



# Community Organisers



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## **1. Summary**

This report was commissioned to support the evaluation of the Community Organiser programme funded by the Cabinet Office. Over the last three years Community Organisers have been working in communities across England to build relationships and create local networks, with the aim of encouraging people to create social and political change through collective action.

### **1.1 Key Research Question**

After at least one year of Community Organising can we see any differences in indicators of social capital and well-being between those living in areas with organisers and similar people living in areas without?

### **1.2 Approach**

We would hypothesize that those living in Community Organiser 'patches' might feel more able to influence decisions, be more active in local decision making and feel part of more cohesive neighbourhoods. They might well also experience a greater sense of purpose and well-being as a result of increased social contact around issues of common interest.

The Community Life Survey measures relevant social capital and well-being indicators robustly across England but to analyse them at a local level requires additional survey interviews to be carried out. TNS BMRB has therefore conducted an online version of the Community Life Survey, in seven Community Organiser 'patches' in Grimsby, Sheffield, Sneinton, Walsall and in Halifax. A total of 823 interviews of adults aged 16+ across the patches were undertaken in Autumn 2014. Concurrently the survey was also asked of people in other areas of the country enabling comparator groups to be assembled comprising:

- Those living in non-Community Organiser areas with responses weighted to match the population profile of the seven patches surveyed (aligned national data)
- Those living in non-Community Organiser areas amongst the 20 per cent most deprived in England to match the patches to areas of similar levels of deprivation

This survey only enables comparisons at a single snapshot in time during which the Community Organisers were operational. We cannot therefore compare the situation before the organisers started work with afterwards nor can we prove any findings are directly the cause of Community Organisers. However, we can usefully test for meaningful differences between patches and comparator areas at the time of survey in order to answer the research question posed.

## **1.1 Key Findings**

The patches were found to be similar (statistically the same) to comparator areas across a broad range of measures; no significant differences were found in satisfaction with the local area, local services, support networks, companionship and loneliness. Similar levels of civic participation, consultation and action were found. Social action and volunteering rates were also the same.

Importantly Community Organiser patches were, on the whole, no worse than comparator areas on any significant measure but found to be better in a few notable areas.

A greater proportion of patch respondents compared with individuals living in the national top 20% of deprived areas felt that people pull together to improve their area; individuals living in organiser patches were significantly more likely to agree that local people pull together to improve the neighbourhood (51% and 39% respectively).

Individuals within the patches reported a stronger sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods; they were found to be significantly more likely than those living in the national top 20% of deprived areas to say that they have a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood - 54% compared to 46% respectively.

Small but statistically significant differences in well-being were found. Patch respondents were less likely to report very high levels of life satisfaction and happiness compared with the national aligned data. At the 90% confidence interval patch respondents were also more likely than those living in both national top 20% of deprived areas and the nationally aligned areas to report a greater sense of worthwhile.

Differences in approaches to influencing decisions were also found; those in Community Organiser areas were more likely to organise a paper petition (44% and 37% respectively), organise a group (9% compared with 4%) or contact local media or journalists (14% compared with 8%). However they were found to be less likely to contact a local MP (30% compared with 38%).

Awareness of Community Organisers was found to be broadly in line with expectations but recall of actual contact was lower than might be expected: Around 15% of local people responded that they were aware of Community Organisers with 4% stating they had some form of personal contact. While this might appear low the Community Organisers had a target to conduct 500 'listening' sessions with people which would equate to an estimated 14% of the local

population of each patch<sup>1</sup>. So the awareness figure is reasonably in line with listening expectations while the contact figure is perhaps lower than might be expected.

## **2. Introduction**

Community Organisers is a national training and development programme, funded by the Cabinet Office and delivered by Locality, which provides an opportunity for people to take action on issues that matter to them in their local area. The programme began in 2011 and has a target to recruit 5,000 Community Organisers by March 2015. The 5,000 Community Organisers are made up of 500 Senior Community Organisers, each receiving a bursary over 51 weeks, who will in turn recruit and train a further 4,500 Volunteer Community Organisers to support their work in their local area. Community Organisers have been working in communities across England during this period to build relationships and create local networks, with the aim of encouraging people to create social and political change through collective action.

The key requirements of a Community Organiser are to:

- listen to local people
- support people to develop their power to act together for the common good
- help people take action on the local issues that are important to them

The work of the Community Organisers is community-led, which means that priorities are set by local people, not the organiser.

The Community Life Survey was carried out by TNS BMRB in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 on behalf of the Cabinet Office, to provide Official Statistics on issues that are key to encouraging social action and empowering communities, including volunteering, giving, community engagement and well-being.

The key objectives of the survey are to:

- Provide robust, nationally representative data on behaviours and attitudes within communities to inform and direct policy and action in these areas.
- Provide data of value to all users, including public bodies, external stakeholders and the public, engaging with end users to refine and develop the survey as appropriate.
- Underpin further research and debate on building stronger communities.

In 2012-13 the survey included a large scale test of a probability sample web survey, incorporating also a paper questionnaire option for those unable or

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<sup>1</sup> A high-level estimation of the population of Community Organiser patch areas was made by overlaying lower super output area (LSOA) boundaries onto the patches and applying average LSOA population estimates to the areas of overlap, and then adjusting to the proportion of adults (16+) expected from census data.

unwilling to provide data online. Subsequently, the Cabinet Office commissioned TNS BMRB to carry out further web developmental work over the course of 2013-14 and 2014-15 alongside a face to face survey.

Many of the measures collected in the Community life Survey relate closely to the work of Community Organisers. In particular, topic areas covered in the survey such as community cohesion, social action and volunteering align very closely with the aims of Community Organisers. Given this alignment between the two, the Community Life Survey presented an opportunity to assess the impact that Community Organisers are having within local communities.

In order for us to detect the general impact of the policy we would need the organisers to have a reasonable impact. It should also be noted that the areas selected for analysis are those for which:

- organisers could define the geographic areas accurately
- organisers could point to local issues they believe they have had a direct influence/impact on.

The analysis assumes that controlling for differences in demographic profile, including indices of deprivation is enough to eradicate systematic differences between intervention areas on the one hand and non-intervention areas on the other. In isolation the strength of evidence is weaker than a Random Control Trial (RCT)<sup>2</sup> or pre-post matching, however it is still possible to test differences between areas after the programme started and the degree of confidence that these are down to chance or not.

## **2.1 Method**

In Autumn 2014, the Cabinet Office commissioned TNS BMRB to carry out the online version of the Community Life survey in seven small areas that had been assigned a Community Organiser. These areas were in Grimsby, Sheffield, Sneinton, Walsall and in three separate locations in Halifax. These areas were chosen to take part in the programme as they were known to have particularly high levels of social deprivation and low community cohesion.

The Cabinet Office supplied TNS BMRB with a list of postcodes covered by the Community Organisers in each area. These postcodes were filtered against the Postcode Address File and a systematic sample was drawn. At each address, all adults aged 16+ (up to a maximum of four) were invited to do the survey online or request a paper questionnaire version. Two reminders were sent to each address and a £10 voucher was available for those completing the questionnaire. The aim was to achieve at least 100 interviews within each area.

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<sup>2</sup> The implementation of such a design was not possible in this case as the programme was already in place at the time of interview

At the close of fieldwork in the Community Organiser areas the following number of interviews were achieved:

<b>Area</b>	<b>No. of interviews</b>	<b>Web interviews</b>	<b>Postal interviews</b>
Grimsby	120	115	5
Sheffield	156	153	3
Sneinton	102	99	3
Walsall	118	114	4
Halifax	327	323	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>19</b>

## **2.2 Weighting**

Interviews from the national online Community Life survey (fieldwork from July-December 2014) provided a benchmark against which to analyse the Community Organiser areas. During this period 1,558 interviews were completed on the national survey.

Due to the limited information available about the demographic profile of each Community Organiser area, only design weights have been applied to the data before using it in analysis. Design weights have also been applied to the national Community Life dataset but, in addition, the national sample of addresses has been more closely aligned with the profile of the sample of addresses drawn in the Community Organiser areas, based on the 2010 indices of deprivation (see appendix A for further details). Throughout the report this is referred to as the aligned national data.

## **2.3 Analysis**

The objective of this work was to assess a set of key 'social capital' indicators. For each of the indicators a comparison between the aligned national and Community Organiser Areas (as a whole) has been made. Due to the fact that Community Organisers tend to help people in deprived areas, previous analyses have compared Community Organiser areas to the most deprived areas in England. Therefore, to retain consistency with previous analysis a comparison has also been made between national areas that are amongst the 20 per cent

most deprived in England according to the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Community Organiser areas (as a whole).

This survey is not intended to provide robust measures of the impact of the programme however the findings still provide an insight into any differences observed, and together with other evaluation evidence contribute to overall knowledge of impact. When interpreting the findings it is important to bear in mind that in the areas sampled the Community Organisers had already started work before the survey was launched and this work continued throughout the fieldwork period. Consequently, it is not easy to interpret the results as they do not form a 'baseline' in the traditional sense but neither do they necessarily reflect the extent of work carried out in each area and the longer term impact of the programme.

The sample sizes within individual Community Organiser areas are small ( $n=100$ ) and therefore there are wide confidence intervals associated with individual-area estimates making it difficult to detect differences both between individual areas, and between an individual area vs the aligned profile. Therefore reporting is based on Community Organiser areas as a whole. Findings that have been highlighted as significant were statistically significant at the 5 per cent level or better unless otherwise stated.

### **3. Research findings**

#### **3.1 Awareness of Community Organisers**

Respondents living in Community Organiser areas were read the following description before being asked if they had ever heard of Community Organisers.

Community Organisers is a national training and development programme, providing an opportunity for people to improve their local community.

The role of a Community Organiser is to:

- listen to local people
- support people to develop their power to act together for the common good
- help people take action on the local issues that are important to them

Overall awareness was 15%. While this appears low, each organiser was targeted to conduct 500 'listenings' with people in the local area. So we would expect contact with around 3,500 people across the seven community organiser areas. This is about 14% of our estimate of the adult population across the areas and therefore of a similar order to the levels of awareness measured through the survey.

Respondents who were aware of Community Organisers were then asked if they personally have had any contact with a Community Organiser in their local area in the last 12 months. Of these three in ten (29%) stated they had some form of personal contact, representing 4% of respondents overall. This is perhaps relatively low compared to the proportion we might expect based on the estimated listenings (14%). That said 'listenings' would have happened well before the survey and it is unreasonable to expect all who had been listened to, to recall it. Furthermore – evidence from the programme indicates that some struggled to meet the 500 target given other concurrent demands on their time.

#### **3.2 Community cohesion and local area satisfaction**

The Community Organisers programme aims to help communities that lack existing social networks by bringing people and groups together. The Community Life survey includes a number of measures that aim to measure community cohesion including:

- Belonging to immediate area
- Frequency of engagement with neighbours
- Comfort in asking neighbours to collect a few shopping items

- Agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

As you would expect, given the nature of areas participating in the community organiser programme, some measures of cohesion were lower for the Community Organiser areas as a whole compared with the national data before any adjustments were made. Once the national profile was aligned with the profile of the sample of addresses drawn in the Community Organiser areas (see appendix A), only a few significant differences were observed.

Levels of community cohesion were high with the majority of respondents living in Community Organiser areas stating that they have a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood (54%), chat to their neighbours at least once or twice a month (73%) and are in agreement that the local area is one in which people with different backgrounds get on well together (69%).

Feelings were mixed when asked how comfortable they would feel asking a neighbour to collect a few shopping essentials (52% felt comfortable, 49% felt uncomfortable).

Individuals living in Community Organiser areas were significantly more likely than individuals living in the top 20% of deprived areas to say that they have a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood (54% and 46% respectively). See table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Community cohesion**

Measure of cohesion		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Strength of belonging to immediate neighbourhood	Strongly (very or Fairly)	49%	46%	54%
	Not strongly (Not very or not at all)	51%	54%	46%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1408</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>798</i>
How often chat to neighbours	On most days	21%	23%	22%
	Once or twice a week	31%	28%	32%
	Once or twice a month	18%	19%	19%
	Less than one a month	20%	21%	15%
	Never	9%	9%	12%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1413</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>821</i>

How comfortable would feel asking a neighbour to collect a few shopping essentials	Comfortable (very/fairly)	48%	47%	52%
	Uncomfortable (fairly/very)	52%	53%	49%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1406</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>822</i>
Agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	Agree (definitely/tend to)	71%	66%	69%
	Disagree (tend to/definitely)	29%	34%	30%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1406</i>	<i>190</i>	<i>822</i>

The survey also collects a number of satisfaction measures relating to the respondents local area:

- Satisfaction with local area as a place to live
- Whether the area has got better or worse to live in over the last two years
- Satisfaction with local services and amenities

Satisfaction levels were generally high, with the majority of people living in Community Organisers areas stating that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (61%) and satisfied with the local amenities and services available (77%).

The majority (44%) of respondents living in Community Organiser areas felt that the area had stayed the same to live in over the last two years, 18% felt it was better and a third (33%) said that it was worse to live in.

No significant differences were observed between the national aligned data or the top 20% deprived national areas and the Community Organiser data, across any of the satisfaction measures.

**Table 1.2: satisfaction with local area**

Measure of satisfaction		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Satisfaction with local area as a place to live	Satisfied (Very/Fairly)	65%	62%	61%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	20%	20%
	Dissatisfied (Fairly/Very)	16%	19%	19%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1412</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>821</i>
Whether the area has got better or worse to live in (over the past two years)	Better	14%	17%	18%
	Worse	34%	38%	34%
	Stayed the same	52%	45%	48%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1285</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>769</i>
Satisfaction with local services and amenities	Satisfied (Very/Fairly)	73%	71%	77%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	23%	16%
	Dissatisfied (Fairly/Very)	7%	7%	7%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1412</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>820</i>

### 3.3 Social capital and well-being

A key outcome of the Community Organisers programme is for local people to have increased well-being and pride in place. The following four subjective ONS measures of well-being are included on the Community Life survey:

- Rating of life satisfaction (Scale 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied)).
- Rating of happiness yesterday (Scale 0 (not at all happy) to 10 (completely happy)).
- Rating of anxious yesterday (Scale 0 (not at all anxious) to 10 (completely anxious)).
- Rating of how worthwhile the things they do are (Scale 0 (not at all worthwhile) to 10 (completely worthwhile)).

Individuals living in Community Organiser areas were significantly less likely to report very high levels of life satisfaction and happiness compared with the national aligned data - but more likely to report high and medium levels (once combined) – in other words in other words the scores were less extreme.

Small differences were observed between Community Organiser areas as a whole and the national top 20% deprived areas at 90% confidence<sup>3</sup> only, with Community Organiser areas having less extreme happiness scores and a greater sense of worthwhile. See table 1.3.

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<sup>3</sup> Given the much smaller effective sample base for the respondents in the top 20% of deprivation it is reasonable to test differences at the 90% confidence level as well.

**Table 1.3: Measures of well-being**

Measures of well-being		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Life satisfaction	Low	18%	19%	17%
	Medium	20%	26%	22%
	High	37%	33%	42%
	Very high	26%	22%	18%
	Mean score	6.75	6.41	6.59
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1401</i>	<i>199</i>	<i>820</i>
Happiness yesterday	Low	19%	24%	18%
	Medium	18%	19%	22%
	High	32%	30%	37%
	Very high	30%	27%	23%
	Mean score	6.72	6.37	6.62
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1407</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>821</i>
Anxious yesterday	Low	62%	60%	59%
	Medium	17%	22%	20%
	High	14%	11%	15%
	Very high	6%	7%	6%
	Mean score	3.39	3.52	3.70
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1402</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>817</i>
How worthwhile the things they do are	Low	13%	16%	11%
	Medium	22%	25%	21%
	High	32%	32%	39%
	Very high	33%	27%	29%
	Mean score	7.08	6.77	7.14
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1399</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>818</i>

The survey also asked respondents about support networks, companionship and loneliness. No significant differences were observed between the aligned national profile or the national top 20% deprived areas and the Community Organiser areas as a whole. See table 1.4.

**Table 1.4: Support networks, companionship and loneliness**

<b>Measures of networks, companionship and loneliness</b>	<b>Answer codes</b>	<b>National aligned</b>	<b>National in top 20% deprived areas</b>	<b>Community organiser areas (as a whole)</b>
If I needed help there are people who would be there for me	Definitely agree	72%	65%	72%
	Tend to agree	21%	25%	21%
	Tend to disagree	5%	8%	5%
	Definitely disagree	2%	2%	3%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1407</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>800</i>
If I wanted company or to socialise, there are people I can call on	Definitely agree	59%	56%	64%
	Tend to agree	31%	31%	27%
	Tend to disagree	8%	9%	6%
	Definitely disagree	2%	3%	4%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1403</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>798</i>
Is there anyone who you can really count on to listen to you when you need to talk?	Yes one person	21%	22%	26%
	Yes more than one person	71%	70%	68%
	No-one	8%	8%	7%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1342</i>	<i>189</i>	<i>799</i>
How often do you lack companionship?	Hardly ever	61%	54%	57%
	Some of the time	30%	36%	34%
	Often	10%	11%	9%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1346</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>798</i>
Would you say that...	Many of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted	32%	22%	25%
	Some can be trusted	34%	38%	36%
	A few can be trusted	30%	35%	34%
	Or none can be trusted	5%	6%	5%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1353</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>798</i>

How often do you feel lonely?	Often/always	8%	8%	7%
	Some of the time	16%	19%	17%
	Occasionally	24%	26%	24%
	Hardly ever	31%	27%	29%
	Never	22%	21%	23%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1404</i>	<i>201</i>	<i>817</i>

### 3.4 Social action and community empowerment

Many local communities do not believe they have or can develop collective power to improve their neighbourhoods and tackle problems. As a result the Community Organisers programme aims to help build connections and beliefs among local people that they can collectively improve their neighbourhoods and tackle problems.

In the 12 months prior to completing the survey a third of respondents (35%) living in Community Organiser areas had some involvement in civil participation, 12% had taken part in a consultation about local services or problems and 5% had been a member of a group making decisions about local issues, such as health, crime and education. No significant differences were observed between the aligned national profile or the national top 20% deprived areas and the Community Organiser areas as a whole. See table 1.5.

Respondents were also asked a number of statements about influencing local decision making. Overall, 23% of respondents in Community Organiser areas agreed that they personally can influence decisions affecting their local area, 53% felt that it was important to influence local decisions and 48% would like to be more involved in local decisions made by the council. These figures are comparable to the aligned national profile and the sample in the national top 20% deprived areas. See table 1.5.

**Table 1.5: Local decision making**

Measures of local decision making		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Taken part in civic participation in the last 12 months	Yes	34%	33%	35%
	No	66%	67%	65%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1417</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>823</i>
Taken part in civic consultation in the last 12 months	Yes	13%	12%	12%
	No	87%	88%	88%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1417</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>823</i>
Taken part in civic action in the last 12 months	Yes	5%	6%	5%
	No	95%	94%	95%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1417</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>823</i>
Agreement that I can personally influence local decision making	Definitely agree	3%	5%	4%
	Tend to agree	19%	22%	20%
	Tend to disagree	43%	37%	46%
	Definitely disagree	35%	36%	31%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1358</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>796</i>
Importance of feeling able to influence local decision making	Very important	14%	13%	17%
	Quite important	39%	40%	37%
	Not very important	31%	31%	34%
	Not at all important	16%	16%	13%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1392</i>	<i>201</i>	<i>812</i>
Whether would like to be more involved in local decision making	Yes	45%	49%	48%
	Depends on the issue	12%	8%	9%
	No	43%	43%	43%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1316</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>768</i>

When asked how they would go about influencing local decisions, the top answers given by respondents living in Community Organiser areas included: Contacting the council (54%), Signing a paper petition (44%), signing an online petition (41%), contacting a councillor (39%), attending a public meeting (35%) and contacting the local MP (30%). Community Organiser areas as a whole were significantly more likely than the aligned national profile to state that they would sign a paper petition (44% and 36% respectively) or organise a paper petition (9% compared with 4%) and significantly less likely to contact their MP (30% compared with 38%).

Similarly respondents living in Community Organiser areas were more likely than those living in the national top 20% deprived areas to organise a paper petition (44% and 37% respectively), organise a group (9% compared with 4%) or contact local media or journalists (14% compared with 8%).

**Table 1.6: Influencing local decisions**

Measures of influence		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
How would you go about influencing local decision making (top four answers given)	Contact the council	55%	57%	54%
	Sign a paper petition	36%	37%	44%
	Sign an online petition	41%	41%	41%
	Contact my councillor	37%	32%	39%
	Attend a public meeting	32%	30%	35%
	Contact my MP	38%	33%	30%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1287</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>743</i>

Social action, in the context of this report, is defined as a community project, event, or activity which local people proactively get together to initiate or support on an unpaid basis.

It is distinct from other forms of giving time in that it is driven and led by local people rather than through an existing group (as in formal volunteering) and tends to focus on a community need rather than the needs of an individual (as in informal volunteering). Examples could include organising a street party, preventing the closure of a local post office, helping to run a local playgroup, or improving local road safety.

Most respondents living in Community Organiser areas agreed (51%) that when people in this area get involved in their local community, they can really change the way the area is run and 48% agreed that people in the neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood. These percentages are similar to the aligned national data however individuals living in Community Organiser areas were significantly more likely than those living in the national top 20% deprived areas to agree that local people pull together to improve the neighbourhood (51% and 39% respectively). See table 1.7.

**Table 1.7: Social action**

Measures of social action		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Agreement that people in the local area pull together to improve the neighbourhood	Agree (definitely/ tend to)	48%	39%	51%
	Disagree (tend to/definitely)	52%	61%	49%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1281</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>776</i>
Agreement that when people in the local area get involved they can really change the way the area is run	Agree (definitely/ tend to)	45%	46%	48%
	Neither agree nor disagree	36%	37%	37%
	Disagree (tend to/definitely)	19%	17%	15%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1388</i>	<i>199</i>	<i>807</i>

One in ten (11%) respondents living in Community Organiser areas stated they had personally been involved in social action in their community. However, a higher proportion are aware of social action in their communities (31%). No significant differences were noted between Community Organiser areas as a whole and the aligned national profile or the top 20% deprived national areas.

**Table 1.8: Social action**

Measures of social action		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Involvement in social action in local area	Yes	12%	13%	11%
	No	88%	87%	89%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1406</i>	<i>201</i>	<i>817</i>
Awareness of social action in local area	Yes	31%	29%	31%
	No	70%	71%	69%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1328</i>	<i>183</i>	<i>784</i>

### 3.5 Volunteering

Formal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefit others or the environment. A third (34%) of respondents living in Community Organiser areas volunteered formally at least once in the 12 months prior to interview.

Most measures of volunteering focus on those who volunteer through more “traditional” routes, such as helping out at local clubs, organisations, or groups. However, informal volunteering is more prevalent than formal volunteering, with 52% of respondents living in Community Organiser areas regularly helping out neighbours and friends on a more casual basis. No significant differences in volunteering rates were observed between Community Organiser areas as a whole and the aligned national profile or the top 20% deprived national areas.

**Table 1.9: Volunteering**

Measures of social action		National aligned	National in top 20% deprived areas	Community organiser areas (as a whole)
Involvement in formal volunteering in last 12 months	Yes	33%	36%	34%
	No	67%	64%	66%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1417</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>823</i>
Involvement in informal volunteering in last 12 months	Yes	49%	51%	52%
	No	51%	49%	48%
	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1417</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>823</i>

## Technical appendix A

In Autumn 2014, the Cabinet Office commissioned TNS BMRB to carry out the online/paper version of the *Community Life* survey in seven small areas that had been assigned a Community Organiser. These areas were in Grimsby, Sheffield, Sneinton, Walsall and in three separate locations in Halifax.

### **Sampling**

The Cabinet Office supplied TNS BMRB with a list of postcodes covered by each Community Organiser.

TNS BMRB filtered the Royal Mail Postal Address File to include only the eligible postcodes and used this as the sample frame. The aim was to achieve at least one completed questionnaire from 100 households in every area. The sample fractions for each area were calculated based on paradata from the national Community Life survey. TNS BMRB estimated the likely address cooperation rate for each eligible postcode as a function of its Output Area Classification (a geodemographic segmentation based on the 2011 Census). The mean sample fraction in each area was equal to:

$(100/\text{estimated address cooperation rate}) / \text{total number of addresses in the area}$

However, the sample fraction actually varied slightly between postcodes to maximise the chance of obtaining a balanced sample within each area. In total, 3,403 addresses were sampled, distributed as Table 1. Within each area, addresses were sorted by postcode and then alphanumerically by first line of address. The relevant sample fraction was attached to each address and a systematic sample was drawn such that the sampling probability of each address matched the attached sample fraction.

Table 1: Number of addresses sampled in each area

Area	# of sampled addresses
Grimsby	513
Halifax	1,262
Sheffield	471
Sneinton	574
Walsall	583
Total	3,403

At each address, all adults aged 16+ (up to a maximum of four) were invited to do the survey online or call up for a paper questionnaire version. Two reminders were sent to each address. A £10 voucher was available for those completing the questionnaire.

### ***Weighting***

Because there is limited information available about the demographic profile of each Community Organiser area, only design weights have been applied to the data before using it in analysis. The design weight is equal to one divided by the sample fraction.

The contemporary national *Community Life* data (collected July-December 2014) is used as a benchmark. Design weights have been applied to this dataset but, in addition, the national sample of addresses has been post-stratified so that its profile<sup>4</sup>, based on the 2010 indices of deprivation, is more closely aligned with the profile of the sample of addresses drawn in the Community Organiser areas. By doing this, it is possible to compare the Community Organiser areas (as a group) with a similar set of areas from across England. An 'alignment weight' has been produced for each case in the national dataset that is equal to the product of the design weight and the post-stratification weight.

To retain consistency with previous analysis a further comparison was made between national areas that are amongst the 20 per cent most deprived in England according to the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Community Organiser areas (as a whole).

### ***Analysis***

The objective of this work was to assess a set of 'community cohesion' indicators within each of the Community Organiser areas. The Community Organisers had already started work before the survey was launched so the results will not form a 'baseline' in the traditional manner but neither do they necessarily reflect the extent of work carried out in each area and the longer term impact of the programme.

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<sup>4</sup> A propensity score method was used to construct the post-strata.