-term health conditions. 10% had six or more long-term health conditions.

Financing health and social care:

Investment

Local authority funding for social services is derived from a variety of sources both from within central Government and also determined locally. Local authorities in England will receive more than £65 billion in 2007/08, a 4.9% increase on 2006/07. This includes a floor guarantee which means that all authorities see at least a 2.7% increase in formula grant. The 2007/08 settlement confirms the increased investment

in local services set out as part of the first multi-year settlement in January 2006, where allocations for all English local authorities were announced for 2006-07 and 2007-08. The figures mark 10 successive years in which Government has provided local government with a grant increase above inflation - since 1997 there has been a real terms increase of 39% in Government grant for local services.

There have been significant increases in the level of funding provided to local authorities by central Government specifically for social services in recent years - 20% between 1996/97 and 2002/03 and 6% a year in the three years 2003/04 to 2005/06. The Government provided £11.5bn for local councils in respect of adult PSS in 2005-06. This has risen to just under £12bn in 2006-07 and to nearly £12.5bn in 2007-08. In 2007/08 alone, authorities will benefit from Government grants of £1.6 billion for specific initiatives in the area of adult social services.

We are investing £60m in Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPs) to pilot new financial initiatives and £80m through the Preventative Technology Grant to invest in areas such as telecare initiatives where individuals can be supported to live at home over the period 2006-2008. We are also investing a further £60m for Extra Care Housing over the period 2006-08

Delivery

We aim to help more people to live at home independently. Councils and their NHS partners have already made significant progress in reducing delays in hospital. Between September 2001 and September 2006 the number of people over the age of 75 delayed in hospital reduced from 5,673 to 1,703, a reduction of 70%. Total delays for the same period were reduced from 7,065 to 2,301, a reduction of over 67%

The launch of the "Cash for Change" programme in 2001 signalled our determination to tackle the problem of delayed hospital discharges through a major cash investment of £300m over two years. By 2006 older people's services had received an extra £1bn a year to expand home care services, extra care housing, community equipment, services for carers and intermediate care. We met our target two years early for improving the quality of life for older people by ensuring 30 per cent of people receiving social services did so at home.

In 2003, we introduced regulations for domiciliary care agencies to improve the quality of care and protection for people receiving personal care in their own home. Agencies that supply people to provide care in a person's home now have to register with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

80-90% of older people say they want to stay in their own home. Homes with Home Care are up 52% since 1998/99. The average number of contact hours of home care provided to households per week has increased from 5.8 in 1998/99 to 9.5 in 2004/05. In 2004/05, 92,300 households received intensive home care (defined as more than 10 hours and six or more visits in a sample week), an increase of 52% from 1998/99.

For most older people, the best care home is their own home. That's why we've expanded intensive home care. This shows that the number of older people helped intensively to live at home has increased steadily from 23% in 1998-99, to 32% in 2004/05, exceeding the target of 30% by March 2006.

Healthy living:

The Department of Health are leading on work across government to develop a new and ambitious strategy, following on from Choosing Activity, to increase sports participation and fitness. In order to take this forward an inter-ministerial Group has been formed. The inter-ministerial Group agreed at its first meeting to focus upon sedentary adults (which by implication will encompass older people) and actions to develop walking and (subject to feasibility) cycling strategies.

The Chief Medical Officer for England's report 'At least five a week', which sets out the evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health, describes the benefits of physical activity for older people.

Three of the nine Local Exercise Action Plans (LEAP) taking place in England which focus on increasing physical activity are aimed at older people. DH is also funding a third sector 'Swimming for health' project aimed at encouraging older people to participate in swimming.

We are making available £60m ring-fenced funding (£20m in 2006/07 and 40m in 2007/08) to approximately 30 council led partnerships across the country to establish and evaluate innovative projects to help older people to live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives for as long as possible.

POPPs will test and evaluate innovative models of service delivery, financial and partnership mechanisms, which will create a sustainable shift in resources and culture away from institutional and hospital based crisis care for older people towards earlier, targeted interventions. The overall aim is to improve the health and well-being and independence of older people.

RIS Commitment 8: Mainstreaming a gender approach in an ageing society to support families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members

Gender equality

Please refer to information supplied under RIS commitment 4.

The Ministers for Women, supported by the Women and Equality Unit (WEU), develop policies relating to gender equality and ensure that work on equality across Government as a whole is co-ordinated.

The Government has introduced a number of practical measures to enhance the position of women:

As mothers ...

Through the launch of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998 all 3 and 4 year olds are now entitled to free, Government funded, early education. The supply of registered childcare stands at 1.28 million places (double the 1997 level), and there is now a registered place for 1 in 4 children under 8.

We are establishing a network across the country of multi-agency Sure Start Children's Centres. They will build on pioneering Sure Start Local Programmes and offer a wide range of early learning, health and parental support, initially to disadvantaged areas. 1,037 Centres had been established by October 2006, providing services to over 829,000 children and their families. By 2010, there will be 3,500, with all young children under 5, and their families, having access to one.

We are also extending the entitlement of all 3 and 4 year olds to free early education. In the first of a series of extensions, from April 2006 the minimum entitlement was increased from 33 to 38 weeks per year; and, from April 2007, 3 and 4 year olds will gradually begin to receive an enhanced free entitlement of 15 hours per week. It will be integrated with the offer of a high quality out of school childcare place for all children aged 3 -14 between 8 and 6 each weekday all year round by 2010. We are building that latter offer around schools as part of a range of extended out of hours services which they will host. We want all schools to become extended schools by 2010, with at least half of primary schools, and a third of secondary schools, doing so by 2008. Well over 3,000 schools - around 1 in 8 - are now providing the core extended services offer (including childcare).

On 3 April 2006, 6.0 million families with 10.1 million children were benefiting from tax credits.

The childcare element of Working Tax Credit provides up to 80 per cent of the cost of eligible childcare up to maximum costs of £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children. In 2004-05 (the latest year for which figures are

available), the total spent on the childcare element was £706 million, compared with £30 million spent on the childcare element within Family Credit in 1997-98. Any family with children, with an income of less than £58,000 will be eligible for some support.

The Government has extended eligibility to childcare support by introducing a new Childcare Approval Scheme in April 2005 and extending the types of childcare for which parents can receive financial support. This particularly benefits shift workers and those with disabled children. 2,891 applications had been approved under the scheme at 30 September 2006.

In the workplace ...

A boost to the pay of low paid workers – the adult rate of the National Minimum Wage increased to £5.35 on 1 October 2006. Around two-thirds of the beneficiaries of the 2006 uprating are women. The Median gender pay gap has fallen by 4.8% since 1997. The National Minimum Wage would have made some contribution to this fall. In October 2004 the Government introduced a new £3 per hour minimum wage for 16 & 17 year old workers - this has risen to £3.30.

Reducing the Pay Gap - making it easier for women and men to take up equal pay claims by simplifying and speeding up existing tribunal procedures; introducing an equal pay questionnaire procedure in April 2003; a commitment by the government to a target of 45% of large organisations having undertaken pay reviews by April 2008. The Government has been working with the EOC to promote equal pay reviews and has provided trade unions with funding to train workplace representatives. We streamlined the complex rules of procedure relating to equal value cases with new regulations introduced in October 2004.

The Government Action Plan for implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendations was published on 11 September 2006, which contains a comprehensive package of measures to address the causes of the gender pay gap.

The Action Plan includes:

- £500K fund to support initiatives to increase the availability of quality, part-time work
- Minister for Women will champion quality, part-time work across the public sector
- Programme of exemplar employers – over 100 have already signed up
- Support for Equality Reps through the Union Modernisation Fund
- More detail on the £40m for initiatives on women's skills and training as announced in Budget 2006

Public sector gender duty – obligation on public sector to promote gender equality
National standards for careers advice to ensure all young people receive careers information, advice and guidance which is free from gender stereotyping

Updating sex discrimination law – from October 2005, the Sex Discrimination Act has made it clear that discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, and harassment (including sexual harassment) are unlawful.

In April 2003 a new framework of support for families and low-income working households was introduced through the Child Tax Credit (extending support to more families currently excluded from income-related support for children) and Working Tax Credit (available to lone parents or two partners working for at least 16 hours a week). These represent the biggest financial boost for mothers since the introduction of Child Benefit.

With work and family responsibilities ...

From April 2003, employees with children under six or disabled children have had the right to require employers to seriously consider their requests to work flexibly. Almost a quarter (22%) of parents with children under 6 have requested to work flexibly since the law was introduced (Department for Trade and Industry April 2005).

Other rights - Government has introduced a right to time off for family emergencies, and three months' parental leave. It has also given part timers (and people on fixed term contracts) the same rights as full timers.

Improved parental rights and pay - paid maternity leave was extended from 18 to 26 weeks from April 2003, with the flat rate increasing to £108.85 a week from April 2006. Most employed women are now entitled to a further six months of unpaid maternity leave. Adoptive parents for the first time have similar rights to leave and pay as mothers and employed fathers can take up to two weeks' Paternity leave paid at £108/85.00 a week. Over 350,000 women can benefit each year from the improved maternity laws; and around 400,000 fathers can benefit from the new rights to paternity leave and pay.

From October 1st, statutory maternity pay, maternity allowance and statutory adoption pay increased from 26 weeks to 39 weeks for babies due on or after 1st April 2007, or adoption placements from that date. It is estimated that the maternity pay changes will benefit around 400,000 mothers each year.

The 2005 budget announced a cash boost of £2,000 to help lone mothers back to work through the 'in work credit'.

New package of measures to support working families:

Following extensive consultation on proposals set out in the Ten Year Childcare Strategy, we are:

- Extending maternity and adoption pay from six to nine months from April 2007, towards the goal of a year's paid leave by the end of the Parliament.
- Widening the scope of the existing flexible working law to enable carers of adults to work flexibly from April 2007.
- Giving fathers a right to take up to 26 weeks Additional Paternity Leave, some of which may be paid if the mother returns to work early, so that they can take a greater role in bringing up their children, and allow mothers who wish to return to work earlier to do so

- Introducing measures to help employers manage the administration of leave and pay and plan ahead with greater certainty
- Helping employers and employees benefit from improved communication during maternity leave
- These measures are being delivered through a combination of legislation, good practice and guidance, in line with the Government's better regulation agenda.

We have consulted on the details of the Additional Paternity Leave and Pay scheme. A consultation on the draft regulations will follow.

In public life ...

The democratic deficit – The Government has legislated through the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 to allow political parties to take positive measures to reduce inequality in the numbers of men and women elected, at local, national and European level.

It also led a national campaign, organised by the Women and Equality Unit, to encourage more women onto the boards of national public bodies. Women currently hold 35.6% of public appointments overall, an increase from 32% in 1997.

Health and well-being ...

Taken positive action to tackle domestic violence. Introduced the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act in November 2004 – the biggest overhaul of domestic violence legislation for 30 years. The Prime Minister announced a new 24-hour help-line and Internet database of refuges, with £2 million from the government and Comic Relief. Research on the economic and social costs of domestic violence was published on 1 September 2004.

Passed the Sexual Offences Act in 2003, which, among other things, clarifies the law on consent with regard to rape, and introduces a number of other new offences dealing with rape.

100% of women with suspected gynaecological cancers (including cervical cancer), urgently referred by their doctor to a consultant, are now seen within two weeks, while 99.9% of patients with suspected breast cancer are seen within two weeks. In addition, 99.7% of patients diagnosed with breast cancer receive their treatment within one month of diagnosis.

Additionally, the NHS Breast Screening Programme is estimated to save 1,400 lives per year, while recent research has shown that up to 5000 deaths per year are likely to be prevented by screening, which means that about 100,000 women will have been saved from premature death by the NHS Cervical Screening Programme by 2030.

In retirement ...

Many of the poorest and most vulnerable pensioners are women. Help has been specifically targeted on those pensioners most at need through the introduction of the Pension Credit. This means that no single pensioner need receive less than £114.05. Free television licences for over 75s, the winter fuel payment which was increased to £200 in 2000 (£300 for the over 80s).

For 2005/06, to help pensioners with their council tax bills, the Government has made a one-off £200 council tax refund for pensioners. There will also be free local bus travel for all pensioners from 2006.

The Second State Pension extends second tier pension rights to people without earnings and with caring responsibilities (mostly women). The Government also introduced pension sharing arrangements on divorce.

The Government published the Pensions Bill on 29 November 2006. This legislates for long-term pensions reform, making the state pension fairer and more generous and providing a solid foundation for private saving.

There are various measures within the Bill that will be particularly beneficial to women. These include:

- reduce the number of qualifying years needed for a full basic State Pension to 30, from 44 for men and 39 for women
- convert Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) into a positive weekly credit for the basic State Pension, and align the rules for when the credit is available between the basic State Pension and the State Second Pension so that those caring for children aged under 12 are eligible
- establish a new Carer's Credit in the basic State Pension and the State Second Pension for those undertaking care for the sick and severely disabled for 20 hours or more a week; and
- abolish the minimum contribution conditions in the basic State Pension and the Labour Market Attachment Test in the State Second Pension, to ensure that every year of contributions or credits counts.

RIS Commitment 9: Support for families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members

Family policies

Please refer to information supplied under RIS commitment 4.

Education

The Government is committed to ensuring that parents and families have access to the support that they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive and resilient parenting, from birth right through to the teenage years. Parents will increasingly have access to good quality universal support, in the form of information, advice and signposting to other services, and, for families facing additional difficulties, more specialised services will be available at a local level, such as parenting programmes and couple support.

The Every Child Matters green paper (September 2003) confirmed the Government's intention of putting parents and carers at the heart of its approach to improving children's lives.

Local Authority or NHS services should offer all families with children under 5 information on parenting, drop in groups and opportunities to access parenting support. Additional support will be available for families that are experiencing particular challenges that mean that children may be at risk of poor outcomes, such as group-based antenatal and post-natal support, structured parenting programmes, home visiting, and access to specialist services such as family therapy. Often these services will be accessed through children's centre. By 2010, there will be 3,500 children's centres - one for every community.

By 2010, all schools should offer access to parenting support as part of their extended school services. All schools should offer access to:

- information sessions for parents when their child starts school and moves to secondary school.
- information on the advice and support available to parents - through national helplines and websites, and local services
- parenting groups, using structured manual-based parenting programmes
- more specialised support for parents who might need it, such as targeted support for parents whose children have problems with attendance or behaviour at school.

To deliver these services schools will work closely with Local Authorities and other partners - such as schools, children's centres, the voluntary and community sector, health services, Youth Offending Teams - in the context of emerging children's trust arrangements.

In addition the Government actively promotes family learning, children, parents and often grandparent learning together. The aim is help improve children's attainment and to further other family members' involvement both in children's upbringing but also to encourage their own learning. There are two discrete programmes, one which focuses in part on parenting; the other on literacy and numeracy. Together their budgets are £37m per annum in England administered through the Learning and Skills Council. Between 2003-4 and 2005-6 over 260,000 adults were helped by these programmes.

RIS Commitment 10: Promotion of the implementation and the follow-up of the Regional Implementation Strategy through regional cooperation

DWP Ministers meet up to six times a year with their counterparts from other EU countries at both formal and informal meetings of the EU Employment and Social Policy Council and pension reform and ageing issues often form part of their discussions. In addition, the UK has held a number of Ministerial / high level discussions with other UNECE countries in recent years which have included ageing related issues.

These meetings have included talks with counterparts in the USA, China, Russia, Sweden, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan, and have covered such issues as pension reform, demographic changes, and extended working life.

The UK submitted to the 2004 International Labour Organisation Conference (jointly with Canada) a Resolution concerning older workers and employment and social protection which specifically highlighted the relevance and importance of the Madrid Plan of Action and called upon the ILO to develop a comprehensive strategy to help its constituents respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing; and

Since then the UK has, as a permanent member of the ILO Governing Body, regularly and consistently called for the inclusion of an item on employment and social protection in the new demographic context to be included on the 2009 ILO Conference agenda.

5. Conclusions and outlook for the future

In conclusion, the UK has enacted a comprehensive programme of work since the adoption of the MIPPA/RIS in 2002. Significant progress has been made in cutting pensioner poverty, increasing employment, improving home quality and supporting people to live at home. We will continue to build on the progress made to ensure that later life is healthy and fulfilling.

The Government is considering how the performance framework, which uses Public Service Agreements (PSA) to ensure central and local government focus on key priorities over a three year period, can promote greater independence and well-being in later life and ensure that we adapt to and benefit from an ageing society. A PSA covering later life would be intended to bring together across Government a wide range of action, supported by increasingly holistic services, that affects older people. Performance would be measured by indicators reflecting the programmes of several Departments.

As previously discussed, key areas of ongoing work include welfare and pensions reforms aimed at increasing the employment rate of older people, increasing saving and tackling poverty. The Opportunity Age strategy will continue to drive behaviour across government towards a more integrated approach to ageing.

Appendix

Age Discrimination legislation

The regulations cover direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and include all workers and those taking part in or applying for employment-related training including further and higher education courses.

- A national default retirement age of 65 means that employers can no longer force someone to retire before then - unless objectively justified where there is a genuine occupational requirement. For example, the role of a character in a play or film, or the serving of alcohol. The test is not an easy one, but it means that in some circumstances there may be practices, policies or procedures that have an age related aspect to them, but it will be proportionate and legitimate to do so. It will be necessary for employers to provide evidence if challenged; assertions alone will not be enough.
- All employees will have the right to request to work beyond the age of 65 or any other retirement age (if there is one) set by the company, and employers will have a duty to consider, although not to accept, such a request. This will involve an employee meeting with their employer to discuss the request. An employee will have a right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting. This policy will be reviewed in 2011.
- Employers must give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that individuals can plan better for retirement, and be confident that "retirement" is not being used as cover for unfair dismissal.
- There is no longer an upper age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy. Older workers have the same rights as younger workers to claim unfair dismissal or receive a redundancy payment, unless there is a genuine retirement.
- The regulations allow pay and non-pay benefits to continue which depend on length of service requirements of 5 years or less or which recognise and reward loyalty and experience and motivate staff.
- Age limits are removed for statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, statutory adoption pay and statutory paternity pay, so that the legislation for all four statutory payments applies in exactly the same way.
- Lower and upper age limits in the statutory redundancy scheme are removed, but will leave the current age-banded system in place.
- The regulations provide exemptions for many age-based rules in occupational pension schemes. The regulations do not affect the age at which people can claim their state pension.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/draft/ukdsi_0110742664_en.pdf

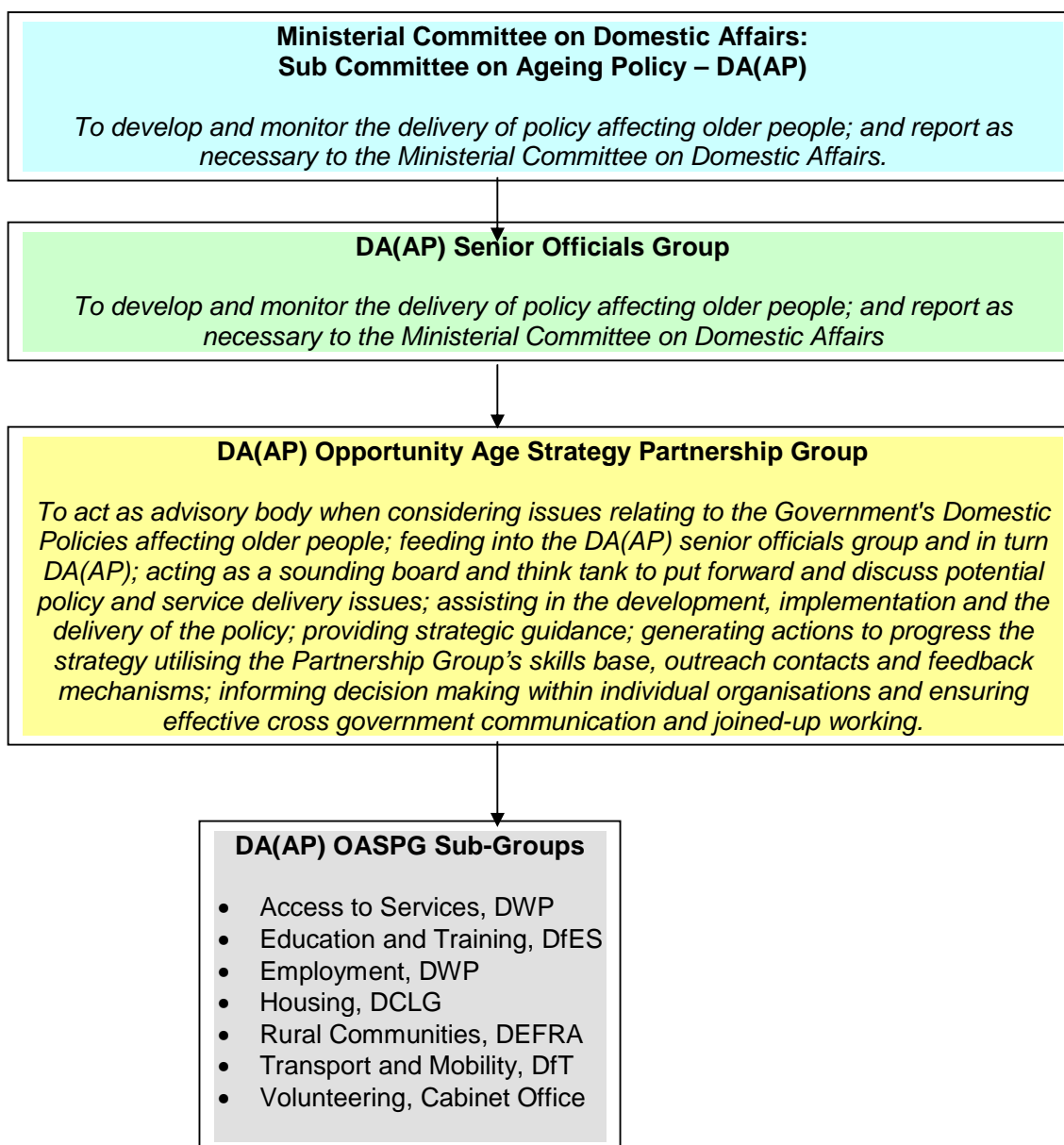
A Sure Start to later life

This report examines how to tackle exclusion in later life. It suggests that the approach of Sure Start in galvanising communities and re-shaping children's services can work just as well for older people, particularly in tackling those most excluded. The Sure Start to later life approach would use the same methods as the children's model to improve access, bringing together services around older people.

"A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People",
A Social Exclusion Unit Final Report, Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM),
January 2006:

<http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/seu/downloaddoc7b5f.pdf?id=797>

DA(AP) Organisational Structure



Membership

DA(AP)

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Secretary of State for Health

Minister without Portfolio and Party Chairman
Secretary of State for Trade & Industry
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Minister of State for Communities and Local Government
Minister of State for Pensions
Minister of State, DEFRA
Minister of State, Department for Culture, Media & Sport
Minister of State, Home Office
Minister of State, Department for Education & Skills
Economic Secretary to the Treasury
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, MoD
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Wales Office
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs

Senior Officials Group

Cabinet Office
Department for Constitutional Affairs
Department for Culture Media and Sport
Department for Education and Skills
Department for Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs
Department of Health
Department of Trade and Industry
Department for Transport
Department for Work and Pensions
HMT
Home Office
Minister without Portfolio
Ministry of Defence
Northern Ireland Office
Department for Communities and Local
Government
Scotland Office
Wales Office

Opportunity Age Strategy Partnership Group (OASPG)

Government Departments

Department for Work and Pensions
Department of Health
Department for Communities & Local
Government
Department of Trade and Industry
Department for Education & Skills
Department for Environment Food & Rural
Affairs

Department for Transport
Department for Culture Media & Sport
Home Office
Cabinet Office
HM Treasury
HM Revenue & Customs
Cabinet Office
Northern Ireland Office
Scotland Office
Wales Assembly

External organisations

Age Concern
Help the Aged
Audit Commission
Local Government Association
Better Government for Older People
Older People's Advisory Group
Association of Directors of Social Services
Centre for Policy on Ageing
The Age & Employment Network
Employers Forum on Age
National Collaboration on Ageing Research
National Institute of Adult Continuing
Education
National Director for Older People's
Services

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

In April 2005 a new Disability Discrimination Act was passed by Parliament, which amends or extends existing provisions in the DDA 1995, including:

- making it unlawful for operators of transport vehicles to discriminate against disabled people
- making it easier for disabled people to rent property and for tenants to make disability-related adaptations
- making sure that private clubs with 25 or more members cannot keep disabled people out, just because they have a disability
- extending protection to cover people who have HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis from the moment they are diagnosed
- ensuring that discrimination law covers all the activities of the public sector
- requiring public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/20050013.htm>

Fiscal policy

Illustrative long-term fiscal projections are published each year as Chapter A of the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report (EFSR) as part of the Budget. To complement and enhance the illustrative projections, the Government has published the Long-term public finance report each year since 2002, most recently alongside the 2006 Pre-Budget Report. The Long-term public finance report provides a detailed discussion of likely future demographic trends and examines how these might affect the sustainability of the public finances over the coming decades.

“Chapter A: Budget policy decisions”, part of the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report (EFSR), March 2007:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/73B/A4/bud07_chaptera_235.pdf

“Long-term public finance report: an analysis of fiscal sustainability”, published alongside the Pre-Budget Report (PBR), December 2006:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/53E/54/pbr06_longtermpublicfinancereport_476.pdf

Focus on Older People

This report paints a detailed picture of people aged 50 and over in the UK. It includes information on their characteristics, lifestyles, and experiences, placing particular emphasis on changes with age.

“Focus on Older People”, Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), November 2005:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/foop05/Olderpeople2005.pdf

Health inequalities

Health inequalities are the result of a complex and wide-ranging network of factors. People who experience material disadvantage, poor housing, lower educational attainment, insecure employment or homelessness are among those more likely to suffer poorer health outcomes and an earlier death compared with the rest of the population.

Health inequalities are unacceptable. They start early in life and persist not only into old age but subsequent generations. Tackling health inequalities is a top priority for this Government, and it is focused on narrowing the health gap between disadvantaged groups, communities and the rest of the country, and on improving health overall. Concerted action to reduce the health gap permeates our programmes within the Department of Health and is supported across Government.

“Tackling health inequalities: Status report on programme for action – 2006 update of headline indicators”, Department of Health, December 2006:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dID=136594&Rendition=Web

“Tackling health inequalities: A Programme for Action”, Department of Health, July 2003:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dID=10311&Rendition=Web

Health, work and well-being

“Health, work and well-being: caring for our future” is the UK Government strategy aimed at creating an environment that promotes the health and well-being of all those in work and all those who wish to work.

The Government is committed to realise the vision set out in this Charter through our leadership, effective joint working, and action within our sectors to:

- Bring about a real and sustained improvement in the health of the working age population by preventing ill health and tackling its root causes;
- To manage the consequences of ill-health and disability, including the associated stigma;
- Champion the aims of the strategy in the work that we do, and in the sector in which we work;
- Help people to return to and remain in work including the provision of advice and support.
- Work with and learn from others;

“Health, work and well-being – Caring for our future”, October 2005:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2005/health_and_wellbeing.pdf

Leitch Review of Skills

The UK Government commissioned Sandy Leitch in 2004 to undertake an independent review of the UK's long term skills needs. The Review published its interim report "Skills in the UK: the long term challenge" in December 2005. It committed the Review, in its final report, to identify the UK's optimal skills mix for 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, set out the balance of responsibility for achieving that skills profile and consider the policy framework required to support it.

The final report of the Leitch Review of Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills, was published on 5th December 2006.

The Review shows that the UK must urgently raise achievements at all levels of skills and recommends that it commit to becoming a world leader in skills by 2020, benchmarked against the upper quartile of the OECD. This means doubling attainment at most levels of skill. Responsibility for achieving ambitions must be shared between Government, employers and individuals.

“Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills” Leitch Review of Skills: Final Report, December 2006:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/523/43/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

Manchester City's Positive Images of Ageing

In 2005, Manchester City Council launched a positive images of ageing campaign with the production of its flagship communication product, the "Challenging Older People in Manchester" calendar. This got the campaign off to a strong start, attracting much media attention and an award nomination. Some of the distinctive, uplifting portraits of older Manchester people were used in national publications produced by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The calendar was followed by the "Full of Life" Festival, which was a week long celebration of the creativity of older people and their contribution to civic life. The festival saw many of the city's cultural establishments providing free activities for older people, along with a wide range of local activity by small community groups and clubs, which included art and craft exhibitions, drama productions and an Old Tyme Music Hall. Marks and Spencer staged a Fashion Show at the Town Hall for the over 50s and there was also a repeat of the "Big Event" - a fun, interactive information day attended by around 500 older people and in excess of 80 partner organisations.

The festival also saw the launch of a photographic montage entitled "What Older People Value", which was compiled by older peoples groups from across the city and facilitated by community artist, Roger Sim.

In January 2006, the second calendar was produced and enjoyed a 50% increase in circulation. The new product was called "Growing Older with Attitude in Manchester". Again featuring uplifting images of older Manchester residents, this year's calendar has again received a great deal of media attention, not least due to the fact that it was coupled with a city centre billboard campaign in January, which saw 4 of the calendar images blown and plastered over 85 city centre billboard sites. Two of the subjects - Mr and Mrs September - were interviewed on both the radio and television and thoroughly enjoyed their new-found fame!

The team are also working with Manchester Alliance for Community Care and the Strategic Health Authority to produce an Anti-age Discrimination training package and video.

National Service Framework for Older People

The National Service Framework for Older People was established in 2001 to look at the problems older people face in receiving care in order to deliver higher quality services. Next Steps sets out the priorities for the second phase of the government's ten-year National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People under three themes: Dignity in care, Joined-up care and Healthy ageing.

Links to the documents are provided below:

“National Service Framework for Older People”, 2001:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dID=15669&Rendition=Web

“A new ambition for old age: Next Steps in implementing the National Service Framework for Older People”, April 2006:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dID=16025&Rendition=Web

“A new ambition for old age: Next Steps in implementing the National Service Framework for Older People: A resource document”, April 2006:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/idcplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&siteId=en&ssTargetNodeId=566&ssDocName=DH_4133990

Northern Ireland: Ageing in an inclusive society

1.6 The Vision of the Strategy is:

'To ensure that age related policies and practices create an enabling environment, which offers everyone the opportunity to make informed choices so that they may pursue healthy, active and positive ageing.'

Six strategic objectives were identified to provide the policy framework within which departments will work to achieve this vision:

1. To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation;
2. To deliver integrated services that improve the health and quality of life of older people;
3. To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community;
4. To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities;
5. To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found; and
6. To ensure that Government works in a co-ordinated way inter-departmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people.

"Ageing in an inclusive society", March 2005:

<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/ageing-strategy.pdf>

"Older people's strategy: Ageing in an inclusive society", 2005/06 Annual Report, January 2007:

<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/ageingreport-2.pdf>

Opportunity Age

Opportunity Age is the Government's strategy for an ageing society. The strategy aims to end the perception of older people as dependent; ensure that longer life is healthy and fulfilling; and that older people are full participants in society.

Opportunity Age volume 1 (published March 2005) sets out the Government's strategy for an ageing society, including the domains to be used in monitoring older people's independence and well-being. Volume 2 provides an overview of the characteristics of the older population.

The baseline report (published October 2006) brings together baseline data for the previously published indicators of older people's independence and well-being which are based around the domains of well-being set out in Opportunity Age volume 1. The data provided refers to the baseline year which will be used for monitoring progress towards achieving the objectives of the *Opportunity Age* strategy. The year that has been chosen is 2004/05 as this is around the time that the strategy was launched and data on the majority of the indicators is available for this year. A progress report will be published every two years identifying recent trends in the indicators and outlining developments in the delivery of the Government's strategy.

Links to the documents are provided below:

"Opportunity Age: Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century", volume 1:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2005/opportunity_age/opportunity-age-volume1.pdf

"Opportunity Age: volume 2 – A social portrait of ageing in the UK":

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2005/opportunity_age/opportunity-age-volume2.pdf

"Independence and well-being of older people: baseline report"

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/opportunity_age/indicators_baseline_report.pdf

Our health, our care, our say (OHOCOS)

This White Paper sets a new direction for the whole health and social care system. It confirms the vision set out in the Department of Health Green Paper, Independence, Well-being and Choice. There will be a radical and sustained shift in the way in which services are delivered, ensuring that they are more personalised and that they fit into people's busy lives.

“Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services”, Department of Health White Paper, January 2006:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dID=456&Recondition=Web

Pension reform

In December 2002, the Government set up the independent Pensions Commission to review the longer-term challenges faced by the pensions system and make recommendations for reform. The Commission published its conclusions in November 2005, setting out its proposals for meeting the challenges we face in providing a fair and adequate retirement income for all in retirement.

With the Commission's report providing a solid basis for building consensus, the National Pensions Debate gave the public their chance to have their say on the emerging options for reform. This process culminated in National Pensions Day – the biggest deliberative consultation event to date in the UK.

With input from the National Pensions Debate, the Government built on the Commission's report and published its own proposals on the 25 May 2006 in the White Paper 'Security in retirement: towards a new pensions system' (this is supplied in the appendix). These proposals were designed to meet the 5 tests of personal responsibility, fairness, simplicity, affordability and sustainability.

Between May and September 2006, the Government consulted on the reform package in the White Paper. Around 350 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation. The Government published a summary of the responses and its proposals for moving forward on 30th October 2006.

On 28 November 2006 the Government introduced the Pensions Bill into Parliament. The Bill legislates for long-term pensions reform, making the state pension fairer and more generous and providing a solid foundation for private saving.

On 12 December 2006, the Government published a second White Paper, Personal accounts: a new way to save. This White Paper sets out proposals for a new national system of low cost personal accounts.

Links to the documents are provided below:

"Personal accounts: a new way to save", Department for Work and Pensions White Paper, December 2006:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pensionsreform/new_way.asp

The Pensions Bill, November 2006:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmbills/012/2007012.pdf>

"Security in retirement: towards a new pension system", Department for Work and Pensions White Paper, May 2006:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/pensionsreform/pdfs/white_paper_compl:ete.pdf

Pensions Act 2004:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040035_en.pdf

“Simplicity, security and choice: working and saving for retirement”, Department for Work and Pensions Green Paper, December 2002:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/consult/2002/pensions/gp.pdf>

Scotland: Strategy for an ageing population

This Strategy sets the vision for a future Scotland - a Scotland which will value and benefit from the talents and experience of its older people; a Scotland which welcomes its ageing population.

In this 21st century, the world around us is changing faster than it has ever done before. The certainties and assumptions of the past are being swept away by economic, technological, environmental and demographic change.

We can already see the impact of those changes in our own lives, in our communities and in Scotland's economy - and we can be sure that there is much more to come in the decades ahead.

Older people play a crucial role in almost every aspect of life in modern Scotland. But there is much more that we still need to do to enable and support their contribution to our society and our economy. The barriers and challenges faced by older people are not to be ignored. Age discrimination and ageist attitudes still see people judged on the basis of their chronological age, not on their life experiences and abilities. Challenging that discrimination and those attitudes is at the heart of our approach.

In the context of a changing world and an ageing population, we know that simply relying on our current actions and achievements will not be enough. As we look forward, we will need to ensure that our actions, our services and infrastructure fully reflect and are adapted to our changing demographic picture.

This document is the start of a process. Achieving our vision for future generations will not be the result of one strategy or action plan, or the actions of a limited number of people. Each and every one of us will have a role to play if we are to succeed and achieve our aspirations for Scotland's future. We look forward to working with you all in the months and years ahead.

“All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population: Volume 1: Summary and Action Plan”, March 2007:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/169342/0047172.pdf>

“All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population: Volume 2”, March 2007:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/169347/0047194.pdf>

Transformational Government

The Transformational Government strategy has set the scene for transformation of contact with citizens and businesses, including increasing the focus on the user of public services and making the most of technological advances.

It sets out three key transformations:

- services enabled by information technology must be designed around the citizen and business;
- there must be an increased culture of shared services to release efficiencies;
- and there must be a broadening and deepening of government's information technology professionalism.

In December 2006, the Varney review was published, building on Transformational Government, as well as the previous efficiency work. It aims to identify further savings to government, citizens and businesses by focusing on the channels through which services are delivered and how they can be made more responsive to citizen and business needs.

Links to the documents are provided below:

"Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer", Sir David Varney, December 2006:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/53D/F2/pbr06_varney_review.pdf

"Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology", November 2005:

<http://www.cio.gov.uk/documents/pdf/transgov/transgov-strategy.pdf>

Wales: Older people strategy

The Government policies in respect of older people described here are also being taken forward in Wales on a similar basis but within the context of the Government of Wales Act 2006 that sets out the statutory framework for devolution. This has meant that whilst the same principles are applied in respect of policies and programmes for older people, the structural, implementation and delivery frameworks are different and distinctive to the needs of Wales.

This is demonstrated through the Strategy for Older People in Wales which was launched on 30 January 2003 following extensive consultation and use of research evidence. With £13 million to support implementation in the 5 year period to March 2008, it provides a structured basis for the Welsh Assembly Government and other public bodies in Wales to develop policies and plans to address implications of an ageing population. An important feature of this Strategy is that it has citizenship for older people at its heart, including measures to improve engagement and participation of older people in society. Evaluation has shown that in the first 4 Years of this 10 year Strategy, solid progress has been made by the Assembly Government and all of its partner organisations. The foundations for implementing the Strategy both nationally and locally are strong and effective arrangements are in place to take forward the ageing agenda in Wales on a collaborative basis. Among a range of distinctive policies established as part of the Strategy, of particular importance is the introduction of new legislation to establish a Commissioner for Older People in Wales. The Commissioner will have a statutory duty to take account of the UN Principles for Older People to help promote and safeguard the interests of older people and to speak up on their behalf. The Commissioner will be appointed by October 2007.

“The Strategy for Older People in Wales”, January 2003:

<http://www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk/stellent/groups/Public/documents/Publications/009931.pdf>

Welfare reform

The Government launched a Green Paper 'A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work' on 24 January 2006. This was a landmark document for the Department in meeting its objectives of promoting opportunity and independence for all. It contains major new proposals to help individuals achieve their potential through work.

On 4 July 2006, the Welfare Reform Bill was introduced for those measures that need primary legislation agreed by Parliament. On 24 July 2006, the Bill was debated in the House of Commons. More detailed debate will continue into 2007.

Measures in the Bill include:

- Reform of incapacity benefits
- Housing Benefit reforms
- Other measures to amend the current benefit system.

A number of other measures in the Green Paper that do not need primary legislation include:

- The national extension of Pathways to Work
- Health, work and well-being strategy
- Lone parents
- Older people
- Cities Strategy

Links to the documents are provided below:

“Welfare Reform Bill”, July 2006:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmbills/208/2006208.pdf>

“A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work”, Department for Work and Pensions Green Paper, January 2006:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/docs/A_new_deal_for_welfare-Empowering_people_to_work-Full_Document.pdf