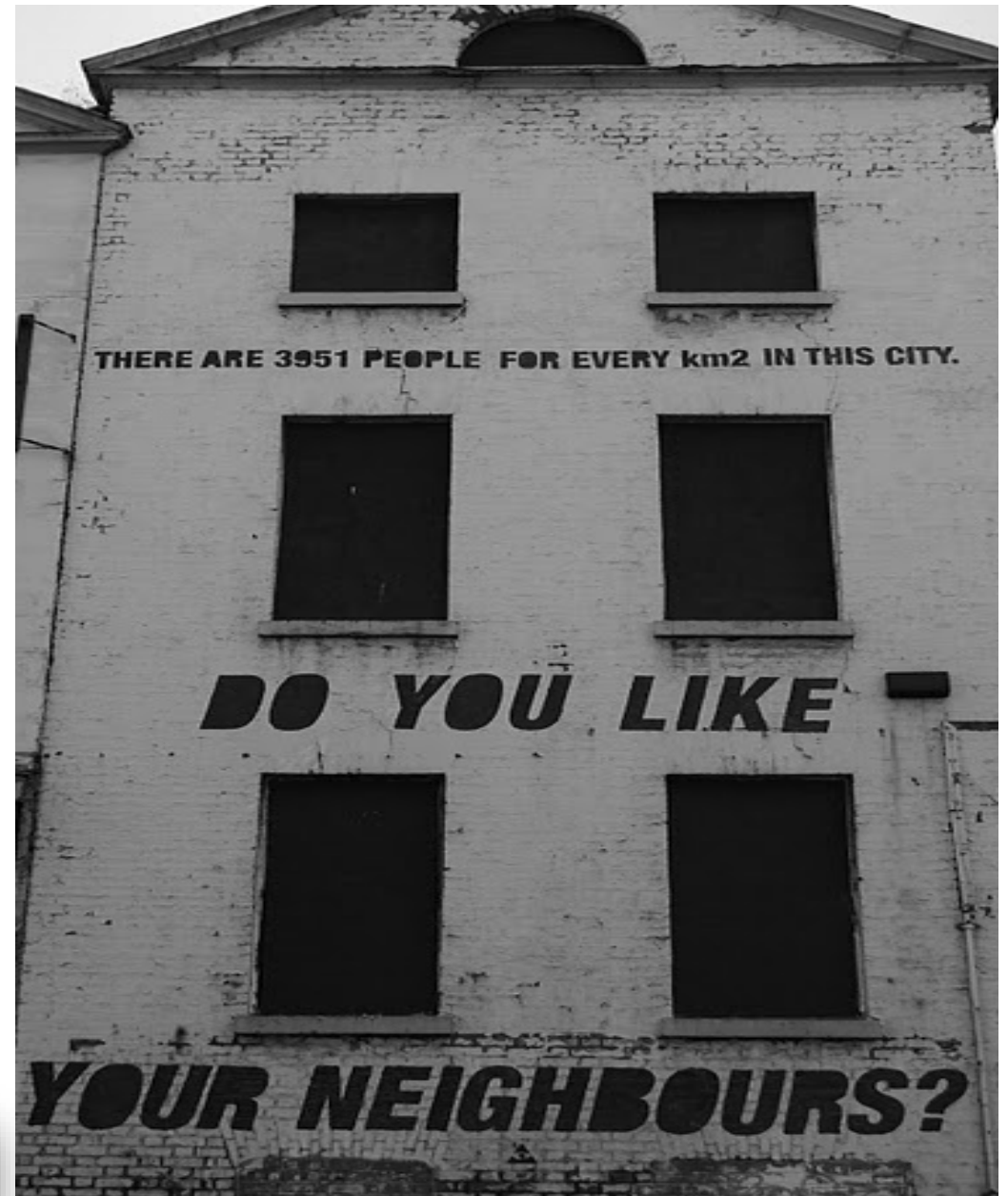


Places, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Rhiannon Corcoran,
Professor of Psychology and
Public Mental Health,
University of Liverpool



Are Cities Good for us?



Benjamin Disraeli

“In great cities men are brought together by the desire of gain. They are not in a state of co-operation, but of isolation, as to the making of fortunes; and for all the rest they are careless of neighbours. Christianity teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves; modern society acknowledges no neighbour.”

The Urbanicity Effect – Mental Health

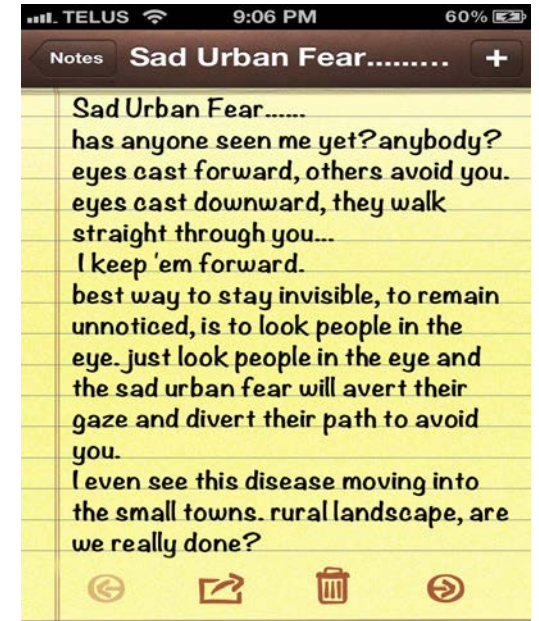
- Faris & Dunham (1939) “Mental disorders in urban areas”: SZ was much more common in deprived inner city Chicago than its affluent suburbs.
- Wirth (1938): depression higher in urban compared to rural settings
- **Pedersen & Mortensen (2001): a dose-response relationship between time spent in urban environments in childhood and risk.**
- Sundquist et al. (2004): Sweden - 4.4 million adults. Those living in the most densely populated areas had 68–77% more risk of developing psychosis and 12 –20% higher risk of developing depression than the reference group.
- Peen, Schoevers, Beeckman and Dekker (2010) meta-analysis of urban-rural differences of mood and anxiety disorder.
- Vassos et al. (2012): meta-analysis of urbanicity in schizophrenia.
- **Evans (2003) and Ellaway et al., (2009) the relationship is associated with perceived quality of place.**

The Urbanicity Effect – Wellbeing

North West Mental Wellbeing Survey 2009 (& 2012):

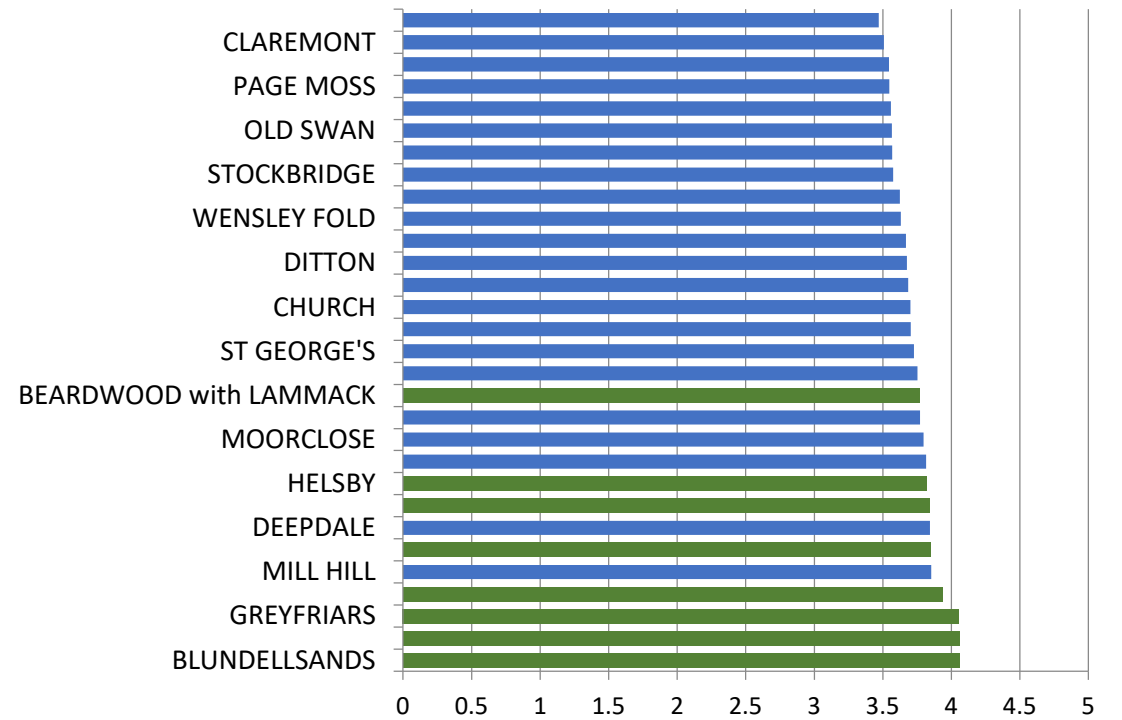
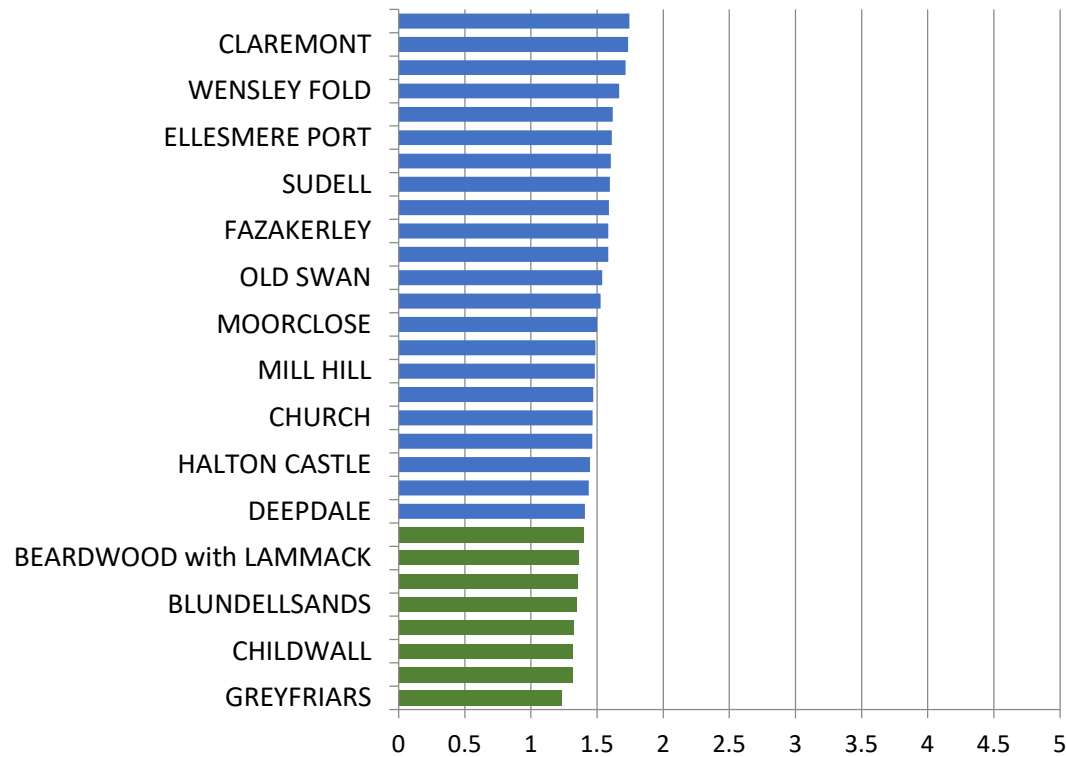
Compared to the other North West areas, people in Liverpool had lower general levels of MH&W across the lifespan. In particular Liverpool residents felt:

- Higher levels of anxiety and depression.
- Decreased sense of belonging to their community.
- Less participation in organizations.
- unable to ask others for help.
- unsafe outside their home.
- relative isolation



Mount Fear- Abigail Reynolds

North West Coast Household Health Survey: Depression and wellbeing by ward deprivation



Bond to Place

**“85% OF PEOPLE POLLED STATED THAT
THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE HAS A
DIRECT IMPACT UPON THEIR LIVES AND
THE WAY THEY FEEL.”**

SEEN & HEARD, DEMOS, NOVEMBER 2007

“We exist inside the built environment – it’s like asking a tortoise if his shell is important.”

Lived Experience

Places of Paradoxical Pride & Shame – an Ambivalent Attachment to Place?

- **Hayden (2013):** “...place comes to define people and .. they, in turn, define their community as in need of defence and not easily understandable to strangers.”
- **Stafford et al. (2008):** Strong attachment to a deprived neighbourhood increases risk of depression.

“...because I feel ashamed being associated with part of that area when deep down people would come to the area and say ‘oh my god look, looks rough round here’. But the people are lovely. I’m not ashamed to be associated... I’m ashamed of people that have got no shame in themselves and they just throw litter. Maybe I’ve used the wrong word of saying I feel ashamed because I’m not ashamed of coming from where I’ve come from because I’ve come from there all me life, and it’s better for me because I’m not a posh nob or I don’t try and be what I’m not.”

(from Corcoran and Mansfield (2018))

Corcoran and Mansfield, 2018

Life History Theory

The qualities of an environment directly determine our life strategies and our wellbeing, emphasising the importance of place design and stewardship.

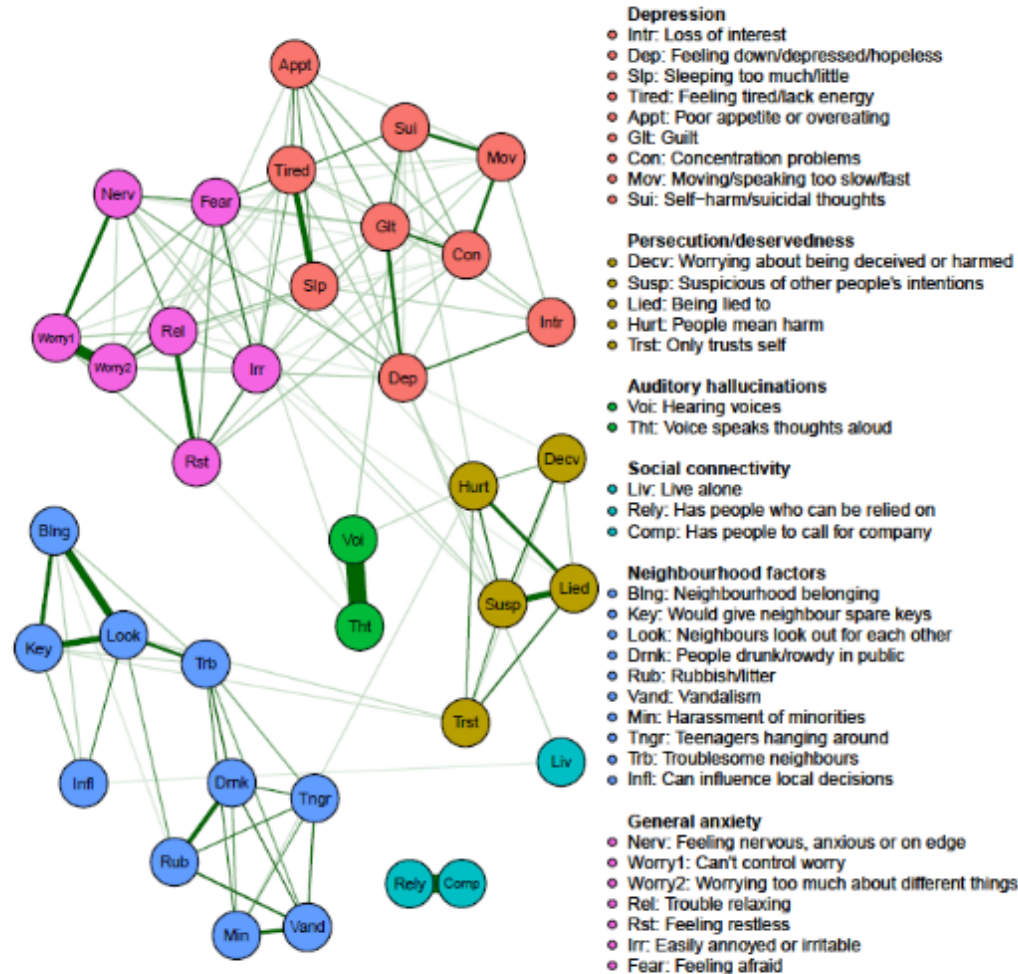
Perceived stable, reliable and predictable resources people plan their futures and develop the capacity to adapt to inevitable life stresses. They tend to cooperate with other future oriented people in their communities to overcome life stressors.

Perceived unstable, unreliable or unpredictable resources tend to prime thrill seeking hedonic behaviours. Uncooperative, unplanned, now-oriented responses become the norm. There is little chance to overcome life stressors through co-operation.

Harsh environments and the **future-discounting behaviours** they prime have significantly negative impacts on individuals and communities.

Mental Health, Deprivation & the Neighbourhood Social Environment: a Network Analysis

Total Sample Mixed Graphical Network

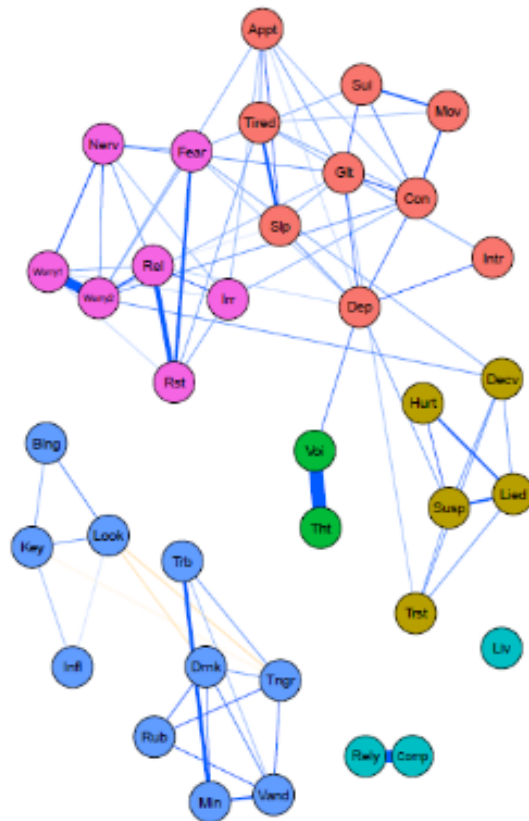


McElroy et al. 2019



Mental Health, Deprivation & the Neighbourhood Social Environment: a Network Analysis

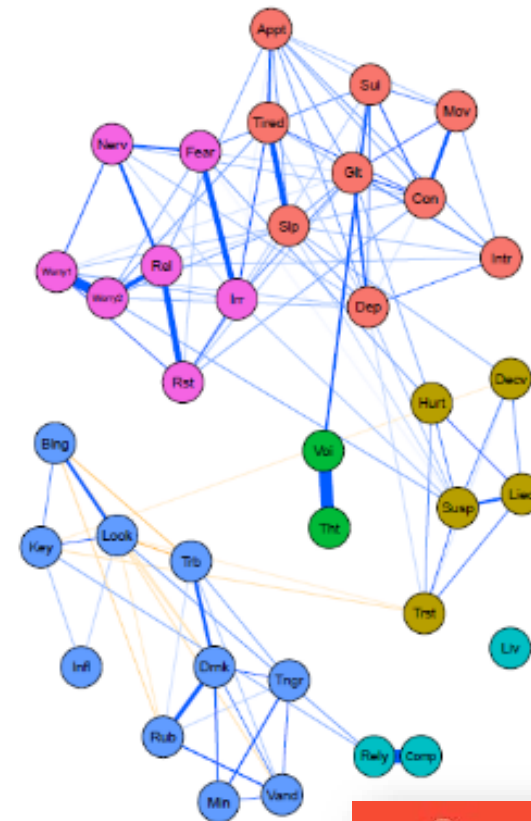
Low Deprivation (n=1,310)



Moderate Deprivation (n=1,192)



High Deprivation (n=1,168)



McElroy et al. 2019



Local Area Wellbeing Inequalities

Measuring wellbeing inequality in Britain

wellbeing inequality across Britain (cont.)

Table 1 highlights the most equal and unequal 10 local authorities (see Box 2 for interpreting the differences between local authorities).

Blanaau Gwent, in Southeast Wales, ranks as the most unequal local authority. The borough, with a population of around 70,000, has the seventh highest levels of unemployment in Great Britain, and the seventh lowest level of education. These are factors that are linked to low wellbeing, so might also explain the high wellbeing inequality in the area. We will publish further analysis exploring the predictors of wellbeing inequality in 2017.

The most equal local authority is Enfield in North London, followed by Cheshire East and Harrow, also in North London. Going down the list shows that more equal local authorities tend to have higher average wellbeing. However this is not always the case, for example, in Kingston upon Hull (the eighth most unequal local authority) the average levels of wellbeing are higher than they are in Lambeth (the eighth most equal).¹⁴ Table 2 provides examples of places that have all four possible combinations of average wellbeing and wellbeing inequality. This highlights the value of looking at average wellbeing alongside inequalities in wellbeing as they both tell different and interesting stories.

For each of the four ONS wellbeing questions, we calculated the standard deviation for each local authority.

Ten most equal			Ten most unequal		
Local authority	Mean Standard Deviation	Average of 4 ONS questions	Local authority	Mean Standard Deviation	Average of 4 ONS questions
1 Enfield	1.0	7.52	Blanaau Gwent	2.5	7.24
2 Cheshire East	1.0	7.74	Liverpool	2.4	7.11
3 Harrow	1.0	7.49	Neath Port Talbot	2.4	7.35
4 Eilean Siar, Orkney & Shetland	1.8	8.05	Merthyr Tydfil	2.4	7.20
5 Warwickshire	1.9	7.75	Knowsley	2.4	7.13
6 Wokingham	1.9	7.80	Sunderland	2.4	7.30
7 Falkirk	1.9	7.55	Rotherham	2.4	7.30
8 Lambeth	1.9	7.33	Kingston Upon Hull	2.4	7.34
9 Aberdeenshire	1.9	7.75	Inverclyde	2.4	7.33
10 Barnet	1.9	7.57	North Ayrshire	2.3	7.29

Table 1: Ten most equal and most unequal local authorities in 2014-15, based on average standard deviation of four wellbeing questions.¹⁴

¹⁴ In these examples, the rows for activity (where a higher score reflects higher levels of activity) have been reversed so that a higher number represents higher overall wellbeing activity for the residents.

¹⁵ We will undertake further analysis to test this as part of the Great Work Centre for Working Community Evidence Programme in early 2017.

Measuring wellbeing inequality in Britain

High average wellbeing, low wellbeing inequality	Relatively high average wellbeing, high wellbeing inequality
Eilean Siar, Orkney & Shetland	Hertlepool
Cheshire East	South Ayrshire
Warwickshire	Doncaster
Low average wellbeing, low wellbeing inequality	Low average wellbeing, high wellbeing inequality
Lambeth	Blanaau Gwent
Wandsworth	Liverpool
Hillingdon	Knowsley

Table 2: Example of localities with different combinations of average wellbeing and wellbeing inequality

BOX 2 Testing for statistical significance

Testing for statistical significance allows us to judge whether an apparent difference seen in the data is just a matter of chance, or whether it indeed represents a real difference.

Overall, there are statistically significant differences across the UK in terms of wellbeing inequality scores. For example, for each of the four wellbeing questions, the top (and bottom) five local authorities listed in Table 1 are almost all significantly more (or less) equal than Leeds – a local authority which ranks consistently between 50th and 60th on measures of inequality across all four wellbeing questions.¹⁶

However, this is not to say that the score of every local authority is significantly different to the score of the local authority above or below it in the ranking. For example, differences within the top and bottom ten local authorities are mixed across each of the four wellbeing questions, meaning that the most equal local authority and second most equal local authority according to any measure might not be significantly different from one another statistically. This is quite normal in a set of ranked data – while the overall ranking tells a useful story between the top, middle and bottom, the differences between local authorities close to each other in the ranking may be less significant.

Testing statistical significance for inequality measures that combine wellbeing measures is not straightforward, and requires further study. More details on the methodology used for testing significance is available in the methodology paper, and a simple tool for users to determine the significance of any given difference can be found in the Excel workbook with all the data.

Overall, there are statistically significant differences across the UK in terms of wellbeing inequality scores.

Research on the predictors of wellbeing inequality is still in its early days¹⁷ and the What Works Centre will be publishing further analysis later this year.

¹⁶ Three exceptions being that Knowsley is not significantly more unequal in terms of activity, Merthyr Tydfil is not significantly more unequal in terms of education, and Leeds is not significantly more equal in terms of life satisfaction.

¹⁷ Some initial analysis can be found in: Hamman, E., Groot, A., and Abdalla, S. (2016) Looking through the Wellbeing Kaleidoscope. London: New Economics Foundation. Accessed via <http://www.wellbeing.gov.uk/gov/uploads/2016/03/looking-through-the-wellbeing-kaleidoscope-philosophy-report.pdf>

Measuring wellbeing inequality in Britain

changes over time

Looking across the UK as a whole, there has been a general trend of declining wellbeing inequality. For example, between 2011-12 and 2014-15, life satisfaction inequality decreased significantly in 78 out of the 143 local authorities for which we have data for both time points.¹⁸ Some of the largest decreases were seen in Swansea, Warwickshire and Bedford.

It only increased significantly in one local authority (Dumfries City) and in that case the statistical significance was only marginal.¹⁹

For the other wellbeing measures, the pattern was less stark. For example, inequality in anxiety only decreased significantly in 33 local authorities, and increased significantly in 8 – with no significant difference in the majority of localities. More details on the significance of changes over time can be found in the methodology paper.

Blanaau Gwent has not always been the local authority with the highest levels of wellbeing inequality.²⁰ Table 3 shows the 10 most unequal local authorities for the last three years (the period for which our local authority boundaries are constant). In 2013-14, the most unequal local authority was North Ayrshire, near Glasgow. In 2012-13, the table was topped by Knowsley, Merseyside.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15			
1	Knowsley	2.6	North Ayrshire	2.4	Blanaau Gwent	2.5
2	Inverclyde	2.5	Blanaau Gwent	2.4	Liverpool	2.4
3	North Ayrshire	2.4	Darling and Dagenham	2.4	Neath Port Talbot	2.4
4	Liverpool	2.4	South Tyneside	2.4	Merthyr Tydfil	2.4
5	East Ayrshire	2.4	Knowsley	2.4	Knowsley	2.4
6	South Tyneside	2.4	Liverpool	2.4	Sunderland	2.4
7	Blanaau Gwent	2.4	Rochdale	2.4	Rotherham	2.4
8	Merthyr Tydfil	2.4	Inverclyde	2.4	Kingston Upon Hull	2.4
9	Sunderland	2.4	Blackburn with Darwen	2.4	Inverclyde	2.4
10	County Durham	2.4	Bedford	2.4	North Ayrshire	2.3

Table 3: Overall wellbeing inequality – ten most unequal over time

¹⁸ Using 1-pointers sets with a p threshold of 0.05 (see methodology).
19: p=0.002

²⁰ While the number of local authorities named from year to year, Blanaau Gwent was in the list every year.

²¹ We did consider inequalities based on other demographics, but discarded them for different reasons. In addition to education, we also initially looked at ethnicity. However the sample sizes were too low to produce anything more detailed than the difference between white and ethnic minority respondents, and so we decided not to pursue a distinction in equality between groups in terms of wellbeing is generally very low. And as we start report, for example, age differences, so there is no simple binary comparison one can make. See methodology for further information.

²² As this analysis was developed, we have not tested for statistical significance. However, we will do this in remaining analysis that will take place in the spring of 2017.

²³ This measure of inequality is simply descriptive, so this is not a causal model. Clearly there are other things connected to education, more education age. When we move onto causal analysis these factors will be controlled for.

What do we attend to? Visual cues to threat



What do we Attend to?

Top Down and Bottom up Attention

The urban environment includes physical characteristics, cues influencing perceptions, regulating social attitudes and emotions and contributing to psychological stress or wellbeing.

Pertinence or salience theory argues that we will attend to threat-related cues for shorter time before deciding to escape.

We used eye tracking specs to investigate attention to residential images asking how nice is this place and how threatening is this place in a within-subjects design:

- the threat focus would result in less overall distance travelled by the eyes and fewer fixation points compared to the 'desirability' focus – partially supported with significantly fewer fixation points in threat condition.
- different fixation points – related to Prospect-Refuge theory (Appleton, 1975) and/or biophilia (Wilson, 1984)

What do we attend to?



Blue = fixations for how nice

Red = fixations for how threatening

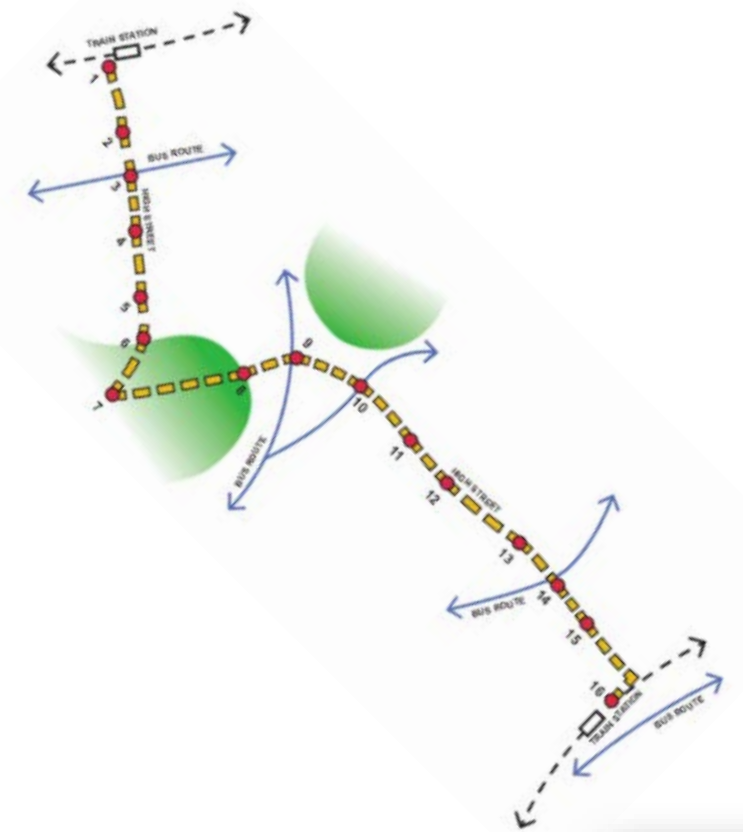
What do we attend to?



Corcoran et al. 2019

Walking the City – Judgements of Threat and Trust

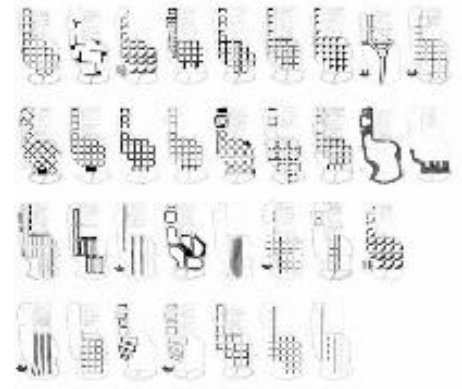
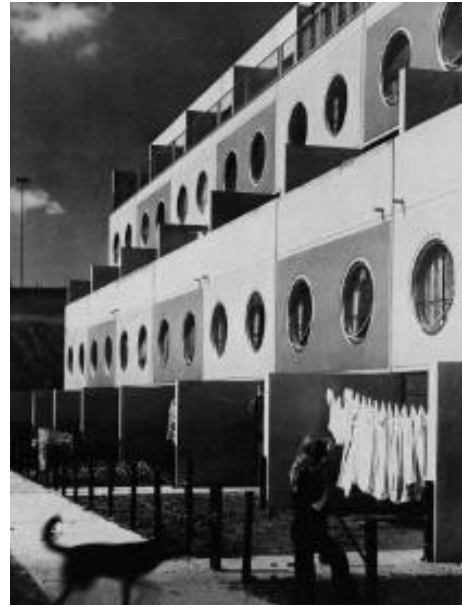
- Judgements of how threatened walkers feel in the more deprived area was determined by the personal resilience score of the walkers
- Judgements of how trustworthy the residents of the neighbourhoods are was determined by the judged wealth of the residents and walkers' scores on a paranoia scale.
- The tipping point or tolerability – cues to threat and resource. **When do cues to impoverishment become psychologically intolerable?**
- **And how does this relate to place stigma?**





Places of Opportunity:Halton Healthy New Town – Community Insights

Doing to.



Doing with.





Halton Healthy New Town – Youth Workshops

How do the places we live in effect our health and wellbeing?

- **Noticing mess:** *“...its hard to have fun with friends outdoors because facilities like parks are being destroyed by graffiti and litter” - “Dull and rundown” - “Abandoned houses. Rough” - “Litter” - “Graffiti”; “Vandalism”*
- **Feeling scared and vulnerable:** *“Fear of what is around the corner from you” - “Not feeling safe” - “Children’s parks that get taken over by groups of older people”*
- **Getting around:** *“Access via public transport” - “Expensive transport” - “Buses are rubbish”*
- **Nothing to do:** *“Being in isolated areas can make people feel down” - “No where local to go with friends” - “No activities can damage a person’s wellbeing”*

Halton Healthy New Town – Youth Workshops

What would make a good place for everyone?

- **Activities for all:** *“Access to activities/ facilities –if there’s none it encourages loitering”; “Places for kids with no cost”;; “Having evenings where young and old people can get together and bond” ; “The ability to talk to others, regardless of age is important -> get together to talk”*
- **A Sense of Community and Neighbourliness:** *“A sense of belonging in the environment you’re in is very important to stay happy” - “If people around you are happy, it will have a positive effect on your life”*
- **Safety, Traffic and Transport :** *“...if people don’t feel safe they don’t want to be there” - “Street lamps” - “A good transport system makes life easier”*
- **A Clean and Pleasant Land:** *“Having a good environment around you” - “Taking pride in your environment” - “More art” - “Colourful” - “Good up-keep of the forests and paths” - “Parks that everyone can access”*

How Does Community Infrastructure Improve Wellbeing? Outcome Mapping

OUTCOMES	Community hubs	Events	Public realm design
+ Relationships	-	YES	YES
+ Cohesion	YES	YES	YES
+Trust	YES	-	YES
+Participation	YES	YES	YES
+Belonging/Pride	-	YES	YES
+IWB/Health/Activity	YES	-	YES
+Networks	YES	-	-
+Heritage/Culture	-	YES	-
+Feeling safer	-	-	YES
+Skills/knowledge	YES	-	-
+Local economy	-	-	YES

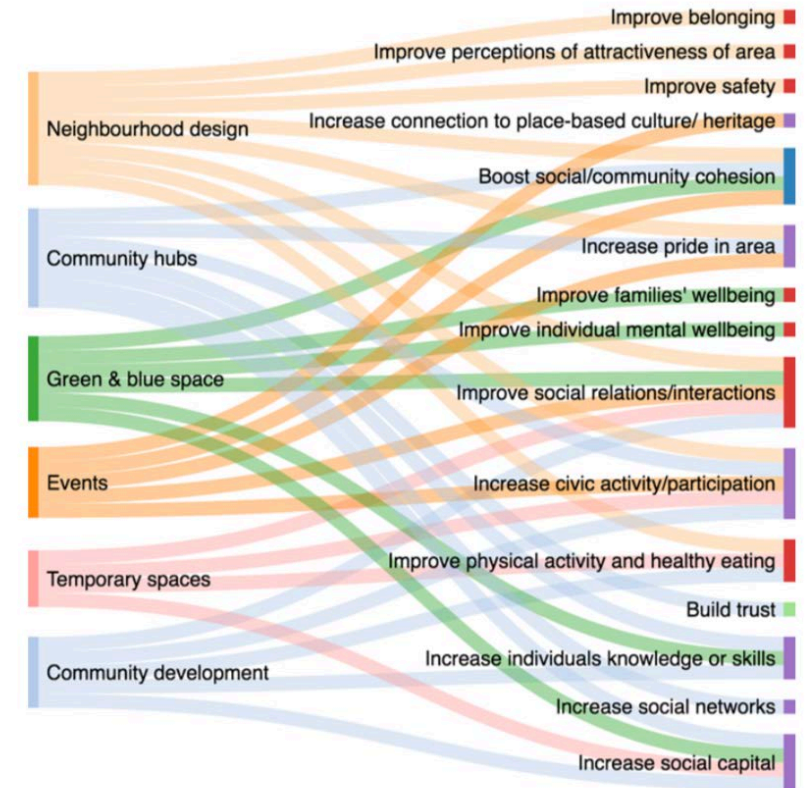
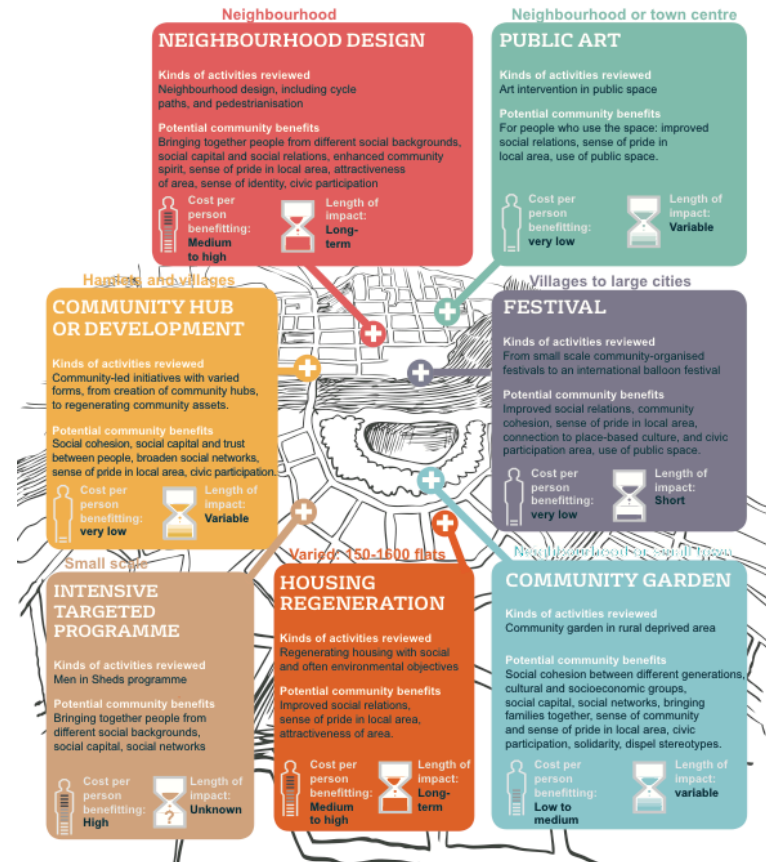
Relative Costs and Wellbeing Effects of Community Infrastructure Interventions

May 2018

briefing | places, spaces, people and wellbeing



Below, we've attempted to bring together some of the key information on implementing activities. Each box contains approximate costs, potential community benefits, length of impact, and scale of impact (written above box). This information was gathered from the subset of the studies reviewed in the systematic review and is intended to give a general outline rather than an exhaustive review of these practicalities. The studies used are little evidence on long-term effects. We also made assumptions about the length of time the infrastructure was in place.



No evidence that top down regeneration schemes improve individual or community wellbeing.

Bagnall et al. 2018



Top-down Interventions: Thriving or Surviving?

Garden Festival Wales 1992



“Prozac Village” 2013

“10,000 people are prescribed anti-depressants per month in Blaenau Gwent, South Wales.”

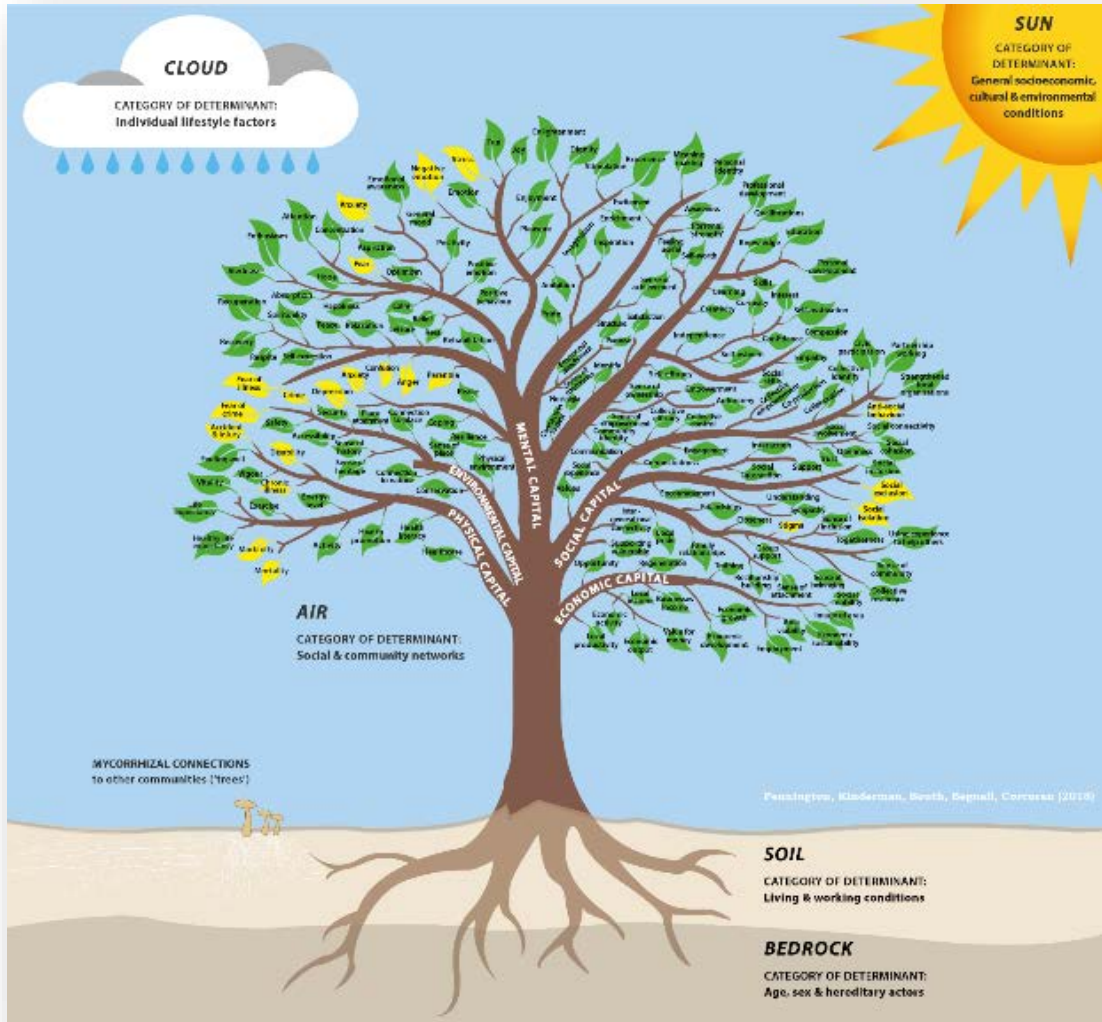
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2351291/One-people-town-anti-depressants-Is-local-GPs-fear-benefits.html#ixzz3GbqtPS8D>



Highest Wellbeing Inequalities 2015

Ten most unequal		
Local authority	Mean Standard Deviation	Average of 4 ONS questions
Blaenau Gwent	2.5	7.24
Liverpool	2.4	7.11
Neath Port Talbot	2.4	7.38
Merthyr Tydfil	2.4	7.28
Knowsley	2.4	7.13
Sunderland	2.4	7.38
Rotherham	2.4	7.30
Kingston Upon Hull	2.4	7.34
Inverclyde	2.4	7.33
North Ayrshire	2.3	7.29

Community Wellbeing : developing a socio-ecological framework



Wellbeing in Place Perceptions Scale

Atkinson et al. (2019) conceptual review of community wellbeing :the ability to sample a collective view of how a place or a community is doing is central to moving the concept and measurement of community wellbeing forward.

Wellbeing: feeling good and functioning well. Places / communities that feel good and function well.

Community Wellbeing determinants: “the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfil their potential” (Wiseman & Brasher 2008).

Place: a location or space endowed with meaning (Lewicka, 2009). A geographical area of meaningful activity and/or of having a focus on making identifiable intentional change as defined by stakeholders, organisations or community.

To work at **hyper-local scale** - street, parish, district, ward.



Wellbeing in Place Perceptions Scale

2 sections

1: perceptions of the 5 thematic determinants of community wellbeing/ wellbeing in place (i.e. the mental, social, health, environmental and economic capitals).

2: integrated perception of community wellbeing.

Section 1 EGs of 20 questions

People seem satisfied with their lives here (M)

People feel they can rely on each other around here (S)

Around here there are enough opportunities to do things that help to keep people fit and well (H)

Most of the streets, roads and public spaces in this area feel safe and are enjoyable to be in (En)

Around here people have enough opportunity to find good quality jobs, training or education locally (Ec)

Section 2: Community Wellbeing

- 1) There are strong networks of relationships and support between the people who live around here
- 2) The people who live here feel they can take action to improve things and influence decisions made about their area
- 3) The people who live here feel they belong here
- 4) No-one is left out in this community
- 5) This area has a physical environment that helps people to feel good and function well
- 6) This area contributes positively to the wellbeing of the people who live here



The Power of the People and Place Bond

CRILS and The Reader (Phil and Jane Davis, Josie Billington)

Clip 1- Eve - Lingham-720p

