COMMUNITIES AFTER COVID-19: The impact of social inequality

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Communities after Covid-19

- **Strengthening** communities & neighbourhoods is proving crucial for tackling the first wave of C-19.

But......

- We need a new **community development policy** to protect neighbourhoods over the longer-term. Poorer communities are likely to make a **slower recovery** from the present crisis.
Neighbourhoods are important...

- They can **support** people in periods of crisis and stress (Stockdale 2007)

- They are especially important for some groups, e.g. older people spend (pre-Covid) **70% of their time** in their immediate neighbourhood

- Informal relationships – the ‘**natural neighbourhood network**’ – help to maintain well-being (Gardner 2011)
‘Making up with the Joneses: how Covid-19 has brought neighbours closer
In a strange and unsettling time, many people have been experiencing something similar: a greater sense of neighbourliness, new friendships forged and new communities stitched together. Across the country, people who previously shared only a postcode have joined together in pavement aerobics classes, singalongs and distanced street discos. Others, less visibly, have texted neighbours, dropped off shopping or simply shouted good wishes from a distance’. (The Guardian June 5 2020)
But not all neighbourhoods are equal

- The ONS (2020) report that those living in the **poorest** parts of England & Wales are dying at **twice the rate** from Covid-19 as those in more affluent areas.

- Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on **BAME communities**, reflecting cumulative inequalities of neighbourhood deprivation, high risk jobs, poor housing, and racism (PHE, 2020).

- Inequalities between neighbourhoods mean that some groups and individuals have been more exposed to the virus than others - raising questions of social justice.
Failure to protect communities from Covid-19

- Additional Gov funding was needed for areas with **high BAME populations** as well as additional funding to charities supporting BAME community

- **Poorest communities** bore the brunt of £900 million cuts to public health funding over 2014-2019 (IPPR, 2019)

- The Voluntary sector estimates losing **£4.3 billion income** over Spring/early Summer: significant impact on deprived areas (Charitytimes, 2020)
How can we ‘shield’ poorer communities from the consequences of Covid-19 &/or from a second wave?

- **Natural neighbourhood networks** – develop their public health potential via e.g. *community workers*

- **Organisation** – develop stronger organisations at neighbourhood level led by older people, able to negotiate with local and national service providers (Goff et al. 2020)

- **Housing** – prioritise tackling **overcrowding** in multi-generational households (Kenway & Holden 2020)
Shielding communities for the second wave

- Care homes - must be integrated with, not isolated from, the community (Phillipson, 2020)

- Discrimination – challenging racism, sexism, and ageism is central to shielding communities & the vulnerable groups within them

- Funding – funding from central government needs re-distributing in favour of poorer areas (Harris et al., 2019)
COVID-19: United vs Divided
[ONS Opinion & Lifestyle Survey 28-31 May]

How united or divided do you think Britain was before, and will be after we have recovered from the COVID-19 outbreak?

- United
  - Before: 25.5%
  - After: 43.4%

- Neither
  - Before: 18.3%
  - After: 12.7%

- Divided
  - Before: 51.9%
  - After: 36.2%
COVID-19: Equal vs Unequal

How equal or unequal do you think Britain was before, and will be after we have recovered from the COVID-19 outbreak?

- **Equal**:
  - Before: 23.6%
  - After: 24%

- **Neither**:
  - Before: 17.1%
  - After: 15.5%

- **Unequal**:
  - Before: 51.1%
  - After: 49.6%
References


ONS (2020) [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19roundup/2020-03-26#deathsbydeprivation](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19roundup/2020-03-26#deathsbydeprivation)

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