The Government’s Vision for Integrated Communities

Improving Social Cohesion and Integration Across Local Communities

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Why does integration matter?

• Britain is on the whole well-integrated - 85% of people report feeling a strong sense of belonging to Britain and 82% say their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

• However, evidence points to a worrying number of communities which are divided along race, faith or socio-economic lines.

• This reduces opportunities for people to mix with others from different backgrounds, allows mistrust and misunderstanding to grow, and can prevent people from taking advantage of the opportunities that living in Britain offers.
Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper

• The 2017 manifesto committed the government to bringing forward a new integration strategy which will seek “to help people in more isolated communities to engage with the wider world, help women in particular into the workplace, and teach more people to speak English.”

• The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, published in March 2018, invited views on the government’s vision for building “strong, integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.”
### Seven key factors drive integration

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<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Level and pace of migration</td>
<td>High levels of migration or sudden, very concentrated migration can put a strain on local communities, particularly in more deprived areas. Differences between cultural or social norms can hamper integration.</td>
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<td>School segregation</td>
<td>A high degree of separation of pupils from different backgrounds reduces opportunities for young people to form lasting relationships with those from other backgrounds and can restrict pupils’ outlook and education.</td>
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<td>Residential segregation</td>
<td>Residential segregation impacts on opportunities for social mixing and may lead to higher levels of mistrust between people of different backgrounds.</td>
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<td>Un- and under-employment</td>
<td>Disproportionately high levels of un- or under-employment and economic inactivity reduce social mobility and can increase disaffection and isolation.</td>
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<td>English language proficiency</td>
<td>Poor English language skills limit an individual’s employment opportunities, their ability to mix, civic participation and access to services.</td>
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<td>Meaningful social mixing</td>
<td>Low levels of meaningful contact between people from different backgrounds can increase levels of mistrust and anxiety and can allow prejudice and anti-social behaviour to take hold.</td>
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<td>Personal and cultural norms and attitudes</td>
<td>People can be held back from integrating by practices and attitudes or by their personal choice or fear of facing discrimination or prejudice.</td>
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Green Paper – key proposals

• **Leadership**, nationally and locally, to drive integration and share best practice.

• **Two-way street** – everyone has a part to play in integration; both those who already live here and those who want to make this country their home.

• Ensure **young people** receive a good education in a safe environment in which they are not exposed to views which undermine shared values.

• Support people to **improve their English language skills**.

• **Promote meaningful social mixing opportunities** so people come together with those from different backgrounds around shared activities and community spaces.

• **Break down the barriers to employment** so that everyone has the opportunity to gain skills and realise their full potential.

• **Challenge cultures and practices** that are harmful, restrict individuals’ rights or hold them back from making the most of opportunities.

• Identify indicators at local and national level to **measure and evaluate** the impact and learn what works.

• **Localised** approach rather than one-size-fits-all national plan.
Since the Green Paper…

- Just over **3,400 responses** to the consultation. Government’s response and an **action plan** setting out next steps to be published shortly.
- Launched Integrated Communities **Innovation Fund**, in partnership with Sport England, to stimulate and test new approaches.
- Supporting the establishment of the independent **Cohesion and Integration Network (COIN)**, to share learning and build capacity and leadership in driving integration.
- Working with the **LGA** to support councils to build their leadership capacity.
- Opened a new Integrated Communities **English Language Programme**
- Across government:
  - Refreshed **Hate Crime Action Plan** to tackle harms and support victims more effectively
  - Revised **National Planning Policy Framework** strengthens importance given to creating shared spaces
  - **Education** – out of school settings guidance, home education call for evidence, updated application criteria for new free schools.
Integration Area programme

- Local approach – government working with local authority and partners to co-design a local integration strategy to address the challenges specific to their place.
- Building on good practice, local expertise and the strength of local assets.
- The Integration Area Programme – working with five areas:
  - Each area has produced an ambitious delivery plan as part of their local integration strategy.
  - Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford have published their strategies. Other areas will do so shortly.
What are we learning so far?

- **Language is important.** Integration as a term is still not well understood.
- It’s hard to **measure success.** What does good look like? How can we measure it?
- **Willingness** but less certainty about **practicalities.** What should people and organisations do differently?
- Range of challenges is **broad.**
- **Social mixing** around a common activity or goal.
- **Local approach** needed. Challenges and opportunities vary greatly from place to place.
- **Reaching beyond** those already engaged is challenging.