



# Local Area Agreements

## What is it?

Local authorities receive a grant from central government to deliver local governance (e.g. provide local services etc). Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are a set of targets that run for three-years. They are 'deals' between local authorities and central government (via Government Offices for the region) about the priorities and work of a local area.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) are responsible for developing and delivering LAAs. Within the LSP, local councils are expected to play a leadership role. LAAs should be informed by the local priorities identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## How does it work?

Each LAA is made up of a number of National Indicators (NIs). There are 17 compulsory indicators (primarily on education) and each local area can choose a further 35 indicators (from a list of 188), in consultation with local people and groups, to make up their LAA. For each NI chosen in the LAA, there are quantifiable targets by which the local authority is measured (e.g. % reduction in teenage conception rates) which are negotiated by each local area. This list of 198 NIs are now the only mechanism that central government uses to monitor local government.

150 Local Area Agreements have been signed off for June 2008 - 2011. LAAs are subject to annual reviews called 'refreshers', to monitor progress. While targets can technically change during these refreshers, guidance indicates that this is unlikely.

It is important to remember that *all* of the indicators will be monitored by audit bodies (e.g. Audit Commission, Healthcare Commission, Ofsted etc) in their Comprehensive Area Assessments. So, even if the NIs that are most relevant to your work are not prioritised in your LAA (e.g. as one of the '35' indicators), there may still be opportunities for influence and engagement.

## Why is it important?

If you are funded by your local council (or other local public body), LAAs are 'the only game in town' as they will now play a significant role in what funding will be available to local third sector organisations. It will also determine the provision of local services, including commissioning, which will impact on women.

## What can I do?

**Find out what are the NIs and targets are in your local area:** All local authorities responsible for the LAA (e.g. councils) have a duty to make their LAA publicly available in an accessible way and to communicate progress to its citizens.

**Demonstrate how the work of your organisation ‘fits’:** Show how your work and your issues ‘fit’ across the NIs and how your organisation can help meet LAA targets. For example, if violence against women is a key issue for local women, you can challenge/lobby your LSP to include targets on violence against women within the NIs on health, community safety, economic well-being etc.

**Keep in touch with your Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and related partnerships such as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships:** Remember, the Voluntary and Community Sector representative on the LSP (e.g. local Council for Voluntary Service or Rural Community Council) is *your* representative. If you have the interest and capacity, why not think of running for VCS representative?

**Start laying the ground work for the next LAA negotiations:** Realistically, there are no opportunities to change the NIs chosen for the current LAAs. However, it is important to start doing the groundwork for LAAs post-2011. Start gathering evidence about local women’s needs and become familiar with the NIs, your LSP and other mechanisms which will influence the LAA. The more visible your issue/s, the better your opportunities for influencing.

## Where can I get more information/support?

To find out what **indicators** are in your LAA, including both the designated indicators (which are measured by central government) and the local indicators (which aren’t monitored by central government):

- [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8399555](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8399555)

Your **local infrastructure organisations**, umbrella bodies and second tier organisations (such as your Council for Voluntary Service (CVC), Rural Community Council (RCC) are likely to be involved in LAAs and LSPs, or be able to sign-post you on:

- [www.navca.org.uk](http://www.navca.org.uk) (to find the details of your local CVS)
- [www.acre.org.uk](http://www.acre.org.uk) (to find the details of your local RCC)

To find our about **your LAA or LSP**, go to your local council website or ring your local council.

The **Women's Resource Centre** can provide practical help and advice about demonstrating how your organisation contributes with LAA targets, engaging with LAA leads, LSPs etc:

- [www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk)

Communities and Local Government information **about NIs**, including definitions:

- [www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/nationalindicators/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/nationalindicators/)

Communities and Local Government information **about LAAs**:

- [www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/localareaagreements/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/localareaagreements/)