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**The Salvation Army, UK Territory Headquarters**

101 Newington Causeway, London, SE1 6BN

Website: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk)

E-mail: [er@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:er@salvationarmy.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7367 4700

THE RESPONSIBILITY GAP

# The Responsibility Gap



The Henley Centre

## The Responsibility Gap

### **Individualism, Community and Responsibility in Britain Today**

In 1999, The Salvation Army commissioned The Henley Centre to explore the social and economic circumstances of life in Britain. The report which followed was entitled *The Paradox of Prosperity*, and described the 'decoupling' in British society between economic growth and emotional wellbeing; how, despite a period of sustained macro-economic growth, people in Britain are not actually any happier with life and are suffering from the increased pressures associated with living in a fast-changing, materialist society. Two years later, The Salvation Army invited The Henley Centre to explore the challenges and opportunities facing the current generation of young people in Britain, sometimes known as 'Millennial Kids'. *The Burden of Youth*, as the second report was called, documented the paradoxical burdens of a society of affluence and choice, upon a vulnerable section of society.

In the autumn of 2003, The Salvation Army again invited The Henley Centre to explore significant, emerging trends in British society. Starting from the platform provided by these two earlier reports, we undertook new research around the dominant themes of community, individuality and responsibility. A key concern to emerge from this research is the growing 'responsibility gap' in British society; it is with this that this third report is concerned.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of The Henley Centre. They do not necessarily reflect the views of The Salvation Army.

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We are grateful to the following, who were interviewed in the course of the research and gave permission for the use of the quotes contained in the report:

We would emphasise that the views expressed represent the personal views of those interviewed and do not necessarily represent the views of the organisations they are members of.

- Stuart Etherington** – Chief Executive, National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- David Varney** – Chairman, mmO2 & Chairman, Business in the Community
- Professor Bob Holman** – Formerly Professor of Social Administration at the University of Bath
- Stephen Burke** – Director, Daycare Trust
- Elisabeth Hoodless** – Executive Director, Community Service Volunteers
- Justin Irwin** – Director, Get Connected Helpline
- Fran Saltmarsh** – Vice-Chairman of National Federation of Women’s Institutes & Chairman of Denman Management Committee



The Salvation Army places itself at the sharp end of delivering care to many of the most vulnerable people in our society. This has not changed over the 138 years that The Salvation Army has put belief into action and experienced the privilege of seeing change in the lives of people all across the world.

However the society in which we operate changes constantly. Because of this over recent years, we have commissioned The Henley Centre to produce the highly acclaimed reports *The Paradox of Prosperity* and *The Burden of Youth*.

The response to these reports has been overwhelmingly positive and we are uplifted by the initiatives which have resulted from them both within and outside our own organisation.

The challenges we face have moved on. Time and again in the work of The Salvation Army, we encounter people who have reached rock bottom, as one support system after another has failed them. As we give each individual the means with which to recover, we are striving to ensure that anyone who follows them need not encounter the same problems.

With *The Responsibility Gap*, we asked The Henley Centre to bring together current data and thinking on individuality, community and responsibility as well as commission original research specifically for this report. From this we learn why and how such gaps in care occur, as well as examining factors which could address some of the issues.

The urgent need for society as a whole to engage in the task of plugging these gaps is increasingly clear. In addition to informing our policies and planning decisions, one key purpose in commissioning *The Responsibility Gap* is to provoke a debate, which we hope will inspire a concerted drive to overcome the challenges associated with caring for the vulnerable in our 21st-century society. The Salvation Army will be fully engaged in making this happen.

**Commissioner Alex Hughes** Territorial Commander

## Executive Summary

### The Responsibility Gap

- Over the last 20 years, social and economic trends have changed British society. In particular, the experience of community, the sense of individuality and the notion of responsibility to others have been fundamentally altered.
- At the same time, our expectations of the welfare state have changed.
- These trends have positive as well as negative impacts. A significant negative consequence, however, is the 'responsibility gap' which has arisen. This refers to the growing deficit of care for vulnerable groups in contemporary British society.
- There are multiple dimensions to the responsibility gap. Some obvious illustrations are:
  - The crisis of care for elderly people in Britain today. Demographic, geographic and family changes have resulted in a high and growing number of elderly people in need of support.
  - The critical shortage of childcare places. As women have taken on more and more of the economic responsibility of providing for their households, many one- and two-parent families are struggling to cope with the demands of work and parenthood.
  - The lack of support for informal carers, who are caring for those in need within their immediate households, and are often suffering from ill-health themselves.
  - The shortage of care places for adults with physical, sensory or learning disabilities.

### Who is involved?

- This report does not attempt to point the finger of blame for this situation. The responsibility gap results both from 'bottom up' changes (to do with the way in which people live their lives) and 'top down' changes (the changing role of government and the economy together with broader demographic shifts). But it raises questions about the responsibility of government and the role of citizens.
- It also has important implications for the charity sector that has become increasingly

involved in the provision of care. These are twofold: first, how far they should and are expected to step in to fill this gap; second, how the changing nature of volunteering impacts upon their ability to deliver their goals.

- The role of the private sector, and corporate social responsibility, is also key. Whilst the private sector has a role in the provision of care for profit, as an act of charity it is viewed with some suspicion. Public attitude is uncertain and sometimes hostile towards corporations.

#### How has it happened?

- Our research shows that in contemporary British society, many people do not feel an obligation of care to their extended family, their local community or vulnerable sections of society. At the same time, however, they have increasingly accepted responsibility for their own health, financial well-being and the care of their immediate families. They have diminished expectations of what government can or should do for them.
- Increasing affluence has been at the cost of increasing inequality, contributing to a growth in relative 'need'.
- Multiple social and economic drivers have led to 'time squeeze': a feeling that we simply don't have enough time to care for people apart from our immediate family.
- The enormous changes in family dynamics, and the increasing responsibility taken on by women for the economic maintenance of their households as they have moved into the workforce, have led to a consequent reduction of 'social capital' in the community: the loss of the caring of extended family and neighbours that has, for generations, been silently undertaken by women.
- These drivers, coupled with 'hypermobility', have led to the changing nature of communities. Neighbourliness is not as dead as some people claim, with significant minorities claiming a community spirit where they live. However, some well-rehearsed changes have taken place:
  - From communities of geography to communities of interest;

- From communities of necessity to communities of choice;
- From permanent communities to impermanent ones.

- The consequences of this transformation are, once again, often unintentional: those who fall outside people's immediate and often temporary communities of interest and choice – often the most vulnerable in society – can fall into the responsibility gap.
- Government remains the umbrella provider of care, but the welfare state has retracted just as local social capital has been reduced.

#### What should be done?

- The report identifies four pillars of care (the individual, government, charities and the private sector). A sense of partnership between the four pillars of care has not been developed adequately. Changing ideas about who should be responsible compounds the gap.
- Broadly speaking, initiatives to address the problem come from four areas:
  - Relationships between the 'big players' – government, corporations and charities - need to be fostered, alongside the relevant checks and balances in each case. Government must continue to be the umbrella.
  - Citizenship should be encouraged through high-profile examples and through education programmes in schools.
  - Volunteering must keep up with the opinions and lifestyle of potential volunteers by reassessing its offer and making its 'terms and conditions' as flexible as possible. There is much to be positive about; many people continue to believe strongly in the 'giving' principle, even though they struggle hard to find the time and energy to contribute directly.
  - Specific local initiatives need to be encouraged and the learning from them disseminated as widely as possible.



## Introduction

Major shifts in contemporary society are generally the result of many overlapping social, economic, political, technological and environmental trends. The responsibility gap – the growing deficit of care for vulnerable groups in Britain today – is such a case in point. No specific group in society is at fault; no particular institution can be blamed. Instead, we can trace multiple socio-economic trends, many of them well documented, as driving this societal shift. As the report documents, the reconfiguration of the welfare state, the expansion of the private sector into new areas of provision, shifting patterns of employment and new notions of community and individuality all play a part. But whatever the cause, the outcome is real: some of the most vulnerable members of society are falling into a gap left between the shifting spheres of responsibilities, with a lack of appropriate care.

Charities and the voluntary sector make a growing contribution to filling this gap, but they themselves face enormous challenges. The gap is the unintentional consequence of change and solutions are not easy. But a shift towards a more caring society depends upon all of us – individuals, communities, government, the private sector and the charity sector – playing our part. We hope this report will serve to further thought and action.

### Methods of research

In order to understand the responsibility gap and explore current and potential responses to it, The Henley Centre used a variety of research methods and approaches.

- The Henley Centre commissioned a survey of the general public which explored their opinions concerning:
  - Their perceived personal feelings of responsibility towards relatives, friends and those in need;
  - The expectations of responsibility for various organisations towards the same groups;

- The involvement they have with these organisations;
  - Their attitude towards volunteering and to donating money to various causes and vulnerable groups.
- The fieldwork was conducted between 3 and 7 October 2003.
  - The Henley Centre collected and analysed existing statistics, trends and insights, using a variety of sources. These included proprietary research held by The Henley Centre, and statistics from the Office for National Statistics, British Social Attitudes, other government sources and market research databases, together with information from other relevant organisations.
  - Executive interviews – The Henley Centre conducted in-depth interviews with experts in the areas of social change, corporate responsibility, community projects, government policy and volunteering, in order to gauge their views concerning the most important current and future issues. These interviews were transcribed and direct quotes used in the report. We are particularly grateful to:

**Stuart Etherington – Chief Executive, National Council for Voluntary Organisations**

Stuart Etherington was appointed Chief Executive of NCVO in 1994. NCVO is a membership organisation that represents the interests of charities and voluntary bodies. Previously he was Chief Executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, a major UK charity.

**David Varney – Chairman, mmO2 & Chairman, Business in the Community**

David Varney has been Chairman of mmO2 plc since June 2001. He is also Chairman of Business in the Community, an independent charity with 20 years' experience of creating 'a public benefit by working with companies to improve the positive impact of business in society'.

**Professor Bob Holman – Formerly Professor of Social Administration at the University of Bath**

For the last 25 years Professor Holman has lived and worked on council estates. He is associated with a voluntary community project in Easterhouse, Glasgow, called Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse.

**Stephen Burke – Director, Daycare Trust**

Stephen Burke became Director of the national childcare charity Daycare Trust in 2000. He has led the charity's campaign for childcare for all, promoting children's centres in every community and securing substantial new investment.

**Elisabeth Hoodless – Executive Director, Community Service Volunteers**

Elisabeth Hoodless CBE is Executive Director of Community Service Volunteers which annually involves 100,000 volunteers aged 5-105 nationwide. She was a member of the Secretary of State's Advisory Group on Citizenship (DfES) and deputy chairman of the Speaker's Commission on Citizenship. She is president of Volonteurope and a volunteer youth court chairman.

**Fran Saltmarsh – Vice-Chairman of National Federation of Women's Institutes & Chairman of Denman Management Committee**

Fran Saltmarsh has been involved in community work for many years and has been a member of the Women's Institute for 27 years.

**Justin Irwin – Director, Get Connected Helpline**

Justin Irwin has been Director of Get Connected Helpline since it became a charity in August 2000. Prior to that he was Marketing Manager for Get Connected, and spent two years in the marketing department and press office for the Samaritans.



## Who Cares?

Since the Second World War, responsibility for the vulnerable and needy has lain with the welfare state. Supplementary support has always been offered by charitable organisations and volunteers.

This arrangement is changing. Government still provides the lion's share of funding but is relying more and more on the private and voluntary sectors to deliver the service provision. Public attitude towards their involvement is uncertain, consumer interest in corporate social responsibility fragile, and charities nervous about corporations' capacity to set agendas.

Charities are popular and omnipresent but suffer from the strain caused by a litigious culture, the increased call for professionalism, and a growing competitiveness for funding.

Individuals express a great deal of good will towards volunteering, but life pressures and a subtly changing attitude to what volunteering should offer them often prevent this good will from being translated into action.

This present combination of government finance, new delivery mechanisms and good will is effective but ultimately insufficient. A responsibility gap still exists, critically in some areas such as care for the elderly, and potentially in others such as care for those with physical or learning disabilities.

New forms of funding, organising, stimulating and energising responsibility in society need to be developed.



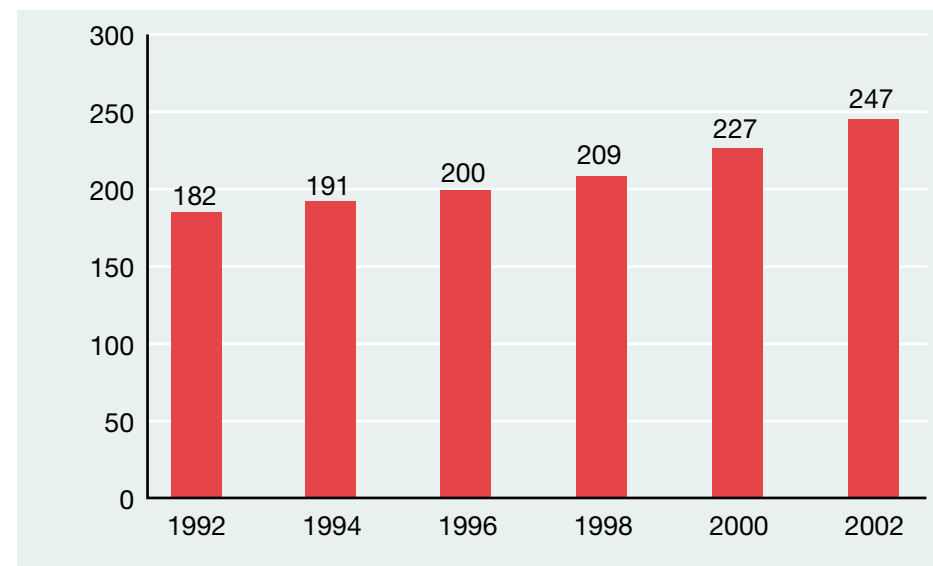
## 1: Understanding The Responsibility Gap

The responsibility gap has its roots in the economic, social and ideological changes that British society has experienced over the last two decades.

The last ten years have witnessed a sustained period of significant economic growth in Britain. Incomes have increased, unemployment has fallen and markets have expanded. As a result the British public is wealthier today than ever before.

Disposable incomes have been rising steadily since the early 1980s and in 2003 they were two-and-a-half times greater than they were in 1979.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1: Index of average household disposable income, 1992-2002



Source: Office for National Statistics

This rise in prosperity has not been uniform, however, and income has also become increasingly polarised over this time:

<sup>1</sup>Office for National Statistics

- In 1979, the top and bottom 10% of the population accounted for 20% and 4.4% of the total national income respectively.
- 17 years later, the top decile's share had risen to 24%, whilst the bottom's had sunk to 3.5%.
- Forecasts from the Office for National Statistics predict that this economic gap is expected to widen over the next decade, so that by 2010 the shares are expected to be 30% and 3% respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst most people are getting richer, a significant minority are becoming relatively much poorer.

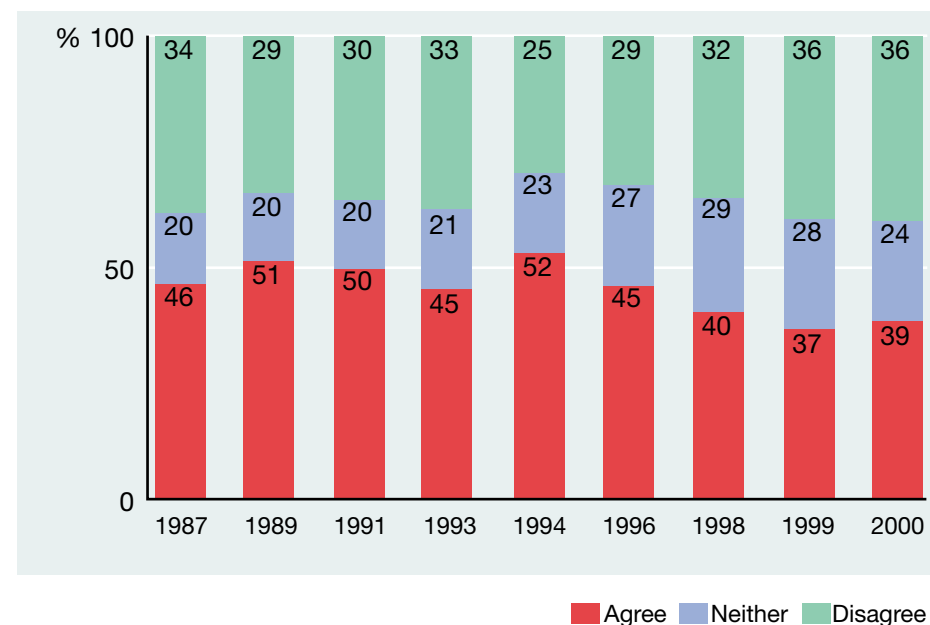
### Ideological Drivers

This affluence has been accompanied by some significant political and ideological shifts. The economic liberalisation of the 1980s is the most important of these, when the 'big state' of the post-war period was rescinded and an emphasis on individual responsibility and consumer choice put in its place. The idea that the state has either the right or the ability to plan people's lives for them, either financially or in any other way, was truly out of fashion.

The individual has become increasingly autonomous and largely free to live as he or she wishes, with all the rights and responsibilities that entails. The result has not simply been a change in the way government and society function, but also a slow transformation in the way people view society.

As the research conducted for the British Social Attitudes survey shown in figure 2 illustrates, recent years have seen fewer and fewer people believing that the government should redistribute income to the less well off. Increasingly affluence has fostered an ideological shift in notions of social responsibility.

Figure 2: The Government should redistribute income to the less well-off



Source: British Social Attitudes: The 18th Report (2001/2002 edition)

In addition, other ideological shifts, with their roots in the Baby Boomer generation, have occurred at the individual level. As we discuss later, this group has been at the forefront of the growth in individualism. As it has aged, this large and unprecedented cohort has done much to reshape society in its own image, emphasising independence, living for today, rejecting authority and being determined to realise one's own ambitions. This has been a potent force for change – both positive and negative – in British society.

### Hypermobility

The last 30 years have also seen a powerful social drive towards ‘hypermobility’.

- As a nation we travel over three times further today than we did in 1952: 720 billion passenger kilometres per year in 1999 compared to 218 in 1952.
- We travel further to work, to school, to shop, and to visit friends than ever before.
- The average person makes over a thousand journeys per year, totalling nearly 7,000 miles, 2,000 more than in 1975, and this is forecast to double again in the next 25 years.<sup>3</sup>

Nor is it simply our day-to-day travelling that has risen.

- As a nation we flew 35 times more domestic miles in 1998 than we did in 1952.
- In 2000, British airports processed twice as many passengers as they did ten years earlier.
- Nearly half of the British population moved house in the 1990s. By 2001, there were nearly 1.5 million housing transactions per year.<sup>4</sup>

‘Hypermobility’ is a classic paradox of prosperity: we travel and move house more often both because we can afford to, and because our lifestyles encourage it (moving regularly for education and employment). At the familial and community level, it has become a driver of change in its own right, having a fundamental impact on geographic community and our relationships with our family elders; on our ability to care for our nearest and dearest and, fundamentally, on our perception of who our nearest and dearest are.

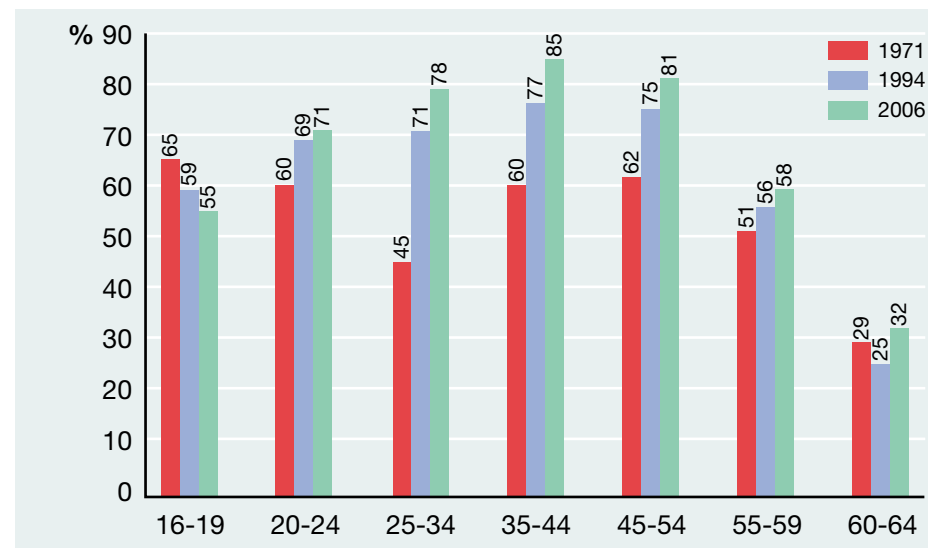
### Time

The notion of the ‘cash-rich, time-poor’ society has been well rehearsed. Since the mid-1980s, The Henley Centre has documented increasing ‘time squeeze’ amongst British society. This feeling, that there is simply not enough time these days to get things done, has been driven by multiple trends. The withdrawal of the welfare state,

and our need to take more care of our health, finances and children’s education, has put us under pressure. The loss of the ‘job for life’ has meant that we have to put more energy into our careers and training. Most importantly, the feminisation of the workforce has meant that the work that historically has been quietly done by women during the day, at home, is now squeezed into the evening and the weekend.

UK employees work longer hours than those of any other European country. As figure 3 shows, more and more women of all ages, except those under 19, are in employment, and this is a trend forecast to continue over the next decade. This alone has had an enormous impact on the ‘social capital’ at the community level (as discussed in chapter 3).

Figure 3: An increasing proportion of women are in employment



Source: DFES, 2000

<sup>3</sup>Office for National Statistics, Transport Trends 2001  
<sup>4</sup>Office for National Statistics, Transport Trends 2001

*“Women, particularly, are working nowadays and I do think once you’re home that’s it, you want to be home. You’ll prepare a meal and you’ll flop down. Unless it’s something frantically important to you, or interesting, I think you’re not going to go out as much as you would have done.”*

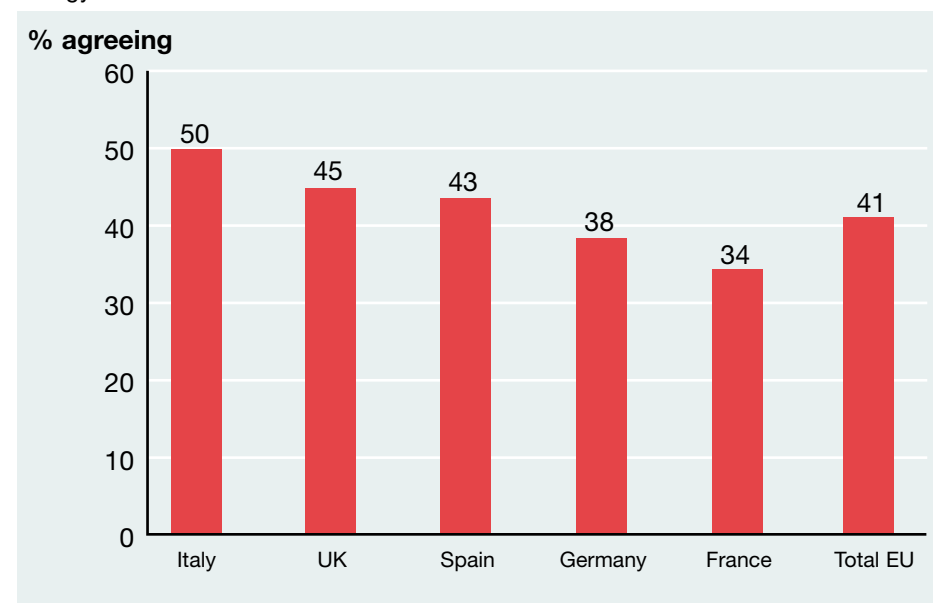
Fran Saltmarsh

### Energy

The 1980s was a decade of ‘loads of money’, when making it and keeping it seemed more important than anything else. The 1990s then became the decade of ‘loads of everything’, when people not only valued their affluence but also began to care greatly about lifestyle. The current decade looks set to shape up to be more about balance, as we realise that we simply don’t have the time to do it all. One outcome of this is our current concern about our energy levels.

As a society we are beginning to get used to ‘time squeeze’; what we moan most about now is that we are too tired to get everything done. As a result of our overburdened lives, 45% of people claim “I am so tired in the evening, I often don’t have the energy to do much”, a figure higher than that for any other EU country but Italy (see figure 4). So even if we could squeeze more out of the day logistically, nearly half of us feel that we simply wouldn’t have the energy to do so. It might seem that the working parent who sits down in front of the television for two hours at night could be more usefully using their time contributing to the community, or checking up on an elderly relative. In all fairness, they may simply be too exhausted to move.

Figure 4: Nearly 1 in 2 agree that “I am so tired in the evening, I often don’t have the energy to do much”



Source: Euro PCC 2001, The Henley Centre

None of these drivers that have influenced individual behaviour in British society has directly caused the responsibility gap. Neither have we *en masse* decided that we don’t ‘care’ any more. However, the way in which many of these trends have coalesced and fed off one another has led to two major trends, which between them do much to explain the shifting sands of provision of care around vulnerable groups in society. These are increasing individualism and the changing nature of community.

### Summary

- British society is wealthier than ever before, although this affluence is also more polarised than at any time in the last 20 years. A sizeable minority are not sharing in the widespread economic boom.
- Economic wealth has heralded a more independent outlook on life, partly encouraged by the political trends of '80s and '90s and partly fostered by the independence that higher disposable income allows.
- The British public is more mobile than ever before, occupationally, relationally and geographically. People travel longer distances for everyday needs like work and shopping, and also move home more frequently than ever before.
- These macro-drivers have each shaped individuals' lives. People have more money but less time to spend it. Our lack of energy is becoming a national obsession.
- These various macro and micro drivers are at the root of the two causes of the responsibility gap: 'the rise of individualism' and 'the changing nature of community'.



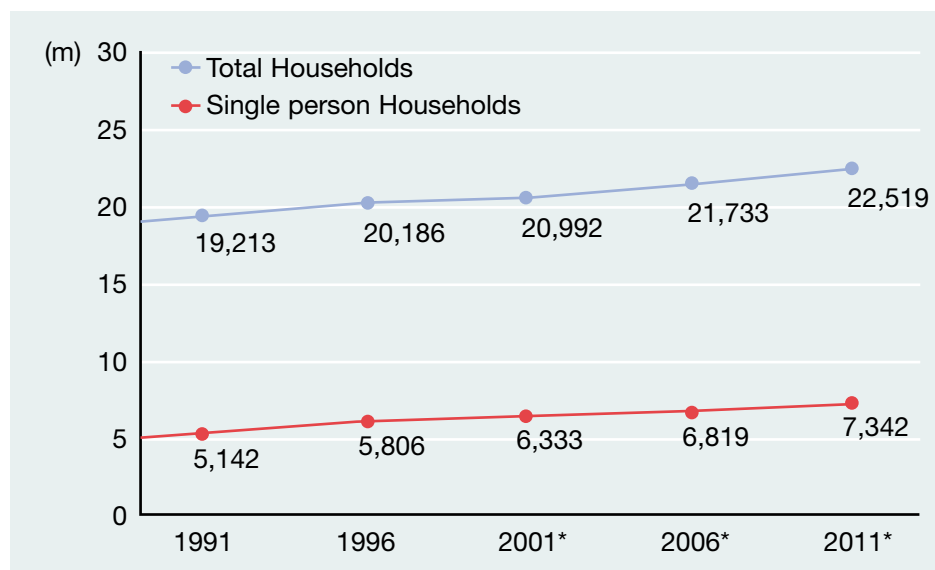
## 2: The Rise of Individualism

'The Rise of Individualism' is often used as a synonym for 'selfishness' and is associated with the worst excesses of the 1980s and the 'Greed is Good' mentality. It is, however, a subtler phenomenon, as much about self-reliance and personal responsibility as it is about egotism. But as we have been encouraged to take more responsibility for ourselves, we have been left often unable, and sometimes unwilling, to take responsibility for others. Individualism impacts on who we believe we should care for, how we feel we are able to show care, and the manner in which we may choose to volunteer our efforts, either within our own family, our self-defined community, or for charitable causes.

### **Understanding Individualism – Relationships**

At its most basic, the rise of individualism is literally about people living and acting as individuals rather than as members of any larger group. This is most graphically seen in the rise of single-person households, which numbered around 5 million in 1991 and are expected to increase to 7.3 million in 2011 (see figure 5). It has been driven by economic, demographic and social changes, all of which look set to intensify.

Figure 5: Single-person households are projected to increase from 27% to 33% of the total housing stock between 1991 and 2011



Source: DETR, December 2000

- People marry later today than ever before. The average marriage age has risen steadily to reach nearly 31 for men and 29 for women in 2003.
- Marriage itself has become less popular, as more co-habitees decide not to marry at all and as many married couples divorce.
- An increasing proportion of people are remaining childless and those who are having children are opting to delay the age of parenthood.<sup>5</sup>

This changing and increasingly irregular marital and relational pattern means that people's lives are no longer shaped by the rigid and permanent relationships of

marriage, family and parenting as they used to be. Whereas once people fitted their lives into the slots afforded by society's basic relational institutions, like marriage and parenthood, today a growing proportion of people's lives are marked by fluid social networks and relationships.

*"I'm not sure that family values are declining, I think just the nature of family has changed. The economic status of women has changed a great deal in the last 20 years and that's changed the pattern of family life. That has left men wondering what their roles are and therefore I think there has been a significant shift there."*

Stuart Etherington

The result of these changes is that people have ever more opportunity to shape their lives according to their own predispositions.

### Choice

Since the free-market revolution of the 1980s, a huge amount of emphasis has been placed on people's right to choose for themselves. Choice is central not simply to economics and the consumer world but increasingly also to political rhetoric. It has become the sovereign value in the modern world.

So fundamental has the right to choose become in society that we are slowly shifting from an 'off-the-peg' culture, in which we are offered a number of pre-selected options and where we adapt our desires to fit the choices available, to a bespoke one, where solutions are tailored to our requirements and the choices available are adapted to fit our desires.

This individualisation can be seen in a range of areas, from Nike's personalised messages on their trainers to tailored holiday schedules. A striking example is the personalisation of media consumption.

The limited number of TV channels available to the general public 15 years ago has given way to a huge range of channels, camera angles and interactive options open to people, and even the gradual penetration of technologies which permit personalised schedules to be created. Portable communication and electronic diary devices, many of which can themselves be customised according to individual needs, enable people to shape and personalise their working and social lives more than ever before.

For the majority of time, people have welcomed the chance to express their individuality through exercising choice. However, in some circumstances, such as pension provision, where the state pension crisis has forced the government to return responsibility to individuals, the availability of 'hyperchoice' has become something of a headache for many people. (This 'paradox of prosperity' was discussed in depth in an earlier Salvation Army report.)

### **Self-actualisation**

The ultimate goal of this individualism and personalisation is commonly known as self-actualisation, the development and expression of a personal identity, unique to the individual.

Of course there is a strong relationship between self-actualisation and spirituality. In contemporary society, however, it is also being chased through more consumer-orientated ways. Although it may seem ludicrous to claim that personalised trainers or a selected camera angle is in any way 'self-actualising', these are often just tip-of-the-iceberg examples of a theme which finds its real depth in phenomena such as life coaches.

This originally American trend offers to help people 'live an ideal life' and has made steady inroads into the UK over the last two years. Organisations offer guidance, training, advice, courses, events and other resources to help people negotiate their

lives and develop their potential. As the website of one explains:

*"Life Coaching is an evolutionary form of an age-old discipline with which we are all familiar. Where before, extended family structures often retained the ability to influence individual members, to help them to "find their way", today's fractured social structures and pressurised corporate environments put pressure on the availability and effectiveness of these traditional support systems. Life Coaching is both a professional and a personal relationship between two otherwise unconnected people, which is designed and managed by the Coach in such a way as to help the client to improve one or many aspects of their lives, independent of the pressures of the past and the present."*

www.achievementsspecialists.co.uk

It is this which lies at the heart of individualism. From the foundation of living an independent, financially autonomous life, with fluid and impermanent relationships, people achieve a freedom which pressurises them to feel that they must identify and accomplish what they most want and thus 'actualise' themselves.

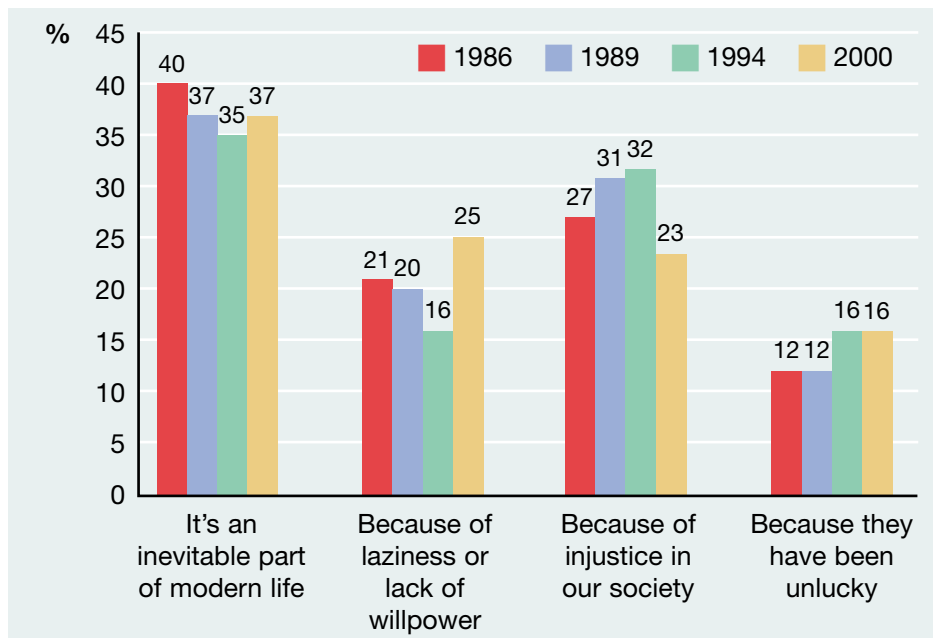
*"I was going to say selfish; perhaps that's a bit too harsh, but I do think there's a lot of "the self" thing nowadays. You're keeping up with your peers. I get the feeling, rightly or wrongly, that you have to be seen to have certain things."*

Fran Saltmarsh

### **Shifting Priorities**

As already observed, individualism has coincided with an increasing resistance to the idea of the redistribution of wealth. It has also paralleled a shifting perception of blame for society's ills (see figure 6).

Figure 6: The change in perceptions of why people live in need



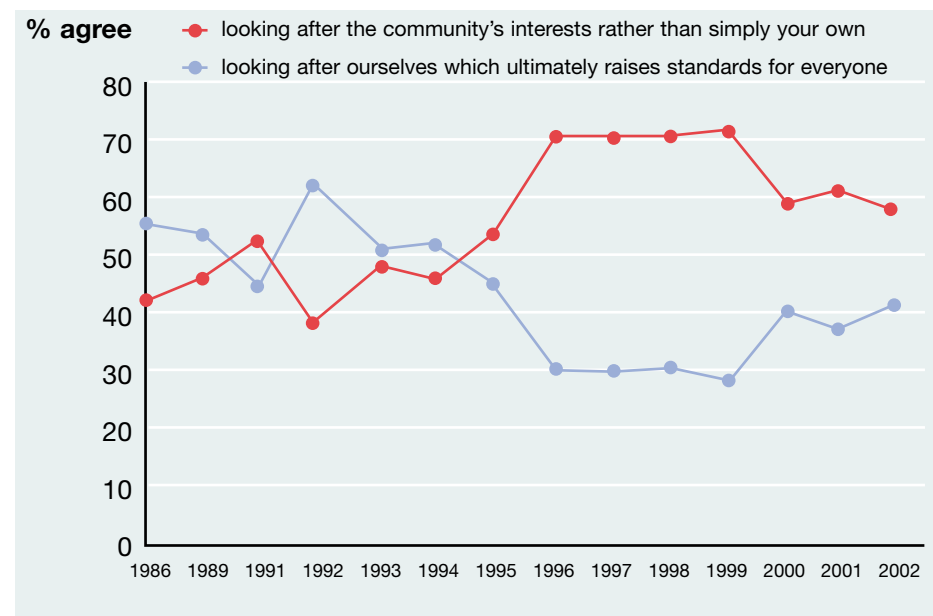
Source: British Social Attitudes, 2001-02

- When asked why people live in need, a quarter of people answered, “Because of laziness or lack of willpower” in 2000, compared to 16% six years earlier.
- Over the same period of time, the percentage of those who answered, “Because of injustice in our society”, fell from 32% to 23%.

This ideological shift has been evidenced in Henley Centre research. Over the last two decades, we have been asking people how “The quality of life can be best improved...”. The proportion of people choosing the answer, “Looking after the

community’s interest rather than simply your own” has been falling since reaching a plateau in the mid-1990s, whereas those responding, “Looking after ourselves which ultimately raises standards for everyone” has risen dramatically over the same time (see figure 7).

Figure 7: The quality of life can be best improved by...



Source: The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change, 1986-2002

At present, the gap between the two is smaller than at any time since the last Conservative government. Although we sometimes find it difficult to admit, individualism often heralds a more self-interested outlook on life.

### The Consequences of Individualism

A key area where individualism has a real impact on people's lives is with regards to their involvement in, or membership of organisations and groups. Gym membership has increased whilst political activism has fallen; interest groups such as the National Trust have gained members who are attracted by affinity, whilst volunteering for organisations that require activity and commitment has fallen.

- There are currently around 280,000 members of the Labour Party, from having been 360,000 in 1999 and 410,000 in 1997.
- The opposition is faring little better, with around 320,000 members of the Conservative Party today, having fallen from 400,000 in 1997.
- The Liberal Democrats have around 74,000 members today, compared to 90,000 in 2001.

Membership of trade unions has fallen even more dramatically than that of political parties, from a peak of nearly 14 million in the 1970s, to a low point of 7 million in the late 1990s. Since then the decline has stabilised and even grown by a few hundred thousand, but levels remain considerably below what they once had been.<sup>6</sup>

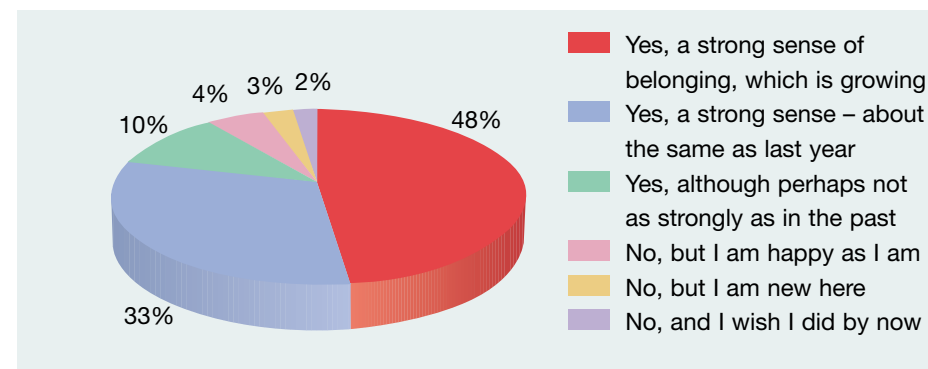
The National Trust boasts 2.7 million members and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds more than one million – a 'club' which makes few demands and can offer the added dimension of experience and even well-being.

This trend away from commitment can be seen clearly in falling church attendances, with 7.4% of the population attending church on Sunday in 2000 according to a survey conducted by Christian Research. This is despite the fact that the 2001 National Census recorded that 72% of people in England and Wales called themselves Christian, and only 15% claimed they had no religion.

Recent research undertaken by the Churches Information for Mission revealed that regular churchgoers show a much stronger sense of belonging to their local community.

More than eight out of ten people in church said they felt a strong sense of belonging, which was either stable or growing (see figure 8).

Figure 8: Do you have a strong sense of belonging to this local church?



Source: Faith in Life: A snapshot of church life in England at the beginning of the 21st century, Churches Information for Mission (April 2001)

Conversely, there has been enormous growth in more amorphous 'spirituality' and spiritual 'experiences' in the same period.

- 65% of the public agree that "Personal spiritual experience is more important to me than belonging to a church."
- In January 1950, 10% of the public told Gallup they believed in ghosts and just 2% thought they had seen one. By 1998, MORI found that 40% now say they believe in ghosts, and 15% that they have personal experience of them. Indeed, 6% of people said they had made a decision based on their belief in ghosts!
- Similarly, in 1951 only 7% of the public said they believed in foretelling the future by cards, and 6% by stars, whereas in 1998 18% of the public said they believed in fortune telling or tarot, and 38% in astrology.<sup>7</sup>

In much the same way, recent years have seen a rise in Eastern religions and alternative spiritualities which are less 'other person-centred' than traditional Christianity. Whatever may be happening to mainstream religion, people are as interested – perhaps even more interested – in spiritual, transcendent and paranormal issues but are far less willing to join up to a traditional organised church.

### **Motivation**

The same motivation which keeps people away from belonging, shapes their behaviour in the marketplace.

*“I think society has become more atomistic. I think individuals have become more market driven. I think probably individuals have become more selfish and also I think as risk has been transferred from the collective to the individual, individuals may be less philanthropic.”*

Stuart Etherington

The greater emphasis on the 'benefits to me' has affected charities and volunteering just as much as high street retailers. The reasons for volunteering became more focused on the potential personal benefits to the volunteer as the decade progressed. Accordingly, charitable organisations now recognise that the desire for some form of personal benefit is central and has affected how charities attract and keep volunteers.

*“Young people want to know what they will get out of volunteering, such as a more impressive CV.”*

Michael Norton, Changemakers

*“Volunteers often stay also because of the social network they get.”*

Justin Irwin

### **Summary**

- Individualism is often viewed as simply a synonym for selfishness, when in actual fact it is a more subtle social phenomenon with positive as well as negative aspects.
- It is characterised by self-reliance and a focus on personal ambitions and goals.
- It is also reflected in an attitude towards the causes of wider societal ills.
- Its effects have reduced membership in all manner of organisations but not touched membership in other, less demanding, more leisure-oriented ones.
- Employers, retailers, service providers and charities have all had to adjust their strategies to these changed outlooks and motivations.



### 3. The Changing Nature of Community

#### Changing community

A great deal has been written about the death of community in Britain. While few people doubt that neighbourliness and community spirit have changed drastically over the last 40 years, the change is again more subtle than commonly presumed.

The proportion of people who agree with the statement, “There is a sense of community spirit where I live,” has remained reasonably constant over the last ten years, and has even risen from 38% in 1995 to 48% in 2001, before falling back to 45% the following year.<sup>8</sup>

Generally, people feel able to ask their neighbours to do small favours. The British Social Attitudes Survey for 2001-02 recorded that:

- 38% of people say they are very or fairly comfortable asking a neighbour to pay the milkman for them.<sup>9</sup>
- 80% say they are very or fairly comfortable asking a neighbour to collect a prescription for them.
- 86% say they are very or fairly comfortable borrowing a sink plunger from a neighbour.

This sense of community tends to differ from area to area.

- 64% of people living in rural areas claim there is a sense of community where they live, compared to 43% of those living in suburban areas and 32% in urban ones.<sup>10</sup>
- Conversely, 62% of people living in urban areas say they are afraid to open the door to strangers at night, compared with 50% of suburban residents and 48% of rural ones.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the sense of community appears to grow with age, with 31% of 15- to 24-year-olds feeling a sense of community where they lived, compared to 43% of 25- to 34-year-olds, 51% of 45-54 year olds, and 60% of those over 65.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change, 1995-2002

<sup>9</sup> British Social Attitudes, 2001-02

<sup>10</sup> The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change, 2002

<sup>11</sup> The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change, 2002

<sup>12</sup> The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change, 2002

Nevertheless, few can doubt that the factors which held many geographic communities together in the past have changed. Much of this is due to the economic changes of the last two decades. The decline of British industry not only changed people's working lives but also their homes and communities.

*"In the 80s, I think we saw the decline of – not the end of – but the decline of community and I would link this to economic changes, particularly to the decline of the large-scale labour-intensive industries. Coal, steel, car industry... the important thing about these labour-intensive industries were that they were enormous communities of interest. Those industries like coal, not only provided a community of interest but because they were all around the same places they centred a community of place."*

Professor Bob Holman

The decline of the manufacturing industry paralleled the feminisation of the workforce and women taking more and more responsibility for the economic maintenance of their households. Women who had previously spent their days running their homes and contributing in a multitude of unacknowledged ways to their local communities, found themselves working long hours in formal employment and squeezing domestic responsibilities into the evenings and weekends. The social fabric of community was inevitably fractured.

Over the same period, as outlined above, the trend towards 'hypermobility' meant that many more people changed their locality within the UK. The number of 'migrants', measured for example by the number of people who switched local health authorities either within a region or between regions, rose from 1.6 million in 1990 to 2.1 million in 2002.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, social and geographic mobility has effectively reduced the extent of multi-generational families living within easy distance of each other, and has

reconfigured the notion of family and responsibility. The vast majority of people today characterise their family as either 'nuclear' (46%) consisting of husband, wife and children; or 'beanpole' (26%) – that is, they describe their immediate family as including only husband, wife, children, siblings, parents and grandparents.<sup>14</sup>

*"Today with many more nuclear families – in fact with us not actually reproducing the population from domestic stock – families are getting smaller and more isolated and are certainly not a community."*

David Varney

One of the effects of this change is that many people know only the small and intense immediate community of the nuclear or beanpole family, as opposed to the larger, more amorphous, extended family unit. Coupled with a loss of a long-term tie or commitment to where we live, and long-term, local friendship, this has served in some circumstances to deify our own children and feel much less obligation to others.

*"I think that nowadays the family can almost become a god. People put so much time into their families, when they do get home at last from work, they just spend time with their own families. They are incredibly concerned about the education of their own families and not about the families of others. So in a sense I think too much emphasis on the family can lessen your sense of obligation towards society as a whole."*

Professor Bob Holman

Finally, trust, an important social glue, has also appeared to decline:

- In the 1950s, on average 60% of people agreed with the statement, "People can generally be trusted."
- This figure dropped to an average of 44% in the 1980s and reached 29% in 2003.<sup>15</sup>

This level of claimed mistrust affects the way we relate to people on a more casual basis and, anecdotally, has been influential in the transformation of community.

**Transformation of community**

In the last 20 years, broadly speaking community has been transformed in three ways.

**From communities of geography to communities of interest**

*“If you look at most communities, the only common elements now are the primary school, the GP’s surgery and maybe a faith group and that’s probably about it.”*

Stephen Burke

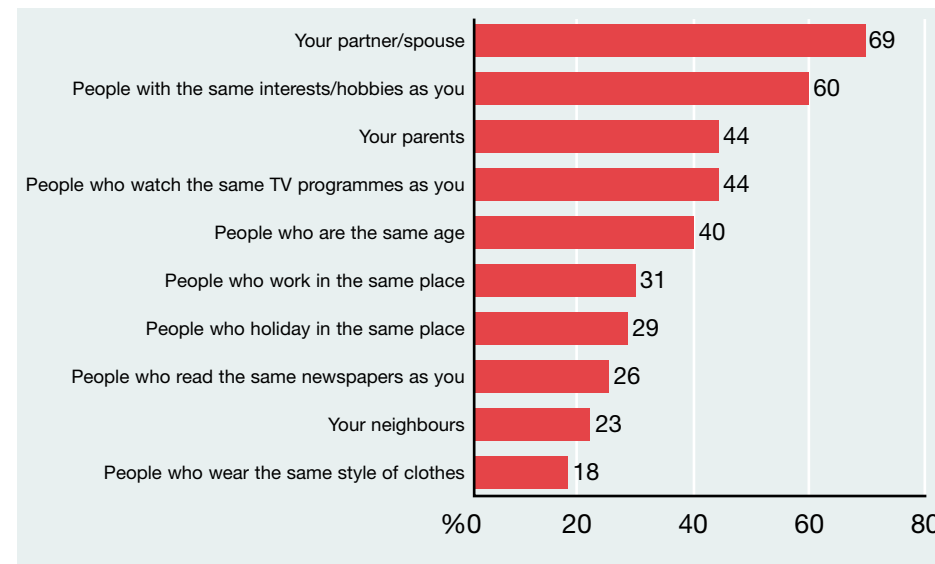
*“Community of place, of neighbourhood, means less and community of interest has become more important.”*

Professor Bob Holman

One of the consequences of the rise of individualism is that more and more people can define themselves according to their pastimes and interests rather than their birthplace, family network or cultural inheritance. This can be most clearly seen in people’s perception of with whom they share things in common.

When respondents are presented with a list of people and asked, “How much do you have in common with the following?”, the results are instructive (see figure 9).

Figure 9: How much do you have in common with the following?



Source: The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change 2001

Whilst ‘your partner/spouse’ scores highest, ‘people with the same interests/hobbies as you’ comes second, slightly ahead of ‘your parents’. ‘People who work in the same place’, ‘are the same age’, ‘holiday in the same place’ and ‘read the same newspaper as you’ all score more highly than ‘your neighbours’.

**From communities of necessity to communities of choice**

As disposable incomes rose sharply in the wake of the Second World War, the need for community began to diminish.

The greater mobility afforded by the increased penetration of car ownership, allows

people to escape their immediate environment and exercise greater choice over where they shop, work, play and generally live their lives.

Cheaper, more efficient and more mobile communication technology now allows people to stay in contact with one another and minimise the inconvenience that distance once imposed on relationships.

The combined result of these factors is a shift from communities in which people associate with people, in places and under circumstances that they had not necessarily chosen, to those where they mix with people they have chosen, in locations they prefer and under circumstances which suit them.

#### **From permanent communities to transient communities**

The transformation of community life is towards impermanence. Traditionally, because of their geographical rootedness and the weight of necessity, communities have been permanent or at least semi-permanent affairs, arenas in which long-term commitments have been lived out.

However, as mobility has increased and society became more individualistic, the permanence of these relationships has begun to be disrupted.

The result of this is an upsurge in 'communities' which exist for only a brief period of time. The recent popularity of single-issue groups is an indication of this. The last 18 months have witnessed two of the largest political demonstrations in British history: the Countryside Alliance march in 2002 and the Stop the War march in 2003. Whilst the marches themselves were only communities in the loosest sense of the word, the groups which organised them were more recognisably so. The Fuel Protest of September 2000 is another example of a very brief community which congregated around a particular issue in order to achieve a specific goal.

*"There are many stories you hear about when a neighbourhood is challenged. The latent community tendency becomes an active tendency. It hasn't actually died, it's just gone to sleep because there isn't a challenge to bring it into being. Provide a challenge and it comes about."*

David Varney

The fact that these communities, being issue-based, are inherently temporary is not an obstacle to the loyalty they provoke or, in some cases, the success they achieve.

#### **Summary**

- Community is not as dead as some claim, with a sizable proportion of people claiming to feel some sense of community where they live.
- However, many of the factors which comprised community spirit in the past – local industries, a sense of location, shared life experiences, interpersonal trust – have declined in such a way as to slowly erode these communities.
- In place of geographic communities, people are more likely to form communities of interest today.
- As increased affluence and independence dismantle communities of necessity, people are inclined to make communities of choice.
- These communities of interest and choice are also less likely to be permanent affairs, as personal tastes and ambitions change with time and fashion.



## 4. The Responsibility Gap

### **The Shape of the Gap**

The rise of individualism and the changing nature of communities are the fundamental reasons behind the responsibility gap today.

A society which is shaped by individualism and time-famine is naturally less inclined to spend valuable time on things that, whilst being ‘worthy’, don’t quite seem to have a justifiable ‘return’ on them. Similarly, a society which is shaped by ‘communities of interest’ is naturally less willing to spend time on causes or issues which fall outside this frame. More often than not there is no ill will in the responsibility gap. Instead, the gap – when vulnerable sections of society are not receiving adequate care – is simply left by the natural shape of life today.

Money is not enough. Vulnerable people need not just money but time and energy and, above all, commitment.

*“I think it’s important to give money, it’s important to give time; but the most important thing is you’ve got to give is commitment. Really, it’s useful but people who volunteer for a few days and then drop out, it doesn’t really give you a lot of value. You need people who are going to commit themselves long term to being volunteers.”*

Professor Bob Holman

### **Recognising the Gap**

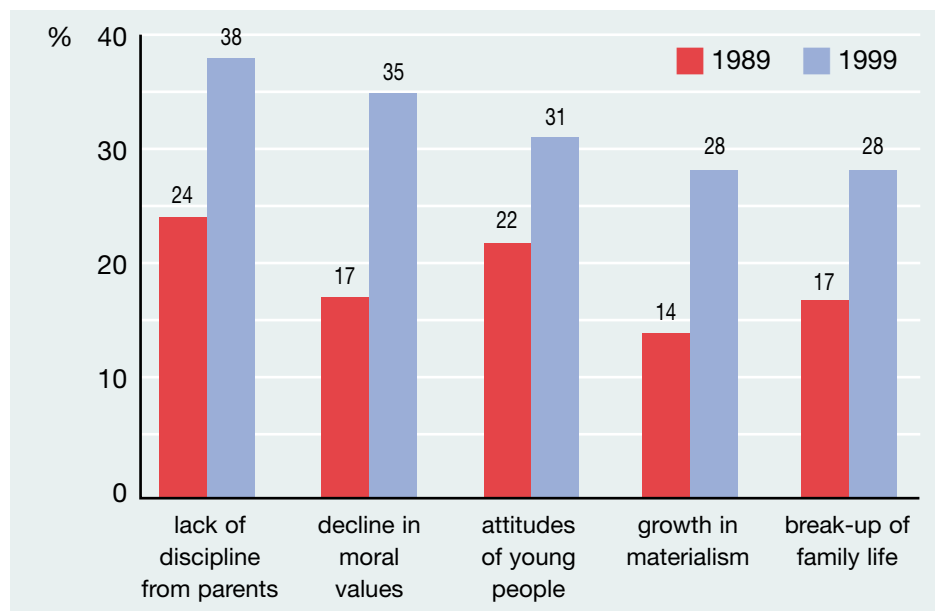
*“I understand that the lowest group supporting the NHS is the 18s to 27s because they’ve lost their sense of mutuality if you like. As a nation, I think, as we lose the generations that can remember the war, we’re losing a tremendous sense of working together.”*

Elisabeth Hoodless

The responsibility gap is illustrated by the pervading sense that we are less caring as a nation.

When MORI asked people in 1999 how they thought life in Britain had changed over the past ten years 63% of people said that they thought people were less caring now, compared with 26% who said people were the same, and 11% more caring. These results compare unfavourably to those of 1989, when the same question was asked: respondents answered 60% less caring, 24% the same and 16% more caring.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 10: Why do you think people are less caring?

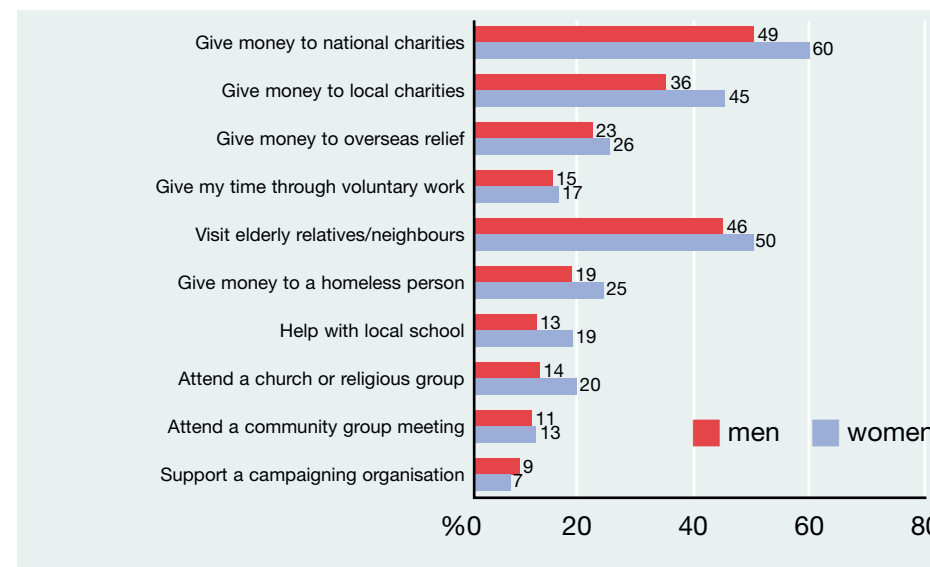


Source: MORI – Caring Society Survey 1989-1999

When asked how they thought life in Britain might change over the next ten years:

- 43% said they thought people would be the same;
- 41% said they would be less caring;
- 16% said they would be more caring.

Figure 11: Which of the following do you do on a regular basis?



Source: Social Responsibility Omnibus Study, The Henley Centre/The Salvation Army, Fieldwork undertaken 3-7 October 2003

This widespread perceived sense of a lack of care and responsibility in society affects a wide range of people in numerous different ways but there are several sections of the population who are particularly vulnerable: the elderly, children, the disabled, substance misusers and the carers themselves.

### Care for the Elderly

*“There’s no question about the fact that services for older people are underfunded. We’ve seen a decline in many of the traditional home help services in this country, purely because of funding, and basically older people have been left to pay for services, either directly provided by the local authority, by private companies or by themselves.”*

Stephen Burke

One sector of the population which suffers more than any other from the responsibility gap is the elderly.

There are both demographic and social reasons for this.

- As the Baby Boomer generation ages, so does society as a whole. Britain has a growing proportion of its population in old age.
- As medical science improves, Britain is becoming an older society in that more of its inhabitants are living into their 80s and 90s.
- With the fragmentation of the traditional family unit over recent decades, a lower proportion of families remain intact in such a way as to be able to support elderly relatives when needed.
- With the trend towards hypermobility and the steady increase in housing transactions over recent decades, fewer people live as near to their elderly relatives today as they did 30 years ago, making responsibility for them much harder.
- With the transformation of communities from geography and necessity to interest and choice, there are more mono-generational communities and fewer intergenerational ones, so that elderly people in ill-health are often cut off from those able to help them.

*“When our middle daughter was born in 1977, the health visitor was talking about the population pyramid. The elderly were the top and the wide part was the babies being*

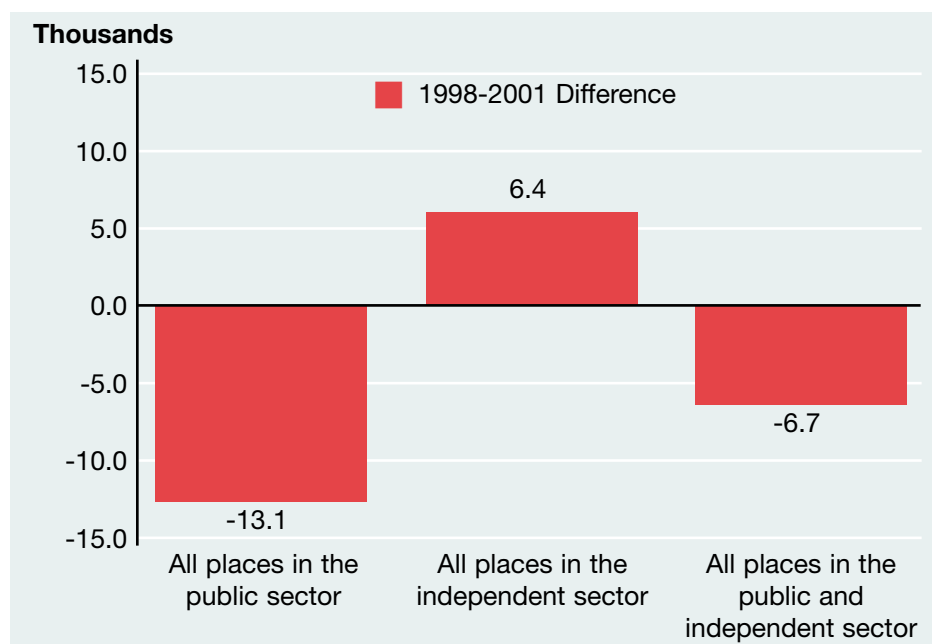
*born. She said that this had completely tipped and this was in the mid-seventies. She said we know now that there’s going to be a huge problem in the future but nobody’s doing anything about it. That was identified all those years ago and still it’s a huge problem.”*

Fran Saltmarsh

- 34% of people agree that “I’m worried there won’t be anyone to look after me when I’m old.”
- 21% agree with the statement “I don’t want to have to care for my relatives when they get old.”<sup>17</sup>

The combination of these factors often leaves responsibility for the elderly squarely on government shoulders. However, recent trends strongly suggest that that responsibility is not being sufficiently taken up. Statistics from the Department of Health show that the places available in care homes, both those in the public and the independent sectors, in England have actually fallen over recent years – by 6,700 between 1998 and 2001, for example – in spite of the increase in demand.

Figure 12: The number of places available in residential health care for the elderly in England has fallen over recent years



Source: Department of Health

This trend has continued over recent months.

- Laing & Buisson’s Annual Care of Elderly People Market Survey 2003 estimates that 13,400 care home places for the elderly and disabled were lost across Britain between January 2002 and April 2003.
- A total of 745 independent care homes were also closed in the same period.

These data are supported by plenty of local evidence:

“Latest statistics from the Registered Nursing Home Association reveal more than

1,000 spaces have been lost in independent care homes since January 2002, across Wales. At the same time, [Swansea] has 120 hospital beds being blocked by pensioners waiting to get a home.”

South Wales Evening Post – 4 August 2003

This situation is made worse by the increased emphasis on care at home, without the provision of adequate funding

### The Need for Childcare

“In many Western societies, child-rearing has become an increasingly privatised activity, with parents subject to growing expectations and cultural pressure to provide, but often separated from the sources of support on which they need to rely by the same processes of cultural and economic change. Thus working parents battle to find enough time to spend at home, competition for school and childcare places is increasingly intense, and children themselves are prone to a new series of risks arising from material affluence and new social pressures; obesity and emotional disorders are increasing, there is more intense pressure to succeed from early on in education, and so forth.”

Tom Bentley and David Halpern, 21st Century Citizenship, DEMOS

At the other end of the generational spectrum, there is a care gap for children.

Gender inequality in the time spent parenting and looking after children has been well documented in Britain. Over the last two decades, women have increasingly taken on economic responsibility for their families and households, dramatically increasing their presence in the formal workforce. At the same time, they have remained primarily responsible for caring for their children and for the maintenance of their homes.

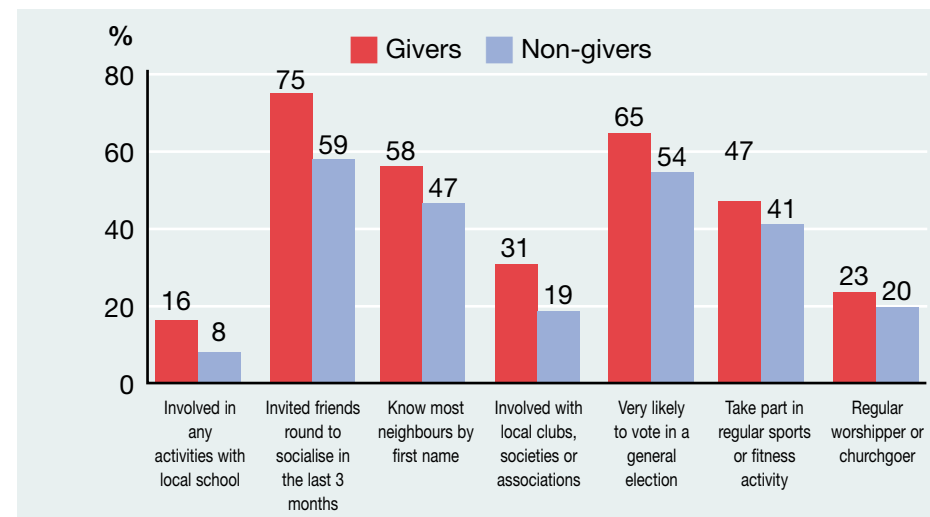
Research undertaken by The Henley Centre in the late 1990s suggested that the only activity inside the household that men spent more time on than women was ‘attending

to their appearance'! Some research is beginning to suggest that partners and fathers are beginning to take on more responsibility around parenting, but, with the startling inadequacy of formal childcare provision, an enormous gap has opened up inside households and communities. This is not, of course, about children being left unattended: it is about the terrible stress placed upon mothers and their children as they desperately attempt to juggle their economic and parental responsibilities. This then serves to perpetuate a vicious cycle of 'care deficit', with working mothers unable to find the energy or time to contribute to the wider familial and community obligations with which they have traditionally engaged. The loss of 'social capital' from the community has simply not been replaced from any other source.

The foundations of social capital are the connections and networks between individuals upon which a sense of community is based. Any growth in social capital must be achieved through an increase in the numbers of 'social stakeholders' within our society, ie those individuals who show engagement with a diverse range of community networks.

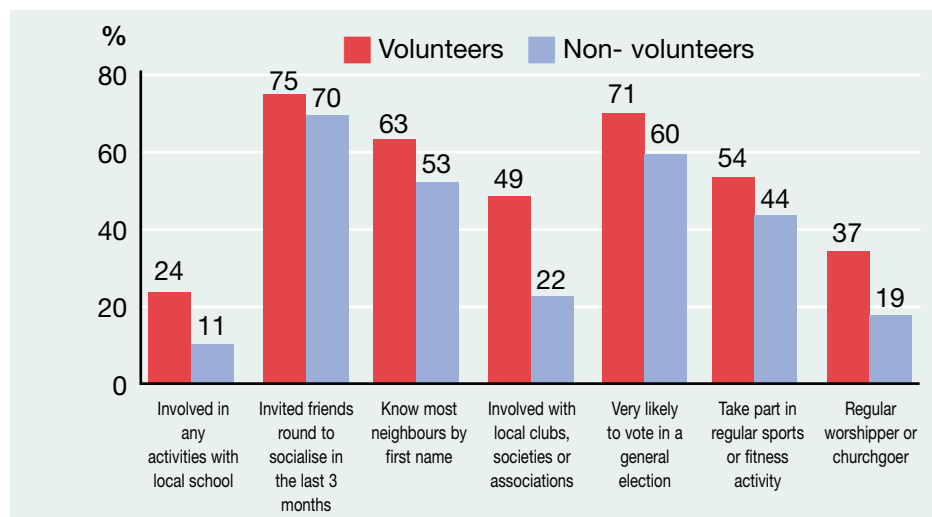
Research shows that those who are more socially engaged are more likely to contribute to their community in terms of monetary donations and participation in voluntary work (see figures 13 and 14).

Figure 13: Social engagement amongst those who give money



Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfp synergy, Sep 2003

Figure 14: Social engagement amongst those who volunteer



Source: Charity Awareness Monitor, nfp synergy, Sep 2003

In addition to declining social capital, the changing nature of family structure together with rising divorce rates means that many one-parent families struggle with the pressures of work and home combined.

- For women with a youngest child under the age of two, employment rates increased from 19% to nearly 56% between 1981 and 1998, and from 33% to 64% for women with a youngest child between three and five years of age.

A survey undertaken by MORI on behalf of Daycare Trust in 2001 suggested that:<sup>18</sup>

- The top three improvements that parents want are more affordable provision (43%), more places available (38%) and more employer support with childcare (38%).
- 60% of parents say the government should contribute more to the cost of childcare, 41% say employers should and only 16% say parents themselves should.

The problem is compounded when combined with the issue of income polarisation. Overall, there is one childcare place for every five children under the age of eight in the UK. But there are also 600,000 children under the age of three living in poverty and only 42,740 free or subsidised places for disadvantaged families. There is only one subsidised childcare place for every fourteen children under three living in poverty.

The number of children being looked after by local authorities (ie in care) also rose – by 16% – between 1996 and 2001, an increase which reflects not only a rise in the number of children being taken into care, but also an increase in the average duration of that care.

*“The childcare gap in Britain is beginning to close but we still have some way to go to catch up with the rest of Europe. More funding from government is crucial but employers also have a key role – helping parents with the cost of childcare and making work more family friendly.”*

Stephen Burke

### Care for Disabled People

A third category of vulnerable individuals who are in danger of falling through the responsibility gap is that of disabled people. Figures show that whilst there is a very significant demand in this area, the situation is not as critical as it is with care for the elderly or for children. Over the 1990s the number of people claiming disability allowance doubled, from 1.7 million in 1991 to 3.5 million in 2000.<sup>19</sup> In the same period, social expenditure on sickness, healthcare and disability increased from £58.1 billion in 1990-91 to £86.7 billion in 2000-01.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, charitable expenditure on physical disability stood at £371 million in 1999-2000, higher than that for children, cancer research or any other charitable sector. Care for disabled people is still being funded by government, but responsibility

for care provision is increasingly moving to the private and not-for-profit sectors. In fact, a survey carried out in January 2002 by the Liberal Democrats suggested that charities providing residential and nursing care for elderly and disabled people could be subsidising the state by as much as £185m a year.<sup>21</sup>

In some cases charities can end up subsidising the services of local authorities, such as Leonard Cheshire Homes, a charity which provides care for disabled people, which in 2001 had to spend £5m of its donated income to top up the costs of the care provision they provided to local authorities.<sup>22</sup>

A recent study into current care provision for people with disabilities argues that care services are not keeping up with changing needs. It concludes that there is a drastic shortage of care homes which means individuals frequently have to move away from their families to take up the only available places. The report also argues that there is insufficient support for people who were born prematurely, many with complex disabilities, once they reach adulthood. Unsuited housing, inflexible care and a lack of support for the need for independence of young disabled people are some of the areas which the study highlights as needing improvement.<sup>23</sup>

### Care for Substance Misuse

Illicit drug use amongst the general population has been increasing in recent years.

- The proportion of the population in England and Wales who have ever used illicit drugs increased from 28% in 1994 to 34% in 2000.
- For most, drug misuse remains an uncommon or short-lived activity: a third of 16- to 59-year-olds have tried illicit substances at some time in their lives; just 11% used a drug in the last year with just 6% having used a drug in the last month.<sup>24</sup>

- 2000: In England, Scotland and Wales, the number of people seeking treatment for their drug use increased by 7% compared to 1999 and by 45% compared to 1995.<sup>25</sup>

Research by Glasgow University provides evidence that substance misuse doesn't impact just on those individuals taking the drugs. They estimate that more than 50,000 children in Scotland live in homes where at least one parent is addicted to drugs and many of these children are being looked after by grandparents who receive no financial or professional support. Current care services can tend to focus on treating the substance misuse itself, rather than helping to support others bearing the brunt of that misuse.<sup>26</sup>

Increasingly, those caring for the homeless or those with substance abuse problems are discovering that these people are dual-diagnosis: that is, they have both mental health and substance misuse issues. At present provision for people with both conditions is extremely limited and not specialised enough. Whilst detox units and separate centres are available for people suffering with mental health issues, there are few services available which can handle multiple conditions in a specialised way.

For many people alcohol misuse is also a serious problem.

- 10,000 people receive help for alcohol misuse every day.<sup>27</sup>
- An estimated 1 in 25 British adults are dependent on alcohol.<sup>28</sup>
- During a 12 month period, the Department of Health identified that there were over 72,000 hospital admissions with a diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol, including more than 30,000 admissions for alcohol dependence syndrome.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>21</sup>The Guardian (30 January 2002)

<sup>22</sup>The Guardian (30 January 2002)

<sup>23</sup>Where do you think you're going?, John Grooms, 2003

<sup>24</sup>British Crime Survey, 1994-2000

<sup>25</sup>Department of Health

<sup>26</sup>The Sunday Times (24 March 02)

<sup>27</sup>First national census of UK alcohol treatment agencies, Alcohol Concern (1997)

<sup>28</sup>The prevalence of psychiatric morbidity among adults 16-64, living in private households, in Great Britain, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1994)

<sup>29</sup>Statistical Bulletin: Statistics on Alcohol: 1976 onwards (Bulletin 1999: 24)

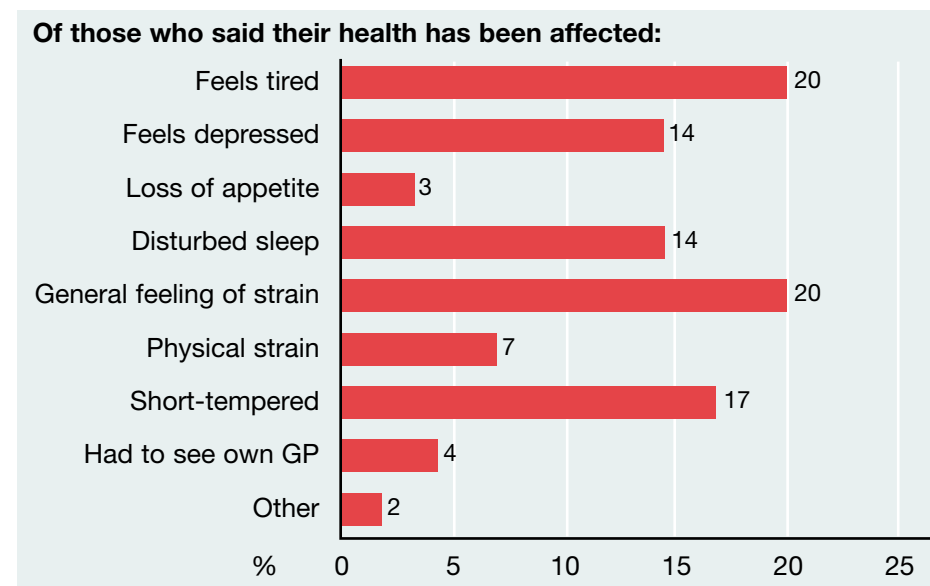
Alcohol Concern argue that there are several problems with the current support network for people who need help to deal with misuse of alcohol. There is a shortage of specialist detoxification and rehabilitation places and availability of alcohol treatment services varies significantly across the country, with many rural areas lacking in specialist services. The specific needs of some groups are not being sufficiently catered for, such as women with young children needing childcare and minority ethnic groups.<sup>30</sup>

There is also a need to develop better partnerships between specialist alcohol treatment services and primary care services, such as hospitals and GPs. Alcohol Concern believe that a more ‘joined-up’ approach will mean that the needs of problem drinkers and their families are likely to be identified and responded to much more quickly than at present.

### Care for the Carers

The care needs of informal carers themselves are also being overlooked. In 2000, 16% of people aged 16 or over were caring for a sick, disabled or elderly person, and one in five households contained a carer. Those people who do give up time and energy to care for others in this way often end up feeling exhausted or depressed, given the already significant pressures of everyday life (see figure 15).

Figure 15: 39% of informal carers said that their health has been affected



Source: ONS, General Household Survey, 2000-01

A recent report by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers found that good sources of information, help and support are very important for this group, particularly when they begin caring. The study found that:

- Although there have been considerable improvements in the last five years, around 2 in 10 carers who began caring in the last two years were still not directed to appropriate support services.
- A third of carers said they found the sources of advice and help difficult to use.<sup>31</sup>

Without adequate support and encouragement, those individuals who do shoulder so

much of the burden of informal caring are in danger of needing care themselves.

### Summary

- There is some recognition among the general public that a responsibility gap exists in society.
- Care for the elderly is the area which experiences the most acute version of the responsibility gap, with too few care home places to accommodate the growing number of people who need them.
- Childcare is also a serious point of need, with more men and women in the workplace making the demand for affordable childcare ever more intense.
- Care for the disabled isn't keeping up with changing needs.
- There is a need for greater consistency in the support networks available to people with substance and alcohol misuse problems. More specialist services need to be provided that can help people with dual-diagnosis problems, that is problems with both mental health and substance abuse.
- Support must also be provided for those who do the informal caring, as there is evidence that this group of people is suffering considerable stress.



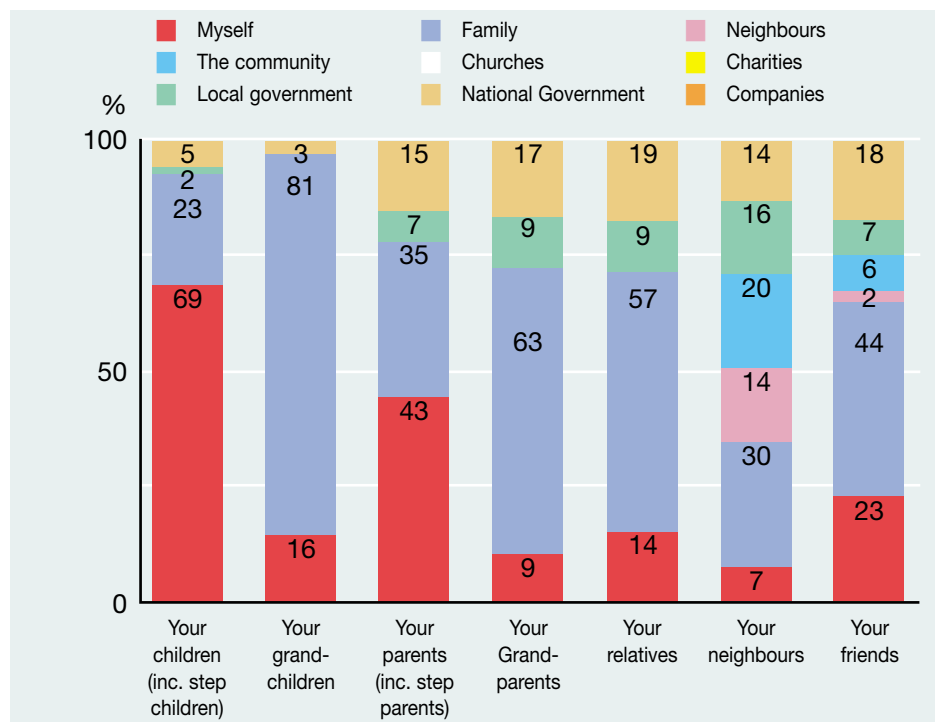
## 5: The Four Pillars of Care

Traditionally, in European countries great emphasis has been placed on the role of the state to care for the vulnerable. The creation of the Welfare State in the UK in the post-war period marked the biggest single shift of responsibility in the UK in the 20th century and was the most complete expression of this ideal the country had ever witnessed. This role of government was set against a backdrop of strong family and community responsibility.

As family and community have been renegotiated, we are witnessing a subtle tension over the appropriate balance of responsibilities between the four pillars of care in contemporary British society: the government, charities, individuals and the private sector.

In 2003, most people seem to view social responsibility and contribution as largely dichotomous – that is, those responsibilities which fall outside the (increasingly shrinking) sphere of family are overwhelmingly seen as the responsibility of government. Figure 16 shows that most people believe that either 'Myself' or 'Family' are MOST responsible for looking after/contributing assistance to their children, parents, grandparents and friends.

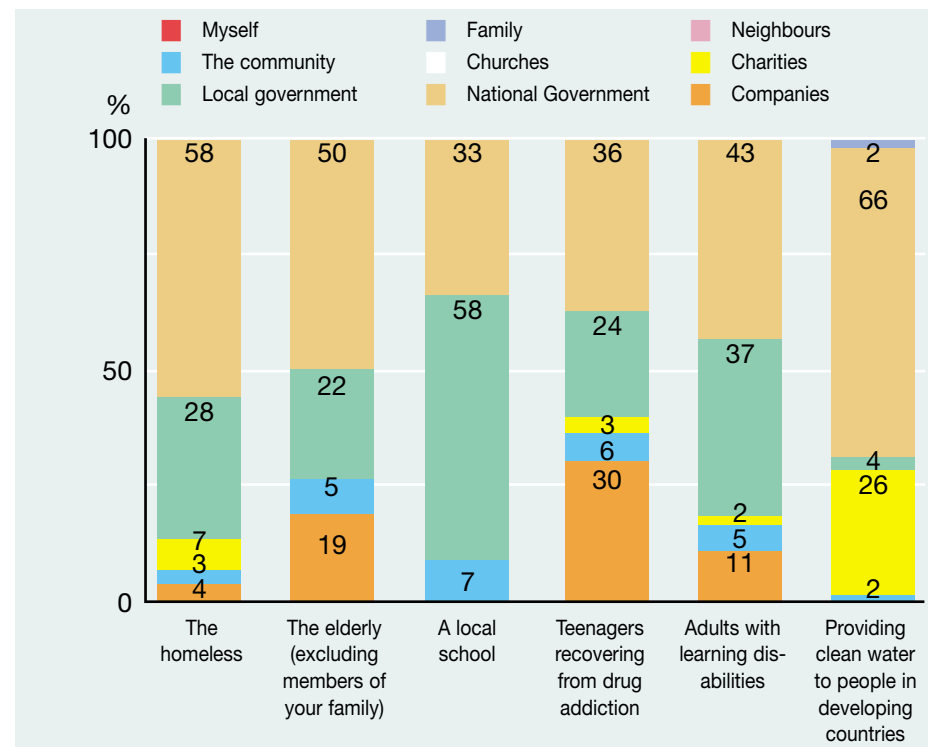
Figure 16: Who is MOST responsible for looking after/contributing assistance to...



Source: Social Responsibility Omnibus Study, The Henley Centre/The Salvation Army, Fieldwork undertaken 3-7 October 2003

However, they believe that either national or local government is responsible for looking after/contributing assistance to those outside of their immediate personal relationships (see figure 17).

Figure 17: Who is MOST responsible for looking after/contributing assistance to...



Source: Social Responsibility Omnibus Study, The Henley Centre/The Salvation Army, Fieldwork undertaken 3-7 October 2003

**Government**

As already mentioned, most people tend now to believe that responsibility for those in need outside their own family lies primarily with the government. We both believe that it is the function of the state to provide for those in need in our society, yet we are also unsettled by it:

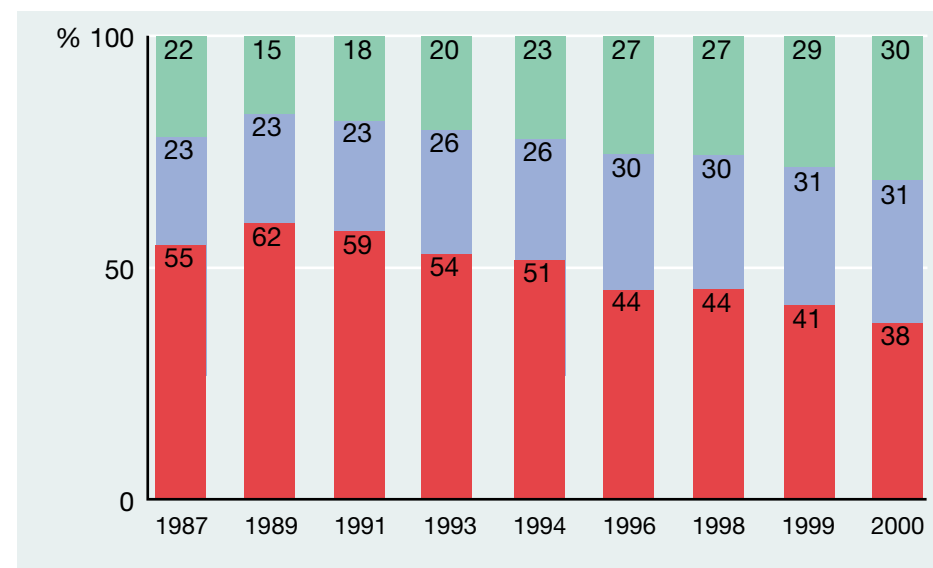
- 37% of people agree with the statement “ government is currently having to fund many of the basic social services that should be provided by the family.”<sup>32</sup>

*“I personally feel that there’s a lot of things we don’t have any right to. You have to earn everything and I don’t just mean in monetary terms. A lot of rights are earned and I think there is a general feeling nowadays that the government should be giving us this: “It’s not our responsibility.””*

Fran Saltmarsh

When the British Social Attitudes survey asked people in 2000 whether they agreed that “The government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor”, 38% agreed, 30% disagreed and 31% neither agreed nor disagreed. These figures actually show a steady reversal from just that position over the last 11 years.

Figure 18: Over the 1990s fewer people thought the government should spend money on the poor



Source: British Social Attitudes, 2000-01

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

This attitude is compounded by an effective embargo there has been on mentioning tax rises in both recent general elections. There is a political view that most people really don’t want to pay higher taxes for the public good:

*“What happens when Peter Hain tries to talk about a slight shift in the direction of a more progressive tax system? He is slapped down instantly because any discussion of even the possibility of this is considered to be politically unacceptable. It is almost as if the political agenda is dominated by the desire not to upset Daily Mail readers.”*

Polly Toynbee, interviewed by The Tomorrow Project

*"I think the role of government has changed significantly, although I think there's still an ambivalence about what it's for. A big impact is international terrorism. If people feel that the state can't protect them from external threats, then people do start to question what the state is for. The bottom line is one would expect the state to be able to protect its citizens, and if people think that new forms of international threat are uncontrollable by the state then they become more sceptical about what states are for."*

Stuart Etherington

Into the future, the government will remain the mainstay of provision and the ultimate umbrella of care in the UK. Increasingly, though, it needs to interact and energise joined-up provision by integrating more fully and supporting with the other three pillars of care.

### Charities

*"We do a lot of work that was previously done by the state. But it's our choice to do it. The state doesn't force not-for-profit agencies to do it. It offers the opportunity."*

Elisabeth Hoodless

Over the last decade there has been increasing recognition for the work of the charitable sector, both from government and society.

- 79% of the general public agree that "Charities are currently having to fund many of the basic social services that should be provided by the government."<sup>33</sup>

In general, the public show a much higher trust in charities than either government or the private sector. This generally positive public attitude towards charities can be seen in a number of ways.

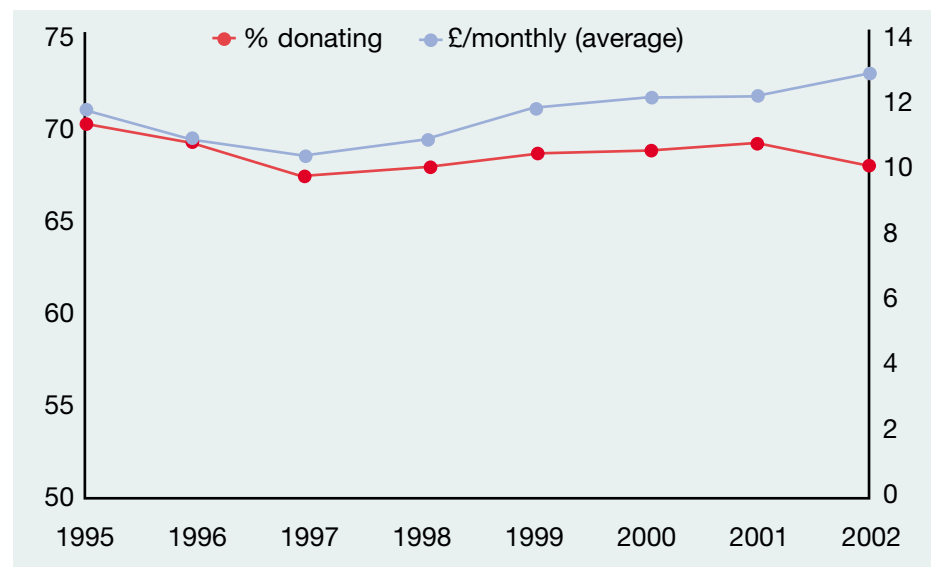
- In 2000, 92% of people claimed to have donated money to at least one charity in the last 12 months and 36% to have given to at least five charities;<sup>34</sup>

- 70% believe that "charity begins at home."

These laudable attitudes and self-convictions do not always translate into hard cash, however. According to ICM research conducted for the National Council of Voluntary Organisations in January 1998, the preceding five years have seen individual donations to charity fall by around 31% in real terms.

In more recent years, the number of people giving to charity has remained reasonably constant and the levels being donated have risen only slightly (figure 19).

Figure 19: Numbers donating have remained constant whilst monthly average donated has risen steadily from 1997



Source: CAF 2003, Inside Research

In spite of this small rise, the amounts that most charities receive as donations still remains comparatively small compared to the figure that the government or the private sector spends on social provision.

The problems that come from having a lack of funds have the potential to be addressed by forging closer relationships with government. As the main political parties have both expressed an eagerness to fund and work with them, charities have the opportunity not only to expand their operations but also to move them onto a more official footing.

However, with this opportunity comes a problem. In the same way as some interviewees thought that receiving private sector money might result in charities being tied to corporate apron strings, so charities which receive government support could lose a degree of their independence.

*“The question is, “Is that a right and proper role for the voluntary sector?” As a straight deliverer of services being contracted in the way that companies can be contracted to deliver services?”*

Stephen Burke

*“The issue is can the non-profit sector retain its unique added value in the context where it’s actually providing services under contract of the state? That’s a key issue.”*

Stuart Etherington

A similar tension exists around the issues of choice and quality. The sheer number of charities which exist offer people an enormous range of choice. The causes to which people can donate money or time are seemingly endless. With such a range, it would appear highly unlikely that anyone would fall into the responsibility gap.

This is not the reality. Firstly, not all charities are equal. It is a well-recognised fact that people are more willing to support some charities, in particular those related to illnesses from which relatives may have died, such as cancer, more than any other.

When asked which charities they would be willing to support year-round, a MORI poll confirmed that of the different types of medical research, cancer research is by some way the top priority for the British public, with four in five adults saying they would support it, as opposed to heart disease, the next highest priority at 50% and Aids research at 25%.<sup>35</sup> The result of this is that causes are left somewhat to the whim of public opinion.

The challenge facing many charities is the demand for increased professionalism. Increasingly there is the imperative for charities to carry out police checks on volunteers, commit resources to training schemes and market themselves in a professional way simply in order to survive.

This trend toward necessary professionalism is also inextricably linked with the rise of litigiousness in society. The exponential growth of negligence payouts made by the National Health Service in the late 1990s is well-known: from £11 million in 1996-97, to £107 in 1998-99, £386 million in 2000-01.<sup>36</sup>

### Individuals

The rise of individualism has had a varied effect on the role that individuals play with regards the responsibility gap. On the one hand, as the state’s function becomes less central, individuals feel more responsible. In the same way as a relatively high proportion consider themselves ethical consumers who are motivated by a corporation’s social and environmental record, younger people in particular are likely to feel they have responsibilities. However, as figure 20 shows, these responsibilities do not necessarily translate into helping a voluntary or charitable organisation.

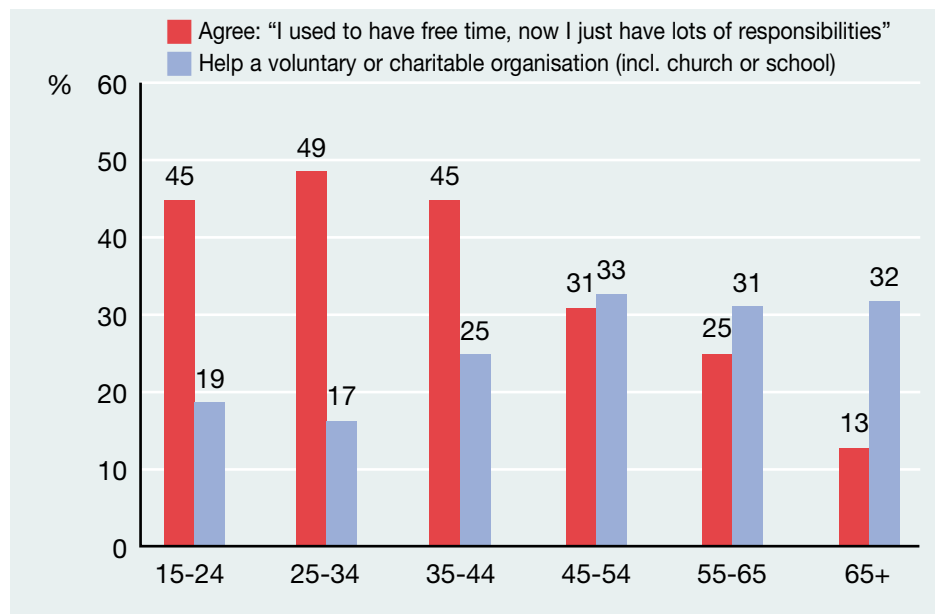
<sup>35</sup>MORI/ Institute of Cancer Research, 1999

<sup>36</sup>Handling clinical negligence claims in England, Feb 2002 – Controller & Auditor General

*“It’s a commitment thing. Whereas before people would quite happily give their time to something that they really cared about, it’s not there now. They want these things to happen, but they don’t want to give the commitment to being the organisation behind it. The make it happen bit.”*

Fran Saltmarsh

Figure 20: Younger people do less volunteering yet are more likely to feel they have responsibilities



Source: The Henley Centre, Planning for Consumer Change 2002, Leisure Tracking 1999

In 1981, 44% of people said they had volunteered formally (ie with a not-for-profit organisation) in the last 12 months and 62% informally (ie helping a relative or neighbour).

By 1991 these figures had changed to 51% and 76% respectively. Actual levels of volunteering have declined slightly in the 1990s.

Volunteering is under pressure from the variety of drivers outlined in previous chapters:

- The average number of hours spent at work has increased over the last 20 years.
- The average amount of time spent commuting has increased.
- The geographical spread of the transformed communities of interest and choice means that more time is spent travelling to shop.
- The higher proportion of one-parent families leaves many adults without any time outside work and family.
- A higher proportion of two-parent family households have both partners working, with the same effect of severely limiting spare time.

*“The great source of volunteering was middle-class women traditionally. Women who did not need to work. Now with changing patterns of economic behaviour, there are fewer women engaged in that area of activity.”*

Stuart Etherington

*“When you advertise for volunteers in the Evening Standard, people call up asking how much you get paid.”*

Justin Irwin

In addition, as we increasingly become global citizens so the perceived sphere of our responsibility widens. The news and other media frequently show examples of people in need all over the world, with the result that appeals for our time and money are no longer limited to those living in our local vicinity.

*“Amongst younger people particularly, I think the images that they see, and indeed the mass fund-raising events that go on, Comic Relief and Children in Need – that does*

*help people to think of themselves as global citizens and having some form of global responsibility and an understanding of the way in which what happens in the UK and Europe impacts on the world. There's probably a greater understanding of the inter-relationships than before."*

Stuart Etherington

- 51% of people agree that "We have just as much of a responsibility to help those in need in other countries as in our own" – this rises to 60% amongst those aged 16-24.<sup>37</sup>

For many, volunteering needs to have some tangible results. Giving that also offers something experiential in return wins support today. Examples of this would include such things as the planting of a commemorative tree, letters from a sponsored child or the promise of a big experience or perfect moment, such as would come with a sponsored cycle ride through Borneo. Whatever the return is, it sometimes needs to conform to the individual's self-image or be part of their wider 'self-actualisation' plan to be really motivating.

### **The Private Sector**

Recent years have seen a gradual increase in the role of the private sector in addressing the responsibility gap. This is Corporate Social Responsibility – a by-word of the 1990s that, at its best, has heralded the rise of the 'triple bottom line', ie. financial, environmental and social responsibility reporting.

*"I think corporate responsibility initiatives have become more popular in recent years because there has been a crisis of public trust and also changed expectations from employees and changed expectations from customers and citizens. We live in a society which is more demanding and more sceptical and the corporations have grown in wealth. Corporates are seen as more powerful and with power comes responsibility."*

David Varney

There are of course plenty of examples of private companies becoming involved in public projects – most supermarket shoppers, for instance, will be aware of the corporate interest in providing equipment for schools.

In Tesco's 'Computers for Schools' programme, each customer is given a Tesco 'Computers for Schools' voucher for every £10 spent in a single transaction at any Tesco store or petrol station. By means of this project, Tesco has contributed over £55 million of computers over recent years.

Sainsbury's, who have a similar scheme running, have provided over £24 million of school equipment, and the Walkers/ News International Free Books for Schools scheme has given out over 6 million books in three years, to a total value of £32.5 million, which have come from the one billion plus tokens that have been collected. According to one calculation, over the last ten years schools have received equipment worth over £100m as a result of various schemes.

Nor is corporate help limited to the provision of equipment. Nike has set up a series of Nike 'Zoneparcs', intended to tackle conflicts among pupils, in a series of London comprehensive schools. Aimed at tackling social exclusion and playground issues in socially deprived areas, the project involves redesigning playgrounds and organising them into different zones – the red zone for sports activities, the blue zone for action games, the yellow zone for chill-out activities, etc. 'Zoneparc Players' supervise the zones. The project, which is backed by the Department for Education and Skills, "is about using the positive aspect of our brand – the fact that it is very aspirational for kids – to encourage better behaviour," according to Nike's head of communications.

Whether with or without governmental backing, private sector involvement in the public arena is clearly a growing trend. The theory behind it is that corporations are able to contribute something into the non-profit-making sphere whilst giving their

brand a fair amount of good publicity. According to at least one survey, the principle of dual benefits – for the cause and for the brand – is one which has the majority share of public support.

- 80% of people agree with the statement “Companies have a responsibility to help support the society in which they operate”;<sup>38</sup>
- 50% agree that companies should “Give equal attention to society and environment as they give to financial performance”.<sup>39</sup>
- 60% feel that “It is acceptable for companies to derive some benefit from their social and community contributions”.
- 52% agree that “The best way for not-for-profit organizations to influence companies is to work closely in partnership with them”.

Research conducted by MORI and The Co-operative Bank into ethical consumerism published in 2000 reported that, in spite of what consumers say, principles usually comes third behind price and product in the purchase decision, giving rise to “the 30:3 syndrome”: the fact that a third of consumers profess to care about companies’ policies and record on social responsibility, but ethical products rarely achieve more than a 3% market share.<sup>40</sup>

A concern with corporate social responsibility is that it gives corporations too much power over which issues are ‘in’ and which are not. If a corporation is motivated substantially by improving their brand image or maximising their revenue, it is likely to be highly sensitive to a cause’s PR implications and very reluctant to engage with causes that are in any way controversial or ‘second-rank’. The result is that the security and success of various causes becomes highly susceptible to the public mood.

*“The danger of corporate giving is that private industry decides which charities should flourish and which should not. They set the agenda because they can give away so much money. They begin to set the agenda for what should happen in the voluntary sector. It might be much more acceptable for a large company to give money to Guide Dogs for the Blind but less acceptable to give money to asylum seekers because that is unpopular.”*

Professor Bob Holman

Corporate social responsibility initiatives also offer many benefits and can, indeed, act as a catalyst for innovation and change in terms of initiatives to fill the responsibility gap.

*“I think there’s a number of initiatives across the country where people are doing things in the community which are good for their business but also provide models for government for more effective ways of dealing with social problems. The issue then is how to bring up government’s appetite for innovation to a level that is hungry rather than complacent.”*

David Varney

<sup>38</sup>Social Responsibility Omnibus Study, The Henley Centre/The Salvation Army, Fieldwork undertaken 3-7 October 2003

<sup>39</sup>MORI, Corporate Social Responsibility, 2002

<sup>40</sup>MORI & The Co-operative Bank, *Who are the ethical consumers?*

**Summary**

- Government remains the 'umbrella' provider of care in the UK.
- The private sector is increasingly playing a role in this area, with certain projects such as the various 'equipment for schools' campaigns achieving national prominence.
- There are obstacles to corporate social responsibility however. Public attitude is uncertain and sometimes hostile towards it. Many people, including those working in the charities which often benefit from corporate involvement, are nervous about the private sector's new-found capacity to set the agenda.
- Individuals express a great deal of good will towards volunteering, but life pressures and a subtly changing attitude to what volunteering should offer them often prevent this good will from being translated into action.
- Charities are popular, omnipresent and invaluable but vulnerable to social changes, such as the need for growing professionalism, a litigious culture and ultimately the public whim. There is also a growing competitiveness for funding which charities of all types have to face.



## 6. Filling the Gap: Future Directions

There is no simple solution to the responsibility gap. The problems facing government, corporations, charities, individuals, and society as a whole necessarily differ from one another and tend not to lend themselves to obvious, single initiatives.

Nevertheless, the problems and issues discussed above do at least offer some guide to potential ways forward. The suggestions which follow are intended to act as provocations to further thought and action.

### Partnerships

'Joined-up government' has been a buzz phrase for much of the last five years, stressing the importance attached to different departments within government working together. Much the same might be said of the responsibility gap.

There is real potential for the charitable sector to work more closely with government and gain political support, provided it can also maintain its autonomy sufficiently in the process. Government funding of not-for-profit organisations is popular and likely to become an ever more important option, and many charities welcome this with the caveats already mentioned.

*"Get Connected is not currently funded by government. We would probably take government money, though, so long as the strings were acceptable."*

Justin Irwin

In much the same way, there is potential for government and charities increasingly to work in partnership with the private sector. Most people believe that companies have a social responsibility and, by and large, favour not-for-profit organisations working with corporations in order to shape their policies.

*"Someone asked me whether I was worried about business being more powerful in*

*some parts of the East End of London. I said, "Look, for 600 years these have been deprived communities. If you go back into the 12th century they were deprived then." I do think you could say that the public sector's had a pretty good go at trying to deal with the problem, and I don't think it's done much, because we're still talking about it being one of the most deprived places in the UK. Maybe it would be sensible to stand back and give some other people a chance. But I think business very rarely works alone. Business often works in partnership with local social entrepreneurs or local individuals or local charities."*

David Varney

This is an approach favoured by many charities, too.

*"When we want to fund something we talk with companies who we've been cultivating about what they're interested in doing this year. We try and find out how we can help them attain their objectives at the same time as we achieve ours."*

Elisabeth Hoodless

*"I think corporates are beginning to engage in CSR programmes in a more structured way. Programmes encouraging giving time and money and I guess in kind, taking a broadly more responsible attitude. That's got to be a good thing."*

Stuart Etherington

The task facing those who wish to see closer partnership between private and public sector is how to ensure sufficient customer interest so that corporate social responsibility doesn't wane with its potential PR value.

One avenue to be explored here is that of making social audits compulsory and as well-publicised as financial ones.

*"I actually think companies could do a lot more than they are doing at the moment. I think this should be properly audited and should be published as part of the company's annual report."*

Stephen Burke

### **Changing the Rationale for Volunteering**

The rationale behind people's volunteering has, as observed, changed and in doing so has become increasingly important.

*"They are looking for a career change, getting stuff on their CV, life experience, learning. We mention training opportunities in our adverts and we will get them external courses, like in Word or Excel, paid for by Get Connected."*

Justin Irwin

Volunteering needs to be made attractive to potential volunteers, whether through the offer of valuable work experience or once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. The precise nature of these opportunities will change according to the charity, but in an age of regular job change, gap years and long term 'travelling', the opportunity to expand one's experience by working in the voluntary sector for a period of time has real attractions. Charities also need to ensure that there is a wide breadth of opportunities available to volunteers in terms of the skills they can use in their voluntary work and the facilities and training provided.

### **Flexible Volunteering**

In much the same way as the rationale for volunteering needs to be closely examined, so does its flexibility. Not only does volunteering need to appear attractive, but it also needs to be manageable.

*"If all they want volunteers to do is boring routine envelope stuffing and you're never*

*satisfied and you never express your appreciation and you never offer them a change of role, then you must expect to be in difficulties. On the other hand if you give them a range of choices, at a range of times, a range of commitments, there is much to be gained all round. There needs to be much more flexibility in the range of engagements.”*

Elisabeth Hoodless

This is also the case regarding the sharing of responsibilities across groups of volunteers rather than devolving all responsibility to an individual, so that, if needed, one volunteer can pick up another's baton.

*“The advantage of a group is that they can share the responsibility, so when they want to go away, another member of the group will cover for them. Too often organisations insist on the same individual coming.”*

Elisabeth Hoodless

### **Increasing Investment of Time**

There needs to be an increasing emphasis from government on the value of time, which is the one true levelling currency we use today. Money is, of course, vitally important, but no one has more hours in the day than anyone else and, in retrospect, donations of time are in some ways the most generous. Stressing that time is the most powerful expression of commitment and encouraging employees and individuals to donate it, should be a priority.

This naturally leads to the idea of investing time. Although you can't earn time back, you can be given it back, and one way of doing this is through encouraging an awareness of 'community lifecycles'.

*“The idea of "Community Lifecycles" is important. That at certain points in their lives,*

*perhaps when they are younger, individuals contribute their time and efforts to community and then later they get paid back. But it's not just what you get back materially, but in terms of self esteem too.”*

Professor Bob Holman

'Community lifecycles' enable older people not just to benefit by receiving help but also to profit from the community that volunteering itself offers.

*“For older people, we have about 8,000 senior volunteers and they're at a stage in their life when their social circle is shrinking, so they work in groups rather than individually.”*

Elisabeth Hoodless

Alternatively, the 'community lifecycle' can be viewed the other way round with those people who are able to retire early using their new-found time to "give something back".

*“We're beginning to see an increased participation by people in their 50's, 60's, 70's in community life, and in a sense because of more earlier retirement, people have a bit more time on their hands to give something back rather than just simply being seen as recipients of services.”*

Stephen Burke

### **Models of Responsibility**

The rise of individualism has, as observed, had some positive effects, encouraging a sense of autonomy and fostering entrepreneurship. However, it has also resulted in an emphasis on rights which has often been to the exclusion of responsibility. This needs to change.

*“Our legal and governance arrangements have not found ways to embed and enshrine responsibilities to others with the same degree of force. Concepts of “duty” or “obligation” have often been either associated with conservatism, or based on more organic and informal sources of authority; the left has relied on the family, occupational communities and broader social solidarity to provide the reciprocity and concern for others needed to make individual rights work in practice.”*

Tom Bentley and David Halpern, 21st-Century Citizenship, DEMOS

Exactly how to foster this sense of responsibility, without dismantling some of the privileges of a liberal society, vexes many commentators. Current thinking increasingly recognises the role of naturally occurring groups or communities, where such a sense of responsibility already exists and is exercised through voluntary support networks. It is through these groups that a sense of responsibility might be introduced into mainstream society.

Another idea is that politicians and other major public figures lead by example and volunteer their time to certain causes, in much the same way as many celebrities and the Royal Family have done. This could become a highly symbolic and very effective way of modelling responsibility in the public arena.

### **Community Participation**

*“You know the average length of turnover of home carers from the public sector? 4.7 weeks. Now how much more would your neighbour appreciate you coming in than someone who may or may not turn up and anyway they’ll be gone in five weeks?”*

Elisabeth Hoodless

The transformation of community needs to be addressed if local, informal home help is going to be a serious option. So far, social services have managed to find many, often original ways of helping people in their homes.

*“400 Leeds people have been helped by Leeds Social Services and our health care partners to stay in their own homes over the last three years, when residential care might have been the only alternative. We have achieved this through new and highly original ways of helping people cope in their own homes. These include intensive home care, outreach work by occupational, speech and physiotherapists, intermediate care to help rehabilitate after a spell in hospital and more respite facilities to give carers a break.”*

Yorkshire Evening Post – 4 August 2003

This may be a successful solution but it would be all the more successful if it worked in tandem with the help networks which potentially exist in neighbourhoods across the country.

Transport and employment policies need to pay greater attention to the social costs of hypermobility and relocation and encourage a renewed sense of the real advantages of rootedness. The more people who know their neighbours well, the better are the relationships which will provide the initial, mutual, local support network for many needy people.

### **Specific Local Initiatives to Grow Social Capital**

There is huge potential for specific local initiatives which can act to stem the loss of social capital by encouraging participation in local communities. Such initiatives are likely to have a long-term effect on local neighbourliness as they will grow the number of social stakeholders in our community as well as saving money.

*“Do we ever invite the community to come and maintain our parks? There are lots of examples, notably in Reading, where not only do you save money on vandalism in the parks, you get better usage of the park and you get a much more powerful sense of community because from the park they move on to thinking about all the other kinds of things they could do.”*

Elisabeth Hoodless

### A More Radical Approach?

There could also be a role for the implementation of more fundamental initiatives to tackle the responsibility gap.

- **Voluntary Service** The introduction of citizenship classes in schools may well lead to a rekindled sense of shared community amongst young people. The government could build on this by introducing 'Voluntary Service', which would work in a similar way to work experience, with teenagers spending two weeks away from school working to benefit their community in some way.
- **Tax Incentives** The tax system could be used to incentivise more people to volunteer, similar to the way in which Give as You Earn has changed how people contribute money to charitable causes. An 'Earn as You Give' scheme could offer tax rebates to individuals who have undertaken a specific number of days of voluntary/community work in the previous month.
- **Community Bank Holiday** French people recently lost one of their bank holidays, the justification being that the additional value created within the French economy on that day will be used to improve the care of elderly people in their society. A similar approach could be used in Britain, or alternatively employers could be encouraged to give their employees an additional day's holiday on the condition that the day is spent on voluntary work.
- **Public Sector Social Responsibility** Given the large numbers of people employed by the various branches of the public sector, the government could take the lead in terms of social responsibility initiatives, thus encouraging more private companies to follow suit.
- **Community Resource Bartering** Nationwide initiatives could be set up to tap into the 'Community Lifecycles' idea and encourage people to share their tangible and intangible resources and make a greater contribution to others living in their local community. This might have the added benefit of enabling all members of the community to participate, including retired or unemployed people who may be 'cash poor', but rich in other resources such as time, information or energy.

Whatever the approach – organic or radical – the responsibility gap is set to widen unless individuals, government, charities and the private sector increasingly work in partnership to ensure that all the vulnerable groups in our society are protected and well cared for.

### Summary

- There is no 'silver bullet' for the responsibility gap, though there are plenty of ideas with the potential to address the various problems discussed.
- On a macro scale, fostering partnerships between the 'big players' – government, corporations and charities – can only be a good thing, provided that sufficient checks and balances are in place.
- Volunteering needs to keep up with the opinions and lifestyle of potential volunteers, by perpetually reassessing its offer and making its terms and conditions as flexible as possible.
- The real, tangible advantages of rootedness must be rediscovered, in such a way that enables community lifecycles to begin to address the caring gaps in local communities where they appear.
- Alternative currencies are highly effective ways of subverting money, time, energy, and loyalty from the mainstream and channelling it into specific, needy areas.
- Responsibility needs to be modelled, partly through the development of a credible intellectual framework which provides a much needed balance to our 'rights culture' and partly through high-profile examples.
- Specific local initiatives to grow social capital need to be encouraged and the learning from them disseminated as widely as possible.
- More radical approaches, such as voluntary service, tax incentives, a community bank holiday, increased public sector social responsibility and community resource bartering, could act as a real boost to rekindle a sense of shared, mutual responsibility in our community.



## The Salvation Army's Response to the Issues Raised in the Responsibility Gap

The Salvation Army is grateful to the Henley Centre for producing *The Responsibility Gap* and crystallising a problem that will resonate with many: a gap is opening up in society and people are in danger of falling into it.

Each situation is different and it is not The Salvation Army's wish or intention to try to apportion blame for the gap. However, it cannot take a neutral stance on the gap's existence.

### **Community**

The Salvation Army believes that it can encourage the building of communities for the 21st century. It wants its 1,000 churches, community centres and social work centres in the UK to be places where people can become part of a community. Whether it is a vibrant Christian worship service, a luncheon club, a parent-and-toddler group or a centre for homeless people, it wants to offer as many opportunities as possible for people to engage with other people.

As part of the Christian Church The Salvation Army is called to speak out on behalf of the poor and marginalised: those who are falling into the responsibility gap. Indeed, enshrined in its vision statement is the commitment to 'fight for social justice'.

The Salvation Army was formed nearly 140 years ago to minister, in body and spirit, to those in the greatest need. Every Salvation Army officer promises 'for Christ's sake, to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable and befriend the friendless'. *The Responsibility Gap* will help to identify those in the greatest need in the 21st century: the time-consuming, the unfashionable and the unrewarding who all need the holistic care that The Salvation Army in particular can offer.

The Salvation Army has a substantial pool of physical resources with around 1,000 buildings situated in key local communities and it commits to encouraging greater community use of its facilities. All new buildings will be designed for multi-purpose use so that they can offer the greatest opportunity for community activities.

### Volunteers

In responding to this report The Salvation Army is called to face some tough challenges in the way it delivers its services. Research contained in this report suggests that many people feel that charities are carrying out work that should be funded by the Government. Indeed, The Salvation Army itself receives substantial Government funding for many of its programmes, many of which could not be run from charitable reserves alone. However, if The Salvation Army is to expand the capacity of its service provision it will have to seek new and innovative ways of funding and staffing. The Salvation Army commits itself to reviewing the funding of programmes to ensure that as much resource as possible is allocated to filling the gaps emerging in UK society while ensuring transparency in the expenditure of resources.

Due to a desire to offer quality, high-level services there has been a rapid professionalisation of the third sector. However, The Salvation Army believes there is also a need to identify, recruit and enthuse a new generation of volunteers. In order to encourage more people to volunteer, The Salvation Army will implement an overhaul of its procedures for engaging with volunteers. If this can be achieved multiple benefits may accrue to each party in the volunteering relationship:

- The capacity of The Salvation Army, and its ability to deliver services to those who need them, will increase;
- As well as the volunteer feeling a sense of satisfaction at having helped someone, there is also the possibility of the volunteer gaining new skills and training;
- Involvement in community activity will increase, improving the sense of community cohesion.

Many people across the UK already volunteer their time to The Salvation Army in a variety of ways. Current opportunities range from the short term, such as spending time helping prepare and serve Christmas lunches, to young people spending a year in a structured programme of community and church work both in the UK and overseas.

This report has highlighted the different reasons why people volunteer and The Salvation Army needs to be responsive to that. The Salvation Army will look at providing different opportunities, at local and national level, to suit different people: long- and short-term opportunities; high- and low-skilled jobs; opportunities that appeal to all ages, with a particular focus on young adults and the recently retired.

The Salvation Army is not unaware of the often-complex regulations surrounding volunteering and it welcomes the commitment to protect children and the vulnerable. It is committed to building a successful volunteering model through sharing dialogue with others in the sector, particularly those with a strong record of successful volunteer management. The Salvation Army also recognises that it needs to make volunteering as easy and attractive as possible and a group has been formed which will produce recommendations for increasing volunteering opportunities. The Salvation Army commits itself to drawing up a national list of volunteering opportunities and publicising it. It will also commit to equipping its volunteers with the right training and support services.

### Filling the Gap

#### *Strategic planning*

This report highlights the many ways in which vulnerable people are in danger of falling through the gaps in society. The Salvation Army, with its diverse range of services, believes it is well placed to offer a holistic package of care to people in need. Moreover, The Salvation Army is increasingly coming to value its diversity as

one of its greatest strengths. In the light of this The Salvation Army is currently undergoing a wide-ranging strategic planning process which will require every regional and national headquarters department to produce plans aimed at resourcing diverse local needs. It recognises that different approaches are required in different communities and The Salvation Army is committed to identifying the gaps rather than trying to implement a 'one-size-fits-all' policy. The Salvation Army will work with communities to help them identify and address local needs.

#### *National Monitoring and Evaluation Service*

One of the tools used for identifying areas of greatest need is The Salvation Army's groundbreaking National Monitoring and Evaluation Service (NMES). NMES is a powerful, client-centred, information management system that utilises web-based technology to provide specific assessment and programme resource tools to our residential and community centres. This system, which is underpinned by a national biomedical laboratory in East London, enables an individually tailored programme of support to be delivered to anyone utilising our services while also providing key data on service use for strategic planning. In the coming years NMES will provide The Salvation Army with invaluable data on problems such as homelessness and addiction.

#### *Homelessness*

The Salvation Army is committed to helping people through the various stages of life and providing support where necessary. Programmes aim to be empowering, giving people the opportunity to take responsibility for their own life, as far as they are able, and for the lives of their family. For many years The Salvation Army's work with the homeless has involved more than offering a bed for the night; it has also included life skills training and resettlement. All Salvation Army Homeless Service users are assessed for literacy and numeracy ability and, if needed, help is offered either on site or with a nearby provider.

#### *Caring for children*

This report highlights issues around childcare and The Salvation Army is committed to supporting parents, particularly those who work to support their children and struggle to find affordable childcare. More than 60 Salvation Army centres in the UK run registerable activities for children, including after-school clubs and nurseries. In addition to these there are more than 400 parent-and-toddler groups organised at Salvation Army churches and centres across the UK. The Salvation Army has an ongoing commitment to children's work and will be opening new nurseries in the near future, including one in Leeds in the Spring of 2004. The Salvation Army will also look at innovative ways of utilising the skills of its church members and other volunteers in schemes such as personal mentoring or parenting classes.

While The Salvation Army welcomes the Government's commitment to increasing the availability of childcare, particularly in deprived communities, it is concerned at the lack of subsidised childcare for children under three years of age whose parents are unemployed. The Salvation Army believes that where childcare would offer benefits to the child the Government should fund places for children whose parents are unemployed as well as those who are working and able to claim tax credits. The Salvation Army itself currently funds places in many of its childcare schemes for such children but does not have sufficient resources to make this more widespread.

#### *Elderly care*

An area of great concern for current and future generations is the provision of elderly care. Research conducted for *The Responsibility Gap* report shows that 21% of the population agree with the statement 'I don't want to have to care for my relatives when they get old'. The Salvation Army finds this statistic very worrying and is concerned that this could lead to a large gap in society. Currently The Salvation Army provides a wide range of support for older people, from luncheon clubs and day care centres to 18 elderly care homes and a project in Angus, North Scotland, which offers

support to people living in their own homes. The Salvation Army has set up a commission to look at the future provision of care for the elderly and it will bring forward recommendations as soon as possible. This commission will look at the full range of care options to ensure the best outcome for older people.

#### *Complexity of need*

The National Monitoring and Evaluation Service is still in its infancy but some of the preliminary findings are emphasising the complexity of people's problems. Of the 1510 people admitted for treatment to The Salvation Army's Addiction Services in 2003 62% had significant mental health problems and more than 65% were unemployed. The situation in the Homelessness Services section of The Salvation Army is equally complex. 61% of clients had an alcohol dependency and 54% had problems with Class A drugs. Moreover, data shows that 27% of the homelessness services clients have significant mental health problems.

#### **Partnerships**

Like all charitable organisations The Salvation Army works to tight budgets and the public is very generous in its support of its work. Despite having some of the lowest administration costs in the sector, the ever-increasing demand for The Salvation Army's services means that it must commit to accessing new sources of funding for its programmes. It acknowledges the success of the partnerships already made with the public sector and looks to develop them, always trying to maintain a balance between funding opportunities and ownership of programmes.

*The Responsibility Gap* has highlighted the role of the private sector in tackling social problems and while it would be unwise to underestimate the possible difficulties inherent in these forms of partnership it would be equally foolish to ignore them. The Salvation Army believes there is real scope for development in the way that private companies relate to the communities in which they are based.

The Salvation Army is also aware that working life can be very stressful and it commits itself to seeking innovative ways of supporting people at work. Salvation Army officers already provide chaplaincy services in a multiplicity of settings and the possibility of offering this service to companies will be explored. In recent years The Salvation Army has built successful relationships with elements of the private sector and is committed to looking at further ways of providing attractive opportunities for partnership. As part of its volunteer strategy The Salvation Army will look at innovative ways of encouraging employees of private companies to donate their time to Salvation Army activities.

The Salvation Army has also entered into successful and rewarding partnerships with other charities and voluntary sector agencies. There is often a desire to 'reinvent the wheel' when starting new programmes, but with charities called upon to do more with limited resources a pooling of ideas and talent is absolutely essential. The Salvation Army commits to fostering new and constructive relationships with other voluntary groups working in similar areas.

#### **Future Challenges**

The UK is a very different place now to when The Salvation Army was formed in the mid-19th century in the East End of London, although the country still faces serious social problems. It is only by constantly reassessing the context within which it works that The Salvation Army can continue to meet practical, emotional and spiritual needs. *The Responsibility Gap* offers The Salvation Army, and others, a multitude of challenges. The task now is to address these challenges in a relevant and dynamic way – to help fill the responsibility gap before it grows any wider.



## The Work of The Salvation Army

### **Belief in Action**

The Salvation Army is the largest and most diverse provider of social welfare in the UK after the Government. Its mission is to create a community for those who have none, to fight for social justice where people are oppressed and to move forward in faith as an integral part of the Christian Church.

### **Summary of the work of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom and Ireland.**

Over 800 churches and community centres across the UK offering a wide range of services. These include, over 12,000 lunch club members, over 29,000 parents and toddlers; over 14,000 young people; over 18,000 Over-60 club members.

50 Homelessness centres and a further 6 addiction units; 3 outreach teams; 2 drop-in centres and a night shelter.

Chaplaincy is offered to: prisoners and prison staff; staff and visitors in shopping centres and airports; agricultural employees and families; police, ambulance and fire personnel.

18 elderly care centres and 4 elderly day care centres

4 children and 7 family centres.

3 special need centres and 1 probation programme.

Family Tracing Service uniting 3,240 people in 2002, an 85% success rate.

The largest clothing recycling operation in Europe.

18 'Red Shield' centres and 11 mobile units providing support and refreshment to military personnel and their families.

Projects in the developing world: Africa, Asia, South America, Middle East supported by finance and personnel from the UK.

### Children and young people

Children's and youth work is a core part of The Salvation Army's social and community programme. Some specialist services are run from adolescent centres which help young men make the transition from residential care or homelessness to living in the community to family centres which help prevent family breakdown. The Salvation Army also runs over 400 youth groups and provides opportunities for young people to volunteer in projects overseas.

### Homeless people

The Salvation Army is one of the leading agencies in the UK working with homeless people and believes in breaking the cycle of homelessness by getting people into their own accommodation permanently. Its 50 centres, providing around 3,000 beds per night, have case workers and resettlement workers who operate alongside people to find the best way of helping achieve independent living in their own homes. In addition, six specialist centres provide residential accommodation and rehabilitation for people with substance misuse problems, both drugs and alcohol, as part of a National Addiction Service.

Homelessness work is supported by local activity run from Salvation Army centres – soup runs and drop-in facilities and nearly 60 centres involved in distributing blankets and sleeping bags to homeless people. Through this integrated chain of care The Salvation Army can build ongoing relationships, helping people make progress towards a more stable life.

### Elderly

The Salvation Army offers a wide range of services to care for older people.

Programmes include:

- 18 residential homes
- 4 day care centres

- Sheltered flats where people can live independently but with a live-in warden
- Home care services to help older people manage own their own homes
- More than 400 Over 60s clubs and 300 lunch clubs where people who live on their own can come regularly to a Salvation Army centre to meet with other people.

### Chaplaincy

The Salvation Army believes that every person has intrinsic value and this drives our commitment to chaplaincy. Offering to 'be with' a person in prison, hospital, airport or a place of employment is a great privilege for Salvation Army personnel involved in this work. Salvation Army chaplains offer help wherever it is needed and seek to respect, listen and encourage.

Salvation Army chaplains visit the majority of prisons in the UK either as members of staff or as volunteers accredited by the Home Office as visiting ministers. Salvation Army centres also try to meet the needs of many prisoners who have difficulties finding employment and accommodation on their release and a special group provides practical and spiritual support to families of prisoners.

### International

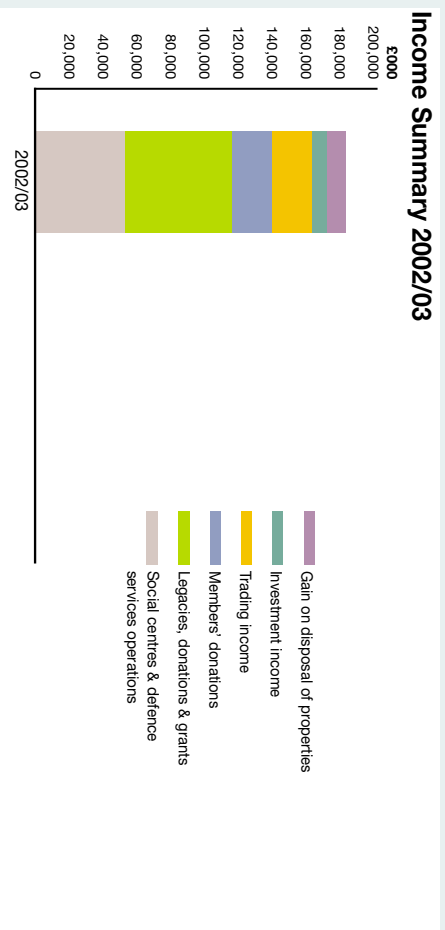
The Salvation Army operates in 109 countries, using 175 languages.

Over a million patients are cared for annually in Salvation Army hospitals and clinics throughout the world. Salvation Army childcare – ranging from children's homes and schools to play centres and youth groups – reaches over 800,000 children every year. The Salvation Army also operates 60 probation homes to help rehabilitate and accommodate over 1,200 young offenders.

The Salvation Army also responds to international emergencies and disasters and at the start of 2004 was working with the United Nations and other agencies to deliver humanitarian aid to the people of Iraq during and after the recent war.

## Funding

In 2002/03 The Salvation Army in the UK had a total income of £185m. The main sources of funding are public donations, government grants, legacies, members' donations and trading income.



The Salvation Army was formed in 1865 by William Booth, a Methodist minister who believed that fighting poverty and social justice were an essential part of Christianity. From its humble origins in the East End of London, it is now an international movement with a membership of over 1,600,000 adults and children as well as employing more than 125,000 people worldwide. 138 years on, The Salvation Army is still putting belief into action, constantly adapting to the needs of a changing world.