



Newham London

# Community Resilience in Newham

a place where people choose to  
**live, work & stay**

## Introduction by Sir Robin Wales

Newham is an exciting place to live, work, and stay. We've had a great year - we hosted the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and got to show the world that we are the best connected place in London, the most diverse place in the world, and the youngest borough in the UK. But we are also the second most deprived borough, with real challenges around social issues including unemployment. As a council our goal is to build the resilience of our community and our residents to deliver long term change.

For us resilience is much more than just being able to bounce back from a single damaging event. It is about possessing the skills and having access to the resources that allow us to negotiate challenges, overcome the more difficult circumstances we may experience, and take up opportunities that come our way. Thriving and getting the most out of our lives requires a mix of community, personal, and economic resilience.

In Newham we've long understood that the community we live in, our relationships and the networks they form are a large part of what makes us resilient and helps us to succeed. Close, emotionally supportive links with family and friends are incredibly important for our happiness, but our approach to resilience recognises that we also need the weaker ties that connect us to a



**Sir Robin Wales** Mayor of Newham

diverse range of people, with different resources, expectations and experiences.

We think of a resilient community as one where our residents could, for example, find employment through a friend of a friend, or an environment where employment is the norm, and where people around you can help you deal with challenges moving into work, finding good childcare or deciding what to wear to an interview.

We believe there is an important role for us to play in building community resilience. We cannot simply step aside and see what happens. Where communities aren't well connected and people are isolated we need to be working with them to develop their networks. Then they'll be in a better place to play a part in the community and deal with challenges.

We also understand that we need to change the way we work and the relationship people have with public

services. We've got to do more to connect people, rather than attempting to treat them in isolation, and use every contact with residents to build skills and get the most out of their strengths. We want a more relational state – it's something we're building towards, but it's a new way of working for local as much as central government, and it's not going to happen overnight.

Councillors, as directly elected and locally accountable representatives of the community, are at the heart of this approach. So too is a real commitment to bringing people together and building shared connections. We have one of the largest free events programmes in the country – with a real emphasis on being resident-led. We built on this further with our Let's Get the Party Started Programme, which helped more than 180,000 of our residents to celebrate throughout 2012 by supporting more than 1,000 local organisers to set up inclusive, network-building events like street parties.

We're proud of our record but we know there's more that we can do to bring community resilience into more of our work. We want to understand the social networks and values that exist in our borough that extend beyond people's formal interactions with the council so that we can reflect and compliment the richness and complexity of our borough and people's lives.

The research by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) and The Campaign Company provides that insight and is illustrative of Newham's commitment to evidence led policy. Here it is combined with information on practical ways of applying the analysis across the council, from influencing the new and innovative Community Hubs model that we are rolling out in April 2013, to the way we communicate with residents and the way we coordinate our volunteers. This is a new and unproven way of working, and we want to share ideas with others who are committed to thinking in new ways and to deal with the challenges that this creates.



## Network Theory and Connected Communities

Network theory, as described in the economist Paul Ormerod's pamphlet *N Squared*, published by the RSA in August 2010, tells us that the impact of a policy will depend not only on how a rational autonomous individual responds to it, but on how the behaviour of different agents in that individual's networks affect each individual's preferences.

The key insight that this line of thinking offers for the world of policy is that networks are simultaneously robust and fragile, frequently resistant to change but at the same time with the potential for sweeping changes to result from seemingly minor interventions. Taking into account even limited information on the structure of networks can make an intervention considerably more effective.

Related to Ormerod's work, the RSA began its 'Connected Communities' programme in April 2009. Other work they have conducted in New Cross Gate successfully mapped the networks of 280 residents to demonstrate the distribution of resources such as the use of community centres, links to employment, and access to power. Their research in Newham has built on this mapping approach.

## Community Resilience in Newham

### The Research

Understanding the relationships and networks people have and the motivations that guide their actions can provide insights to inform the interventions we make across the council. At a time of tight public finances, more efficient targeting of activity, communications and resources is a necessity, not a luxury. So we felt it was really important to understand the social networks and values of our residents, and how they affect their lives, their decisions, and their opportunities.

In late 2011/early 2012 the RSA and The Campaign Company were commissioned by Newham to carry out networks and values analysis. They conducted 823 interviews with residents in three parts of Newham with distinct demographic, geographic and socio-economic profiles (East Ham, Royal Docks, and Stratford), along with 191 interviews with businesses, voluntary groups, and frontline council staff.

### This research primarily used:

- Social network analysis to understand differences between the connections between residents in different areas and residents with different characteristics, and how these networks affect their resilience.
- Values modes analysis, which builds on 40 years of British Values Survey

and other data to segment the population into three key groups (Settlers, Prospectors and Pioneers) identifying people's values and motivations, which can inform our understanding of their resilience.

### Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis asks people to name their contacts and give details about them, such as their ethnicity and education. From this information we can establish patterns of mixing and functional connections, such as who might be able to help someone to get a job. Within this section we also look at data gathered on the types of services and local spaces used by residents.

The first layer of social network analysis identified some differences between the social networks in each area. Residents were asked to name five contacts under four different categories (e.g. who they socialise with). 'Network density' was

then calculated, measuring the number of actual connections between a person's contacts and the possible number of connections – a number nearer to 1 means a highly dense network.

Table 1 presents data on this initial social network analysis. People in East Ham have wider, more local networks; people in Royal Docks have denser, more homogenous networks, with fewer people knowing someone with a degree despite similar qualification levels to the rest of the borough; people in Stratford have smaller but less homogenous, less local networks.

Given there are clear differences between areas in the types of social networks that residents have, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to community development is not a viable option. Our work to build the networks of each area needs to be resident-led and tailored at a hyper-local level, which our Community Hubs model will help enable in the future.

**Table 1: Network statistics for Newham residents by area**

	East Ham	Royal Docks	Stratford	Total
Average number of contacts	4.4	4.1	3.8	4.1
Average network density	0.69	0.74	0.68	0.71
% contacts who are local	65	59	60	61
% contacts who are same ethnicity	81	83	74	80
% of people who do not know anyone who has a degree	16	27	18	20

## Community Hubs

Newham Council is currently moving towards being a strategic commissioning organisation, guided by our belief in the importance of promoting the resilience of our residents. We believe that the State has, and will continue to have, a role in fostering the development of community: so where deficits exist in community engagement and participation, we do not believe in blaming residents or leaving them to sink or swim alone, but rather in helping them to develop assets.

Our focus is devolving as much activity and influence as possible away from the Town Hall to a more local level through Community Hubs.

Community Hubs are not a single space but a virtual web of spaces, services and activities in an area, with strong local recognition by residents. They will give the Community Lead councillor in each area, along with other councillors and with input from residents, real control over local assets and services. Through the Hubs even more activity will be resident-led, with officers and councillors facilitating residents working

together to face local challenges, build their networks, and improve their neighbourhood. Community Hubs will co-ordinate volunteers in the area to deliver local events and a range of other local activities like sports or cultural activity. In this way they will help us to reach members of the community who might never come to a traditional public meeting or council service.

Hubs will also have a vital role in local intelligence-gathering and asset mapping. Officers working in hubs will be committed to visiting each street in the area once each week to identify persistent problems. Combined with the accountability of closer councillor involvement, this will allow the Council to tackle issues like anti-social behaviour faster and more effectively. Hubs will also carry out baseline mapping on a wide range of issues including the local environment, local activity, and community spaces.

Hubs are vital in delivering community resilience in Newham. The model is being piloted in two areas, Plaistow and Manor Park, with plans for roll-out in April 2013.

The research also asked residents about the number of informal social interactions they had by asking which people, from a list of ten, they knew well enough to greet in the street. As was the case in the RSA's research in New Cross Gate, postmen and street cleaners were the most recorded informal social interaction, with an average of 66% and 55% of residents respectively feeling comfortable greeting them. The third most common interaction varied, with police officers or teachers tied at 27% in Stratford, gardeners/caretakers in Royal Docks (38%), and religious leaders in East Ham (41%).

In each area the supermarket, market or shopping centre was the most used local place with more than 80% of respondents in each area using it, with GP surgeries or health centres the most used public service at more than 70% of respondents, highlighting the importance of these places within the community. Below these universally used services there were notable differences – in East Ham a community centre was a focal point, in Stratford hair and beauty salons, and in Royal Docks a particular café.

These two variables have important implications for how the council operates. As we move to strategic commissioning we are learning to think outside of traditional models of public services. Our residents' lives largely revolve around places and people who are separate to

the Council. To have the greatest impact as an organisation we need to shift our attitudes to work with a wider range of partners and engage residents in new and innovative ways.

## Employment and Social Networks

Unemployment is just one issue that this approach can help us to think differently about. In Newham 14% of the economically active population is unemployed, compared with 8% nationally. A further 32% are economically inactive compared with 23% nationally. Tackling this deficit is a key priority for elected members in the borough.

The survey of business representatives identified that 65% of businesses used personal contacts to recruit their staff. More importantly, 51% said that they only use personal contacts to recruit. Among voluntary groups this bias also shows, with 20% of the groups interviewed only recruiting paid staff and 41% only recruiting volunteers through contacts or word of mouth.

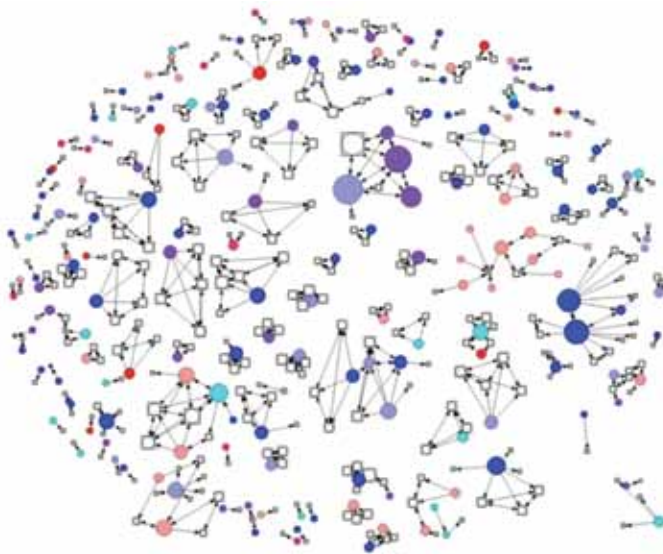
Stratford had the greatest prevalence of businesses recruiting through contacts, so further analysis was undertaken of the role of networks in employment in the area. Figure 1 below is a network map of the links between people in Stratford and those who are likely to be able to help them to find a job. This includes 'weak ties' between people, such as links between a person and a friend of a friend who might be able to help with employment.

Each survey respondent or person named as a contact by a respondent is represented by a dot which is coloured according to their labour market status. The lines between the dots indicate functional links that might lead to employment.

Figure 1: Links between respondents, people they think can employ people, people working locally, and friends of friends in these categories.

As we might expect, people who are unemployed are at a disadvantage in finding work if networks are an important factor in locating opportunities. Figure 2 below compares the networks of employed and unemployed people in Stratford. The networks of employed people have more cross-links, although this may partly be a feature of sample size.

**Figure 1:** Links between respondents, people they think can employ people, people working locally, and friends of friends in these categories.



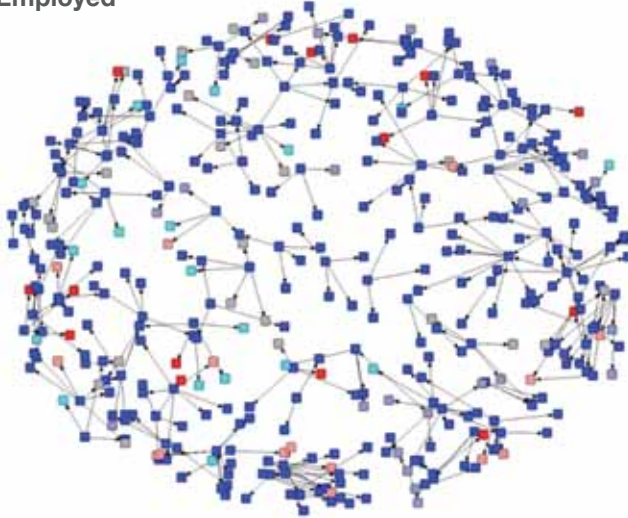
Blue = employed,  
mauve = student,  
aqua = looking  
after home,  
pink = retired,  
red = unemployed,  
white = no data



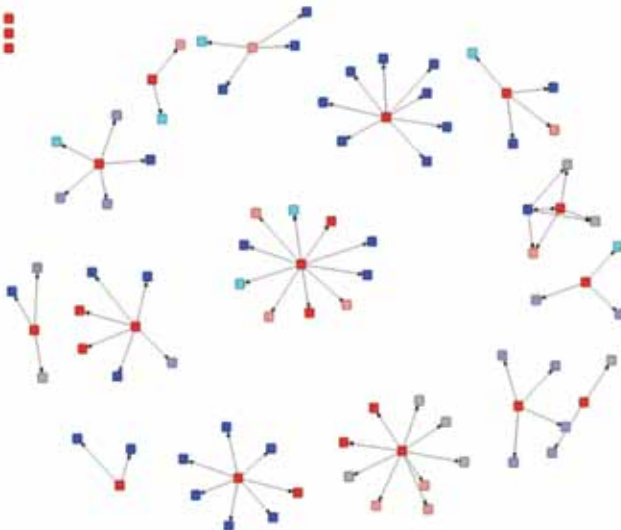
**Fig. 2: Networks of employed and unemployed people in Stratford**

**Employed**

Blue = employed,  
grey = student,  
aqua = looking  
after home,  
pink = retired,  
red = unemployed



**Unemployed**



Understanding how networks impact on employment has important implications for the way we try to get our residents into work. Newham's local employment service, Workplace, has been phenomenally successful since its introduction in 2007, with over 15,000 people placed into work. Independent research has identified that half of those placed in work are long-term unemployed, and three quarters are still in work a year later.

But this research suggests that job opportunities at half of the businesses in the borough are only likely to be accessible to well-networked residents, and that our unemployed residents do not have networks that are as broad or as large. Our current model clearly works, but if we can improve our residents' networks we could do more to increase employment in the borough. That will involve not only building a stronger community but overcoming the barriers unemployed people have in engaging with that community, from confidence to cost. We want to think about how we can use networks in a range of public policy settings (see case study).

## Case Study

Cancer rates are not significantly worse in Newham than elsewhere in London but sadly cancer survival rates are. More of our residents die of cancer than elsewhere; it is a tragic and unnecessary waste. There are many reasons but one is that people do not go to the doctor to report their symptoms until it is too late. This is a problem of personal resilience; too many residents do not have the confidence to contact a health professional and are not aware of the symptoms to watch out for. To deal with this problem, we need to think and work differently.

To increase early detection of breast cancer among girls and their mothers we are working in partnership with Newham PCT and Community Links, a local charity. The programme is being delivered in Plashet Girls School where many of the girls are from Asian backgrounds, a sector of the community where traditional methods of awareness raising have not succeeded. Girls are encouraged to embed regular self examination as a lifetime habit, to increase awareness of the possible signs and symptoms of breast cancer and increase their confidence in approaching a doctor and attending appointments. Importantly, the girls

are encouraged to take the message home to their families helping identify older women who are at risk but may not know it. The scheme uses personal and social networks to reach the lives of multiple generations of women from daughters to mothers and grandmothers.

Success so far is evidenced through the number of girls being able to name symptoms for early detection, and an increase in confidence in contacting a doctor if they felt something was wrong.



## Values Modes Analysis

Values modes analysis was pioneered by the organisation Cultural Dynamics Strategy & Marketing and looks at the underlying motivations behind individuals' behaviour.

The methodology used in values modes analysis begins with a ten-point questionnaire which is based on over 30 years and 1,000 questions from the British Values Survey and elsewhere. The data compiled from the questionnaire is used in a logistic regression which predicts the probability of the respondent being in one of three groups: Settlers, Prospectors, and Pioneers.

These groups are loosely based on the psychologist Abraham Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs, with Settlers being security-driven, Prospectors outer-driven, and Pioneers inner-driven. Some of the features of these groups are highlighted below. It is important that we treat each of our residents as individuals, but the use of values modes can help give us a greater understanding of the different perspectives that exist amongst our residents, to supplement the knowledge that we already have through our everyday interactions in the borough.

**Table 1:**

Settlers	Prospectors	Pioneers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older</li> <li>• More likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds</li> <li>• Anxious about economic security</li> <li>• Socially conservative</li> <li>• Desire to belong</li> <li>• Safety and social order</li> <li>• Bounded choice</li> <li>• More pessimistic about the future/nostalgic</li> <li>• Local means local</li> <li>• Tight knit networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger</li> <li>• More likely to be better off (but not in Newham)</li> <li>• Focused on economic maximization</li> <li>• Socially conservative or liberal</li> <li>• Hierarchy</li> <li>• More oriented to free market solutions</li> <li>• Generally optimistic</li> <li>• Not interested in causes</li> <li>• Being at the centre of things locally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No obvious age profile</li> <li>• Slightly better off (in Newham noticeably so)</li> <li>• Socially tolerant or liberal</li> <li>• Post materialist and want a fairer society</li> <li>• Typically start trends</li> <li>• No simple solutions</li> <li>• Lower fear of crime</li> <li>• Looser knit and diverse social networks</li> </ul>

The values modes analysis of Newham residents by area (Table 2) shows the borough is strikingly different to the UK as a whole, with notable but less pronounced differences between areas.

Compared to the UK as a whole, Newham has twice as many Prospectors and fewer Pioneers and Settlers. This is driven in part by migration and demographics.

**Table 2: Values Modes Analysis by area**

	Stratford	East Ham	Royal Docks	Newham	UK
% Settler	23	31	27	26	39
% Prospector	40	54	48	47	23
% Pioneer	37	15	35	27	38

Newham residents born outside the UK are more likely to hold Prospector values with 54% falling into this group compared with 38% among residents who were born in Newham and 47% of all residents. This fits with what we know about the Prospector group, as people who migrate to work are likely to be focussed on economic maximisation. People who were born elsewhere in the UK but moved into Newham are more likely to fall into the Pioneers group, with 35% compared with 26% overall.

In Newham Pioneers are more likely to be white. They are also more likely to be women than in the UK as a whole. Settlers are more likely to be White British (or to a lesser degree Asian), and over 65. Prospectors are more likely to be Asian or particularly to be Black, with 61% of black residents who responded falling into the Prospector category. Our young people - those aged under 34 – are also much more likely to be Prospectors.

Nationally there are correlations between being a Pioneer and being a higher earner and having higher levels of education. In Newham these correlations are particularly strong, with people who have a degree 4.5 times more likely to be Pioneers. Newham Council frontline staff are twice as likely to be Pioneers as the resident population. This finding suggests a warning that the way Council staff think needs to take into account differences with the resident population.

While nationally Prospectors are more likely to be higher earners than the other two groups, in Newham this is not the case. This suggests that Newham has many aspirational, highly focussed residents who are not yet able to earn the salaries they would like.

## Values Modes and Social Networks

When values modes and social network analyses are combined we can identify whether people with different values have different types of networks. This research identifies that they do.

Pioneers tend to have the largest, least dense, most heterogeneous social networks, in line with their generally more socially liberal views and more independent outlook. Prospectors are more likely to have smaller, more local networks which are more ethnically homogenous. They are more likely to want to know what is going on in their local area and to want to be at the centre of it. If they are on the socially conservative side of the prospector group, they are likely to have more friends from their culture and to feel a strong pressure for social approval.

Settlers are more likely to have denser networks, orientated to family and like-minded people. Previous research suggests Settlers are more likely to define the subjective term 'local' in smaller geographic terms than the other groups.

This analysis offers us insights into the way we engage with our community at the hyper-local level at which Community Hubs will work. For example, in areas where more of our residents are Prospectors, and are likely to be focussed on economic maximisation and local knowledge, we need to reflect that by making sure our local volunteering programmes offer clear routes to skills to make them more employable.



## Volunteering in Newham

We believe that reciprocity is a big part of what makes a community resilient, and we try to ensure that we build it into the way our Council works: for example, in 2012 we made pioneering changes to ensure that work and caring are rewarded in the way we allocate our social housing. That shift is also about ensuring that our social housing hosts a mixed community that can build networks that enhance economic resilience.

We see promoting volunteering as key in building reciprocity in Newham, and the Council runs the biggest local authority-led volunteering programme in England. Encouraging voluntary action sends the message to each member of our community that their skills and contributions are valued, and that we want them to be involved.

The research explored the demand side of civic engagement and voluntary action in Newham – the appetites for volunteering there are in the borough - and looks at differences in the geographical areas studied and according to respondents' values modes. Table 3 below shows how people's attitudes to volunteering and community engagement vary by area.

**Table 3: Volunteering and Civic Engagement by area**

	East Ham	Royal Docks	Stratford
<b>Volunteering</b>			
% Regularly volunteers to help community	30	21	25
% Does not regularly volunteer to help community: not self, but friend/ family/acquaintance does	30	22	25
% Does not know anyone who regularly volunteers to help community	40	57	50
<b>Service delivery and decision making</b>			
% Already involved in delivering services and decision making	3	7	9
% Would like to but don't have time to get involved	22	31	28
% Don't know how to get involved	19	18	25
% A good idea, but not for people like me	31	31	20
% Not my job to get involved	23	13	13

People in East Ham are the most likely to currently volunteer, or to know someone who does, which chimes with their larger, local networks, whereas people in the Royal Docks, where networks are likely to be smaller and denser, are less likely to volunteer.

There are also fewer voluntary groups active in that area. Encouraging volunteering may pose more of a challenge in areas like the Docks as a result, yet equally offers the prospect of significant improvements in the resilience of the local community.

The research also surveyed 61 voluntary and community groups in the areas of Newham studied. These groups tended to be well networked with each other, with many people involved with more than one group. Key council staff and councillors were also shown to be an important part of the networks of many of these organisations.

As outlined above informal recruitment methods prevailed. Around 70% of volunteers lived and worked locally, and a similar proportion volunteered for over a year at the same organisation. 77% of organisations recruited their volunteers through personal connections, with the next category other than 'other' being links with schools and universities, at a considerably lower 19%. This shows both the importance of networking in encouraging more widespread volunteering in Newham, and that there is a role for council action where volunteer organisations might find it hard to move outside the core of people that they engage with.



### Let's Get the Party Started!

Let's Get the Party Started! was an initiative introduced to ensure the Diamond Jubilee and London 2012 Olympic Games provided an opportunity for everyone in the borough to celebrate. We made available small cash grants for street parties in the borough, with the condition that they had to be open to everyone and promote broader community cohesion.

Over 1,000 parties were held in 2012, with over 180,000 residents participating. Community resilience has been built as a result, with 98% of a sample of event organisers feeling confident about organising a community event in the future. Key to the aims of the programme was using existing assets in the community – residents who felt they could organise a party – to reach out to people who otherwise might be isolated and allow them to build relationships with their neighbours. We recognise that the Council is not the sum total of activity in the borough. Sometimes, we just need to enable residents to get on with it themselves. By investing in bringing people together we are helping to build the core network 'infrastructure' in the borough.



Counter-intuitively, it seems that patterns for decision making by area are different to those for volunteering – we currently do not have a clear explanation for why this is, but it illustrates the complexity of dynamics around community engagement.

Table 4 shows differences in civic engagement according to values modes across the population surveyed. These

differences are more notable than differences according to areas. Pioneers are much more likely to be involved already and to give reasons other than 'it's not my job' for not getting involved. Prospectors and Pioneers are both more likely to cite information constraints, and Settlers are more likely to feel more wholly separate from decision-making processes.

**Table 4:**

	Pioneers	Prospectors	Settlers
% Already involved in delivering services and decision making	12	7	8
% Would like to but don't have time to get involved	30	33	27
% Don't know how to get involved	20	21	15
% A good idea, but not for people like me	29	26	27
% Not my job to get involved	9	12	21
% Refused	0	0	0

This information offers important lessons in terms of how we engage our residents in local decision making. The amount of time it takes to engage is a barrier across the board, so we need to make a virtue of brevity in our civic engagement. For the large number of

Prospectors living in Newham information is a barrier, so we need to make the routes into engagement as easy to find as we can. Importantly, for the large proportion of all groups who feel engagement is 'not for me', a resident-led approach can help to dispel this myth.

## Case Study

Elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents want to be independent, to exercise choice and to live fulfilling lives. People want a life, not a service, but traditional care services haven't necessarily supported this and they've sometimes encouraged dependence. That's bad for the people involved and means supporting people is more expensive than necessary.

Newham's Enablement Service (NES) is about helping people to be as healthy and independent as they can – rather than supporting them just the way they are.

Enablement focuses on building confidence in skills they may have lost because of disability or spending a period of time in hospital. It works with people to learn or relearn everyday skills so they can continue to remain independent in their own homes.

Newham volunteers are a key part of our enablement service. We have 60 volunteers who work alongside professional staff - complementing and adding value to our services. Volunteers are provided with training to give them the skills and confidence they need to carry out their roles. They can do a number of

roles including helping people to get out and about in the local community and rebuilding their local support networks.

Volunteers can give ongoing personal support that complements the support our paid, professional staff offers. NES is linked in to Newham Volunteers, the largest council-led volunteering programme in the country with almost 3,000 active members.



## **What more can we do to promote Community Resilience?**

The insights from the RSA and The Campaigns Company's research suggest further questions for policy, both in the London Borough of Newham and nationally.

## **How can local authorities and public services use social networks?**

With greater insight into the structure of social networks and an understanding of how they operate we are better able to 'cascade' policy interventions to get more effect from scarce resources. However as Ormerod states, 'the perception that [an authority was] trying to nudge people might induce others, through the network effect, to become more stubborn or to adopt a completely contrary mode of behaviour'.

So what can we take from a better understanding of social networks? Is there a place in good policymaking for the direct use of network structures to implement policy, or is it more about ensuring that populations to effectively build and use their networks?

## **What are the dangers of using networks or encouraging**

One of the key strengths of local authorities is their ability to deliver services and engage at ground level. We already do that through our Community Leaders and Engagement teams and we

are expanding the resources that residents will control through our Community Hubs.

But with any devolution of power comes the possibility that the objectives of residents and local groups might differ from the strategic direction of the Council. Local community attitudes might be different, or in some cases even in direct conflict, for example over approaches to community cohesion. There are also challenges in accessing genuine networks as opposed to self styled community leaders that present challenges for local authority officers and councillors. How do we respond?

## **Can social networks be utilised to get people into work?**

We know that people who are in full-time or part-time work have larger social networks and that employers are more likely to recruit through personal contacts – even volunteer opportunities that might lead to improvements in skills may be determined by networks. But schemes to improve networks specifically with the aim of increasing employment run the risk of seeming artificial, and may pose difficulties in getting employed people to participate. Also, where employment opportunities are largely closed within communities is it realistic for others to access them? Are there ways to overcome this? Or do we need to make our other activity that builds communities more employment-focused?

