

Recession, Resilience and Rebalancing Social Economies in Northern  
Ireland's Neighbourhoods: A Research Project funded by the Office of the  
First Minister and Deputy First Minister

# Understanding the economic contribution of the social economy at a neighbourhood level: *Final Report*

Chris Dayson, Paul Hickman, Aimee  
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and Jenny Muir



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May 2015

**This research forms part of a programme of independent research commissioned by OFMDFM to inform the policy development process and consequently the views expressed and conclusions drawn are those of the author and not necessarily those of OFMDFM.**



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# Executive Summary

## Context

After the financial crash of 2008, and with the arrival in power of a Coalition Government committed to balancing the books, 'austerity' and public sector spending cuts were the dominant discourses in debates about public policy at the beginning of the 2010s. Across the United Kingdom, there was concern about how disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their residents would cope (or not) in the new 'world' of austerity, economic stagnation, declining public sector spending at the neighbourhood level, reducing monies for neighbourhood renewal, reduced funding for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), and welfare reform.

Nowhere was this the case more than in Northern Ireland, where its greater reliance on the public sector made it even more exposed to these changes. This was why in the summer of 2011 the study team, which comprised Sheffield Hallam University, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Sheffield, submitted a research proposal to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister under its *Equality and Social Need Research Programme* to explore these issues in the context of Northern Ireland. The proposal (and study) was concerned with two issues in particular:

- first, how would 'austerity' impact on the lives of residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland? Would they still be able to 'get-by' or not? And were there any factors that would help them to do so?
- second, at a time when attention was focused on the impact of any decline in public sector spend in disadvantaged neighbourhoods on their economies, whether through welfare reform or a decline in funding to the VCS, would their social economies contribute to any rebalancing of local economies?

This report, which is one of three final reports,<sup>1</sup> is concerned with presenting the findings of the study team in respect of the **second issue**. The report, which was written in May 2015, explores how the social economies of four case study neighbourhoods have changed (or not) since 2012, in doing so exploring volunteering patterns (both formal and informal) within them. The study is timely in a number of ways, not least because the VCS in Northern Ireland faces challenging times as its funding is reduced. The report provides an insight into how VCS organisations will fare in a very different (and more hostile) financial terrain, and the extent to which they will be able to adapt to it.

The study had four case studies, two of which, because they are interface areas, comprise two distinct neighbourhoods. Three of the case studies may be defined (using deprivation indices) as being 'disadvantaged':<sup>2</sup>

- Inner East Belfast, which comprises Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh
- Waterside in Derry/Londonderry, which comprises Top-of-the-Hill (also known as Gobnascale) and Irish Street; and

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<sup>1</sup> In total, over the course of the study the research team produced six reports.

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/InteractiveMapTheme.aspx?themeNumber=137&themeName=Deprivation>

- Sion Mills, a village located close to Strabane.

The fourth case study neighbourhood - Erinvale, in the south-west of the Greater Belfast conurbation - is not disadvantaged and was chosen to act as a 'better-off' comparator to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The report's focus is on the **social economy**. Drawing on the work of Murtagh *et al.* (2014), this is defined in broad terms as the **full range of non-profit organisations and activities within civil society**, covering: informal self-help and mutual aid; philanthropy and fundraising; formal and informal volunteering; the 'traditional' grant-aided voluntary and community sector; faith-based community activity; and publicly and commercially-funded social enterprise.

This definition is in contrast to some narrower definitions of the social economy, particularly those used in policy discourses, which focus on market-facing social enterprise activity. However, the study team felt that a broader understanding of the social economy resonated more closely with our findings 'on the ground' in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and enabled us to develop a more holistic understanding of the economic contribution and prospects of the social economy in these areas.

The report draws on the following data sources:

- **Two household surveys**, one of which was conducted at the beginning of the study (the 'baseline' or Wave 1 survey) and one near its end (Wave 2 survey). Both surveys were conducted by the Belfast-based market research company *Perceptive Insight*. The Wave 1 survey was conducted between December 2012 and March 2013. In all 939 interviews were conducted. The Wave 2 survey took place between October 2014 and January 2015. In all 931 interviews were conducted. 511 of the Wave 2 survey interviews were undertaken with respondents who were interviewed as part of the Wave 1 survey: members of this group comprise the **longitudinal cohort**.
- **A postal questionnaire survey of social economy organisations in the case study neighbourhoods which was conducted towards the end of study**. The survey sought to profile and measure the activities of social economy organisations. Although the number of responses was relatively small - we received 19 completed questionnaires - because of our close links with local social economy organisations, the main ones in each case study neighbourhood were represented within this sample.
- **In-depth interviews** with representatives of social economy organisations and local residents, including many volunteers. In all, the study team undertook nearly 250 interviews over the course of the study.

## Key characteristics of the social economies of the case study neighbourhoods

The survey of social economy organisations found that:

- A little under half - nine out of 19 - of organisations surveyed reported that they had charitable status.
- The most commonly-cited principal purpose of organisations was community development, which was cited by eight. However, organisations were involved in a range of other activities, with the most frequently-cited being: 'education/training'; 'cultural'; 'advice /advocacy/ information'; 'youth work/development' and 'health/care.'
- Social economy organisations in the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods served a range of population groups. The most commonly-cited were: 'people on low incomes' (12 responses); 'children 5-13' (11); 'elderly people' (11); and 'young people 13-25' (11).
- The numbers of paid staff employed by social economy organisations varied markedly across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. While in Sion Mills, only one paid worker was employed

across its three principal social economy organisations, 121 were employed in Lower Castlereagh, with one organisation (Oasis) employing over 100.

- The numbers of residents volunteering in our case study organisations (over the last 12 months) fluctuated markedly across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, from 247 in Sion Mills to 35 in Short Strand.

There was a dichotomy with regard to where the case study areas were situated in terms of the Aiken *et al.* social economy typology. While most of the activities in Irish Street, Top-of-the-Hill, Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh could be characterised as *community development*, most in Sion Mills fell under the umbrella of *stewarding*. *Entrepreneurship* activities were very limited across the case study areas although examples were found in Sion Mills and Lower Castlereagh. As Erinvale's social economy is very underdeveloped, it was not possible (or appropriate) to classify it.

## The nature and form of volunteering in the case study neighbourhoods

The pattern and nature of volunteering within the case study neighbourhoods differs greatly. So, too, does the social economy architecture within them. Specifically, they differ in the following ways:

- **The size and maturity of their VCSs.** For example, while Short Strand and Sion Mills have relatively well developed and comprehensive VCSs, the ones in Irish Street and, in particular, the better-off comparator, Erinvale, are less well developed.
- **The type of organisations that comprise the VCS.** In the rural case study, Sion Mills, the organisations that comprise the local VCS were relatively small and 'below the radar' - i.e. they had not been picked up by formal sector mapping exercises in Northern Ireland. And these organisations did not employ paid workers. However, this was not the case in Irish Street, Short Strand and Top-of-the-Hill, where a very different volunteering model appeared to exist. In these areas volunteering activities were very much driven by paid workers employed by formally constituted, larger organisations.
- **Volunteering rates, both formal and informal.** The rates were highest in Sion Mills and Short Strand, and lowest in Top-of-the-Hill.
- **The balance between formal and informal volunteering.** In Sion Mills and Erinvale, the (12 months) formal volunteering rate exceeded the informal rate while in Top-of-the-Hill and Lower Castlereagh the opposite was the case. In Short Strand and Irish Street the rates were broadly similar.
- **The types of voluntary activities that volunteers engage in.**

However, the research has also highlighted a number of similarities between the areas:

- For many residents the connection with volunteering is a loose and fluid one with volunteering being something that they dip in and out of on an *ad hoc* basis. As will be discussed in the key learning report that accompanies this report, this has important implications for policy - creating more substantive and self-sustaining VCS models consistent with the ideals of political discourses that promote self-help (and social enterprise) may be very difficult in areas where the pattern of volunteering is ephemeral. Conversely, the opposite will be the case in areas like Sion Mills, where the pattern is more stable and consistent.
- In four of the areas (Lower Castlereagh, Irish Street, Top-of-the-Hill and Erinvale) the proportion of respondents formally volunteering grew over the course of the study. The outlier was Short Strand, which saw the participation rate fall from 47 per cent in the Wave 1 survey to 19 per cent in the Wave 2 survey (in Sion Mills there was a 1 percentage point fall).
- Over the course of the study the proportion of volunteering activity taking place in the local neighbourhood increased markedly. For example, in the context of formal volunteering in the

last 12 months, the proportion of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods who reported that all of their volunteering took place locally increased from 33 per cent to 68 per cent.

- Historically, studies of volunteering have focused on formal volunteering. However, the research has shown the important role that informal volunteering plays.

## **The economic contribution of the social economy in the case study neighbourhoods**

- Overall, **social economy organisations** contributed more than £3 million per year to the economies of the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods and this increased by 35 per cent over the course of the study, from £3.4 million in 2011-12 to £4.6 million in 2013-14.
- However, the majority of this income was concentrated in a few very large organisations in East Belfast, suggesting that whilst social economy organisations can make a significant economic contribution in central urban city locations where large organisations can be sustained and flourish; in smaller urban areas like Derry/Londonderry and rural places like Sion Mills where organisations tend to be much smaller, the potential economic contribution is far less.
- Furthermore, very few of these social economy organisations were able to generate financial surpluses for reinvestment in local activities and services, and those that did generate surpluses only recorded very small amounts. This suggests that the extent to which social economy organisations in disadvantaged areas are able to reinvest money at a neighbourhood level for the benefit of local people is fairly limited.
- Social economy organisations in disadvantaged neighbourhoods received funds from a diverse range of statutory and non-statutory sources but a significant proportion relied heavily on public sector income to sustain their activities and social enterprise type trading currently plays only a limited role for most organisations. Given the planned reduction in statutory funding for social economy organisations over the next few years, this finding raises concerns about the ability of these organisations to maintain their existing economic contribution without a fundamental change in their business models.
- The estimated contribution of **resident volunteers** to the economies of our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods was more than double that of social economy organisations, but declined over the course of the study, from £15 million in 2012-13 to £10 million in 2014-15.
- Importantly, a majority of residents' voluntary activity was undertaken within neighbourhoods in which they lived, something which was more commonplace in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In addition, the majority of formal volunteering was undertaken within social economy organisations operating in the neighbourhood, rather than in the public or private sectors.
- Levels of informal volunteering were markedly higher in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods when compared to the better-off neighbourhood but conversely, residents in the better-off neighbourhood contributed more time to formal volunteering than those in the disadvantaged areas.
- At a neighbourhood level the data revealed significant variations in the economic contribution of volunteers and there were also some significant fluctuations between Wave 1 and Wave 2. This highlights the potential volatility of participation at an individual level, which might limit the extent to which it can be considered a 'reliable' form of economic output.
- Despite these variations and fluctuations, one neighbourhood, Sion Mills, stands out as having a consistently high level of economic contribution by formal and informal volunteers, something which is supported by the qualitative case study findings.
- In interpreting these findings it is important to emphasise the complex calculations, estimates and judgement involved, and to recognise that they are estimates based on research findings

from a sample of residents and social economy organisations in our case study neighbourhoods. As such the estimates provided should be considered illustrative of the types of economic value that might be created and contributed if these assumptions hold true within the wider population.

## Future prospects for the social economies of the case study neighbourhoods

Social economy organisations in our case studies identified a number of challenges they are likely to face in the future. They can be categorised into two groups - funding and delivery - with the former being of particular concern to them.

### Funding

- **Declining funding.** There was a consensus amongst social economy stakeholders that the financial environment for social economy organisations would become more challenging in the future. And approximately half felt that their income would fall in the next three years.
- **The pressure to become more 'self-sufficient' and 'sustainable.'** As a result of the financial pressures facing social economy organisations in our case study neighbourhoods, some were rethinking their funding and exploring, albeit reluctantly, the possibility of generating more of their own income to become more sustainable. However, in the context of continuing austerity, welfare reforms and public sector funding cuts, vulnerable households will find it increasingly difficult to pay for the services provided by social economy organisations.
- **Partnership working.** Social economy organisations felt that they would increasingly be required to work in partnership, a development many were not happy with. And 16 out of 19 reported that they would work with more partners in the future.
- **Change in the approach to the administration of Neighbourhood Renewal funding.** There was a concern that the independence of social economy organisations could be threatened by the change in how Neighbourhood Renewal funding is administered, with its administration shifting from the Department of Social Development to the new super-councils. It was felt that this change could threaten their independence and identity.

### Delivery

- **Increasing demand for the services provided by social economy organisations.** There was a consensus that the demand for the services of social economy organisations had increased in recent times. This trend was likely to continue in the future because of:
  - cuts to public services which would 'push' vulnerable households to the VCS
  - the economic downturn
  - the impact of welfare reforms.
- **A reduction in volunteering hours.** Volunteering hours fell over the course of the study. A number of stakeholders felt that this trend was likely to continue in the future as volunteers (understandably) devoted more of their time to their own struggle to 'get-by' financially.
- **Community capacity.** Volunteering levels varied markedly across the case study areas. Stakeholders in areas with lower levels of volunteering were concerned that if funded voluntary workers were lost there, local communities may not have the capacity to meet the volunteering shortfall created.

In order to explore the future trajectories of the social economies of the case study areas, the study team employed a conceptual framework based on the work on Innes and Jones (2006). This framework highlighted *risk, resilience and recovery factors*. Reflecting their diversity, the factors varied for each of the social economies, although funding and community capacity were risk factors in all of them.

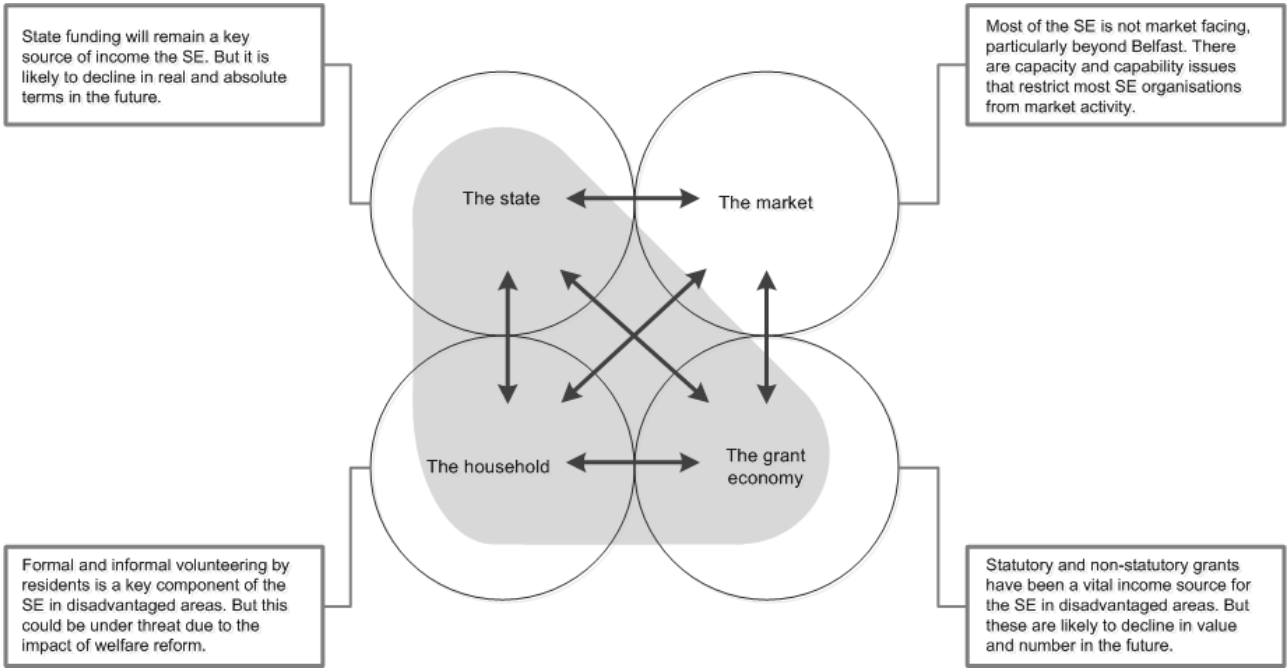


## Conclusion

- The report has highlighted the diverse size, scope, form and function of social economy organisations in our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods. For the most part, these organisations are small 'traditional' voluntary, community and faith-based groups whose main role and purpose relates to *stewarding* and *community development*. There appear to be very few organisations providing an *entrepreneurship* function, particularly beyond East Belfast. In most areas, the social economy functions through a combination of paid staff and volunteers, with volunteers more prominent in neighbourhoods where organisations have few or no members of paid staff.
- It is clear from all of our case study neighbourhoods that the social economy, through local voluntary, community and faith-based activity, and formal and informal volunteering, plays a vital role in disadvantaged areas. It provides important services and supports a range of community activity that is highly valued by local people.
- There are very few signs that the social economy in our case study neighbourhoods has changed significantly over the course of the study. Voluntary, community and faith organisations have fared relatively well, reporting a small increase in income in each area; but overall volunteering levels have remained static at best, and declined in some areas.
- Overall, social economy organisations make a small but significant contribution to the economy at a neighbourhood level. Across our case study areas this amounted to more than £3 million per year and increased over the course of the study, but the large majority of this income was concentrated in East Belfast. The economic contribution of volunteers was greater, amounting to more than £10 million per year across the case study neighbourhoods, but decreased over the course of the study and substantial area-level variations and fluctuations were observed.
- Despite its importance and relative stability over the course of the study the social economy is entering a period of unprecedented uncertainty and is likely to be transformed and look very different in 3-5 years' time. Large parts of the sector are heavily reliant on public sector funding, but this seems certain to decline significantly over the next few years. These organisations recognise the need to become more self-sufficient or sustainable, but there is little evidence that they have the capability or capacity to meet this challenge in the immediate future. At the same time, the wider impact of welfare reform will affect people's ability to 'get-by' at an individual level, with potentially adverse implications for activities such as formal and informal volunteering.
- The expected cuts in public sector funding from 2015 onwards will inevitably be passed on to social economy organisations previously reliant on public sector income. This will require a fundamental change in many organisations' business models, perhaps towards more entrepreneurial social enterprise type approaches or so that they are more closely aligned with public sector priorities. Although a few organisations are well-placed to adapt to these changes there appear to be particular challenges in urban and rural areas beyond Belfast, where social economy organisations tend to be smaller and the potential for social enterprise approaches to generating income is limited.
- This research suggests that the potential for the social economy to contribute to the economic rebalancing of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, either in the form of organisational activity or volunteering by residents, appears to be limited. Although social economy organisations appear to have thrived in recent years they are facing the likelihood of major cuts in their public sector funding at a time when competition for non-statutory charitable funding is increasing. In the short-term at least, a shift to entrepreneurial social enterprise approaches to income generation is not a sustainable option for most organisations. Meanwhile, levels of volunteering in these areas are at best static and at worst declining; meaning volunteers stepping in to replace or enhance the previously well-funded activities of social economy organisations is unlikely to occur on a major scale. Given these findings, we have adapted and annotated a diagram produced by Murray *et al.* (2010) to reflect the findings from this

study. It places more emphasis on the role of the household and the grant economy, with less emphasis on the market, whilst retaining the importance of the state, and highlights the challenges each of these spheres is likely to face in the foreseeable future.

**Figure E.1: The social economy and spheres of activity in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland**



Source: Adapted from Murray *et al.*, 2010, p.143



# Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction

After the financial crash of 2008, and with the arrival in power of a Coalition Government committed to balancing the books, 'austerity' and public sector spending cuts were the dominant discourses in debates about public policy at the beginning of the 2010s. And across the United Kingdom, there was concern about how disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their residents would cope (or not) in the new 'world' of austerity, economic stagnation, declining public sector spend at the neighbourhood level, reducing monies for neighbourhood renewal, reduced funding for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), and welfare reform.

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- first, how would 'austerity' impact on the lives of residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland? Would they still be able to 'get-by' or not? And were there any factors that would help them to do so?
- second, at a time when attention was focused on the impact of any decline in public sector spend in disadvantaged neighbourhoods on their economies, whether through welfare reform or a decline in funding to the VCS, would their social economies contribute to any rebalancing of local economies?

This report, which is one of three final reports from the study team, is concerned with presenting the findings of the study team in respect to the **second issue. The report, which was written in May 2015, explores how the social economies of four case study neighbourhoods have changed (or not) since 2012, in doing so exploring organisational characteristics and volunteering patterns (both formal and informal) within them.**

The report's focus is on the **social economy**. Drawing on the work of Murtagh *et al.* (2014), this is defined in broad terms as the **full range of non-profit organisations and activities within civil society**, covering: informal self-help and mutual aid; philanthropy and fundraising; formal and informal volunteering; the 'traditional' grant-aided voluntary and community sector; faith-based community activity; and publicly and commercially-funded social enterprise.

This definition is in contrast to some narrower definitions of the social economy, particularly those used in policy discourses, which focus on market-facing social enterprise activity. However, the study team felt that a broader understanding of the social economy resonated more closely with our findings 'on the ground' in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and enabled us to develop a more holistic understanding of the economic contribution and prospects of the social economy in these areas.

The study had four case studies, two of which, because they are interface areas, comprise two distinct neighbourhoods. Three of the case studies may be defined (using deprivation indices) as being 'disadvantaged':<sup>3</sup>

- Inner East Belfast, which comprises Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh
- Waterside in Derry/Londonderry, which comprises Top-of-the-Hill (which is also known as Gobnascale) and Irish Street; and
- Sion Mills, a village located close to Strabane.

The fourth case neighbourhood - Erinvale, in the south-west of the Greater Belfast conurbation - is not disadvantaged and was chosen to act as a 'better-off' comparator to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A comparator was included in the study because there is a lack of evidence about how forms of infrastructure, economic and social capital and community dynamics are linked to variable social economy outcomes between more affluent and deprived neighbourhoods, although there is a substantive evidence base relating to the comparative performance, and impact of policy on, different deprived neighbourhoods. For example, Atkinson and Flint (2004) found that affluent and deprived neighbourhoods used very different forms of social capital, and informal and formal social control, to regulate public space. A detailed profile of Erinvale, along with the three other case studies, can be found in Appendix 1.

The study, which ran from early 2012 until spring 2015, comprised a range of quantitative and qualitative research elements, some of which, in the context of this type of study - policy funded research - may be described as being 'alternative', such as photography (photo novella) and solicited diary keeping.

This research is timely in a number of ways:

- It sheds light on a relatively under-researched issue - **how volunteering plays out at the neighbourhood level**. The volunteering literature has grown rapidly in recent years, and there are a number of excellent contributions within the context of Northern Ireland. These include outputs from both academics (see for example, Murtagh *et al.*, 2014; Murtagh *et al.*, 2012; Acheson, 2014; Acheson, 2013; and Molloy *et al.*, 1999) and the policy and practice community (see for example, DSD and Volunteer Now, 2010; Volunteer Development Agency, 2007; DETI and DSD, 2013; NIVCA, 2014)). However, despite the undoubted importance of these contributions, the role of neighbourhood (and place) is relatively silent within them.
- **It sheds further light on how to map and understand the social economy.** There have been a number of excellent studies on this issue in recent times (Dayson *et al.*, 2013; Soteri-Proctor, 2011), with a number focusing on Northern Ireland (see for example, NICVA, 2014; DETI and DSD, 2013). However, these

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<sup>3</sup> See::

<http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/InteractiveMapTheme.aspx?themeNumber=137&themeName=Deprivation>

studies have to some extent neglected the important role of 'below the radar' volunteering.

- **Funding of the VCS is being reduced** (McAleavey, 2015a; 2015b) - this report provides an insight into how the sector may fare in the future in light of this.
- **The research will be of help to policy-makers and practitioners operating in the VCS arena.** By understanding how the social economy and volunteering function at the neighbourhood level, policy-makers and practitioners are better placed to make decisions about how best to utilise their declining resources.

## 1.2. Policy context

Although devolution to the Northern Ireland Assembly did affect policy areas such as education, health, social care, housing, planning, youth services and aspects of employment, social policy remained proximate to other parts of the UK (Acheson, 2010). Policy-making for the engagement and support of the voluntary sector was devolved to the Northern Ireland administration, and as with the other regions, policy following devolution pursued a closer alliance between government and the voluntary sector (Alcock, 2012).

Post-devolution, the VCS flourished and by 2014 it employed nearly 28,000 staff, representing four per cent of the Northern Ireland workforce (NICVA, 2014). It has played a key role in delivering services to many of the most disadvantaged communities in the region, a role which has been acknowledged by politicians and policy-makers (Alcock, 2012).

For the VCS in Northern Ireland, statutory funding has been extremely important, comprising over 60 per cent of its overall income (Alcock, 2012). However, this leaves the sector exposed to any cuts in public sector expenditure. The arrival in power in 2010 of a Coalition Government committed to financial austerity might have seen this scenario occurring, but for a number of reasons this did not happen. However, in the summer of 2014 it was announced that the budget of one the sector's key funders - the Department for Social Development - would be cut for both the remainder of 2014-15 and 2015-16 (Campbell, 2014; Douglas, 2014). And in April 2015 it was confirmed that DSD's budget for 2015-16 would be cut from £790 million to £715 million (Douglas, 2015).

To help achieve this, the budget for DSD's flagship regeneration programme - Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) - has been cut. This may have consequences for the VCS in Northern Ireland as many organisations working in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are (part) funded by NR monies, including ones operating in four neighbourhoods that the research has studied: Short Strand; Lower Castlereagh; Irish Street; and Top-of-the-Hill.

In March 2015 other funding cuts were also announced and these may also have an impact on the activities of the VCS in Northern Ireland, as a number of stakeholders in the VCS in Northern Ireland have argued. For example, NICVA report that the cuts to Early Years services alone represented a loss of services in 153 communities in the most disadvantaged parts of Northern Ireland (McAleavey, 2015a). The impact of the funding cuts is likely to be immediate, NICVA argue: 450 jobs are likely to be lost "in weeks", with negative consequences for residents living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods:

*"The scale of the cuts being faced and the resulting jobs losses is unprecedented in our sector's relationship with government in Northern Ireland in the last 35 or more years. Skilled staff will be lost from our sector and the impact will be felt right across Northern Ireland with a loss of local walking*

*routes, arts events and childcare facilities. Voluntary and community organisations provide highly specialized services in areas where government provision doesn't meet the needs of local people and often work with harder to reach client groups. It is obvious that the most vulnerable people will be harder hit with programmes focusing on training and support to help people get jobs, develop crucial early learning skills in children and rehabilitation being cut."* (McAleavey, 2015b)

It has been argued that the impact of these cuts in disadvantaged neighbourhoods will be exacerbated by the economic downturn and welfare reforms, which will have the effect of reducing the income levels of many of its residents. This is likely to result in increasing demand for the services of VCS organisations and make it more difficult for them to self-fund.

Research by colleagues at Sheffield Hallam University reveals that the economic impact of the welfare reform programme will be greater in Northern Ireland than in other parts of the UK (Beatty and Fothergill, 2013); although there is uncertainty about the form that the reforms will take and their timing. Significantly, the two areas that were singled out as being likely to be worst affected - Derry/Londonderry and Strabane - are home to two of our case studies (Waterside and Sion Mills). The research concluded that when the reforms have come into full effect they will take £750 million a year out of the Northern Ireland economy. This is equivalent to £650 a year for every adult of working age, and compares to an average of only £470 a year across Great Britain.

It is possible that another recent policy development may have an impact on the VCS in Northern Ireland: the creation of super-councils, which will come into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. A number of stakeholders we spoke to suggested that this change may affect the sector in two ways. First, the new councils will be responsible for a number of functions that DSD have performed, including the NR programme. Second, the merging of councils may create new local politics and power dynamics, with knock-on consequences for VCS funding. For example, villages close to the Irish border currently under Strabane District Council (such as Sion Mills) may become more (politically) peripheral when the council merges with Derry City Council to form Derry City and Strabane District Council.

### 1.3. Research methods

The study team adopted a **mixed methods approach** to the research, which is described in detail in the Baseline Report. The research comprised a number of elements including.

#### 1.3.1. Stakeholder interviews

In order to set the research in context, at the beginning of the project in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from a range of organisations in Northern Ireland with a stake in the study's subject area. These included government departments, VCS representative organisations, social enterprises, and churches. In all 26 interviews were conducted.

#### 1.3.2. Household surveys

Two household surveys were conducted: one at the beginning of the study (the 'baseline' or **Wave 1 survey**) and one near its end (**Wave 2 survey**). Both surveys were conducted by the Belfast-based market research company *Perceptive Insight*. Their local knowledge proved invaluable in the sometimes challenging circumstances in which the surveys were carried out, including the protests associated with the 'flag'

issue in the East Belfast area during the Wave 1 survey. The surveys for both questionnaires made extensive use of questions used in comparable surveys, such as the Cabinet Office's Community Life Survey (the successor to the Citizenship Survey), the Office for National Statistics' Annual Population Survey, and the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. This allowed comparisons with other levels of population and other jurisdictions. The questionnaire covers a wide range of issues including: income, wealth and poverty; housing quality of life; the quality of the socio-physical environment including neighbourhood; infrastructure and amenities; neighbourhood 'likes', 'dislikes', 'problems' and 'issues'; neighbourhood satisfaction; overall quality of life and well-being; health; residential mobility and immobility; economic activity and worklessness; crime and anti-social-behaviour; education; community participation, volunteering, social capital; and social assets.

- **The Wave 1 (or baseline) survey.** This was carried out in the case study areas between December 2012 and March 2013. In all 939 interviews were conducted, with interviews being broken down as follows: East Belfast: 253 interviews (Short Strand: 130; Lower Castlereagh: 123); Derry/Londonderry: 250 (Top-of-the Hill: 127; Irish Street: 123); Sion Mills: 220; and Erinvale: 216.
- **The Wave 2 survey.** This took place between October 2014 and January 2015. In all 931 interviews were conducted. 511 of these interviews were undertaken with respondents who were interviewed as part of the Wave 1 survey: members of this group comprise the **longitudinal cohort**.

### ***1.3.3. In-depth interviews with representatives of social economy organisations***

In each of the case studies interviews were conducted with representatives of local social economy organisations. Participating organisations include: VCS groups; sports groups, and churches. As interviews took place in every year of the study, the research team was able to track the experience of key local VCS organisations over the course of the project. In all, nearly 50 local stakeholder interviews were undertaken.

### ***1.3.4. Survey of social economy organisations***

In order to develop a picture of the size, form, function and experiences of social economy organisations in each of the case study neighbourhoods, and to understand if and how this has changed over the course of the study, a postal questionnaire survey was sent to all local social economy organisations, whether formally constituted or not, towards the end of the study. In order to allow the findings of the survey to be contextualised and benchmarked within Northern Ireland, most of the questions were taken from a questionnaire developed for DETI's research into Northern Ireland's third sector and its potential to become more enterprise-driven. Although the number of responses was relatively small - we received 19 completed questionnaires<sup>4</sup> - because of our close links with local social economy organisations, all the main ones in each case study neighbourhood were represented within this sample.

### ***1.3.5. Longitudinal resident panel***

In each of the case study neighbourhoods, at the beginning of the study panels were created initially comprising 20 residents in the disadvantaged areas and 15 in the comparator. The study team followed their lives over the course of the study. They

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<sup>4</sup> It is impossible to calculate a response rate for the survey as the overall population of social economy organisations in the case study neighbourhoods was unknown - one way the study team secured responses was by giving questionnaires to key contacts within them who then distributed them locally.



did so in a number of ways including: conducting in-depth interviews with them at three points (2013, 2014 and early 2015); and, conducting photographic (*photo novella*) and solicited resident diary keeping exercises with some of them on two occasions.

In order to minimise the impact of attrition, which can be a problem on longitudinal studies, residents were incentivised to take part in the research through the payment of £15 on completion of interviews. While some panel members were 'lost' over the course of the study, attrition was not a major problem and in all 197 interviews with residents were conducted over the course of the study, all of which were recorded and transcribed.

#### 1.4. Conceptualising the social economy

The analytical framework for the study includes a typology (adapted from Aiken *et al.*, 2011) that frames the research in an understanding that individuals, informal collective activity and more formal community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations all have a key role within the social economy of a neighbourhood. That is, they fulfil a variety of *stewarding*, *community development* or *entrepreneurship* functions (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1: Roles and functions of the social economy**

<b>Stewarding</b>	Provision of small, often time-limited and very specific interventions, activities or services, delivered by mainly small volunteer-run groups with a low income.
<b>Community Development</b>	Provision of local service delivery and engagement with local partnerships, based on a mix of income streams, including longer-term funding and including some paid staff.
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	Provision of larger social enterprises, based on commercial practices and business models, often with capital-intensive assets.

This framework enables the roles and functions of the social economy in a neighbourhood and its relationship with the public and market economies to be understood in the wider context of economic rebalancing. For example, *community development* functions may provide an alternative to anticipated reductions in public sector-provided services whilst *entrepreneurship* may provide an alternative to private sector provision and offer sustainable forms of neighbourhood services and infrastructure. At the same time all three functions can be essential to the resilience and recovery of neighbourhoods: *stewarding* may provide residents with coping mechanisms that mitigate the impacts of welfare reform and public sector cuts in the context of long-term disadvantage, whilst *community development* and *entrepreneurship* could provide the basis for sustainable recovery and contribute to the rebalancing of the economy.

The definition of the local social economy within this framework includes all non-profit activities of civil society including informal support, self-help and mutual aid, traditional voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as profit or surplus-generating social enterprise activities. As such, it enables the inclusion of activities that are resourced in various ways including grants, public sector contracts, trading, loans, asset transfer, and, importantly, philanthropy and volunteering. In addition, it also allows the role of church-supported community activity to be included in the research. This is a very broad definition of social economy, and narrower definitions are also in use, particularly in certain policy documentation. These narrower definitions tend to exclude elements of 'traditional' voluntary, community and faith-

based community activity, and focus on the social economy as comprising predominantly social enterprises operating in an arena of recognisable economic activity, in which goods and services are traded, but where profits are reinvested to support a social, environmental or ethical purpose, and there is a preference for collective ownership and democratic control.

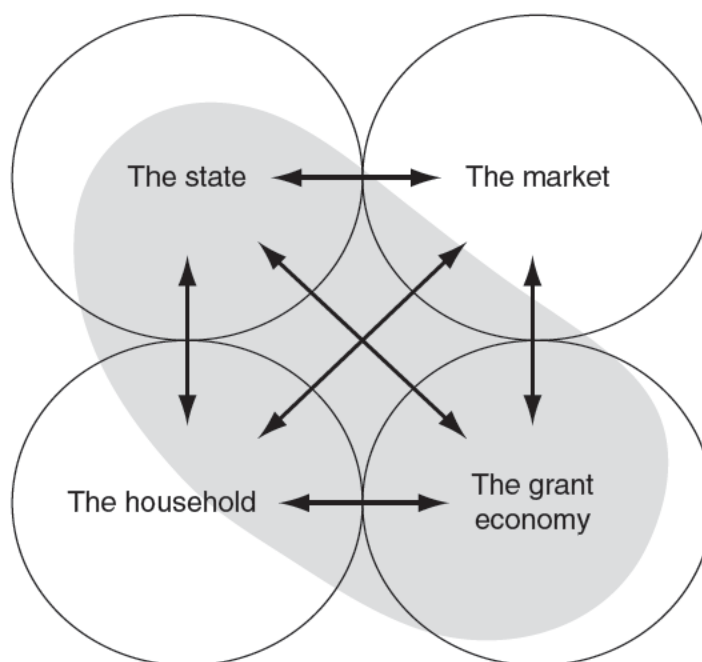
However, research by Murtagh *et al.* (2014) supports the study team's argument that a broader definition of the social economy relates better to conditions in Northern Ireland than a narrow definition, as it embraces the scope of the sector, linking its range of economic activities with a wider set of social outcomes. The work of Molloy *et al.* (1999) and Murray *et al.* (2010) also supports this broader definition of the social economy:

*"The social economy constitutes a **broad range of activities and practices which have the potential to provide opportunities for local people and communities to engage in all stages of the process of local economic regeneration and job creation...**The sector covers the economic potential and activities of the self-help and co-operative movements...which aim to satisfy the social and economic needs of local communities and their members. **The sector includes co-operatives; self-help projects; credit unions; housing associations; partnerships; community enterprises and businesses.**"* (Molloy *et al.*, 1999, p.11)

*"The social economy...cuts across the four sub-economies: the market, the state, the grant economy, and the household. Each of these sectors has its own logics and rhythms, its own means of obtaining resources, its own structures of control and allocation, and its own rules and customs for the distribution of its outputs. But the parts of these economies which we term the social economy are united by their four goals, by the importance given to ethics and their multiple threads of reciprocity. **Their production ranges from the micro scale of domestic care in the household to the universal services of a national welfare state.** Although analytically distinct from the private market, it includes social enterprises engaging in the market, as well as some of the activities of private companies that have primarily social goals."* (Murray *et al.*, 2010)

Murtagh *et al.* (2014) also reproduce a useful diagram (see Figure 1.1) from Murray *et al.* (2010: 143) to help illustrate the dynamic and interrelated nature of these four domains and how the social economy interacts with them.

**Figure 1.1: The social economy and spheres of economic activity**



Source: Murray *et al.*, 2010, p.143

Murtagh *et al.*'s (2014) distillation of Murray *et al.*'s (2010) and Molloy *et al.*'s (1999) work certainly therefore provides a useful additional framework for our conceptualising of the social economy at a neighbourhood level in Northern Ireland and resonates strongly with our experience 'on the ground' in our case study neighbourhoods. In particular, developing an understanding of the role of the market, the state, the grant economy (including voluntary, community and social action), and the household within and between different neighbourhoods has been key to researching how the different actors in these neighbourhoods come together to respond to economic turbulence.

The analysis within this report therefore utilises our original conceptual framework of *stewarding*, *community development* and *entrepreneurship*, but has embedded within it an understanding of how these three functions interact with the social economy through the four spheres of economic activity identified by Murray *et al.* (2010), using these to understand the relative importance and contribution of each to the social economy and resilience at a neighbourhood level.

## **1.5. Scope of the report**

It is important to make three points about the scope of the report:

- First, it is important to see it within the broader suite of reports being produced by the study team and it should be read alongside them. The other outputs of the study team are:
  - a report highlighting the key findings to emerge from the baseline (or Wave 1) survey of residents, which was published in 2013 (Hickman *et al.*, 2013). The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/recession-resilience-rebalancing-social-economies-ni-neighbourhoods.pdf>
  - a report which explores how residents were coping financially at the beginning of the study, and the extent to which they were 'getting-by'



(Hickman *et al.*, 2014a). The report, which was published in January 2014, can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/getting-by-coping-resilience-initial-findings-january-2014.pdf>

- a report which profiles and explores the VCS of the areas with the most vibrant VCS amongst our case study areas: Short Strand and Sion Mills (Hickman *et al.*, 2015). The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/research-paper-2-understanding-higher-levels-of-volunteering-the-case-of-the-short-strand-sion-mills.pdf>
- a **final report** which examines how residents have fared financially over the course of the study and the extent to which they have been able to 'get-by' (or not). In doing so, this report plays particular attention to a concept that has become increasingly popular in both the policy and academic communities: resilience. The report, which has been published alongside this paper, can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/equality-and-strategy/equalityresearch/research-publications/esn-pubs/equality-publications-2015.htm>
- a short **final report**, which has been published at the same time as this paper, which highlights the **key learning to emerge from the study as a whole**. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/equality-and-strategy/equalityresearch/research-publications/esn-pubs/equality-publications-2015.htm>
- a technical report which presents data generated from the Wave 2 survey of residents. This report can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/equality-and-strategy/equalityresearch/research-publications/esn-pubs/equality-publications-2015.htm>
- Second, the research which underpins this report is not a study of 'community relations' and divided communities, although, of course, these issues did impact on the nature of the data collected as well as on the data collection process. And the study team is fully aware of the importance of framing the research and its findings within the unique social, economic, political, historical, and cultural context that exists within Northern Ireland.
- Third, the report does not offer reflections for policy to emerge from this element of the research, of which there are many. This is because all of the learning to emerge from the study is presented in the **learning report** which accompanies this report.

## 1.6. Structure of the report

The report is divided into six chapters, including this one:

- Chapter Two profiles the VCS infrastructure and social economies of the case study neighbourhoods. It does so by drawing on the survey of the VCS organisations within them, which was undertaken towards the end of the study.
- Chapter Three is concerned with exploring the nature, scope and extent of volunteering (both formal and informal) in the case study areas. It does so primarily with reference to data garnered from the two household surveys undertaken by the study team.
- Chapter Four examines the issue at the heart of the report - the economic contribution of the social economy across our case study neighbourhoods. It

presents estimates for the economic values that can be associated with the social economy in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, drawing on responses from the survey of Social Economy organisations and longitudinal data from the household surveys to do so.

- Chapter Five explores the prospects of social economy organisations in the case study neighbourhoods. It does so both *collectively* by identifying shared issues that were identified by them, and *geographically*, by identifying risk, resilience and recovery factors for each of the case study areas, drawing on an analytical framework devised by Innes and Jones (2006). It draws primarily on data derived from in-depth interviews with social economy stakeholders undertaken at the end of the study.
- Chapter Six reflects on the key issues to emerge from the study.
- Appendix 1 presents profiles of the case study areas.

# Key characteristics of social economies of the case study neighbourhoods

## 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to profile social economy organisations in the case study areas and paint a picture of the local VCS architecture. It does so, principally, by drawing on the survey of social economy organisations, which was undertaken towards the end of the study. The chapter is divided into three sections, including this one. Section two highlights some of the key findings of the survey. Section three pulls this analysis together, combining it with qualitative data collected by study team, to provide profiles of the VCS architecture in each of the six case study areas.

## 2.2. Key findings from the survey of social economy organisations

Postal questionnaires were sent to all social economy organisations in the case study areas. In all, 19 responses were received with questionnaires being secured from every area except Erinvale. Responses were secured from all the major social economy organisations in Sion Mills, Irish Street and Top-of-the-Hill, and most in Lower Castlereagh and Short Strand. The breakdown of responses by area is presented in the table below. As Table 2.1 reveals, four responses were received from organisations that were not based in one of our case study areas and which operated at a city-wide level.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2.1: Overview of survey respondents in each case study neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Number of responses	1	4	1	5	4	1	3	19

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 19

<sup>5</sup> These organisations operated in the Derry/Londonderry and Belfast disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods but were not based there.

Respondents were asked to categorise the legal status of their organisation. As Table 2.2 reveals, a little under half - nine out of 19 - reported that they had charitable status.

**Table 2.2: Legal status of social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Charitable Organisation	0	3	1	2	1	1	1	9
Community Interest Company	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Company Limited by Guarantee	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Trust	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Unincorporated	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	4

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 18

Respondents were asked to highlight where their organisations operated. As Table 2.3 reveals, there was a fairly even split between those operating exclusively within the local neighbourhood and those with a broader geographical remit. As one might have expected, organisations in the most geographically isolated area - Sion Mills - were more likely to report that they operated locally.

**Table 2.3: Social economy organisations with a single neighbourhood focus (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
No. of organisations operating <u>only in the case study</u> neighbourhood	1	0	0	3	3	0	1	8
No. of organisation operating <u>beyond the case study</u> neighbourhood	0	4	1	2	1	1	2	11

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 19

Respondents were asked to describe the principal purpose of their organisations. As Table 2.4 reveals, most reported their main purpose as being 'community development', which was cited by eight organisations. Other activities cited were: 'childcare' (2 responses); 'environment/sustainable development' (2); 'youth work/development' (2); 'sport/recreation' (1); and 'counselling/support' (1).

**Table 2.4: Main purpose of social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Accommodation/Housing/Homeless	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Advice/Advocacy/Information	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Childcare (Day care/Playgroup/After School)	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Community Development	0	3	0	2	2	0	1	8
Counselling/Support	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cross border/Cross community	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education/Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment/Sustainable Development	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Health/Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sport/Recreation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Youth work/development	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 17

Respondents were also asked if their organisations had any other purposes. Table 2.5 presents the response of the 17 organisations that did. As the table reveals, the most striking thing about their response is the breadth of activities social economy organisations in the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods are involved in, with 15 activities being highlighted. The most commonly-cited were: 'education/training' (13 responses); 'community development' (9); 'cultural' (8); 'advice/advocacy/information' (7); 'sport/recreation' (7); 'youth work/development' (7); and 'health/care' (6).

**Table 2.5: Other purposes of social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Accommodation/Housing/Homeless	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Advice/Advocacy/Information	0	2	1	1	2	0	1	7
Arts	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
Childcare (Day care/Playgroup/After School)	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Community Development	0	0	0	4	2	0	3	9
Counselling/Support	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Cross border/Cross community	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	5
Cultural	0	0	1	3	2	0	2	8
Disability	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
Education/Training	1	2	1	3	3	0	3	13
Environment/Sustainable Development	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	4
Health/Care	0	3	0	0	2	0	1	6
International Development	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sport/Recreation	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	7
Youth work/development	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	7

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 17

Table 2.6 highlights the population groups served by social economy organisations in the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods. Reflecting the diversity of their activities, organisations reported serving a range of groups. The most commonly-cited were: 'people on low income' (12 responses); 'children 5-13' (11); 'elderly people' (11); and 'young people 13-25' (11).

**Table 2.6: Main groups of people supported by social economy organisations in each neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Children 5-13	1	1	1	3	3	0	2	11
Early Years (under 5)	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
Young people (13-25)	1	0	1	4	3	0	2	11
Homeless people	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
People with disabilities	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	5
People on low incomes	0	2	1	4	3	0	2	12
People of a particular race or ethnic origin	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
People with drug/alcohol-related issues	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Elderly people	0	3	1	1	4	0	2	11
Women	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	6

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 19

Respondents were asked to highlight whether their organisations employed paid staff, with Table 2.7 presenting the responses to this question.

**Table 2.7: Social economy organisations employment of paid staff in each case study neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Paid staff	1	4	1	4	1	1	1	13
No paid staff	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	5

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 18

Respondents were also asked to highlight how many paid staff they employed. As Table 2.8 reveals, the numbers of paid staff varied markedly across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. While in Sion Mills, only one paid worker was employed across its three principal social economy organisations, 121 were employed in Lower Castlereagh, with one organisation (Oasis) employing over 100.

**Table 2.8: Total no. of paid staff employed by social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
No. of employees	6	121	3	20	1	2	14	167
No. of FTE employees	1	89.5	3.5	12.5	0.5	2	12	121

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 18

Respondents were asked to highlight how many volunteers their organisations had. As Table 2.9 reveals, the numbers varied markedly across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, from 247 in Sion Mills to 35 in Short Strand. This issue is explored in more depth in the next chapter when survey data are used to unpick volunteering rates within the areas.

**Table 2.9: Numbers of volunteers in social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Total number	35	93	40	173	247	1	98	687
No. in management roles	10	24	12	38	21	0	28	133
No. in administrative roles	10	5	1	4	11	0	7	38
No. delivering services	35	39	0	35	13	0	20	142
No. in other roles	35	35	27	41	5	0	34	177

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 18

Respondents were asked whether staffing levels in their organisations had changed in the last year. As table 2.10 highlights, seven reported that they now employed more paid employees, with three reporting a decrease. Five reported an unaltered staffing base.

More than half of respondents reported that the number of volunteers in their organisation had grown in the last year, with eight reporting that the number was unchanged. Only one organisation reported a fall in volunteer numbers.



**Table 2.10: Change in social economy organisations no. of employees and volunteers in the last 12 months (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
<b>Paid employees:</b>								
Increased	0	3	0	2	1	0	1	7
Remained the Same	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	5
Decreased	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
<b>Volunteers:</b>								
Increased	1	2	0	4	2	0	1	10
Remained the Same	0	2	1	1	1	1	2	8
Decreased	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 19

## 2.3. An overview of the VCS architecture in the case study neighbourhoods

The preceding section has provided a valuable insight into the social economies of the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods. This section builds on this to provide profiles of the VCS architecture within them and Erinvale. In doing so, it revisits Aiken *et al.*'s conceptual framework for understanding social economies, which was presented in Chapter One.

### 2.3.1. Lower Castlereagh

Residents of Lower Castlereagh have very few organisations located within their boundaries, however there are many options in the wider Inner East Belfast area which are very accessible.

The Oasis Caring in Action project in Castlereagh Street provides childcare, mental health support, employment training, a befriending service for elderly people and a café. Projects include a number undertaken on a cross-community basis such as crafts, photography (including exhibits at Short Strand Community Centre), cookery and a joint carol singing event with Short Strand Community Centre. Oasis is funded through government departments (grants and contracts), Big Lottery and private sector contributions. Currently they have 80 FTE staff and 20 volunteers. Oasis also undertakes projects outside East Belfast.

Just inside the Lower Castlereagh boundary is the East Belfast Network Centre in Templemore Avenue, which provides space for a number of groups, including: East Belfast Community Development Agency; East Belfast Independent Advice Centre; East Belfast Community Counselling; Engage with Age; and the Inner East Youth Project. The Network Centre is located near the Bryson Street interface, and all groups are committed to also involving Short Strand residents.

The wider Inner East Belfast area includes a number of other community groups and initiatives, many church-based, such as the East Belfast Mission which runs a number of social economy projects, some of which are located in the new Skainos Centre on the Newtownards Road. Another group with a wider East Belfast remit is the East Belfast Partnership, which along with its social economy arm Landmark

East undertakes physical and social redevelopment in the area. A current relevant project is the rebuilding of the Bryson Street Surgery, which is being partly funded through the OFMDFM's Social Investment Fund. There are also Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade companies meeting in local churches both in Lower Castlereagh and elsewhere in East Belfast. The nearby Ballymac Centre off the Newtownards Road also serves Lower Castlereagh residents, and the group Charter NI on the Newtownards Road undertakes employment training, youth work and community safety projects.

In terms of Aiken *et al.*'s social economy conceptual framework, most of the activities undertaken by VCS organisations in the area fall under the umbrella of *community development*, with some churches playing a *stewarding* role and in one case (East Belfast Mission) an important *entrepreneurship* role. Landmark East has played an entrepreneurial role for many years in its capacity as a local non-profit property developer.

### **2.3.2. Short Strand**

Short Strand has a well-developed VCS based around the activities in the Community Centre, the Doyle Youth Centre and, to a lesser extent, St Matthew's Church, the social club and the primary school. Some residents also use the Oasis Project in Castlereagh Street and organisations based in the East Belfast Network Centre in Templemore Avenue.

The largest base for community activity is the Short Strand Community Centre. It houses a number of projects including a café, IT training for young people (Short Strand Bytes), crèche and mothers and toddlers group, women's group, seniors' group, benefits and other advice, job club and youth services. Short Strand Community Forum provides advocacy for the area by working with local statutory services, for example, as part of the Inner East Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. Both the Forum and the Short Strand Partnership (which runs the Community Centre) have a paid worker (three in total) funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and the Centre's projects attract funding from various other sources. The Community Centre has recently been refurbished at a cost of £95,000, funded by Belfast City Council.

The smaller Doyle Youth Centre is also important in the area, with a membership of around 60 per cent of the local young people. It is funded by the Belfast Education and Library Board. It is managed by a full-time youth worker and there are six part-time staff. The Centre attracts a large number of volunteers, up to 30 at any one time. The Centre attracted capital funding for improved facilities, opened in 2012, but the wide range of activities (including some cross-community projects with the Inner East Belfast Youth Project) still necessitates meeting elsewhere. As well as sports activities, projects include: boys' personal development group, young women's group, after school project, awareness of bullying project, trips to America and Romania, mentoring and a community relations project with Lagan Village (Ravenhill area). The St Matthew's social club and a Pigeon Club are private facilities for adults. St Matthew's Church provides a group for children with special needs, run by volunteers.

In terms of Aiken *et al.*'s social economy conceptual framework, most of the activities undertaken by VCS organisations in the area fall under the umbrella of *community development*.

### **2.3.3. Irish Street**

Irish Street has relatively few VCS organisations. However, it does have a community centre which is administered by the Irish Street Community Association

(ISCA). As of January 2015, ISCA employed three members of staff. In December 2014 ISCA lost a staff member when his International Fund for Ireland (IFI) funding was terminated and there was uncertainty around whether the resulting staffing base would be maintained. The activities of ISCA are overseen by a management committee. The community centre is well used with it being home to more than 30 activities per week. In terms of Aiken *et al.*'s social economy conceptual framework, most of the activities undertaken by Irish Street fall under the umbrella of *community development*.

### 2.3.4. *Top-of-the-Hill*

Top-of-the-Hill has a range of VCS organisations, the majority of which are relatively small and informal. The area does not have a community centre although there are plans to build one in it. For most of the period covered by the study, VCS activity in the area centred on four organisations:

- **The Whistle Project.** This initiative, which is based in a former NIHE property, is concerned with organising activities for younger people. Although, the initiative does use local volunteers, it is particularly reliant on paid workers - at the beginning of 2015 it employed five paid staff. At the time of our last interview in early 2015 with our key contact at the project, there was uncertainty whether the funding of Neighbourhood Renewal-funded staff would continue in 2015-16.
- **Hillcrest.** This organisation, which shared a former NIHE property with Top-of-the-Hill 2010 (see below), is concerned with working with vulnerable adults and older people, in particular. It provides a range of services in relation to community well-being and health. At the beginning of 2015 it employed three staff, although it was not clear whether they would be funded by Neighbourhood Renewal monies in the future. Early in 2015, Hillcrest and Top-of-the-Hill 2010 merged.
- **Top-of-the-Hill 2010.** The remit of this organisation was to ensure the development of neighbourhood and community facilities in Top-of-the-Hill. Although it fulfilled a largely strategic function, it was also involved in the delivery of services and employed four staff as of January 2015. However, there was some uncertainty whether these staff members would continue to be funded.
- **Na Piarsaigh Doire Trasna.** This is the local GAA club. Although it no longer has a physical presence in the area with the demolition of its sports pavilion, it is very active in the area. In the VCS survey it reported that it employed eight members of the staff in the area.

Most of the voluntary activities undertaken in the area are consistent with a *community development* role in relation to the conceptual framework developed by Aiken *et al.*

### 2.3.5. *Sion Mills*

Sion Mills has numerous VCS organisations. However, most of them, because they are relatively small (and therefore 'below the radar') were not identified by the recent DETI and DSD-funded mapping exercise of the VCS in Northern Ireland.<sup>6</sup> Many of the village's VCS organisations are concerned with sporting activities - it has cricket, football, angling and bowling clubs.

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<sup>6</sup> See: [http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti\\_-\\_dsd\\_3rd\\_sector\\_final\\_report\\_160513.pdf](http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti_-_dsd_3rd_sector_final_report_160513.pdf)

Sion Mills has two active and vibrant community organisations. Sion Mills Community Association, which is run from a bespoke community building owned by the association, engages in a number of activities. It delivers activities for a range of population groups in the village including the elderly and children; and provides training. It has a relatively small financial turnover and funds itself principally through fund raising activities, although the external monies it has received have been vital to the organisation. While a number of individuals play an important role in the association, it has been reliant on the energy and commitment of one individual in particular. SMCA does not employ any paid workers.

This has also been the case for the village's other community organisation, Sion Mills Community Forum, which has also been driven by a highly motivated and committed local resident. While, as its name suggests, the forum is principally concerned with pulling together key local stakeholder groups in the village, including VCS groups, it also provides activities for local residents including football for local children, a youth club, and activities for older people. The forum has a small turnover and generates most of its income through fund raising activities. However, it has been successful in securing public funding, which for a short period paid for a youth development worker.

Another noteworthy VCS organisation is the Sion Mills Preservation Trust, which is concerned with restoring the village's numerous historical buildings, which are a legacy of its industrial past through the linen mill. It recently restored the stables complex, which is now home to a restaurant, which part-funds its activities, and conference facilities. The trust employs one full time worker to manage its activities, particular in relation to the Stables development, and the restaurant based there employs a number of staff.

In terms of the conceptual framework developed by Aiken *et al.*, most of the voluntary activities undertaken in the area are consistent with a *stewarding* role for the sector. Until recently, there was little evidence of *entrepreneurship* activities in the area. However, Sion Mills Preservation Trust is a form of social enterprise and is using monies generated from the Stables development to part-fund its other activities.

### 2.3.6. *Erinvale*

The VCS architecture in Erinvale is underdeveloped and it only has two formal VCS organisations - a football team (Finaghy United) and a bowling club (Finaghy Bowls Club). Local residents attribute this to a number of factors:

- **The absence of any communal space from which local groups could operate.** Although Wedderburn playing fields, which is located at the heart of the neighbourhood, is an excellent resource and used by the football and bowling clubs, the area lacks a space for local groups to meet. As one resident noted: "*This place would benefit so much from a community facility to bring people together even if it's only for a coffee morning.*" (Matthew, third interview)
- **The age of the local population.** It was reported that the age profile of the area - it was perceived to have a relatively old population - also contributed to the immaturity of the VCS in the neighbourhood.
- **The proliferation of opportunities to volunteer close to the area,** particularly on Finaghy Road, which was home to a number of churches (as is highlighted in the next chapter, many Erinvale residents volunteered through local churches). Finaghy Road was also home to a number of other VCS organisations including: youth clubs; Brownie, Guide and Scout groups; lunch clubs; and hospital visiting schemes.
- **A lack of volunteering tradition within the area.**

## 2.4. Summary

A survey of social economy organisations was conducted towards the end of the study, which elicited a response from 19, all of which were based in the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods. It revealed that:

- A little under half - nine out of 19 - of organisations surveyed reported that they had charitable status.
- The most commonly-cited principal purpose of organisations was community development, which was cited by eight. However, organisations were involved in a range of other activities, with the most frequently-cited being: 'education/training'; 'cultural'; 'advice/advocacy/information'; 'youth work/development' and 'health/care.'
- Social economy organisations in the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods served a range of population groups. The most commonly-cited were: 'people on low incomes' (12 responses); 'children 5-13' (11); 'elderly people' (11); and 'young people 13-25' (11).
- The numbers of paid staff employed by social economy organisations varied markedly across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. While in Sion Mills, only one paid worker was employed across its three principal social economy organisations, 121 were employed in Lower Castlereagh, with one organisation (Oasis) employing over 100.
- The numbers of residents volunteering in our case study organisations (over the last 12 months) fluctuated markedly across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, from 247 in Sion Mills to 35 in Short Strand.

There was a dichotomy with regard to where the case study areas were situated in terms of the Aiken *et al.* social economy typology. While most of the activities in Irish Street, Top-of-the-Hill, Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh could be characterised as *community development*, most in Sion Mills fell under the umbrella of *stewarding*. *Entrepreneurship* activities were very limited across the case studies although examples were found in Sion Mills and Lower Castlereagh. As Erinvale's social economy is very underdeveloped, it was not possible (or appropriate) to classify it.

# The nature and form of volunteering in the case study neighbourhoods

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with exploring the nature, scope and extent of volunteering (both formal and informal) in the case study areas. Formal volunteering is defined as being involved with groups, clubs or organisations in the past 12 months, including taking part, supporting or helping in any way, either as an individual or with others. Informal volunteering is defined as any unpaid help given in the last 12 months to someone who is not a relative, such as a friend or neighbour.

The chapter draws on two sources: data garnered from the Wave 1 and 2 household surveys; and qualitative material generated from in-depth interviews undertaken with volunteers and members of local social economy organisations. The chapter is divided into five sections, including this one. It begins by examining formal volunteering activities in the case study neighbourhoods and then moves on to explore patterns of informal volunteering. Section 4 reconfigures the data presented in sections 2 and 3 to provide profiles of volunteering activity at the neighbourhood level. The final section summarises the key issues to emerge from the chapter.

## 3.2. Formal volunteering

The questionnaire used for the Wave 1 (baseline) and Wave 2 surveys included a number of questions relating to volunteering. Respondents were first asked whether they had volunteered in the last year. Table 3.1 presents the response to this question for the 511 respondents who comprise the longitudinal sample i.e. those residents who were interviewed in both surveys.

Nearly half (46 per cent) of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported that they had formally volunteered over the course of the study. This compares to 48 per cent of respondents in the better-off comparator, Erinvale. In two areas - Sion Mills and Short Strand - more than half (55 per cent) of respondents reported that they had volunteered, and these two 'high' volunteering areas are the subject of a previously published report by the study team which seeks to explain the higher level in the area (Hickman *et al.*, 2015). The lowest annual volunteering rate was reported in Top-of-the-Hill, where 28 per cent of respondents reported that they had formally volunteered at some point during the study.

In some areas the volunteering rates differed markedly between the two waves. This was certainly the case in Short Strand where only 19 per cent of respondents reported that they had formally volunteered in the Wave 2 survey when 47 per cent



had done so in the Wave 1 (baseline) survey. In Lower Castlereagh and Irish Street the proportions of respondents reporting that they had volunteered in Wave 2 were markedly higher than those for the Wave 1 survey: 27 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively, compared to 17 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively. The increase in Lower Castlereagh may be due to the opening of the East Belfast Network Centre on Templemore Avenue, and the Skainos Centre on the Newtownards Road, both of which provide more local opportunities for volunteering, or it may be because community tensions in the area due to the 'flags dispute' have reduced over the past year.

The proportion of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods who reported that they had volunteered in both surveys was only 14 per cent. And in Top-of-the-Hill, not one respondent reported that they had volunteered in both surveys. However, in one of the case study neighbourhoods the volunteering model was a very different one - in Sion Mills nearly a third (30 per cent) reported that they had volunteered in the last year in both surveys.

**Table 3.1: Overall level of formal volunteering in each case study neighbourhood on an annual basis (percentage of respondents involved in the last 12 months)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Involved W1	47%	17%	16%	12%	43%	28%	31%	30%
Involved W2	19%	27%	38%	16%	42%	39%	29%	32%
Involved either wave	55%	36%	41%	28%	55%	48%	46%	46%
Involved both waves	11%	8%	12%	0%	30%	19%	14%	16%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

Further insight into the pattern of volunteering is provided in Table 3.2, which highlights the proportion of respondents who reported that they formally volunteered at least once a month in the preceding 12 month period in both surveys. As one might have expected, the proportion who reported they volunteered on (at least) a monthly basis was lower for the comparable annual figure presented in Table 3.1. For example, only 26 per cent of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported that they had volunteered on a monthly basis in either (or both) of the two surveys compared to 46 per who reported they did the same when asked to identify their volunteering activity on an annual basis.

Again, the table reveals marked differences at the neighbourhood level, in line with those presented in Table 3.1. For example, the proportion of respondents who reported that they had volunteered in Short Strand fell markedly between Wave 1 and 2 from 32 per cent to nine per cent, with only five per cent reporting that they had volunteered in both surveys. And in Sion Mills, again, a sizeable proportion (15 per cent) of respondents reported that they had volunteered in both surveys.

In line with the data presented in Table 3.1, which revealed the overall (annual) formal participation rate fell from 31 to 29 per cent, the monthly volunteering rate fell from 19 per cent in Wave 1 to 16 per cent in Wave 2, with the reduction being most marked in Short Strand which saw a 23 percentage point fall from 32 per cent to nine per cent.

The data presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 suggest that for many residents the connection with volunteering is a loose and fluid one with volunteering being

something that they dip in and out of on an *ad hoc* basis. While there may be a number of reasons for this, irregular working patterns appear to be a contributory factor.

*"The only volunteering that I can really do is working with the Doyle, the youth club, to go over and give a hand with the football teams whenever I can, unfortunately it's becoming less and less frequent with the night shifts I'm doing."* (Daniel, Short Strand, third interview)

As will be discussed in the summary, learning report that accompanies this report, this finding has important implications for policy - creating more substantive and self-sustaining VCS models consistent with the ideals of political discourses that promote self-help (and social enterprise) may be very difficult in areas where the pattern of volunteering is ephemeral. Conversely, the opposite will be the case in areas like Sion Mills, where the pattern of volunteering is more stable and consistent.

**Table 3.2: Level of formal volunteering in each case study neighbourhood on a monthly basis (percentage of respondents involved at least once a month)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Involved W1	32%	15%	11%	5%	21%	23%	19%	20%
Involved W2	9%	20%	17%	3%	26%	31%	16%	20%
Involved either wave	36%	27%	20%	8%	31%	40%	26%	30%
Involved both waves	5%	8%	9%	0%	15%	14%	8%	10%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

Respondents were asked to highlight where they volunteered and Table 3.3 presents the response to this question for both surveys. In the Wave 1 survey, exactly a third of longitudinal respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported that all of their formal volunteering took place within the local neighbourhood, with nearly two-thirds reporting that they also volunteered outside the neighbourhood. However, the picture in the Wave 2 survey was a very different one, with volunteering being much more spatially bounded within the local neighbourhood - more than two-thirds (68 per cent) took place locally.

It is not clear why this happened although a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors may be behind the phenomenon. A factor *pushing* residents to volunteer locally may be the costs (travel and time) associated with volunteering further afield in a context when household budgets are being squeezed. Possible factors pulling residents to volunteer locally include an increase in local volunteering opportunities and a desire, in the context of austerity, 'to look after one's own'. However, this is pure supposition - in-depth interviews with both residents and social economy stakeholders did not shed any light on the reasons behind the phenomenon.

Table 3.3 reveals some differences in terms of the results by case study area. For example, in the Wave 2 survey respondents in Lower Castlereagh were most likely to report that they volunteered locally (76 per cent did) with those in Irish Street (58 per cent) being least likely to do so. As one might have expected, respondents in the better-off comparator (Erinvale) were more likely than their counterparts in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods to report that they volunteered outside the neighbourhood: only 44 per cent reported that all of their volunteering took place locally compared to 68 per cent of respondents from the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.



**Table 3.3: Amount of formal volunteering within each case study neighbourhood (per cent of respondents)**

	Short Strand		Lower Castlereagh		Irish Street		Top-of-the-Hill		Sion Mills		Erinvale		All disadvantaged neighbourhoods		Total	
	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2
All of the time	23%	68%	52%	76%	59%	58%	24%	59%	36%	72%	49%	44%	33%	68%	37%	60%
Most of the time (i.e. at least three-quarters)	21%	0%	18%	18%	0%	5%	0%	0%	31%	0%	16%	10%	21%	3%	20%	5%
Some of the time (i.e. between a quarter and three-quarters)	22%	0%	11%	6%	6%	5%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	11%	10%	3%	8%	5%
A little of the time (i.e. less than a quarter)	19%	0%	13%	0%	7%	0%	0%	13%	0%	5%	15%	3%	9%	3%	10%	3%
None	13%	32%	5%	0%	28%	28%	76%	9%	33%	20%	13%	32%	26%	20%	23%	24%
Don't know	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	19%	0%	0%	5%	0%	1%	3%	2%	2%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 153 (W1); 162 (W2)

Those respondents to the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys who reported that they had volunteered were asked to specify what form this activity took. Table 3.4 presents the response to this question for longitudinal respondents who reported that they volunteered in either the Wave 1 or 2 survey (or both).

The table reveals the importance of child-related volunteering in the case study neighbourhoods: two of the most commonly-cited activities were 'youth/children's activities (outside school) ' and 'children's education/schools', which were cited by 15 per cent and 14 per cent of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Other activities cited by more than 10 per cent of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods were: 'sports/exercise' (15 per cent); 'local community or neighbourhood groups' (14 per cent); and 'hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs' (13 per cent).

The prevalence of activities varied by area. For example, while nearly a quarter (21 per cent) of respondents in Short Strand reported that they had volunteered in relation to sport, only four per cent in Irish Street did so. In a similar vein, while child-related volunteering was common in East Belfast (Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh) it was less so in Derry/Londonderry (Top-of-the-Hill and Irish Street).

Neighbourhood differences are a result of a multitude of factors including the volunteering tradition and demography (for example, one would expect lower levels of child-related volunteering in Irish Street as it has a relatively old population). However, one factor is of particular importance - the local volunteer/paid worker paradigm, specifically, the proliferation of VCS paid workers. Thus, the low level of child-related volunteering in Top-of-the-Hill is not evidence of a dearth of youth activities in the area, but instead a result of most local activities for children in the area being run by the paid staff of local social economy organisations.

**Table 3.4: Type of clubs, groups or organisations involved with in each case study neighbourhood across both survey waves (percentage of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Children's education/schools	17%	22%	6%	1%	20%	12%	14%	13%
Youth/children's activities (outside school)	23%	21%	5%	8%	16%	18%	15%	16%
Education of adults	5%	2%	5%	4%	9%	2%	5%	5%
Sports/exercise (taking part, coaching or going to watch)	21%	12%	4%	7%	24%	14%	15%	15%
Religion	4%	3%	12%	0%	15%	15%	8%	10%
Politics	2%	0%	1%	0%	7%	0%	3%	2%
The elderly	5%	6%	9%	0%	14%	9%	8%	8%
Health, disability and social welfare	6%	1%	1%	1%	8%	2%	4%	4%
Safety, first aid	7%	0%	1%	3%	9%	1%	5%	4%
The environment, animals	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Justice and human rights	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Local community or neighbourhood groups	18%	6%	21%	2%	17%	9%	14%	13%
Citizens' groups	2%	1%	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%	2%
Hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs	15%	0%	6%	5%	24%	11%	13%	12%
Trade union activity	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	3%	1%	2%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

The range of volunteering activities that respondents were involved in is perhaps indicative of some being involved in more than one activity. Qualitative data collected by the study team support this assertion with Edward from Sion Mills being typical of a number of volunteers we spoke to:

*"Well, all my life I was involved in sports. I'm also the chairman of the local community association for the last 21 years and I always got involved with sports, cricket, football, badminton, bowls. You name it, I got involved with it around the area....Well, I was a grade 2 referee at football and I was the secretary for the football, a secretary for the cricket, secretary to the outdoor bowls and the indoor bowls. [I] just love taking part. It gets you out too."* (Edward, Sion Mills, third interview)

Respondents to both surveys were asked to categorise the type of help they provided, with Table 3.5 presenting their response. For residents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods the most common response was 'raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events', which was cited by the 19 per cent of longitudinal respondents who reported that they had formally volunteered in either the Wave 1 or 2 surveys. Three more roles were cited by at least 10 per cent of respondents: 'organising or helping to run an activity or event' (16 per cent); 'leading the group/member of a committee' (11 per cent); and 'visiting people' (10 per cent).

Again, the types of activities reported varied by area. For example, respondents in Sion Mills were most likely to report that they were involved in 'raising or handling money' (34 per cent did) and those in Top-of-the-Hill were least likely to do so (five per cent). In a similar vein, while exactly a quarter of respondents in Sion Mills reported that they had been involved in running an event, only one per cent in Top-of-the-Hill did so. While there are factors which contribute to these neighbourhood differences, the local volunteer/paid worker paradigm is, again, a key contributory factor. The lower figures for Top-of-the-Hill in relation to raising money and organising events is a reflection of these activities being undertaken by paid workers in local social economy groups.

**Table 3.5: Type of formal volunteering help and support provided in each case study neighbourhood across both survey waves (percentage of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhood	Total
Raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events	22%	11%	10%	5%	34%	13%	19%	18%
Leading the group/member of a committee	9%	11%	7%	2%	21%	13%	11%	12%
Organising or helping to run an activity or event	18%	10%	20%	1%	25%	15%	16%	16%
Visiting people	14%	11%	6%	1%	15%	10%	10%	10%
Befriending or mentoring people	6%	8%	4%	1%	8%	4%	6%	5%
Giving advice/information/counselling	8%	5%	3%	0%	12%	7%	6%	7%
Secretarial, admin or clerical work	5%	4%	5%	0%	10%	5%	5%	5%
Providing transport/driving	2%	2%	4%	0%	13%	9%	5%	6%
Representing	6%	0%	4%	0%	8%	5%	4%	4%
Campaigning	4%	0%	3%	0%	8%	4%	4%	4%
Other practical help (e.g. helping out at school, shopping)	10%	5%	6%	5%	9%	9%	8%	8%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

Respondents to the both the Wave 1 and 2 surveys were asked to identify the sector(s) where their volunteering activities were located. As Table 3.6 reveals, the majority of formal volunteering took place in the community and voluntary sectors in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the Wave 2 survey: 54 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, fell into these categories. The public and private sectors both accounted for five per cent of activity while faith-based volunteering groups accounted for 13 per cent.

Respondents in Erinvale were much more likely to report that the organisation they volunteered for was faith-based - 42 per cent in the Wave 1 survey, and 32 per cent in the Wave 2 survey, did so. This compares to 13 per cent of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods who did so in both surveys.

*"Well we have a bible study in our house every month for the church but my wife would do more but at the moment she's had to scale it down cos she's had a hip replacement. It takes up a lot of time. The next ones in about 10 days and it takes me that length of time to get... and things don't always go smoothly even if you have done everything. We also do visiting of other members of the church most weeks and whatever other work needs doing. Helping people and trying to make them understand more about what they're reading normally every day, and the getting together as well with people you know pretty well and it's nice, I enjoy it." (Brian, Erinvale, second interview)*

*"I was going to go out tomorrow giving out calendars for the church but it due to rain and it's up and down the hills. The problem is that any work that needs done, it's the older ones that are doing it." (Brian, Erinvale, third interview)*

*"I: When we last spoke, you don't do a lot in the community, you don't volunteer locally cos your time's taken up with your grandchildren. Is that still the case?*

*R: Well I go to church, I think from last year I'm on the vestry now in church so you've more to do with the running of things in the church. They just voted me on so I didn't really choose to do it. I just sort of fit it in. I prefer to be busy." (Fiona, Erinvale, second interviews)*

**Table 3.6: Formal volunteering by organisation type in each case study neighbourhood (percentage of respondents involved in formal volunteering)**

	Short Strand		Lower Castlereagh		Irish Street		Top-of-the-Hill		Sion Mills		Erinvale		All disadvantaged neighbourhoods		Total	
	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2
Private Sector	11%	3%	9%	6%	0%	2%	17%	0%	6%	7%	4%	8%	8%	5%	7%	6%
Public Sector	2%	0%	13%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	2%	12%	0%	15%	3%	5%	3%	8%
Voluntary Sector	48%	20%	61%	61%	54%	0%	0%	31%	48%	28%	39%	25%	46%	25%	45%	25%
Community Sector	65%	50%	11%	33%	69%	67%	73%	78%	59%	49%	25%	25%	60%	54%	52%	45%
Faith Groups	13%	11%	11%	0%	11%	25%	0%	0%	15%	13%	42%	32%	13%	13%	19%	19%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 153 (W1); 162 (W2)

In the Wave 2 survey, respondents were asked to indicate how important they felt the VCS was. As Table 3.7 reveals, most (69 per cent) residents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods felt that it was 'very important', with 22 per cent feeling that it was 'quite important'. Residents in the better-off comparator, Erinvale, were less likely to feel this way - only 53 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, responded in this way.

As one might have expected, the area with the most vibrant and developed VCS - Sion Mills - had the highest proportion (82 per cent) of respondents reporting that the sector was 'very important'. The lowest figure was recorded in Lower Castlereagh where 39 per cent of respondents reported that it was 'very important'. The importance of the VCS was confirmed in qualitative interviews, including concern about the consequences if funding were to be reduced:

*"... the more people you have out helping each other, to me it's always going to Make the community far stronger and far better.... I think people have come to rely on the likes of the elderly support, if they were to be left on their own it would definitely be detrimental. And the kids, if they were to cut the volunteers for the kids' football anti-social behaviour would start to creep back in again."* (Daniel, Short Strand, third interview)

*"For the younger ones especially, during the summer when there's trouble, it can be murder here in the summer, and they always try and get the kids away round about the times that they know... all the kids would be here, there would be bedlam."* (Shirley, Short Strand, third interview)

**Table 3.7: Resident perceptions of the importance of the voluntary and community sector in each case study neighbourhood (percentage of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Very important	63%	39%	67%	78%	82%	53%	69%	65%
Quite important	17%	38%	29%	18%	16%	21%	22%	21%
Quite unimportant	4%	14%	0%	2%	2%	8%	4%	5%
Very unimportant	0%	5%	0%	2%	0%	7%	1%	3%
Don't know	15%	4%	4%	0%	0%	11%	5%	6%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

### 3.3. Informal volunteering

Respondents to both the Wave 1 and 2 surveys were asked to indicate whether they had informally volunteered in the last 12 months. Table 3.8 presents the response to this question for the longitudinal respondents.

As it reveals, nearly half (46 per cent) of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported that they had volunteered informally at some point over the duration of the study. This compares to 36 per cent of respondents in Erinvale who responded in the same way.

Like formal volunteering, informal volunteering appeared to be episodic with only 11 per cent of the longitudinal sample in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reporting that



they had informally volunteered in both the Wave 1 and 2 surveys. Respondents in Sion Mills were most likely to fall into this category (19 per cent reported that they volunteered in both waves); those in Top-of-the-Hill least likely to do so (two per cent).

In line with the data for formal volunteering, fewer respondents living in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported in the Wave 2 survey that they had volunteered in the last 12 months than did so in the Wave 1 survey (21 per cent compared to 35 per cent). There may be a myriad of reasons why volunteering rates (both formal and informal) have fallen over the course of the study. However, it is likely that one contributory factor is that the struggle of many residents to 'get-by' has (understandably) made them more inward looking, a phenomenon predicted by the New Economics Foundation (2012).

**Table 3.8: Overall level of informal volunteering in each case study neighbourhood on an annual basis (percentage of respondents involved in the last 12 months)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Involved W1	47%	30%	30%	25%	37%	12%	35%	30%
Involved W2	12%	30%	24%	8%	30%	31%	21%	24%
Involved either wave	53%	52%	41%	32%	48%	36%	46%	43%
Involved both waves	7%	7%	13%	2%	19%	7%	11%	10%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

The data presented in Table 3.9 present informal volunteering rates over the course of the study at a monthly (at least) level. They are very much in line with those presented in Table 3.8. First, the table reveals that monthly informal volunteering amongst longitudinal respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods has fallen over the course of the study, from 28 per cent in the Wave 1 survey to 14 per cent in the Wave 2 survey. Second, the proportion of respondents who consistently informally volunteered over the duration of the study is relatively low - only six per cent reported that they had volunteered in the last month in both surveys. Third, the results vary at the neighbourhood level.

**Table 3.9: Level of informal volunteering in each case study neighbourhood on a monthly basis (percentage of respondents involved at least once a month)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Involved W1	44%	22%	27%	20%	23%	10%	28%	24%
Involved W2	8%	23%	16%	4%	20%	21%	14%	16%
Involved either wave	49%	43%	32%	22%	33%	25%	37%	34%
Involved both waves	3%	2%	11%	2%	10%	5%	6%	6%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

As was the case with formal volunteering, respondents were asked to identify where their informal volunteering took place. Table 3.10 presents the response to this

question. In line with the data for formal volunteering, the table shows that the proportion of informal volunteering taking place in the local neighbourhood grew markedly over the course of the study. In the Wave 1 survey just over a third (35 per cent) of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods reported that all of their informal volunteering took place locally; by the time of the Wave 2 survey this figure had risen to 78 per cent. While all areas saw increases, the most marked ones took place in Short Strand and Top-of-the-Hill.

Nearly one in five (17 per cent) of respondents in the aggregate sample reported that they only volunteered outside their local neighbourhood in the Wave 2 survey. As one might have expected, respondents in Erinvale were more likely than their counterparts in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods to do so (20 per cent compared to 16 per cent). Perhaps surprisingly, the proportion of respondents who reported that none of their volunteering took place locally grew (in the Wave 1 survey only seven per cent of respondents in the aggregate sample reported that their volunteering fell into this category, although the picture varied by neighbourhood).

Taken together, these findings reveal that over the course of the study informal volunteering became more geographically concentrated, with fewer respondents reporting that they volunteered both within and outside their neighbourhoods. While there may be many reasons for this, it appears that time may be a factor - in the context of the day-to-day struggle that many residents faced to 'get-by', they simply did not have the time to volunteer in more than one area. Other data generated by the survey support this supposition - as is explored in depth in Chapter Five, the hours devoted to volunteering by residents in the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods fell over the course of the study.

**Table 3.10: Amount of informal volunteering within each case study neighbourhood (per cent of respondents)**

	Short Strand		Lower Castlereagh		Irish Street		Top-of-the-Hill		Sion Mills		Erinvale		All disadvantaged neighbourhoods		Total	
	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2
All of the time	13%	84%	24%	45%	31%	73%	45%	100%	60%	88%	30%	55%	35%	78%	34%	70%
Most of the time (i.e. at least three-quarters)	23%	0%	52%	12%	18%	0%	8%	0%	28%	2%	19%	0%	25%	3%	25%	2%
Some of the time (i.e. between a quarter and three-quarters)	38%	0%	5%	5%	13%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%	17%	1%	15%	5%
A little of the time (i.e. less than a quarter)	23%	12%	18%	5%	29%	0%	6%	0%	4%	0%	24%	8%	16%	3%	16%	4%
None	1%	4%	0%	32%	6%	27%	25%	0%	3%	10%	27%	20%	5%	16%	7%	17%
Don't know	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	2%	1%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 151 (W1); 120 (W2)

Respondents to both surveys were asked to specify the form their informal volunteering took. Table 3.11 presents the response to this question. The most commonly-cited type of activity was 'baby sitting or caring for children', which was cited by 19 per cent of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods in either the Wave 1 or 2 surveys (or both).

The importance of this form of informal volunteering also clearly emerged from the qualitative work undertaken by the study team and a number of longitudinal panel members identified it as being a vital source of support.

*"If you've got people stuck in the house, you can't get out for messages, the likes of myself and if people come round and you need something, thank goodness for that, you call them volunteers or just good neighbours." (Liam, Lower Castlereagh, third interview)*

The next two most commonly-cited activities were 'doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills' (16 per cent) and 'keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out' (15 per cent). Qualitative data collected by the study team revealed that elderly residents were most likely to be the recipients of these activities.

*"I would do wee things for neighbours: the lady next door is very elderly and I call in every now and again and ask her: does she want anything? But that's just a neighbourly thing...she knows if she needs anything at all, she knows she can come to me. And I know if I have anything I need from any of them all I have to do is call into their houses and they would be the same with me." (Victoria, Short Strand, first interview)*

*"Maybe my wee neighbour who lives down the street; she's on her own and me and one of the other neighbours would call in and check on her 'coz, like she's on a wee walking frame. And then again not long ago the electricity went out and people would run down, and that, and make sure she was OK and make sure she had candles and things." (Clarissa, Short Strand, first interview)*

*"The wee bit of snow we had I had a big snow shovel and I cleaned next door's and the wee path up the whole length of this path, no-one asked me, I just thought if I'm clearing mine I can clear a path for everybody else, done me father's drive and the old lady that lives next door, I did hers as well. I just did it, I wasn't asked." (Tony, Top-of-the-Hill, second interview)*

*"... my husband's really handy, sometimes we'll get a knock on the door if it's somebody who needs help with their car or help some of the ladies in the street who want help keeping their garden in order, or sometimes he'll get asked about helping out with forms.." (Maggie, Lower Castlereagh, second interview)*

Elderly residents were also more likely to be beneficiaries of two of the other activities that were cited by at least 10 per cent of respondents: 'cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening or other routine household jobs' (11 per cent); and 'transporting or escorting someone (for example to a hospital, or on an outing)' (10 per cent).

*"We bring people to church and their husbands, most of them are dead. And they like you to talk cos they've nobody to talk to, their families are ok but they can only be there for a time and you can do that sort of thing, visitation and just talking to people, just being there, for people that is a big thing cos there's so many lonely people who don't see anybody in a 24 hour period except the television." (Brian, Erinvale, second interview)*

The only other activity cited by at least 10 per cent of respondents was 'giving advice', which was cited by 12 per cent. The types of informal voluntary activities undertaken varied by area. For example, respondents in Short Strand were most likely to report that they 'baby sat or cared for children ' (25 per cent did) with those in Sion Mills most likely to report that they had given advice (22 per cent).

**Table 3.11: Type of informal volunteering help and support provided in each case study neighbourhood across both survey waves (percentage of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Erinvale	All disadvantaged neighbourhoods	Total
Keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about (visiting in person, telephoning or e-mailing)	24%	13%	17%	1%	14%	13%	15%	15%
Doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills	23%	10%	17%	13%	12%	8%	16%	14%
Cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening or other routine household jobs	21%	7%	10%	4%	8%	6%	11%	10%
Decorating, or doing any kind of home or car repairs	8%	12%	2%	1%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Baby sitting or caring for children	25%	19%	12%	14%	20%	6%	19%	16%
Sitting with or providing personal care (e.g. washing, dressing) for someone who is sick or frail	3%	2%	8%	0%	3%	1%	3%	3%
Looking after a property or a pet for someone who is away	4%	2%	5%	3%	7%	3%	4%	4%
Giving advice	11%	7%	5%	6%	22%	10%	12%	11%
Writing letters or filling in forms	9%	6%	6%	2%	16%	5%	9%	8%
Representing someone (for example talking to a council department, or to a doctor)	4%	2%	4%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Transporting or escorting someone (for example to a hospital, or on an outing)	9%	13%	10%	5%	13%	13%	10%	11%

Source: Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys of residents  
Base: 510

### 3.4. Place-based volunteering profiles

As the analysis presented so far in the report has largely been configured thematically, it is useful here to pull it together by place to offer volunteering profiles of each of the case study neighbourhoods.

#### 3.4.1. Lower Castlereagh

- 36 per cent of respondents reported they had formally volunteered (in the last 12 months) in either the Wave 1 or 2 surveys.
- The proportion of respondents formally volunteering has risen from 17 per cent in Wave 1 to 27 per cent in Wave 2.
- Notwithstanding this, informal volunteering is more common in the area than formal volunteering - 30 per cent of respondents to the Wave 2 survey reported that they had informally volunteered in the last 12 months, with 52 per cent reporting that they had volunteered in the Wave 1 or 2 surveys (or both).
- The most popular form of formal volunteering in the area was working with initiatives relating to 'children's education/schools' and 'youth/children's activities (outside school)', which were cited by 22 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, of respondents who reported undertaking this activity in one or both of the surveys.
- The most popular form of informal volunteering in the neighbourhood was: 'baby sitting or caring for children', which was cited by 19 per cent of respondents; followed by, 'keeping in touch' (13 per cent); and 'transporting and escorting someone' (13 per cent).

#### 3.4.2. Short Strand

- In terms of the overall volunteering picture in the area, it has high levels of both formal and informal volunteering. However, volunteering in the area appeared to be episodic and *ad hoc* with relatively few residents reporting that they volunteered in both the Wave 1 and 2 surveys. Only five per cent of respondents reported that they had formally volunteered on a monthly basis over the last 12 months in both surveys while the figure was only three per cent in relation to informal volunteering.
- The level of formal volunteering (in the last 12 months) in the area fell dramatically over the course of the study from 47 per cent in Wave 1 to 19 per cent in Wave 2.
- The most common type of social economy organisations that residents were involved in were: 'youth/children's activities - outside schools' (which was cited by 23 per cent of volunteers); sporting organisations (21 per cent); 'local community or neighbourhood groups' (18 per cent); and 'children's education/schools' (17 per cent).
- Not unexpectedly given its central location, a significant proportion of both formal and informal volunteering undertaken by volunteers takes place outside the area.
- In terms of the types of formal volunteering activities undertaken by residents in Short Strand, the most common were: 'raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events' (22 per cent); 'organising or helping to run an event or activity' (18 per cent); 'visiting people' (14 per cent); and 'other practical help' (10 per cent).

- With regard to informal volunteering in Short Strand, more than half (53 per cent) of respondents had undertaken informal volunteering at some point in the study. But the participation rate fell dramatically over the course of study, from 47 per cent in Wave 1 to 12 per cent in Wave 2.

### **3.4.3. Irish Street**

- More than a third (38 per cent) of respondents reported that they had formally volunteered in the last 12 months in the Wave 2 survey. This represents an increase of 22 percentage points - in the Wave 1 survey, only 16 per cent of respondents reported that they had volunteered.
- Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents to the Wave 2 survey reported that they had undertaken some form of informal volunteering in the last 12 months.

### **3.4.4. Top-of-the-Hill**

- Formal volunteering rates in the area are relatively low - only 16 per cent of respondents reported that they had volunteered in the last 12 months in the Wave 2 survey. This compares to 29 per cent of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods who did the same. Furthermore, much of the volunteering that takes place in the area appears to be sporadic and episodic - only five per cent of respondents in Wave 1, and three per cent in Wave 2, reported that they had volunteered on a monthly basis over the last 12 months. Not a single respondent reported that they had volunteered in both surveys.
- Informal volunteering is more prevalent in the area with 32 per cent of respondents reporting that they had volunteered in the last 12 months in either the Wave 1 or 2 surveys (or both).

### **3.4.5. Sion Mills**

- Sion Mills has high levels of volunteering, both formal and informal. More than half (55 per cent) of residents reported that they had volunteered formally at some point over the course of the study. This compares to the average for the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of 46 per cent; in Sion Mills 48 per cent had undertaken some informal voluntary activity over the course of the study.
- Data collected by the study team suggest that volunteers in Sion Mills were the most consistent in terms of the frequency of their volunteering - nearly a third (30 per cent) reported that they had formally volunteered in the last 12 months in both the Wave 1 and 2 surveys. This compares to the average for the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of 14 per cent.
- Most formal and informal volunteering takes place in the village itself, with this particularly being the case for informal volunteering. Given the relative isolation of the village, this is perhaps not surprising.
- The most common type of organisations for volunteers to be involved in were sports-based, or concerned with hobbies, recreation, arts and social activities, which were both cited by 24 per cent of volunteers in one or both of the surveys.
- In terms of the types of formal volunteering activities undertaken by residents in Sion Mills, there appears to be a particular emphasis on fund raising activities in the village, with 34 per cent of formal volunteers reporting that they were involved in this activity. Given the nature of its social economy organisations, most of which are relatively small and predominantly self-funded, this is not a surprise. The next two most common forms of activity were 'organising an event



or activity', which was cited by 25 per cent of respondents, and 'leading a group or being on a committee' (21 per cent).

- In terms of the types of activity that informal volunteers were involved in, the most common were: 'giving advice' which was cited by 22 per cent of respondents; 'baby sitting or caring for children' (20 per cent); 'writing letters or filling in forms' (16 per cent); and 'keeping in touch' (14 per cent).

### 3.4.6. *Erinvale*

- In terms of its VCS architecture, Erinvale only has two formal VCS organisations - a football and bowls team. As noted earlier, local residents attribute this to three factors; the absence of any communal space from which local groups could operate; a lack of volunteering tradition within the area; and the proliferation of opportunities to volunteer close by the area, particularly on Finaghy Road.
- 48 per cent of respondents reported that they had formally volunteered in the last 12 months in either the Wave 1 or 2 surveys. More than a third (36 per cent) of respondents reported that they had informally volunteered in the last 12 months in either the Wave 1 or 2 surveys, with seven per cent reporting that they had volunteered in both surveys.
- As one might have expected, compared to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the proportions of formal and informal volunteering that took place outside the neighbourhood was higher in Erinvale.
- In terms of the sector in which respondents reported that they formally volunteered, the most common response was 'faith', which was cited by 32 per cent. This was the highest proportion for all the case study neighbourhoods (the figure for the disadvantaged neighbourhoods was only 13 per cent).

## 3.5. Summary

Perhaps the key finding of this chapter is that the pattern and nature of volunteering within the case study neighbourhoods differs greatly. And as highlighted in Chapter Two, so too does the VCS architecture with them. Specifically, the volunteering and VCS paradigms within the case studies differ in relation to:

- **The size and maturity of the VCS.** For example, while Short Strand and Sion Mills have relatively well-developed and comprehensive VCSs, the ones in Irish Street and, in particular, the better-off comparator, Erinvale, are less well-developed.
- **The type of organisations that comprise the VCS.** In the rural case study, Sion Mills, the organisations that comprise the local VCS were relatively small and 'below the radar' - i.e. they had not been picked up by formal sector mapping exercises in Northern Ireland, and these organisations did not employ paid workers. However, this was not the case in Irish Street, Short Strand and Top-of-the-Hill, where a very different volunteering model appeared to exist. In these areas volunteering activities were very much driven by paid workers employed by formally constituted, larger organisations.
- **Volunteering rates, both formal and informal.** The rates were highest in Sion Mills and Short Strand, and lowest in Top-of-the-Hill.
- **The balance between formal and informal volunteering.** In Sion Mills and Erinvale, the (12 months) formal volunteering rate exceeded the informal rate while in Top-of-the-Hill and Lower Castlereagh the opposite was the case. In Short Strand and Irish Street the rates were broadly similar.

- **The types of voluntary activities that volunteers engage in.**

However, the research has also highlighted a number of similarities between the areas:

- For many residents the connection with volunteering is a loose and fluid one with volunteering being something that they dip and in and out of on an *ad hoc* and 'as and when basis'. As will be discussed in the key learning report that accompanies this report, this has important implications for policy - creating more substantive and self-sustaining VCS models consistent with the ideals of political discourses that promote self-help (and social enterprise) may be very difficult in areas where the pattern of volunteering is ephemeral. Conversely, the opposite will be the case in areas like Sion Mills, where the pattern is more stable and consistent.
- In four of the areas (Lower Castlereagh, Irish Street, Top-of-the-Hill and Erinvale) the proportion of respondents formally volunteering grew over the course of the study. The outlier was Short Strand, which saw the participation rate fall from 47 per cent in the Wave 1 survey to 19 per cent in the Wave 2 survey (in Sion Mills there was a one percentage point fall).
- Over the course of the study the proportion of volunteering activity taking place in the local neighbourhood increased markedly. For example, in the context of formal volunteering in the last 12 months, the proportion of respondents in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods who reported that all of their volunteering took place locally increased from 33 per cent to 68 per cent.
- Historically, studies of volunteering have focused on formal volunteering. However, the research has shown the important role that informal volunteering plays.

# The economic contribution of the social economy in the case study neighbourhoods

## 4.1. Introduction

As discussed earlier in this report, one of the primary objectives of the study has been to examine **how the social economy in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland has evolved** (or not) since 2012, using our case study neighbourhoods to illustrate this and provide some comparison with the social economy in better-off neighbourhoods where possible. A particular focus of this element of the research has been to explore the extent to which **different components of the social economy have contributed to the rebalancing of the wider economy of disadvantaged neighbourhoods** in Northern Ireland, where the squeeze from declining public sector spending at the local level is being most acutely felt. To meet this objective the study team has attempted to create an assessment of the economic contribution of the social economy in our case study areas over the course of the study, and consider the prospects for this contribution to be sustained or increase in the future. This economic assessment has focused on capturing evidence from two perspectives:

- local **social economy organisations**, using data from the survey of these organisations undertaken in each neighbourhood
- and local **residents**, using longitudinal data from the household survey on their involvement in formal and informal volunteering.

In this chapter, then, we present estimates for the economic values that can be associated with social economy activity across our case study neighbourhoods, addressing each perspective in turn. It is important to note, however, that the figures presented are **estimates** based on the data that have been collected by the study team, and should be treated as **illustrative** of the type and level of economic contribution the social economy could make within disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland if **certain assumptions within the data hold true**. At a neighbourhood level in particular, these estimates are **sensitive to small fluctuations** at an organisational and individual level, such as the amount of funding received by social economy organisations or the amount of time individuals spend volunteering. Although neighbourhood-level data are presented for completeness the analysis and discussion that accompanies them focus on the **aggregate data** for our case study areas and the overall implications they have for economic rebalancing.

## 4.2. An organisation-level perspective on the economic contribution of the social economy

The organisation-level perspective is based on responses to the survey of social economy organisations in our case study neighbourhoods.<sup>7</sup> Respondents to this survey were asked to provide a range of information on their financial circumstances from which an assessment of their economic contribution and wider economic prospects can be made. This includes organisations' income level and the amount of income received over the course of the study, the extent of financial surplus or deficits made, and their sources of external funding.

Table 4.1 presents the income level of social economy organisations across our case study neighbourhoods<sup>8, 9</sup>. This suggests that there is a mix of organisations of different sizes that operate at a neighbourhood level. Nine respondents were micro or small in size with annual incomes of less than £100,000, five were medium-sized with an annual income of between £100,000 and £1 million, and two were large with an annual income of more than £1 million. Closer inspection of these data reveals considerable variations by neighbourhood: both of the large organisations were based in East Belfast whilst in Sion Mills and Derry/Londonderry the majority of organisations were small or micro.

**Table 4.1: Income level of social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood (no. of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Micro (£10,000 or less)	-	0	-	0	1	1	1	3
Small (£10,000-£100,000)	-	1	-	2	3	0	0	6
Medium (£100,000-£1m)	-	2	-	3	0	0	0	5
Large (£1m or more)	-	1	-	0	0	0	1	2

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 16

Clearly, in neighbourhoods where social economy organisations have only small amounts of income their economic contribution is far less than in neighbourhoods with larger organisations. This is illustrated by Table 4.2, which provides an overview of the total annual income of social economy organisations that responded to the survey across our case study neighbourhoods between 2011-12 and 2013-14. It shows that overall, the income of these organisations increased by 35 per cent over this period, rising from £3.4 million in 2011-12 to £3.7 million in 2012-13 and £4.6 million in 2013-14. Importantly, overall increases were apparent in each neighbourhood. However, the majority of this income, more than 85 per cent each year, was received by organisations based in East Belfast compared to only 11-12 per cent in Derry/Londonderry and one-two per cent in Sion Mills. This suggests that whilst social economy organisations have the potential to make a significant economic contribution in central urban city locations like East Belfast, in smaller

<sup>7</sup> As discussed earlier in the report, the survey did not cover Erinvale as the study team did not identify any social economy organisations based in this neighbourhood.

<sup>8</sup> The Short Strand and Irish Street respondents did not provide any income data

<sup>9</sup> Several organisations were based in our case study neighbourhoods in East Belfast and Derry/Londonderry but delivered across the respective cities. The data for these organisations are reported separately.

urban areas like Derry/Londonderry and rural places like Sion Mills the potential contribution is far less.

**Table 4.2: Total annual income of social economy organisations in each case study neighbourhood (2011-12-2013-14)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
2011-12	-	£1,415,969	-	£400,624	£47,429	£437	£1,500,300	£3,364,758
2012-13	-	£1,706,329	-	£455,858	£79,226	£875	£1,500,300	£3,742,588
2013-14	-	£1,968,071	-	£495,856	£92,691	£700	£2,000,500	£4,557,819

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 16

The extent to which social economy organisations can make a contribution to the economic well-being of a neighbourhood is also dependent on the extent to which they are able to make a financial surplus each year. In theory, these surpluses can be reinvested in additional services and activities to support the needs of local people. Over a longer period they also provide a picture of an organisation's sustainability. Table 4.3 provides an overview of the number of social economy organisations recording a surplus or deficit in 2013-14 and Table 4.4 provides an overview of the size of any surpluses. These data show that, overall, only five of the 18 organisations responding to the survey recorded a surplus, nine broke even and four recorded a deficit. Of the five organisations that recorded a surplus two recorded relatively small amounts of less than £2,000, two recorded between £5,000 and £10,000 and one recorded between £10,000 and £25,000. This suggests that the extent to which social economy organisations are able to reinvest at a local level is fairly limited, and that some organisations might struggle to be sustainable over the longer term.

**Table 4.3: Social economy organisations' surplus/deficit in 2013-14**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Surplus/profit	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	5
Break-even	1	2	1	3	1	0	1	9
Deficit/loss	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	4

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 18

**Table 4.4: Size of social economy organisations' surplus in 2013-14**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
£1,000 or less	-	0	-	1	0	-	-	1
Between £1,000-£2,000	-	0	-	0	1	-	-	1
Between £2,000-£5,000	-	0	-	0	0	-	-	0
Between £5,000-£10,000	-	0	-	0	2	-	-	2
Between £10,000-£25,000	-	1	-	0	0	-	-	1

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations

Base: 5

Given the recent squeeze on public sector finances and the increasing competition for other sources of funding, and the prospect that both will continue for the foreseeable future, it is important to understand where social economy organisations have been successful in bidding for funding in the past. To shed light on this Table 4.5 provides an overview of survey respondents' different sources of funding in 2013-14, including which was most important (largest). It highlights the diverse mix of income sources received by social economy organisations operating at a neighbourhood level: 14 organisations identified two or more income sources and seven organisations reported three or more sources. Grant income from non-statutory sources was the most frequently-identified income source (11 organisations) followed by Government grants and earned income from trading (10 each) and then earned income from Government sources and other income sources (seven each).

For the most important income source the picture was slightly different: the most frequently-identified most important source was earned income from Government sources (four organisations) followed by earned income from trading, Government grants, and other income sources (three each), with other income sources the least important (two). Overall, this highlights the importance of statutory funding for a significant proportion of survey respondents, with seven organisations identifying the Government as their most important source. It also highlights the limited role that non-Government social enterprise type trading currently plays for social economy organisations at a neighbourhood level, echoing the qualitative findings discussed earlier in this report. Given the expected reduction in statutory funding for social economy organisations over the next few years, this raises further concerns about the ability of these organisations to maintain their existing economic contribution without a fundamental change in their business models.

**Table 4.5: Social economy organisations' sources of funding in 2013-14**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
<b>Income received:</b>								
Earned income: Government trading	1	2	0	2	0	-	2	7
Earned income: other trading	0	2	0	4	2	-	2	10
Government grant income	0	3	1	1	3	-	2	10
Other grant income	0	2	0	3	3	-	3	11
Other income sources	0	1	1	2	2	-	1	7
<b>Most important income source:</b>								
Earned income: Government trading	1	1	0	2	0	-	0	4
Earned income: other trading	0	2	0	1	0	-	0	3
Government grant income	0	1	0	1	0	-	1	3
Other grant income	0	0	0	0	2	-	0	2
Other income sources	0	0	1	1	1	-	0	3

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 18

### 4.3. An individual-level perspective on the economic contribution of the social economy

The individual-level perspective is based on the measures of formal and informal volunteering in Chapter Three. It involves estimating the total number of hours of volunteering undertaken in each neighbourhood and assigning a monetary value to this figure, applying the following methodological steps for Wave 1 and Wave 2 survey data:

1. Calculate the number of hours of formal and informal volunteering contributed by survey respondents in each neighbourhood in the four weeks preceding the survey interview.
2. Use the four-week figure to calculate an annualised figure for the number of formal and informal volunteering hours contributed by survey respondents in each neighbourhood.
3. Use 2011 Census data to produce an extrapolated estimate of the annual number of formal and informal volunteering hours contributed by the adult population in each neighbourhood.
4. Apportion hours contributed to different formal and informal volunteering categories: within the neighbourhood; within the social economy (all areas); within the social economy (within neighbourhood only).
5. Apply monetary values to the volunteering hours contributed.



The outcome of applying the first four steps to our survey data is outlined in the remainder of this section and in Tables 4.6 and 4.7 below. The outcome of applying step five is presented in the section that follows. It should be noted that due to the low numbers of volunteers at a neighbourhood level these data are affected by outliers (e.g. a small number of individuals volunteering for a large number of hours). To account for this, the study team applied an upper limit for the number of hours provided that equated to a normal working week (i.e. 37 hours).

#### **4.3.1. *An estimate of the number of hours spent volunteering***

The data show that in our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods, overall, an estimated 514,000 formal volunteering hours per year were provided in Wave 1 compared to 333,000 hours in Wave 2: this equates to 48 hours per capita in Wave 1 and 35 hours per capita in Wave 2. In these areas the estimated number of informal volunteering hours per year was lower, with 383,000 hours in Wave 1 and 242,000 hours in Wave 2: this equates to 36 hours per capita in Wave 1 and 22 hours per capita in Wave 2. In Erinvale, the better-off comparator, an estimated 80,000 formal volunteering hours per year were provided in Wave 1 compared to 99,000 hours in Wave 2: this equates to 50 hours per capita in Wave 1 and 63 hours per capita in Wave 2. Similar to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the estimated number of informal volunteering hours per year was lower, with an estimated 7,000 hours in Wave 1 and 31,000 hours in Wave 2: this equates to 5 hours per capita in Wave 1 and 20 hours per capita in Wave 2.

This suggests that, overall, the amount of time spent involved in formal and informal volunteering in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods declined over the course of the study but increased in the better-off neighbourhood over the same time period. These changes in the number of hours provided by volunteers have implications for the overall economic contribution that they make, as outlined in the following section.

**Table 4.6: Estimated annual volunteer hours across the case study neighbourhoods**

		Formal Volunteering				Informal Volunteering	
		<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>	<i>Within SE</i>	<i>SE within NH</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>
Short Strand	<i>W1</i>	192,800	141,419	140,805	104,118	110,448	81,786
	<i>W2</i>	63,621	31,326	62,329	30,034	28,096	27,451
Lower Castlereagh	<i>W1</i>	152,761	109,613	94,084	92,314	100,154	75,268
	<i>W2</i>	118,364	114,065	108,248	106,477	156,807	112,750
Irish Street	<i>W1</i>	3,094	1,369	3,094	1,369	39,847	19,886
	<i>W2</i>	10,688	10,407	10,595	10,407	5,438	5,157
Top-of-the-Hill	<i>W1</i>	37,810	0	34,067	0	42,677	29,013
	<i>W2</i>	3,369	3,369	3,369	3,369	4,867	4,867
Sion Mills	<i>W1</i>	127,987	106,763	121,318	100,863	90,027	82,640
	<i>W2</i>	137,220	133,476	130,808	128,089	46,681	45,142
Erinvale	<i>W1</i>	79,862	47,435	79,696	47,435	7,154	3,952
	<i>W2</i>	99,495	64,971	91,342	57,900	31,279	26,521
Disadvantaged combined	<i>W1</i>	514,451	359,163	393,368	298,664	383,153	288,593
	<i>W2</i>	333,263	292,642	315,348	278,377	241,889	195,365
Total	<i>W1</i>	594,313	406,598	473,064	346,099	390,307	292,544
	<i>W2</i>	432,757	357,613	406,690	336,277	273,168	221,886

Source: W1 and W2 Household Surveys, 2011 Census Small Area (SA) Key Statistics (KS101NI)

**Table 4.7: Estimated annual per capita volunteer hours across the case study neighbourhoods**

		Formal Volunteering				Informal Volunteering	
		<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>	<i>Within SE</i>	<i>SE within NH</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>
Short Strand	W1	82	60	60	44	47	35
	W2	27	13	26	13	12	12
Lower Castlereagh	W1	39	28	24	24	26	19
	W2	30	29	28	27	40	29
Irish Street	W1	7	3	7	3	84	42
	W2	22	22	22	22	11	11
Top-of-the-Hill	W1	21	0	18	0	23	16
	W2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Sion Mills	W1	58	49	55	46	41	38
	W2	63	61	60	58	21	21
Erinvale	W1	50	30	50	30	5	2
	W2	63	41	58	36	20	17
Disadvantaged combined	W1	48	33	37	28	36	27
	W2	31	27	29	26	22	18
Total	W1	48	33	38	28	32	24
	W2	35	29	33	27	22	18

Source: W1 and W2 Household Surveys, 2011 Census Small Area (SA) Key Statistics (KS101NI)

#### 4.3.2. The economic contribution of volunteers

The economic contribution of volunteering can be monetised by valuing the output created by volunteers. In effect this is the economic value to society of the 'goods and services' that volunteers produce. This is estimated by taking the total hours volunteers contribute each year and multiplying this by the estimated gross value added (GVA) per hour volunteered.<sup>10, 11</sup> The value of GVA output is the sum of the labour input (wages and benefits) and the capital input (for example office space and computers).

It should be noted that using estimated GVA to measure the value of the output produced assumes that paid employees would not be used in their absence to produce the same level of goods and services. If paid employees would be used to

<sup>10</sup> This study used the estimated Northern Ireland GVA per employee per hour in the human health and social work sector (£17.21 in 2012) as a proxy for volunteer output. This was considered the closest sectoral match to the voluntary and community sector and has been used as proxy sector in similar studies.

<sup>11</sup> Please note currently the work of volunteers is not included within official GVA figures.

produce the same level of goods and services then the capital input value would be borne whether or not volunteers were used. In this instance the value of the output from volunteers would be only the value of the labour input.<sup>12</sup>

The outcome of applying this method to our survey data is outlined in Tables 4.8 and 4.9. The data demonstrate that overall, formal and informal volunteers in our disadvantaged neighbourhoods made an economic contribution of more than £15 million in Wave 1 and almost £10 million in Wave 2. This is the equivalent of more than £1,400 per capita in Wave 1 and £920 per capita in Wave 2. By contrast, in Erinvale, the better-off comparator, formal and informal volunteers made an economic contribution of around £1.5 million in Wave 1 and around £2.2 million in Wave 2. Although the total figures are much lower than in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods the per capita figures of £944 in Wave 1 and £1,418 per capita in Wave 2 are broadly similar. However, the per capita figures do suggest that although volunteers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods made a more valuable economic contribution on an individual basis than their counterparts in the better-off area in Wave 1, the opposite was the case in Wave 2.

The data also demonstrate that the majority of economic value was provided by residents volunteering within social economy organisations and within the neighbourhood. Amongst formal volunteers in our disadvantaged neighbourhoods, their estimated economic contribution within social economy organisations operating within the neighbourhood was £5.3 million in Wave 1 (59 per cent of formal volunteering value) and £4.8 million in Wave 2 (84 per cent). For informal volunteers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods the estimated economic contribution of activities undertaken within the neighbourhood was £4.7 million in Wave 1 (74 per cent of informal volunteering value) and £3.6 million in Wave 2 (87 per cent). Amongst formal volunteers in Erinvale, the better-off comparator, the estimated economic contribution within social economy organisations operating within the neighbourhood was £816,000 (58 per cent of formal volunteering value) in Wave 1 and £996,000 in Wave 2 (58 per cent). For informal volunteers in Erinvale the estimated economic contribution of activities undertaken within the neighbourhood was £73,000 in Wave 1 (58 per cent of informal volunteering value) and £351,000 in Wave 2 (65 per cent).

The per capita figures provide an insight into the relative contribution of formal volunteering in social economy organisations within the case study neighbourhoods, and of informal volunteering within the neighbourhood. In the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, formal volunteers volunteering in social economy organisations within the neighbourhood contributed an estimated £489 per capita in Wave 1 and £448 per capita in Wave 2 whilst informal volunteers volunteering within the neighbourhood provided £434 per capita in Wave 1 and £338 per capita in Wave 2. By comparison, in the better-off comparator, formal volunteers volunteering in social economy organisations within the neighbourhood contributed an estimated £864 per capita in Wave 1 and £911 per capita in Wave 2 whilst informal volunteers volunteering within the neighbourhood provided £46 per capita in Wave 1 and £222 per capita in Wave 2.

Overall, these data suggest that the potential economic contribution of formal and informal volunteers is significant in both disadvantaged and better-off neighbourhoods. There are also, however, a number of differences. For instance, volunteers in disadvantaged neighbourhood appeared to spend more time volunteering within their neighbourhood compared to their counterparts in the better-off neighbourhood. Similarly, levels of informal volunteering were higher in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods than in the better-off neighbourhoods but conversely,

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<sup>12</sup> This would be the average hourly wage in the human health and social work sector.

for formal volunteering the picture was reversed, with more time contributed per resident in the better-off neighbourhood than in the disadvantaged areas.

**Table 4.8: Estimated annual value of the volunteering output across the case study neighbourhoods (£000s)**

		Formal Volunteering				Informal Volunteering	
		<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>	<i>Within SE</i>	<i>SE within NH</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>
Short Strand	<i>W1</i>	£3,318	£2,434	£2,423	£1,792	£1,901	£1,394
	<i>W2</i>	£1,095	£539	£1,073	£517	£484	£238
Lower Castlereagh	<i>W1</i>	£2,629	£1,886	£1,619	£1,589	£1,724	£1,237
	<i>W2</i>	£2,037	£1,963	£1,863	£1,833	£2,699	£2,601
Irish Street	<i>W1</i>	£53	£24	£53	£24	£686	£303
	<i>W2</i>	£184	£179	£182	£179	£94	£91
Top-of-the-Hill	<i>W1</i>	£651	£0	£586	£0	£734	£0
	<i>W2</i>	£58	£58	£58	£58	£84	£84
Sion Mills	<i>W1</i>	£2,203	£1,837	£2,088	£1,736	£1,549	£1,292
	<i>W2</i>	£2,362	£2,297	£2,251	£2,204	£803	£781
Erinvale	<i>W1</i>	£1,374	£816	£1,372	£816	£123	£73
	<i>W2</i>	£1,712	£1,118	£1,572	£996	£538	£351
Disadvantaged combined	<i>W1</i>	£8,854	£6,264	£7,219	£5,267	£6,594	£4,666
	<i>W2</i>	£5,735	£5,016	£5,499	£4,825	£4,163	£3,641
Total	<i>W1</i>	£10,228	£6,937	£8,821	£6,082	£6,717	£4,556
	<i>W2</i>	£7,448	£5,885	£7,026	£5,530	£4,701	£3,715

Source: W1 and W2 Household Surveys, 2011 Census Small Area (SA) Key Statistics (KS101NI)

**Table 4.9: Estimated annual per capita value of the volunteering output across the case study neighbourhoods**

		Formal Volunteering				Informal Volunteering	
		<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>	<i>Within SE</i>	<i>SE within NH</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Within NH</i>
Short Strand	W1	£1,406	£1,031	£1,027	£759	£805	£591
	W2	£464	£228	£455	£219	£205	£101
Lower Castlereagh	W1	£676	£485	£416	£408	£443	£318
	W2	£524	£505	£479	£471	£694	£668
Irish Street	W1	£112	£49	£112	£49	£1,441	£637
	W2	£386	£376	£383	£376	£197	£191
Top-of-the-Hill	W1	£353	£0	£318	£0	£399	£0
	W2	£31	£31	£31	£31	£45	£45
Sion Mills	W1	£1,006	£839	£953	£793	£707	£590
	W2	£1,078	£1,049	£1,028	£1,007	£367	£357
Erinvale	W1	£866	£514	£864	£514	£78	£46
	W2	£1,079	£705	£991	£628	£339	£222
Disadvantaged combined	W1	£823	£582	£671	£489	£613	£434
	W2	£533	£466	£511	£448	£387	£338
Total	W1	£828	£562	£714	£493	£544	£369
	W2	£603	£477	£569	£448	£381	£301

Source: W1 and W2 Household Surveys, 2011 Census Small Area (SA) Key Statistics (KS101NI)

#### 4.4. Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of analysis designed to provide a series of insights into the different types of economic contribution the social economy can make at a neighbourhood level. Estimates have been presented for the contributions made by **social economy organisations** and **formal and informal volunteers** across our case study neighbourhoods for the duration of the study. The values that have emerged are very much dependent on the number, scale and scope of social economy organisations operating at a neighbourhood level, and the amount of income they generate, in combination with the number of formal and informal volunteers in a particular neighbourhood and the number of hours they contribute. From this analysis a number of important findings have emerged:

- Overall, **social economy organisations** contributed more than £3 million per year to the economies of the disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods and this increased by 35 per cent over the course of the study, from £3.4 million in 2011-12 to £4.6 million in 2013-14.
- However, the majority of this income was concentrated in a few very large organisations in East Belfast, suggesting that whilst social economy organisations can make a significant economic contribution in central urban city locations where large organisations can be sustained and flourish; in smaller urban areas like Derry/Londonderry and rural places like Sion Mills where organisations tend to be much smaller, the potential economic contribution is far less.
- Furthermore, very few of these social economy organisations were able to generate financial surpluses for reinvestment in local activities and services, and those that did generate surpluses only recorded very small amounts. This suggests that the extent to which social economy organisations in disadvantaged areas are able to reinvest money at a neighbourhood level for the benefit of local people is fairly limited. It also raises some concerns about the extent to which some social economy organisations are sustainable in the longer term.
- Social economy organisations in disadvantaged neighbourhoods received funds from a diverse range of statutory and non-statutory sources but a significant proportion relied heavily on public sector income to sustain their activities and social enterprise type trading currently played only a limited role for most organisations. Given the planned reduction in statutory funding for social economy organisations over the next few years, this finding raises concerns about the ability of these organisations to maintain their existing economic contribution without a fundamental change in their business models.
- The estimated contribution of **resident volunteers** to the economies of our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods was more than double that of social economy organisations, but declined over the course of the study, from £15 million in 2012-13 to £10 million in 2014-15.
- Importantly, a majority of these residents' voluntary activity was undertaken within neighbourhoods in which they lived, something which was more commonplace in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In addition, a majority of formal volunteering was undertaken within social economy organisations operating in the neighbourhood, rather than in the public or private sectors.
- Levels of informal volunteering were markedly higher in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods when compared to the better-off neighbourhood but conversely, residents in the better-off neighbourhood contributed more time to formal volunteering than those in the disadvantaged areas.
- At a neighbourhood level the data revealed significant variations in the economic contribution of volunteers and there were also some significant fluctuations between Wave 1 and Wave 2. This highlights the potential volatility of participation at an individual level, which might limit the extent to which it can be considered a 'reliable' form of economic output.
- Despite these variations and fluctuations, one neighbourhood, Sion Mills, stands out as having a consistently high level of economic contribution by formal and informal volunteers, something which is supported by the qualitative case study findings discussed earlier in this report.

In interpreting these findings it is important to emphasise the complex calculations, estimates and judgement involved, and to recognise that they are estimates based on research findings from a sample of residents and social economy organisations in



our case study neighbourhoods. As such the estimates provided should be considered illustrative of the types of economic value that might be created and contributed if these assumptions hold true within the wider population.

# Future prospects for the social economies of the case study neighbourhoods

## 5.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the prospects of social economy organisations in the case study neighbourhoods and, more broadly, the future of local social economies. It does so both *collectively* by identifying shared issues that were identified by organisations, and *geographically*, by identifying risk, resilience and recovery factors for each of the case study areas, drawing on an analytical framework devised by Innes and Jones (2006).

The chapter draws primarily on data derived from in-depth interviews with social economy stakeholders. It is important to remember that these took place between January and March 2015 and the situation in the areas has moved on and evolved since then - for example, the short-term funding uncertainties which are highlighted below have been removed.

The chapter is divided into four sections, including this one. In each of the case study areas, a unique bundle of challenges emerged, and these are highlighted in the final section of the chapter. However, some reoccurred across the case study studies, and these are highlighted in the first two sections. These challenges can be categorised into two groups - funding and delivery - with the former being of particular concern to social economy stakeholders.

## 5.2. Funding

### 5.2.1. Declining funding?

There was a consensus amongst representatives of social economy organisations that the financial environment had become more challenging for them. For example, one of the case study social economy organisations (Irish Street Community Association) reported that it had lost one of its workers funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI).

*“Well, everybody’s saying we should be alright for another year, but I suppose wishful thinking. We had X employed as a peace walls worker, they’re funded under the IFI, the International Fund for Ireland, and they were hoping, their project was drawing to a close at the end of February, and they were hopeful that would be extended for at least another year, maybe longer, but now that project’s been pulled.” (Irish Street)*

There was a consensus that grants like that provided by IFI were become scarcer and more difficult to secure. As a result, the competition for smaller-scale grants had increased with small groups now having to compete with the larger organisations. A community activist in Sion Mills noted:

*"Some time ago with the EU, there was a block with the money and all them boys that had maybe a three year contract and were starting to run out and they were starting to grab the £1,000 that the wee groups would have grabbed and it left the wee groups with a big belly and nothing there to fill it."* (Sion Mills)

The same respondent noted that this trend was likely to continue in the future: *"So it's going to get tighter and tighter"*. This view was shared by other organisations - as Table 5.1 reveals, seven out of 19 organisations reported in the social economy organisations survey that they believed that their total annual income would decline in the next three years, although it is important to note, that the same number thought it would increase.

**Table 5.1: Social economy organisations' views about how their finances will change over the next 1-3 years**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
<b>Total annual income:</b>								
It is likely to increase	0	0	0	3	1	1	2	7
It is likely to remain the same	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
It is likely to decrease	0	4	1	0	1	0	1	7
Not applicable/Cannot say	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	4
<b>Earned income from Government trading:</b>								
It is likely to increase	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
It is likely to remain the same	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
It is likely to decrease	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Not applicable/Cannot say	0	2	0	3	3	1	2	11
<b>Earned income from non-Government trading:</b>								
It is likely to increase	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	4
It is likely to remain the same	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
It is likely to decrease	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Not applicable/Cannot say	1	2	0	3	3	1	1	11
<b>Non-Government grant income:</b>								
It is likely to increase	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	4
It is likely to remain the same	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
It is likely to decrease	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Not applicable/Cannot say	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	8
<b>Government grant income:</b>								
It is likely to increase	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	4
It is likely to remain the same	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
It is likely to decrease	0	2	1	1	2	0	2	8
Not applicable/Cannot say	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	4

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 19

There was a view that the decline in the budget of the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) programme funded by the Department of Social Development (DSD) would impact adversely on the finances of social economy organisations. This is reflected in the data presented in Table 5.1 which shows that eight of 19 respondents believed that their 'Government grant income' would fall in the next three years.

The impact of NR funding cutbacks was already being felt in the four neighbourhoods with staff funded under the programme: Lower Castlereagh; Short Strand; Irish Street; and Top-of-the-Hill, where nine posts were funded by DSD. In these areas, there was considerable uncertainty amongst DSD-funded organisations about their future, both in the short and long terms. In the short-term, organisations reported that they were unsure whether they would be funded by DSD in 2015-16 and were waiting for a decision from them, and were on '90 day notice periods'. These organisations reported that uncertainty over funding made it very difficult to plan for the new financial year:

*"With funding at the minute we're still unsure [about next year's budget]. Effectively we're on our 90 days' notice at Christmas..." (Irish Street)*

In a similar vein, another organisation reported how the possible loss of its public health funding made it very difficult for it to plan for the future:

*"It's so difficult to say 'cos we're in this limbo state, our public health agency funding, that has, the public health agency is supposed to have gone out to tender with that money for such a long time now, but it keeps rolling over so you're never really sure." (East Belfast)*

Understandably, uncertainties over funding had an adverse effect on staff morale:

*"This annual thing and 90 day notice... you can feel the tensions coming up towards Christmas, and it's just not nice." (Top-of-the-Hill)*

A number of respondents reported that if staff members were lost, this would have a further detrimental impact on morale.

*"The staff we have are amazing, they've come through some tough times and there's been a lot over the years cos they've all been volunteers and the younger youth members have come through our service since day one so they know us, it's like a family, it's like a family breakup if you like if this doesn't work out for us." (Top-of-the-Hill)*

Furthermore, it was noted that any job losses would have an adverse effect on the local economy as there was a consensus that staff, most of whom lived locally, would find it very difficult to find new work:

*"There's all these people with nowhere to go cos all the core posts are permanent and they've already been taken up and in place so you've all these people with nowhere to go and loads of skills and it'll probably be back to volunteering again until something else comes up." (Top-of-the-Hill)*

The removal of NR funding would make it very difficult for some organisations to work effectively, with detrimental consequences for the local communities they served. In the area which appeared to be most reliant on paid (NR-funded) social economy workers (Irish Street), there was a belief that its removal would have a major adverse effect on community activities in the area, making it difficult to run programmes and activities in it. This was because (it was felt) the local community (in the form of the Community Centre management committee) did not have the expertise, skill-sets or time to run activities or secure new funding.

*"There would be no additional programmes or anything run. There would be nobody to draw down the funding or apply for funding." (Irish Street)*

*"The thing is if X wasn't here to manage all them pots of funding and programmes.... unless the management committee, which is... they're great, but I don't know if they would have the capacity, really." (Irish Street)*

In Top-of-the-Hill it was reported that the loss of a DSD-funded youth worker would result in there being no specialist youth worker in the area, therefore making it very difficult to run activities for younger people as most time-limited funding schemes did not cover staff time:

*"They're on 90 days' notice and if we don't receive funding then I have no youth staff at the end of March and finding another funder who funds salaries is extremely hard. They throw money at you for programmes and you're lucky if you get running costs, running costs is a nightmare." (Top-of-the-Hill)*

Organisations were concerned that funding cuts could have another detrimental effect on their performance and effectiveness - they could become too inward looking and focused on *survival* as opposed to *delivery*.

*"If you're focused on keeping your organisation afloat rather than focused on what it is you're supposed to be doing, which is a danger back to grant aid, government shouldn't be surprised that people focus on keeping themselves going." (East Belfast)*

**Table 5.2: Social economy organisations' plans to expand their activities in the next 1-3 years (number of respondents)**

	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills	Derry wide	Belfast wide	Total
Expand your geographic coverage to other parts of Northern Ireland	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Increase the number of people/groups you work with	1	2	1	5	3	1	3	16
Increase the range of activities you provide	0	2	1	5	2	1	3	14
Begin to charge for services that are currently provided for free	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Develop new sources of Government trading income	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Develop new sources of non-Government trading income	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Increase income from Government grants	0	1	1	4	2	0	3	11
Increase income from non-Government grants	0	1	0	3	1	0	2	7
Increase the number of volunteers	0	1	1	5	3	1	3	14
Increase the number of paid employees	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	6

Source: Survey of neighbourhood social economy organisations  
Base: 19

Before moving on to consider other funding challenges that social economy organisations are likely to face, it is salient to make two more important points here. First, many organisations believe that their total annual income will increase over the next three years: seven out of the 15 organisations who responded to this question in the social economy organisations survey responded in this fashion, as Table 5.1 reveals. Second, a number of respondents felt that the issue of declining funding streams would be compounded by the challenge of securing match funding, a requirement from funders which was seen as being problematic:

*"It's definitely harder and especially with council grants. It's: 'Can you match fund this with something else?' That's where your problems arise. So for the last few years we haven't took a council grant for those reasons; the match funding'."*

### **5.2.2. Pressure to become more 'self-sufficient' and 'sustainable'**

As noted earlier, the financial pressure on many social economy organisations in our case study neighbourhoods is likely to increase as VCS funding is reduced. As a result, some are rethinking their funding and exploring, albeit reluctantly, the possibility of generating more of their own income to become more 'sustainable'. They were reluctant because they believed that many VCS activities did not lend themselves to being self-sustaining.

*"On this particular project the economic appraisal came back saying: 'this community centre is not sustainable'. Well community centres by nature aren't sustainable." (East Belfast)*

Despite this, many stakeholders reported that their organisations were intending to become more sustainable by generating more of their own income, through a range of initiatives including private sponsorship.

*"So we took a decision at that stage at senior staff level to try and generate some of our own income and we did that first by setting up a small subsidiary company." (East Belfast)*

And, as Table 5.2 reveals, four organisations reported that in future they would have to charge for services that were currently free.

A stakeholder from Top-of-the-Hill referred to the pressure to become self-sufficient in the context of the construction of a new community centre to which her organisation was hoping to relocate. The plan was for her organisation to manage and run the centre when it was completed, generating income by letting out office space within it and charging for the use of its sports facilities, such as badminton courts. However, she noted that her organisation was not familiar with working in this way. Furthermore, she also felt that many local residents would be reluctant to pay to use the facilities of the centre, even if they could afford to do so.

*"Another one of the challenges is changing mind-sets because the community groups think this is our community centre, we just operate out of it and the possibility that they think they won't have to pay. So we have to get them thinking this isn't free, so that's a challenge as well." (Top-of-the-Hill)*

Stakeholders in Sion Mills felt that self-funding was not a viable option in the area. This was because of low income levels in the village and its relative isolation from more affluent areas, whose residents could potentially draw on any services provided by its VCS.

*"If they [local residents] had the funds they would plough the funds into the sport but they don't have that." (Sion Mills)*

*"People just haven't got the money." (Sion Mills)*

### **5.2.3. The capacity of the local community to pay for the services provided by social economy organisations**

Notwithstanding stakeholder concerns about the pressure to become more sustainable, there was also a general concern that with continuing austerity, welfare reforms and public sector funding cuts, vulnerable households would find it increasingly difficult to pay for the services provided by social economy organisations. In line with respondents elsewhere, a stakeholder in Top-of-the-Hill noted that this was already an issue in her area - local children were increasingly having to 'raid their piggy banks' to pay to attend the local youth club.

*"The youth club is board run so they charge 50p or whatever and it breaks my heart cos I've seen wee ones come in with 2ps and 1ps to pay to get in and I'm going 'that's your money box, you didn't get that out of Barclays, you've been saving that', so I've seen me taking money out of my own purse to pay for things." (Top-of-the-Hill)*

### **5.2.4. Increasing pressure for grant applications to be submitted in partnership**

Stakeholders in one case study area expressed their dissatisfaction at a recent development in the VCS funding arena which would make their jobs more difficult - the requirement of funding applications to comprise partnerships.

*"The thing funders are looking for too now is partnership working as well is the big thing, you rarely get a stand-alone grant for yourself, a few funders do but the likes of the Big Lottery are looking for partnership working and joined-up working with other agencies and statutory agencies and things like that. So it's going to get worse and more competitive." (Irish Street)*

There was a consensus that this requirement would not go away and this was reflected in the number of organisations - 16 out of 19 - that reported in the social economy organisations survey that they would work with more partners in the future, as Table 5.2 reveals.

### **5.2.5. Impact on social economy organisations of the change in approach to the administration of Neighbourhood Renewal funding**

There was a concern that the independence of social economy organisations could be threatened by the change in how Neighbourhood Renewal funding is administered, with its administration shifting from DSD to super-councils. It was felt that this change could threaten their independence. A number of stakeholders highlighted the importance of independence and identity, and ensuring that both were protected.

*"I would never want us to lose the essence of who we are." (East Belfast)*

There was a concern that both could be eroded by increased core funding from local authorities.

*"One of the things, also an independent advice centre as well, not one that's constrained by funding, it's important to the community that we're independent, that we represent them, that they see us as somewhere safe, and what we do is in their interest. Some of my fears going forward with core funding and*



*government funding is that they will expect us to work too closely with them and the new advice strategy that's going to be consulted on."* (East Belfast)

#### **5.2.6. Impact of the creation of super-councils on funding allocations**

Respondents in Sion Mills felt that the creation of a Derry/Strabane super-council could have an adverse effect on the ability of social economy organisations in the village to secure funding, as the merger (they felt) would place even more emphasis on urban areas, to the detriment of rural areas like Sion Mills.

*"I have fears over this new super-council, it might be unfounded fears, but that it could be city-based, large town-based and the outside communities like Sion Mills...places that could be side-lined. We call them hinterlands. The hinterlands might be forgotten about."* (Sion Mills)

#### **5.2.7. Lack of grant application writing expertise**

In one area, Sion Mills, another funding issue emerged, a factor which could potentially act as a check on the capacity of social economy organisations to deliver in the area - the lack of expertise, locally, with regard to writing funding applications. While it was felt that it had always been an issue in the area, the problem was likely to become more acute as competition for scarce VCS funding became even more fierce. A representative from a community group in the village noted that she needed help to complete grant applications and, to date, she had not identified a suitable organisation to provide this.

*"I'm sure we could apply for funding to these wee organisations but we need somebody to be able to help us with our application forms... I could fill out, not that one there's too many questions on it, but the other ones. I could tick a box but the way the questions are coming out from everybody, they asked you a question this way, further down they're asking you the same question in a different manner."* (Sion Mills)

### **5.3. Delivery**

As noted above, funding cuts may have a detrimental impact on the ability of social economy organisations to deliver effectively in the future. But respondents identified other factors relating to the *delivery* of their services that would adversely impact on them:

#### **5.3.1. Increasing demand**

There was a consensus that the demand for the services of social economy organisations had increased in recent times. This was particularly the case for those organisations providing support (in a range of different ways) to vulnerable families struggling to 'get-by'. As part of this trend, and in line with 'national' data (Butler, 2015), the demands on food banks had increased in recent times. For example, a stakeholder in East Belfast noted:

*"There are a lot more referrals for charitable support now, like St Vincent de Paul, food banks, we never used to refer... there weren't any food banks. We used to have a migrant worker project from OFMDFM and it was only about that time, about 2008, the referrals to food banks starting to happen, it was very rare to refer to St Vincent de Paul, we did refer to St Vincent de Paul but it was nothing like it is now."* (East Belfast)

There was a consensus that the demands on social economy organisations in the case study neighbourhoods would continue to increase in the future. A number of (inter-connected) reasons were given for this.

- **Cuts to public services.** This was a commonly-cited narrative by respondents - cuts to public service budgets were 'pushing' vulnerable households to the VCS:

*"Cos of austerity coming in here we realise there's more people out there that will be dependent on something that they try to do for them." (Sion Mills)*

*"I think the community sector is needed more too, with health services cuts, older people are relying on us more for different types of services and home help and that's all gone." (Irish Street)*

- **The economic downturn.** A representative from a social economy organisation providing financial advice in East Belfast noted:

*"It's the economic downturn which brought a huge number of people to us, people who never needed advice before, people who were devastated to come in and learn just how little benefits actually are" (East Belfast)*

- **Welfare reforms.** Welfare reforms were also contributing to the increase in demand for the services of social economy organisations:

*"We've found that a lot of people, the changes in welfare benefits over the last few years, there's a lot more people with acute mental health problems, severe and enduring mental health problems that need our services... The change from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance. It means people who are on that benefit, who are on the sickness benefit are reassessed more frequently so that caused quite a spike in our work." (East Belfast)*

### 5.3.2. A reduction in volunteer hours

As noted earlier volunteering hours fell over the course of the study in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A number of stakeholders felt that this trend was likely to continue in the future as volunteers (understandably) had to devote more of their time to the struggle to 'get-by'.

*"We have a number of workers at the minute that are on short-term funding and play a vital role especially around the weekend work, we open Saturday and Sunday, come next March their funding's on the line. They will continue to volunteer but people have a job to pay their bills so it could be a case of we lose people in terms of their paid work". (Short Strand)*

*"Say a young couple, with two kids and things are so tight and maybe the one job they have does not suffice, they might have to go out and look for another job part time as well so there'd be less chance of them volunteering." (Sion Mills)*

These concerns have also been raised by the NEF who have argued that (in an English context) austerity and the economic downturn is forcing many low income households to turn inwards, as they inevitably (and understandably) focus more of their energies on themselves and 'getting-by' on a day-to-day basis (NEF, 2012, p.5):

*The Big Society vision of empowered local communities driving forward an agenda of social action and local ownership of public services has faced major challenges. Many in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) viewed it as window dressing for a programme of cuts that had already thrown them into*

*turmoil. As people have become less economically secure, they have tended to turn inwards, focusing on just getting-by from day to day, with no time or energy to connect with others or take local action. This has led to a general weakening of the core economy – a term used to describe all the unpaid time, caring, support, friendship, expertise, giving, and learning that underpin society and the formal economy. The Big Society vision relied on a strong core economy. But people have found their time and capacity increasingly stretched by reduced local public services, changes to working and child tax credits, and insecure, low-paid employment.*

### **5.3.3. Community capacity**

As noted earlier, volunteering levels varied markedly across the case study areas. Stakeholders in areas with lower levels of volunteering were concerned that if funded voluntary workers were lost there, local communities may not have the capacity to meet the volunteering shortfall created.

*"...this sense of the whole peace process passing people by just making them less cooperative, less interested in engaging and the danger is people then think cos somebody didn't engage they're not interested in the outcome, which isn't the case. I think it's hard for people holding resources if a community or community group doesn't have the capacity to take those resources and do something positive, basically the resources giver doesn't quite know what to do."*  
(East Belfast)

## **5.4. Risk, resilience and recovery factors in the case study neighbourhoods**

In addition to providing an insight into the collective future of the case studies by identifying shared challenges, it is also important to offer place-specific insights into their future. Drawing on an analytical framework generated by Martin Innes and Vanessa Jones (2006), this section does this by highlighting *risk, resilience and recovery* factors for the six areas that comprise this study.

The analytical framework of '*risk, resilience, and recovery*' was developed by Emily Werner in 1993, who used it to explore the developmental paths of a multiracial cohort of children who had been exposed to perinatal stress, chronic poverty, and a family environment troubled by chronic discord and parental psychopathology (Werner, 1993). In the context of the social sciences, the framework was adapted by Innes and Jones who used it to explore neighbourhood security and change (see Innes and Jones, 2006). In this study, we slightly adapt the framework so that it can be applied to the voluntary sector/social economy, with the following definitions of risk, resilience and recovery being used.

**Table 5.3: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the case study neighbourhoods**

<b>Risk</b>	Factors and conditions that increase the likelihood that the VCS will experience decline and continuing or escalating social, economic, cultural or environmental problems
<b>Resilience</b>	Factors and conditions that enable some VCSs to withstand and mitigate risks, based on the distribution of economic and social capital and the presence of collective efficacy enabling them to counter threats
<b>Recovery</b>	Factors and conditions that promote and enable VCSs to experience overall social and economic improvements

Source: Innes and Jones, 2006

**Figure 5.1: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the social economy in Erinvale**

<b>RISK FACTORS</b>
Underdeveloped social economy in the neighbourhood - the area only has two VCS organisations (two sports clubs)
Absence of community spaces in the neighbourhood from which social economy groups can operate
No culture of volunteering within the neighbourhood
<b>RESILIENCE FACTORS</b>
Many residents in Erinvale do volunteer, with many volunteering at organisations on the nearby Finaghy Road
The area has an excellent outdoor recreation facility at Wedderburn Playing Fields
The area is relatively well-off as are many of the neighbourhoods that surround it
The area has relatively high levels of economic and social capital?
<b>RECOVERY FACTORS</b>
Potential to build on the social economy infrastructure of Finaghy Road
Potential to build on the volunteering tradition of Finaghy Road

**Figure 5.2: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the social economy in Irish Street**

<b>RISK FACTORS</b>
Stagnant local economy and low income levels - impact on ability to self-fund and generate social enterprise?
Reduction of grant funding...
...in a context where demand for the services of local social economy organisations is likely to increase and.....
...where paid workers drive the VCS in the area...
...the area only has one substantive social economy organisation
If funding contracts and paid workers are lost, can the local community fill the void?
The population of the area is relatively old
The creation of Derry - Strabane super-council could undermine the relationship between the neighbourhood and the local council
<b>RESILIENCE FACTORS</b>
The area has an excellent community centre
Partnership working. There is a tradition of partnership working with partners outside the neighbourhood, particularly with organisations from the Waterside area of Derry/Londonderry.
Skilled and committed VCS work force...
...who are skilled at securing grant funding
Proximity of the neighbourhood to the centre of Derry/Londonderry
High levels of residential and neighbourhood satisfaction - people like living in Irish Street
The (formal) volunteering rate has increased in recent times
<b>RECOVERY FACTORS</b>
New funding opportunities
Potential to grow volunteering rates

**Figure 5.3: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the social economy in Lower Castlereagh**

<b>RISK FACTORS</b>
Poverty – has impact on possibility of social economy income generation projects and nature of community needs e.g. welfare rights advice, employment training
Possibility of poverty increasing over next few years e.g. cuts in state services and welfare
Reliance on grant funding, more competition, need to spend more time applying for grants rather than delivering services directly
History of conflict, including last couple of years ('flags' dispute – not primarily with Short Strand, more with police) could affect ability to work with Short Strand (but see recovery factors)
Paramilitary activity still going on; drugs, anti-social behaviour: impact on community cohesion.
High dissatisfaction with the area, low levels of trust and belonging (according to our survey) – cohesion less than Short Strand although there is still plenty of community activity in Lower Castlereagh or accessible to residents in the area
Comparatively low levels of both formal and informal volunteering, according to our survey
Fragmented community groups – no sense of one organisation speaking for all
Regeneration responsibilities going to Belfast City Council in 2016 – could be recovery factor
Interviews found very few people actually using VCS facilities, although they were aware of them
Contracting out state services including to social economy organisations – although unlike Short Strand, some organisations may be able to compete e.g. Skainos
Public sector cuts: EU funding; regional level e.g. education, health; local level e.g. environmental services, community development
<b>RESILIENCE FACTORS</b>
VCS connections with rest of East Belfast (also a recovery factor)
Appreciation of the role of local VCS, especially churches, some of which are very active
Strong political advocacy for the area at local and regional level
East Belfast Social Economy Company and East Belfast Mission provide a good model for entrepreneurial activity
Current dominant model is community development, with some churches playing a stewarding role and in one case (East Belfast Mission) an important entrepreneurial role.
<b>RECOVERY FACTORS</b>
Local VCS does have links with Short Strand and is keen to work on a cross-community basis e.g. through East Belfast Partnership, use of East Belfast Network Centre. Not impacted adversely by 'flags dispute' over the past two years or so
Area's proximity to the City Centre and Titanic Quarter could provide opportunities entrepreneurial activities, as could connection to more affluent areas in outer East Belfast
Entrepreneurial organisations and individuals, with good connections
Regeneration responsibilities going to Belfast City Council in 2016 – could be risk factor

**Figure 5.4: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the social economy in Short Strand**

<b>RISK FACTORS</b>
Poverty – has impact on possibility of social economy income generation projects and nature of community needs e.g. welfare rights advice, employment training
Possibility of poverty increasing over next few years e.g. cuts in state services and welfare
Reliance on grant funding, more competition, need to spend more time applying for grants rather than delivering services directly
Catholic/nationalist enclave with history of conflict with surrounding areas including last couple of years ('flags' dispute) could affect ability to work with LC (but see recovery factors)
Paramilitary activity still going on, drugs, anti-social behaviour: impact on community cohesion
Regeneration responsibilities going to Belfast City Council in 2016 (?) – could be recovery factor
Contracting out state services including to VCS – may not be able to compete
Public sector cuts: EU funding; regional level e.g. education, health; local level e.g. environmental services, community development
<b>RESILIENCE FACTORS</b>
Population very loyal to area, tight-knit community with many family-based networks but also appears to welcome newcomers e.g. Eastern Europeans. High sense of belonging in the area. Strong base for expansion of volunteering and more extensive VCS activities (also a recovery factor)
VCS connections with rest of East Belfast (also a recovery factor)
Strong tradition of both formal and informal volunteering
Strong support for local VCS organisations and feeling that in general the organisations speak for them
Strong trust in neighbours and high resident satisfaction with neighbourhood
Active role of church
Strong political advocacy for the area at local and regional level
East Belfast Social Economy Company provides a good model for entrepreneurial activity (but operates more in other parts of East Belfast)
Current dominant model is <i>community development</i>
<b>RECOVERY FACTORS</b>
Strong social base for expansion of volunteering and more extensive VCS activities (see resilience factors)
Local VCS does have links with elsewhere in East Belfast e.g. through East Belfast Partnership, use of East Belfast Network Centre. Not impacted adversely by 'flags dispute' over the past 2 years or so
VCS organisations elsewhere in East Belfast keen to work with Short Strand VCS e.g. Oasis, including cross-community projects
Also proximity to City Centre, Markets, Lower Ormeau, Titanic Quarter – could make links for entrepreneurial activities
Regeneration responsibilities going to Belfast City Council in 2016 – could be a risk factor



**Figure 5.5: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the social economy in Sion Mills**

<b>RISK FACTORS</b>
Stagnant local economy and low income levels - impact on ability to self-fund and generate social enterprise?
(Over?) Reliance on key individuals
Tensions between two principal community groups/lack of joint working
Lack of expertise in grant application writing
Funding cuts and more competition for grants
Breakdown of the relationship with the owner of Sion Mills mill
Creation of a Derry/Strabane super-council
<b>RESILIENCE FACTORS</b>
High levels of volunteering
Many committed volunteers
Long standing tradition of volunteering...
...and self-sufficiency and 'doing it ourselves'
Well-developed VCS infrastructure
Excellent facilities
High levels of 'community spirit' and cohesion
Location on main road link from Derry/Londonderry to Dublin
The area is not reliant on paid VCS workers - in terms of Aiken <i>et al.</i> 's social economy conceptual framework, <i>stewarding</i> is the dominant paradigm in the area
<b>RECOVERY FACTORS</b>
Social enterprise? Extension of <i>entrepreneurship</i> activities
Developing relationship with Derry/Strabane super-council
Development of historic buildings in village...
...more visitors to the village

**Figure 5.6: Risk, resilience and recovery factors for the social economy in Top-of-the-Hill**

<b>RISK FACTORS</b>
Stagnant local economy and low income levels - impact on ability to self-fund and generate social enterprise?
Reduction of grant funding...
...in a context where demand for the services of local social economy organisations is likely to increase and...
...where paid workers to drive the social economy in the area...
...the area has a (relatively) low level of volunteering...
...and relatively little volunteering tradition
The closure of the local secondary school
The creation of Derry - Strabane could undermine the relationship between the neighbourhood and the local council
Failure to secure funding for the new multi-purpose community centre planned for the area
<b>RESILIENCE FACTORS</b>
The area has a well-developed VCS infrastructure...
...it is home to four organisations with a long track record of working in the area
Partnership working. There is a long tradition of partnership working <i>within</i> the neighbourhood - the three principal organisations have worked very well together - and <i>outside</i> the neighbourhood, with partners from the Waterside of Derry/Londonderry.
Skilled and committed VCS work force...
...who are skilled at securing grant funding
A plan has been put in place to improve community facilities in the area, which involves the construction of a multi-purpose community centre - this plan has been backed by Derry City Council
Proximity of the neighbourhood to the centre of Derry/Londonderry
High levels of 'community spirit' and cohesion
The (formal) volunteering rate has increased in recent times
<b>RECOVERY FACTORS</b>
The construction of a new community centre...
...which will provide a home for social economy groups in the area...
...and generate income that can be ploughed back into community activities
New funding opportunities
Potential to grow volunteering rates

## 5.5. Summary

Social economy organisations in our case studies identified a number of challenges that they are likely to face in the future. They can be categorised into two groups - funding and delivery - with the former being of particular concern to them.

### 5.5.1. Funding

- **Declining funding.** There was a consensus amongst social economy stakeholders that the financial environment for social economy organisations would become more challenging in the future. And seven out of the 19 social economy organisations surveyed by the study team believed that their income would fall in the next three years, although the same amount felt it would increase.
- **The pressure to become more 'self-sufficient' and 'sustainable'.** As a result of the financial pressures facing social economy organisations in our case study neighbourhoods, some were rethinking their funding and exploring, albeit reluctantly, the possibility of generating more of their own income to become more sustainable. However, in the context of continuing austerity, welfare reforms and public sector funding cuts, vulnerable households will find it increasingly difficult to pay for the services provided by the VCS.
- **Partnership working.** Social economy organisations felt that they would increasingly be required to work in partnership, a development many were not happy with. 16 out of 19 reported that they would work with more partners in the future.
- **A change in the approach to the administration of Neighbourhood Renewal funding.** There was a concern that the independence of social economy organisations could be threatened by the change in how Neighbourhood Renewal funding is administered, with its administration shifting from the Department of Social Development to the new super-councils. It was felt that this change could threaten their independence and identity.

### 5.5.2. Delivery

- **Increasing demand for the services provided by social economy organisations.** There was a consensus that the demand for the services of social economy organisations had increased in recent times. This trend was likely to continue in the future because of:
  - cuts to public services which would 'push' vulnerable households to the VCS
  - the economic downturn
  - the impact of welfare reforms.
- **A reduction in volunteering hours.** As noted earlier, volunteering hours fell over the course of the study. A number of stakeholders felt that this trend was likely to continue in the future as volunteers (understandably) devoted more of their time to their own struggle to 'get-by' financially.
- **Community capacity.** Volunteering levels varied markedly across the case study areas. Stakeholders in areas with lower levels of volunteering were concerned that if funded voluntary workers were lost there, local communities may not have the capacity to meet the volunteering shortfall created.

In order to explore the future trajectories of the social economies of the case study areas, the study team employed a conceptual framework based on the work on Innes and Jones (2006). This framework highlighted *risk*, *resilience* and *recovery* factors. Reflecting their diversity, the factors varied for each of the social economies, although funding and community capacity were risk factors in all of them.

# Conclusion

## 6.1. Introduction

This report has explored the characteristics and economic contribution of the social economy across four disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland, including how it has changed (or not), over the past three years. Drawing on a broad definition of the social economy, these dynamics have been considered from two perspectives: organisations, including voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, and social enterprises; and local residents, through their involvement in formal and informal volunteering. The research involved a diverse mixed methods approach: quantitative data were captured through a longitudinal survey of residents and an additional survey of social economy organisations; qualitative data were collected through interviews with representatives of key local organisations and groups and local residents involved in and benefitting from social economy activity.

This concluding chapter highlights the main findings from this report, drawing on the analytical framework outline in chapter one to discuss the future prospects for the social economy at a neighbourhood level and its potential to contribute to wider economic rebalancing. Although the chapter includes a range of findings that resonate for policy-makers and practitioners with an interest in the role and development of social economy in Northern Ireland, these implications are outlined in a separate learning report produced as part of this research.

## 6.2. Main findings

- The report has highlighted the diverse size, scope, form and function of social economy organisations in our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods. For the most part, these organisations are small 'traditional' voluntary, community and faith-based groups operating within the *grant economy* whose main role and purpose relates to *stewarding* and *community development*. There appear to be very few *market-facing* organisations providing an *entrepreneurship* function, particularly beyond East Belfast. In most areas, the social economy functions through a combination of paid staff and volunteers, with volunteers more prominent in neighbourhoods where organisations have few or no members of paid staff.
- It is clear from all of our case study neighbourhoods that the social economy, through local voluntary, community and faith-based activity, and formal and informal volunteering, plays a vital role in disadvantaged areas. It provides important services and supports a range of community activities that are highly valued by local people.

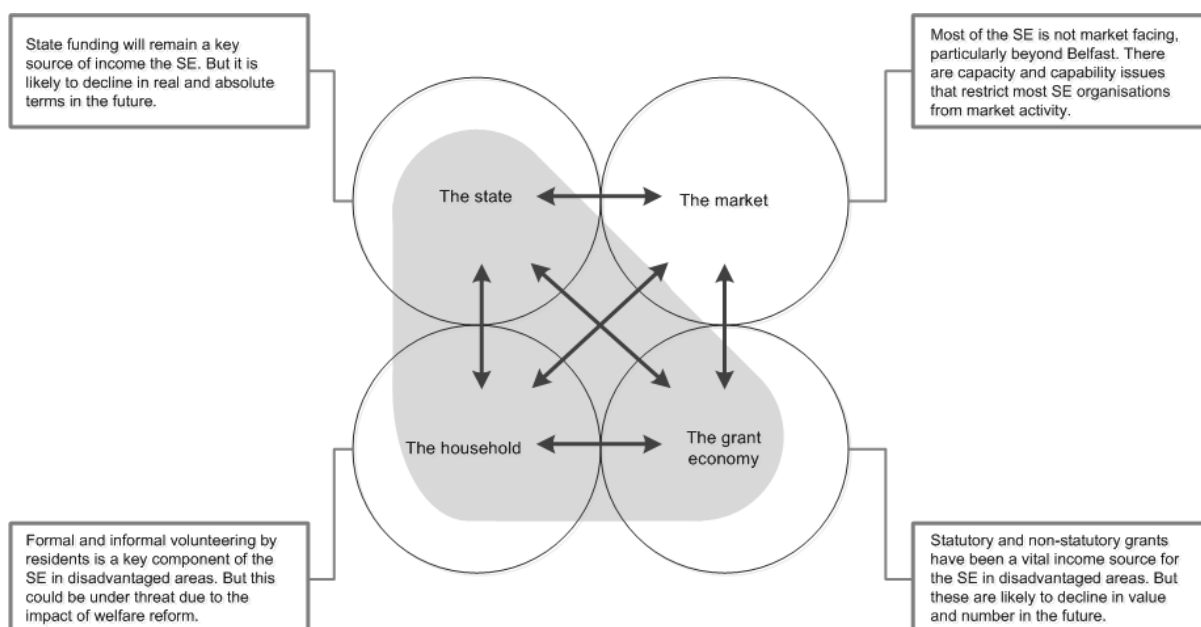
- There are very few signs that the social economy in our case study neighbourhoods has changed significantly over the course of the study. Voluntary, community and faith organisations operating within the *grant economy* have fared relatively well, reporting a small increase in income in each area; but from a *household* perspective, overall volunteering levels have remained static at best, and declined in some areas.
- Overall, social economy organisations make a small but significant contribution to the economy at a neighbourhood level. Across our case study areas this amounted to more than £3 million per year and increased over the course of the study, but the large majority of this income was concentrated in East Belfast. The economic contribution of volunteers was greater, amounting to more than £10 million per year across the case study neighbourhoods, but decreased over the course of the study and substantial area-level variations and fluctuations were observed.
- Despite its importance and relative stability over the course of the study, the social economy is entering a period of unprecedented uncertainty and is likely be transformed and look very different in 3-5 years' time. Large parts of it are heavily reliant on *state* funding, but this seems certain to decline significantly over the next few years. These organisations recognise the need to become more self-sufficient or sustainable through *market*-orientated strategies, but there is little evidence that they have the capability or capacity to meet this challenge in the immediate future. At the same time, of welfare reform will affect *households'* ability to 'get-by' at an individual level, with potentially adverse implications for activities such as formal and informal volunteering.

### **6.3. Implications for the social economy at a neighbourhood level and its potential to contribute to economic rebalancing**

- There are wide disparities in the number of social economy organisations and the level of volunteering when comparing our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods. These disparities have implications for the potential of the social economy to play a role in wider economic rebalancing at a neighbourhood level. In areas where volunteering levels are high, and/or in areas where there are a number of locally-responsive and sustainably-funded social economy organisations, there exists the potential for the social economy to be a part of the wider economic rebalancing process. Conversely, in areas with low levels of volunteering and/or where there are fewer, poorly-funded or unsustainable social economy organisations, the economic potential of the social economy is severely limited.
- It is widely accepted that social economy organisations in Northern Ireland have, for a long time, been heavily reliant on income from a well-resourced public sector (Acheson, 2010; Alcock, 2012). Northern Ireland is not alone in this respect, as the social economy in deprived areas in other parts of the UK has also been heavily reliant on public sector funds, particularly when compared to better-off areas (Clifford *et al.*, 2013). The expected cuts in public sector funding from 2015 onwards will inevitably be passed on to social economy organisations previously reliant on public sector income. This will require a fundamental change in many organisations' business models, perhaps towards more entrepreneurial social enterprise type approaches or so that they are more closely aligned with public sector priorities. Although a few organisations are well-placed to adapt to these changes there appear to be particular challenges in urban and rural areas beyond Belfast, where social economy organisations tend to be smaller and the potential for social enterprise approaches to generating income is limited.

- The expected cuts in public sector funding of the social economy suggest that there will be increased demand for volunteers within social economy organisations to fulfil roles previously filled by paid staff. However, there are no indications from this study that there is potential for volunteering to increase significantly. Across our disadvantaged case study neighbourhoods the proportion of people volunteering and the amount of time spent volunteering decreased between 2012-13 and 2014-15 and fewer than one in five residents volunteered formally in each of these years with even fewer volunteering informally. This is consistent with the wider picture across the UK in which levels of volunteering have remained relatively consistent for a number of years (Cabinet Office, 2014).
- Overall then, the potential for the social economy to contribute to the economic rebalancing of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, either in the form of organisational activity or volunteering by residents, appears to be limited. Although social economy organisations appear to have thrived in recent years they are facing the likelihood of major cuts in their public sector funding at a time when competition for non-statutory charitable funding is increasing. In the short-term at least, a shift to entrepreneurial social enterprise approaches to income generation is not a sustainable option for most organisations. Meanwhile, levels of volunteering in these areas are at best static and at worst declining; meaning volunteers stepping in to replace or enhance the previously well-funded activities of social economy organisations is unlikely to occur on a major scale.
- Given these findings, we have adapted and annotated Murray *et al.*'s (2010) diagram, to reflect the findings from this study. It places more emphasis on the role of the *household* and the *grant economy*, with less emphasis on the *market*, whilst retaining the importance of the *state*, and highlights the challenges each of these spheres is likely to face in the foreseeable future.

**Figure 6.1: The social economy and spheres of activity in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland**



Source: Adapted from Murray *et al.*, 2010, p.143

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# Appendix 1: Case study neighbourhoods

## A1.1. Introduction

This appendix presents profiles of the case study neighbourhoods. All figures used in the profile are from the 2011 Census unless otherwise stated. Five statistical tables are included in section A1.4. They cover all the case studies and in the case of Derry/Londonderry and Belfast they are sub-divided. Maps of the neighbourhoods are provided in A1.5.

## A1.2. Three 'disadvantaged' areas

### *Inner East Belfast: Lower Castlereagh and Short Strand*

A divided and disadvantaged inner urban area in the city of Belfast, which has been the site of considerable sectarian conflict over the years.

The Belfast case study is located in the Inner East Belfast area of the city, including Lower Castlereagh and the Short Strand within the Ballymacarrett and The Mount electoral wards, as highlighted in Maps A1.1a and b. Interfaces at Bryson Street/Newtownards Road and Mountpottinger Road/Albertbridge Road have been the site of conflict over the years. The recent protests over a reduction of the flying of the union flag at Belfast City Hall have seen extensive rioting in the area from December 2012 – March 2013.

The Lower Castlereagh area has a population of 3891 in 1897 households. Although considered to be predominantly of Protestant community background, it actually contains 65.54 per cent Protestant and 20.48 per cent Catholic residents, along with the highest proportion in the case study areas claiming to be brought up in no religion (12.59 per cent).<sup>13</sup> 27.04 per cent of households contain dependent children. The area includes part of the Mount electoral ward, which recorded the fourth biggest decrease in the recorded Protestant population between 2001 and 2011.<sup>14</sup>

Housing tenure is 24.15 per cent owner occupation, 43.96 per cent social housing and 25.94 per cent private rented. The built form is low rise and predominantly terraced (whatever the age of the houses), with some semi-detached housing and small apartment blocks. Castlereagh Street, the Albertbridge Road and the Newtownards Road provide local shops and other facilities, and the nearby Connswater Shopping Centre includes many larger shops including supermarkets

<sup>13</sup> A note of caution: this category is commonly acknowledged to be more likely to be used by the Protestant population.

<sup>14</sup> Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2013) Statistical Summary: Ward level religious segregation in Northern Ireland 2001-2011. Unpublished briefing paper for the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

and other chain stores selling a wide range of goods. Public transport links to the nearby city centre are also good. The local Avoniel Leisure Centre is currently being refurbished. Unemployment is 7.12 per cent and economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is 9.70 per cent; 38.94 per cent of residents have some kind of long-term health condition.

The area includes a number of community groups and initiatives, many church-based such as the new Skainos Centre on the Newtownards Road. The East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) is about to move into new premises on Templemore Avenue that will include space for new social economy businesses and the historic Templemore Baths has now re-opened as the Templemore Swim and Fitness Centre. However, the area remains blighted by sectarian territorial markings such as murals and flags, to a much greater extent than the other case studies and more so in Lower Castlereagh than in the Short Strand. Community activity in Lower Castlereagh appears fragmented.

The Short Strand area has a population of 2366 in 1041 households, and is predominantly of Roman Catholic community background (80.90 per cent). 35.54 per cent of households contain dependent children. Housing tenure is 36.22 per cent owner occupation, 48.03 per cent social housing, and 10.76 per cent private rented. The area contains high density housing, mainly from the 1980s on the city side of Mountpottinger Road and a mix of older and more recent housing on the other side extending to the Bryson Street 'peace wall'. There are a few shops on Mountpottinger Road and a doctors' surgery at the end of Bryson Street; some might shop in the Castlereagh Road or at Connswater Shopping Centre, but given recent tensions this is less likely and the Avoniel Leisure Centre is definitely not regarded as safe – residents use Leisure Centres in the Lower Ormeau or the Falls. City centre shopping amenities are close by. Unemployment is 8.25 per cent and economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is 5.61 per cent; 37.28 per cent of residents have some kind of long-term health condition. The Short Strand Community Centre and Community Forum provide a focus for community activity in the area, as does the Doyle Youth Club. Residents also participate in the East Belfast Partnership and the EBCDA.

### ***Top-of-the-Hill and Irish Street, Waterside, Derry/Londonderry***

A divided and disadvantaged urban area in the city of Derry/Londonderry.

The Derry/Londonderry case study is located in the Waterside area of the city, including Top-of-the-Hill (Gobnascale) and Irish Street within the Clondermot and Victoria electoral wards (see Maps A1.2a and b). The area includes an interface along Irish Street at which there are sometimes minor disturbances.

The Top-of-the-Hill area has a population of 1,843 in 716 households and is predominantly of Roman Catholic community background (92.73 per cent). 44.69 per cent of households contain dependent children. Housing tenure is 48.05 per cent owner occupation, 29.05 per cent social housing, and 18.16 per cent private rented. Much of the built form is low to medium rise housing including a number of apartments. There is little green space apart from a park higher up the hill. A school has recently closed. Unemployment is 9.73 per cent and economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is a high 12.59 per cent; 28.97 per cent of residents have some kind of long-term health condition. There are several very active community groups and a Community Forum. A large parcel of vacant land exists due

to the demolition of a school a few years ago, and a regeneration process for the area was announced recently.<sup>15</sup>

The Irish Street area has a population of 476 in 234 households, and is predominantly of Protestant community background (88.87 per cent). 20.51 per cent of households contain dependent children. Housing tenure is 64.11 per cent owner occupation, 22.22 per cent social housing, and 11.54 per cent private rented. The area is an enclosed estate of mainly semi-detached houses originally built by the Housing Executive, with a small amount of green space and a few shops, most of which are unoccupied. However, shopping facilities are good due to the proximity of the Lisnagelvin Shopping Centre and Crescent Link. Unemployment is 6.32 per cent and economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is again a relatively high 12.07 per cent; 42.23 per cent of residents have some kind of long-term health condition. The Irish Street Community Centre occupies a fairly new building in the area but reports difficulty with community engagement.

### ***Sion Mills***

A rural area of hidden disadvantage near the town of Strabane in Co. Tyrone.

The rural case study, Sion Mills, is a village in Co. Tyrone located on the A5 road and near the town of Strabane. The case study area is contiguous with the Sion Mills electoral ward (Maps A1.3a and b). Sion Mills has a population of 2190 in 868 households and is of mixed community background (60.78 per cent Roman Catholic and 38.17 per cent Protestant). 33.29 per cent of households contain dependent children. Housing tenure is 60.95 per cent owner occupation, 19.36 per cent social housing, and 12.90 per cent private rented. The case study area is located on the left-hand side of the A5 travelling from Derry, and consists of low-rise mainly semi-detached housing, a 'village green' space and other smaller public open spaces. There are several small shops along the A5, but residents shop mainly at the new Asda on the road to Strabane, and in Strabane, Omagh or Derry. This means life without a car is difficult. The pleasant local environment hides disadvantage. Unemployment is 7.17 per cent and economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is 13.02 per cent; 39.41 per cent of residents have some kind of long-term health condition. Village life, and employment, was focused around the Mill which closed in 2004 and is still derelict although some funds were obtained by the Sion Mills Building Preservation Trust to repair the Mill chimney as a local landmark. The village has numerous VCS organisations with perhaps the two most prominent being Sion Mills Community Association and the umbrella organisation: Sion Mills Community Forum.

### **A1.3. Comparator 'better-off' case study: Erinvale**

A popular suburban area on the outskirts of Belfast.

The comparator 'better-off' case study, Erinvale, is a suburban area on the outskirts of Belfast, including part of the Finaghy electoral ward (Maps A1.4a and b). Erinvale has a population of 1587 in 688 households and is of predominantly Protestant community background (71.33 per cent) although 3.02 per cent of the population identifies as having an 'other' religious background, higher than other case studies. 24.42 per cent of households contain dependent children. Housing tenure is 88.52 per cent owner occupation, 1.75 per cent social housing, and 7.70 per cent private rented. Of the owner occupiers, 41.38 per cent have mortgages. Thus the tenure

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/News/Top-of-the-Hill-Regeneration- per centE2 per cent80 per cent93-A-new-plan-for-the->

structure is (intentionally) very different from the other case studies. The built form is mainly semi-detached housing built for sale around 60 years ago, in an area off Finaghy Road South accessed via Erinvale Avenue. The area is popular due to its accessibility to Belfast (including a direct bus route) and also to Lisburn. There are local shops on the main road and good local schools and sporting facilities. Unemployment is low at 2.67 per cent and economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is 3.83 per cent; 33.02 per cent of residents have some kind of long-term health condition. There is no community 'centre' as such but there are churches, schools, neighbourhood watch and sports clubs nearby.

#### A1.4. Case study tables: 2011 Census

**Table A1.1: Religious background**

	Erinvale	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills
All usual residents (base)	1587	2366	3891	476	1843	2190
Religion or religion brought up in: Catholic (per cent)	18.97	80.90	20.48	7.35	92.73	60.78
Religion or religion brought up in: Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian-related) (per cent)	71.33	14.88	65.54	88.87	4.67	38.17
Religion or religion brought up in: Other religions (per cent)	3.02	1.78	1.39	1.05	1.03	0.09
Religion or religion brought up in: None (per cent)	6.68	2.45	12.59	2.73	1.57	0.96

**Table A1.2: Unemployment, dependents and long-term health conditions**

	Erinvale	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills
All households (base)	688	1041	1897	234	716	868
No adults in employment in household: With dependent children (per cent)	5.67	14.22	10.81	5.56	15.08	8.87
No adults in employment in household: Without dependent children (per cent)	33.58	38.23	38.85	41.88	29.61	34.68
Dependent children in household: All ages (per cent)	24.42	35.54	27.04	20.51	44.69	33.29
Dependent children in household: Aged 0-4 years (per cent)	10.76	15.18	13.34	10.68	19.13	12.33
One or more people in household with a long-term health problem or disability: With dependent children (per cent)	5.38	12.97	8.17	5.98	13.13	12.56
One or more people in household with a long-term health problem or disability: Without dependent children (per cent)	33.58	37.56	37.01	41.45	28.21	41.94

**Table A1.3: Economic activity**

	<b>Erinvale</b>	<b>Short Strand</b>	<b>Lower Castlereagh</b>	<b>Irish Street</b>	<b>Top-of-the-Hill</b>	<b>Sion Mills</b>
All usual residents aged 16-74 years (base)	1200	1684	2934	348	1295	1590
Economically active:						
Employee: Part-time: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	15.67	14.90	11.90	14.94	13.90	10.31
Economically active:						
Employee: Full-time: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	40.58	25.00	33.57	34.48	26.49	29.12
Economically active: Self-employed: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	5.50	2.49	2.25	4.60	5.17	8.11
Economically active:						
Unemployed: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	2.67	8.25	7.12	6.32	9.73	7.17
Economically active: Full-time student: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	3.50	3.44	2.52	2.87	3.71	2.26
Economically inactive:						
Retired: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	21.42	10.63	11.01	16.95	7.49	14.09
Economically inactive:						
Student (including full-time students): Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	3.50	6.24	3.85	2.30	8.19	5.35
Economically inactive:						
Looking after home or family: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	1.83	8.08	7.67	3.16	7.34	6.04
Economically inactive:						
Long-term sick or disabled: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	3.83	5.61	9.70	12.07	12.59	13.02
Economically inactive:						
Other: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	1.50	2.04	3.07	2.30	5.41	4.53
Carried out voluntary work: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	14.67	3.66	5.24	10.63	10.66	12.14
Unemployed: Aged 16-24 years (per cent)	0.25	0.74	1.34	1.44	2.93	1.76
Unemployed: Aged 50-74 years (per cent)	0.83	0.58	0.61	0.86	0.69	0.82
Unemployed: Never worked: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	0.08	0.69	0.95	2.01	2.39	1.32
Long-term unemployed: Aged 16-74 years (per cent)	1.67	1.43	2.17	2.30	4.40	3.33



**Table A1.4: Types of long-term health condition**

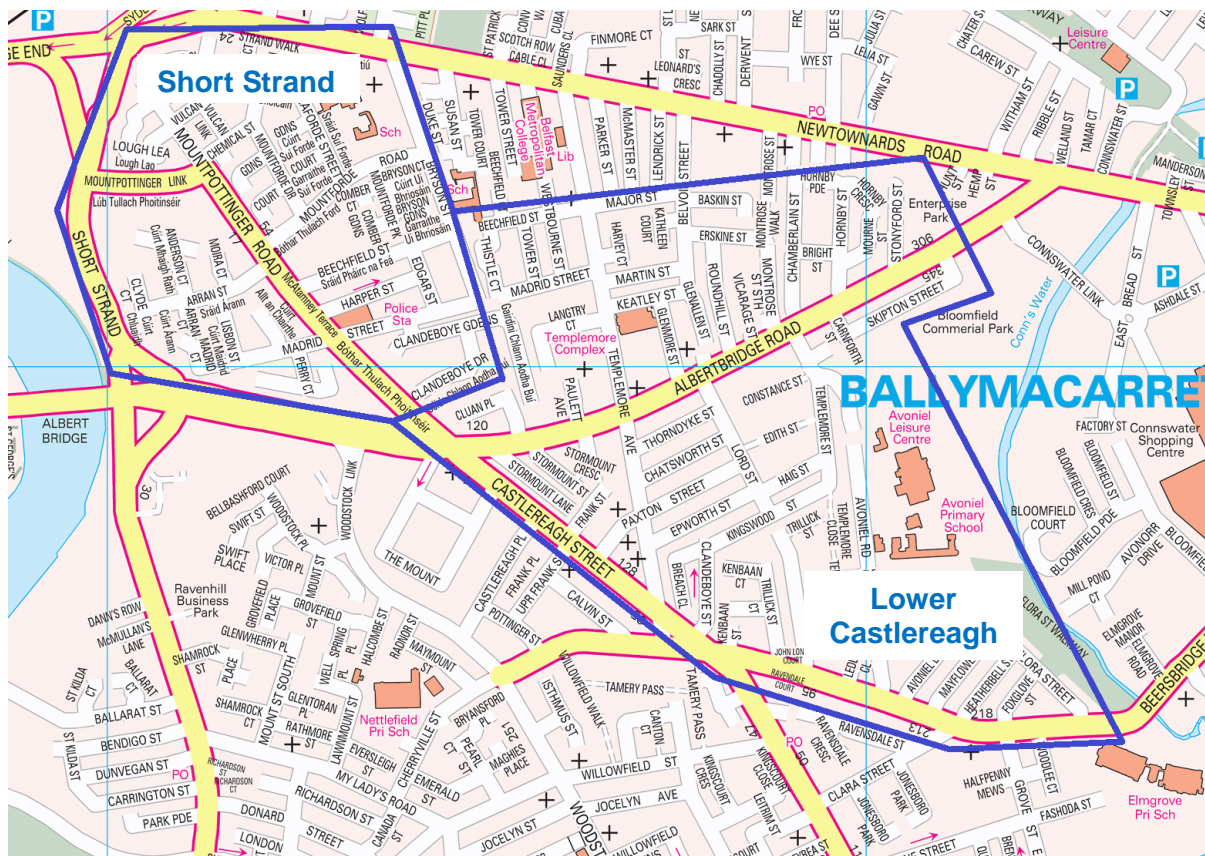
	<b>Erinvale</b>	<b>Short Strand</b>	<b>Lower Castlereagh</b>	<b>Irish Street</b>	<b>Top-of-the-Hill</b>	<b>Sion Mills</b>
All usual residents (base)	1587	2366	3891	476	1843	2190
Type of long-term condition: Deafness or partial hearing loss (per cent)	6.93	4.61	6.19	8.40	4.07	6.07
Type of long-term condition: Blindness or partial sight loss (per cent)	2.33	2.07	2.31	2.73	2.06	2.69
Type of long-term condition: Communication difficulty (per cent)	1.01	2.58	1.62	2.10	1.36	3.01
Type of long-term condition: A mobility or dexterity difficulty (per cent)	13.36	14.92	15.52	18.70	10.42	16.39
Type of long-term condition: A learning, intellectual, social or behavioural difficulty (per cent)	1.95	3.59	3.52	2.52	2.17	2.79
Type of long-term condition: An emotional, psychological or mental health condition (per cent)	4.85	10.31	10.18	9.66	8.68	9.63
Type of long-term condition: Long-term pain or discomfort (per cent)	10.96	12.76	12.77	14.29	8.30	14.57
Type of long-term condition: Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (per cent)	8.25	11.67	12.80	9.87	8.84	12.24
Type of long-term condition: Frequent periods of confusion or memory loss (per cent)	1.51	2.32	2.72	2.94	1.68	2.33
Type of long-term condition: A chronic illness (per cent)	7.94	7.99	7.92	10.29	5.48	8.95
Type of long-term condition: Other condition (per cent)	6.11	5.96	5.42	7.35	3.96	5.98
Type of long-term condition: No condition (per cent)	66.98	62.72	61.06	57.77	71.03	60.59

**Table A1.5: Housing tenure**

	Erinvale	Short Strand	Lower Castlereagh	Irish Street	Top-of-the-Hill	Sion Mills
All households (base)	688	1041	1897	234	716	868
Owner occupied: Owns outright (per cent)	51.89	14.51	9.86	35.90	12.71	32.26
Owner occupied: Owns with a mortgage or loan (per cent)	36.63	21.71	14.29	28.21	35.34	28.69
Shared ownership (per cent)	0.44	0.38	0.74	0.00	0.70	0.58
Rented from: Northern Ireland Housing Executive (per cent)	0.73	29.78	39.48	22.22	27.65	14.98
Rented from: Housing association or charitable trust (per cent)	1.02	18.25	4.48	0.00	1.40	4.38
Rented from: Private landlord or letting agency (per cent)	7.70	10.76	25.94	11.54	18.16	12.90
Rented from: Other (per cent)	1.02	1.44	0.90	0.43	1.26	2.07
Lives rent free (per cent)	0.58	3.17	4.32	1.71	2.79	4.15

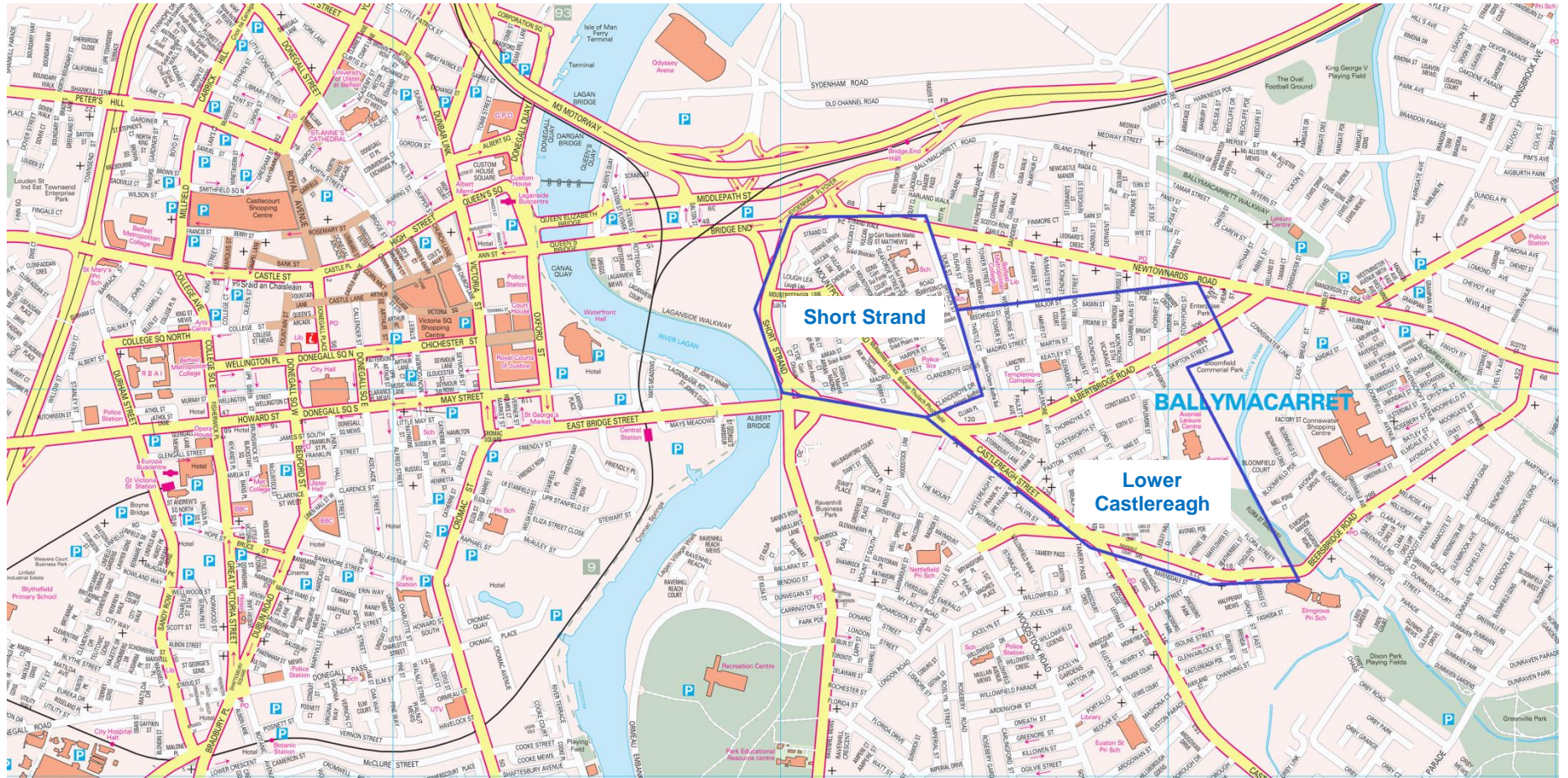
## A1.5. Case study maps

**Map A1.1a: East Belfast: Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh - neighbourhood scale**

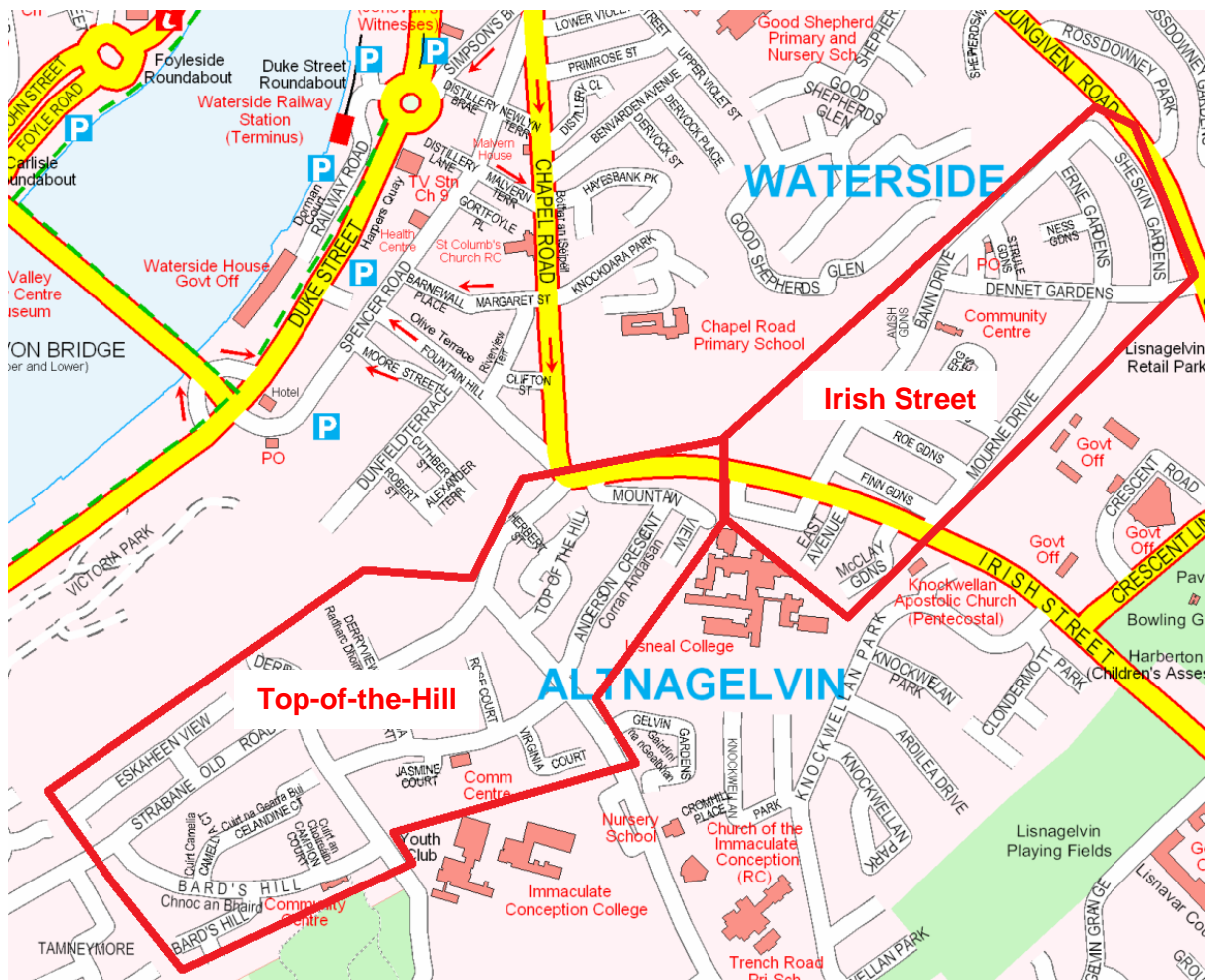




Map A1.1b: East Belfast: Short Strand and Lower Castlereagh - city scale

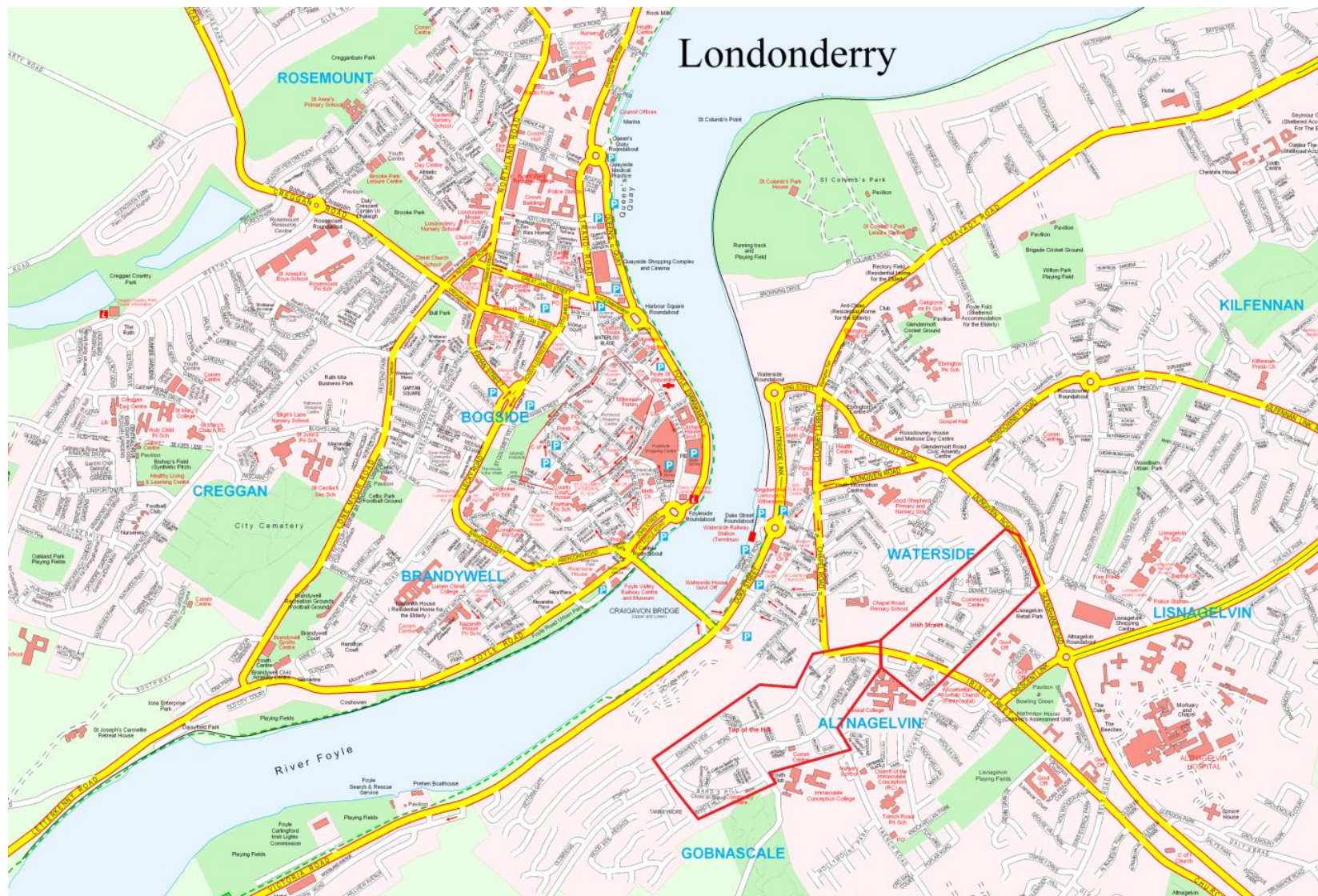


**Map A1.2a: Derry/Londonderry: Top-of-the-Hill and Irish Street - neighbourhood scale**

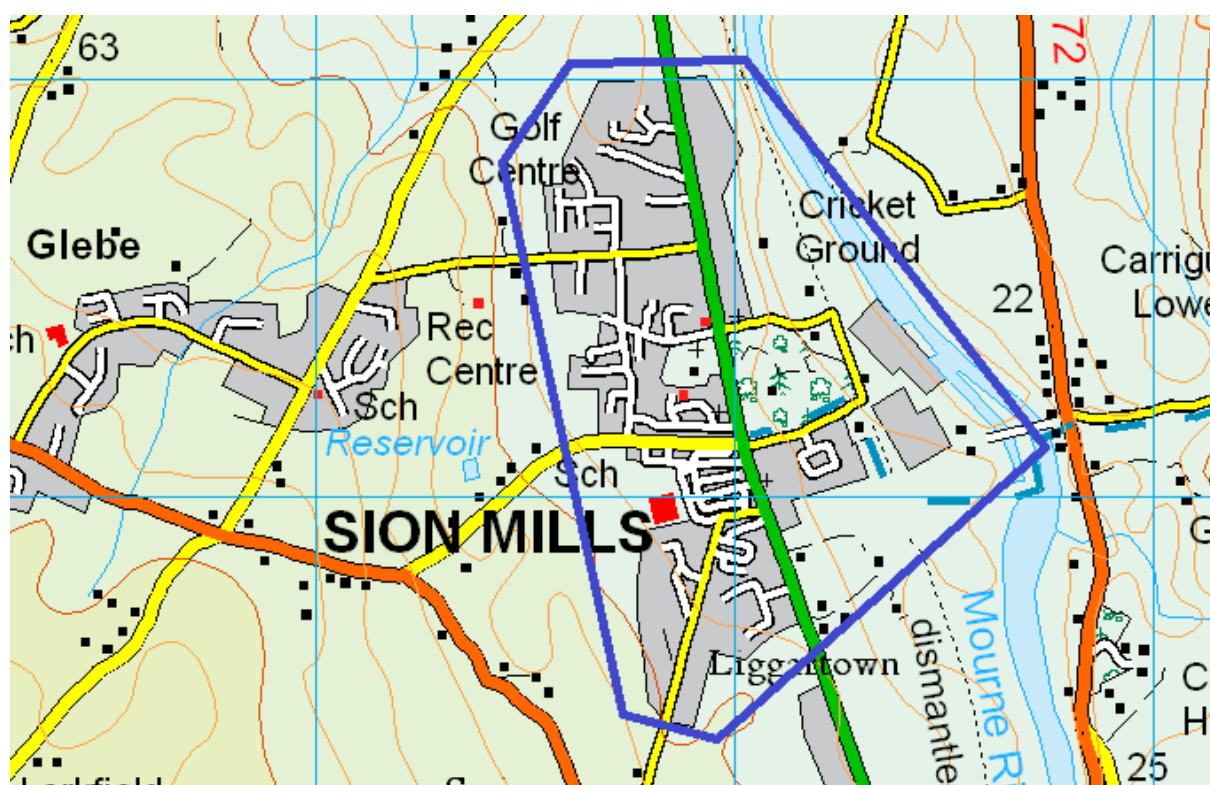




Map A1.2b: Derry/Londonderry: Top-of-the-Hill and Irish Street - wider scale

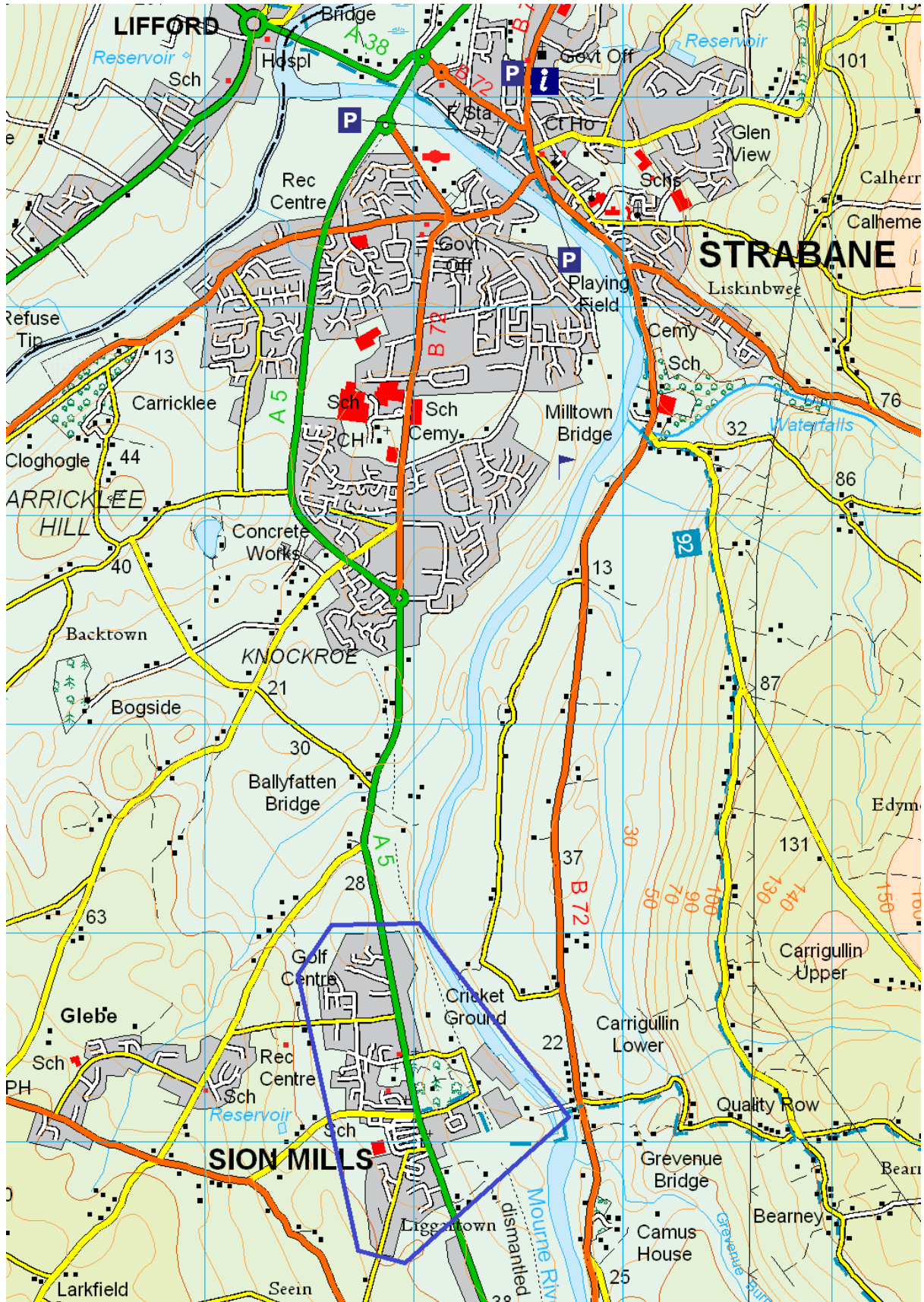


Map A1.3a: Sion Mills- neighbourhood scale



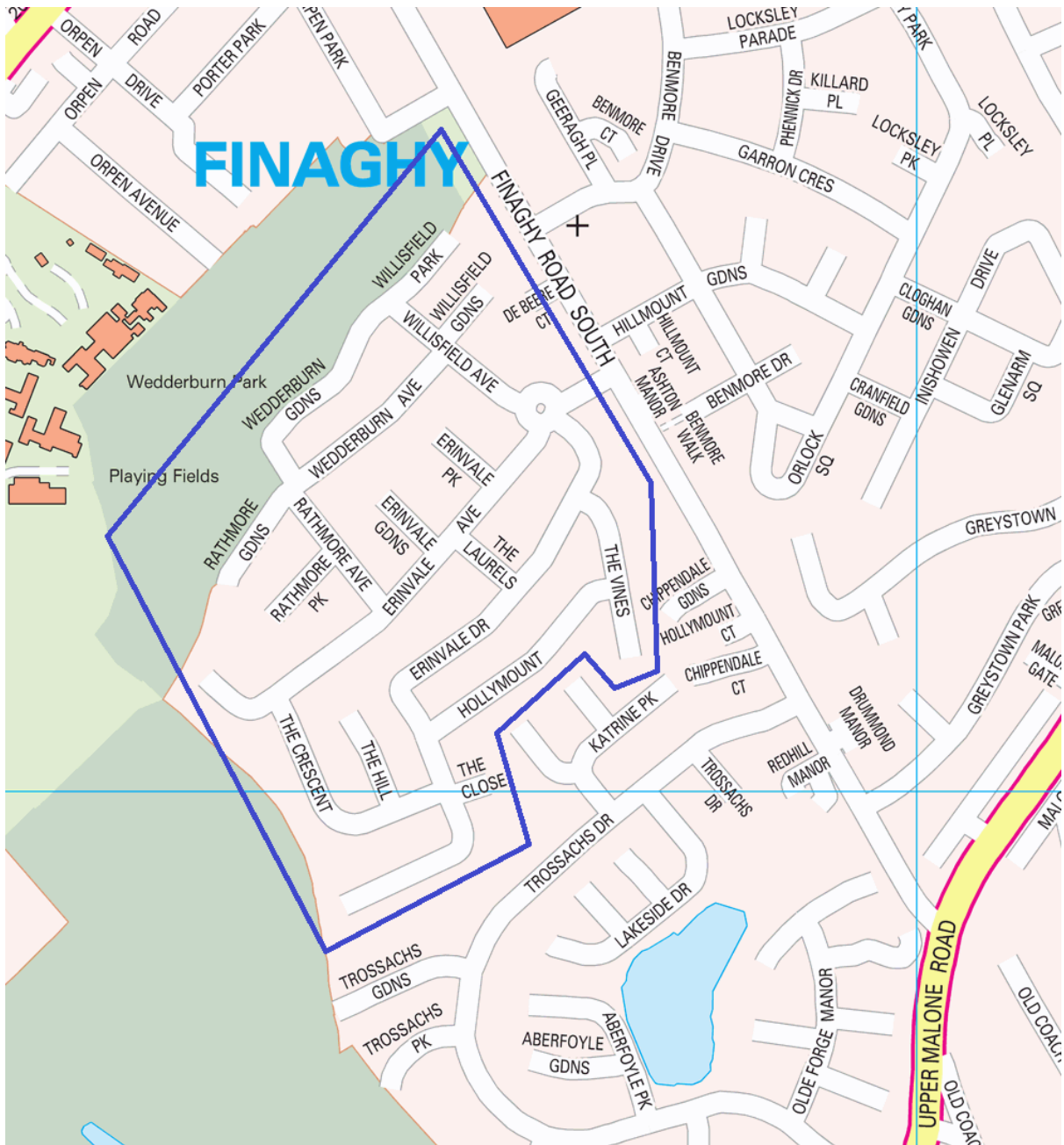


Map A1.3b: Sion Mills - wider scale

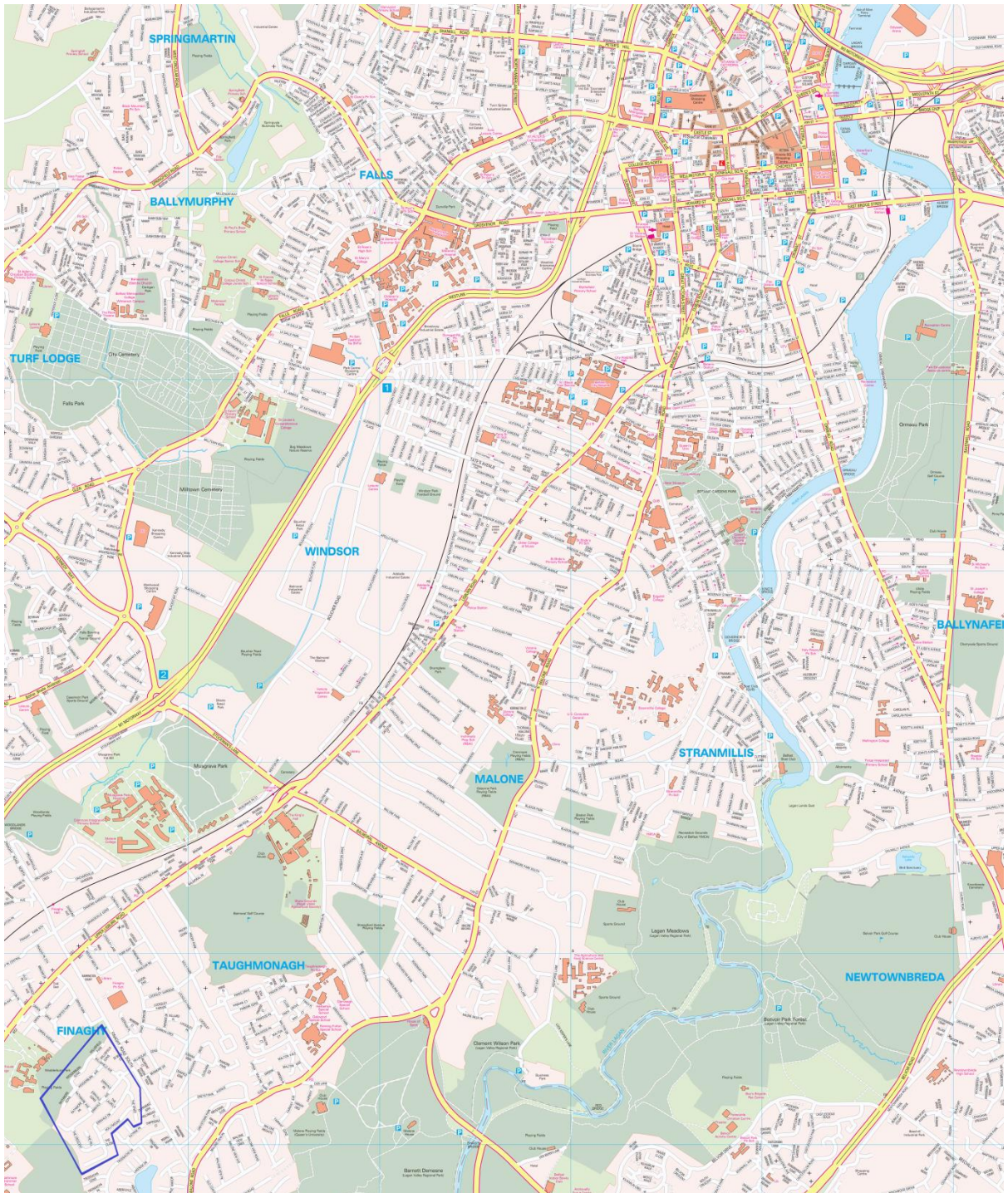




Map A1.4a: Erinvale - neighbourhood scale



**Map A1.4b: Erinvale - wider scale**





*Understanding the economic contribution of the social economy at a neighbourhood level:  
Final Report*

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