



Community
Foundation

Tyne & Wear's Vital Issues 2017

Strong communities

Strong communities

1.1 Overview

The strength of a community is not an easy thing to measure. The strong communities section of this report focuses on the relationships people have with one another, the extent to which local people play an active role in society and the voluntary associations that help provide for a good quality of life. We will therefore use crime, electoral turnout, volunteering and the state of civil society organisations as the main focus of our analysis. First however, we will look at what is known about how local residents view their quality of life.

1.2 Self-perception

The Measuring National Wellbeing survey was released in 2015ⁱ. It measures satisfaction with using the following questions:

- “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”
- “Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”
- “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”
- “Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?”

Table 36: The 4 wellbeing measures – scale of 0 to 10

	England	Tyne & Wear
Satisfaction	7.6	7.4
Worthwhile	7.8	7.7
Happiness	7.5	7.2
Anxiety	2.9	3.2

The scores are worse for each measure in Tyne & Wear.

1.3 Crime

According to Dr E Wedlock, author of *Crime and Cohesive Communities*, “*local areas with a high sense of community, political trust and sense of belonging show significantly lower levels of all reported crime*”ⁱⁱ, making this a good starting point for looking at this issue.

An overall crime score can be calculated by looking at the average rates of a set of crimes per population. The score for Tyne & Wear is given below:

Table 37 – crime scores, 2016ⁱⁱⁱ

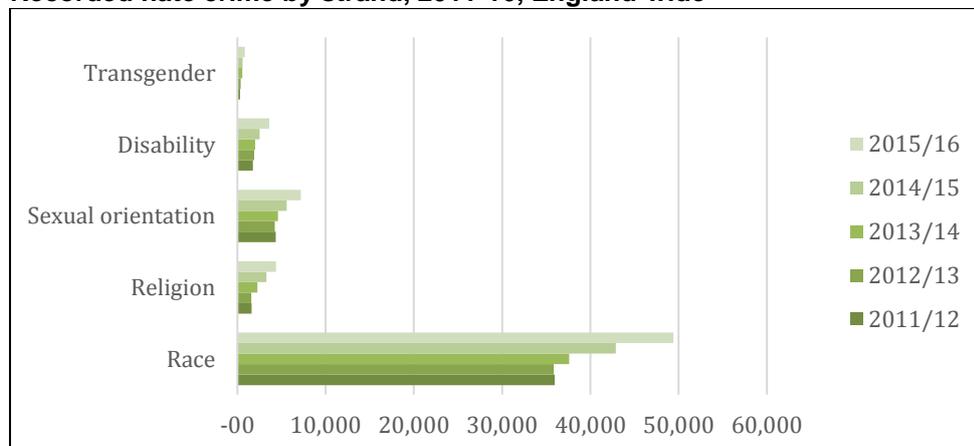
Area Name	Crime: score (2016)
Tyne & Wear	119
England & Wales	100

The score suggests that crime in Tyne & Wear is higher than elsewhere in England and Wales. Following Dr Wedlock’s logic, this would suggest that there is a lower degree of cohesion than elsewhere.

Rising levels of recorded hate crime suggest an erosion of community cohesion, and this has unfortunately become increasingly common throughout the UK. Figures are not available at a regional or local level, but the chart below gives the rates of growth

across England since 2011. All strands of hate crime have expanded, with the biggest proportional increases in hate crimes against religious groups, and targeting people with disabilities and transgender people.

Recorded hate crime by strand, 2011-16, England-wide^{iv}



There is no reason to believe that people living in Tyne & Wear are more or less likely to perpetrate or suffer from a hate crime than anyone else.

1.4 Civic engagement and volunteering

Voter turn-out is a good indicator of civic engagement, and so of the strength of a local community. Here is the data for the last General Election:

Table 38– Voter turnout in General Election 2015

	Turnout %
UK	66.1
All Tyne & Wear constituencies	63.1
Blaydon	66.4
Gateshead	59.4
Houghton & Sunderland South	56.3
Jarrow	60.4
Newcastle Centre	57.5
Newcastle East	52.9
Newcastle North	66.7
South Shields	57.8
Sunderland Centre	57.3
Tynemouth	69.0
Tyneside North	66.1
Washington & Sunderland West	54.6

Again, this does not give much cause for celebration, and it is notable that there is a wide degree of variance between areas ranging from the high figure for Tynemouth to the low one for Newcastle East.

Unfortunately there are no figures for volunteering below regional level. As part of the national Taking Part survey^v participants were asked whether they had engaged in any voluntary work in the previous year. In 2014-15, only 15.6% of NE respondents said they had, growing to 16.4% in 2015-16. (UK figures were 24.4% and 24.4%, respectively.) This suggests that levels of volunteering do not indicate community strength in Tyne & Wear.

1.5 Charity and community organisations

The recent Third Sector Trends Study^{vi} reported on the strength and sustainability of organisations across the NE region.

The picture across the sub-region is a varied one. A primary indicator of the strength of civil society is the strength of its finances, and the table below shows how organisations assess their current position

Table 39 – Financial wellbeing of third sector organisations, 2016

	Tyne & Wear	North East
Very strong	12.6	10.4
Strong	17.1	18.2
Stable	38.9	35.8
Weak	24.8	21.2
Mixed	9.8	11.3

What is the capacity of the sector across Tyne & Wear to access a wider pool of funding? As table 40 indicates there is a strong focus on local funding from grant making trusts. The public sector fits less prominently in the mix, but there is higher interest in national charitable funding although success rates could be improved. The report also suggests groups are having some success accessing funding from private sector partnerships.

Table 40– Applications made to grant-making bodies and success rates

	Local grant-making foundations		Local public sector organisations		National grant-maker	
	Tyne & Wear	NE	Tyne & Wear	NE	Tyne & Wear	NE
In the last two years, we made an application and were successful	58.3	54.6	41.6	42.6	41	36.7
In the last two years, we made an application but unsuccessfully	8.5	7.7	9	7.4	17.2	14.7
In the last two years, we did not make an application	33.2	37.7	49.4	50	41.8	49.6
Percentage success rate	87%	88%	82%	85%	70%	71%

A word of caution is needed. Within this overall picture for Tyne & Wear, there are likely to be strong variations. The strength of voluntary organisations based in the regional capital Newcastle may mask serious weaknesses elsewhere. Voluntary organisations in the poorest areas are certainly being hardest hit by the loss of funding for local regeneration.

Potential roles for philanthropy

There is evidence that the long-term key to increasing cohesion may lie in addressing deprivation and reducing inequality. However, there are also specific actions that can be taken with philanthropic support to support local communities:

- Organising community events and activities to improve local relationships and reduce misunderstanding, distrust and hate crime.
- Support those at risk of becoming the victims of hate crime.
- Encouraging an understanding of, and interest in, local and national democracy.
- Encouraging volunteering and engagement with local third sector organisations.
- Providing focused support to organisations to develop their organisational capacity and ability to access funding and develop new income streams.
- Developing new mechanisms to provide support for essential community and voluntary organisations, particularly in poorer areas.

ⁱ **ONS (2015)** *Measuring National Well-being: Personal Well-being in the UK, 2014 to 2015* at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-09-23>

ⁱⁱ **Wedlock, E (2015)** *Crime and Cohesive Communities*. Home Office (2006), accessed at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.510.6857&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ **Grant Thornton Analytics (2017)** *Crime*, created and downloaded at: gtplaceanalytics.org

^{iv} **Home Office (2016)** *Police recorded crime*, ONS, downloaded from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2015-to-2016> 4/7/16 15:26

^v See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/taking-part-survey>

^{vi} **Chapman, T and Hunter, J (2017)** *Third Sector Trends in the North of England – a summary of key findings*, IPPR North.