

“we identify  
new and  
innovative  
ways of  
working”

**‘only a footstep away’?:  
neighbourhoods, social capital & their place in the  
‘big society’**

**a skills for care workforce development background paper  
june 2010**

# preface

Welcome to *Only a Footstep Away*, Skills for Care's first published venture into the fields of community development and 'neighbourhoodism'. This is going to be an increasingly important area for adult social care, extending the range of cross-sector perspectives that we address under the heading of 'new types of worker and new ways of working.'

In 2008 we published the *Principles of Workforce Redesign*, in which the seventh principle highlighted the importance of understanding your local community. Since the publication of the principles, the importance of understanding your local community or neighbourhood has been reinforced by a range of publications from the new types of worker projects that we support. Some of these are on [www.newtypesofworker.co.uk](http://www.newtypesofworker.co.uk).

In those projects it has become clear that Skills for Care needed, in the context of personalisation, to explore the skills and skill requirements of those who would not necessarily see themselves as part of the social care workforce, but who do have an important part to play in enabling people to continue to live in their neighbourhoods.

This report examines the literature that supports the development of a community skills approach where, through a careful analysis of the skills that exist in a local neighbourhood, the right skills development can be put in place to enable those vulnerable adults living in that neighbourhood to experience a greater level of support and independence.

*Only a Footstep Away* is an important grounding for our thinking about neighbours and neighbourhoodism. It provides Skills for Care with a strong starting point from which to pilot the concepts of community skill development and neighbourhood leadership development. From here we can go on to create the analytical skills assessment framework from which we will

create a strategic approach to community and neighbourhood skills development.

We know that we do not have to start from scratch. Local government and the voluntary sector have well-established neighbourhood development expertise for social care to draw upon. And we know that colleagues in health and housing already draw on that expertise. Whilst social care is already doing so too, on the ground, it is not yet doing so in the strategic planned way that is necessary to make best use of existing skills and to be systematic about addressing skills gaps.

We also know that the time is right politically to address community and neighbourhood approaches. *Only a Footstep Away* refers to the coalition government agreement, published as this work was being finalised, which makes reference to the need for greater respect for, and involvement of local communities in work to improve people's lives.

These perspectives now need to be combined with our learning from the new types of worker programme, plus the principles of workforce redesign, to create a practical workforce strategy to boost social care's neighbourhood effectiveness. This will be an important challenge for Skills for Care over the next three years, and we are keen to involve social care's other leaders in the work.



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## acknowledgements

This paper was commissioned by Skills for Care from independent consultants Bob Hudson and Melanie Henwood. The views expressed in the paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of Skills for Care. The authors are grateful to Jim Thomas for his support and helpful comments throughout.

### ***'Only a footstep away'? Neighbourhoods, social capital & their place in the 'big society'***

Published by Skills for Care, West Gate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds LS1 2RP [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

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Skills for Care is the employer-led strategic body for workforce development in social care for adults in England. It is part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development.

This work was researched and written by Bob Hudson and Melanie Henwood, working to a commission from Skills for Care.

*Bibliographic reference data for Harvard-style author/date referencing system:*

*Short reference:* Skills for Care [or SfC] 2010

*Long reference:* Skills for Care, *'Only a footstep away'? Neighbourhoods, social capital & their place in the 'Big Society'*, (Leeds, 2010) [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

Skills for Care would like to acknowledge the assistance of Bob Hudson and Melanie Henwood in the development of this work.

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## executive summary

1. This paper is a background discussion document produced for Skills for Care. It scopes the meaning and understanding of neighbours and neighbourhoods and considers how this might inform strategic development on neighbourhood workforce planning and skills development. The paper also locates the discussion within the context of the emerging debate around the meaning of social capital, the concept of the 'Big Society' and empowerment of people and communities as a platform for the delivery of fairness and opportunity.

2. We have explored the literature across a range of disciplines to consider the theoretical, conceptual and empirical understandings of 'neighbourhood'. We have not confined our analysis to informal and voluntary care between neighbours (i.e. care *by* the neighbourhood), but have also looked at the scope for services and support to be configured on a neighbourhood basis (care *in* the neighbourhood). As well as broadening the focus to encompass formal, semi-formal and informal sources of support, we have also moved beyond social care to consider the wider health and well-being agenda.

3. It is evident that there is considerable ambiguity and lack of consensus in the meaning and understanding of terms such as 'neighbour' and 'neighbourhood'. Some definitions concentrate on spatial and geographical boundaries, and other objective measures. However, people's own understanding of *their* neighbourhood is typically expressed in terms of social networks and relationships.

4. Neighbouring can be understood in terms of a continuum which ranges from practical activity through to emotional support; or from latent to manifest neighbourliness. We identify the themes that

recur as factors which shape the neighbourhood experience. These include: proximity; timeliness; physical environment; length of residence; social polarisation, and personal circumstances.

5. It would be unwise to equate the concept of neighbourhood with emotional and normative assumptions about the capacity of the neighbourhood to act as a rich source of 'social capital'. The increasingly popular notion of social capital is often poorly defined and used in non-specific ways. A recent review of the literature in this area identified eight key dimensions of social capital in terms of: family ties; friendship ties; participation in local organised groups; integration into the wider community; trust; attachment to the neighbourhood; tolerance; being able to rely on others for practical help. Others have distinguished between social capital as 'bonding capital' (networks within communities), and 'bridging capital' (networks between communities).

6. Some conceptualisations of social capital focus on the importance of reciprocity, and the exchange of goods and services for mutual benefit. Some commentators have suggested that a requirement for all citizens to contribute a given number of hours of voluntary work in a year or over a lifetime might be a fruitful way of developing a culture in which reciprocity is the norm and where transactions can be used to meet practical needs such as supporting older relatives. While such positions are likely to be controversial, some politicians are eager to adopt at least elements of this model.

7. Much of the focus of neighbourhood policy development over the past decade or so has been concerned with strategies that attempt to integrate bonding and bridging

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capital by encouraging the emergence of locally generated initiatives in place of top-down implementation. We explore a number of these neighbourhood-focused initiatives and programmes at the levels of national government programmes; national non-statutory sector programmes, and locally generated programmes.

8. In addition to understanding ideas about neighbourhoods and neighbourhoodism, any approach to neighbourhood workforce development also requires a clear understanding of the needs that any workforce is intended to address. This is the objective of neighbourhood mapping and analysis. There has been significant improvement in the availability of localised data presented as 'Super Output Areas'. This includes, for example, morbidity and mortality information; crime and community safety data; community well-being information; housing data on tenure and conditions; and economic deprivation data. However, it is understood that the quality and sophistication of this level of data is currently limited, as is local analytic capacity.

9. The notion of community 'capacity building' appears regularly in official policy discourse. The characteristics of community capacity have been identified as: a sense of community; level of commitment among community members; problem-solving mechanisms; and access to resources. There is evidence that light touch support, mentoring and some resource availability can indeed foster the building of capacity. The role of neighbourhood leaders as part of capacity building is an area that has been relatively neglected.

10. Our analysis of the literature does *not* at this stage provide a preliminary neighbourhood workforce development strategy. However, it *is* a prelude to any such development. In drawing lessons from

neighbourhood literatures in sociology, social policy and public policy our concern has been to ensure that further workforce development at this level will be evidence-based. We highlight a number of issues that any workforce strategy will need to address, including recognition that: this is a complex territory that crosses many dimensions of life within any community; formal and informal aspects will need to be integrated and mutually supporting; core skills need to be identified and developed, and the capacity to develop and support social capital must be better understood.

11. The transformation agenda of *Putting People First* (DH 2007) established by the last government requires local action across the four inter-related dimensions of: universal services; early intervention and prevention; choice and control, and social capital. The way in which the last of these has been expressed suggests a relatively limited understanding of the concept and lack of clarity about how it should be taken forward at local level. There is considerable work to be done in ensuring that the lessons and understandings of several decades' experience in neighbourhoods, neighbourhoodism, co-production, etc., inform local and national developments. Our review of the key literature is a step towards supporting this learning, and ensuring that emergent workforce strategies are based in reality and not on naively optimistic views about the nature of communities, neighbourhoods and reciprocity. There are opportunities to build on the increased attention being directed to neighbourhoods; it is vital that this is approached in ways that transcend party politics and short-term populism.

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# 1 introduction

1.1 This report is a background paper produced for Skills for Care as a prelude to further work on developing a strategy on neighbourhood workforce planning and skills development. The work has been commissioned from independent consultants Professor Bob Hudson and Melanie Henwood. Since the work was commissioned in early 2010, its focus has become of greater significance. As we explore below, ideas of community and neighbourhood are increasingly central to political discourse, and we trust that this paper will be a helpful contribution to the growing debate about the meaning of the 'big society', the development of social capital and the implications for workforce development.

1.2 The aim behind the paper is to consider the substantial literature on 'neighbourhood' – theoretical, conceptual and empirical – and to outline current policies that focus upon 'the neighbourhood'. By doing so it should be feasible to anchor subsequent workforce development proposals within a robust evidence base. Our stance is that exploration should not be confined to examining informal and voluntary care amongst neighbours (i.e. care *by* the neighbourhood), but should also encompass the scope for wider services and support to be neighbourhood-configured (care *in* the neighbourhood). In this way we can begin to think more creatively about formal, semi-formal and informal sources of support, and look beyond social care to the wider health and wellbeing agenda. This should also make the report of interest to other skills councils.

1.3 Almost everyone has neighbours, yet the neighbourhood is a relatively neglected level of analysis - the bulk of academic and

policy attention has focused upon the levels *above* the neighbourhood (the political, economic and value systems of society as a whole) or *beneath* it (inter-personal relationships in settings such as the family). However, neighbourhoods derive significance from their proximate status as compared with the remoteness of other systems of governance, production or consumption—neighbourhoods *do* matter for the people who live in them.

1.4 Evidence suggests that the differences between neighbourhoods in terms of institutional resources, patterns of social organisation and networks, levels of community safety, quality of the physical environment and levels of trust, either support or undermine how people are able to overcome difficulties and develop resilience (Pierson 2008). We also know that people living within the same area often share similar mental and physical states of health, as assessed by indices of neighbourhood deprivation, so targeting support in these areas seems to make sense (Blackman 2006), and that the qualities of the surroundings in which we live are among the main concerns about quality of life that are reported in surveys of UK residents (MORI 2002).

1.5 The importance of the neighbourhood in people's lives has slowly gained a foothold in policy visions, notably as a key aspect of the last government's Social Exclusion Strategy (SEU 2000, 2001). This suggested a number of possible strands to neighbourhood renewal, including jobs and training, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, provision of better community facilities, tackling problems of neglected and abandoned housing, rebuilding community support and providing greater assistance

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to schools and young people. In 2005 the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published *Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (ODPM 2005) which identified several ways in which neighbourhood level activity can be socially beneficial. Such activity, it was argued, can:

- make a real difference to the quality and responsiveness of services that are delivered to or affect those neighbourhoods
- increase the involvement of the community in the making of decisions on the provision of those services and on the life of the neighbourhood
- provide opportunities for public service providers and voluntary and community groups to work together to deliver outcomes for the locality
- build social capital—reducing isolation whilst building community capacity and cohesion.

1.6 Indeed the neighbourhood question has now spread beyond specific policy initiatives to become a key part of the wider ideological debate about finding the right balance between central government and ‘localism’. It was reported, for example, that the Labour Party was considering a manifesto pledge to turn schools and hospitals into ‘mutualised co-ops’ where staff and local people have a real stake in service improvement. In the event, the Labour manifesto (Labour 2010) took a softer line with a commitment to promoting social enterprises, including a right for public sector workers to request that front line services be delivered through a social enterprise. The manifesto also acknowledged ‘the new mutualism’ reflected in “growing interest in co-operative and mutual organisations that people trust, and that have the capacity to unleash creativity and innovation, creating

new jobs and services – particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where traditional approaches have failed in the past.” (Labour 2010, 7:5)

1.7 The Conservative Party has placed emphasis upon encouraging families, charities and communities to come together to solve problems (Guardian 2009), and their election manifesto highlighted the ambition for “every adult citizen being a member of an active neighbourhood group,” and outlined plans to introduce a National Citizen Service for 16 year olds “to help bring our country together” (Conservative 2010). More broadly, this manifesto expressed an aspiration to build the ‘big society’, “to help stimulate social action, helping social enterprises to deliver public services and training new community organisers.” The central theme of the manifesto was empowering individuals and communities to take greater local control, and in doing so the Conservatives were clearly moving into territory that has traditionally been more closely associated with the Labour Party.

1.8 The Liberal Democrat manifesto similarly stated a commitment “to handing power back to local communities. We believe that society is strengthened by communities coming together and engaging in voluntary activity, which sets people and neighbourhoods free to tackle local problems.” (LD 2010)

### **building the ‘big society’**

1.9 The outcome of the General Election in May 2010 resulted in a hung parliament and subsequently to the establishment of a coalition government between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The initial coalition agreement document set out 11 key issues that needed to be resolved “in order for us to work together as a strong and stable government” (Con



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LD 2010). The agreement was intended as a platform on which other elements were to build. The first of these to be published (on 18 May) addressed the 'big society', and the new Prime Minister described this as "a big signal" about the importance attached to the issues of decentralising power and empowering communities. The "driving ambition" of the coalition government is stated as being "to put more power and opportunity into people's hands" (HMG 2010a) The statement on the big society went on to highlight the need to "draw on the skills and expertise of people across the country as we respond to the social, political and economic challenges Britain faces." Five key areas of agreement were set out:

- give communities more powers
- encourage people to take an active role in their communities
- transfer power from central to local government
- support co-ops, mutuals, charities and social enterprises
- publish government data.

1.10 Volunteering and involvement in social action are to be encouraged, and the idea of a National Citizen Service that was set out in the Conservative manifesto is to be taken forward, initially in a programme for 16 year olds "to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities." In supporting communities to do more for themselves and each other, and to establish neighbourhood groups across the UK, a new generation of community organisers is to be trained. (HMG 2010b)

1.11 Mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises are to be supported and to have greater involvement in the running

of public services. Funds from dormant bank accounts will be used to establish a 'Big Society Bank' to "provide new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprise and other non-governmental bodies."

1.12 In launching the idea of the big society the Prime Minister acknowledged the financial situation and the difficult choices facing government spending, and stated that he did not "have some naive belief that the Big Society just springs up in its place." Rather, the agenda for government needed to be how to enable the third sector to "do even more of what you do." The PM went on to say that he wanted this work "to be one of the great legacies of this government: building the Big Society." (PM 2010)

1.13 The new Deputy PM, Nick Clegg, also endorsed the approach and argued that the parties had been using different words for a long time but meaning the same thing in terms of liberalism, empowerment and responsibility. The challenge would be to bring about "a huge cultural shift, where people, in their everyday lives, in their communities, in their homes, on their street, don't always turn to answers from officialdom, from local authorities, from government, but that they feel both free and empowered to help themselves and help their own communities." (DPM 2010)

1.14 Ideas of neighbourhood and community are clearly of growing political importance, and it is evident that these themes will be major components of the policy agenda for the new coalition administration (HMG 2010b). However, to recognise the significance of neighbourhood is only the starting point in understanding a complex and contested concept, along with its associated policy developments. In this report our approach

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is to undertake four sequential stages of exploration:

- What do we mean by the concept of 'neighbourhood'?
- The evidence base: what do we know about the determinants of good neighbouring?
- Neighbourhood policy and practice in England: building on existing developments.
- Broad workforce implications and proposals for next steps work.

## 2 what do we mean by 'neighbourhood'?

2.1 There is considerable ambiguity in the meaning and use of terms like 'neighbour' and 'neighbourhood'. In the landmark study published in 1986, Abrams claimed that "*the literature is scant, predominantly atheoretical and not sufficiently advanced to have produced a debate on concepts, let alone a consensus*" (Bulmer 1986, 17). Although there have been subsequent improvements, the claim still has validity.

2.2 All studies agree that *proximity* is an essential attribute of a neighbourhood, with much agreement that neighbours live within walking distance and that face-to-face contact is possible. Models of community mapping, or population profiling, use such an approach. For example, Mosaic is a methodology that classifies UK postcodes against more than 400 socio-demographic variables. Residents within a specific postcode area are more likely to reflect the characteristics of that group than of another. However, some definitions assume that a neighbourhood can be rigidly defined with a set of boundaries, neglecting the reality that the local residential environment is

defined by a wide range of attributes, each of which will have its own spatial boundaries. Definitions may range from a few street blocks close to people's homes, to the wider district where local civic amenities can be accessed, or on the basis of local electoral ward boundaries. This means that the spatial extent of a neighbourhood may be defined differently by residents and service providers respectively – a conflict between subjective and objective maps of locality. Thus while neighbourhoods may be defined geographically for some purposes, the *meaning* of neighbourhoods is generally understood in terms of social networks and relationships.

2.3 A second common feature is that the *neighbourhood relationship* is relatively limited and indeterminate – it is framed by 'being nearby' and in general terms by little else. Some classic network studies support the assertion of the importance of location and neighbourhood, pointing to the close association between dense network forms and local neighbourhood. However, in his review of the evidence on neighbourhoods and social networks, Bridge concludes that:

*"It is only in the working class that one is likely to find a combination of factors all operating together to produce a high degree of density: concentration of people of the same or similar occupations in the local area; jobs and homes in the same local area; low population turnover and continuity of relationships; at least occasional opportunities for relatives and friends to help one another to get jobs; little demand for physical mobility; little opportunity for social mobility."* (Bridge 2002, 10)

2.4 Where these factors are not present then a problematic juncture between neighbourliness and privacy is evident.

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Abrams notes that the placing of respect for privacy on the same footing as friendliness and helpfulness occurs in almost all studies, yet “*the precise point at which one might distinguish friendliness from mere civility at one extreme or a deep concern at the other remains highly obscure.*” (Bulmer 1986, 28) Thus good neighbouring may be as much about showing restraint, non-involvement and latent qualities, as it is about activities that social scientists can observe and record.

2.5 A common conceptual interchange is that between ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘community’, with both being perceived as ‘in decline’. Much of the classic literature on neighbourhoods and networks is part of what is called the urbanisation literature that discusses the consequences of the growth of the industrial city in western nations. Even in the nineteenth century the sociologist Tonnies argued that in rural *gemeinschaft* (or community) social order was based on multi-stranded social ties. People knew each other in a range of roles—as parents, neighbours, co-workers, friends or kin. In contrast, residents of urban neighbourhoods lived in a *gesellschaft* (or association) with single-stranded ties—only knowing each other in single, specialised roles such as neighbours. (Tonnies 1887)

2.6 Arguments about the decline of community are in large measure arguments about an unavoidable decline in the density of local social networks (or neighbourhoods). High density has generally been associated with solidarity, commitment and normative consensus, whereas low density is held to bring about all sorts of contrary conditions. It is through the erosion of density that modernisation and urbanisation are said to have weakened traditional social solidarities, including those of caring neighbourhoods.

2.7 However, as Abrams has argued, these ‘natural’ helping networks of the traditional neighbourhood were in fact a way of life worked out to permit survival in the face of great hardship—“*conditions which one would not wish to see reproduced today*” (Bulmer 1986, 92). Most neighbourhoods today do not constrain their inhabitants into strongly bonded relationships with one another. Better transport, longer journeys to work, geographical dispersal of kin and friends, a wider range of shopping and recreational opportunities, and the privatisation of the family, have all reduced the centrality of the neighbourhood as a locus of social interaction and social support. It is in these changed circumstances that calls to recreate civic values and shared activities struggle to make an impact, for the current policy imperatives seem to be at odds with these dominant social trends.

2.8 Given all of this, it makes sense to think in terms of a continuum of different types of neighbouring rather than some homogeneous concept which is either present or absent. One can distinguish, for example, between practical activity (such as taking in a parcel or feeding the neighbour’s cat) and emotional support such as looking to neighbours in time of crisis (Bridge 2004). Mann usefully distinguished between manifest and latent neighbourliness. *Manifest* neighbourliness is characterised by overt forms of social relationships such as mutual visiting in the home and going out for leisure and recreation. *Latent* neighbourliness is characterised by favourable attitudes to neighbours which result in positive action when a need arises in times of emergency or crisis. (Mann 1954) Feelings of well-being via neighbouring may have as much to do with this latent potential as the activities routinely identified in neighbourhood studies.

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2.9 A helpful conceptual framework is proposed by Abrams, who makes the following distinctions (Bulmer 1986, 21):

- *neighbours* are simply people who live near one another
- *neighbourhood* is an effectively defined terrain inhabited by neighbours
- *neighbouring* is the actual pattern of interaction observed within any given neighbourhood
- *neighbourliness* is a positive and committed relationship constructed between neighbours as a form of friendship.

2.10 The latter concept is critical to much current policy and political discourse, and requires an answer to the question, 'What are the determinants of neighbourliness?' This is the focus of the following section.

### 3 what do we know about neighbourliness?

3.1 There is a substantial research literature going back over at least eighty years that has attempted to identify the factors that shape the neighbourhood experience. Several themes recur.

#### proximity

3.2 Although sounding like a truism, proximity is a key factor in shaping neighbourhood experiences. The studies undertaken as part of the Abrams research (Bulmer 1986) found that the most frequently mentioned influence on whether or not neighbourly relations developed was proximity – being next door to someone is different from living in the next street to them. Proximity is also related to the previously noted importance of the 'watch and ward' function in times of crisis and emergency. Blackman (remarks that whilst

the neighbourhood unequivocally starts as we leave our front door, where it ends will vary according to many spatial and temporal factors, but the concept of a 'walkable zone' remains important. He notes that:

*"People endow a neighbourhood with organisation through their walking patterns from the nodal points of their homes – walking children to school, walking to the bus stop or local shops, and walking to call on neighbours... but the extent to which a neighbourhood emerges empirically depends on whether local interactions create common attributes bounded by group properties."* (Blackman 2006, 33)

#### timeliness

3.3 Speed of response is a further special province of neighbours, ranging from the quick convenience of ad hoc borrowing and lending, to help in an emergency when time is of the essence. However, the availability of time to participate in neighbouring is one of the factors associated with the 'loss of community'. Even in the research undertaken in the 1980s, Abrams (Bulmer 1986) found the observation by people that 'neighbouring is not what it used to be' being explained in terms of the availability of time. The increase in female employment was an especially noted factor. In his examination of semi-formal Good Neighbour schemes, he found that the crucial attribute that determined involvement was whether or not people had time to spare.

#### physical environment

3.4 Inside the home – whether it is damp, cold, noisy or overcrowded – sits within the wider neighbourhood context of which it is a part. As Blackman puts it, "housing is experienced as the dwelling and its residential setting, the

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neighbourhood.” (Blackman 2006, 25) The official definition of a ‘poor neighbourhood’ is that used in the English House Condition Survey which is based on a neighbourhood having over 10% of its dwellings assessed as seriously defective. Using this measure, around 10% of the national housing stock was classed in ‘poor neighbourhoods’ in 2001.

3.5 There is also some evidence to suggest that the physical layout of both the house and the neighbourhood can shape levels of neighbourly activity. Brown and Burton (1998), for example, demonstrated (in the USA) the significance of the front porch as a semi-public space in which non-threatening and non-intrusive neighbourly relations could be initiated and reproduced. And the Abrams studies (Bulmer 1986) found that the segregation of elderly people in bungalows and flats cut them off from neighbours other than people of their own age, and that this accentuated social isolation.

### **length of residence**

3.6 The Abrams studies concluded that the most obvious factor accounting for variations in neighbouring was the longevity of the settlement and the length of residence there of particular households. Clear differences were observed between long-time residents and newcomers in terms of contact with neighbours and the sort of help exchanged. This is partly explicable in terms of exchange theory. In the modern neighbourhood milieu, exchange relations will typically evolve as a slow process, starting with minor transactions in which little trust is required because little risk is involved. Only when mutual trust is more firmly established will there be a gradual expansion of mutual support.

3.7 This picture is supported by more extensive longitudinal studies. Wenger and

her colleagues analysed data on loneliness among older people from the Bangor Longitudinal Study of Ageing. (Wenger 1996). They reported that the most successful network in terms of avoiding loneliness and isolation was the ‘locally integrated support network’, which was usually based upon long-term residence. In another paper based upon the same data the authors further noted that people in such networks were less likely to need statutory services to help with personal care. (Wenger 2001)

### **social polarisation**

3.8 Reciprocal care between neighbours grows where information and trust are high, and where resources for satisfying needs in other ways are low. This is most likely to occur in relatively isolated, relatively closed and relatively threatened social milieu with highly homogeneous populations. This could be part of a vicious circle of decline as qualitatively better jobs and homes elsewhere will be in reach of at least some of the residents, and their departure further deepens the marginalisation of those remaining. Dorling and Rees (2003) note that with continuing socio-spatial polarisation, areas are now more easily typified as being old and young, settled and migrant, black and white or rich and poor. Indeed, in their study of young people growing up in depressed parts of Teesside, Macdonald and Marsh (2005) found that most chose to remain living in very deprived neighbourhoods, seeing these as ‘normal’. Local social divisions were perceived instead at a very fine-grained scale such as streets or parts of an estate with troublesome residents.

### **personal circumstances**

3.9 Abrams found that apart from proximity, the most salient influences mentioned as promoting neighbourliness

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were age and status in the life cycle. He argued that most neighbours do not typically choose to make their friends among their neighbours, and that those who do tend to be seeking highly specific solutions to highly specific problems. Bridge (2002) describes this situation as ‘residual neighbouring’ for people who do not have access to broader networks. The most relevant group for the purposes of this paper is older people, for the degree of social exclusion they experience is closely related to the places they live.

3.10 Pierson (2008) points out that older people are especially susceptible to the occurrence of major life events that pare down relationships and networks—losing a partner, adjusting to living alone, the loss of close family members and friends, withdrawal from the labour market, and the onset of chronic illness and disability. The Social Exclusion Unit’s report on the exclusion of older people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods demonstrated the extent to which older people ‘age in place’, and are therefore especially vulnerable to changes in the character of the neighbourhood. (SEU 2005)

3.11 The most commonly experienced form of social exclusion was found to be ‘social relations’, which included such factors as isolation and loneliness, and lack of participation in everyday social activities. Both isolation and loneliness are associated with poor health and with diminishing contact with health professionals, as well as with higher admission to residential care, depression and poor recovery from strokes. However, Wenger (2001) also points out that many older people who live alone (and are hence technically ‘isolated’) do lead socially active lives and have close friendships that are more important than thinning family ties. So people who are isolated do live alone, but the reverse is not necessarily true.

### **normative assumptions about neighbouring**

3.12 It is already clear from the key messages about neighbouring that it is unwise to equate the concept of neighbourhood with emotional and normative assumptions about the capacity of the neighbourhood to act as a rich source of ‘social capital’. Even in the 1980s, Abrams was complaining that “much of the appeal of the call for neighbourhood care has been a matter of ill-defined sentiment and imprecise rhetorical resonance” (Bulmer 1986, 23) and this is true today in the way the concept of ‘social capital’ is sometimes used. The recent DCLG publication ‘Building Cohesive Communities’, for example, identifies the following dimensions of ‘commitment to a shared future’:

- wanting to live in the area
- using local services, shops, schools and businesses
- investing in local social capital such as volunteering, attending neighbourhood forums and being local leaders
- feeling safe and having contact with neighbours
- having a sense of their own power to be involved and to influence
- understanding and welcoming the range of different people in the area
- developing a local identity focusing on shared local experiences. (DCLG 2009a)

3.13 What is less clear is how all of this can be brought about, including the potential role of a neighbourhood focused workforce strategy. On the contrary, some have used the term ‘the geography of misery’ (Burrows & Rhodes 1998) to

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describe certain disadvantaged areas in which neighbourhood ties may not be superior ties. Some commentators have broadened the issue further to attribute the responsibility for urban disadvantage upon an 'underclass' whose members make poor moral choices. (Murray 1994) And in an influential contribution, Wilson and Kelling (1982) proposed their 'broken windows' theory whereby disorganisation and a lack of informal social control lead to a spiral of neighbourhood decline as social and physical incivilities go unchallenged and exponentially increase, further reducing civic interaction. The policing strategy of 'zero tolerance' is a response to this theory.

3.14 There is little doubt that significant proportions of people do have concerns about aspects of their local area. Market research from MORI (2002) and other local surveys has for several years been reporting that the most prominent issues for many residents are about local crime and anti-social behaviour, dirty streets and neglected spaces and lighting. The 2008 Place Survey conducted by DCLG, for example, found:

- 31% felt there was a problem with people not treating one another with respect and consideration
- only 30% felt that parents in their local area took responsibility for the behaviour of their children
- 20% felt that anti-social behaviour was a problem in their local area
- around a quarter felt drunk or rowdy behaviour and drug use or drug dealing were problems in their local areas. (DCLG 2008)

3.15 Other research has highlighted specific problems of targeted violence and hostility towards disabled people. A recent study undertaken for the Equality and

Human Rights Commission by Sin (2009) found the fear and experience of a wide range of criminal, sub-criminal and anti-social behaviour to be having a marked impact on the social inclusion and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities. 'On the street' near to where the victim lived was found to be one of several hostility 'hot spots'. These findings confirm those of an earlier study by the UK Disabled People Council (UKDPC 2007). The consequences can be tragic as has been seen recently with the Pilkington case, where a vulnerable single mother killed herself and her severely disabled daughter after years of unchecked 'low level' abuse from local youths. Such realities are of enormous importance given the ambitions of the transformation agenda in social care to promote personalisation of care and support, much of which is predicated on people being supported to use mainstream services and to live in local communities rather than in segregated housing.

### **the nature and role of social capital**

3.16 The idea that the neighbourhood fosters the development of supportive social networks through interaction in local public space is clearly far from straightforward, and it is against this background that the role of the increasingly popular notion of 'social capital' has to be considered. The term is one that is widely used but often poorly defined, leading to confusion and misunderstanding. A review of the literature undertaken for the ONS observed:

*"This has been exacerbated by the different words used to refer to the term. These range from social energy, community spirit, social bonds, civic virtue, community networks, social ozone, extended friendships, community life, social resources, informal and formal*

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*networks, good neighbourliness and social glue.*" (ONS 2001)

3.17 The concept has become particularly associated with the writing of Robert Putman who defines it as 'the features of social organisation such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putman 1995, 67). A review of the literature on social cohesion and social capital by Stafford (2005) identified eight dimensions:

- family ties
- friendship ties
- participation in local organised groups
- integration into the wider community
- trust
- attachment to neighbourhood
- tolerance
- being able to rely on others for practical help.

3.18 The neighbourhood may be one source of social capital but many people are less dependent on neighbours for social support, and their networks are less locally based than in the past (and likely to become even less so with the dispersal of populations but also because of the increasing significance of virtual social networks via sites such as Facebook). In their analysis of data contained in the General Household Survey, Bridge and others (2004) report that visits to neighbours took place on at least three or four days per week by almost 50% of respondents, but there is no additional data on the nature and extent of such visits. Similarly the 2008 Place Survey found that 23% of respondents said they had given unpaid help (excluding donating money) in a voluntary capacity during the previous twelve months. (ONS 2008)

3.19 Another approach to understanding social capital is what David Halpern terms 'the hidden wealth of nations'. This refers to a parallel world of relationships and reciprocal interactions that 'makes our societies and economies work.' (Halpern 2010, 2) In particular, 'the economy of regard' includes "the myriad of ways in which people help, show affection, care for and support each other in everyday life." (p.98) Within this economy, the relationship between the giver and receiver is a key feature. Halpern poses questions about whether and how the economy of regard can be supported and encouraged, including approaches that make mutual support and voluntary activity an expectation within society. We will return to this later in the paper.

3.20 All these findings do at least suggest there is some basis for developing local strategies on social capital, and the benefits of doing so have been much rehearsed. Putman (1995) argues that social capital has a strong influence on health status, and that measures of social capital correlate with those on morbidity and premature mortality, independently of the effects of material deprivation. More broadly he suggests that communities where trust, reciprocity and social networks are strong will yield collective action and cooperation to the benefit of the wider community. It is this latter feature that signifies social capital as a societal rather than an individual property—a 'public good' rather than an individual possession. In this way we can conceive of social capital as consisting of the features of a place (such as a neighbourhood) rather than of individuals. Central to the concept of social capital is the view that it is a resource that can be both depleted and renewed; where people work together, the stock of social capital increases, but where they don't it declines—perhaps terminally.



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3.21 In this context, White (2002) notes that social capital has come to have at least two meanings in policy terms. First there is social capital as ‘bonding capital’, meaning networks and relationships of trust within communities. Secondly there is social capital as ‘bridging capital’, meaning the networks and inter-relationships between neighbourhoods, communities and external agencies and resources. This distinction further raises the question of the relationship between the two meanings, and the extent to which it is possible for bodies such as local authorities to generate bonding capital.

3.22 Again, there are two approaches to this relationship. One approach is to view social capital as an alternative to state support—a way of rebuilding a perceived ‘broken society’ by emphasising the virtue and value of strong mutual ties. A different approach is to develop a strategy that harnesses bonding capital to bridging capital through a range of measures designed to replace top-down approaches with locally generated initiatives and programmes. There has been no shortage of such developments in past decade and these are the subject of the following section of this report.

3.23 The fashionable term for describing the link between bonding and bridging capital is ‘coproduction’—a concept that has arisen from the critique of traditional services which are thought to have supplanted rather than strengthened people’s own abilities and their social networks. In this perspective, communities cannot be built upon their deficiencies, but only upon the mobilisation of the capacity and assets of people and place. In a review of the issues for the Department of Health (OPM 2009) it is suggested that a framework for analysis should encompass individual economic capital, individual capacity, an individual’s social networks,

neighbourhood relationships and community associations, and public, voluntary and commercial services and facilities.

## 4 neighbourhood policy and practice

4.1 ‘Neighbourhood support’ is a term that appeals to two different social policy developments. On the one hand it can refer to the extent and intensity of neighbourliness achieved in a neighbourhood; on the other it can refer to the provision of formal or semi-formal support to the inhabitants of a neighbourhood with no necessary reference to neighbourliness at all. The idea therefore crosses a frontier between formally organised social action and essentially informal relationships. Moreover, not all of the issues affecting neighbourhoods can be addressed at neighbourhood level, therefore the relationship between neighbourhood-level solutions and wider area strategies is also crucial.

4.2 Barnes (2006) makes a further useful distinction between interventions that are community-based, and those that are at community level:

- *Community-level* interventions aim at the whole community (or neighbourhood) and primarily intend to change that community rather than to help specific individuals or families within it. The approach is based upon the conviction that social problems (especially those created by disadvantage) are best dealt with by ‘capacity building’ in the community rather than by focusing upon individuals with problems. This ties in with the idea of social capital as a public good rather than an individual possession.

- *Community-based* interventions seek to do the opposite—to meet the needs of individuals and families through services and supports in the community.

4.3 The position taken in this report is that there is no reason why ‘neighbourhood care’ should not be defined in terms of pursuing both understandings, though the policy emphasis has been upon improving the delivery of public services in deprived neighbourhoods so as to achieve improvements in health, employment, education, housing and crime. Even within this approach there are differences of view about the appropriate scale of a ‘neighbourhood’, with figures ranging from fewer than a thousand to up to 5000 households. (DCLG 2008)

4.4 In addition to the ideas that the neighbourhood is potentially a valuable source of support, a related series of developments have focused on empowering neighbourhoods in order to improve overall well-being of residents and communities (Hothi 2008). In this case there can be additional benefits that accrue – such as increased contact and interaction between neighbours and general development of social capital – without this being a specific objective of an initiative.

4.5 The rationale for neighbourhood-level support is that this will be more accessible and more likely to address problems as defined by local people. Support can be available through schools, local offices, well-known community institutions or in a person’s home, and may be delivered by professional, volunteer and informal personnel who know the area and its people. The past decade or so has seen a large number of neighbourhood-focused initiatives and programmes. These might be categorised as national government

programmes, national non-statutory sector programmes and locally generated programmes.

### **national government programmes**

4.6 We need also to locate neighbourhood policy within a wider policy context, and particularly that of the social care transformation agenda – *Putting People First* – established by the previous administration (DH 2007). The Department of Health has established a project around Building Community Capacity (DHCN) focused on exploring the role of social capital and co-production in the transformation of adult social care, which comprises the fourth quadrant of transformation as outlined in the figure below.

Source: *Putting People First, the whole story* (DH 2008)



4.7 Despite the change of government it is unlikely that there will be a significant departure from the transformation agenda. While the detail of policy remains to be set out, there is continuing emphasis on the importance of such key themes as prevention, personalisation, and partnership. The full coalition ‘programme for government’ was published on 20 May 2010 and underlined the need “to provide much more control to individuals and their carers”, and to extend the greater roll-out of personal budgets. The document also stated the government’s support for

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“social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy”, and a commitment to “make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another.” (HMG 2010b)

4.8 Social capital is viewed as an important contribution to improved outcomes for people who use social care, although it is recognised that “it will not on its own enable people who might need to use social care to meet their needs unaided” (DHCN, 5). The framework for exploring social capital within this project distinguishes between individual social capital (particularly family, friends and neighbours), and neighbourhood relationships and community associations. At the time of writing (Spring 2010) the outcomes from the Building Community Capacity work have still to emerge; however, it is anticipated that these will focus on sharing good practice from a number of ‘trailblazer authorities’ and evidence on cost-effective interventions. A series of case study vignettes on the Building Community Capacity website outlines some of the innovations currently underway. These include examples of population profiling, community development, social enterprise development, auditing community volunteering, time banking, homesharing, ‘buddy’ schemes, etc.

4.9 As we outlined in the first section of this paper, the recent statements by the coalition government on the development of the ‘big society’ echo similar themes. It is evident that ideas of citizenship and reciprocity transcend party political boundaries, and particularly in a time of economic pressure, empowering “families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities (...) to be bigger and stronger than before” has an obvious appeal. (HMG 2010a)

4.10 A landmark national policy development was the publication of the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) Strategy action plan (CO/SEU 2001) with the aim that no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live because of ‘failing’ local services or a poor environment. Funding for NR programmes was initially allocated to the 88 most deprived areas in England with the expectation that the (then) growing budgets for mainstream public services would underpin the NR strategies, and that there would be further targeting of the most deprived neighbourhoods. The local delivery vehicles for the NR strategy are Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)—potentially one of the most important innovations in local governance in recent years.

4.11 The final evaluation of the neighbourhood renewal strategy has recently been published (DCLG 2010a). Although it concludes that changes in the conditions of the more deprived neighbourhoods have improved, and that the gap with the national average has closed, it is clear that they remain a long way behind and are beginning to feel the impact of the recession. A similar message emerges from the final evaluation of the New Deal for Communities programme (DCLG 2010b). Here there was also an improvement on most core indicators, especially in people’s feelings about their neighbourhoods. Stronger relationships were established with those agencies having a ‘natural’ neighbourhood presence (like the police), but little improvement in the generation of social capital was evident.

4.12 The identification of pockets of deprivation including but extending beyond NR areas led to the introduction of the Safer Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) in 2006 to focus on these small localities in

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84 local authority areas. Included in the SSCF is the Neighbourhood Element which provides funding for 100 of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England to improve the quality of life for people living in them, and to ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs. Both NR and SSCF are good examples of Barnes's community-/level/ interventions.

4.13 Perhaps the main national programme impinging directly on workforce development has been the establishment of Neighbourhood Management (NM), an approach developed by the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team as a means of securing neighbourhood level action to improve service delivery. The first 20 Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders were announced in July 2001, and a second round of 15 in December 2003.

4.14 Although NM is seen as a way of encouraging service providers to improve services in deprived neighbourhoods, it also has a potential role in developing social capital and community cohesion. In particular it employs a neighbourhood manager, supported by a small team, to take overall responsibility at this local level. In addition to the Pathfinders, other localities have developed their own NM schemes drawing upon the Neighbourhood Element (NE) of SSCF—around 80% of local authorities (in around 500 neighbourhoods) in receipt of NRF or NE are estimated to be operating such schemes. Given the heavy financial dependence upon NE, the end of this source of funding will be a key test of local commitment.

4.15 There has been some evaluation of the NM Pathfinders (DCLG 2010b; 2008b). Most of the initiatives covered the following components:

- use as a tool for facilitating the renewal of deprived neighbourhoods
- an initial focus upon crime and environmental issues
- an average target area size below 15,000 (some well above conventional definitions of a 'neighbourhood')
- an emphasis upon influencing service providers rather than engaging in direct service delivery
- engagement with a variety of partners, notably the police, local authority, PCT and housing associations; leadership is predominantly by the local authority
- widespread recognition of the importance of involving the community.

4.16 Nevertheless the evaluators are cautious in their assessment of the impact of NM, observing that it is a challenge to identify and evaluate measurable impacts, not least in the absence of systematic and comprehensive small area administrative data.

4.17 The role of policing in neighbourhoods has become hugely significant since the publication of the Flanagan Review (Flanagan 2008). This proposed that neighbourhood policing should be at the core of policing in England and Wales, as it would help to:

- increase community confidence in the police
- increase community involvement in shaping priorities
- increase partnership working
- promote community cohesion.

4.18 Subsequently the Home Office published a new strategy on

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neighbourhood policing (HO 2010) which sets out a vision of safe and confident neighbourhoods everywhere in which all members of the public can expect:

- to continue to benefit from their named, dedicated neighbourhood policing team including Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)
- victims to receive a joined up response from the police, local council and criminal justice
- to be able to have a say in how services keep them safe and confident and be able to challenge agencies if expectations are not met
- to be confident and able to engage in playing their full role in their own neighbourhood's safety.

4.19 Importantly, the strategy states that to keep neighbourhoods truly safe and confident, the police cannot act alone. It is expected that all key agencies – health, local council and children's services – will have clearly identified lead contacts for neighbourhood policing teams. Moreover, the previous government had funded 12 areas (and supported a further 100) in developing Neighbourhood Agreements to support communities in negotiating what police services can do for them to keep neighbourhoods safe and confident. In terms of workforce development, there is a proposal for further professionalising neighbourhood policing through training and leadership support and a PCSO accreditation. The main party manifestos all reflected an emphasis on neighbourhood policing themes. The Conservative Party stated a commitment to giving people "democratic control over policing priorities" to empower local communities, while Labour pledged to establish neighbourhood police teams in every area

with accountability to local people through monthly public meetings.

4.20 Finally, in the recent publication *Putting the Frontline First* (HMG 2009) the Labour government proposed a further raft of measures that bear upon neighbourhoods and the generation of social capital. These include:

- *Neighbourhood Agreements* to be piloted by the Home Office, which will give the public in a local area more say about how issues where they live can best be tackled, and lead to allocations of resources that better reflect community priorities.
- *The Community Assets Programme* will aim to empower communities by encouraging the transfer of under-used local authority assets to local organisations.
- *Social Impact Bonds* aim to attract non-government investment into local activities with returns generated from a proportion of the related reduction in government spending on acute services.
- *Social Investment Wholesale Bank* to provide capital to organisations delivering social impact to support the sustainability of social enterprises.
- *Civic Health Index* to enable people to assess how well civic society is faring and how it can be enabled to thrive.

### **national non-statutory sector programmes**

4.21 There are several relevant non-statutory sector programmes that have some national profile. Perhaps the best known of these are time banks, pledgebanks and lifetime neighbourhoods.

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➤ time banks

4.22 The concept of time banks is part of a wider set of ideas often enshrined in the term ‘co-production’. Much of the theoretical and practical development of co-production has come from the United States and dates back to the 1970s. It embodies partnership between the monetary economy and “the core economy of home, family, neighbourhood, community and civil society” (Cahn 2008). Co-production and time banks are not simply a non-monetary alternative economy that provides a mechanism for valuing the contribution of people outside of a formal labour market. Rather, there is also an explicit ideological and value-based underpinning that emphasises principles of reciprocity and mutuality.

4.23 Time banks started in the UK in 1998 and offer a model for recognising and rewarding family carers. In a time bank, participants earn time credits for helping each other—one hour of your time entitles you to one hour of someone else’s time. Credits are deposited centrally in the time bank and withdrawn when help is needed, with help exchanged through a broker who links people up and keeps a record of transactions. Most time banks have an office base and a paid member of staff serving as the broker. Time credits have no monetary value, so are unlikely to affect carers’ benefit entitlements. A national network of around 200 time banks – Time Banks UK – is already in operation, and some programmes are actually identified as ‘neighbourhood time banks’ ([www.timebanking.org](http://www.timebanking.org)).

4.24 Another model closely related to time banks features complementary currencies within ‘local exchange trading systems’ (LETS); as with time banks this involves people creating credits that they can ‘spend’ with other members. A much-cited example of one such complementary

currency is that of ‘Fueai kippu’ that has been developed in Japan to provide care for elderly family members:

*“Imagine I am living in Tokyo, but my elderly parents live 200 miles away so it is difficult for me to care for them. Instead, I care for an elderly person who lives close by, and I transfer my credits back to my parents. They can then use these to ‘buy’ care where they live.”* (Halpern 2010, 107)

4.25 It might be argued by critics that such a system would not work (or not in an English context) because care is not simply an exchange commodity, but is fundamentally about the context of a relationship. Nonetheless, Halpern argues that because Fueai kippu are earned through care and not money, “the whole transaction feels different and far more acceptable. And the evidence shows that this system leads to more caring activity, not just displacement.” (Halpern 2010, 107)

4.26 Halpern has gone further than some commentators in asking whether such positive reciprocity should be actively stimulated by expecting ‘all able adults’ to contribute a minimum number of hours of community service. Rather than this being seen as altruism or volunteering, Halpern argues, it would be ‘true reciprocity’, particularly if the economy of regard was further strengthened through the use of complementary currencies. (Halpern 2010, 119)

➤ pledgebanks

4.27 The *Communities in Control* white paper (DCLG 2008c) included a commitment to pilot community Pledgebanks during 2009 as a way of encouraging people to register a pledge to undertake some activity or contribute some resource towards a common goal. Community Pledgebanks could be

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collective ('I pledge to do X if Y other people will join me in doing it') or individual ('I pledge to do X'). Collective pledges are harder to work because they have to link in with someone else's idea, and the greatest number of current pledge schemes concern environmental issues. There is only limited data on pledging, but a review (Cotterill and Richardson 2009) concluded that:

- asking people to pledge can lead to behaviour change, but there is no clear evidence that it is any more or less effective than other campaigning approaches
- asking people to pledge seems to work best if it takes a personal approach, but it is unclear whether it is the personal approach or the pledging that has an effect
- pledging campaigns are most likely to be successful if they are part of a wider promotional campaign, including publicity, incentives, creation of social norms, reminders and cues, but then it is hard to separate out the effect of the pledge
- people are more likely to carry out a pledge if it relates to something they were already thinking about, they have been allowed to personalise the pledge, and the activity is not too challenging.

➤ lifetime neighbourhoods

4.28 In the context of an ageing population it is vital to offer inclusive 'age-proofed' environments that minimise the impact of disability on independence and social participation. Lifetime neighbourhoods seek to fill this need, but the concept has yet to feature extensively in government guidance or make a significant impact on mainstream planning practice. The broad aim is to provide all residents with the best possible chance of

health, well-being and social inclusion (DCLG 2008d). In a manifesto for lifetime neighbourhoods, Help the Aged propose ten components that should be the minimum requirement.

- *Basic amenities within reasonable reach:* while everyone needs access to money, healthcare and some shops, neighbourhoods and communities that do not provide these can leave older people isolated.
- *Safe, secure and clean streets:* this matters to all age groups but older people are particularly likely to fear crime. Good lighting, well-kept clean streets and a police presence should all be prioritised to help people feel more confident about getting out and about.
- *Realistic transport options for all:* while older people are given free bus passes, many are still unable to get around because physical impairment prevents them from using buses, or because there are simply no routes. Transport options should be available for all.
- *Public seating should be made available in many more places:* having somewhere to rest means that older people can remain mobile for longer in their communities and that they can enjoy public spaces.
- *Information and advice:* if no one knows about them, services might just as well not exist. Good advice and information on everything ranging from social care to local volunteering opportunities are essential for older people's well-being.

- *Lifetime homes*: new homes should be built to Lifetime Homes standards and people in existing homes should have access to necessary repairs and adaptations to make their homes last for a lifetime.
- *Older people's voices heard*: older people must be involved in local decisions that affect them, and their voices heard.
- *Places to meet and spend time*: whether it be a public park, a shared community centre or a village hall, spaces for people to meet are vitally important to all of us and all ages.
- *Pavements in good repair*: all pavements should be smooth and non-slip, with a maximum difference in paving-slab height of 2.5cm (1 inch), so that older people are less likely to fall or to have a fear of falling in their local area.
- *Public toilets* should be provided in far greater numbers as they are vital to the many older people who suffer from incontinence; without them many people are rendered housebound. (HtA 2008)

## local programmes

4.29 Local neighbourhood strategies are variable. Some, such as Local Area Coordination or Connected Care, are based upon national templates, whilst others are entirely locally generated. It has not been possible in this review of published sources to undertake a full survey of local programmes, but some examples are given below.

### ➤ Local Area Coordination (LAC)

4.30 LAC is an innovative way to support individuals and families to build a 'good life'

and strengthen the capacity of communities to welcome and include people with disabilities. The concept originated in Australia, pioneered by the work of Eddie Bartnick (Bartnick & Chalmers 2007), and has become popular in Scotland. Like the Neighbourhood Manager, the LAC acts as a coordinator rather than a service provider, and also contributes to building inclusive communities through partnership between individuals and families, local organisations and the broader community. An evaluation of the Scottish experience of LAC was undertaken by Stalker and her colleagues (Stalker 2007), but (as in the case of Neighbourhood Management) it proved difficult to extract clearly identified and measurable outcomes. However, they do suggest three areas of achievement: a better overall quality of life for people; specific differences in individuals' lives; and particular areas of work such as transition to adulthood.

### ➤ Connected Care

4.31 The Connected Care model aims to improve community well-being by reshaping the relationship between services and the communities in which they are delivered. The stated aim is to connect health and social care services with housing, education, employment, community safety, transport and other services, based upon a belief that the gaps between services can be bridged by ensuring that the legitimacy of local user and community voices is recognised. In their evaluation of the Connected Care Centre in one ward in Hartlepool, Callaghan and Wistow (2008) note that if community social capital can be built through involvement and devolved power, the role of the state can then become one of facilitator in a self-sustaining process, rather than a provider of unresponsive services. In effect, the production and ownership of knowledge would become



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the province of the community rather than the 'expert' professional.

4.32 In the case of Hartlepool, a community audit was used as the basis for specifying a new model for ward-based commissioning and service delivery which included proposals for workforce development such as:

- care navigators working on an outreach basis (and possibly recruited from among local residents) to improve access, promote early interventions, support choice and ensure a holistic approach
- a complex care team integrating specialist health, social care and housing support for residents with long-term needs
- a transformation coordinator to manage the service and promote change in existing services so that they are joined up.

4.33 This all adds up to a significant challenge to the traditional model, and the evaluators have been cautious at this stage about making undue claims of success. (Wistow & Callaghan 2008)

➤ Derby Neighbourhood and Social Care Strategy

4.34 Derby's strategy is based upon a neighbourhood mapping exercise which charts the correlation between areas of multiple deprivation and levels of social care need (Derby 2007). One or two neighbourhoods were found to account for high proportions of children on the protection register, and for those accessing adult social care support. This approach is seen as an alternative to the traditional city-wide needs-led model based upon individual needs assessment and pre-judged eligibility criteria, rather

than a bolt-on. The hope is that needs can in future be met at a neighbourhood level, with some specialist resources retaining a city-wide focus. There does not appear to be any independent evaluation of the strategy.

➤ Sheffield Community Portraits

4.35 Community Portraits is a project to measure how suitable neighbourhoods in Sheffield are for the needs of older people, and the intention is to score all neighbourhoods against the outcomes identified in the DH 2006 white paper, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* (improving health and emotional wellbeing; improving quality of life; making a positive contribution; exercising choice and control; enjoying freedom from discrimination and harassment; economic wellbeing) to which has been added personal dignity and respect, access to services and demographic need. The first community portrait was undertaken in the Darnall neighbourhood and included a series of focus groups in the area at which the Community Portrait was discussed. This approach can be understood as a less radical version of Connected Care—one less likely to challenge existing decision-making procedures.

4.36 On the basis of the community portraits, the Sheffield strategy is to refocus neighbourhood delivery across the city to change services from supporting a small number of people with high dependency, to early intervention and support to larger numbers (Sheffield 2007). This has workforce implications, notably the development of 16 community caseworkers (to act as the case-finding 'eyes and ears' of their neighbourhoods) and the creation of neighbourhood-based multi-disciplinary teams to provide a rapid response service and to target people in (or at risk of entering) residential and nursing homes. The Sheffield strategy

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acknowledges that the new model requires an integrated workforce development plan, and it is true to say that the entire notion of neighbourhood policy and practice has significant workforce ramifications. Some of these are the subject of the final section of this report.

➤ Southwark Circle

4.37 The social enterprise, Participle, is developing a neighbourhood-based preventive service (focusing on older people) called Circle with the following core principles:

- moving from a system focused on ‘needs’ to one concerned with developing and maintaining ‘capabilities’
- moving from services that are targeted to a preventive model open to all
- relaxing the absolute focus on the individual to include more of a focus on social networks
- moving from a narrow financial focus to a broader resource focus, thereby enabling a sustainable business case. (Participle 2009)

4.38 This initiative is underway in Southwark and is looking to extend elsewhere. It requires a one-off investment of £680,000 over three years after which, it is said, it will be self-sustaining. The approach begins with research with older people and their families into their hopes, fears, needs and aspirations, out of which tailored proposals for new services and supports are generated. Circle focuses very clearly and specifically upon cost-effectiveness, identifying four categories of potential savings:

- ‘actual cost savings’ which detail what the council and health organisations are actually spending

money on that they can stop spending money on in the future

- ‘preventive cost savings’ - these are conceded to be difficult to measure
- ways in which existing services can be further utilised to deliver greater value for money
- increases in unpaid contributions on the part of Circle participants—the social capital dividend.

4.39 Circle is still in its very early stages and does not yet appear to have been independently evaluated—indeed, many of the benefits could not be expected to emerge for several years.

➤ The Asset Approach

4.40 The ‘asset approach’ is being promoted by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) as a means of improving community health and well-being by harnessing individual, community and social capital. This approach is contrasted with the dominant ‘deficit’ model as outlined here (below).

4.41 The asset approach chimes with a number of agendas, not all of them of the same ideological imperative: personalisation, community development and the creation of a ‘big society’. However, in terms of the neighbourhood focus of this report, it is clearly a locality-based focus where silos and agency boundaries are not helpful.

4.42 The discussion of national and local programmes illustrates the point that in recent times there has been considerable development of community development and capacity building. However, as a report on the ‘venture society’ has remarked, the picture “is of a disparate series of initiatives that have failed to convey an overall vision.” (Singh 2010)

Deficit Approach	Asset Approach
Starts with deficiencies and needs in the community	Starts with the assets in the community
Respond to problems	Identify opportunities and strengths
Provide services to users	Invest in people as citizens
Emphasise the role of agencies	Emphasise the role of civil society
Focus on individuals	Focus on communities/neighbourhoods and the common good
See people as clients and consumers receiving services	See people as citizens and co-producers with something to offer
Treat people as passive and done to	Help people to take control of their lives
'Fix people'	Support people to develop their potential
Implement programmes as the answer	See people as the answer

(IDeA 2010)

## 5 workforce implications

5.1 It is not part of this literature review to properly examine workforce implications or propose a neighbourhood development workforce strategy. The truth is that there is little in the literature to support such an analysis, and this would need to be a priority task in any further work. In his studies of Good Neighbouring schemes, Abrams (Bulmer 1986, 114) notes that many of the people who initially joined the schemes subsequently dropped out because they did not know *how* to be useful, and he remarks that "*the extent to which the untrained are frightened of helping, deterred by their own incompetence, emerges strongly*". Some broad suggestions on possible future developments can be identified.

### neighbourhood mapping and data analysis

5.2 An indispensable prelude to neighbourhood workforce development is a clear understanding of the needs that the workforce is intended to address. This is the aim of neighbourhood mapping and analysis. In part this is about understanding who needs to be consulted and involved. Briggs (2007) urges avoidance of the temptation to start with a 'laundry list' of everyone who has a stake in the neighbourhood. For him the issue is not who counts in the legal or civic sense, but who acts and interacts, around what and with whom. As in the cases of the Hartlepool Connected Care Centre and the Sheffield Portraits, data can be sourced and analysed by undertaking wide consultation and using this to draw up a map of neighbourhood needs and priorities. This is valuable not only in ensuring data is current and valid, but also in promoting the civic engagement of people in the neighbourhood.

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5.3 The ‘asset approach’ proposed by IDeA (2010) takes as its starting point the undertaking of a community-led ‘asset mapping exercise’ with five phases. First, meeting those people who become the core group that will take the lead. Second, contacting the individuals or groups who are active in the community—both formal and informal networks. This will identify the individuals who can do the mapping. Third, through face-to-face conversations, door knocking and other techniques such as storytelling, these individuals collate the assets and talents of individuals in the community. The residents who get involved recruit more people to help who, in turn, carry on mapping more individuals. Fourth, identify the resources and assets of local associations, clubs and volunteers. And finally, map the assets of the agencies including the services they offer, the physical spaces and funding they could provide, and the staff and networks they have. This is an approach similar to that used in the Hartlepool Connected Care project, and one that raises issues of workforce development.

5.4 Such initiatives are costly, therefore it is also important to maximise the use of existing data, typically that which is officially gathered. There have been significant improvements over the past decade in the amount of data available to practitioners and citizens about the areas in which they work and live. Highly localised data on ‘Super Output Areas’ (SOA) of populations of around 7000 attempts to bring together a high volume of information provided for small target areas. SOA data can include:

- health and care data on life expectancy, hospital episodes, healthy lifestyle behaviours and the provision of unpaid care
- crime and community safety data covering crime, fires and road accidents

- community well-being information on community involvement, social inclusion and street cleanliness
- housing data sets on tenure and condition, overcrowding and homelessness
- economic deprivation data relating to economic activity, poverty and welfare benefits.

5.5 Information on this data is at [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov) where 32,482 neighbourhoods in England have been ranked on seven dimensions (income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation, education deprivation, barriers to housing and services, crime and living environment deprivation) to form an aggregate measure of ‘total deprivation’.

5.6 It is nevertheless important not to exaggerate the sophistication of neighbourhood data. The evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders concluded that “*the quality and quantity of timely and publicly available service data at a neighbourhood level for most mainstream services remains severely limited*” (DCLG 2008e, 11). Similarly a wide-ranging review of neighbourhood level data produced for DCLG noted that although a great deal of information is produced at neighbourhood level, “*not all of this data is suitable or robust enough to accurately measure the prevalence of an incident or to identify differences between neighbourhoods or over time*” (DCLG 2008f, 6). And the most recent work on this issue by Tyler, commissioned by DCLG, refers to neighbourhood data as a ‘*black box*’ that needs to be opened up (Tyler 2009).

5.7 A recurring difficulty is the difference we highlighted at the outset of this paper between ‘official’ boundaries and subjective perceptions of what constitutes

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a neighbourhood. Tyler 2009 notes that for the most part it is simply not possible to get accurate survey data from service providers at the neighbourhood level because sample sizes are not large enough. Indeed, the gathering of survey data at this level is often not even considered by authorities because it is costly and is not required through monitoring regimes. The issue is not one of technical constraint but rather unwillingness to act.

5.8 Even making use of existing data presents difficulties because of the shortage of data analysis skills. This problem comes across clearly in the national evaluation of the Supporting Evidence for Local Delivery (SELD) pilots, which reviews the impact of the pilots on improving the use of evidence by neighbourhood renewal practitioners and decision makers (DCLG 2008g). The SELD pilot programme was introduced in 2005 to promote better use of data, research and evidence in neighbourhood renewal through the provision of technical assistance to LSPs and neighbourhood renewal partnerships. Among the findings of the evaluation are:

- 80% of partnership managers identified analytical skill needs within their partnership, most frequently relating to interpreting and challenging data
- aspects of these needs include knowing how to ‘create a narrative’ from data analysis and assessing the quality of evidence
- 40% of partnership managers indicated that limits on available analytical skills had hampered partnership performance
- there is relatively short supply of expertise in statistical techniques, IT

applications, indicator selection and target setting

- the scale of the skills gap is likely to be understated – a common response was ‘we don’t know what we don’t know’
- nearly half of partnership managers experienced difficulty in sourcing analytical advice and assistance.

### **community engagement and involvement**

5.9 Community engagement and involvement is now widely seen as a self-evident virtue. Burton 2004 identifies three key benefits:

- it aids social cohesion through its developmental effects on individuals and hence on society
- the planning and delivery of services is effective and decisions are accorded legitimacy since they reflect the interests of participants
- it is a right of citizenship that is justified on the grounds of due process.

5.10 Central to the promotion of neighbourhoodism is the concept of ‘*community capacity building*’ – a term that originated in the academic literature (Chaskin 1999) and is now increasingly used in official discourse. A Home Office report, for example, describes it as: “*activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities.*” (HO 2004)

5.11 Chaskin identifies four fundamental characteristics of community capacity, as follows, observing that different

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communities may have different levels of each.

- *A sense of community*: a degree of connectedness among members and a recognition of mutuality of circumstance.
- *A level of commitment among community members*: this covers the existence of community members who see themselves as stakeholders in the collective wellbeing of the neighbourhood, and their willingness to perform actively in that role.
- *Mechanisms of problem-solving*: the capacity to translate commitment into action by identifying priorities and solving problems.
- *Access to resources*: economic, human, physical and political, including those external to the neighbourhood.

5.12 In the UK the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) funded a four year programme of ‘light touch’ support in 20 neighbourhoods to support community groups and organisations. The idea was to offer support not through major funding, but through a range of ‘light touch’ resources, and to build a ‘learning network’ through which the organisations could share experiences and support each other. The evaluation of the programme showed that the participating organisations identified a number of common challenges at the outset:

- *local knowledge and analysis*: few such organisations pay attention to planning unless it is a funding requirement
- *engaging with the wider community*: small organisations often lack the

knowledge or confidence to go out and engage more people

- *organisational capacity and leadership*: few resources tend to be invested in building this capacity
- *divisions and fragmentation in the neighbourhood*: many communities do have social capital, but they lack the capacity to build ties across diverse social groups
- *lack of influence with local power-holders*: many community organisations still feel marginalised in partnerships with statutory authorities and other agencies
- *difficulties in securing sustainable funding*: four of the twenty organisations in the programme failed to survive in their original form. (JRF 2007)

5.13 Despite these obstacles, the JRF programme was able to demonstrate the potential of a small pot of flexible funding, a little mentoring from a trusted ‘critical friend’, and the opportunity to meet with other neighbourhood organisations—at a cost of around £7500 per neighbourhood per year. For most participants it was access to five facilitators (working on a regional basis) that constituted the strength of the programme. Their role was to:

- support capacity building and organisational development
- encourage groups to grow and broaden their membership
- help to establish organisational systems
- signpost organisations to further sources of information and contacts
- help groups to plan more strategically

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- operate variously as mentor, critical friend, mediator and independent broker as required.

5.14 The role of the facilitator in the JRF programme is not dissimilar from the traditional role of community development workers, though the latter have more of a focus upon linking people in their neighbourhoods with the wider planning structures where there is the power to shift resources or reshape how services are delivered. Although the traditional specialist role of ‘community development worker’ is now less common, the role continues in specialist niches and services such as neighbourhood management, community arts, health promotion initiatives, anti-drug campaigns, youth work and Sure Start.

5.15 The 2007/8 Citizenship Survey published by DCLG (2009b) finds some evidence of self-reported involvement in volunteering, but the figures are not broken down on a small area basis. The survey reports that 27% of people in England say they participated in formal volunteering at least once a month, and 35% claim to have participated in ‘informal volunteering’—in both cases a 3% fall on the position recorded in 2005. Those people classified as at risk of social exclusion were less likely to regularly participate. The more recent 2008-09 survey reveals little change in these respects (DCLG 2010c). Fewer than half of the people surveyed said that they would like to be more involved in decisions affecting their local area, but people who felt strongly that they belonged to their neighbourhood were more likely than those who did not have such strong feelings to participate in civic engagement.

5.16 The evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (DCLG 2008e) was able to report some success in widening community

engagement, beyond a handful of people in the early stages to a strong core of 20–60 involved in deliberative processes such as board membership and contributing to working groups. This was complemented by the more limited involvement of larger numbers of local residents in networks, forums and consultation exercises. A study of Pathfinder board membership found it to be broadly representative of the local population in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, though engaging young people was more challenging.

5.17 The recently published national evaluation of participatory budgeting offers evidence on the use of a small ‘community chest’ (averaging around £2000) to engage small communities in decision-making (DCLG 2010d). The interim evaluation reports improvements along several dimensions, including: self-esteem and confidence; people’s sense of their ability to influence local decision-making; and local ‘community capacity’, especially when linked to wider community development or neighbourhood management initiatives. A kindred initiative is Community Cashback, which (in 2010/11) will be repeated to enable communities to decide how to spend the recovered proceeds of criminal activity in their neighbourhoods.

5.18 The 2008 Place Survey published by DCLG (2008a) reported that while 80% of people said they were happy with their area, only 45% were satisfied with the way the local council was performing. Partly in response to this, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 lays a new duty on councils to respond to petitions, and to tell local people what action is going to be taken to address their concerns. Guidance covers examples of the responses councils should consider in four key areas: under-performing schools, alcohol-related crime

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and disorder, under-performing health services and anti-social behaviour (DCLG 2009c). This may tie in well with the push towards neighbourhood policing.

### **developing neighbourhood leaders**

5.19 Although recent years have seen a flurry of policy programmes aimed at neighbourhood level activity, there does not appear to have been much discussion about the nature of neighbourhood leadership. Guidance published by DCLG on ‘building cohesive communities’ does identify several aspects of effective community leadership:

- in touch and able to listen to all sections of their community
- able to involve others and work in partnership
- make things happen locally
- make good use of resources
- accountable to the community
- committed to developing new leaders
- gateways rather than gatekeepers. (DCLG 2009d)

5.20 Precisely who should carry out such roles, whether alone or in partnership, is less obvious, but it has to involve both formal and informal neighbourhood leaders.

### **informal neighbourhood leaders**

5.21 The early studies by Abrams (Bulmer 1986) and (in the USA) by Collins and Pancoast (1976) both highlight the role of the ‘sociometric stars’ – or key individuals – at the heart of a dense local network of help. These are precisely the people whose position and activities enable them to link family-based informal care, wider neighbourhood involvement and formal neighbourhood practitioners and

programmes. Moreover, they are normally visible incumbents of central roles such as leaders of community associations, priests, publicans and postmasters.

5.22 For Collins and Pancoast this helping minority was not distinguished from the inactive majority sociologically, but ‘psychologically’. They were ‘natural neighbours’ who provided a centre through which help flowed to others, without any directly comparable reciprocal return. Workforce implications are rarely mentioned, and there are still some important lessons to be learned about engaging informal neighbourhood leaders as ‘community ambassadors’, community monitors and even paraprofessionals. There may be scope in this situation for a new aspect to the New Type of Worker initiative.

5.23 Similar observations can be made about the role of volunteers—an activity which may or may not be neighbourhood-focused. In a study of volunteering on the part of older people in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Lie (2009) found motivations to be strongly shaped by notions of ‘citizenship’ – the satisfaction of contributing and feeling a part of the community. They distinguish this motivation from official attempts to tempt younger people into voluntary activity by portraying it as a route into paid employment. However, they also warn that volunteering among older people is under threat from several quarters: the pressure to continue in the labour market, childcare and social care gaps needing to be filled informally by older people, and the increased professionalisation and bureaucratisation of the voluntary sector.

### **formal neighbourhood leaders**

5.24 One of the difficulties with the current raft of professional ‘neighbourhood practice’ is that it is fragmented; although



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many people may be operating at this level, they rarely do so in concert. Moreover there is no established leadership of the 'neighbourhood mission'—each group operates in its own professional and organisational silo, with different sources of funding and different channels of accountability. Hence there are across the UK an estimated 230 'neighbourhood management partnerships', alongside 500 neighbourhood warden schemes and 250 town centre management schemes. There are workforce issues here around coordination and leadership.

5.25 Alongside all of this is the neighbourhood level role played by mainstream professionals, such as community police officers, community pharmacists, GPs, teachers, social workers, housing officers, community nurses, community development officers and others. With increasing numbers of

localities expressing an aspiration for a neighbourhood-focused approach, questions will have to be asked about the fragmentation of current neighbourhood practice by separate professional groups, often visiting the same individuals and families. A key task for a neighbourhood workforce development strategy will be to identify the scope for synergy, efficiency and better neighbourhood outcomes across the entire informal and formal neighbourhood workforce.

5.26 The suggestion in the *Total Place* strategy that this new joined-up approach could be applied at various levels, including that of a neighbourhood, may open up some interesting new possibilities (HMT/DCLG 2010). It is suggested (p71), for example, that local authorities and their partners will be able to propose 'single offers' and 'innovative policy offers' focused at neighbourhood level.

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## 6 conclusions and next steps

6.1 It is important to reiterate that this report does not constitute a preliminary neighbourhood workforce development strategy; rather it is a prelude to any such development. What the paper has sought to do is draw together a diverse range of literatures about neighbourhoods – from sociology, social policy and public policy – with a view to ensuring that further workforce development is evidence-based. Although some messages about workforce development have been highlighted, these are best regarded as provisional. Our key messages have been identified but here we summarise the central conclusions once more.

- Terms such as ‘neighbour’ and ‘neighbourhood’ are ambiguous and in many ways subjective.
- While neighbourhoods might be defined geographically (in various ways), the *meaning* of neighbourhoods is generally understood by those who live there in terms of local networks and relationships.
- Neighbourhood and community are often said to be in decline and to have been eroded by modernisation and urbanisation.
- Neighbouring can be conceptualised in terms of a continuum and neighbourliness is mediated by a number of variables including proximity, timeliness, physical environment, length of residence, social polarisation and personal circumstances.
- It is unwise to equate the concept of neighbourhood with emotional and normative assumptions about the capacity of the neighbourhood to act as a rich source of social capital.
- The term ‘social capital’ is often poorly defined, but most definitions identify the core issues of social networks cooperating for mutual benefit. However, not all social capital is built on neighbourhoods and networks can have a wider basis.
- Social capital can be an alternative to state support *or* it can provide locally generated initiatives that fit within a national policy framework.
- Various national government-level programmes have focused on neighbourhood based strategies (including neighbourhood renewal, safer stronger communities, and neighbourhood management pathfinders).
- Local neighbourhood strategies include those which are located within a national framework (including Local Area Coordination and Connected Care) and others that are entirely locally generated.
- In the non-statutory sector a range of neighbourhood-focused programmes include time banks, pledge banks and lifetime neighbourhood initiatives.
- The development of alternative currencies to support the ‘economy of regard’ are advocated by some enthusiasts, as is the principle of expecting all adults to provide a certain number of hours of support to other citizens over the course of a

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year or a lifetime (the germ of this idea was included in the 2010 Conservative election manifesto).

- Any attempt to address a neighbourhood development workforce strategy should start by understanding needs by means of neighbourhood mapping and analysis. At present the quality of neighbourhood level data is limited, and there is poor capacity to analyse and understand what data do exist.
- Community capacity building can be valuable on a small scale and its promotion sits within the tradition of community development workers. How best to develop neighbourhood leadership is an area that has been relatively neglected to date.
- Much neighbourhood level activity is fragmented, poorly coordinated and with professional groups often operating with the same individuals and families. At minimum there is scope for improving synergy and efficiency and delivering better neighbourhood outcomes across the informal, third sector and formal neighbourhood workforces.

6.2 The transformation agenda of *Putting People First* (DH 2007) attached central emphasis to people who use services having greater choice and control over their lives. The Department of Health has identified four inter-related areas on which councils and their partners should focus in delivering these objectives, one of which is termed 'social capital'. This is defined in terms of:

*"...how society works to make sure everyone has the opportunity to be part of a community and experience the*

*friendships and care that can come from families, friends and neighbours."*

6.3 The literature we have reviewed indicates that this is a somewhat narrow and simplistic view of the meaning of social capital. Analysis of the development of policy on the transformation of adult social care also makes clear that the understanding of the implications for community and neighbourhood has been largely implicit to date. The March 2009 Department of Health circular for local authorities about 'transformation' of social care refers to the need for work to improve wellbeing "*in line with the needs of the local population*", and in the context of remodelling systems and processes acknowledges "*the ability of individuals to identify cost effective personalised solutions through wider community networks and innovation.*" (DH/LAC 2009) The 'milestones' document issued jointly by ADASS, the LGA and Department of Health was similarly vague about the steps that should be taken in respect of communities or building social capital, beyond underlining the importance of local commissioning strategies being developed with all stakeholders (ADASS 2010).

6.4 If the development of social capital *is* to be pursued as the fourth quartet of the transformation agenda, considerable conceptual and practical work will be required. This is all the more important in the context of a new government that has stated its commitment to building communities and neighbourhoods and empowering them to do more for themselves, with the support of a 'new generation of community organisers'. This will need to build on the evidence and experience gathered from a wide range of work over several decades on neighbourhoodism, neighbouring and concepts of co-production, such as we have summarised above. It is essential that

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any attempt to link these elements to an emerging workforce strategy is grounded in reality rather than in any naively optimistic view about the nature of communities, neighbourhoods and reciprocity. Nevertheless there is scope to explore the factors that can facilitate and nurture the preconditions for mutuality and support, and that needs to be the focus for a further stage of work.

6.5 We have noted the development of the Building Community Capacity project in the Department of Health. At present the case studies appear to be focusing on innovative service development and social capital promotion. The ‘trailblazer’ sites that are participating in the Building Community Capacity project could potentially provide further opportunities to pilot parallel areas of work needed around workforce and community skills development. Currently the sites do not appear to focus on the workforce implications of their programmes.

6.6 This paper has been prepared to inform the next stages of development and to assist Skills for Care in addressing the workforce implications of the transformation agenda in general, and the development of social capital in particular. Although the workforce implications of neighbourhoodism have yet to be articulated, there are some general issues that can be raised and these are set out below.

6.7 ***Everybody’s business:***

Neighbourhood policy and practice crosses all sectors—informal, independent, statutory and the voluntary and community sector. It also straddles many organisational and professional boundaries, and is about much more than Skills for Care and the Department of Health. An area of around 10,000 population, for example, is likely to contain

primary health care services, community health services, adults’ and children’s social care and support, early years and primary school provision, neighbourhood policing, a community pharmacy, neighbourhood wardens of some sort, a number of voluntary and community groups, housing offices, commercial and leisure facilities, and some measure of social capital. All of these contributions are important but they are rarely joined up, and there has not been any attempt to develop a coherent focus upon the workforce implications. As we have also remarked, neighbourhood policy and practice is also, and increasingly, the focus of political interest across all main parties and is therefore likely to remain a key focus for innovation and development for the next and subsequent administrations.

6.8 ***Weaving together formal and informal support:***

There has been a tendency for care *in* the neighbourhood and care *by* the neighbourhood to develop along separate tracks. This misses a crucial opportunity to develop synergy between the informal neighbourhood leaders identified in this report, and those with more formal positions. Any workforce development strategy will need to encompass formal and informal, paid and voluntary elements.

6.9 ***A common body of skills and knowledge:***

There will be some generic areas of skills and knowledge that are important to all neighbourhood-based practitioners but that are not routinely addressed in current education and training. These might include theoretical and conceptual issues; empirical evidence on neighbourliness; reviews of neighbourhood policies; the importance of a joined-up approach; illustrations of good practice; and skills in neighbourhood mapping and data analysis. The key issue is exploring the scope for learning synergy

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across all of those with a stake in neighbourhood level working.

6.10 ***Testing the capacity of social capital:*** When so much of the essence of social capital is about mutualism, altruism and voluntarism, it is uncertain how best to develop and encourage these qualities and – particularly – whether a more formal *requirement* for citizens to contribute to their communities will drive out the very qualities it tries to engender. Any workforce development strategy will need to explore the issues around voluntarism and compulsion, and to investigate the impact of incentives in shaping behaviour (both at the level of individuals and on a community or neighbourhood basis).

6.11 These key issues – and probably others – could offer the beginnings of a framework within which to locate exploratory pilot developments linking a workforce development model to neighbourhoodism and community capacity building. There is a resurgence of interest in ‘the neighbourhood’ evident on many levels, not least in party politics and in the new ambition to build the big society. It is important that the opportunities this creates are seized and built upon rather than merely going the way of much political rhetoric and having a relatively short shelf life. There is potential to promote social capital and to develop the workforce – in public, private, charitable, and social enterprise arenas - in innovative and productive ways which transcend passing political fashion and economic expediency.

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