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THE CENTRE FOR POLICY ON AGEING WELCOMES A RADICAL VISION TO END INEQUALITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Centre for Policy on Ageing strongly supports the radical vision to mitigate the exclusion, poverty and isolation of older people detailed in the final report from the Social Exclusion Unit, 'A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People', published on 26 January 2006.

The government is clearly listening – the Link-Age Plus initiative based on the Sure Start model is to be driven by the needs and aspirations of older people themselves. The Centre is pleased also that the minister, Phil Woolas and Baroness Kay Andrews acknowledge the importance of research in helping us to understand the extent of exclusion for older people. A growing body of research and practice on ageing issues shows how economic, social and health factors interact to affect the quality of later life.

Gillian Crosby, CPA's Director said 'The vision is clear – now we must all work together to make it a reality. Strong leadership from an Office for Older People and Ageing would help to ensure that all the strands impacting on inclusiveness – such as transport, housing, community life, access to services – can be brought together. An Observatory on Ageing will have a key role in providing the evidence to underpin policies and develop the right services. Tracking and disseminating results from the proposed pilot schemes to test the effectiveness of the Sure Start for older people approach will be critical.

'Cultural change is necessary if we are to drive out inequality and exclusion and foster the inclusive communities which value all older people. We are therefore pleased that the agreed government actions in the SEU report build on the aims of Opportunity Age and other government documents. For the Sure Start "inclusive" model to become a reality the government must honour these actions.'

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