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# Public services and civil society working together

An initial think piece

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## PREFACE

This independent think piece was commissioned by the Cabinet Office Public Services Unit to quickly explore the evidence of individuals, local community groups and enterprises working alongside local public agencies to deliver better outcomes. In it we explore the existing barriers to such work and highlight promising ways in which such engagement could be strengthened.

We welcome your feedback on this initial think piece and the emerging ideas. Please contact us at [vicki.savage@youngfoundation.org](mailto:vicki.savage@youngfoundation.org)

## AUTHORS

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## THE YOUNG FOUNDATION

The Young Foundation has a 50-year history of successfully meeting social needs, mainly through creating new enterprises and promoting new ideas. We start from the big questions of our times – how to cope with ageing; how to engage teenagers bored by school; how to reduce conflict within communities; how to meet the needs of people living with chronic diseases?

And we then work with others to design practical solutions which we can then implement, often starting on a small scale. Some of these turn into new organisations; some feed into public policy; and some get taken up by existing organisations.

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# Report

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## Summary

1. Civil society continues to flourish in Britain. Citizens and communities are bringing their own insights, time and energy to the most pressing needs in their community like child poverty, chronic illness, pupil attainment or mental health.
2. Civil society works with the state in three broad ways: through user engagement with services, volunteering and service provision by local voluntary and community groups and social enterprises.
3. Empirical evidence suggests that where civil society and the state work together there is an improvement in outcomes, be it pupil attainment, patient health or cleaner streets. However, the evidence base is thin and uneven, largely because most initiatives are small and operate under the radar of formal evaluations.
4. However, there is much stronger evidence to suggest that such interaction improves citizen satisfaction with services, the degree to which residents feel they can influence decisions and their confidence and capacity.
5. Over the last 12 years government has invested in strengthening civil society through a wide range of policies and programmes, including the introduction of gift aid, volunteering initiatives and *Time Banks*, commissioning frameworks for the voluntary sector and much more. But some barriers to participation remain – from frustrations with red tape to an understanding of personal responsibility, as well as the capacity of local public servants to deal with this agenda.
6. There is significant scope for government to harness the talents of citizens operating at a very local level to work alongside local public servants like GPs and headteachers. Some of the most promising opportunities for success do not require significant financial investment from central government. Instead they build on the existing assets and capacity in communities.
7. Specifically we suggest that the Cabinet Office explore the concept of community entrepreneurs to scout out good ideas and build local networks; promote community dividends which reward communities that act together; value the work of particular groups of volunteers through credits; take up the opportunities of asset sharing; innovate in new ways to make the most of the experience

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of retired professionals (from nurses to police and teachers); and make the 'quality of relationships between civil society and public services' an indicator of success.

### Structure of this report

8. In this paper we discuss:
  - a framework for understanding involvement
  - what evidence there is of the state and citizens working together successfully to achieve better outcomes
  - the barriers and incentives to involvement from individuals and groups
  - action government could take to build this field.

### Introduction

9. The most pressing challenges facing communities are complex – be it child obesity, anti social behaviour, managing chronic health conditions or care for the elderly. Over the last 10 years government has created a dense infrastructure of public services to help meet these needs. As the resources for public sector services reduce, public infrastructure now needs to increasingly leverage in the capacity and resources of civil society to improve existing public services and deliver others themselves.
10. Civil society continues to expand in Britain with 6,635 charities registered in the last year.<sup>1</sup> It includes formal and informal associations such as voluntary and community organisations, trade unions. Civil society operates in a space not occupied by government or for-profit business<sup>2</sup> and includes two traditions – one of mutual self interest, where people come together to meet their own needs, and another of charity where individuals and organisations are directly responding to social needs.<sup>3</sup> Civic behaviour, takes the form of action towards a common good (e.g. participating in public decisions, volunteering or shopping ethically).<sup>4</sup>
11. Across the country volunteers, community organisations and social enterprises continue to build on long traditions of meeting the needs of their local community. For example, there are 170,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in the UK<sup>5</sup>, five million people have signed up on the No10 Petition website<sup>6</sup> and 260,000 people acting as School Governors throughout England.<sup>7</sup>

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12. Experience suggests that community outcomes like pupil attainment, quality of life and better health can be improved by linking local public servants with their community and its assets. It can also help build a sense of civic pride and belonging in local communities.
  13. Empirical evidence to support this experience is thin and uneven, largely because many of the good projects are not of a nature or small scale that makes it easy to carry out classic evaluations.

### **A framework for understanding involvement**

14. Engaging communities in service delivery has long been the business of government. A surge towards customer focus, devolution, user involvement, co-production etc over the last 10 years has now expanded to include strategies for changing behaviour and building independence, choice and personal resilience. Most services offer multiple ways to give feedback and a myriad of options for getting involved. In fact when you map the interactions of civil society and the state you can be left with a confusing picture.
15. Throughout this paper we have used a simple framework to categorise the interaction between public agencies and civic society at a very local level. Our three broad themes include:
  - a. **user involvement** – both gathering feedback and involving users in redesigning public services (co-production)
  - b. using individuals as **volunteers**
  - c. using local **voluntary and community sector provision**.
16. For example, a local GP wishing to harness the talents and resources of individuals, local community groups and social enterprises at a very local level, might build a network of civil society around him or her which comprises different ventures in each of these three categories as shown below. After all improving public health is a goal which cannot be achieved by frontline staff like GPs and their services alone.

Figure one : **A hypothetical civil society network to support a GP**



**Evidence to date**

17. There may be less money in the public sector, but that does not necessarily mean there are fewer resources. Far from reducing, enquiries about volunteering have risen 87 per cent during the recession and charitable giving has also gone up.<sup>8</sup> Evidence from recessions of the past is that when communities are under attack they pull together and become more acutely aware of each others need.<sup>9</sup>
18. Over the last 12 years the government has sought to strengthen civil society with the introduction of gift aid, a central bank of volunteering opportunities at *do-it.org*, Millennium Volunteers, commissioning frameworks for the voluntary sector, time banks and the promotion of schemes which give paid time off for volunteering. So what evidence is there that all this activity is improving outcomes for communities?

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## Empirical evidence

19. When public servants tap into this community capacity it can lead to significant improvements in outcomes. For example:

### ***i) User involvement – user feedback and involvement in service design***

- 19.1 Web technologies have revolutionised how users interact with services. Not only are public services publishing more information online, they are also receiving feedback on services in volumes never experienced before from sites like *patientopinion.org.uk* and *fixmystreet.org*. *Thumbprintcity.com* allows users to create a map for the police of where they feel safe and where they don't by reporting their feelings by text. *Lovelewisham.org*, which encourages residents to report graffiti and fly tipping for quick removal has led to an eight per cent decrease in graffiti and a further 30 per cent drop in complaints about it.<sup>10</sup>
- 19.2 Web 2.0 technologies have brought even more interactions – local blogs like *leaderlistens.com* in Barnet and Camden council's Twitter account are improving transparency by providing real time information and the opportunity for the community to comment. There is evidence that people in these areas feel more informed (but not necessarily that they are improving services).
- 19.3 The *Expert Patient Programme*<sup>11</sup> is a peer support network for patients, designed by co-production and continuously working with local public servants to co-produce services. Patients share their experiences to help peers with the same condition manage their condition. The information can also be used to design self help products, feed support groups or modify public services etc. Early evaluations showed that programme reduced outpatient visits by 10 per cent and Accident and Emergency visits by 16 per cent, whilst also building the quality of life and wellbeing of patients and their confidence in managing the condition themselves.<sup>12</sup>
- 19.4 Transport for London has been working with two schools in Wimbledon to get teenage girls to walk to school. The scheme has seen reductions in the peak of demand for buses with 50 per cent less incidents of students 'unable to board' crowded buses.<sup>13</sup> The success of the programme is attributed to strong engagement with pupils, who designed a swipe card scheme along the route (like an Oyster card for walking to school) with retail vouchers to reward those who changed their behaviour.

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19.5 Many public services now aim to involve users in their design from the beginning. Sure Start programmes usually have at least five parents on the management board and many others involved in designing services. There is substantial evidence that Sure Start Local programmes have empowered individual parents so they feel less isolated, more valued and (especially mothers) more confident in their parenting activities.<sup>14</sup> It is these indicators of satisfaction and influence which are becoming the norm in measuring public service performance.

### **ii) Volunteering**

19.6 More than 40 per cent of people in the UK volunteer each year.<sup>15</sup> This passionate and ready made workforce meet the needs of vulnerable people, share skills and act as role models for many. There are numerous examples around the country like *Start Again*, whose 10 volunteers have helped more than a hundred young people, many coming out of care, to return to education, training or employment.<sup>16</sup> Added together these small initiatives are delivering significant outcomes. A recent Home Office study suggested that mentoring of offenders significantly reduced subsequent offending from 15 to 11 per cent (but only where it was regular and part of a series of other interventions).<sup>17</sup>

19.7 *Foster Plus*, in Wales saved the public purse £1.3m on foster care in Pembrokeshire after effectively professionalising foster care. Offering more tailored support to volunteers acting as foster carers has led to fewer young people going into residential care.<sup>18</sup>

19.8 Volunteering also helps build a sense of community pride. An evaluation of the *Time Credit Project* run by SPICE *Time Banks*, which rewards volunteer's efforts with credits to spend on an activity, shows it has strengthened the networks in the community and fostered better relationships between the generations.<sup>19</sup> Community Pledge Banks, where residents agree 'I you will, if I will', are also gathering momentum and helping some localities to build community identity.

### **iii) VCS and social enterprise provision**

19.9 Service provision by voluntary and community organisations or social enterprises in localities has a big part to play. *WyeCycle*, a community recycling organisation in Kent serves 1,000 households. It has used community initiatives to decrease curbside waste from 1000 to 250 kilos per household per year, slashing costs to the local authority and landfill.<sup>20</sup>

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- 19.10 In adult and social care, voluntary sector provision is on the increase. The innovative *Right Steps* model from Turning Point has received 1,300 upstream referrals for depression or anxiety in Kingston since January 2009 without increasing the pressure on expensive professional input.<sup>21</sup>
- 19.11 In the USA local *Citizen Schools* pair mentors with students for after school tuition and as a result students significantly outperform their peers in six out of seven indicators of school success (including grades, discipline issues, and standardised test scores).<sup>22</sup> *826 Valencia*, a voluntary organisation matching freelance journalists with students struggling with English in a deprived neighbourhood of Los Angeles has seen a staggering 96 per cent of teachers reporting students improved class work and the same percentage of parents reporting improved homework.<sup>23</sup>

### **Anecdotal evidence**

20. Across the country civil society is working with schools, health care centres, prisons, police stations, youth clubs, care homes and so many more public services to help deliver local outcomes. Most schemes go unevaluated but few go unnoticed by those they support.
21. Examples are too many to cite here but just a flavour would include a new *Dementia Signposting Service* developed by the Alzheimer's Society in North East England which has proved so popular with carers it is being rolled out nationally. Or the volunteer Young Father's Worker in Lewisham who has prevented countless family breakdowns by working with teenage fathers to understand their new responsibilities. Or the councillors in Newsome Ward, Kirklees, who have catalysed a home grown food revolution in the ward with neighbours growing a swapping healthy food. Or the *Kaleidoscope Project* in Kingston, where volunteers have helped support hundreds of people with substance misuse addictions.
22. NHS Birmingham East and North have turned to start up social enterprise *Healthy Incentives* to support people with long-term medical conditions, those at moderate or high risk of cardio-vascular disease and pregnant smokers to change their lifestyles.<sup>24</sup> Four months in, early findings suggest a local support group and a financial incentive to change combined can together have a powerful impact.

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### What can't be shown?

23. However, few practitioners and policy makers have managed to convincingly measure the impact of participation in civil society on those who participate, the society itself and the services delivered within it.<sup>25</sup> In particular it is difficult to find quantifiable evidence of the tangible benefits of community engagement initiatives to service providers, due in part to a lack of appropriate and viable indicators that take into account the scope and quality of various engagement initiatives.<sup>26</sup>
24. The recent DCSF evaluation of parental engagement in schools suggests that evidence is not robust enough to demonstrate an increase in pupil attainment.<sup>27</sup> The Home Office review of volunteer involvement to rehabilitate offenders is also inconclusive – only certain types of sustained engagement really make any impact on reducing reoffending.<sup>28</sup>
25. Social Return On Investment (SROI) tool is in its early stages but could be a useful tool for demonstrating the impact of interventions, in particular the monetary value which can be attributed to the work of the third sector. The Office of the Third Sector is currently pursuing this.

### Evidence of changing levels of perception, satisfaction and influence

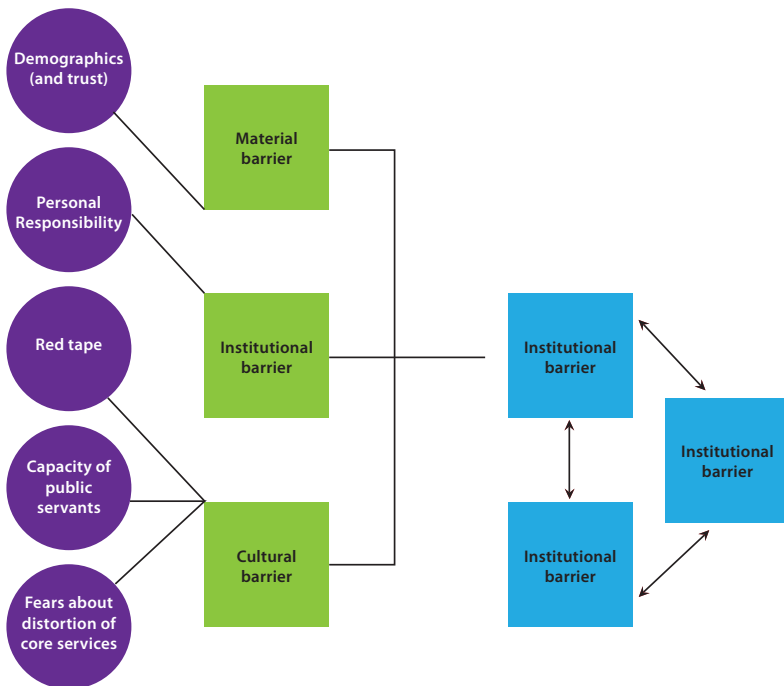
26. However, most evaluations and academic studies do note that the initiatives are welcomed by users, volunteers and the state. They also often credit the initiatives with improving community pride, cohesion or wellbeing even if it is difficult to show a change in performance.
27. Public services are increasingly concerned with user's perceptions and it is here that sustained interactions with civil society are started to pay off. Balsall Heath, a diverse and largely deprived neighbourhood in Birmingham, has a thriving civil society. A recent opinion poll for Birmingham City Council showed that the neighbourhood ranked the highest of the city's 25 priority areas for NI4 'do you agree you can influence decisions' (75 per cent agreed), NI5 'do you feel satisfied with your local area' (87 per cent agreed) and 80 per cent of residents agreed they felt safe after dark.<sup>29</sup> These figures suggest the community has high levels of trust, a reflection of the investment and dedication of the local community organisations there.

28. The national evaluation of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) too suggests that although the level of recorded crimes or reported incidents of antisocial behaviour did not increase in the areas where they were deployed, community satisfaction did rise with their presence.<sup>30</sup>

### The barriers and incentives to involvement from individuals and groups

29. So how can government build on this good work and promote the role of civil society in finding local solutions? The barriers to involvement and partnership work vary widely. We have adapted Cotteril et al's (2008) framework of material, institutional and cultural barriers and facilitators to civic behaviour and deal with each barrier in turn below.<sup>31</sup>

Figure two : **Barriers to civil society interaction with the public sector**



30. **Demographic factors and the relationship with trust** – In many of our most diverse cities, local residents report that they 'do not trust their neighbours'. Fears over antisocial behaviour, the actions of young people and the treatment of all build resentment and hatred. With an erosion of local trust it follows that individuals are less inter-

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ested in their local area and its performance. Putnam (2000) suggest increased diversity leads to less engagement between neighbours with citizens instead 'hunkering down' in homogenous groups.<sup>32</sup> Engaging citizens and civil society is based on trust. Social networks and social capital cannot be generated overnight.

31. **Citizen's understanding of personal responsibility** – There is a need for a wider dialogue with the public about what they can do, and what they should pay for. Barnet council are currently floating an idea dubbed 'Easy Barnet', a no frills council that offers minimal universal services and if you want more you pay more. Cultivating pro-social, civic behaviour is a complex process. It means a shift in power and a change in mindset both by public services and citizens. The London Boroughs of Sutton and Camden are also pioneering work in this field, using behaviour change techniques to convince citizens to use the car less, or turn the heating down, taking more responsibility for the impact of their own behaviour.<sup>33</sup>
32. **Red tape** – We're all turned off by red tape. Experiences of citizens giving feedback and told "you've come to the wrong department" do nothing to help the public sector's reputation. Whether it's an Ofsted inspection for mothers providing informal childcare to each other or Home Office rules that parents who drive children for sports or social clubs must be vetted, well intended legislation can make mutual support more difficult.
33. Local people have responded well to Wardens, where citizens can communicate with an individual whose prime concern is a geographical not a departmental. In the Netherlands and now in Wales, citizens can call in the *Kafka Brigade*<sup>34</sup> when public servants become tangled in a web of dysfunctional rules, regulations and procedures. An independent, non-profit action research team assesses red tape from a citizen's perspective.
34. **Capacity of local public servants** – Though there are many examples of excellent public sector relationships with local voluntary organisations or social enterprises, there are also other public servants who struggle to adjust their working culture or feel tied to a regime which discourages piloting innovative approaches. User engagement and especially co-production are both time consuming and costly. Front-line professionals need more tools and the time to build links with their local communities but also a compelling narrative of why

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to do so. As we discussed in the previous section, the evidence base is uneven, and outcomes can sometimes be hard to quantify. New ways of measuring such outcomes are required in order to convince all stakeholders.

35. **Distortion of core services** – Some voluntary and community organisations, particularly advocacy and campaigning groups, fear that taking on additional roles locally will distort their core message, create imbalanced provision chasing short term funding or reduce other high quality independent third sector provision.<sup>35</sup>

## **Incentives for civil society to work with the state**

### **Motivating individuals to do more**

36. **The importance of hyper local** – The importance of hyper local involvement (based around your street, park, school etc) should not be underestimated. Residents tend to work from their own first hand experiences to devise new solutions to meet needs. And they tend to feel a stronger sense of achievement when they can see the impact of their work<sup>36</sup> – be it a revitalised flowerbed now weeded, the smile of an older person visited or the achievement of a young person at school.
37. Whatever form engagement between civil society and the state takes, citizens are much more likely to respond to national campaigns or very local work, over involvement opportunities at a borough level.<sup>37</sup> The highest levels of engagement in the UK and other European countries come when citizens do not need to interact with a third party but can volunteer locally.<sup>38</sup>
38. Hyper local civil society and state interaction can also help build a sense of place, and foster feelings of trust, belonging and cohesion in communities.<sup>39</sup> Putnam's study of Chicago showed that communities with a sense of 'collective efficacy' were better able to tackle crime locally.<sup>40</sup>
39. **Demonstrating personal reward** – Personal reward, be it a sense of wellbeing, learning new skills, meeting new people or earning credit motivates volunteers to give their time to local ventures and provide feedback to services. Just over half of all current formal volunteers get involved because they wanted to improve things or help people and 30 per cent wanted to meet people through volunteering.<sup>41</sup>

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40. Pilot project *The Good Gym* will help you stick to your personal fitness regime by matching you up with an old person on your running route who'd like you to drop by.<sup>42</sup> Timebanking schemes have shown a 66 per cent of volunteers report an improvement in their self confidence.<sup>43</sup> In Japan the idea has been taken one stage further with *Fueai Kippu* or 'caring relationship tickets' where citizens care for elderly people nearby in exchange for others caring for their family members in another city.<sup>44</sup> More of these schemes are needed in the UK.
41. **Demonstrating financial reward** – *Justaddspice.org* have created credit systems which reward volunteers with trips, events and leisure activities for donating time to frontline services and community work. This has led to a minimum of 100 per cent increase in engagement with services.<sup>45</sup> The growing literature around behaviour change suggests that financial incentives, when properly calibrated and combined with other support and rewards, have the potential to significantly change resident behaviour. Whether it is citizens talking more care of their street, volunteering or taking personal responsibility for their own health.<sup>46</sup> There is a great deal of scope for central government to operate in this field, perhaps through community dividends (discussed later).
42. **Demonstrating citizen's rights** whether it be the right to knowledge about public services, the right to receive a response from public bodies or the right to create a neighbourhood council. Recent bills have placed more power in the hands of citizen's to petition, for example, but there is scope to go further.

### **Structural incentives to promote co-production and the work of the third sector**

43. **Asset transfer** of libraries, offices, community centres and parks is building the capacity of civil society to become self sustaining and fostered new working relationships between the state and communities. In Coin Street asset transfer catalysed the regeneration of an area of South London which used its new portfolio to fund the building of new social housing.<sup>47</sup> Community Land Trusts now give scope for landowners to give assets to community organisations. For example, Lindisfarne has recently built new social housing on land donated by benefactors.<sup>48</sup>
44. **Commissioning frameworks** have done much to increase the delivery of local outcomes by local voluntary sector groups or social

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enterprises. More can be done to promote schemes which reward outcomes regardless of method or intervention type.

45. **Investment in local social enterprise**, be it through business advice, grants or tax breaks has significantly grown the field over the last 10 years.
46. The renewed emphasis of civil engagement as a key indicator of **performance frameworks** for public services has brought about new innovations to inform and involve users. However, MORI data from an evaluation of New Deal for Communities areas shows that satisfaction in local services correlates with the amount of influence residents perceive they have, not with actual influence.<sup>49</sup>

### How could government build this field?

47. So how can government encourage and support the GP to link with volunteers in the community, or the local PCSO build a relationship with nearby youth clubs or a headteacher to make better use of parents as a resource?
48. Civil society should not be seen as the new answer to a panoply of social, political, cultural and even ethical ills facing society.<sup>50</sup> But clearly there is room for more to be done to link local public servants with the resource and capacity of their community.
49. Considering how to support civil society is a complicated task for. There are a number of devices available to act though, as indeed there are opportunities to encourage public servants to place additional focus on their relationships with civil society. Each will need to be explored in more detail in terms on impact, costs and feasibility, but we consider the areas of greatest opportunity to be:
50. **Civic and community entrepreneurs** – There is the potential for each locality to have a community entrepreneur who acts a local link between civil society, public services and good ideas. This idea draws from the experience of a pilot scheme in North and South Tyneside which offers community entrepreneurs paid positions with the local authority to work with up to 20 families to tackle poverty locally.<sup>51</sup> They have become experts in making the links between all public sector services operating locally, increasing take up of key benefits and signposting to employment opportunities. Each entrepreneur receives

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a package of work-based learning and family support to develop the skills to engage with their own neighbours on community-building projects.

51. A similar model, the Young Foundation's Social Entrepreneur in Residence, works inside Birmingham's North and East PCT and has sourced and helped develop three social enterprises in four months. Whether housed in the community or inside a public agency, the success of both models is rooted in finding genuinely creative and well networked local people and the legitimacy and status their new title carries, rather than a substantial financial reward.
52. **Community dividends** – A simple principle where if a community comes together to act and makes a tangible difference then it is rewarded financially. If, for example, a community cuts their estate's prescription drugs bill by half it would be entitled to keep half of the consequent saving to the state (whilst the state retains the other half). This could be allocated either as direct financial reward to households, or as credits towards buying other public assets like playground equipment. Such an approach may also help to build a better sense of resident responsibility – whether it is promoting recycling schemes or encouraging residents to not drop litter.
53. Together with social impact bonds, Pledge Banks and community contracts (agreements of reciprocity with the state and piloted across the country in 2008/9<sup>52</sup>), community dividends would be part of a set of different tools which reward groups of voluntary organisations for achieving outcomes like fewer hospital admissions or higher pupil attainment, with payment on completion regardless of the route of delivery.
54. **'Use it or lose it' asset sharing** – Building on the recent flurry of artists using empty shop fronts, there is scope to give voluntary and community groups the right to use unused spaces such as playing fields, community centres or even corporate buildings. Perhaps even a 'charter of peer support' for un-constituted peer groups to meet in health centres or schools where they are acting as a support group for a known need.<sup>53</sup> Such a move would build a sense that public buildings are 'owned' by the community and prevent a culture solely based on grant giving from the service to such groups.

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55. Further investment could also be made to share assets. For example building multi-occupancy resource centres for voluntary and community groups to share, or housing these organisations in frontline public service building like the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Job Centre Plus staff that now run benefits sessions out of a school in Blackpool to engage more parents as clients.
56. **New ways to value and recognise volunteers** – The government has already invested in a time banking infrastructure but the experience of *Justaddspice.org* shows that small incentives to reward particular groups of volunteers can be helpful. For example Americorps offers students discounts on textbooks for students who volunteer<sup>54</sup> and in Brazil the Mayor of Curitiba exchanges education and transport vouchers to children from the slums in exchange for rubbish.<sup>55</sup>

There is also room in the market for schemes which allow volunteers to 'swap' their time locally – for example teaching knitting in exchange for gardening services, or a citizen in one area caring for the elderly and earning credits which can be exchange for care of a family member in another location.

57. **Community Experience Teams or COMETs** – Utilising the experience and talents of retired public servants in localities to respond to acute needs. For example, using retired headteachers, police officers or doctors as an informal network to respond to community needs in times of disaster (fire, flood etc).
58. Nearly 30,000 retired people in California contribute their time and talents to a similar scheme called *Senior Corps*. They work as volunteer safety patrols for police departments, first responders in natural disasters, foster grandparents for children with special needs or as Senior Companions helping older people in the neighbourhood to maintain independence.<sup>56</sup>
59. **Performance measures which map user voice** – Assessment tools in the CAA and duties in the Local Democracy Bill place are beginning to focus local councils and public agencies on user interaction, satisfaction and trust. Many of these are in essence a proxy for the quality of relationships public servants/ services have with citizens and should be promoted more heavily. Small scale measurement exercises in Peterborough and Manchester to map the impact of civil society may shed some light on this area over the next six months.<sup>57</sup>

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More can be done on this agenda. Public servants will rightly resist more performance targets, but citizens could play a greater role in recruitment, assessment regimes of public servants and services, and in local management boards.

60. There is also scope for building the capacity of public servants to interact with this agenda, many of whom will have received training in a narrow profession. More training on tools for engagement and perhaps small pots of funding for co-production, may help.
61. **Promoting the citizen's 'right to know'** – Transforming the accountability of services through better real-time information, for example from councillors or local public services hubs. Tools like blogs and Twitter are encouraging two way conversations about such information but many public servants and bodies lag behind in their understanding of the importance of such technology and their ability to use it effectively.
62. **Power for local people to act** – The Duty to Involve and other similar legislation has begun the significant shift of power from Whitehall to citizens with initiatives like e-petitions. For example, more can be done to make it easier for groups of patients with similar conditions to reshape services, whether it is through devolved budgets, the power to call staff to account, prioritising local service investment, neighbourhood enquiries or local taskforces or online streaming of officer meetings etc.
63. **Building the capacity of social enterprises** – There is scope for a more Community Interest Companies (CICs) taking over local services for community benefit, for example Post Offices at risk of closure. Financing is needed for good ideas through government grants or tax relief which is slowly reduced over time. Many fledging social enterprises struggle to move away from grant dependency. Intermediaries to help build the field are also needed.

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