



Cabinet Office

Social Action: Harnessing the Potential

A Discussion Paper

Updated June 2015

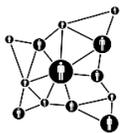


Social action is about people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It:¹

- 1** Increases the resources available to achieve social goals
- 2** Gives public services access to new expertise and knowledge
- 3** Enables broader and better targeted support
- 4** Empowers local groups, enabling local solutions and building resilient communities
- 5** Creates new models for how society can respond to challenges
- 6** Helps reduce the demand for public services

This Government has set out its vision for a **Bigger and Stronger Society**, where everyone has the chance to contribute to their community, and where those communities are self-confident and civically engaged.

As part of this, there is significant potential to harness more effectively the skill and passion of citizens, communities and businesses to help tackle long-standing challenges this country faces. That's why we are:



Accelerating the development of projects that complement public services through the Centre for Social Action.



Encouraging the role of social action to be considered in the design of public services.



Devolving power and resources so people can take action on issues they care about.



Encouraging and enabling more people to take part in social action e.g. through the plans for a workplace entitlement to Volunteering Leave.



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1. Introduction



Social action is about people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important to their communities.

Social action can broadly be defined as practical action in the service of others, which is:

- 1 carried out by individuals or groups of people working together
- 2 not mandated and not for profit
- 3 done for the good of others - individuals, communities and/or society
- 4 bringing about social change and/or value

giving of time

giving of money

**community
action**

**simple, everyday,
neighbourly
acts**

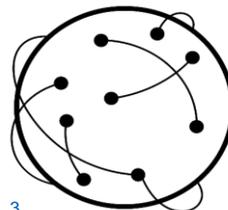
formal

informal



The UK is a very generous place, with a long and proud tradition of social action, and levels of volunteering and giving have increased.²

UK **7th**
most **generous**
country in the world ³



To their
local community



44% give money

54% give time ⁴

c. **32m** people aged 16+



volunteer at least once a year

That's **74%** of us ⁵



75%
give to
charity

in typical
four-week period

£10.6bn

Estimated amount donated
to charity by adults in 2014 ⁶



2. The role of social action



78,000 volunteers
in acute trusts in England
13m hours per year ⁷

21,500



volunteer magistrates ⁸

Over **50,000**



foster families ⁹

Around **300,000**
school
governors ¹⁰



Across health & social care

c. **3m** people



volunteer regularly ¹¹



70,000
volunteer
**Games
Makers**

40% new to
volunteering ¹²



But many challenges make this a more important agenda than ever before.

Challenges:

- 1 Our population is ageing
- 2 More people have long-term health conditions
- 3 Expectations of public services continue to rise
- 4 People want more responsive, personalised public services
- 5 People want more control and influence over how their local services are run
- 6 Communities are more fluid and, in some cases, fragmented

Between 2012 and 2032
population of over 85yr olds is set
to increase by **106%**¹³



People with **long-term conditions**
account for:

About **50%** of GP appointments

64% of outpatient appointments

Over **70%** of inpatient bed days¹⁴



Further harnessing the skill, passion and capability of citizens can improve outcomes, complement public services and help to build more capable, connected communities.

Social action: ¹⁵

- 1 Increases the resources available to achieve social goals
- 2 Gives public services access to new expertise and knowledge
- 3 Enables broader and better targeted support
- 4 Empowers local groups, enabling local solutions and building resilient communities
- 5 Creates new models for how society can respond to challenges
- 6 Helps reduce demands on public services

£18.4 trillion

Value of **human capital**



Our collective skills, knowledge, abilities, social attributes, personality and health attributes. ¹⁶

Leveraging just a small part of this could have immense value to public services

Volunteering is also linked with higher levels of wellbeing.



Those who volunteer have **significantly higher levels of life satisfaction** ¹⁷ than those who don't.



1

Social action increases the resources available to achieve social goals.



IntoUniversity supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to attain either a university place or another chosen aspiration.

Predominantly undergraduate student volunteers offer tutoring and mentoring to school children. In 2013-14 **18,000** students benefited.

79% of IntoUniversity school leavers progressed to higher education in 2014. Their impact report shows that students accessing their services significantly out-performed national averages.

Initial findings indicate that for every £1 spent, IntoUniversity generates £4.20 in social return on the investment.

IntoUniversity is being backed by the Centre for Social Action to create six new centres and to support an **additional 5,400 young people.**



Social action gives public services access to new expertise and knowledge.



Code Club is a network of volunteer-led after school coding clubs, teaching young people how to build digital products like websites, animations or games.

A study commissioned by O₂ in 2013 found that the UK economy will need **745,000 additional workers** with digital skills over 2013-17.¹⁸

Code Club volunteers go to their local primary school and spend an hour a week helping groups of 10-15 children, aged 9-11, to do coding projects.

By June 2014, Code Clubs were in around **12% of English primary schools**. This initiative is supported through the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund, led by Nesta. The Centre is backing Code Club to **scale up to nearly 5,000 clubs** (nearly 30% of English primary schools) by March 2016.



3

Social action enables broader and better targeted support.

Become a Dementia Friend now:

Step 1 Watch our video.

Step 2 Enter your details to get your FREE Dementia Friends pack.

The screenshot shows a website interface for becoming a Dementia Friend. On the left is a video player titled 'Becoming a Dementia Friend' showing a woman sitting on a sofa. On the right, there are two main sections: 'Join a face-to-face session' with links for 'Find a session near you >' and 'Already attended a session? Log in >', and 'Want to get more involved?' with links for 'Become a Champion >' and 'Already a Champion? Log-in >'.

Dementia Friends, launched in February 2013 by Alzheimer’s Society, is creating a step change in how society helps people with dementia.

1 in 3 people over the age of 65 will develop dementia.¹⁹ It costs the economy **£26bn** a year.²⁰

The movement has created **1 million** Dementia Friends: people with some understanding of dementia and the small things they can do to help people.

People become a Dementia Friend through a face-to-face session or by completing an online session.

High profile businesses backed the initiative - **Marks & Spencer** created **80,000** Dementia Friends amongst their staff.



Social action empowers local groups, enabling local, tailored solutions and building resilient communities.



Community organising in London

Community Organisers are empowering communities to develop their own solutions to the challenges they face, as Terri, an organiser in Dudley, explains.

“Residents told me how hard it was to make ends meet...If only we could buy in bulk, they said, perhaps we could bring prices down.

Something else was distressing many people on the estate. A 90 year old man, Bill, was sleeping rough in a nearby park.

Two problems - and, as it turned out, one solution.

Bill is now back in his house...organising the bulk-buying for the estate...Residents pay up front so they don't get into debt, and Bill phones round until he gets the best deal. The supplies are delivered to Bill's house, and residents come to collect their goods. When they come, they help Bill out. They bring him meals. They have done up his house and garden. Bill now has a team of local volunteers...who take messages and help with deliveries.”



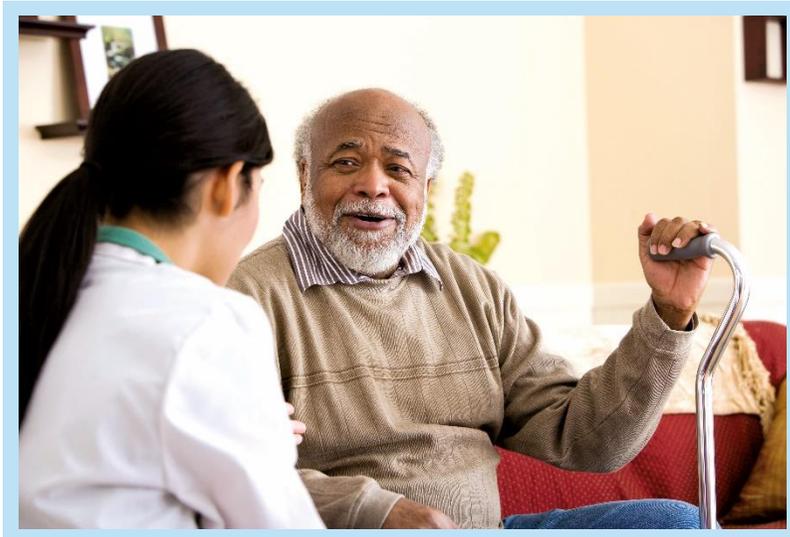
Shared Lives Plus matches individuals, couples and families who are willing to give their time and share their homes with vulnerable adults who need support to live independently.

There are over **8,000** Shared Lives Carers supporting over **10,000** people in England.

It has a positive effect on the quality of life and wellbeing of the vulnerable adults.

Shared Lives Carers provide average net savings from a long term arrangement of **£26,000** per annum for people with learning disabilities.²¹

This initiative is supported through the Centre for Social Action, both through the Nesta-led Innovation Fund, and the Cabinet Office-led Carers Social Action Fund. With the Big Lottery Fund and Social Finance, the Centre is supporting Shared Lives to increase the number of users/beneficiaries by **at least 40%**.



Royal Voluntary Service
Photograph: Getty Images

The **Reducing Winter Pressures Fund** is supporting 37 social action interventions that help older people stay well, manage their health conditions or recover from illness or injury.

By supporting people to stay well in the community, this helped to **reduce pressure on hospitals** for winter 2014/15.

The Fund initially supported 7 projects to grow over a 9 month period. In January 2015 it was expanded to include a further set of 12 week interventions, targeted at some of the most under pressure A&E departments in England.

For example the Fund is supporting Age UK Leeds in partnership with British Red Cross to increase their volunteer led services to 7 days a week including holidays. Patients will be supported in hospital by staff and volunteers and throughout their discharge. They will then receive help to settle back into their home and community.



3. Government's recent programmes: enabling and growing social action



To harness social action more effectively, the Centre for Social Action is accelerating the development and spread of projects that complement public services...

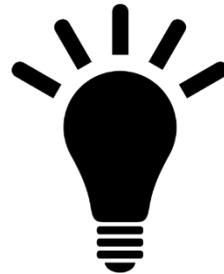
£36m over 2 years investment



The goal?

To **identify** and **accelerate** development and spread of **high impact** social action initiatives

215 projects



Rigorous focus on



evaluation

Developed

partnerships



Alzheimer's Society | Leading the fight against dementia

M&S

Social Investment Business

 **Department of Health**

 **Ministry of Justice**

leveraging for projects an **additional investment** of **c. £31m**

This includes the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund led by **Nesta...**²²



...and over the last Parliament Government devolved power and resources through its community programmes so communities can take action on issues they care about.

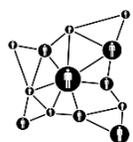
Community Organisers

£26m programme to recruit and train **5,000** Community Organisers, delivered by Locality.

Organising involves:

- 1 Listening
- 2 Building relationships
- 3 Supporting residents to act

} **Empowering communities**



1,500 community projects backed



Now over **6,500** organisers



Worked in **400** neighbourhoods



Listened to **150,000** residents

Community First

- 1 Neighbourhood Match Fund, delivered by the Community Development Foundation.

Volunteer panels in **600** deprived wards in England allocate Government funding to **local causes**.

£25m Govt funds allocated to **17,000** projects with **£92m** match from communities

- 2 Endowment Match Challenge, delivered by UK Community Foundations.

A national challenge offering Government funds to match endowment funds donated by the public.

£130m value of endowment gaining **10.6%** interest enabling **£5.8m** in grants so far to local groups



These programmes are focussed on six key themes where we are testing and growing the role of social action in supporting public services and addressing important social issues.

Key themes:

- 1 Health, Ageing and Care
- 2 Young Potential & Social Mobility
- 3 Rehabilitation
- 4 Community Action
- 5 Employment & Prosperity
- 6 Digital



Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Young Carers Project, supported with funds from the Community First Endowment.

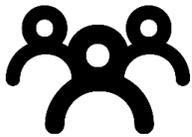


In health, ageing and care, we are growing projects that harness the assets of communities to provide support to statutory services...

Challenge



Programme



Over **700,000**
Number of people with **dementia**
in England in 2014 ²³



Dementia Friends by Alzheimer's Society
aims to drive a culture change in how society responds
having created **1 million** Friends.



14.6m visits to **A&E** in 2014.
An increase of over 440,000
on 2013 ²⁴



Reducing Winter Pressures Fund
supports projects using volunteers to help older
people stay healthy, reducing pressure on hospitals.



3 in 5 of us
will be **carers**
at some point in our lives ²⁵



Carers Social Action Fund backs
social action projects to support unpaid, family carers.



...and draw on the passion and commitment of volunteers to offer support beyond the capacity of the public sector.

Challenge



“There is more to do to engage communities in the end of life so that those affected...do not feel abandoned and socially isolated”

Dying Well Community Charter²⁶



Programme

Social Action End of Life Fund

supports projects using volunteers to provide companionship, emotional support and practical help.



More than **15 million** Hospital admissions in 2013-14²⁷



Helping in Hospitals supports hospitals to expand the **reach and impact** of their volunteering services.

Care of people with **long-term health conditions** accounts for **70%** of spend on health and social care in England²⁸



This fund is growing social action projects that help people with long-term conditions to self manage.²⁹



To help young people reach their potential, we have invested in initiatives that inspire and build resilience and skills.

Challenge



Programme

34% of **care leavers** at age 19 are not in **education, employment or training** ³⁰



Vulnerable & Disengaged Young

People's Fund has invested in projects that support the most vulnerable young people to achieve their potential.

12.5%



Percentage of children from low-income homes that achieve a high income as an adult ³¹



The Centre has invested in projects that

tackle educational disadvantage,

embed social action and help young people find a job.

40% of **young people**

participate in meaningful social action. There is significant potential to increase this. ³²



Through **two youth social action funds**

the Centre has invested in the creation of new opportunities for young people, to help raise participation by **50%** by **2020**.



To support rehabilitation, the Centre has invested in social action programmes across prison and probation services.

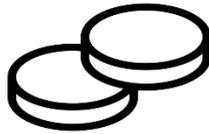
Challenge



Programme

£33,785

Average cost



of holding one prisoner for the year³³

57.9%

Reoffending rate
in 2012-13 for adults who served
sentences less than 12 months³⁴



Rehabilitation Social Action Fund

has invested in projects that use social action to provide support to ex-offenders helping them to stop committing crime and transform their lives.



Activities include:

- 1 Volunteer mentoring with offenders in receipt of shorter sentences
- 2 Peer mentoring drawing on experiences of ex-offenders who want to give back to society
- 3 Circles of support for particularly high-risk offenders



We're helping communities come together to take action on issues they really care about, complementing our Community First and Community Organisers programmes.

Challenge



Programme

Millions already volunteer in their **community**.

But how do you make sure that their time is used as **effectively** as possible?



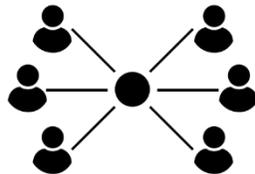
Cities of Service UK

is backing 7 cities to create new and better opportunities for volunteers to make a difference.



There is a **need to build the pipeline**

of grassroots community enterprises ready to work alongside public services.



Community Organisers' Social Action Fund

This small grant fund is developing some of the most promising projects stemming from the Community Organisers programme.





We are exploring the role of social action in helping people get back to work, and how digital services can act as an enabler.

Challenge



Programme

943,000

Number of people aged 16-24
not in employment, education or training³⁵



The Centre supports projects using social action to help unemployed people **improve their skills** and **confidence.**



Average adult spends longer engaged in **media** or **communication** activity than **sleeping**³⁶



The Centre is backing **digital** projects with potential to enable social action from **providing platforms** to **facilitating mass movements.**



4. Next steps: harnessing the potential



“It is a society where everyone has the chance to contribute to their community, and where those communities are self-confident and civically engaged.

It is a world where people ask what they can do for their community not only what their community can do for them.”



Minister for Civil Society Rob Wilson MP, 25th June 2015,
on his vision for a Bigger, Stronger Society.



That's why this Government is committed to encouraging and enabling social action. Initial plans include the following and will be developed further over this Parliament.

Centre for Social Action

Further investment

in new phase of Centre's work.

This will support models that are making a difference, enabling them to grow, with the aspiration to become part of the

norm

alongside **public services** and in **communities.**

Building stronger communities

Government wants to rebalance power away from central Government...



...so communities can make more of their own decisions.

This will include **new support** for projects inspired by **Community Organisers**, and, across this Parliament, exploring how to take a **place-based approach**, working with civil society.

Encouraging Volunteering



Government will take **new steps** to encourage and enable volunteering and giving.

This will include the plans for a new workplace entitlement to three days of **Volunteering Leave** on full pay for employees in large companies and the public sector.





This is an emerging agenda with a great portfolio of models and approaches demonstrating the role social action can play, in hospitals, schools, prisons, communities and beyond.

The challenge is to spread and grow these models and approaches.

The ingredients needed for social action to thrive are common to many forms of social innovation:

- 1** Support for exemplars
- 2** Share evidence of what works
- 3** Local leadership and buy-in
- 4** Development of partnerships and alliances
- 5** Refinement of tools, techniques and methods to support and enable policy-makers and commissioners

Should you have any reflections on this discussion paper, please email socialaction@cabinetoffice.gov.uk



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