

“ Everyone is an expert in their own neighbourhood ”

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# Exploring Scotland's **20-minute** neighbourhoods

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Event report

June 2022

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# Introduction

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This report gathers learning from the event series ‘Exploring Scotland’s 20-minute neighbourhoods’ hosted by the Health and Social Care Academy, a programme of the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (ALLIANCE), in partnership with Disability Equality Scotland (DES) and Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS). The purpose of the series was to explore the benefits and challenges of a 20-minute neighbourhood and viewed this concept through the lens of inclusion, diversity, and accessibility.

The 20-minute concept has gained attention internationally and has been developed in cities such as Melbourne, Portland and Paris. The concept looks at having all your basic needs - health and social care, shops, work hubs, places to socialise - met within a 20-minute walk, wheel or cycle from where you live.

The Scottish Government’s 2020-21 Programme for Government announced the ambition of 20-minute neighbourhoods.<sup>1</sup> The 2021-22 Programme for Government commits to:<sup>2</sup>

**“ Revitalise local communities through development of 20-minute neighbourhoods, investment in town centres and a new focus on place ”**

The concept gained significant traction since the COVID-19 pandemic with people staying closer to home to access support and services.

The event series provided a space to consider how our neighbourhoods can be truly inclusive, accessible and transformational for everyone in the community, with a focus on disabled people, people living with long term health conditions and unpaid carers.

Discussion surrounding 20-minute neighbourhoods also links to wider policy developments including the Review of the Town Centre Action Plan, Place Principle, National Planning Framework 4, the route-map to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030 and feeds into discussions surrounding renewal and recovery post pandemic.<sup>3</sup>

This series was developed following initial work undertaken by Disability Equality Scotland on this topic. Disability Equality Scotland ran a poll with its membership of disabled people to understand their views on the topic. A webinar was held in December 2020 to explore key concerns with advocates of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept and Disability Equality Scotland heard feedback from disabled people about their views and experiences.<sup>4</sup> Disability Equality Scotland worked in collaboration with Transport Scotland and MACS to present this discussion alongside insights from key panellists including experts from the Improvement Service, the Scottish Government and local authorities who have been progressing the idea.

The webinar highlighted that COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to radically rethink the places we live, our homes and communities. This initial webinar led to a further collaboration between the ALLIANCE, Disability Equality Scotland and MACS to explore findings in more detail.

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## About the event series

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The purpose of the series was to discuss and explore different aspects of the 20-minute neighbourhood including: getting around and accessing services; social connection; housing and greenspace; and designing in the community. A key thread throughout events was to consider how 20-minute neighbourhoods can be inclusive for everyone and uphold the rights of a range of groups.

The series was promoted through newsletters, on social media and through the ALLIANCE, Disability Equality Scotland and MACS networks. Participants attending the series included those working in local authorities, planning, third sector and health and social care. The series was attended by over 120 participants.

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## Academy, MACS and Disability Equality Scotland approach

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This series aligns with the Academy's 'Five Provocations for the future of health and social care'.<sup>5</sup>

The Five Provocations are the key values and principles, which underpin the work of the Academy and are necessary for the realisation of positive, radical and transformational change. In particular, the provocations 'Ceding Power' and 'Emphasising Humanity' are relevant to this discussion. Throughout the series it was clear that people need to be central to the development of their communities **"listed authorities need to cede power to the community, individuals and the third sector and embrace cross sectoral approaches"**. Additionally, the rights and needs of people need to remain central to ensure that people **"enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the right to live independently as part of the community"**.



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# Format

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Events were held online between May and August 2021. Each event involved a panel of two or three expert speakers and a chair. Each session was chaired by one of the partner organisations. Speakers came from a wide range of perspectives and sectors including public health, local government and the third sector.

A commitment to listening to the voice of lived experience (experts by experience) was at the heart of the series. Each event involved a panellist speaking from their perspective. The series was delivered in partnership with experts by experience from MACS.

There was also time for breakout discussion which was designed to delve deeper into the discussion and to capture a range of voices and experiences.

## TITLE

**Exploring Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhood:**

Introduction

## DATE

**06.05.21**

## THEMES

- Introducing the concept
- Exploring the international context
- Setting the Scottish context

## SPEAKERS

- Bobby Park, Glasgow Access Panel
- Margaret Douglas, Co-director of the Master of Public Health Programme Edinburgh University
- James Mant, Planning Projects Victoria State Government
- Chair: Emma Scott, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Disability Equality Scotland.

## TITLE

Exploring Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhood:

Getting around and accessing services

## DATE

17.06.21

## THEMES

### Getting around and accessing services

- The natural and built environment
- Safe and accessible journeys
- The role of community transport
- Services in the community

## SPEAKERS

- David Hunter, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
- Alice Duthuille, Community Transport Association
- Stuart McMillan, Spinal Injuries Scotland
- Chair: Audrey Birt, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)



## TITLE

**Exploring Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhood:**

Social connection, housing and greenspace

## DATE

**15.07.21**

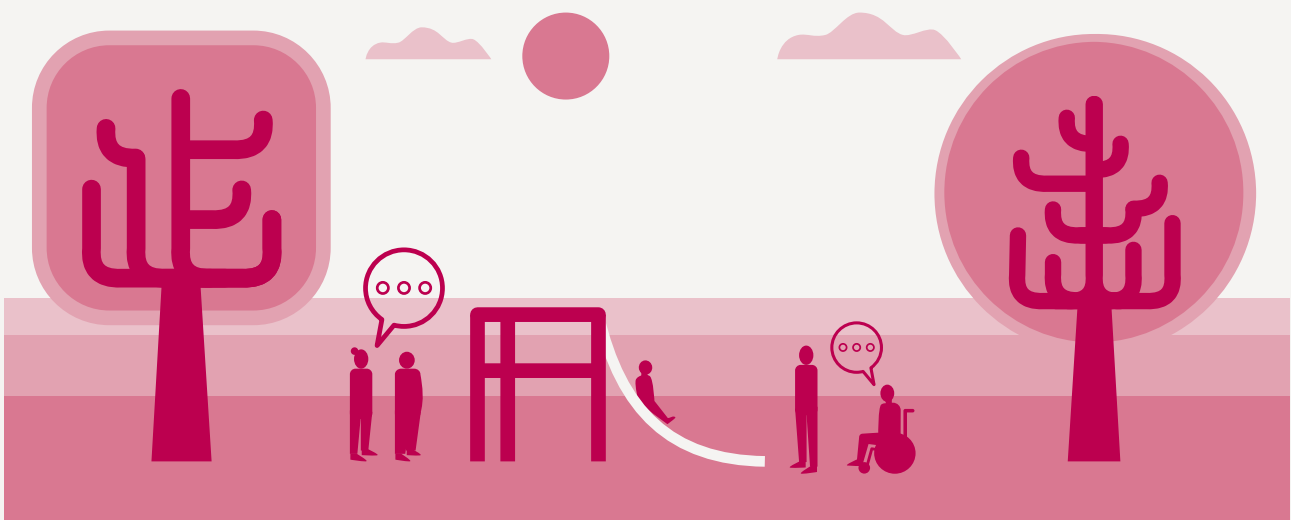
## THEMES

### Housing and greenspace

- Types of housing
- How can we ensure that people living in urban areas are able to access safe and accessible green spaces?

## SPEAKERS

- Moira Bayne, CEO, Housing Options Scotland
- Alison Bunce, Senior Palliative Care Nurse
- Rona Gibb, Manager, Paths for All
- Ian McCall, Senior Development Officer, Paths for All
- Chair: Jane Miller, Academy Programme Manager, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland





## TITLE

Exploring Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhood:

Designing in the community

## DATE

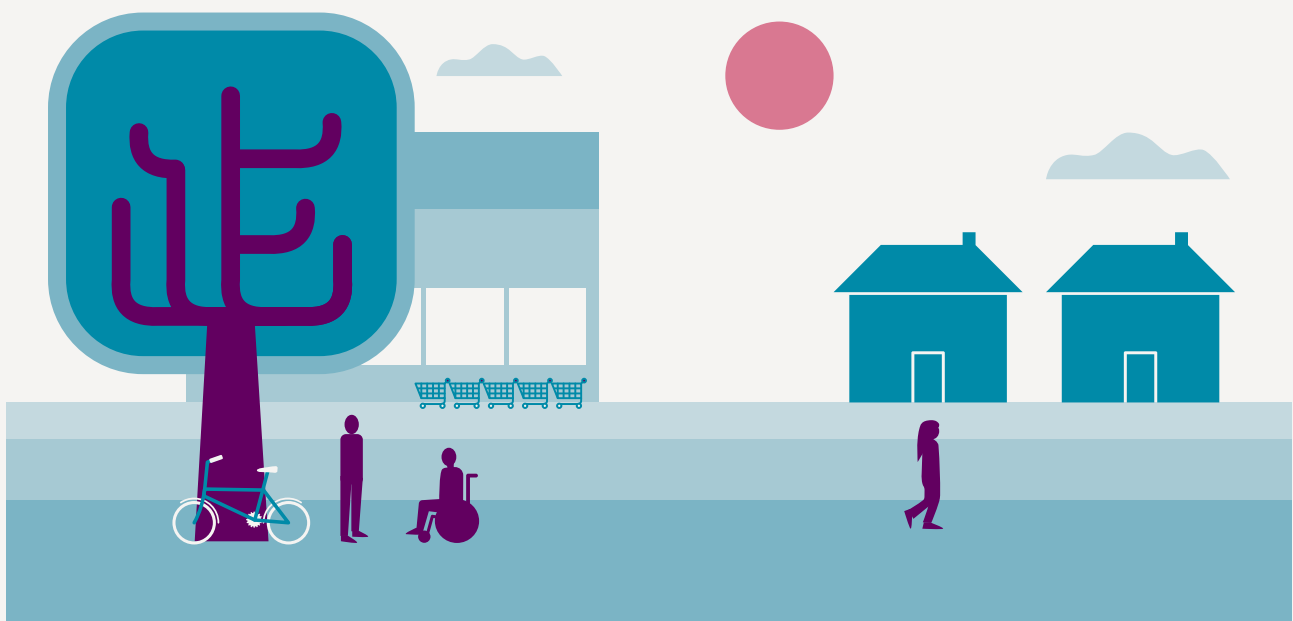
26.08.21

## THEMES

Designing in the community

## SPEAKERS

- Steve Malone, Architecture and Design Scotland
- Tasha MacKenzie, City of Edinburgh Council
- Kate Joester, Living Streets Scotland
- Anne Docherty, Living Streets Scotland
- Chair: Jane Miller, Academy Programme Manager, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland



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# Exploring the concept

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Throughout the series it was recognised that the 20-minute neighbourhood is not a **“new concept”** but is something that has been discussed for years but framed differently, for example **“walkable communities”**. However, it was suggested that its inclusion within the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government has given it more of an ambition and **“political emphasis”**.

Participants highlighted that a 20-minute neighbourhood would be difficult to realise in every community across Scotland. One of the suggested reasons for this was due to Scotland’s geography. It was felt that this concept lends itself to a city/urban context rather than a rural one. As part of the event series, there was a decision to focus beyond the parameters of 20 minutes, to one which applies the principles to an individual understanding of community. It was suggested that when thinking about delivering a 20-minute neighbourhood we need to focus on the question **“what does community mean to you?”**. Community will mean different things to different people, for example community could be identified by where you live, friends, religion or other groups that people have something in common with. In an opinion piece by Cameron MacFarlane, ALISS Community Engagement Manager, he highlights that **“we each have a variety of social, cultural and emotional ties to different places for different reasons”** however he also highlights **“that to large extent it is this location within a geographic area that naturally defines our perceptions around what we view as our local neighbourhood and community”**.<sup>6</sup>

When exploring and implementing the 20-minute neighbourhood concept it will be important to keep wider understandings of community and what this means to people. This includes thinking about communities of interest and communities of place.

## Communities of Interest:

Can refer to groups of people who share an experience. For example: consideration of the impact of strategic decisions on people who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

## Communities of Place:

Refers to people who are bound together because of where they reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a continuous portion of their time.

Established and well developed 20-minute neighbourhoods were identified by both speakers and participants. However, it was felt that there is an inequality in where these neighbourhoods are located. During the series there were calls for more concerted action to establish 20-minute neighbourhoods within areas experiencing disadvantage.

It was felt that joined up working will be central to the design and facilitation of all 20-minute neighbourhoods. There was recognition that the concept is broad and wide-ranging and impacts individuals and groups on a day-to-day level. As a result, cross-sectoral, collective and joined up working will be required at a local level.

It was highlighted that whilst it was good to think about designing 20-minute neighbourhoods it is also important to consider sustainability and think about how they are developed and maintained in the long term, including investment and innovation.



**The question of designing neighbourhoods is a good one but also probably a question of nurturing it and maintaining it?**



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## Getting around

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A central aspect of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept explores how people move around and interact with their community. Many participants highlighted that access was a major issue, especially lack of accessible and well-connected transport links. We heard that public transport needs to be more interconnected to link different services together. Examples highlighted included: health and social care services, hospitals, libraries, shops, and schools.



**Joined up thinking is needed – interconnectedness between public transport and health centres**



Participants suggested that this must be thought about during early planning stages, particularly at local authority level. We heard of concerns around silo working, and participants felt that buy in is required across local authority departments to fully implement a 20-minute neighbourhood initiative. This would also require partnership working across health boards, private, the third and voluntary sectors.

David Hunter from MACS shared that local neighbourhoods will still need to be linked. Links to other towns and the wider city and other neighbourhoods will still need to be **“attractive, accessible, affordable, quick and easy to use”**.

However, we heard that connecting to transport itself can be an obstacle for disabled people in particular. Issues highlighted included: poor pavement infrastructure, lack of dropped kerbs, pavement obstacles, parked cars, road works, poor lighting and lines of sight, lack of benches and places to rest, inaccessible toilets and lifts at stations. These issues were referred to as the problem of the **“first and last mile”**. These challenges not only impacted people’s ability to access public transport but also had implications for wider access to services. It was felt that some existing problems have been exacerbated following the COVID-19 pandemic due to restrictions, some of the spaces for people initiatives and restaurants and bars putting out street furniture.

## “ Small changes make a big difference ”

Community transport was highlighted as playing an important role and offered as a possible solution for the development of our communities. Alice Duthuille from Community Transport Association highlighted that **“more and more people will depend on a form of public transport because of an aging population”**. It was felt that those accessing community transport should be able to get free or concessionary travel, particularly where community transport was the only option in the absence of suitable public transport (public transport that is **A**vailable, **A**ccessible and **A**ffordable – MACS Triple **A** check).

David also stated that many disabled people will still need their cars as mobility aids. In Scotland, there are over 60,000 Motability cars and over 200,000 blue badges and cars will still be essential for many to access the same opportunities. David highlighted that these considerations are often overlooked in sustainable travel plans and would require further attention to prevent the inequality gap widening and align with the ‘reduces inequalities’ pillar of the National Transport Strategy 2.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, social care staff use cars when delivering care at home services. This was an important finding of the Climate Action and Social Care Collective report following a series of roundtable events delivered by the Academy in partnership with Scottish Care.<sup>8</sup> The report also stated that policy initiatives need to be more joined up including 20-minute neighbourhood with net zero initiatives.



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## Services and amenities

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This series built on key learning from work undertaken by Disability Equality Scotland on this topic. By conducting a poll with its membership, Disability Equality Scotland asked the question:

“ **Can you access key services in your local community within a 20 minute walk or wheel from where you live?** ”

450 people responded to the poll with 94% answering ‘no – they can’t access these key services locally’. These findings highlighted that most disabled people felt where they live was inaccessible and unable to meet their basic needs.

We delved into this issue as part of our second event in the series. There was a general feeling that over recent decades, there had been a move away from local and community approaches with many services (including healthcare) being centralised or shifted to centres of excellence or regional, out of town hubs.

“ **The last 30 years we have been centralising and we need to move back towards more community based** ”

People described how they were unable to access shops, supermarkets, leisure, citizens advice and healthcare facilities. It was recognised that the loss of key local services such as GPs, the post office, bank and public toilets was having a detrimental impact. Many spoke about the **“loss of the high street”**. Local shops were viewed as being more affordable and accessible and a source of employment for people in the community. Participants felt that the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods would provide potential opportunities to build thriving, inclusive and accessible communities. Town Centre funding and Business Improvement Districts were highlighted as opportunities to regenerate local high streets. It is important to consider how we encourage and enable the long-term sustainability of local businesses in local and residential neighbourhoods. There are concerns that there aren’t currently enough supports in place to help them survive and thrive.

There were mixed views about the development of local hubs. Some attendees expressed concern about the development of hubs in rural areas and felt that this would lead to the removal of local services from communities. This coupled with poor transport links would only **“deepen inequalities”**. Even when there are local services available the buildings themselves can be inaccessible for many disabled people.

The importance of the health and social care sector was highlighted by participants. The availability of local employment opportunities forms one part of the 20-minute neighbourhood model. The social care sector was highlighted as one which could provide local jobs and opportunities through self-directed support, allowing for more choice and person-centred care. Additionally, if services were available more locally this could have positive implications for action on climate and the environment. The No One Left Behind initiative ensures that employability services are being delivered locally through local employment partnerships and could provide greater opportunities for the health and social care sector.

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## Social connection

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Communities were perceived as places for social connection and as a way of reducing loneliness and isolation, which was recognised as having significant impacts on individual's health and wellbeing. Participants suggested that communities and amenities should be designed to support people to interact and develop relationships.

“ **People need fun as well as access to basic services – cafes, bars, pubs and community meeting venues** ”

Alison Bunce from Compassionate Inverclyde highlighted the important role that individuals play within their community. She suggested that people on the ground can signpost to available services and highlighted the importance of friendship, community hubs and social groups: **“there is a need for connectors within a 20-minute neighbourhood. People who are on the ground and know what is happening in their neighbourhood so they can signpost on the street to the local shops or what is going on in the local community hall”**.

The location of services has an impact on social connection, and we heard that it is important that people can easily access social supports near to their home. Feeling informed about where you can access services and what's on in your local area is vital. We heard that whilst there is a lot of information online it doesn't often include information related to accessibility. Examples highlighted included: if there are steps, the location of accessible bathrooms, the availability of BSL interpreters. Dementia Friendly Prestwick was identified as a way of increasing the use of space by making it more welcoming and accessible.<sup>9</sup> However, discussion also centred on the needs of different communities. It was suggested that concerted effort is required to support people to interact with each other, develop relationships and to build confidence and trust: **“(they need to feel that) they don't need to do something for a particular purpose”**.

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# Housing diversity

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Ensuring that there is a range of diverse housing options within a local community is vital to meet the needs of a range of groups; being able to have the choice of different housing options is essential. Participants highlighted that future housing would need to be adaptable and accessible to cater for disabled people and an aging population. Good practice was highlighted in South Ayrshire, where houses have walls that can be taken in and out to adapt to the individual needs of the person over time. Planning for new builds should take account of accessible housing, it was suggested that this would work best if it was made a legal requirement and that developers should be held accountable.

“ Working with planning rules to ensure accessible housing is part of the requirement of new builds, and where even if it doesn't include adaptations itself, it is easy and affordable to be adapted. Issue of public good vs profit in housing design ”

Developers also need to be held accountable, for example even when there are commitments to build a percentage of wheelchair accessible housing many developers are not delivering in their commitments.

Taking a holistic approach to housing design and development was also spoken about. Participants suggested that houses will need to be designed to have space and be adaptable to cater to people with complex care needs.

A shift in the delivery of care was mentioned however it was felt that several changes were required in the community to make them more sustainable and resilient. Sheltered housing was praised for its role during the pandemic however there were warnings about future blocks to the system. We also heard about the role that digital could play in providing future support.

Another focus was on affordability and there was the recognition that appropriate housing needs to be available in areas experiencing deprivation. The lack of available social housing was perceived as a key challenge **“for every social house that becomes available, at least 200 people are bidding. Social housing is in very high demand”**.

Intergenerational living was another topic of discussion, with evidence around health, loneliness and connection. It was suggested that we look to models in Nordic countries where multigenerational living is more encouraged and consider this within our own context.

Overall, the importance of housing choice emerged as a core theme of the session. We heard that a mix of housing options supports places to feel less divided. It was suggested that there has already been positive work undertaken to support communities through regeneration, including in places like the Gorbals. Living in places which mixed economies supported more cohesive communities as it was felt that often places are segregated by income.

Moira Bayne from Housing Options Scotland highlights that there is no one definition of what is accessible and that it is important to look at tailoring to the needs of individuals at specific times in their lives. It is important to recognise that many people have mental health issues as well as living with a physical disability. Quieter houses and more outdoor spaces were seen as essential for supporting people.

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## Greenspace

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Discussions around 20-minute neighbourhoods have predominately focused on active travel and getting around and there has been less attention on the requirements for outdoor and community space. Connecting with the natural environment had benefits for physical, social and mental wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic a disparity in use of greenspace was highlighted. For some people their use of greenspace significantly increased whilst for older people and those living in areas of disadvantage inequalities were sustained or even exacerbated.

Participants highlighted that quality of greenspace matters. Even when greenspace is in range it isn't often high quality, may not be accessible and may not always feel safe.

Psychological barriers were identified, for example some people would avoid spaces at certain times of the day particularly in the evening and early morning as they were **"very isolated, don't feel safe"**. We heard that safety can also be a matter of perception rather than reality and work needs to take place to breakdown societal barriers and support more intergenerational mixing:

**“ Safety is often a matter of perception rather than reality – for example, people feeling a little bit intimidated by young people, who might just be enjoying the space! ”**

As with housing, it is important that there are different types of spaces available to cater to different people, including both wider open and smaller more intimate spaces. Greenspace should be taken into consideration when thinking about planning developments.

Access to greenspace was another potential challenge, the balance of being able to provide access to wheelchair users and adapted bikes but not for motorbikes. It was suggested that forthcoming guidance including on accessible countryside, Cycling by Design and Inclusive Mobility, would be useful.<sup>10</sup> Physical barriers, including motorways, can impact people's access to greenspace and communities.

**“ If we get it right for the least mobile, we get it right for everyone ”**



Rona Gibb from Paths for All also spoke about their work to support Dementia friendly spaces. Dementia Friendly Projects implement dementia friendly signage, outdoor space considerations, strength and balance and promote “nature connectedness”. Developing a relationship with nature supports increased happiness, lower levels of anxiety, depression and supports people who experience social isolation and loneliness.

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## Co-design and participation and inclusion

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One of the ongoing themes that came up throughout discussion was the need for disabled people, people living with long term conditions and unpaid carers to be involved from the outset of decision making processes rather than being included retrospectively. Contributors believed that this would improve design, prevent further barriers being “built in” and avoid future challenges. This will help to build confidence in taking part in co-design initiatives and help promote a sense of local ownership.



**Planners find surprising things they’d never have thought about when they actually consult with disabled people**



There was a general feeling of lack of engagement with communities. One example discussed was equality impact assessments (EqIA). These were perceived as being “**desk-based exercises**” rather than as providing an opportunity for meaningful engagement with communities and learning from experts by experience.

It was suggested that community buy in is essential for the development of inclusive 20-minute neighbourhoods. People should be able to provide their feedback through different formats and forums. It was recognised that individuals and groups within the community would share different views and understanding and actioning these views would be a “**complex and nuanced**” process.

Participation processes should engage everyone and should focus on capturing the views of seldom heard groups, including:



**Disabled people, children and young people; people who have been shielding during COVID-19; people who are digitally excluded, people who don’t have English as a first language; unpaid carers; deprived areas; older people**



Reaching these groups will require active outreach and support from individuals and organisations who have established relationships and direct contact, including: housing associations, Links workers, Disabled People’s Organisations, community cafes and youth organisations.

Access Panels were highlighted as an effective way of engaging and involving disabled people however it felt that these were **“underfunded”**. Participants felt that there should be a real commitment to fund the national network of Access Panels. Bobby Park, from the Glasgow Access Panel, showcased the important role that panels play in providing feedback on new proposals during the planning stage using audits and encouraged wider use of the Access Panel Network’s expertise in this area.

Once views have been captured it was emphasised that people would need to see real change being implemented and actioned. This would encourage them to participate in future engagement processes. Effective feedback loops would be an essential part of this process.

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## Conclusion

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Realising the ambition of 20-minute neighbourhoods where everyone feels happy, healthy, safe and included has the potential to be truly transformational for everyone. To achieve this, people must be at the heart of planning, design, and delivery. Each neighbourhood is unique, and its design and implementation will have to be tailored to the specific needs of individual populations. Joined up working across the public, private and third sector is essential and the voice of lived experience will need to be an equal partner in this process.

In addition to practical changes to infrastructure there must be investment in resources that support enhanced social connection and tackle isolation and loneliness. For these neighbourhoods to be transformational, policy and practice will need to become more joined up and coherent.

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## Calls to action

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The following actions have been developed as a result of our key learning from the four webinar events to explore the 20 minute neighbourhood concept in more detail. We believe these actions are necessary for ensuring the realisation of inclusive, supported and sustainable communities that deliver a just transition:

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## Policy infrastructure

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The Scottish Government needs to clearly “map” interconnections between Programme for Government commitments, emerging strategies and policies and the intended outcomes (i.e. which policies rely on each other and are interdependent for successful delivery, describe what success will look like and how it will be measured).

The Scottish Government should enable effective cross-sectoral, collaborative and joined up working across all spheres of government and public services through greater policy coherence.

The Scottish Government and local authorities should make an explicit commitment within their policy and strategies to meaningfully engage with all groups as part of a rights, intersectional and equalities based approach. This needs to align with the revised Public Sector Equality Duties and Scotland Specific Duties.

Local service delivery across public, private and third sector must become joined up to translate policy aspirations into practice. The rights, needs and preferences of the community should be at the centre of all planning and service delivery. This needs to be achieved through meaningful engagement with local communities and in line with the Scottish Governments Democracy Matters agenda.

Individuals and communities should be supported to hold public and private bodies to account if they have failed to meet their legal duties under the Equality Act. This should include the provision of advocacy and support services.

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## Lived experience participation and engagement

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Listed authorities (as defined in the PSED), planning authorities, housing developers, transport agencies, local authorities and health boards, health and social care partnerships and all other relevant bodies must actively and meaningfully engage everyone in decision making processes which impact their community. There should be a commitment and resourcing from bodies to actively reach out to seldom heard communities at the early stages of planning processes.

Local authorities must provide adequate funding and resourcing to support Access Panels. This ensures that disabled people are meaningfully involved in supporting planning, decision and implementation of physical access and social inclusion within local communities.

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## Local infrastructure

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Local authorities must invest and prioritise the development of local infrastructure to ensure that it is inclusive, accessible, and fit for purpose for everyone in the community. This should include investing in well maintained and uncluttered/unobstructed pavements, widespread provision of dropped kerbs, benches and places to rest, accessible toilets, bus shelters and accessible signage.

Local authorities must provide adequate accessible (blue badge) parking spaces.

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## Getting around and accessing services

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Sustainable travel plans should explicitly recognise and consider that car usage is still a requirement for disabled people and those delivering and receiving care.

The Scottish Government should guarantee sustainable investment in the availability of accessible and affordable travel for people who access and deliver care services, to reduce the impact of transport on climate change.<sup>11</sup>

Financial support should be made available for those accessing Community Transport services. This should be similar to the Scottish Government's flagship National Concessionary Travel Scheme and extend to other modes of transport where public transport is not available or accessible.<sup>12</sup>

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## Services

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Investment and support will be required to enable the regeneration of local town centres. Local people want town centres to support social connection and reduce isolation (diverse, mix and range of opportunities)

Rural communities must be consulted about plans to centralise services into local hubs including the proposed "mobility hubs".

Consultation with the community must take place to find out what they need including transport links and the location of health and social care services.

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## Housing

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Planning authorities must work with developers and local community groups to ensure that there is a diverse range of available housing options, which are affordable, adaptable and accessible. Housing developments should be designed alongside local infrastructure to ensure that everyone is able to access good quality services, transport links and greenspace to support their health and wellbeing.

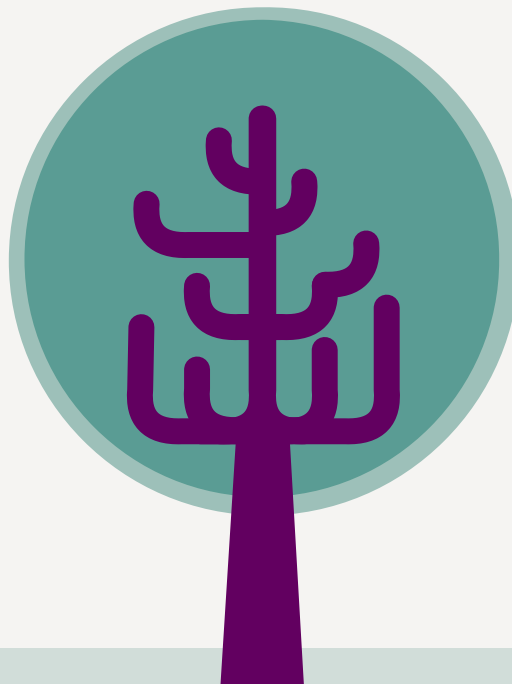
Housing developments must be part of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plans and Local Transport Strategies to ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and public transport services, which keep places connected, supporting the sustainable transport hierarchy and 20% reduction in car kilometres route-map.

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## Greenspace

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Planning authorities should commit to developing high quality greenspace with focused attention on areas experiencing inequality. There should be consideration about the types of spaces and how people access them. Greenspaces need to be accessible to all.



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# About the ALLIANCE

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The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. We have a growing membership of over 3,000 national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors, disabled people, people living with long term conditions and unpaid carers. Many NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Medical Practices, Third Sector Interfaces, Libraries and Access Panels are also members.

The ALLIANCE is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government and has close working relationships, several of which are underpinned by Memorandum of Understanding, with many national NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology.

Our vision is for a Scotland where people of all ages who are disabled or living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers, have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well, as equal and active citizens, free from discrimination, with support and services that put them at the centre.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims. We seek to:

- Ensure people are at the centre, that their voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.
- Support transformational change, towards approaches that work with individual and community assets, helping people to stay well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner and foster better cross-sector understanding and partnership.



**ALLIANCE**  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  
ALLIANCE SCOTLAND  
people at the centre

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# About Health and Social Care Academy

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The Health and Social Care Academy (the Academy) is an ALLIANCE programme that helps drive positive and radical change in Scotland's health and social care, through the voice of disabled people, people living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers. The Academy's 'Five Provocations for the Future of Health and Social Care' was created based on the vision from the Think Tank of Scottish senior leaders from across the public sector, third and independent sector leaders, and people who use health and social care services.



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# About Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)

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MACS is an advisory non-departmental public body. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Transport. The committee was established in 2002 and was formally constituted under Section 72 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. MACS has 15 members with various skills, knowledge and experience gained through their fields of expertise and lived experience, many of whom, themselves have a disability.

MACS overarching remit is: To give Scottish Ministers advice on aspects of policy, legislation and practice affecting the travel needs of disabled people. MACS takes account of the broad views and lived experiences of disabled people when giving advice and encourages awareness amongst disabled people in Scotland of developments, which affects their mobility, choices and opportunities.



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# About Disability Equality Scotland (DES)

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Disability Equality Scotland is a national Disabled Person's Organisation. With a membership of over 1,400 disabled people, it works to make life more accessible, equal and inclusive for disabled people in Scotland.

Its role is to promote access in its widest sense, including access to the built and natural environment and access to the same opportunities as are enjoyed by others in our communities thus promoting a life of dignity, respect, choice and independence. This extends beyond physical access to include access to information, access to inclusive communication and inclusion in decision-making, whether with planners over inclusive design or transport providers about accessible travel.

Disability Equality Scotland represent the views of individuals with any type of impairment, as well as disability organisations and groups who share its values.

Disability Equality Scotland is the umbrella organisation for all disability Access Panels in Scotland and the principal provider of support and guidance to the Access Panels presently representing disabled persons at a local level throughout Scotland. Access Panels are committed to improving access and equality in its widest form, which means access to the physical environment, Education, Housing, Health, Transport, Leisure & Recreation and Social Justice amongst other areas



**Disability  
Equality  
Scotland**



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# Appendix:

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## Opinion Piece

### The 20-minute neighbourhood - what does it mean to you?

**Audrey Birt, Associate Director, the ALLIANCE<sup>13</sup>**

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As we emerge once more from lockdown, thanks to COVID-19, Spring has never felt so welcome. And for many of us we have learned so much about our local areas and if we are fortunate we have seen the buds awaken and offer their blooms and the trees spread their branches, drawing our attention to what is around us. We have become more aware of our neighbourhoods and have discovered how important they are. Instead of jobs that take us away from our homes, we were home and perhaps for the first time having time to raise our heads and notice both what was good but also become very aware of the gaps that affected their lives.

With uncanny prescience the Scottish Government have included 20-minute neighbourhoods in the 2020/21 Programme for Government a concept that has found its time. The Mobility Access Committee Scotland (MACS) that I'm a member of "believes in a Scotland without the barriers that isolate and exclude disabled people from making their choice of successful door to door journeys". Reading about 20-minute neighbourhoods we have been interested in how this might enable disabled people being able to fully contribute to and enjoy life as involved members of their communities. So many studies have shown that disabled people, including those with hidden disabilities, have been deeply impacted by the pandemic including by the Office for National Statistics.<sup>14</sup> Hate crime, shielding, loss of support both social and medical have all meant that for many a deterioration in health and increased isolation and loss of agency. It's never been more important to look at solutions that involve much of the determinants of health; transport, housing, access to social and medical facilities, access to good food, social connection and agency, green spaces and physical activity. So the question I hold is how can the 20-minute neighbourhood contribute to that?

What is fascinating is that whatever our focus or interest, the 20-minute neighbourhoods concept appeals. If we are committed to a green economy for example then the concept of local work, growing and selling local produce, a car free environment, a culture of walking, cycling or wheeling, growing local business and even generating locality-based energy sources from wind, sun or in some rural communities, hydro-electric; then 20-minute neighbourhoods design can have so much to contribute. If health is your interest, then aside from having primary care facilities within the 20-minute access, walking, cycling, wheeling is hugely important for wellbeing as is access to gyms and outdoor parks and playing fields. As the pandemic has worsened social isolation and loneliness the approach provides the opportunity to be improved by communities and activities that are connected and local.

The image from the work done in Melbourne Australia shows the interconnectedness of the features that could make up a 20-minute neighbourhood.<sup>15</sup> A key finding from this work as it emerges, is the importance of collaboration. Enabling 20-minute neighbourhoods to emerge takes a vision and commitment from across local government agencies, third sector, corporate sector and vitality the local community itself. The vision itself needs to be ambitious everyone within that community. Involving disabled people from the start will ensure good accessibility which helps everyone.

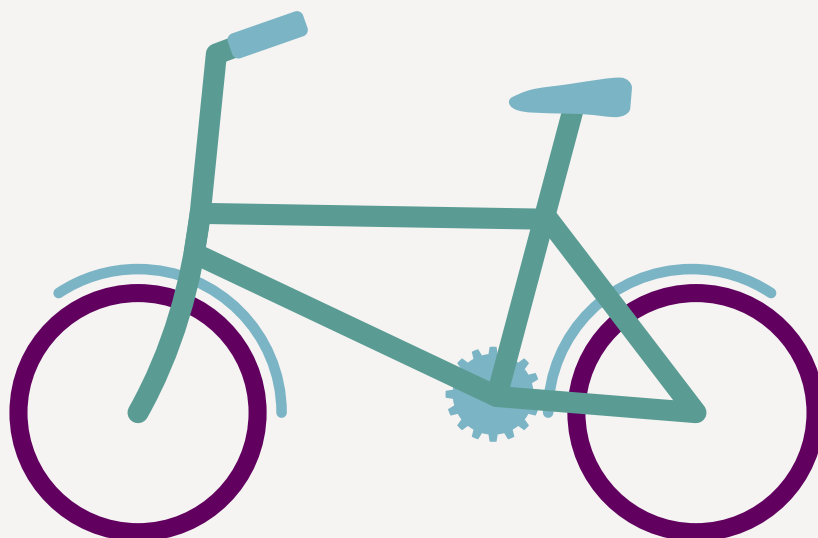
The Place Standard is a tool designed to support conversations across sectors and communities whether they are existing or being developed from new and can act as a valuable resource to examine a route to 20-minute community development.<sup>16</sup> In many ways it stands on the shoulders of good practice across Scotland but enables a national ambition.

Communities, even new ones are not blank canvases either. They are full of the assets of those who have come together there, of shared histories and new ones. The risk of national approaches is that the “professionals” unintentionally miss the assets, because traditionally we have focussed on deficits (like needs assessments). Asset based community development turns the traditional approaches on their heads and seek to increase interdependencies within communities and this in turn builds social capital. All of this will be important in nurturing the growth of that deeper sense of neighbourhood.<sup>17</sup>

This is a concept that requires a long-term commitment, beyond political lifetimes, and may fall fowl of that. Engaged communities can sustain beyond policies and politics. The approach risks leaving behind rural communities, some who will not doubt have some sense of neighbourhood but can be very isolated and far from the supports that are crucial parts of the urban concept; like medical facilities, banks, public transport and so on. Can rural communities learn from the approach and build digital support where geography does not enable face to face?

I’m very much looking forward to these sessions, covering the key areas I have mentioned. There is much to learn here and for me, much to be excited about.

This Opinion is part of a specially commissioned series by the ALLIANCE’s Academy programme which accompanies the Academy summer event series Exploring Scotland’s 20-minute neighbourhoods delivered in partnership with MACS and Disability Equality Scotland (DES).<sup>18</sup>



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## Opinion Piece

### 20-minute neighbourhood- home is where the heart is?

**Cameron MacFarlane, Community Engagement Manager, the ALLIANCE**

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You don't have to live in a place to feel rooted to it. We each have a variety of social, cultural and emotional ties to different places for different reasons. This can be true even though we may not personally live there, or the opportunities to visit are rare, or the time we spend there is short.

Whether it's through choice or being forced to leave, we don't always live in the place we call 'home'. But being physically resident in a particular place is an important aspect of our lives. This can be on a temporary and practical basis, or it can be part of how we identify and define ourselves. Either way, to large extent it is this location within a geographic area that naturally defines our perceptions around what we view as our local neighbourhood and community – at least for the period of time we are resident there, but sometimes beyond.

The concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood is inherently linked to place and in turn the assets that exist in and around particular geographic areas. In this respect housing is fundamental in determining our 'place' as our address or postcode, which translates as a physical pin on the map, then shapes what we then define as our local neighbourhood. As an extension to this, our address or postcode can often form part of the criteria that determines if and where we are eligible to access certain services or attend certain activities.

Beyond determining our location, housing is interlinked with various other factors that affect our health and wellbeing more broadly, impacting physically, mentally, socially and economically. Safe, secure, good quality and affordable housing must be considered a prerequisite for enabling people to live well. But it is only one factor and we need more than good housing. We also need access to healthy food and greenspaces; we need meaning and purpose in our lives; and as much as anything, we need social connection with other people. As Aristotle suggests, 'we are by nature social animals'.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the increasing availability and reliance on digital technology has on one hand allowed connection and enabled participation in a way that requires no physical interaction and transcends geographic areas and boundaries. Many groups and services have adapted to the challenges posed by social distancing, or restrictions on the numbers of people who can meet in person, by moving online. In some ways, for some people, this has increased access by removing the time, effort and cost needed to physically travel and attend. However significant barriers remain for many in terms of engaging digitally and digital inclusion remains an important issue. Furthermore, according to the Mental Health Foundation, 24% of adults in Scotland have experienced loneliness as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic so it is clear that despite an increased array of digital options, social connection has still been difficult for many.<sup>19</sup> Beyond this, digital technology can't replace opportunities to spend time outdoors in nature which, as outlined in the ALLIANCE's report on 'The Potential of Green, Blue & Wild Spaces in tackling health inequalities' is also important for health and wellbeing.<sup>20</sup>

Alongside the role of digital technology, the pandemic has also amplified the impact that geographic location has on our day to day lives and the importance of the community assets that exist within local neighbourhoods. Lockdown restrictions that have prevented travel and required people to stay local to varying degrees over the last couple of years have meant that people have been more reliant on what is more immediately located within their neighbourhood, or wider local authority area.

For me personally, living in Glasgow has meant that for much of the last year, a trip to the beach, or a walk in the hills has often been impossible. This inability to get out of the city for long periods of time has made the existence of local greenspaces including public parks and gardens even more important.

Being forced to spend so much time in my own neighbourhood has also been quite enlightening in terms of discovering – and appreciating – some of the things that are present so close to home. Inspired by the Wildlife Trust's 30 Days Wild campaign my wee boy, Sorley, and I have been making a 'nature map' along our daily route walking to and from his nursery.<sup>21</sup> It's a 10 minute walk but even within that small amount of time and space, making our map has shown us how much more exists on our doorstep than we might previously have noticed or paid attention to. Essentially and unintentionally, we've been 'asset mapping' in a very limited form which immediately leads me to connect my own personal experience with my role working on the ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) Programme at the ALLIANCE.<sup>22</sup>

Community assets and in turn asset mapping are central to the ALISS Programme which aims to help people, including citizens and professionals work together to gather, manage and share information about these assets which exist in neighbourhoods throughout Scotland, and which play a vital role in helping people to live well. When the ALISS Programme was originally being coproduced with disabled people, people living with long term conditions and/or providing unpaid care, one of the fundamental questions framing the process was 'What keeps you well?' And in answer to that question people spoke about a wide range of activities ranging from formal health and social care services to informal community groups and associations as well as places and spaces.

This same question continues to frame the work of the ALISS Programme and one of the most interesting and inspiring things about working on ALISS is the opportunity it provides to hear about and speak with people involved in the huge range of organisations, groups, services and activities throughout the country that can make a positive difference for individuals and communities in terms of supporting health and wellbeing. To live well we need a range of services and connections. To achieve safe and secure housing we need the housing support and homelessness services that can help to obtain and sustain this. To enable independent living we need health and social care services that are person centred, inclusive and accessible for all and we need services such as independent advocacy that can help to ensure people are aware of their rights, are not excluded from the services they are entitled to and are able to participate as fully as possible in the decisions that affect their lives.

But amid these formal services, communities themselves represent an interconnected network of opportunity. Whether it is joining a community choir or book group to meet new people and participate in meaningful and enjoyable activities with others or joining a local walking football team or community garden for increasing physical activity and getting outdoors for some fresh air. Many of these activities are interlinked in terms of the benefits they provide. For example, the motivation for joining a walking football team may be to get a bit more exercise and improve physical health, but it also involves getting outdoors and enables social connections with other members of the group.

For those who don't know yet all the pockets of potential that their neighbourhood might hold to fuel a new interest, revive a hobby, or make a new friend, ALISS could be their starting point. And in so doing, they can find new connections within their neighbourhood that further adds to that rooted sense of place.

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## Opinion Piece

### The 20-minute neighbourhood- a peer support perspective

**Heather Calvo, Chief Executive Officer, Neighbourhood Networks<sup>23</sup>**

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The principles behind the 20-minute neighbourhood are, in my view, entirely aligned with the peer support model developed within Neighbourhood Networks.<sup>24</sup> In the last year we have witnessed a sea-change in consideration of these principles. I find myself regularly reflecting about what we have learned over this period, what have been the key elements and what the future may have to offer.

Neighbourhood Networks has developed a unique way of delivering and facilitating peer support that is rooted in a local community model. The organisation recruits a Community Living Worker (CLW) to work with a group of vulnerable people in a network. The CLW must live in the same community as the members of the network and the CLW doesn't follow a shift pattern, instead working flexibly with individuals and the group.

The CLW support focuses on developing reciprocity between network members and active contribution, encouraging members to share their skills and gifts with one another and the community at large. There is a focus in using local resources and accessing peer support to use these spaces and facilities while working toward achieving shared outcomes, such as making where they live a better place.

A peer support network provides a very local safety net for people who may experience crisis. At a point of crisis, a consistent CLW who can step in when needed, can be a life saver. Equally, a fellow network member can sometimes be the first to notice that someone is reaching crisis and this enables support earlier. If you are known to people and engaged locally you will have people looking out for you or missing you when you are not around.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have witnessed the importance of the 20-minute neighbourhood principles. Thankfully during lockdown, support to members remained as most CLW's could walk to members and provide access to support. Equally as important, members were able to do the same for each other while sticking to the lockdown guidelines.

Many people kept in touch digitally with peers or CLW support over this period. We invested considerable capacity into developing digital champions across members and staff, however the local delivery of this support from the CLW or a peer proved to be invaluable. It's easier to accept support from someone local that you know and trust.

Friendships can be easier to foster when you live physically close to people, trusting relationships develop more quickly when you see people on a regular basis.<sup>25</sup> Friendships, in my view, also work better when there is reciprocity to be practically supportive to people when you live close by. It's testament to the peer support model that friendships in networks have survived the COVID-19 pandemic and it's due in part to people having such strong foundations laid through local network membership.

The importance of green spaces in our 20-minute neighbourhoods has really hit home to all of us in Neighbourhood Networks.<sup>26</sup> Bit by bit as lockdown eased we have used the local parks and amenities to bring people together. The spaces were always there but now we all fully appreciate their value. It is little wonder then the Feely Report makes recommendations that align with the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. In particular recommendation 4.1 states:<sup>27</sup>

“Commissioning and planning community based informal supports, including peer supports, is required to be undertaken by Integration Joint Boards and consideration of grant funding to support these is needed.”

It's too early to say how much of these recommendations will be acted upon by local authorities but we look ahead with some optimism that more local and peer led solutions will be developed in the future.





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