

## Reducing health inequalities

Strategies to address health inequalities have, in recent years, focused on the need for partnership working which is vital in addressing some of the social, economic and environmental factors which contribute to poor health. In many of these existing partnerships, however, an important element is missing - that of the community as a significant partner. There are well recognised barriers to involving local people. Some of these emanate from the professionals involved and some from the community itself. These barriers in the community become apparent when attempting to engage people who are not the 'usual suspects' in public and patient involvement, people who may well lack the confidence and self esteem to get involved. The Improvement Foundation has not only responded to this challenge, but capitalised on it. The Improvement Foundation's [Healthy Communities Collaborative \(HCC\)](#) has won national awards for its innovative work and results, and has become internationally recognised as leading the field in the area of involving deprived communities in the improvement of their own health and wellbeing. An article about the Health Communities Collaborative has recently been published in the Journal of Integrated Care. Please [click here](#) to view a summary of this article. New developments Using the healthy communities model, the Improvement Foundation is currently running major programmes on [Promoting Earlier Identification of Cancer Symptoms](#) and on [Promoting Earlier Identification of Cardiovascular Disease](#). We also offer inequalities improvement programmes on tackling obesity, reducing alcohol misuse, improving cervical screening and improving sexual health services - further information is provided in the [New Developments](#) section. Further information about our work on improving the uptake of cervical screening is available in the [press office](#) section. We are also working in partnership with the School Food Trust and other organisations to deliver the [Everyone's Cooking](#) programme to support the establishment of Let's Get Cooking clubs in schools nationwide. Ongoing support The [Widening Access to a Healthy Diet](#) programme delivered 87 new initiatives created to widen access to a healthy diet and provided nearly 1,000 people with training in food, hygiene and cooking skills. Our work on [Reducing Falls in Older People](#) resulted in a 32% decrease in falls handled by the ambulance service. If you are interested in working with the Improvement Foundation please go to [How we can help](#) or [click here to contact us](#).