Figs project, Birmingham

Ageing Better

COMMUNITY FUND

Ageing Better: Local responses to the COVID-19 pandemic – neighbourliness and reciprocity

The Ageing Better programme

Ageing Better is a six-year programme which has funded 14 England-wide partnerships to address the issues of loneliness and social isolation in communities of people aged over 50. Commencing in 2015, the programme was entering its sixth year when the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

This is the second in a series of rapid review papers, which summarise key features of Ageing Better partnerships' responses, in reorganising their support to reach people over 50 most affected by the pandemic. The papers are based on a review of wider policy and practice, and products (including self-reported data) published by the Ageing Better partnerships. Each paper will explore a different theme and culminate in a longer review due to be published in the Autumn. Please visit: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/ageing-better to find out more.

We know that before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, social isolation and loneliness presented clear challenges for society. More than a quarter of men and two fifths of women aged 55 or over said they always or sometimes feel lonely[i]. We also know many older people didn't have regular social contact, with around a tenth of older people being in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a month, and a further two-tenths having similar contact less than once a week[ii].

While the impacts of lockdown policies and the gradual easing of restrictions on social isolation and loneliness are yet to be fully realised, initial surveys during the pandemic showed a quarter of older people felt lonely in the previous seven days[iii].

Ageing Better partnerships recognise that COVID-19 presents a significant challenge for communities. As the lockdown is eased, some people over 50 are experiencing fear and anxiety leaving their home and mixing with other people[iv]. Ageing Better has supported many people to become more mentally and physically active and connected within their communities over time. Learning from Ageing Better has consistently highlighted the importance of routine, structure and a sense of purpose to people's overall mental health and wellbeing[v]. The current situation has required people to adapt quickly to new and different ways of interacting, socialising and taking part in meaningful activities. Although some people need support with this[vi], they may also become part of the solution, feeling empowered to assist their neighbours and support their communities. Informal support networks have become increasingly important during the pandemic and have developed quickly.

In this paper, we consider two key questions:

- How has Ageing Better supported neighbourliness and reciprocity during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are we learning that can enable our communities to recover in the longer-term?

How has Ageing Better supported neighbourliness and reciprocity during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Ageing Better has empowered people over 50 to contribute to local responses to the pandemic through 'social action', building on their existing abilities. Informal volunteering opportunities have increased, through approaches known as 'neighbourliness', 'reciprocity' and 'mutual aid', whereby people are both helped and help others. This paper explains how these approaches are gathering pace, and can support community recovery from the pandemic.

Building neighbourliness and the ability to self-organise

Neighbourliness and social action

Neighbourliness refers to local people interacting, offering practical help and resources[vii]. The approach embodies social action, which The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) defines as:

"People coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It involves people giving their time and other resources for the common good. This can be in a range of forms, from volunteering and community owned services to simple neighbourly acts"[viii].

The Ageing Better programme is designed to build social action networks, to help reduce social isolation and loneliness. The programme seeks to do this by harnessing and updating existing skills and supporting people to develop new abilities, working together to co-design and co-produce community activities[ix]. In response to the pandemic, Ageing Better stakeholders have applied social action principles to self-organise and help their local communities. In this way, Ageing Better is contributing towards wider social trends, with neighbours increasingly reaching out to support each other[x], and forming local support groups to assist people in need[xi]. Recent figures suggest many people are supporting their neighbours during the pandemic:

- Nearly two in three adults (62.6) had checked in on neighbours who might need help at least once in the last seven days (up from 53.8% previous week); and
- Over one in three adults (37.5%) had gone shopping or done other tasks for neighbours (up from 27.7% the previous week)[xii].

Supporting informal volunteering and empowering marginalised groups

Informal volunteering covers a wide range of activities and is defined as giving unpaid help to someone who is not a relative. Informal volunteering can be provided on a more ad hoc basis than 'formal' volunteering, which focuses on fulfilling a set role at regular intervals for a group, club or organisation[xiii]. Informal volunteering empowers *"Older People in the Lead"*; a principle which underpins the Ageing Better programme. This approach emphasises asset-based volunteering, enabling people to utilise a range of skills flexibly[xiv], around other commitments and considerations.

Over time, Ageing Better partnerships have worked hard to diversify their volunteering base, consulting stakeholders on the language associated with 'volunteering'. Whilst some people are proud to be called a 'volunteer', this wording can be off-putting to others, who may prefer to contribute on a more informal basis. Terms such as becoming a 'member' or 'helper' are more appealing to some people,

encouraging contributions on a flexible basis. Ageing Better partnerships found that people warmed to terms such as 'mutual support' rather than 'giving back'. Collaborative approaches work best, whereby people discuss their interests and what they would like to contribute and then roles or tasks are designed accordingly[xv].

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Highlight: Micro-funding and volunteering

Collaborative approaches are embodied in micro-funding initiatives. The Ageing Better programme has invested more than £4 million into micro-funding, which encourages volunteers to utilise existing skills and develop new abilities to aid their communities[xvi]. Activities range from people over 50 volunteering on commissioning panels and delivering activities[xvii] to providing practical peer support such as face-to-face befriending. Although some of this activity is currently paused in response to government physical distancing guidelines, these tried and tested approaches are informing new social action initiatives, which are supporting community recovery.

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Ageing Better has demonstrated the appeal of informal volunteering approaches over time. Many people became 'participant volunteers', using their skills to pursue a creative hobby which also enabled them to give something back to their community. For example, Ageing Better in Cheshire supported a micro-funded project run by mainly male volunteers who made bespoke furniture from reclaimed wood. The group raised funds to support the wildlife charity that acted as their initial host[xviii]. Meanwhile Ageing Better in Camden found that skills-based projects, such as "Men's sheds" may appeal to men as they could apply their skills in a social environment.

"Our conversations with men have suggested that men are less likely to socialise for the sake of socialising and would rather have another reason for going out and meeting other people."[xix] (Ageing Better Partnership team)

Ageing Better highlights the importance of using appealing language to promote informal volunteering opportunities to different groups. For example, Ageing Better in Hackney emphasise asset-based principles in their advertising, asking 'how you can help', rather than 'how we can help you'. This terminology empowered male volunteers to assist other men, providing transport and befriending support[xx]. Ageing Better in Bristol also found that projects supported by older male volunteers helped to engage peers. These findings can inform the COVID-19 response, engaging men through purposeful activities with their peers.

The rise in neighbourliness may have particular benefits for some groups affected by COVID-19, such as BAME communities. Whilst it is recognised that BAME groups may feel more disconnected from the wider community[xxi] some are very engaged in neighbourly actions and helping others within family networks[xxii].

The rise in informal volunteering may also empower people over 50 with health challenges to provide peer support. Within the Ageing Better programme, it is hoped that people shielding or at risk of returning to shielding in future lockdowns may be keen to provide peer support, particularly via telephone befriending[xxiii].

Whilst the rise in neighbourliness and community action is to be celebrated, people should remain vigilant and aware of potential risks. Many organisations have updated their safety guidance, to increase awareness of doorstep scams[xxiv]. Recognising that some groups may be at particular risk, Ambition for Ageing, the Ageing Better partnership in Greater Manchester, helped produce a local authority paper on the impact of COVID-19 on local marginalised communities. The paper highlights several issues, such as how people should pay for goods delivered by volunteers, and that BAME groups may experience language barriers in accessing healthcare. Concerns were also raised about people pretending to be volunteers knocking on doors and offering services or virus testing[xxv]. Ageing Better partnerships are continuing to review the effects of neighbourliness on marginalised groups to help safeguard communities in the longer-term.

By demonstrating the real contribution older people are making to their communities, Ageing Better is challenging the common COVID-19 narrative that older people are defined by needing protection. This provides a positive vision of empowering participants and volunteers[xxvi] and works against the resurfacing of ageism and negative connotations of older people being vulnerable and dependent on others[xxvii]. Ageing Better's emphasis on supporting people to become 'participant volunteers' who help to run activities[xxviii], drives social action. This builds a sense of community spirit and may help reduce some of the psychological impacts caused by the pandemic[xxix]. For example:

- In Torbay, the Good Neighbours Network quickly emerged in response to the pandemic, providing street level self-help. Guidance has been provided to 55 micro neighbourliness schemes so far, so they can help each other safely and access further support from Ageing Better Torbay's Community Builders[xxx].

Volunteering appears to have risen during the pandemic[xxxi] across the Ageing Better programme. Existing Ageing Better participants, volunteers, staff and partners from local organisations have been joined by new volunteers helping out in their communities. This has involved bringing together people from a variety of backgrounds, including furloughed workers; people still working or caring for family members; retired people and students. The increasingly flexible ways that people can volunteer gives real opportunities for more people to continue supporting their local communities as they return to work or study. This could increase intergenerational volunteering, particularly providing support to enhance digital inclusion[xxxii].

The rise in neighbourliness means many people are volunteering informally for the first time. General advice for new volunteers supporting older neighbours is available online[xxxiii]. Ageing Better is supporting this approach by tailoring training materials and guidance for new volunteers. For example, Leeds Older People's Forum, (LOPF), which leads an Ageing Better partnership[xxxiv] has helped develop the local response, working with partners through the Leeds Community Care volunteering scheme hosted by Voluntary Action Leeds. The scheme initially recruited 300 local people to become RU OK? volunteers to help people affected by the pandemic. LOPF and their partners ran online volunteer induction sessions covering common working practices and safety protocols[xxxv]. People volunteering informally to help their neighbours are also signposted to the *Being a Good Neighbour Pack[xxxvi]*.

Mutual aid and kindness

> ## Mutual Aid groups
>
> Across the UK, mutual aid groups have emerged to support marginalised individuals during the pandemic. Mutual aid groups can be defined as:
>
> *Self-organising groups where people come together to address a shared health or social issue through mutual support[xxxvii].*
>
> The mutual aid movement embodies 'community power', working flexibly, responsively and in a person-centred manner, based on the concept of reciprocity. These groups have reached isolated people, provided essential food and medicine and helped with a wide range of tasks.

Ageing Better stakeholders are building on their volunteering expertise developed over the past five years to enhance their mutual aid offer:

- In Hackney, Ageing Better volunteers are sharing their skills online via mutual aid groups or other local networks, such as sharing arts and craft expertise[xxxviii].
- In Thanet, flexible volunteering approaches are empowering people to adapt. Some volunteer-led groups initially kept in touch with their face-to-face groups through WhatsApp, and are now running online Zoom sessions to share experiences and keep in touch[xxxix].

Mutual aid groups have flourished where local people are already networking and working age people have more time. This highlights the importance of proactively supporting community mobilisation and capacity building, to enable communities to develop self-organising support groups on an equal footing[xl]. Ageing Better demonstrates the value of investing support in this area. The Torbay partnership's revised volunteering model complements community action with a coordinated helpline, providing direct support and signposting to other services. The model is

based on encouraging reciprocity, which is central to building meaningful connections and relationships. People are asked what they can offer and contribute as well as what help they might need; exploring both purpose and need[xli].

"Underpinning our model…are two principles: harnessing kindness and fostering reciprocity." (Ageing Better Partnership lead)

Groups supported to come together through the Ageing Better programme are undertaking acts of kindness, reaching further into their communities across the country. For example:

- In Middlesbrough, the 'Crafty Capers' group have created teddy bears, hearts, and over 200 comfort and scrub bags for patients at James Cook University Hospital. The group meets online to chat about their volunteering activities and mutual love of knitting[xlii].
- In Torbay, the Ageing Better team set up the hashtag #TorbayKind, to share spontaneous acts of kindness. Activities range from gardening and shopping to physically distanced exercise classes in the street. Before the lockdown, neighbours distributed leaflets to collect telephone numbers and permission to keep in touch with each other through telephone trees or WhatsApp groups. New friendships have evolved and communities have come together[xliii].

Emerging benefits for individuals and communities

The benefits of volunteering are widely documented[xliv]. Over time, it is hoped evidence will demonstrate that new volunteers become more resilient personally by helping others. Enhancing individuals' personal resilience and sense of neighbourliness builds community resilience, with local groups and social networks strengthening the collective response to tackling challenges and creating local solutions. Community resilience underpins longer-term recovery[xlv]. Ageing Better partnerships are already reflecting on the links between personal and community resilience in response to the pandemic. For example, Ageing Better in Torbay note the strength and resilience shown by people volunteering during the pandemic, with almost 2,000 volunteers and neighbours matched to help other local people. The Ageing Better partnership notes that community resilience, collaboration and the 'ability-to-respond' has been empowered by their work in Torbay over time[xlvi].

What are we learning that can enable the longer-term recovery of our communities?

The learning provided by Ageing Better partnerships tends to fit with similar information from the wider community sector, suggesting that longer-term community recovery could:

- Create opportunities for more people to utilise their assets and skills to volunteer informally. How can we harness the power of self-organising groups to help sustain communities in recovery? How can we balance volunteering opportunities and make them fit as much as possible with other work/study/caring commitments?[xlvii]
- Empower marginalised groups to drive local community solutions. What can we learn from the rise in neighbourliness and reciprocity to enable communities to flourish in the longer-term? How can we ensure vulnerable people continue to be able to engage safely?
- Establish neighbourliness as the norm, as the basis for a sustainable future in which local people support each other. How can we maintain the energy and drive for neighbourliness which developed during lockdown? What approaches, such as micro-funding, could help empower people to lead local community action[xlviii]? How can we enhance social action through local activities?

Looking forward

In our role at Ecorys as the independent evaluator and learning partner for the Ageing Better programme, we are working with TNLCF and Ageing Better partnerships to generate programme insights and will share these through future leaning papers and events to influence wider service design. This paper has been written by Ecorys, in collaboration with TNLCF. We are producing a series of similar rapid review papers over the next few months summarising Ageing Better's response to the pandemic. Forthcoming papers will focus on topics including: tackling the digital divide and alternative support; and developing protective factors. Details on the **wider evidence base** generated by the evaluation can be found on The National Lottery Community Fund website.

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[i] British Red Cross (2016) Isolation and Loneliness: An overview of the literature https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/about-us/research-publications/health-social-care-and-support/co-op-isolation-loneliness-overview.pdf

[ii] Age UK (2015) cited in Age UK (2019) Later Life in the United Kingdom 2019 https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/later_life_uk_factsheet.pdf

[iii] Office for National Statistics (2020) Coronavirus and loneliness https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandloneliness

[iv] Covid-19 Transition Phase – learning from Ageing Better https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing-Better-Covid-19-Transition-Phase.pdf?mtime=20200714115157&focal=none

[v] For example, Ecorys with The National Lottery Community Fund, March 2020. Learning Paper No.5 Micro-funding: Empowering Communities to Create Grassroots Change. Available from: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_learning_report_5_evaluation_report.pdf

[vi] Covid-19 – learning from Ageing Better
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_Covid19.pdf?mtime=20200408124030&focal=none

[vii] The Young Foundation (2010) Understanding neighbourliness and belonging
https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Understanding-neighbourliness-and-belonging-September-2008.pdf

[viii] https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/place-based-social-action

[ix] This has similarities with the Place Based Social Action (PBSA) programme, which seeks to create positive change by enabling people, communities, local non-statutory organisations and the statutory sector to work collaboratively to create a shared vision for the future of their place, and address local priorities through social action. The PBSA programme is jointly funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and the National Lottery Community Fund. It provides approximately £4.5M of funding up until December 2024.
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/place-based-social-action

[x] Neighbourliness is known to have a positive effect on people's feelings of connection, and has increased through the community response to COVID-19. British Red Cross (2020). Life after lockdown: Tackling Loneliness among those left behind https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/research-publications

[xi] More than 2000 local support groups have been established during the pandemic.
https://www.mutual-aid.co.uk/

[xii] ONS weekly research on Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/23april2020

[xiii] UK CIVIL SOCIETY ALMANAC 2020 DATA. TRENDS. INSIGHTS.
https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/

[xiv] For example, Ecorys with The National Lottery Community Fund, January 2020. Learning Paper No.4 Engaging Marginalised People Over 50. Available from:
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/prog_fulfilling_lives_ageing_better_learning_report_4.pdf?mtime=20200313105446&focal=none

[xv] Language – learning from Ageing Better
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_Use_of_language.pdf?mtime=20200722145230&focal=none

[xvi] For example, Ecorys with The National Lottery Community Fund, March 2020. Learning Paper No.5 Micro-funding: Empowering Communities to Create Grassroots Change. Available from:
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_learning_report_5_evaluation_report.pdf

[xvii] For further informatonn: Ageing Better's asset-based volunteering approaches, please view the Ecorys micro-funding report and film https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/ageing-better

[xviii] For example, Ecorys with The National Lottery Community Fund, March 2020. Learning Paper No.5 Micro-funding: Empowering Communities to Create Grassroots Change. Available from:
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_learning_report_5_evaluation_report.pdf

[xix] Working and engaging with men – learning from Ageing Better
https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_working_with_men_summary.pdf?mtime=20200422164345&focal=none

xx Ecorys with The National Lottery Community Fund, January 2020. Learning Paper No.4 Engaging Marginalised People Over 50. Available from: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/prog_fulfilling_lives_ageing_better_learning_report_4.pdf?mtime=20200313105446&focal=none

xxi We know that neighbourliness also has a positive impact on people's feelings of connection. Our data suggests that people from BAME backgrounds are at greater risk of feeling estranged from their neighbours, with over half (52 per cent) reporting that their neighbours are like strangers to them, compared to 37 per cent of UK adults as a whole. https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/life-after-lockdown-tackling-loneliness

xxii Ethnic minorities are more likely to live in multi-generational households. Professor Lucinda Platt, London School of Economics webinar June 2020.

xxiii Covid-19 Transition Phase – learning from Ageing Better https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing-Better-Covid-19-Transition-Phase.pdf?mtime=20200714115157&focal=none

xxiv For example, Independent Age offers advice on avoiding scams https://www.independentage.org/get-advice/money/scams/different-types-of-scam

xxv The paper highlights BAME groups are over-represented in the "at-risk" communities. For example South Asian people have a higher prevalence of diabetes and Black African people are disproportionately affected by HIV. BAME groups are also more likely to live in multi-generational households or with people at higher risk. Furthermore, BAME people are much more likely to live in densely populated and deprived areas where NHS services are already overstretched. GMCA (April 2020) Impact of COVID-19 on equalities and diverse communities https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/system/files/IMPACT%20OF%20COVID-19%20ON%20EQUALITIES%20AND%20DIVERSE%20COMMUNITIES.pdf

xxvi Covid-19 – learning from Ageing Better https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_Covid19.pdf?mtime=20200408124030&focal=none

xxvii Centre for Ageing Better (July 2020) COVID-19 and ageism – the view from outside the UK https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/covid-19-and-ageism-view-outside-uk

xxviii For example, Ecorys with The National Lottery Community Fund, March 2020. Learning Paper No.5 Micro-funding: Empowering Communities to Create Grassroots Change. Available from: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_learning_report_5_evaluation_report.pdff

xxix Covid-19 – learning from Ageing Better https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_Covid19.pdf?mtime=20200408124030&focal=none

xxx Torbay Community Development Trust (July 2020) Pandemic Response: Building resilience in the community in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Ageing Well Torbay Learning Series https://ageingwelltorbay.com/2020/07/15/pandemic-response-building-resilience-in-the-community-in-response-to-covid-19-pandemic-2020-report/

xxxi The rise in volunteering has also been noted on other TNLCF programmes such as the Place Based Social Action (PBSA) Programme https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/place-based-social-action/prog_pbsa_learning_covid_crisis.pdf?mtime=20200610114306&focal=none

xxxii Covid-19 Transition Phase – learning from Ageing Better https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing-Better-Covid-19-Transition-Phase.pdf?mtime=20200714115157&focal=none

xxxiii Independent Age (June 2020) Advice for volunteers supporting people in their own communities https://www.independentage.org/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-volunteers-supporting-people

[xxxiv] Ageing Better in Leeds website https://timetoshineleeds.org/friendly-communities/coronavirus-and-older-people-in-leeds

[xxxv] Further information is available online: https://timetoshineleeds.org/blog/are-you-ok

[xxxvi] Produced by Voluntary Action Leeds and Leeds City Council https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk/assets/files/Good%20Neighbour%20Pack%20Revised%203%20April.pdf

[xxxvii] Seebohm, P et al. (2013). *The contribution of self-help/Mutual Aid groups to mental wellbeing*. Health & Social Care in the Community, 21(4), 391-404. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/

[xxxviii] For more information please visit https://www.skillshare.com/browse/drawing

[xxxix] Social Enterprise Kent Ageless Thanet - Covid-19: Reacting to a Crisis https://sekgroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Covid-19-Report_standard.pdf

[xl] New Local Government Network (July 2020) Communities vs. Coronavirus: The Rise of Mutual Aid http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/Communities-Vs-Corona-Virus-The-Rise-of-Mutual-Aid.pdf

[xli] Covid-19 – learning from Ageing Better https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing_better_Covid19.pdf?mtime=20200408124030&focal=none

[xlii] Ageing Better Middlesbrough website https://www.ageingbettermiddlesbrough.org.uk/news/a-lot-of-knitting-with-no-sign-of-quitting/

[xliii] Neighbourliness – the new normal? https://ageingwelltorbay.com/2020/07/09/neighbourliness-the-new-normal/

[xliv] Age UK. Older People as Volunteers Evidence Review https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/Research/OlderPeopleAsVolunteers.pdf?epslanguage=en-GB?dtrk=true

[xlv] Further information and guidance on community resilience is available online https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/06/01/the-community-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19/

[xlvi] Torbay Community Development Trust (July 2020) Pandemic Response: Building resilience in the community in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Ageing Well Torbay Learning Series https://ageingwelltorbay.com/2020/07/15/pandemic-response-building-resilience-in-the-community-in-response-to-covid-19-pandemic-2020-report/

[xlvii] Employment policy and practice that supports flexible working, enabling working-aged people more time to volunteer could increase community power and mutualism and support economic recovery and renewal. http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/Communities-Vs-Corona-Virus-The-Rise-of-Mutual-Aid.pdf A shorter working week could lead to a range of benefits for individuals and communities, including more time for families, friends and neighbours and a stronger society. https://neweconomics.org/2014/07/10-reasons-for-a-shorter-working-week

[xlviii] Opportunities for increasing community action using micro-funding approaches were explored with community organisations and potential commissioners at the *Empowering communities through micro-funding* online event held in July 2020. Further information available online https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/ageing-better