



National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships

**Update on publication of the final definitions for the
national indicator set**



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Update on publication of the final definitions for the national indicator set

1. On 11 October 2007 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced a new set of 198 national indicators for English local authorities and local authority partnerships. The set underpins the new performance framework for local government and meets the Government's commitment, as set out in the local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, to introduce a clear set of national outcomes and a single set of national indicators by which to measure them.
2. A consultation exercise on the Government's proposed technical definitions for the 198 indicators ran from 8 November to 21 December 2007. Responses were received from over 580 separate organisations. In addition to commenting in detail on each of the indicators, many respondents had more general points to make. The majority were very supportive of the Government's stated aim of moving to a smaller, more outcome-focused set of indicators.
3. Communities and Local Government have been working with other Government Departments and stakeholders to agree final definitions for inclusion in the handbook, taking into account the many helpful and informed comments received from consultees on individual indicators. We have completed this process for 138 indicators and in line with the consultation document, have published final definitions for these in four annexes: Annex 1: Stronger and Safer Communities; Annex 2: Children and Young People; Annex 3: Adult Health and Well-being and Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equalities; Annex 4: Local Economy and Environmental Sustainability.
4. The technical definitions for the remaining 60 indicators have not yet been finalised, including those that are also part of the Assessments of Police and Community Safety framework and/or are to be collected through the new Place Survey, both of which were subject to separate consultations running to a later timetable than that for the national indicator set definitions.
5. We announced in October that 3 of the 198 indicators would be introduced in April 2009, rather than April 2008, allowing more time for further work and piloting to ensure robust data collection mechanisms. We are publishing the first tranche of 138 for 2008 now in order to provide as much information as possible for local authorities and their partners in the run-up to the introduction of the set. The full Handbook, containing definitions for the remaining indicators for introduction in April 2008, will be published by the end of March, together with feedback on the consultation exercise.

- 6.** National indicators which are also part of the Home Office's APACS framework will be finalised in the coming weeks, alongside the finalisation of the APACS indicator set. Definitions for indicators that form part of the APACS framework (which covers community safety) will be published on the Home Office website in March.
- 7.** Definitions for indicators to be collected through the Place Survey will be included in the final Handbook. Guidance on the methodology for the Survey will be published in April.
- 8.** The final Handbook to be published in March will contain the following:
 - details of who will be providing data for each of the indicators as well as which of the indicators will be reported directly from local authorities;
 - details of the reporting system and the latest developments on the hub; and
 - arrangements for ongoing support and maintenance of the national indicator set.

Collection of data against the national indicator set

- 9.** As was set out in the consultation document on the technical definitions, we are developing a system to make available in one place data on the national indicator set, reducing the reporting requirements on LAs and the number of duplicate requests for information which they receive. Work on this has been progressing, and this system (known as the Data Interchange Hub) will be available in April.
- 10.** The majority of the National Indicators will be directly reported into the data interchange hub by Government Departments (based in many cases on information already provided by LSP partners, then quality assured and published by the departments). For these indicators, no additional collection, calculation or reporting of data will be required by local authorities.
- 11.** For the remaining small number of indicators (which work to date indicates will number around fifteen), the data interchange hub will also be the mechanism for authorities to provide data.

- 12.** Further details of this system will be available in March at www.esd.org.uk, and we will be providing additional information and training over the next month on use of the system and how to report data for the small number of indicators for which this will be necessary.

Other Information

- 13.** BVPIs and other old performance measures which are not included in the national indicator set will be discontinued as indicators from 1 April 2008. However, care will be needed before taking decisions to stop the actual data collections which feed these, or any other data returns to central government – there is a risk of losing evidence to support central and local decision-making.
- 14.** It will therefore be necessary to identify, with local government stakeholders, those data returns which provide a useful statistical record for the benefit of both central and local government (this could include information which was collected to calculate old BVPIs and other former performance measures) and those which are burdensome, causing the most difficulty on the ground while adding little value. We are therefore working across Whitehall to ensure departments undertake a thorough review of the data they collect from local authorities.
- 15.** We are currently looking to test an approach to doing this with a small data-set before rolling it out more widely. More information on how we will do this and involve local authorities will be available in due course, and we will aim to provide an update on progress, giving a clearer indication of the likely time-scales for burden reduction, in the summer.