

The logo for Pilgrims' Friend Society, featuring the text "PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY" in a white, serif font, enclosed within a white, hand-drawn style oval. The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of several hands of different skin tones being stacked together in a supportive gesture.

PILGRIMS'  
FRIEND  
SOCIETY

# Empowering communities to care

Unlocking local resources to  
transform how society cares  
for an ageing population



# “Social care has become everybody’s business.”

Reimagining Care Commission Report,  
January 2023



Our ageing population needs a whole community response with every player – state, voluntary, community and commercial – working together and leveraging all their assets to deliver the care that older people need.

Although this person-centred and inclusive approach is common in most policy analyses, its outworking is conspicuously lacking in most policy recommendations as they usually fail to place the communities around older people, and older people themselves, at the centre.

Our experience as charities working with older people, combined with research by other bodies, is that unlocking existing community assets is essential to creating effective and long-lasting change in the care for older people, as a complement to and multiplier of a comprehensive government response.

## **This leads to recommendations under four policy themes:**



**Champion  
volunteers**



**Empower community  
entrepreneurship**



**Engage communities  
to join up delivery**



**Encourage the private and charity  
sector to go the extra mile**

# Background

The UK's population is undergoing a massive age shift. There are over 11 million people aged over 65 and in 10 years' time this will have increased to 13 million people - 22% of the population. The fact that many of us are living longer is to be celebrated and it is impossible to think of sensible and affordable policy responses to an ageing population if we neglect the reality that most older people are vital and active contributors to the wellbeing of their families and communities.

But the experience of ageing in England is getting worse and more unequal with a growing number of people experiencing poverty, discrimination and poor health as they get older. They need help and even today over 1.4 million people are not getting what they need<sup>1</sup>.

The current model is predominantly top-down, resulting in waste and frustration as people have to join up separately conceived silos of provision at the point of delivery. Approaches that include a whole community response often do so as an afterthought.

Spending on adult care hasn't kept pace with need and neither has it unlocked community resources and as a consequence there is inadequate funding, with billions of pounds of extra spending needed.

More of the same policy approach will, however, perpetuate today's problems of scarcity, poverty, loneliness, frustration, and despair.



<sup>1</sup>Age UK

## How care happens

As people age, they draw on care and support in different ways. Some need temporary help, others require support throughout their life and as such become experts in their own care needs. For some people long-term care needs develop suddenly, for others it is gradual. Everyone has to navigate an unfamiliar landscape bespoke to them at a uniquely vulnerable time of life.

For most people care needs start to be met by the person themselves with help then being provided from the immediate circle of family, friends, and neighbours. Social care is therefore already at the heart of our communities, and communities are at the heart of good social care.

From this perspective, the Government adds to what is already going on through appropriate policies, resources, and expertise that encourage family and community caring and provide the vital services that are beyond the capacities of families and communities alone. Strong communities, mobilised and equipped to care, in turn ensure that government responses are joined up, have enhanced reach, and are augmented and multiplied as the assets of the community are engaged.



# Empowering communities to care

This manifesto contends that the cumulative impact of the micro-assets that communities possess need to be unlocked to complement what the State is doing in order to ensure that we have a response equal to the challenges of making good provision for an ageing population.

## The micro-assets that communities can bring to bear are:

- People with the motivation to care and connect and with local know-how.
- Informal associations of people who come together to improve the liveability of the community.
- Organisations such as community groups, churches and religious organisations, clubs, charities or businesses that provide services or resources to the community.
- Physical assets like faith buildings, community halls, business premises, council offices, care homes and day centres.
- Networks of people and organisations who collaborate to strengthen communities like business associations, Councils for Voluntary Service, and faith groups.

This manifesto recommends a number of areas of policy focus that will ensure that government investment in social care is leveraged by these community assets.

Only if this happens will we be able to deliver the kinds of person-centred care that we all want and need. Strong caring communities will leverage national policies and resources.

These policy themes and recommendations build on the work of a number of important projects and research by government, think tanks, civil society, and academia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The Reimagining Care Commission; NHS Integrated Service Boards; “Compassionomics”; The 2021 Government White paper on Adult Social Care; International Research on Asset Based Community Development; Fabian Society work on proposals for a National Care Service; NCVO Building stronger communities; York Dementia Friendly Communities; Fuller Report; Roadmap.

# Empowered communities in policy and practice



## Champion volunteers

Enfield Town Community Church has a Faith in Later Life Church Champion for older people encouraging the church in its contacts with around 100 older people each month through 1:1 visiting, a weekly seniors' group, and other church activities. Love Your Neighbour's 188 church hubs<sup>3</sup> do similarly across all demographics.



### Scaling the impact

If this were replicated in the UK's 40,000 churches that would reach **4 million older people**, just over 36% of the total.

## Policy Recommendations

### National Care Service

Embed volunteering within the scope of the planned National Care Service.

### Community Care Champions

Grant fund and accredit charities to equip and appoint people as Community Care Champions who can be trained to understand and respond to dementia, loneliness and bereavement.

Organisations that could participate and scale up include<sup>3</sup>:

**Faith in Later Life** already has 1000 Church Champions and could support more volunteers.

**BRF Ministries' Anna Chaplaincy** has over 350 Anna Chaplains and those in equivalent roles, plus hundreds of volunteers, offering spiritual care in community-based settings.

**Dementia Friends** has 2.5 million people registered who could be re-energised and mobilised.

**helpforce** could extend volunteering with community-based charities in areas like fall prevention (falls cost the NHS around £2.3 billion per year).

**Love your Neighbour** could build on its current 295,000 hours of church-based volunteering.

<sup>3</sup> <https://faithinlaterlife.org>, <https://www.annachaplaincy.org.uk>, <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk>, <https://helpforce.community>, <https://www.loveyourneighbour.uk>







## Empower community entrepreneurship

The Pargiter Trust works with six Community Foundations from the UK Community Foundations Network to support around 80 local charities and community groups a year to improve health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation, and improve access to facilities and services for older people. One of the larger initiatives is the Pear Tree Centre that serves a population of 50,000 people in rural Norfolk and Suffolk, working alongside the NHS to offer support and advice.



### Scaling the impact

UK Community Foundations has 47 members that cover every postcode in the UK. If each foundation was able to fund initiatives like the Pear Tree Centre, they would be able to **support 2.4 million people.**

## Policy Recommendations

### Match funding micro grants

Seed fund the development of place-based grants for community entrepreneurs. Learning from the evaluations<sup>8</sup>, invest £125m in a match fund through UK Community Foundations who would raise a further £125m. This would yield grants of £50m per annum, or £250m over the lifetime of a parliament, reaching up to 7m people or 67% of the older population<sup>9</sup> and unlocking local assets. An endowment challenge would provide similar benefits over the longer term.

### Recognise community entrepreneurs

Use existing reward mechanisms to the full as part of the National Care Service: The King's Award for Voluntary Service; Points of Lights Awards.

Consider a bespoke awards process with a reception in the Palace of Westminster or a Royal Palace as part of the National Care Service.

Appoint a Whitehall Care Champion (independent policy adviser) to champion community care initiatives and joined up policies.

<sup>8</sup> Ageing Better National Lottery Community Fund; DCMS Growing Place Based Giving

<sup>9</sup> Based on the reach of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund





## Engage communities to join up delivery

Silver Cord is a befriending service available to anyone in Tameside and Glossop who is suffering from the distressing effects of isolation and loneliness. The service is free to those in need, and it is provided by trained, DBS-checked volunteers from partner churches. It reaches out and connects into the Local Authority and blue light organisations to provide support to many who can be repeat users of their services.



### Scaling the impact

The London School of Economics has reported<sup>4</sup> social returns on investment of up to £24 for every pound invested in befriending schemes. If schemes like Silver Cord could help support 10% of the older people who call 999 after a fall<sup>5</sup> that **could save the NHS up to £500m per annum.**

## Policy Recommendations

### Integrated Service Boards (ISB)



**UKCOMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS**  
GIVING FOR LOCAL GOOD

ISBs should solicit membership from local grant making trusts, Big Local Trusts or UK Community Foundations (UKCF) that can develop available grant pots to help community groups and charities take referrals from the NHS and social services, and vice versa. An example of this is the PHP Community Impact Fund that has been delivered by UKCF since 2021 in Scotland and England, supporting social prescribing activities near local GP practices.

### Place-based funding

Building on the thinking around Age Friendly Communities, Dementia Friendly places<sup>6</sup> and the success of Big Local Trust<sup>7</sup>, government and non-departmental public bodies should establish local grants funds in areas of high health needs that fund and engender community led collaborative work around older people and connections with NHS and Social Care provision.

<sup>4</sup> <https://dev.campaigntoendloneliness.org/wp-content/uploads/CTEL-summary-doc-final-15.9.17-1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2464894/>

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Rowntree Evaluation

<sup>7</sup> <https://localtrust.org.uk/big-local/>





## Encourage the private and charity sector to go the extra mile

Middlefields House care home in Chippenham opened in 2021 with a community hub built at no cost to the state because the Local Authority was able to take account of the commitment to volunteering by the operator when negotiating the sale of the site. The home now supports 40 volunteers and has a thriving community café.



### Scaling the impact

If every care home did the same that would be nearly **17,000 community hubs** and over **650,000 volunteers**.

## Policy Recommendations

### Local Authority best value rules

Ensure that Local Authority criteria for best value on contracts and asset sales include an assessment of the value of community volunteering.

### Community Foundations

Involve cross sector convening partners, like Community Foundations, on issues that involve local authorities, charities, and the private sector. A Community Foundation can support actions and mediate community development. Community foundations regularly work with local authorities on a range of programmes including the delivery of winter support campaigns for older people.

### Care Quality Commission

As part of their purpose to “encourage care services to improve”, CQC should be asked to comment on the way that regulated providers of social care contribute to the health of communities.



# Supporting organisations

Join us and the following organisations in supporting empowering communities to care.



Also endorsed by:

Strathclyde House Trust Limited  
Homesdale (Woodford Baptist Homes) Limited

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