

Press release: New government action to create stronger, more integrated Britain

- £50 million to support new Integrated Communities Strategy
- strategy includes bold proposals to boost English language skills, increase opportunities for women and promote British values in education

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (14 March 2018) set out an ambitious long-term plan of action to tackle the root causes of poor integration and create a stronger, more united Britain.

The [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#), to which £50 million will be committed over the next 2 years, seeks views on the government's bold proposals to boost English language skills, increase opportunities for more women to enter the workplace, and promote British values and meaningful discussion between young people.

Britain is on the whole, a well-integrated society, with 85% of people reporting a feeling of belonging strongly to Britain.

But the evidence, including [Dame Louise Casey's independent review into opportunity and integration](#), overwhelmingly points to a significant number of communities being 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 prevents those living in isolated communities from taking advantage of the opportunities that living in Britain offers.

The strategy sets out a range of actions the government plans to take to bring divided communities together, including:

Boosting English language skills

We are proposing a new strategy to promote adoption of the English language across all communities in England, including a new community-based English language programme, a new network of conversation clubs, and support for local authorities to improve the provision of English language tuition for those who need it most.

Increasing economic opportunity, particularly for women

Jobcentre Plus will trial new approaches to support people from some of the most isolated communities into work through personalised skills training to address their individual needs.

Ensure that every child receives an education that prepares them for life in modern Britain

New proposals to ensure young people have the opportunity to mix and form lasting relationships with those from different backgrounds, promotion of British Values across the curriculum and increased take up of the national citizen service.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Britain can rightly claim to be one of the most successful diverse societies in the world. But we cannot ignore the fact that in too many parts of our country, communities are divided, preventing people from taking full advantage of the opportunities that living in modern Britain offers.

Successive governments have refused to deal with the integration challenges we face head on, preferring to let people muddle along and live isolated and separated lives.

We will put an end to this through our new strategy which will create a country that works for everyone, whatever their background and wherever they come from. Integration challenges are not uniform throughout the country, with different areas and communities having varying needs.

The government will work with 5 'Integration Areas' to develop local integration plans: Blackburn with Darwen; Bradford; Peterborough; Walsall and 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. Learning from these areas about what works – and, just as importantly, what doesn't work – will be shared more widely as the programme develops.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

We want to make sure that all children learn the values that underpin our society – including fairness, tolerance and respect. These are values that help knit our communities together, which is why education is at the heart of this strategy.

It's also important that children are taught in a safe environment and that we can act quickly if children are at risk or being encouraged to undermine these values. Together, with Ofsted and communities across the country, we will build on the work already underway to achieve this.

We want to start a debate on the Integrated Communities Strategy, to find the

most effective ways to address integration challenges. The consultation will run for 12 weeks to 5 June 2018.

Further measures included as part of the Integrated Communities Strategy:

Building stronger leadership

The strategy calls on leaders in national and local government, business and civil society to ensure all services have a strong focus on integration.

Supporting recent migrants to integrate into the community

We will provide a package of practical information for recent migrants in our integration areas to better help them understand and navigate British life, values and culture. We will also improve communities' ability to adapt to migration and manage pressures on local services and amenities in order to promote more effective integration.

Respecting and promoting equal rights

The strategy sets out new measures to empower marginalised women, including exploring reform of the law on marriage and religious weddings. We will support training of faith leaders to practice in the British context understanding British culture and shared values. We will also strengthen action to tackle hate crime and encourage greater reporting of incidents.

Building vibrant communities

An Integration Innovation Fund will be introduced to allow organisations to bid to test out new approaches to bring people from different backgrounds together and we will make better use of shared community spaces such as parks and libraries.

Further information

See the [Integrated Communities Strategy](#).

To deliver the vision set out in this strategy we recognise that we need to talk to individuals and communities to hear what they think the key issues are and how communities and local and national government can tackle them. The consultation period will run for 12 weeks.

85% of respondents felt that they belonged 'very' or 'fairly' strongly to Britain. Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Community Life Survey 2016-17](#).

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