



## SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Development Department  
Social Inclusion Division

Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Councillor Allan Macaskill  
Chair  
Argyll & Bute Community Planning Partnership  
Kilmory Castle  
Lochgilphead  
PA31 8RT

Telephone: 0131244 0803  
Fax: 0131 244 0810  
kay.barton@scotland.gsi.gov.uk  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

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Dear Colleague,

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE'S CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP TARGETS

I am writing to let you know that Malcolm Chisholm, Minister for Communities, announced today the Scottish Executive's new **Closing the Opportunity Gap** targets in Parliament. I wanted to write to you to notify you of the content of the targets, a copy of which are attached at Annex A, given the key role that Community Planning Partnerships will play in delivering them. We have also written today to CoSLA to inform them of the new targets.

Cabinet have chosen 10 targets to drive action to tackle poverty and deprivation in Scotland and to build on the progress made towards our Social Justice Milestones. The Cabinet Delivery Group on Closing the Opportunity Gap co-ordinated the selection of these targets, with particular help from the external members of the group, Professor Gill Scott of the Scottish Poverty Information Unit and David Nicoll, Chief Executive of the Wise Group.

The targets range across Ministerial portfolios and will require joined up action by the Executive and local delivery agents to ensure delivery. Most are existing targets and draw on resources that are already in place. I hope that you will welcome the refocusing of our social justice strategy on these key aspects of poverty and disadvantage in Scotland and the significant role that Community Planning Partners will play in their delivery.

Further details about each of the targets have today been made available via the Executive's website and can be accessed at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/closingtheopportunitygap>. Mr Chisholm is hoping to meet key stakeholders over the forthcoming weeks to discuss with them the role that they can play in delivering social inclusion and opportunity for all.



However, in the meantime, if you do want to discuss the targets in more detail please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Neil Langhorn in the Social Inclusion Division on 0131 244 0805.

Yours sincerely

*Kay Barton*

**Kay Barton**  
Head of Social Inclusion Division



## ANNEX A: CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP TARGETS

Target A: *Reduce the number of workless people dependent on DWP benefits in Glasgow, North & South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire & Inverclyde, Dundee, and West Dunbartonshire by 2007 and further by 2010.*

Target B: *Reduce the proportion of 16-19 year olds who are not in education training or employment by 2008.*

Target C: *Public sector and large employers to tackle aspects of in-work poverty by providing employees with the opportunity to develop skills and progress in their career. NHSScotland will set an example by providing 1000 job opportunities, with support for training and progression once in post, between 2004 and 2006 to people who are currently economically inactive or unemployed.*

Target D: *To reduce health inequalities by increasing the rate of improvement for under 75 Coronary Heart Disease mortality and under 75 cancer mortality (1995-2003) for the most deprived communities by 15% by 2008.*

Target E: *By 2008, ensure that children and young people who need it have an integrated package of appropriate health, care and education support.*

Target F: *Increase the average tariff score of the lowest attaining 20 per cent of S4 pupils by 5% by 2008.*

Target G: *By 2007 ensure that at least 50% of all "looked after" young people leaving care have entered education, employment or training.*

Target H: *By 2008, improve service delivery in rural areas so that agreed improvements to accessibility and quality are achieved for key services in remote and disadvantaged communities.*

Target J: *To promote community regeneration of the most deprived neighbourhoods, through improvements by 2008 in employability, education, health, access to local services, and quality of the local environment.*

Target K: *By 2008 increase the availability of appropriate financial services and money advice to disadvantaged communities to reduce their vulnerability to financial exclusion and multiple debts.*

The detail of several targets will be agreed in consultation with key stakeholders:

For target A, local employment partnerships will be asked to agree the size and nature of the target for their area, by February 2005. For example, the Glasgow Welfare to Work Forum set targets in 2003, to reduce the number of working age people claiming key benefits by 15,000 by the end of 2007 and 30,000 by the end of 2010.

For target B, as part of our work to develop an employability framework, we will analyse the make-up of the NEET group and their reasons for disengagement from school, work or further education. We will then specify the level of reduction that we seek to achieve.

For target H, working with an advisory Group of representatives from key delivery agents and rural communities, we will agree the rural areas to be targeted, consult with local communities to identify the key services to be improved, and agree with the relevant community planning partnerships the specific targets for improvements to accessibility and quality to be achieved.

