

# Contents

<u>A note of introduction</u>	3
Setting the Scene	4
Introducing the Cast	10
- Visionary Disruptors	14
- Everyday Carers	22
- Neighbourly Empathizers	30
- Practical Taskers	39
- Community Weavers	49
The Next Act	58

# A note of introduction

This collaboratively created resource has been developed for anyone wanting to scratch beneath the surface of the incredible community response to the Covid pandemic.

Created to help those who work with the time givers, formally or informally, to sustain the caring without crushing the spirit, it'll help you to:

- Reflect on the different forms of volunteering we've seen over the past year
- Dig into the different experiences, motivations and needs of Covid volunteers
- Explore how you can support Covid volunteers of all types to carry on caring into the future

Throughout the pages that follow, we pose a number of questions and opportunities designed to be probed and explored. Why not get your team, your mutual aid group, your fellow travellers together (virtually, of course) to see what ideas it unlocks for you?

There's a lot in here. Feel free to skim over the bits that feel less relevant and linger longer on the sections that really speak to you.

This is a work in progress and very much a collaborative effort. Thank you to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for supporting this work, to Leonie Shanks for her wisdom and guidance, and to everyone who has contributed their experiences, ideas and reflections.

We'd love to hear more. Please get in touch: <u>immy@relationshipsproject.org</u>



## An invitation



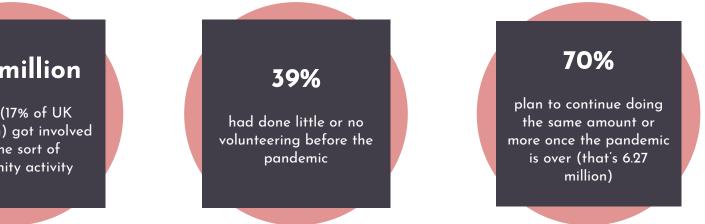
In <u>The Moment We Noticed</u> - our report on our learning from 100 days of lockdown, published back in July - we issued an invitation to join us in understanding the outpouring of community support and explore how to encourage and enable 'Covid volunteers' to carry on caring into the future.

Here's what we've found.

At the end of September 2020, YouGov took a snapshot of the Covid volunteering effort for us. They surveyed 3,478 people to help us get a sense of the scale of the response and the role of socio-economic and demographic factors in determining who stepped forward. They found:

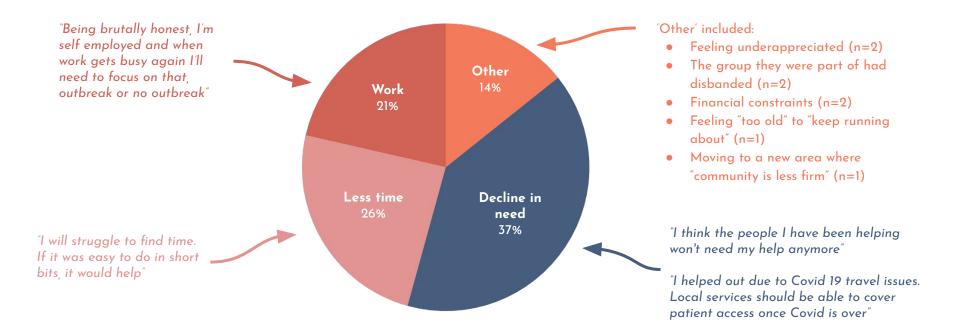


people (17% of UK population) got involved in some sort of community activity



# In numbers: the 'Covid volunteers'

Those who predicted they would do less volunteering post-pandemic were asked why they thought that would be the case. They (n=70) responded:



## We were curious to explore...

What are the stories behind these statistics?

What factors have shaped their desire and ability to contribute and care? What's needed to support and encourage them to carry on caring?

# Shifting relationships

The forms of care, contribution and involvement that we have seen over the past year have been underpinned by **a set of changing relationships** from top-down hierarchical relationships bound up in slow-moving bureaucracy and formalised support to more horizontal, agile relationships rooted in local place.

Any recovery and attempt to build back better by harnessing this energy must understand this new web of relationships and put them at its heart.

A lot of community activity started out as tackling 'single issues' (e.g. food poverty), and became more about relationships. The early learning from this demonstrated that, as one community member put it, "people appreciated the food but valued the social contact".

As lockdown continued, more emphasis was placed on social connections and combating social isolation – through doorstep conversations, telephone support or online activities.

Now, as the social and emotional effects of the pandemic continue to unravel, supportive community relationships will become ever more essential.

# Introducing the cast

## A note on personas



The persona groups that we present are not meant to be restrictive categories or exclusive boxes in which people are confined, but instead are intended to be indicative typologies which highlight different flavours, commonalities and themes.

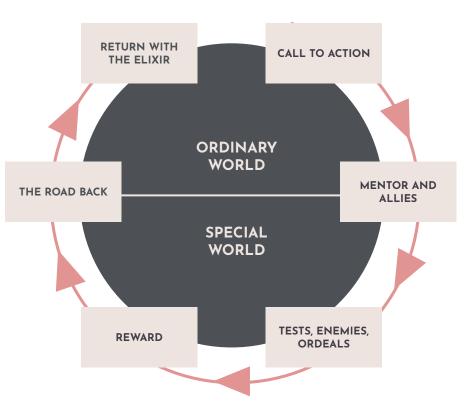
Some people will identify with more than one persona, others will move between groups at different points in time as their circumstances shift and change.

This work is intended to aid reflection and exploration by providing a framework for understanding. It is not intended as a means of controlling, siloing or engineering.

# The Hero's Journey

<u>The Hero's Journey</u> is a common template of stories that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, is victorious in a decisive crisis, and comes home changed or transformed. This narrative arc maps onto the stories we've heard from Active Neighbours who've stepped up to respond to the Covid crisis. We've consolidated the stories we heard for each persona group to give a sense of the journey they have been on over the past 11 months. These stories are unfinished; yet to be fully played out.

Our collective task in the months ahead is to help to write the second half of the story; to shape the road back and keep the elixir alive.



# Introducing our Active Neighbours



# The Visionary Disruptor

The big picture thinkers striving and agitating for a new way of doing things

# The Visionary Disruptor

Visionary Disruptors are excited by the potential of grassroots community organising to generate change beyond the here and now.

Curious about new possibilities - new models of coordination and governance - they're interested in the theoretical and strategic dimension of community organising and challenging the status quo.

They see grassroots activism and bottom-up organising as as a way of starting to build a society that works better for everyone and believe that now is the moment to grasp a new future.

Like Community Weavers, Visionary Disruptors are interested in the workings of community organising. Unlike Community Weavers, they're not content to work in and around the current system but instead are looking to create a new system based on a new set of values Passionate

Curious

#### **Ambitious**

#### **KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Fellow Visionary Disruptors:** Building relationships with those who share their belief helps to energise and nurture their vision for change

#### MISSING RELATIONSHIPS

**Local authority:** Visionary Disruptors are typically missing strategic relationships within existing systems to help them realise the change they want to see

**Community Weavers:** Connections with Community Weavers or 'doers' with complementary skill sets would help Visionary Disruptors turn their ideas into action

"We spent 12 hours across 5 meetings writing a vision statement. That's the kind of people we had - systems design-type people."

Questioning the status quo with a breadth of vision and a a conviction in their beliefs

> Requirement to turn thinking into action and resistance to structures and bureaucracy

#### The Hero's Journey

"I came back to a meeting a few weeks ago, and it kind of bummed me out [...] I was kind of like ready to be like 'whoo hoo - back in the game!' ready to start again - and you could tell that there was probably a core group of about four people who are really really super committed and they were tired out"

#### Return with elixir

How might we support Visionary Disruptors to create the coalitions needed to turn ideas into action?

#### **Call to Action**

Excited by the **possibilities** Covid created to imagine a new role for community and new forms of organising

"I think what was really cool at the beginning was it felt like you had this whole potential to really rethink how you interacted with your local area. There was a real sense of possibility that you were really kind of mini-world makina or somethina"

Road back

energy of the Spring / Summer 2020 is key to keeping The Visionary Disruptor engaged

Maintaining the momentum and

"It [volunteering] is my passion - I see that something really needs to be done this can't ao on. I want to see change. Change takes time - for communities to change, for opinions to change, for people to change."

Mentor and Allies WORLD Meeting like-minded people who share their vision and help them develop their ideas fuelled the energy and enthusiasm of The Visionary SPECIAL Disruptor WORLD Visionary Disruptors thrive on Turning their vision into a the intellectual stimulation reality and reaching beyond that comes with finding a their echo chamber are key 'tribe' of like-minded people challenges faced by Disruptive with whom they can explore Visionaries their ideas

ORDINARY

Reward

Tests, enemies, ordeals

"We could have done so much more if we'd had dedicated capacity and made people feel like it was their own group, rather than thinking it was something exclusive."

# Explore the stories of our Visionary Disruptors



We're grateful to everyone who shared their stories with us. To protect their privacy, their names and locations have been changed



# Pathways Forward

How might we support Visionary Disruptors to create the coalitions needed to turn ideas into action?

# **Key considerations**



When thinking about how we can support Visionary Disruptors to carry on caring, we need to consider:



## Potential pathways forward for Visionary Disruptors



#### **TRUSTING AND INVOLVING**

Visionary Disruptors are a source of creativity and ideas. Opening up lines of trust with local authorities and CVS's can unlock this resource and turn ideas into action

How can we open up the lines of communication between Disruptors and Local Authorities?

#### PRACTICAL EXEMPLARS

Sometimes wheels can be adapted rather than reinvented. Practical examples of things that have worked elsewhere can help Visionary Disruptors turn their ideas into action and build credibility

Where can Disruptors look to for inspiration?

#### **MUTUAL SUPPORT**

Spaces and networks that connect them up with other Visionary Disruptors beyond their local patch can help maintain energy and improve their work

How can we link up Disruptors in different areas?



The old hands who provide unwavering care to someone close to them



Looking after others is a core part of the Everyday Carer's identity.

Often stemming from a belief system rooted in upbringing or faith, the Everyday Carers haven't made new choices in the pandemic, they have done more of what they have always done.

Everyday Carer's don't seek reward or recognition - indeed such praise would be likely to met with embarrassment. They don't typically see themselves as 'volunteers' and are certainly not an 'army' ready to be redeployed.

Instead, they self-organise, working with those they care for to identify and meet their needs and as such are unreliant on formal structures and schemes.

Like Community Weavers, Everyday Carers are old hands at 'volunteering' and see it as a core part of their identity



Like Neighbourly Empathizers, Everyday Carers thrive on providing one-to-one care. Unlike Neighbourly Empathizers, they come to caring more organically; they're self-starters who are more likely to do something for themselves than to sign up to something



Unlike Visionary Disruptors, Everyday Carers work in and around the world as it is Compassionate

Reliable

Committed

#### **KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Those they care for:** A deep relationship of love for the people they care for sits at the heart of The Everyday Carers work

**Partners and employers:** Having the support and 'permission' of their partners and employers makes it easier for Everyday Carers to provide this support

#### MISSING RELATIONSHIPS

**Statutory services:** Everyday Carers often provide care in isolation and could benefit from stronger relationships with statutory services and local service providers

**Peer support:** Providing long-term care can be lonely. Community Weavers could gain pastoral and emotional support from meaningful connections with other Everyday Carers

Caring deeply for others with reliability, endurance and without reliance on systems and SUPERPONER SUPERPONER RYPTONITE

> Bureaucracy, regulation and interference

#### The Hero's Journey

"I will continue but I don't need to be encouraged. I like to help that's just who I am."

#### Return with elixir

How might we support Everyday Carers to carry on caring in a sustainable way and to support others who are earlier in their journey to becoming an Everyday Carer?

#### **Call to Action**

Everyday Carer's supporting others long before the pandemic. Often beginning in childhood, helping is a big part of their **identity** and linked to their **core values** 

"I was brought up in a household where I was expected to do all the housework, the DIY, preparing meals. That was considered normal for me"

"I just think it's really nice we can each all be each other's solutions [...] If everyone put in just a few hours a week to help in their community, we can change so much.

"What I did find - which I find auite shockina - is that a few people that would offer to help always expected something back in return - [...] I felt that a lot of people were helping for the glory, wanting people to say to them 'you're so good - you've delivered a paper to an old person."

#### Road back

There is no 'journey back' for The Everyday Carer - caring is in their nature, something they've done for a long time, and something they'll carry on doing, providing they remain healthy

ORDINARY WORLD

#### SPECIAL WORLD

"What I love about what I do is the honesty of people and the kindness and how grateful the people are. It's not about flash cars it's not about bia houses - it's literally just about spending time with people and having a bit of fun [...] You're probably the first person that I've told about what I've done durina Covid."

The rewards experienced by Everyday Carers are all intrinsic - knowing they are helping those they care about. They shy away from extrinsic rewards and recognition

Reward

Balancing paid work with their caring role can be a challenge for The Everyday Carer, putting strain on their own wellbeing, and knowing when to ask for help can add to this strain

#### Tests, enemies, ordeals

**Mentor and Allies** Everyday Carers tend to be

self-starters and lone rangers. The support of partners and employers makes it easier to provide this sort of care, particularly during a pandemic

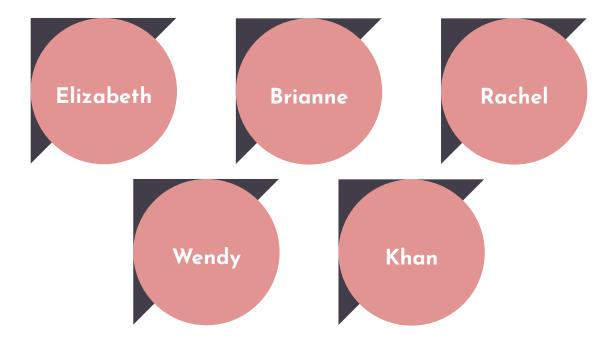


"As a volunteer helper it can be really hard to know where the boundaries are - when someone needs professional help"

aiven the Covid risks and Brianne<sup>\*</sup> actively went against their wishes. To mitigate the risks thev've compromised with a strict cleaning routine. Despite this Brianne did actually get Covid, and passed it on to her partner. But they are both well. (Researcher notes)

Her partner is anxious

# Explore the stories of our Everyday Carers



We're grateful to everyone who shared their stories with us. To protect their privacy, their names and locations have been changed



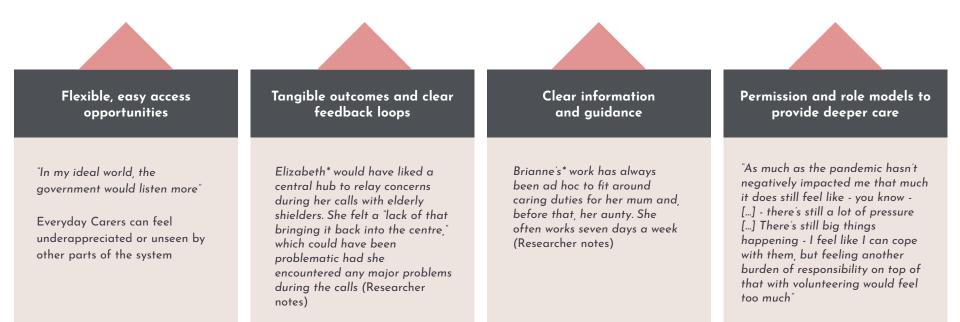
# Pathways Forward

How might we support Everyday Carers to carry on caring in a sustainable way, and to support others who are earlier in their journey to becoming an Everyday Carer?

# **Key considerations**



When thinking about how we can support Everyday Carers to carry on caring, we need to consider:



# Potential pathways forward for Everyday Carers



#### MENTORING

Everyday Carers have a wealth of experience. Sharing their knowledge, advice and support to those earlier on in their journey to becoming an Everyday Carer could help them on their way

#### PEER SUPPORT

Being an Everyday Carer is demanding, and often lonely. Light touch peer support networks could provide support, encouragement and backup where needed

#### **PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

Everyday Carers can feel on their own. Providing access to professional support services such as health and social care - for everyday needs, such as practical aids, and emergencies could help

#### **BRINGING INTO THE FOLD**

More than any other group, Everyday Carers tend to be isolated from other Active Neighbours. Opening up opportunities for them to connect, particularly with Weavers, is important

What's needed to encourage and enable Carers to mentor other Carers? What lightweight infrastructure is needed to establish a Carers peer support network? What professional support would aid Everyday Carers? How could it be accessed? How could connections between Everyday Carers and other Active Neighbours be nurtured?

# The Neighbourly Empathizer

The sociable companions who have found meaning in new neighbourhood connections

# The Neighbourly Empathizer

These sociable neighbours often made their way into volunteering as Practical Taskers but found purpose and fulfilment in the new relationships they formed with those that they supported.

A degree of 'officialdom' and the sense of 'permission' this provides is important in giving Neighbourly Empathizers confidence to push past social reservedness and offer up their support.

The satisfaction and reward that they get from supporting others in their community has whetted their appetite and they now seek opportunities to provide longer-term support within their local area.

Like Everyday Carers, Neighbourly Empathizers enjoy the human element of caring, getting to know new people and building new relationships. Unlike Everyday Carers, they tend to need a bit more structure and support - and the feeling of 'permission' that this provides, to do this sort of work. They tend to be newer to this sort of caring than Everyday Carers.

Like Practical Taskers, Neighbourly Companions tend to be new to 'volunteering'.

#### Sociable

Caring

Eager

#### **KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Friends and family:** Neighbourly Empathizers were often inspired or encouraged into volunteering by friends or family, and could themselves encourage more people into this role

**Other volunteers:** Newly formed relationships with fellow volunteers provided a positive introduction to community helping

**Those they supported:** Over time, friendships developed with those they supported, providing warmth, enjoyment and a sense of fulfilment

A lack of structure and

"The first lady I shopped for who lives five minutes walk from me, she's not shielding anymore - when she'd finished, she said `oh, I'd like to invite you and your husband to meet me and my partner, we can sit in the garden' - and we've sort of carried on [...] she's not someone who I'd EVER have met otherwise. We get on really well, we have a bit of a laugh [...] and I don't know - we just clicked."

#### The Hero's Journey

"Sometimes you wonder what your purpose is all about, but now I feel my purpose is sort of to really help people"

"In the past I've done paper-based volunteering.[...] but I've realised that I quite enjoy meeting people and having that interaction. In particular, I've enjoyed meeting people that are outside my social circle because you know, we're all quilty of having our own little aroup"

> "I met people - like the guy with cancer, who's Jamaican. I was like. 'When this is all over we'll ao for a Wrav and Nephews.

#### Return with elixir

How might we provide Neighbourly Empathizers with the connections, confidence and support to channel their compassion into longer term contributions?

New **friendships**, a greater

sense of **belonging** to their

local area and a sense of

purpose and pride are all

**Neighbourly Companions** 

Reward

rewards experienced by

Road back

continue to provide one-to-one support

in their local area, and some of these

relationships of support have turned

Many Neighbourly Companions

into friendships

#### **Call to Action**

Fuelled by a sense of duty and a belief that you get what you give, Neighbourly Companions gained a new awareness of needs faced by members of their community

"It was a feeling of like, well, what can we do to help, because this is massive and the government seem to be struggling somewhat. And also, as a citizen, you know - we had time and the ability to help, so what could we do?"

ORDINARY WORLD

#### SPECIAL WORLD

Initially signing up to the **NHS** GoodSam app, some had a poor start to volunteering. Once in their stride, **patchy** quidance and a lack of confidence made them doubt themselves at time

Tests, enemies, ordeals

"I was a bit nervous about it [using the OnHand app] but there was quite good support on it. It can tell you how many shopping trips you've done for people"

**Mentor and Allies** 

Structured opportunities organised

locally give Neighbourly Companions

the 'permission' they seek to offer

their support to their neighbours

"I turned up at the location only to find no-one else was there. They told me they weren't ready yet. That left me with a sour feeling - I wasn't given enough information."

# Explore the stories of our Neighbourly Empathizers



We're grateful to everyone who shared their stories with us. To protect their privacy, their names and locations have been changed



# Pathways Forward

How might we provide Neighbourly Empathizers with the connections, confidence and support to channel their compassion into longer term contributions?



### 66

One man told me his story straight away - it was like he really needed to speak to someone. [...] I wonder if people who were in really bad ways were just too embarrassed to ask for help. I respected his confidentiality. I had his number but wouldn't message him. I'd have chatted to him in the street if I'd seen him but I didn't. I told Ellen\* (who coordinated the mutual aid group) that I was worried about him and she said she'd report it to his social worker. It felt like a missed opportunity because he really wanted to talk and open up.

Observatory Contributor

"

## **Key considerations**



When thinking about how we can support Neighbourly Empathizers to carry on caring, we need to consider:

Inviting and accessible **Backup support in case** Cover for when they Feeling that their contribution things get tricky have to step away is valuable longer-term opportunities Julie<sup>\*</sup> recounts a time when the door "I've already started to look was aiar and the man inside called out "I've just got back from a "I was sent to another for local opportunities. I'm asking for help to get into bed. He was two-week trip. We're having interested in working for a location where I wasn't in distress and Julie felt in a really to quarantine for the next difficult position. She knew she wasn't needed. I was just there for refuge or homeless charity or two weeks, so in total I won't meant to go inside due to the infection the sake of it. I tried to tell something like that. I've a few risk and wasn't qualified to lift have done my 'client's' that look interesting, but it's them [me being there] was a someone onto the bed so had to tell shopping for four weeks. I waste of time, but it fell on hard to do anything at the the man she couldn't help which was feel bad - I feel a sense of really hard for her. She spoke to a moment (because of the deaf ears. I didn't really feel obligation towards them neighbour who said the carers would like I was listened to " pandemic)" be in soon, but she still worried now" (Researcher notes)

## Potential pathways forward for Neighbourly Empathizers

#### CONNECTING WITH OTHER EMPATHIZERS

Neighbourly Empathizers thrive in supportive environments. Connecting up with other Empathizers, either informally over a coffee or via a more formal network, can offer practical and emotional support

What light touch infrastructure could be created to connect up Neighbourly Explathizers?

#### TRAINING

Light touch training - such as Community Connector or Health Champions training - could be another source of help and support to Neighbourly Empathizers on their journey

What sort of training would benefit and appeal to Neighbourly Empathizer?

#### **VOICE WALKING**

Many Neighbourly Empathizers have got to know people they wouldn't otherwise have met over the course of the pandemic. Sharing the stories of those they have supported can help nurture a foundation of empathy and understanding

How could you support Neighbourly Empathizers to share stories and perspectives across lines of difference?



The busy doers new to volunteering who thrive on getting tasks done

## The Practical Tasker

These busy doers were inspired to offer up their support by (social) media coverage of acute need and heroic acts (here's to Captain Tom).

Looking for tangible, time bound tasks they could fit around existing commitments, they signed up to NHS GoodSam and various local groups, eager to do their bit. They shopped for shielders, baked cakes for overlooked public service people and picked up prescriptions for neighbours.

The practical, flexible nature of these tasks opened up a more accessible dimension to volunteering, and any future involvement will rely on these characteristics for they're wary of being tied down or being asked more than they can give.

Like Neighbourly Empathizers, Practical Taskers are often relatively new to volunteering Unlike Neighbourly Empathizers and Everyday Carers, Practical Taskers don't want to be tied down to long-term commitments



Practical Taskers commonly need a Community Weaver to provide the infrastructure to help and point them to tasks they can do

#### Responsive

#### Practical

#### Willing

### **KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Broader society:** A sense of social pressure or obligation stemming from both social and mainstream media played an important role in prompting Practical Taskers to believe they had a role to play.

**Partners and employers:** Relationships of 'permission' involving employers and members of their household were important in determining whether and to what extent Practical Taskers got involved in community activity.

**Community Weaver:** Perhaps most crucially, the support of a Community Weaver has been essential for many Practical Taskers. By surfacing need, coordinating the response, and creating easy access platforms, Community Weavers created the infrastructure which made it easy for Practical Taskers to do their bit

**Fellow volunteers:** New and sociable connections with other members of their community added to the sense of enjoyment for Practical Taskers

Responding quickly and energetically to simple, practical tasks

RYPTOHITE

Long-term commitments and complex tasks

#### The Hero's Journey

"It became more challenging as time went on [...] because a good 40% of requests were from people who didn't have money [...] It had taken a turn from the original feel of the aroup [...] because it's then talking about poverty and disadvantage, and whether [the council] is good, bad or indifferent at supporting such people."

> "It's quite nice to have a purpose to do stuff when vou can see an overwhelming need for it. So yes, a massive sense of fulfilment."

#### Return with elixir

How might we encourage and help Practical Taskers to commit their energy and help longer term?

Road back

As lockdown became a way of life,

short-term, practical needs gave way

well suited to Practical Taskers. Alona

with the **return to work** and a **shift in** 

the national mood. Practical Taskers

find themselves in limbo

to entrenched, complex issues less

#### Call to Action

Inspired by the Captain Tom effect. Practical Taskers were compelled to **do their bit** by others around them and inspirational stories reported in the **media** 

"There's a famous cartoon, which was a propaganda cartoon from WW2. And it's a picture of a middle-aged guy with his brill-creamed hair with his son on his lap and his son says to the auy. Daddy what did vou do in the war? And the auv is looking into the distance and you know full well he didn't volunteer"

ORDINARY WORLD

#### SPECIAL WORLD

Meeting like minded people, purposeful and feeling part of the effort were all perks for would have liked

Reward

feeling more connected to

their local area, feeling

Practical Taskers

In the summer, Practical Taskers found themselves competing for tasks and frustrated by communication and coordination which, at times, was not as clear as they

"It [Whatsapp] was a great leveler, I thought. We didn't have to ao through, you know where do you live? How big is your house? How educated do vou sound? It seemed much more inclusive [...] and [we] trusted each other a lot faster than we would in a conventional group."

"Sometimes there were things I'd see on the Facebook group which were posted 2 hours ago. I'd go to comment and 15 people had beaten me to it. It was a bit disappointing."

Mentor and Allies

Hyperlocal groups welcoming everyone

and coordinated through accessible

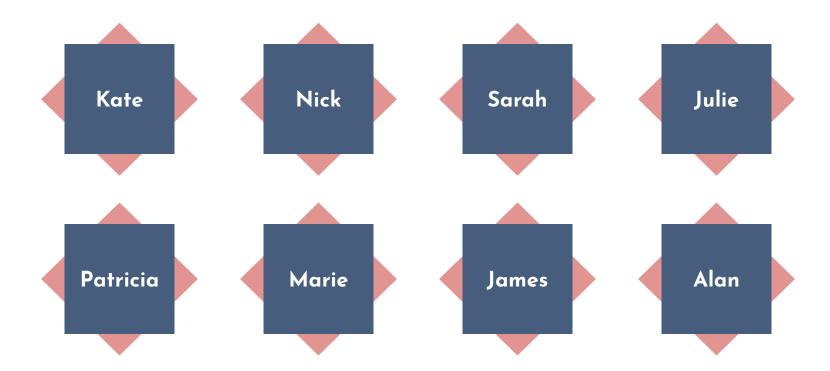
platforms such as Whatsapp and

Facebook which made time-bound

tasks easy to find and complete

Tests, enemies, ordeals

## Explore the stories of our Practical Taskers



We're grateful to everyone who shared their stories with us. To protect their privacy, their names and locations have been changed



# Pathways Forward

How might we encourage and help Practical Taskers to commit their energy and practical help longer term?



## 66

There's a woman called Rochelle\* who's got really involved in mutual aid coordination which was a real change for her. She was an editor before but got really into the coordination. She's now setting up a cafe kiosk and really wants to run it as a neighbourhood hub. But [...] there were lots of other people in the same situation who got involved in mutual aid but who are back to work and who see covid volunteering as just a stage in their lives that they've now moved on from. Why has it stuck for some people and not for others? When there's not a national crisis and clear call to action it can be much harder to see what your role in your community is and how you can help. If someone asked them to do something they would but if not it's harder to sustain that sort of involvement.

Observatory Contributor

"

## **Key considerations**



When thinking about how we can support Practical Taskers to carry on caring, we need to consider:

Flexible, easy access opportunities

"In my experience, the moment you take on a role like Treasurer or something, it's incredibly hard to ditch it. I am conscious that you can volunteer and end up being given all the jobs. The only way to get rid of the role is to actually leave the area!" Tangible outcomes and clear feedback loops

"People need to see some sort of progress, some sort of feedback. If you continually take all the time people will stop giving. You have to give something back, whether a gift, information, a building" Clear information and guidance

"Being clear about the expectations that are on you. Being given clear guidance on what you are and are not expected to do and what to do in different circumstances" Permission and role models to provide deeper care

"It didn't feel like I was treating them as humans. Leaving food on the doorstep felt cold. It was the best thing for their safety but I wanted to give them more interaction. It was challenging not to be able to do more and be more compassionate."

## Making it engaging

We should also think about how to make Practical Tasking fun and appealing to those who are tempted but not convinced. We might consider...

#### Recognition

Practical Taskers often thrive on the feeling of having been recognised for the role they've played. Recognition might be something as simple as a t-shirt or a few words of gratitude, but it can make a big difference in keeping up motivation

## Connection

Practical Taskers have thrived on the connection found through volunteering. Simple platforms like Whatsapp and Facebook have made Taskers feel part of something bigger and made the experience all the more enjoyable. Continuing and evolving these spaces for connection will be important

## Fun

The 'race' to offer help added an element of fun and dynamism to the realm of Practical Tasking in the early days of lockdown. This served to boost energy and could keep those with a competitive streak engaged

#### Value exchange

The mutuality of mutual aid has been questioned but helping others is good for our wellbeing. Celebrating the idea that Practical Tasking is good for everyone involved might offer a motivation boost

## **Potential pathways forward for Practical Taskers**



#### CONTINUATION

Many have found their stride as a Practical Tasker over the past year and have put their hands up to continue supporting their communities by completing tangible tasks. The nature of need is changing so finding new roles for this group is a priority

What roles could Practical Taskers play going forwards? What tasks need doing and how can they be surfaced?

#### TRANSFORMATION

Practical tasking is often an entry point to other forms of volunteering a first step in the journey to providing community care. Clear signposting, easy access opportunities and support along the way makes for a smooth journey

How could you support Practical Taskers to take on new roles and provide other types of care?

#### HIBERNATION

Disaster response experiences show that, when people who play the role of Practical Tasker leave with a positive legacy they 'hibernate well'; ready to spring back into action when their services are required

How might you support Practical Taskers to tell their stories and, in doing so, create a positive legacy?



The connectors and organisers building platforms for others to get involved



Leading the local response, Community Weavers build the platforms, infrastructure and connections which enable others to get involved in helping their community.

Community Weavers are a central figure in their community and know the who's who and the what's what. They join the dots between different entities, helping things work smoothly and effectively.

Fuelled by self-confidence and an abundance of energy, they're leaders who aren't afraid of taking responsibility and trying out new things. They're full of ideas for strengthening their communities now and in the future.

Like Everyday Carers, Community Weavers have a history of community activity and are in it for the long run Like Practical Taskers, Community Weavers are hands-on doers who thrive on getting things done Unlike Ideological Agitators, Community Weavers work within the current system, making connections and oiling the wheels to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness.

### Indefatigable

Driven



### **KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Local community:** Community Weavers have earned the trust of their local community and are seen as leaders as well as coordinators

**Core group of trusted advisors:** A small informal committee often help Community Weavers develop new ideas and test out new plans

**Local groups and services:** Community Weavers have built effective relationships with other sources of local support

"With a lot of the charities we've worked with, a lot of them have become friends as well now. There were a few that I knew from before anyway, because we did the homeless stuff together. And there have been other groups and charities that we've got together with, and I think they would continue, because I think a lot of the groups that we're working with still want to continue and offer some sort of service."

Connecting people up and creating the platforms that get the best out of them SUPERPONER SUPERPONER

> Interference or co-option by more 'formal' players



"There is something I've experienced over the past three or four months something I call 'charity fatique': vou're iust constantly busy doing stuff between work and charity stuff, so you get totally mentally drained. It becomes less of an enjoyment and more of a chore [... ] If you don't manage your own mental health, how are you going to help anyone else?"

> "You know, for some people it would be 'We'll go to the pub and get pissed' and all of that - that will be the release. For me it was not going to the pub but going into the kitchen at the gurdwara and cooking and feeding and interacting with the homeless people on the streets."

#### Return with elixir

How might we support Community Weavers to build a longer term vision for their communities, and build bridges across divides?

Road back

Community Weavers face a challenge

commitment of their community and

convincing them that they're always

in maintaining the energy and

needed, not just in crisis

#### **Call to Action**

Already established before the pandemic, Community Weavers draw confidence from past experience of community organising

ORDINARY WORLD

#### SPECIAL WORLD

Community Weavers thrive on the sociability of their role and the satisfaction of having helped to strengthen their

Reward

community

Mentor and Allies

Trusted relationships with a core aroup of 'advisors' helps sustain The Community Weaver's relentless energy, while connections with local aroups help them to coordinate action

Practical challenges around coordinating the volume of support and training up new

volunteers faced Community

lockdown

Weavers in the early stages of

Tests, enemies, ordeals

"I'm so luckv to have these good friends around me to help me do this"

had signed up to help out and were added to the whatsapp group. To begin with they had 4 or 5 requests for help each day. People in the support group were often quick to respond and Josie\* had to spend a couple of week 'training' everyone in how the support was meant to work (Researcher notes)

Within a couple of days, 65 people

losie\* describes herself as a 'coordinator': someone who nurtures and encourages the 'strengths' and

'gifts' in other people for the

'do'. (Researcher notes)

betterment of the community. She sees

it as her role to create and oversee the

'platforms' that enable other people to

get involved [..] She describes her motivation as almost being selfish in that it gives her the opportunity to make new friends and 'have a good

## Explore the stories of our Community Weavers



We're grateful to everyone who shared their stories with us. To protect their privacy, their names and locations have been changed



# Pathways Forward

How might we support Community Weavers to build a long term vision for their communities, and build bridges across divides?

## Making the most of their potential



Community Weavers play a fundamental role within the ecosystem of community support. Realising their full potential involves...

#### Recognising their power

Community Weavers sit at the centre of the community response. The connections they have and the role that they play wield huge potential

How might we support, inspires and reassure Community Weavers so they can make the most of their connections and position?

#### Understanding their 'army'

Community Weavers tend to support a wide variety of Active Neighbours, all of whom bring different strengths and face their own challenges and constraints

How can Community Weavers find the

best roles for others, understand and

nurture their value, and bring the

best out of them?

#### Identifying community needs

The needs of communities were often easy to identify at the start of lockdown but are becoming more complex and harder to surface

#### Supporting each other

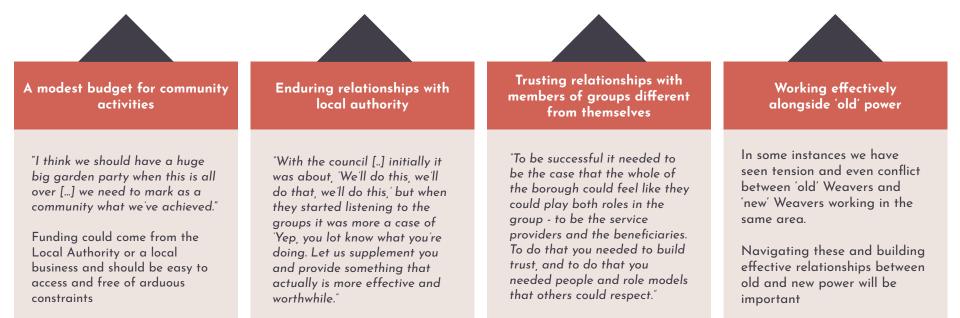
By virtue of the central role that Community Weavers play within their communities, burnout can be common

How might Community Weavers understand how best to serve their communities going forwards? How could Community Weavers support one another by sharing ideas, tips and encouragement?

## **Key considerations**



To support Community Weavers to play their best role and support their communities to do the same, we should also consider...



## Potential pathways forward for Community Weavers



#### CONNECTING WITH OTHER WEAVERS

Being a Weaver can be demanding, and burnout is a risk. Peer support networks would enable Weavers to support and encourage one another, and share useful resources

> What lightweight infrastructure is needed to connect Community Weavers?

#### **BUILDING BRIDGES**

Over the course of the last year many relationships have been strengthened, but some have got weaker. Healing divides and building strong relationships between different groups must be at the heart of the 'recovery' and Community Weavers can play a central part

What role could Community Weavers play in building bridges? What support do they need to be able to do this?

#### **TRUSTING AND SHARING**

Community Weavers and local authorities both have knowledge about the needs of the community. Sharing that knowledge would benefit both

How could lines of communication be opened up between Weavers and Local Authorities? Where can we look for inspiration?



## **Building Bridges**

Over the past year, our communities have achieved an extraordinary amount. We've shopped for one another, lent each other things, found ways to keep our children entertained with window ledge surprises. We've met people we have never met before and we've gained an insight into how others down the road live.

We've built thousands of little bridges which connect us outside of our usual bubbles. These bridges are powerful things - they're the infrastructure of new friendships and, in aggregate, the engineering of stronger, more resilient communities.

As we look ahead to the future, we must tend to these bridges and continue to build more.

Join us seeking to nurture newfound connections and empathy and building bridges across divides. Find out more <u>here</u>.

## 66

We should nurture those who have seen their neighbourhoods in a new light having met the person and not just read about the problem and the poverty. That many we live alongside have been in a form of isolation that both pre-existed and will persist the pandemic. That being "seen" is a universal human need, and to simply turning our "seeing" into "speaking" is a positive action. That compassion and empathy form the many and small feeder streams required to create any meaningful flow of solidarity further down.

"

– Observatory Contributor

Props



## We have developed some props for continuing this work and are working on others





heatmap.relationshipsproject.org





A storybook for making sense of your experience of Covid and its effect on your relationships

#### <u>The Relationships</u> <u>Heatmap</u>

An interactive diagnostic for identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement in your practice

#### <u>Kit for</u> Councils

A set of principles and practical resources to help local authorities nurture flourishing communities



#### Bridge Builders Handbook

A set of principles and practical resources to help local authorities nurture flourishing communities



#### Turning to the Light

Reflections on how we build on the positives from the pandemic to pave the way for a more connected future

This work is evolving and collaborative. If you have ideas, questions or would like to be involved, please get in touch

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