

Institution: Keele University
Unit of Assessment: C22 Social Work and Social Policy
Title of case study: Healthy ageing and age-friendly cities: Reducing the social exclusion of older people
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research undertaken at Keele has made the social exclusion of older people visible to opinion-leaders and policy makers, helping to shape their perceptions of ageing. These changes in attitude have contributed to transforming provision for older people and promoting inter-generational interaction within local communities through both policy and practice, in both national and local government. The research has had a direct impact on national government policies, and has also coalesced into national campaigns to improve older people's lives. Regional impacts initially focussed on making Manchester an 'age-friendly city' which has subsequently been used as a model for other local councils across the country.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Research into older people's social exclusion was initially carried out at Keele from 2000-2003 in a project awarded £182,000 in funding under the ESRC's Growing Older Programme. This was the first study of its kind to focus exclusively on exploring the experiences of older people living in some of England's most disadvantaged urban communities. In terms of its strong place focus, the study drew on the experience of the Keele social gerontology group in an earlier ESRC-funded study that explored aspects of older people's family relationships (Phillipson <i>et al.</i>, 2001). The mixed-methods study, involving a survey of 600 people aged 60 and over, in-depth interviews with 130 older people, and a series of group discussions, was undertaken in parts of London, Liverpool and Manchester. The unique nature of the data, in particular the often powerful accounts of many older people's daily experiences of poverty, social isolation, loneliness, crime, and urban change, provided new and striking insights into the lives of some of the UK's most disadvantaged citizens (Scharf <i>et al.</i>, 2002; Scharf <i>et al.</i>, 2005a; Scharf <i>et al.</i>, 2005b). Further, qualitative, work was then commissioned to explore similar issues in rural communities (Scharf & Bartlam, 2006), and to develop material deprivation indicators better suited to disadvantaged older people (Scharf <i>et al.</i>, 2006).</p> <p>The focus on ageing in disadvantaged communities continued to attract highly competitive funding. In partnership with Manchester City Council, a multi-disciplinary team from Keele (led by Michael Murray with Sian Maslin-Prothero, Roger Beech and Thomas Scharf as Co-Investigators) was awarded £334,281 under the cross-council New Dynamics of Ageing programme to conduct a major study from 2008-2011 that has sought to identify ways of better engaging older people in their local communities. Conducted in four socially deprived neighbourhoods in Manchester, the CALL-ME (Community Action in Later Life – Manchester Engagement) study adopted a participatory action research design to assess the degree to which contrasting initiatives succeeded in encouraging older people's community participation. It found that active participation by older people in designing, planning and implementing community arts projects, exercise programmes, and physical environment enhancement schemes (through gardening projects) improved social and physical well-being of both older people and their communities (Buffel <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Beech & Murray, 2013)</p> <p>The work on inclusion and exclusion in later life, and that on other themes in social gerontology, has been supported at Keele by an institutional commitment to develop ageing as a research priority. This has included establishing the University's work on Active Ageing as a context for research and education in relation to ageing populations.</p> <p>Researchers: Professor Thomas Scharf; Professor Chris Phillipson (at Keele until 2012); Bernadette Bartlam – Research Fellow/Lecturer; Maureen Ray – Research Assistant, Lecturer, and Senior Lecturer; Professor Michael Murray; Professor Sian Maslin-Prothero (Honorary Professor); Tine Buffel – Research Fellow at Keele until 2012; and Roger Beech – Reader.</p>

3. References to the research

Beech, R. & Murray, M. (2013) Social engagement and healthy ageing in disadvantaged communities, *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults* 14, 1, pp. 12-24. (Journal Article; peer reviewed). DOI 10.1108/14717791311311076

Buffel, T., Phillipson, C. & Scharf, T. (2012) Ageing in urban environments: developing 'age-friendly' cities, *Critical Social Policy* 32, 4, pp. 597-617. (Journal Article; peer reviewed) DOI: 10.1177/0261018311430457

Scharf, T. & Bartlam B. (2006) *Rural Disadvantage: Quality of life and disadvantage amongst older people – a pilot study*. (London: Commission for Rural Communities). (Government Report).

Scharf, T., Bartlam, B., Hislop, J., Bernard, M., Dunning, A. & Sim, J. (2006) *Necessities of Life: Older People's Experiences of Poverty*. (London: Help the Aged). (Report; subject to review).

Scharf, T., Phillipson, C. & Smith, A.E. (2005a) Social exclusion of older people in deprived urban communities of England, *European Journal of Ageing* 2, 2, pp. 76-87. (Journal Article; peer reviewed). DOI: 10.1007/s10433-005-0024-7.

Scharf, T., Phillipson, C. & Smith, A.E. (2005b) *Multiple Exclusion and Quality of Life amongst Excluded Older People in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods* (London, Stationery Office: Social Exclusion Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister). (Government Report).

Scharf, T., Phillipson, C., Smith, A.E. & Kingston, P. (2002) *Growing Older in Socially Deprived Areas: Social Exclusion in Later Life* (London, Help the Aged). (Report; subject to review).

Grants:

Jan 2008 – Dec 2010 £334,281, UK Research Councils, New Dynamics of Ageing programme, 'Promoting independence and social engagement among older people in disadvantaged communities' (M. Murray [PI], R. Beech, S. Maslin-Prothero & T. Scharf).

Feb 2000 – Jan 2003 £182,000, Economic and Social Research Council, Growing Older programme, 'Older people in deprived neighbourhoods: social exclusion and quality of life in old age' (T. Scharf [PI], C. Phillipson & P. Kingston).

4. Details of the impact

Supported by ESRC's Growing Older Programme 2000-2002, Scharf's research continues to have an enduring impact on public policy/practice. It has been one of two highly influential pieces of research (out of over 100 pieces commissioned 2000-2009) that those working in the public sector report referring to frequently to help them understand the social exclusion challenges that older people face, and has been widely used to shape policy making.

Initial findings from the *Growing Older* research published by Help the Aged (Scharf *et al.*, 2002) attracted media interest, eliciting a formal response from the then Minister for Social Exclusion, who described the research as 'invaluable'. *The Guardian's* Assistant Editor suggested that ministers/policymakers pay particular attention to the study's findings [source 1]. Then followed an invitation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to review the impact of government policies on older people vulnerable to social exclusion (Phillipson & Scharf, 2004). This led the Social Exclusion Unit to identify 'excluded older people' as a key target group for service innovation, with Scharf *et al.* (2005) informing the resultant key government strategy *A Sure Start to Later Life* [source 2]. This advocated a new approach to service provision for older people and led to the development of a range of two-year (until mid-2008) *Link-age Plus* projects providing a 'one-stop-shop' for advice and services in a bid to combat isolation and promote well-being. Ultimately it led to a range of recommendations to local authorities about how they could best link older people to services [source 3]. The Local Government Association report *All our Tomorrows* [source 4] cites

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evidence from Scharf on the number of pensions not being drawn. This report is still shaping Local Government strategy around ageing, for example it is drawn on by Lancashire's ageing strategy to 2025 [source 5].

Arising from the *Growing Older* research, related work was commissioned by the Commission for Rural Communities (Scharf & Bartlam, 2006) and by Help the Aged (Scharf *et al.*, 2006), which the Department for Work and Pensions drew on to develop a set of material deprivation indicators better suited to the situation of older people. These were tested in an Office of National Statistics Omnibus Survey and have since been added (in 2008 – continuing in 2013) [source 6] to the annual Family Resources Surveys (FRS). The FRS is a major survey; its results are used to shape government policy around income and benefits; the material deprivation work was taken up in a report by Stephen Mackay for DWP [source 7].

Most recently, in 2012, Scharf's *Growing Older* work (with Victor) has been used in the Government White paper *Caring for our Future: reforming care and support* [source 8] to identify the high levels of loneliness felt by older people and that this is an important consideration for providing for future needs. In this context, Scharf's research formed the very basis for the launch of the *Campaign to End Loneliness* in 2011. This launch was preceded by his providing the originators of the Campaign with relevant material to ensure that the Campaign was truly evidence-based. Founded by four partner NGOs, the central aims of the Campaign are to identify the causes of loneliness in later life, identify what works in reducing this loneliness and campaign for this action, and to create a vision for the future where loneliness is not an issue. The Campaign states that Scharf's work has been distinctive and a factor in the success of its work. They cite their key success to date as being the Care Services Minister adopting the issue of loneliness, commissioning funded work on a toolkit for Health and Wellbeing Boards, and putting loneliness as a measurement area into the adult social care outcomes framework. Information from the Campaign is also used in much media coverage of the issue, with the profile of loneliness being significantly raised in the public press since the Campaign's launch [for example, source 9].

Alongside work relating to national policy making, the social exclusion research has influenced the development of local ageing policies, particularly since 2004 through collaboration with Manchester City Council (MCC). The ESRC study was used by MCC to develop the city's first ageing strategy (MCC, 2004) and, with further involvement by Scharf, has since contributed to the shaping of an innovative and forward-looking strategy aimed at making Manchester a 'great place to grow older' (MCC, 2009). During this period Scharf was a member of the city's Ageing Strategy Expert Advisory Panel, along with other notable research and practice leaders. Their developing relationship has resulted in numerous joint initiatives between Keele and MCC, including several of the projects that have been implemented as a result of the ageing strategy. The CALL-ME study involved developing a series of initiatives across four disadvantaged communities in Manchester. For example, a gardening project in Moss Side was implemented with Scharf playing an active role in engaging local residents across the generations in the creation and development of the garden, the existence of which has also provided a sense of pride to Moss Side – an inner city area previously viewed negatively by others (Community Garden Member, Sept 2009) and with high levels of social deprivation. As indicated by the research findings of the project, the participatory nature of the research had an impact on the research participants, leading to their improved physical and social well-being.

These small-scale projects with direct impacts on the lives of those in Manchester were brought together at an event at Manchester Town Hall in 2009, at which Scharf presented research findings to those involved in many of the projects – academics, practitioners, and older people (over 200 people in total). This event provided a forum for discussion and point of connection across the city, strengthening each of the projects. This was just one of many such events that Scharf has contributed to in this capacity. The age-friendly cities strategy has been adopted by local councils across the UK (for example in Newcastle, Glasgow and Cardiff), with Manchester City Council being an active member of the age-friendly cities network, which is affiliated to the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities, that facilitates the sharing of best practice [source 10]. Manchester was also involved in the first global conference on age-

friendly cities in Dublin in 2011, with Scharf also contributing on the theme of older adult loneliness, and so has contributed more broadly to age-friendly developments in the international arena.

Drawing on the increasingly close relationship with Manchester City Council, Keele subsequently piloted educational programmes aimed at engaging older people in the study of ageing and, latterly, developing the skills base of staff involved in delivering services to older people. The positive pilot project review, founded on a series of focus groups with key stakeholders [source 11], has led to the formalisation of an on-going certified Ageing Studies Programme. The programme in Manchester has now run four times and involved over 100 participants from the public, independent and voluntary sector in interdisciplinary CPD. Funding was achieved via the Department for Work and Pensions which also meant that the programme was rolled out and delivered to the Wirral (35 participants), York (25 participants), Stoke (30 participants) and, again, to Manchester. Feedback from participants has been very positive, with many saying the course challenged their beliefs and ways of working with older people and, for example, has led them to seek out and pay greater attention to the opinions of the older people they work with [source 12].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Source 1: Dean, M. (2004) *Growing Older in the 21st Century*. Economic and Social Research Council: Swindon. [www.esrc.ac.uk/ images/Growing_older_21st_century_tcm8-13535.pdf](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/Growing_older_21st_century_tcm8-13535.pdf)

Source 2: Social Exclusion Unit (2006) *A Sure Start to Later Life*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

Source 3: Department for Work and Pensions (2013) *Core Principles of the Link-Age Plus Approach*

Source 4: Singleton, N. and Painter, A. (2003) *All Our Tomorrows: Inverting the triangle of care*. Local Government Association/Association of Directors of Social Services.

Source 5: Lancashire Local Authority *Strategy for An Ageing Population Handbook*

Source 6: Bartlett, A., Frew, C., and Gilroy, J. (2013) *Understanding Material Deprivation Among Older People*. DWP

Source 7: McKay, S. (2010) 'Using the new family resources survey question block to measure material deprivation among pensioners'. DWP

Source 8: HM Government (2012) *Caring for our Future: Reforming Care and Support*. The Stationary Office: London

Source 9: *The Guardian* January 22nd 2013 'Britain's Loneliness Epidemic'.
<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/jan/22/the-loneliness-epidemic>

Source 10: Beth Johnson Foundation, *UK Age-friendly cities network*, Webpages:
<http://www.bjf.org.uk/age-friendly/news/uk-age-friendly-cities-network>

Source 11: Valuing Older People/Keele University (2011) *Manchester Ageing Studies Certificate: Pilot project review*. Available from:
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/17902/ageing_studies_pilot_report

Source 12: Course evaluation forms available on request.

Corroboration from:

Age Concern Oxfordshire City and County.
 Manchester City Council.