

[Press release: New funding for innovative projects to build stronger communities](#)

A new £7 million fund to support trailblazing approaches to building more integrated communities in England was launched today (9 July 2018) by Secretary of State for Communities Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP.

The [Integrated Communities Innovation Fund](#) will help drive forward the proposals to tackle the key causes of poor integration set out in the government's [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#) launched in March 2018.

The Secretary of State launched the fund while giving evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee at Parliament at a session outlining his priorities as the Secretary of State for Communities.

The new Innovation Fund aims to support similar trailblazing projects that will share their learning more widely, allowing other areas to develop proven approaches to tackling the key causes of poor integration.

We are inviting applications to support approaches which help build integrated communities. This includes projects that use sport and physical activity to encourage integration. The government will be working in partnership with Sport England, which is contributing to the new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund, to support projects of this type.

The consultation on the government's Integrated Communities Strategy green paper closed on 5 June 2018. Over 3,500 responses were received from a wide variety of organisations and individuals clearly demonstrating the widespread commitment to building stronger communities across the country. The government will respond to the consultation later this year.

Speaking after the session, Secretary of State for Communities Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Britain is on the whole a well integrated society, but we have been clear that we need to tackle the persistent challenges of integration in some communities across the country.

The trailblazing projects supported by the fund announced today will drive forward our work to bring all levels of society together, from business leaders to grassroots charities, to tackle the key causes of poor integration.

Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England, said:

I'm very pleased that Sport England is working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to achieve our shared objective of improving integration to strengthen communities.

We believe sport and physical activity is a powerful way of bringing together people from all backgrounds and strengthening the bonds between them.'

The green paper sets out that organisations that work closely with communities must be bold and innovative in order to tackle some of the most difficult integration challenges and that knowledge of what works should be shared.

To support this aim the government is today also announcing support for a new Cohesion and Integration Network. This will bring together organisations and individuals from across national and local government, business, and voluntary and community groups to share their ideas, knowledge and experience.

Professor Ted Cattle, a trustee of the new network, said:

The Cohesion and Integration Network announced today is a great opportunity to boost integration across the country, and ensure that proven ideas and projects can be easily shared replicated elsewhere and not re-invented or lost altogether.

We will be developing toolkits and guidance and making these resources accessible to everybody and as well as investing in skills and training to build the capacity of communities

The [Integrated Communities Innovation Fund](#) builds upon steps already taken to tackle the key causes of poor integration in collaboration with a wide range of partners.

It will complement the government's ongoing work to develop ambitious local integration plans with 5 integration areas across England:

- Blackburn with Darwen
- Bradford
- Peterborough
- Walsall
- Waltham Forest

These 5 local authorities have already demonstrated a keen grasp of the challenges they face and shown a desire to try new things and learn from what works. This learning will be shared more widely as the programme develops.