

**To:**

Local Authority Chief Executives  
Primary Care Trust Chief Executives

**Copy:**

Strategic Health Authority Chief Executives  
Government Offices of the Regions Directors  
Regional Directors of Public Health

**Phil Hope MP**

*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**  
26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH

**Melanie Johnson MP**

*Minister for Public Health*

**Department of Health**  
79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS

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## **TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES: THE “SPEARHEAD GROUP”**

Promoting healthier communities and tackling health inequalities are challenges that can only be met by working in partnership: central Government with local deliverers, and local deliverers with each other. Both local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are key players in this agenda, working together, and with other local partners through Local Strategic Partnerships, and supported by Strategic Health Authorities, Government Offices of the Regions and Regional Public Health Groups.

The new Public Health White Paper and the Department of Health's 2004 Public Service Agreements, published this Summer, gave a focus to health inequalities, underlining the high priority of tackling this deep seated and difficult problem. The Public Service Agreement targets are set out in Annex 1.

The targets to narrow the geographical inequalities in life expectancy, cancer and heart disease mortality are focused upon narrowing the gap between the average and the areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators by 2010. Following the recent publication of data by the Office for National Statistics, we are today publishing the list of areas which will be the focus of these health inequalities targets, the Spearhead Group. They are defined by local authority area, and consist of 70 local authorities which map across to 88 PCTs. The list of local authorities and PCTs is attached at Annex 2.



We recognise that all areas have health inequalities, and welcome and encourage the work that is going on in localities all over the country to tackle these. This is vital work and we urge partners in all areas to build health inequalities into the mainstream thinking across the range of public services, using systems and tools such as Local Area Agreements, Local Public Service Agreements, Health Equity Audit and the Self Assessment Tool piloted as part of the Local Government Association's shared priority programme, to ensure that the benefit of public services is disproportionately reaching those in greatest need.

While all areas have inequalities, the scale of the problem is greater in those areas in the Spearhead Group. The challenge in these areas is therefore also greater, and faster progress will be needed to reduce the inequalities gaps. Local partners in the Spearhead Group will need to be trail blazers in narrowing health inequalities. This is not just a mainstream commitment for Primary Care Trusts, tackling issues such as the effects of high smoking and poor diet on health, higher incidence of disease and poorer access to services. These are the kind of mainstream priorities that Local Strategic Partnerships, in Spearhead local authority areas have identified in community plans, and through their neighbourhood renewal strategies in most of the Spearhead areas. It is no coincidence that the Spearhead Group of local authorities face major challenges in areas such as educational achievement, unemployment, and community safety and cohesion. Progress on issues such as these is inextricably linked to a narrowing of the health inequality gap.

For those for whom membership of the Spearhead Group coincides with Local Area Agreement pilot areas, there is a particular opportunity for the partners to make proposals for different ways of working which can be taken forward as part of the piloting process. We would encourage the pilot areas to do so.

We are looking at new ways of supporting you in tackling these major challenges. We want to improve the way we share knowledge about successful interventions across the country so that you do not have to reinvent solutions that already exist. We want to look at issues of training, development and leadership to see how we can respond better to your needs, and we need to align our health promotion activities with your local needs.

We would like to work together with key players in the Spearhead Group to clarify expectations of the different organisations in the delivery chain for public health, identify and tackle barriers, align incentives, share and promote best practice, and jointly determine how to secure delivery of the Public Service Agreement target. To this end we would like to invite Local Authorities, Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts in the Spearhead Group to an event in March, with further details to follow.



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister  

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Creating sustainable communities



Health inequalities will not narrow if we continue to do things the way we have always done. We know there is real commitment right across the country to get to grips with this complex set of problems. We now need to find and embed the interventions and activities that will have the greatest and fastest impact. Working together, we hope to see the people living in the Spearhead Group of areas, and in areas of disadvantage everywhere, living longer lives free of illness with better services and a higher quality of life.

**MELANIE JOHNSON**

**PHIL HOPE**

## **Public Service Agreement inequalities targets**

### **Extract from the Department of Health Public Service Agreement**

**Objective I:** Improve the health of the population. By 2010 increase life expectancy at birth in England to 78.6 years for men and to 82.5 years for women.

1. *Substantially reduce mortality rates by 2010:*
  - *from heart disease and stroke and related diseases by at least 40% in people under 75, with at least a 40% reduction in the inequalities gap between the fifth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators and the population as a whole;*
  - *from cancer by at least 20% in people under 75, with a reduction in the inequalities gap of at least 6% between the fifth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators and the population as a whole; and*
  - *from suicide and undetermined injury by at least 20%.*
2. *Reduce health inequalities by 10% by 2010 as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth. The single target is supported by the following two specific targets:*
  - *Starting with children under one year, by 2010 to reduce the gap in mortality by at least 10% between “routine and manual” groups and the population as a whole.*
  - *Starting with Local Authorities, by 2010 to reduce by at least 10% the gap between the fifth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators and the population as a whole.*
3. *Tackle the underlying determinants of ill health and health inequalities by:*
  - *reducing adult smoking rates to 21% or less by 2010, with a reduction in prevalence among routine and manual groups to 26% or less;*
  - *halting the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. Joint with the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; and*
  - *reducing the under-18 conception rate by 50% by 2010 as part of a broader strategy to improve sexual health. Joint with the Department for Education and Skills.*

## **Inequalities in Public Service Agreements across Government**

In addition to focusing on overall improvements across government, PSA targets continue to address deprivation, particularly in key areas such as education and health through 'floor' targets or minimum standards. There is a strong correlation between these floor targets and the interests covered in the Programme for Action. A full set of PSA floor targets is set out below.

### **Public Service Agreement Floor Targets**

Floor targets for key government departments are aimed at levering up the performance of public services towards the national average in areas where delivery is unacceptably weak, particularly in deprived areas. This Spending Review refines and improves the suite of floor targets to ensure more effective targeting of mainstream resources to deprived areas and the continued improvement of key public services in those areas. The 2004 Spending Review delivers the following improvements to ensure interventions are prioritised for deprived areas and groups:

- in health, retaining the overall target on narrowing the gap in life expectancy, and introducing new floor targets to reduce the inequalities gap between the fifth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators and the population as a whole by at least 40 per cent for cardiovascular disease and by at least 6 per cent for cancer, and to reduce adult smoking prevalence
- in education, more challenging floor targets to drive further improvements in schools in deprived areas, so that by 2008 the proportion of schools in which fewer than 65 per cent of 11 year olds achieve level 4 or above in English and maths is reduced by 40 per cent, whilst in all schools ensuring at least 50 per cent of 14 year olds achieve level 5 or above in English, maths and science, and at least 30 per cent of 16 year olds achieve the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A\* to C;
- a new national target to reduce the proportion of young people not in employment, training or education by two percentage points by 2010;
- an improved target on self-employment in deprived areas;
- a new target to help tackle persistent pockets of worklessness, by increasing the employment rate across the Local Authority wards with the poorest labour market performance by one percentage point, and reducing the gap between the employment rate across these wards and the national average by one percentage point;
- a challenging target on tackling crime, especially in high crime areas;
- a new target on making public spaces cleaner, safer and greener in deprived areas and across the country; and
- an improved national target on neighbourhood renewal, on narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest in key outcomes on crime, health, education, worklessness, quality of public space and housing.

source: Public Services Agreement White Paper 2005-08, page 8

## COMPOSITION OF SPEARHEAD GROUP

### Notes

1. The Spearhead Group is identified in terms of Local Authorities (LAs) (those LAs in the 'worst' fifth of LAs for at least 3 out of 5 selected indicators).
2. 'Score' shows for how many of the 5 indicators an LA lies in the 'worst' fifth of LAs.
3. The indicators are: LE(M) - male life expectancy at birth, 1995-97; LE(F) - female life expectancy at birth, 1995-97; Ca - cancer mortality rate, under 75s, 1995-97; Ci - circulatory disease mortality rate, under 75s, 1995-97; IMD - Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (LA summary), average score.
4. The Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) shown are those which overlap geographically with LAs in the Spearhead Group (derived from information in the Standard Names and Codes (SNAC) 2003 file from ONS, based on boundaries as at 31/12/2003).
5. LAs and PCTs that overlap geographically are listed alongside each other (based on SNAC 2003 file mapping).
6. 'Overlap with Spearhead Group' is based on an estimate of the proportion of the PCT resident population lying in the Spearhead Group.
7. SHAs with no areas in the Spearhead Group are not listed.

W = Whole PCT; P = Part of PCT

LOCAL AUTHORITIES							PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS			SHA	GOR
	Score	LE(M)	LE(F)	Ca	Ci	IMD		Overlap with Spearhead Group			
00CH Gateshead	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5KF Gateshead	W	100%	Q09 Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	NORTH EAST
00CJ Newcastle upon Tyne	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5D7 Newcastle	W	100%		
00CK North Tyneside	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		5D8 North Tyneside	W	100%		
00CL South Tyneside	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5KG South Tyneside	W	100%		
00CM Sunderland	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5KL Sunderland Teaching	W	100%		
35UD Blyth Valley	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	}	TAC Northumberland Care Trust	P	Less than 50%		
35UG Wansbeck	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	}					
00EB Hartlepool	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5D9 Hartlepool	W	100%	Q10 County Durham and Tees Valley	
00EC Middlesbrough	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ }	5KM Middlesbrough*	W	100%		
00EE Redcar and Cleveland	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ }	5KN Langbaurch	W	100%		
00EF Stockton-on-Tees	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		5E1 North Tees	W	100%		

\* Middlesbrough PCT contains Middlesbrough LA and part of Redcar and Cleveland LA. Langbaugh PCT contains the rest of Redcar and Cleveland LA.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES							PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS			SHA	GOR
	Score	LE(M)	LE(F)	Ca	Ci	IMD			Overlap with Spearhead Group		
20UB Chester-le-Street	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		5KC Durham and Chester-le-Street	P	Less than 50%		
20UD Derwentside	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5KA Derwentside	W	100%		
20UF Easington	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5KD Easington	W	100%		
20UG Sedgefield	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5KE Sedgefield	W	100%		
20UJ Wear Valley	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5J8 Durham Dales	P	50 to 90%		
00EX Blackburn with Darwen	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5CC Blackburn with Darwen	W	100%	Q13 Cumbria and Lancashire	NORTH WEST
00EY Blackpool	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5HP Blackpool	W	100%		
16UC Barrow-in-Furness	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5DD Morecambe Bay	P	Less than 50%		
16UD Carlisle	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		5D5 Eden Valley	P	Less than 50%		
						{	5D4 Carlisle and District	P	50 to 90%		
30UD Burnley	4	✓	✓		✓	✓					
30UJ Pendle	4	✓	✓		✓	✓					
30UM Rossendale	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		5G8 Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	W	100%		
30UG Hyndburn	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	5G7 Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	P	50 to 90%		
30UK Preston	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	5HD Preston	P	Over 90%		
00BL Bolton	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	5HQ Bolton	W	100%	Q14 Greater Manchester	
00BM Bury	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		5JX Bury	W	100%		

LOCAL AUTHORITIES							PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS			SHA	GOR
	Score	LE(M)	LE(F)	Ca	Ci	IMD		Overlap with Spearhead Group			
00BN Manchester	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{ { {	5AA South Manchester W 100% 5CL Central Manchester W 100% 5CR North Manchester W 100%			
00BP Oldham	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5J5 Oldham W 100%			
00BQ Rochdale	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{ {	5JY Rochdale W 100% 5F4 Heywood and Middleton W 100%			
00BR Salford	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5F5 Salford W 100%			
00BT Tameside	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5LH Tameside and Glossop P 50 to 90%			
00BW Wigan	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5HG Ashton, Leigh and Wigan W 100%			
00BX Knowsley	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5J4 Knowsley W 100%	Q15 Cheshire and Merseyside		
00BY Liverpool	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{ { {	5G9 North Liverpool W 100% 5HA Central Liverpool W 100% 5HC South Liverpool W 100%			
00BZ St. Helens	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5J3 St Helens W 100%			
00CB Wirral	3	✓		✓		✓	{ {	5F8 Bebington and West Wirral W 100% 5H2 Birkenhead and Wallasey W 100%			
00ET Halton	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5J1 Halton W 100%			
00EU Warrington	3	✓	✓		✓			5J2 Warrington W 100%			



LOCAL AUTHORITIES							PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS				SHA	GOR
	Score	LE(M)	LE(F)	Ca	Ci	IMD			Overlap with Spearhead Group			
00FA Kingston upon Hull	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{	5E5 Eastern Hull	W	100%	Q11 North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER
							{	5E6 West Hull	W	100%		
00FC North East Lincolnshire	3	✓		✓		✓		5AN North East Lincolnshire	P	Over 90%		
00CX Bradford	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	{	5AW Airedale	W	100%	Q12 West Yorkshire	
							{	5CF Bradford City	W	100%		
							{	5CG Bradford South and West	W	100%		
							{	5CH North Bradford	W	100%		
00DB Wakefield	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	{	5E7 Eastern Wakefield	W	100%		
							{	5E8 Wakefield West	W	100%		
00CC Barnsley	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5JE Barnsley	W	100%	Q23 South Yorkshire	
00CE Doncaster	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{	5CK Doncaster Central	W	100%		
							{	5EK Doncaster East	W	100%		
							{	5EL Doncaster West	W	100%		
00CF Rotherham	4		✓	✓	✓	✓		5H8 Rotherham	W	100%		
00FY Nottingham	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5EM Nottingham City	W	100%	Q24 Trent	
17UC Bolsover	3		✓	✓		✓		5EG North Eastern Derbyshire	P	Less than 50%		
32UD Lincoln	3	✓	✓		✓			5D2 West Lincolnshire	P	Less than 50%		
00FN Leicester	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	{	5EJ Leicester City West	W	100%	Q25 Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	
							{	5EY Eastern Leicester	W	100%		
34UB Corby	4	✓	✓	✓	✓			5LV Northamptonshire Heartlands	P	Less than 50%		

LOCAL AUTHORITIES							PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS				SHA	GOR
	Score	LE(M)	LE(F)	Ca	Ci	IMD			Overlap with Spearhead Group			
00GL Stoke-on-Trent	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{	5ME North Stoke	P	Over 90%	Q26 Shropshire and Staffordshire	WEST MIDLANDS
							{	5MF South Stoke	P	Over 90%		
41UK Tamworth	3	✓		✓	✓			5DQ Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth	P	Less than 50%		
00CN Birmingham	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	{	5M1 South Birmingham	W	100%	Q27 Birmingham and the Black Country	
							{	5MW North Birmingham	W	100%		
							{	5MX Heart of Birmingham Teaching	W	100%		
							{	5MY Eastern Birmingham	W	100%		
00CS Sandwell	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	{	5MG Oldbury and Smethwick	W	100%		
							{	5MH Rowley Regis and Tipton	W	100%		
							{	5MJ Wednesbury and West Bromwich	W	100%		
00CU Walsall	3	✓			✓	✓		5M3 Walsall Teaching	W	100%		
00CW Wolverhampton	4	✓	✓		✓	✓		5MV Wolverhampton City	W	100%		
00CQ Coventry	4	✓	✓		✓	✓		5MD Coventry	W	100%	Q28 West Midlands South	
44UC Nuneaton & Bedworth	3		✓	✓	✓			5MP North Warwickshire	P	50 to 90%		
00AN Hammersmith & Fulham	3	✓		✓		✓		5H1 Hammersmith and Fulham	W	100%	Q04 North West London	LONDON
00AP Haringey	4	✓	✓		✓	✓		5C9 Haringey	W	100%	Q05 North Central London	
00AU Islington	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5K8 Islington	W	100%		
00AB Barking & Dagenham	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5C2 Barking and Dagenham	W	100%	Q06 North East London	
00AM Hackney	4	✓		✓	✓	✓		5C3 City and Hackney	P	Over 90%		

LOCAL AUTHORITIES							PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS			SHA	GOR
	Score	LE(M)	LE(F)	Ca	Ci	IMD			Overlap with Spearhead Group		
00BB Newham	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5C5 Newham	W	100%		
00BG Tower Hamlets	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5C4 Tower Hamlets	W	100%		
00AL Greenwich	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5A8 Greenwich	W	100%	Q07 South East London	
00AY Lambeth	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5LD Lambeth	W	100%		
00AZ Lewisham	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5LF Lewisham	W	100%		
00BE Southwark	4	✓	✓	✓		✓	5LE Southwark	W	100%		