

Kinship, neighbourhood and attachment

Presentation to the Neighbourhood
Action Network (NAN)

Questions we wanted to answer:

- How do residents define their community?
- How attached are residents to their communities?
- Do residents recognise themselves as Londoners, do they make use of the capital?

Downham ward

Population: 14,300

18% residents from a BME background

Low economic activity

51% of properties owner occupied

New Cross ward

Population: 15,100

53% of residents from a BME background

Low economic activity

29% of properties owner occupied



63% of respondents identify their neighbourhood as either “this street” or “this street and neighbouring streets”

75% respondents define the boundaries of their local area as being within “10 to 20 minutes walk” (within a mile)

Respondents stated a strong sense of attachment to Neighbourhood (49%) and London (52%) above council ward (22%) and the council/borough (34%)

Friends, Train Station, Family/Relatives, Main street/Shopping contribute most to a sense of belonging



Linear model – the negative impact of urban living

“the substitution of secondary for primary contacts, the weakening of the bonds of kinship and the declining significance of the family, the disappearance of the neighbourhood and the undermining of the traditional bases of social solidarity”

Systemic model – community as an essential aspect of mass society

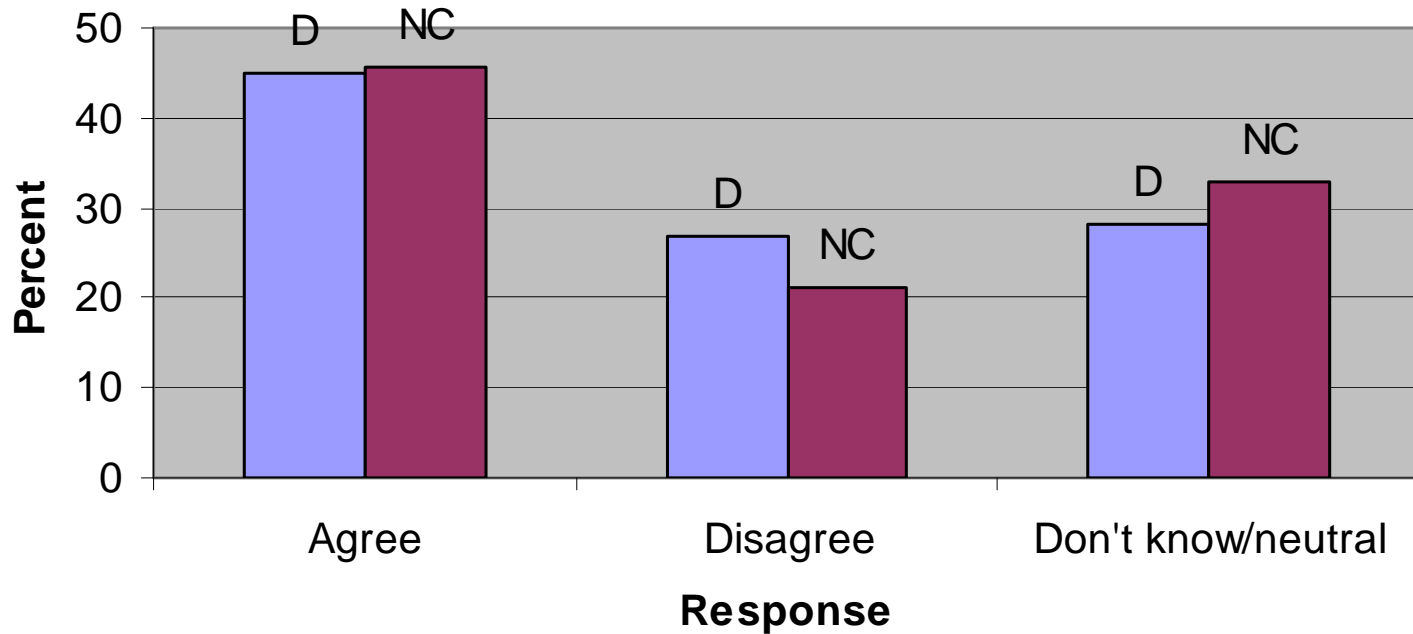
“a complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties...fashioned by the large scale institution of mass society”

Hypotheses:

- Proximity of family members would correlate with a stronger sense of community attachment.
- Length of residence would correlate with a stronger sense of community attachment.
- Factors affecting sense of community will primarily be associational rather than environmental



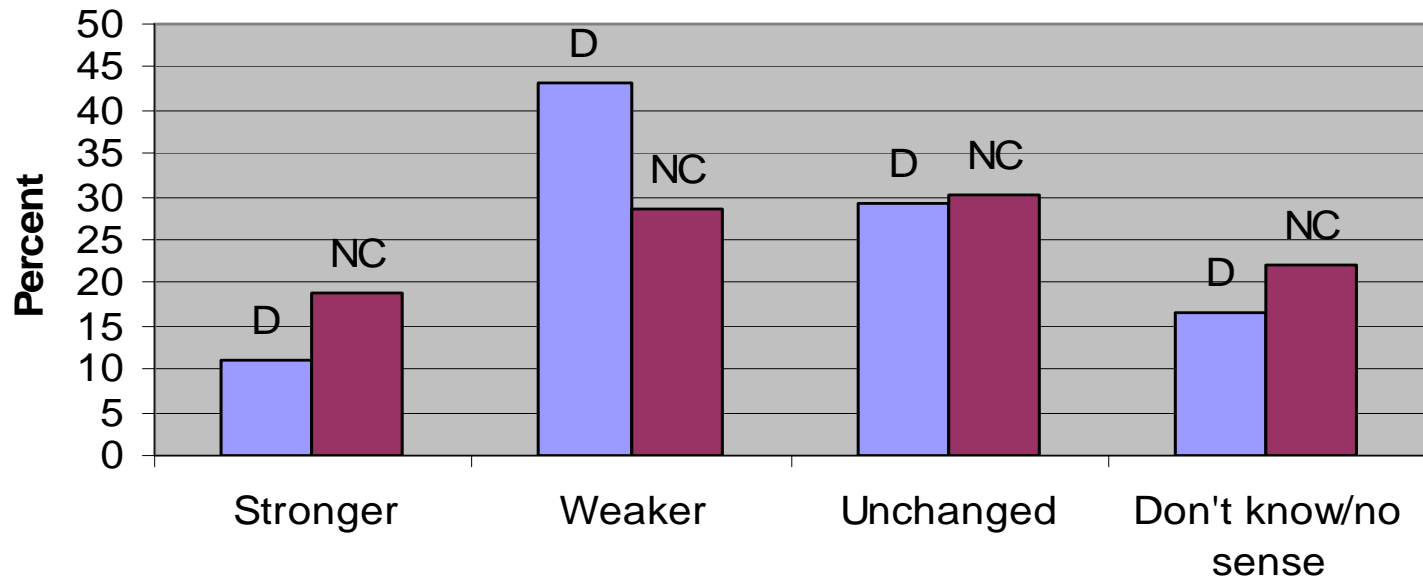
Would you say that living in the area gives you a strong sense of community?



- Similar sense of community in the two wards
- There is no significant correlation between age and strong sense of community or length of residence.



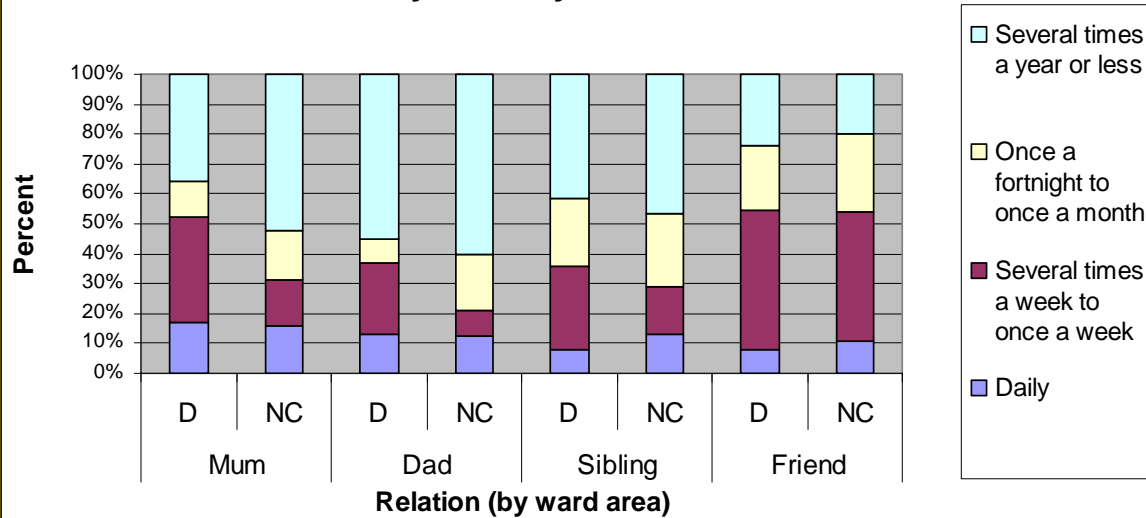
Is the sense of community in the area growing stronger, weaker or is unchanged?



- Factors that most contribute to a stronger sense of community in New Cross: Good relationships with neighbours, Good local facilities, Area feels safe
- Factors that most contribute to a diminishing sense of community in Downham: Poor local facilities, Area does not feel safe, People no longer look out for each other
- Overall, 74% of those age 61 & over said the sense of community is growing weaker



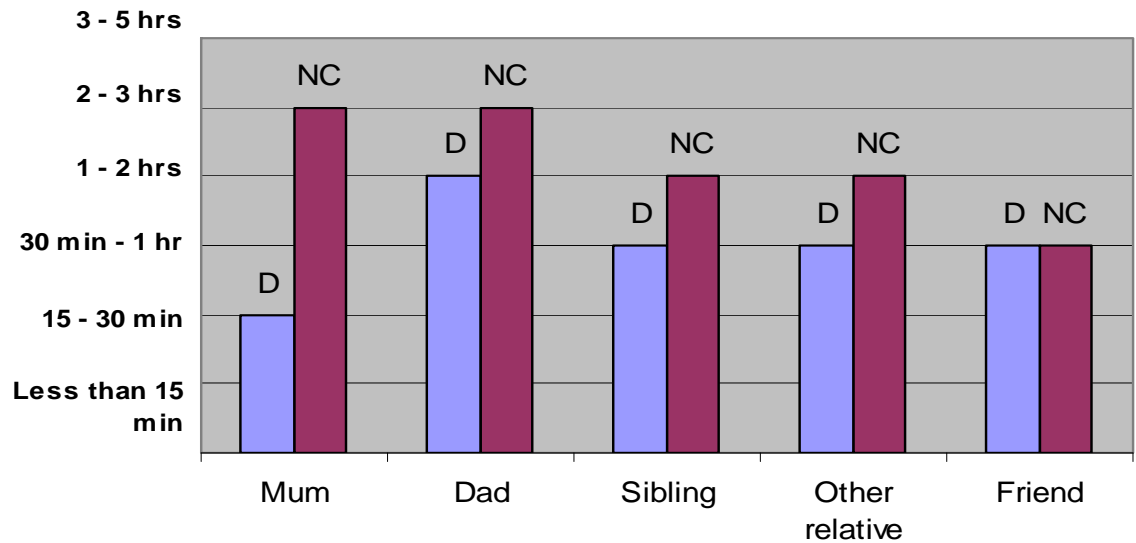
How often to you see your relative/friend?



Downham residents see their relatives more than New Cross residents; overall people see their friends more than family

New Cross residents overall live further away from their relatives than Downham residents

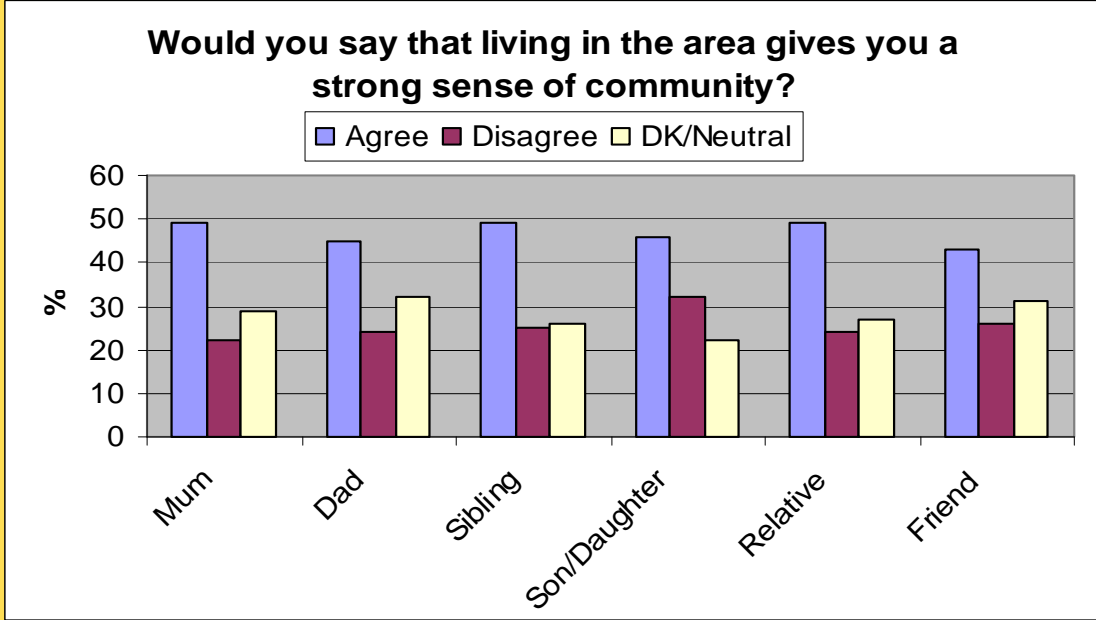
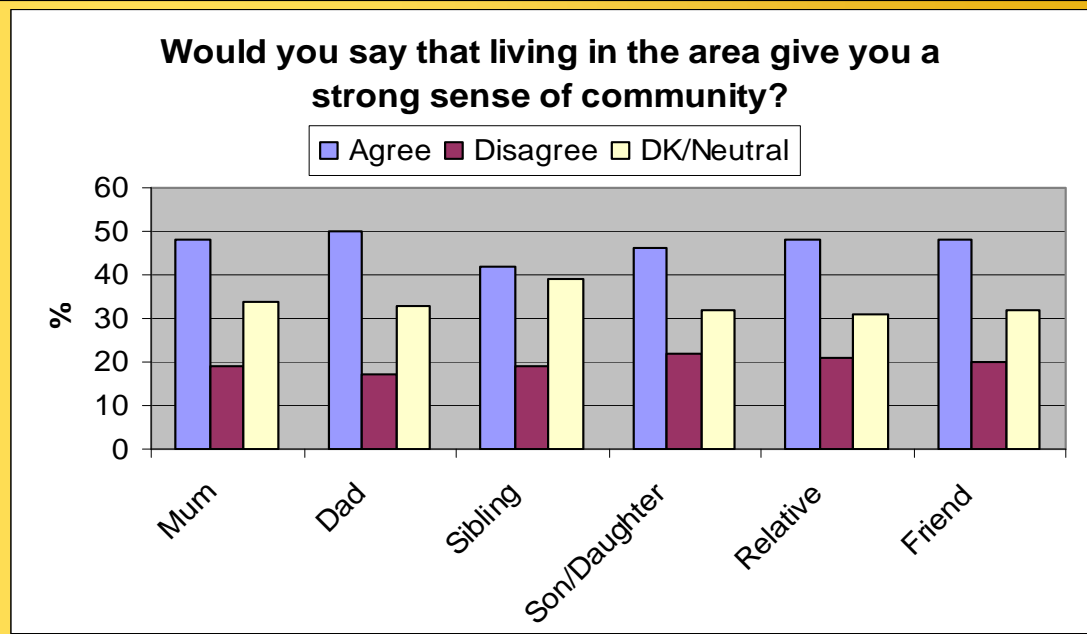
Median time to get to relative/friend's house



Correlation between proximity of family member (<30 minutes away) and respondent identifying a strong sense of community.

Close proximity of family members does not necessarily correlate with a strong sense of community

Correlation between proximity of family member (>30 minutes away) and respondent identifying a strong sense of community.



Nearly half (46%) of respondents are active in, have been or intend to join community groups, church groups or social activities in their area.

Three-quarters of respondents say that they do some shopping within their local area. 28% say that a local school contributes to their sense of belonging.

70% of respondents stated that they know the names of their neighbours to the left and right of their property.

Environment and physical aspects feature strongly especially community safety and quality of local amenities



What does it all mean?

- Community and sense of community is complex – neither model works
- Associational activity is unarguably a factor, but there is no one key variable – too many factors for a local authority?

What can local authorities do?

Environment in which people feel comfortable and able to associate

Facilitating associational activities

Recognising the limits and allowing communities to address their own needs

