

# Summary on a Page: February 2010

## Fair Society, Healthy Lives: the Marmot review



### What is it?

The results of an independent review, led by Sir Michael Marmot, to propose the most effective evidence-based strategies for reducing health inequalities in England from 2010.

### What does it say?

The report sets out the evidence that suggests that health inequalities are inextricably linked to social inequalities (a 'social gradient'), looking at the relationship between early years, education, work, income and communities with health. Inequality brings a huge economic cost in terms of loss of years of life as well as productivity losses. Tackling health inequalities requires action against social inequalities, and intervention should be proportional to the level of disadvantage.

A number of policy recommendations are made, as summarised below.

- **Give every child the best start in life** through increasing proportion of overall expenditure spent on addressing inequalities in early development and providing high quality maternity care, parenting programmes, childcare and early years education; according to disadvantage.
- **Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives** through improving partnerships between schools, families and communities; reducing social inequality in educational outcomes; tackling life skills across the school-home boundary; and making life long learning accessible across the gradient.
- **Create fair employment and good work for all** through prioritising long term unemployment intervention; improving quality of jobs available by requiring employers to fulfil legislation and encouraging wellbeing at work; and improving security and flexibility of jobs.
- **Ensure a healthy standard of living for all** through establishing a minimum healthy living income; using progressive taxation etc to reduce standard of living inequalities; and making it easier for people moving from benefits to work.
- **Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities** through linking tackling health inequalities with climate change; improving community capital and regeneration; and fully integrating planning, housing, transport and health systems to address local issues.
- **Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention** particularly through targeting those conditions most strongly related to health and social inequalities across the gradient; and increasing long term and sustainable funding for this area across government departments.

Finally it sets out proposals for delivery systems, targets and implementation, working on a 'central direction, local delivery' principle. The third sector features as a key partner, valued for its access to information and understanding of communities, and development of community networks and infrastructure. Concerns are raised about funding and the reliance on grants and contracts from the public sector, and also that representation and engagement with the sector vary widely between local authorities. The diversity of the sector needs to be fostered and supported.

### Any implications?

The report champions the concept that 'well-being should be a more important societal goal than simply more economic growth' – which is the heart of the VCS. This could have a considerable effect.

### Key links:

 Read the full report at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/gheg/marmotreview>