

# Building Back for the Better

## A perspective from Carnegie UK Trust

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# Opening remarks

It is now clear that COVID-19 will super-charge existing inequalities, increasing division and fragmentation in society with subsequent effects on social cohesion and democracy. In responding to this, governments, civil society and businesses should be bold, placing wellbeing at the centre of the recovery effort, reinvigorating efforts to reform public services locally and nationally and ensuring that people and places disproportionately affected by the pandemic are not left behind.

While we are early in our collective understanding of the impact of the pandemic, we believe that the existing knowledge-base, coupled with the emerging evidence amidst the crisis, can provide insight that supports the work being carried out across the UK to build back better.

After the 2008 recession, we carried out research into how governments were approaching the ‘perfect storm’ of austerity, climate change and ageing populations. We found four key approaches: retrenching; restructuring; reforming and rethinking. Politicians in the UK have largely ruled out further retrenchment. Restructuring organisations and reforming activities are inadequate to the scale of the challenge. It is only by rethinking the role and ambitions of government that we will be able to achieve the aim of building back for the better.

The Carnegie UK Trust was set up to improve the wellbeing of the people of the UK and Ireland. Our work shows that the different aspects of wellbeing are intrinsically linked, something that the pandemic has brought back into focus for many – our health, wealth and happiness are all connected, as are the social, economic, environmental and democratic outcomes for society (see figure 1). There is no economy without a healthy population, there is no healthy population without systems for ensuring basic needs are met on a foundation of a sustainable environment.

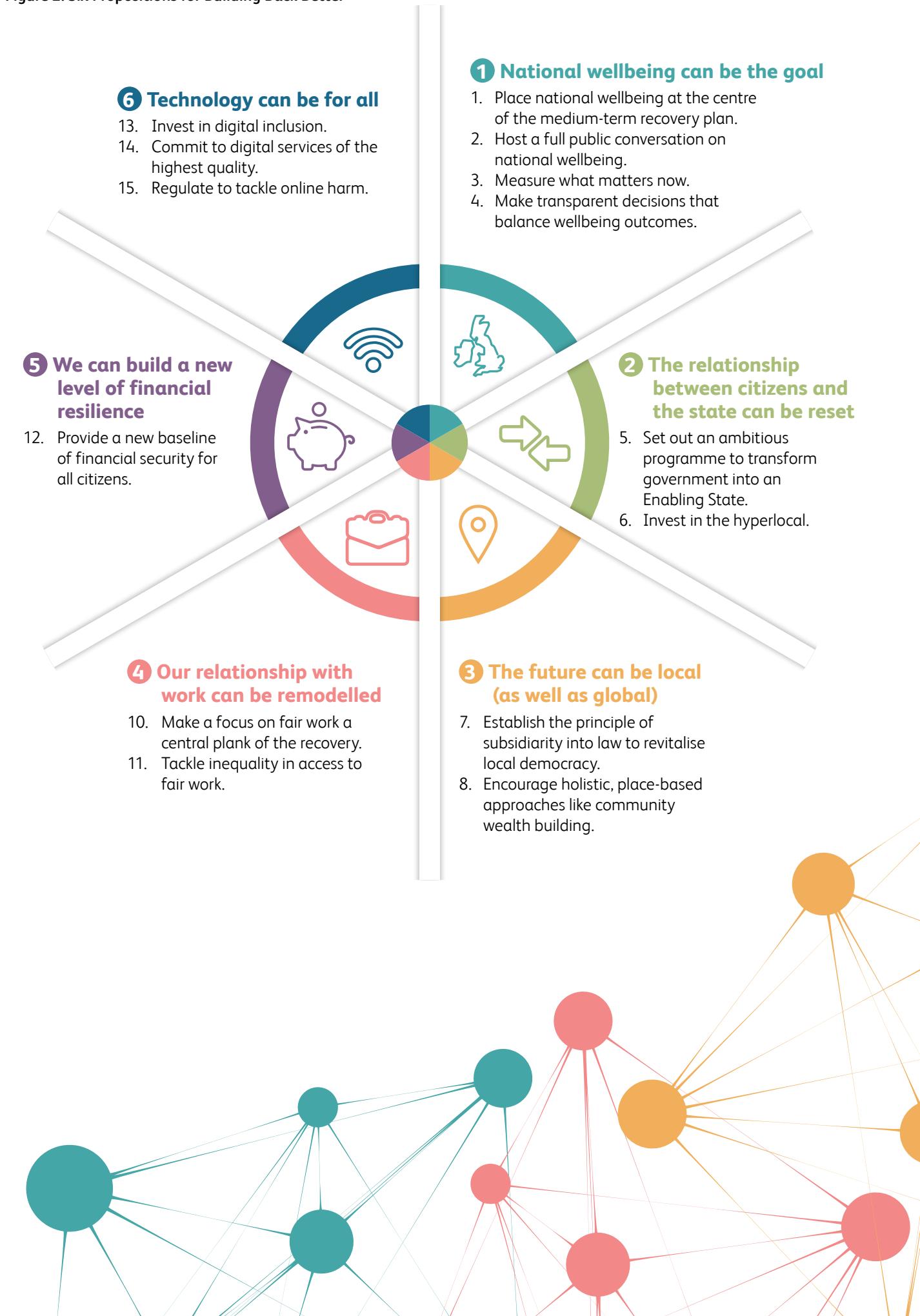
We have used what we know now to set out a series of propositions, backed up by recommendations of practical things that could be done to improve wellbeing. These will not be the only things to consider for the medium-term recovery, nor are they the only things that could be done to improve wellbeing of people across the UK, but we hope that by taking a wide perspective, we can connect the threads between different parts of the recovery effort. The recommendations are largely aimed at government, as the stakeholder most likely to be able to create the conditions for recovery, but implementation will require action across all sectors of the UK.

Our final opening reflection is that we have written our propositions in positive language. There is much that challenges us but having a hopeful approach and presenting an optimistic vision of the future feels, to us, to be particularly important at this time.

**Figure 1: Carnegie UK Trust’s SEED approach to societal wellbeing**



Figure 2: Six Propositions for Building Back Better





# PROPOSITION 1: National wellbeing can be the goal

As governments evolved in the twentieth century, the pursuit of economic wellbeing as a means to a ‘good society’ became the norm, to the extent that economic output became an end in itself and the dominant way that countries measured and compared their progress<sup>1</sup>.

More recently, some governments have begun to look for other models and approaches to improve the lives of citizens. These new models have different names – wellbeing, sustainable development, new economies, green economies and so on – during the COVID-19 pandemic there have been calls to replace the existing GDP based growth model with a more balanced approach. While the language varies, most call for a ‘new narrative’ share the key elements of a wellbeing approach:

- balancing domains of wellbeing
- long-term planning
- addressing inequalities
- building resilience.

The core message of all wellbeing approaches to government is the need to join up and rebalance the emphasis given to the SEED outcomes for society, and to provide a mechanism for making trade-offs between different domains of wellbeing. Our UK and international evidence<sup>2</sup> shows that this approach can:

- provide strong leadership by creating an aspirational but achievable vision for society
- make sense of complexity by bringing information from across the system into one place
- support joined-up government through a shared analytical framework
- provide a framework for debating trade-offs between different outcome areas, making

<sup>1</sup> [www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr](https://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/measuring-what-matters/>

decision-making and spending more transparent

- inform policy development by providing information on inequalities across wellbeing domains, helping identify structural issues for specific people or places that risk being left behind
- catalyse citizen engagement by giving people an opportunity to express their priorities and subsequently to see whether governments are making progress towards these.

We need to boost our recovery from the pandemic with a new way of thinking amongst all kinds of decision-makers. We do not have the luxury of time or resources to allow an economic recovery to take place in a way that further exacerbates the environmental challenge, and we cannot consign large swathes of the population to poor quality jobs knowing that they result in poorer health and decimated communities.

This is where the concept of a super-policy comes in. Super-policies are those that *achieve positive outcomes across a wide range of areas beyond that which was the primary intention, and which do not have unintended negative outcomes*.<sup>3</sup>

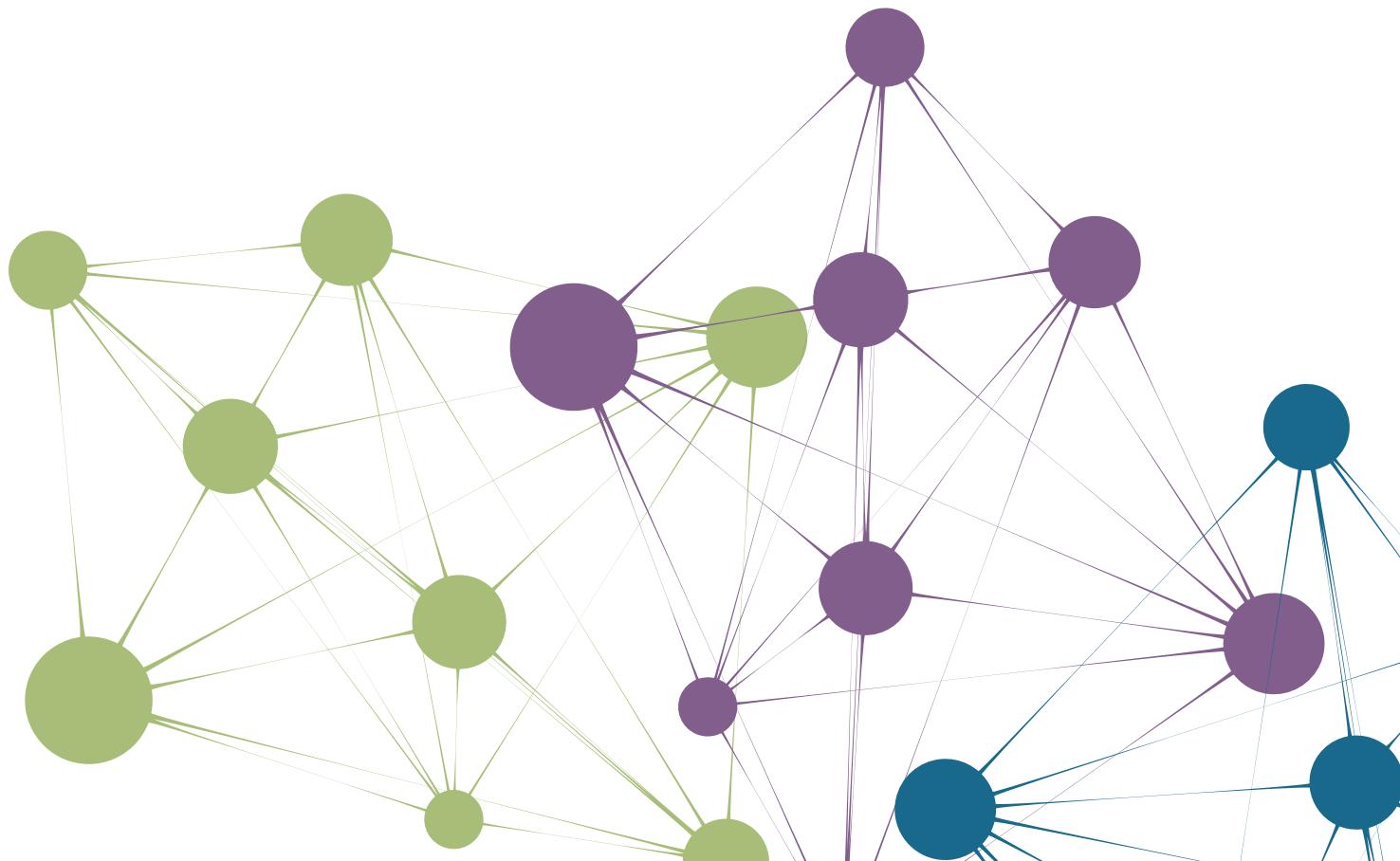
Despite the interest in wellbeing approaches, there are few examples of ‘super-policies’ that maximise outcomes across all domains of wellbeing. For example, there are opportunities to shift to a green economy<sup>4</sup>, but progress feels slow and is often overtaken by the need to prioritise immediate concerns. As we emerge from the immediate crisis, there may be space within governments to think differently to maximise impact by putting wellbeing at the heart of all decisions.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666535220300021?via%3Dihub>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/04/20/four-eu-nations-back-green-post-coronavirus-recovery/>

## Recommendations

- 1. Place national wellbeing at the centre of the medium-term recovery plan.** A crisis can create the conditions for a new narrative to be developed, a change in how we see ourselves and understand the world. The crisis has revealed how closely related our health, economy and environment are. Governments should use this clarity as the opportunity to set wellbeing as the goal for societies.
- 2. Host a full public conversation on national wellbeing in a post-COVID-19 society.** While there will be a need for specific conversations with professionals, the public conversation should be focussed on one ‘core conversation’ to ensure high levels of engagement and to ensure that the response is holistic. We have all been through this experience and we must all be part of the next phase. Growing expertise on participatory democracy will support this activity. Engagement should be measured in hundreds of thousands, not hundreds.
- 3. Measure what matters now.** As we learn through public engagement what matters to people now, governments should be prepared to update how they measure social progress to reflect these changes. From our work, we expect this to cover a much broader understanding of what digital inclusion is – not just access to technology (which not all have) but also the ability to use it effectively. Similarly, we have called for more focus on job quality not just quantity. This multi-dimensional framework should be what drives decision making, not one proxy indicator such as GDP or subjective wellbeing.
- 4. Make transparent decisions that balance wellbeing outcomes.** Placing wellbeing front and centre of the medium-term recovery explicitly challenges long-held beliefs in trickle-down economics. It requires all decisions to be made through the lens of wellbeing, balancing social, economic, environmental and democratic outcomes. We support calls for open government, particularly around the information on which budget decisions are made. Where a balance of judgement is being made, the evidence for that judgement should be publicly available and open to discussion and debate.





## PROPOSITION 2:

# The relationship between citizens and the state can be reset

The depth of the untapped asset of mutual aid and reciprocity (often encapsulated by the language of kindness) seems, to us, to be one of the fundamental learnings from the pandemic<sup>5</sup>. Although physically apart, people have come together to give care, food and friendship to neighbours, strangers and friends. We believe that this flowering of community connectedness may build a foundation for long-term change and community response. As demand lessens there is a growing awareness that citizens and community groups have more to offer than time alone, using non-state assets (both tangible and intangible) to deliver at pace in ways that the state would struggle to mobilise.

However, the story of the pandemic is not just of individual and community action, it is of the state and community working together to understand what each other can offer. We believe that this realisation has the potential to accelerate a shift to a more agile model of the citizen-state relationships that support people and communities to achieve positive change for themselves. We use the language of the Enabling State to refer to this paradigm shift<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to volunteering, reneighbouring and mutual aid, community ownership of assets is a further mechanism for building a sustainable future for places. We believe social infrastructure will be even more important during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic given the economic shock that is now apparent. Our work on community asset ownership shows it can be a driving force

in supporting a town or community to come together and flourish. Across the UK communities already have rights to take over community assets – although in some areas more powers are still required; they can drive the process themselves by identifying and developing existing, but often unrecognised assets. Those who want to do more in their communities need information, funding and a supportive culture to thrive and so we support calls for further investment in asset transfer as part of the recovery phase<sup>7</sup>.

We have rewritten our Route Map for an Enabling State to take account of what we have learnt from the COVID-19 emergency (see figure 3). We believe that these seven steps could ‘bank’ positive changes in relationships where these have occurred and accelerate progress towards an Enabling State model.

The transformation to an Enabling State is not guaranteed. It will require sustained action. Firstly, those groups that stepped into the pandemic response will require support to continue their work, including ongoing permission to act. Our listening exercises suggest some are concerned about a ricochet back to the traditional relationship between state and community where the state acts as gatekeeper and contract manager, and where the relationship is characterised by power imbalances rather than parity of esteem. Secondly, we know that social capital is not evenly distributed and therefore some communities risk being left behind unless the playing field for community action is levelled.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ukonward.com/covid-19-and-community/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/the-enabling-state-where-are-we-now-review-of-policy-developments-2013-2018-summary-report/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/community-asset-ownership-in-towns-a-cross-uk-learning-event/>

Figure 3: Route Map for an Enabling State – Guiding Principles for Recovery



## Recommendations

5. **Set out an ambitious programme to transform government into an Enabling State.**  
We recognise that public services will be under immense financial pressure over the medium term and that there will be calls from within the system not to transform at a difficult time. But failure to harness the assets of citizens and communities as we emerge from this crisis will miss the opportunity to reset the relationship and will limit society's ability to recover effectively.
6. **Invest in the hyperlocal.** Funders (government, private sector and charitable foundations) should focus their investment in long-term place-based approaches that support local people to carry out community engagement, empowerment and ownership activities. To support social cohesion for the UK as a whole, they should be focused on places that are at risk of being left behind, rather than those that already exhibit the social capital required to flourish.



# PROPOSITION 3: The future can be local (as well as global)

The UK is the most centralised state in the G7, and one of the most centralised in Europe<sup>8</sup>. Many organisations, including CUKT, concluded that a lack of local power was one of the contributing factors to the vote to leave the European Union as the ‘take back control’ message galvanised large parts of the population<sup>9</sup>.

Despite the key role that local government plays in supporting community wellbeing, the low level of power of local government is matched by low levels of engagement in local decision-making<sup>10</sup>. There is a pressing need to rejuvenate local democracy (in its broadest sense), providing a focal point for conversations on building back better. But there is little point having such vital conversations when the participants are doomed to conclude they themselves do not have the power to make change happen.

Our listening project is hearing examples of local government being given more responsibility and autonomy to respond to the crisis<sup>11</sup>. This has created space for emergency place-based approaches resulting in joined up services, shared budget allocations and new partnerships. For these trusting relationships to continue, local authorities need more flexible funding, unrestricted by targets and central control. We hope that these collaborative local approaches will continue into the recovery phase but to do so, rhetoric needs to be matched with legal powers to take raise funds and take decisions at the most appropriate spatial level.

Before the pandemic, much economic policy was built on the insight that the future was city-based, and that agglomeration was the goal. Global cities like London were the model for economic planning, though many pointed to the vast inequalities between regions that this created<sup>12</sup>. Despite more

than three decades of regeneration and renewal programmes, the places that had seen their traditional economic bases disappear in the 1980s still persisted as major locations of disadvantage.

Local places had begun to fight back and there are now examples of place-based approaches that take a cross-sectoral approach to tackling these deep economic issues. The most well-known of these is community wealth building where local authorities or other large anchor institutions (universities, combined authorities and housing associations) use their procurement power to stimulate the local economy and support sustainable local supply chains. While progress is being made, these approaches have not yet reached a tipping point into mainstream policy and practice. Without sustained support to spread such place-based innovations, the likelihood is that some local economies will fail, with a decimating effect on community wellbeing – as much through a lack of hope as through a lack of a corner shop.

## Recommendations

7. **Establish the principle of subsidiarity into law to revitalise local democracy.** A new settlement between central and local is required that adheres to the principle of subsidiarity (where powers to make decisions should be held at the most immediate, or local, level possible to ensure wellbeing outcomes). A renewed local power base would galvanise non-governmental actors like businesses, universities and civil society to come together to improve wellbeing in their local area.
8. **Encourage holistic, place-based approaches like community wealth building.** There is an opportunity to build on the learning to date from place-based approaches to expand to new localities, resulting in more just and equitable local economies and improved community wellbeing.

8 <https://iea.org.uk/on-regulation-and-centralisation-the-uks-record-is-no-better-than-the-eus/>

9 <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/new-powers-new-deals-remaking-british-towns-after-brexit/>

10 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-capital-scotland-measuring-understanding-scotlands-social-connections/>

11 <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/blog/conversations-with-communities-sharing-common-experiences-from-scotland-england-northern-ireland-and-wales/>

12 <http://uk2070.org.uk/>



# PROPOSITION 4: Our relationship with work can be remodelled

The COVID-19 crisis has already brought fundamental change to the UK labour market. After a number of years of historically low levels of unemployment, the economic shutdown in response to the crisis has seen the number of those out of work rise, a record drop in hours worked and a record low in new job vacancies<sup>13</sup>. With more than 9 million workers currently furloughed under the Job Retention Scheme<sup>14</sup> there is deep concern that unemployment is set to rise sharply, to unprecedented levels.

Unemployment has a significant long-term effect on wellbeing, and the longer the period of unemployment the greater the impact<sup>15</sup>. Tackling the looming jobs crisis must, therefore, be one of the most urgent and important priorities for policymakers at all levels.

At the same time, it will be important to consider the types of labour market that we want to create in the recovery process and the levers that are available to achieve this. Prior to the pandemic a focus on fair work had been an increasingly prominent feature of political and policy attention. At UK level, Matthew Taylor published his Review of Modern Work Practices in the UK, with 50 recommendations broadly accepted by the UK Government in its Good Work Plan. Scotland has a Fair Work Convention; Wales a Fair Work Commission and both jurisdictions have sought to embed a fair work focus across government with dedicated directorates and a long-term commitment to change. At regional and local level, many areas have sought to develop new approaches to foster fair work practices in local economies.

This attention that fair work has received in recent years reflects the importance of how we work to our wellbeing. Work can:

- enable us to provide for ourselves and our families
- buy the goods and services that we need
- build connections in our local communities
- foster our sense of personal and collective identity.

But the recent focus on fair work is borne out of a recognition that even prior to COVID-19, good jobs have not been available to all. The extent to which workers enjoy job security, decent pay, opportunities for progression, positive management support, access to training, a reasonable work-life balance and the chance to be involved in decisions that affect them, varies hugely across industries, roles and demographic groups. In particular, younger workers, BAME workers, women, disabled workers and those working in the hospitality, retail and care sectors have been more vulnerable to poor employment practices and the negative consequences these can bring for wellbeing<sup>16</sup>.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought a raft of challenges to all aspects of fair work, across the entire labour market. For those on the front-line throughout lockdown, the notion of health and safety at work has taken on new meaning and significance, with workers in key sectors exposed to a significant new level of risk. Greater physical and mental strain, and an increase in work intensity have been additional pressure points for key workers. For people working from home there have been changes in relationships with peers and with managers, pressures around work intensity and strains on psychosocial wellbeing. Particular circumstances such as isolation, caring responsibilities or the suitability of home working conditions may have exerted additional pressure.

13 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53427304>

14 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-july-2020/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-july-2020>

15 <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/unemployment-reemployment-wellbeing-briefing-march-2017-v3.pdf>

16 <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/work-wellbeing-discussion-paper/>

**Figure 4: Job quality dimensions**

For those furloughed there have been reductions in income and concerns over job security, as well as the loss of purpose and connection that work can bring.

The crisis has also brought new attention to the issue of employee voice and representation. This is more important than ever at times of crisis, due to rapid decision-making and the development of new ways of working. However, it can be more difficult to organise and make such engagement meaningful when workers are dispersed or socially distant, while the urgent nature of some decisions, particularly at the point of lockdown, may have curtailed opportunities for voice and representation.

As well as being important for wellbeing, good quality work supports higher workplace productivity, which will be a critical aspect of supporting wages and living standards in the recovery. Our research has shown that there is a positive correlation between most aspects of fair work and improved worker productivity<sup>17</sup>. The correlation is much stronger at the ‘poorest’ end of the spectrum, meaning we should tackle ‘bad work’ to deliver the greatest improvements in worker wellbeing and productivity.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.carnegieknight.org.uk/publications/can-good-work-solve-the-productivity-puzzle/>

## Recommendations

**9. Make a focus on fair work a central plank of the recovery.** Driving forward fair work requires high level political and policy commitment to this goal. We need a vision for a new labour market which recognises the importance of fair work for all. We need to understand and nurture the contribution that decent jobs can make to workplace productivity, helping the economy to recover better and faster. We need to explore the wide range of levers that policy makers hold to deliver fair work, including incentives, culture change, inspiration, resources and enforcement.

**10. Tackle inequality in access to fair work.** Within a wider focus on redesigning the labour market we need to recognise the significant inequalities that currently exist in access to work and in access to decent work. The new labour market should promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion, for its intrinsic value and for the positive outcomes that we know a more inclusive economy can deliver.



# PROPOSITION 5: We can build a new level of financial resilience

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of the financial resilience experienced by households across the UK.

The UK Financial Wellbeing Strategy, published by the Money and Pension Service before the onset of the crisis highlighted that more than 11 million people have less than £100 in savings; 9 million often have to borrow to buy food or pay bills; and 22 million don't feel they have enough information to plan properly for retirement<sup>18</sup>.

Since the crisis has hit, Stepchange debt charity estimates that 4.6 million people who have been financially affected now face a personal debt burden of more than £6 billion<sup>19</sup>. The Standard Life COVID-19 Financial Impact Tracker shows that since March, more than a quarter of households have seen their income fall as a direct result of the crisis<sup>20</sup>. Now, fewer than 40% of households are now classed as financially secure; with 35% potentially exposed financially; 17% struggling to make ends meet; and 11% in serious financial difficulty.

In this context, there has unsurprisingly been a significant uptake of the payment holidays being offered during the crisis on a variety of financial products<sup>21</sup>. Two million households in the UK have

applied for a mortgage holiday while 700,000 credit card and nearly 500,000 personal loan payment holidays have been granted.

It is clear that without these interventions and others such as the Job Retention Scheme and support for those self-employed, the financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis would have been catastrophic for many households.

However, the scale and extent of the impact of the crisis on household finances raises fundamental questions about the level of financial security that we want to support people to attain in the medium-term recovery. There is no single solution to this challenge. A multifaceted approach is required, which addresses issues such as:

- low pay
- the level of social security payments
- the poverty premium in access to a range of markets and services
- the cost of living in areas such as housing, transport and childcare.

## Recommendations

**11. Provide a baseline of financial security for all citizens.** Rise to the challenge that the crisis has exposed to our financial resilience and give serious consideration to a range of interventions that can support greater long-term financial resilience for households across the UK.

18 <https://moneyandpensionservice.org.uk/uk-strategy-for-financial-wellbeing/>

19 <https://www.stepchange.org/policy-and-research/debt-research/post-covid-personal-debt.aspx>

20 [https://www.standardlifefoundation.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/61120/SLF-JUNE-2020-COVID-19-Tracker.pdf](https://www.standardlifefoundation.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/61120/SLF-JUNE-2020-COVID-19-Tracker.pdf)

21 <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2020/may/08/uk-lenders-have-granted-nearly-12m-payment-holidays>



# PROPOSITION 6:

## Technology can be for all

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated – if we weren’t aware of it already – the fundamental role that digital technology plays in supporting personal, community and societal wellbeing. It enables:

- public service delivery and access
- social connections and engagement across local, national and international communities
- enhancement of learning; access to the labour market; personal agency and autonomy
- sharing of knowledge and information
- individual choice, convenience and efficiency.

The lockdown has put technology even more firmly at the heart of essential infrastructure as millions have relied on it every day to work, participate in education, shop for food and access essential services, including health services.

However, the overnight escalation in the role and importance of technology has also exposed a wide range of wellbeing risks that technology also brings and has highlighted the nature of the harms that people might experience in their digital engagement, including issues around exclusion, personal privacy, information quality and security, harmful content and the pervasive nature of technology.

There has long been a significant social justice dimension in access to and use of digital technology, which the COVID-19 crisis has starkly exposed<sup>22</sup>. Those most likely to be disadvantaged digitally are also more likely to be disadvantaged according to a range of social or economic measures. What does this digital disadvantage look like? It might mean:

- a lack of connectivity
- no access to an appropriate device, or not enough devices

- reliance on less flexible or more expensive payment models
- limited or narrow digital engagement
- greater risk of exposure to different types of harm online.

The impact of this disadvantage is that technology may be rapidly deepening existing inequalities in society – and this risk has arguably never been greater. This reality contrasts with a commonly held public perception about the internet-age, where digital technology has often been regarded as a route to breaking down traditional hierarchies, barriers and divides.

This is not an issue that will disappear in time or without action. Before the crisis, there was often a tendency to regard children and young people as ‘digital natives’, for whom digital skills are somehow inherent. This is far from the case, and there is a significant risk of digital exclusion for many young people, particularly those who are at risk or experiencing disadvantage<sup>23</sup>. The consequences of not being able to maximise the benefits of technology – and being exposed to the harms that it can bring – can be particularly significant for young people, as the COVID crisis is demonstrating.

Resetting our relationship with technology requires, however, a focus on much more than individual access, skills, confidence and motivation – as important as these factors are. Much of the growth of the digital sphere during the past 30 years has been driven by private enterprise. Until recently, the burden for navigating engagement with digital markets and platforms in a safe and effective way has predominantly fallen on individuals. In recent years however, there has been a growing recognition of the challenges and risks associated with the way in which these systems have developed; and an understanding that a much wider range of public policy interventions

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/role-digital-exclusion-social-exclusion/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/digitalworld/>

are required to ensure that digital technology can deliver positive wellbeing outcomes for all citizens<sup>24</sup>. The spread of disinformation about COVID-19 across multiple digital platforms further demonstrates the need for action<sup>25</sup>. In the recovery from the COVID crisis, coordinated public policy intervention at a system level, to ensure that technology really does deliver wellbeing benefits, will be vital.

Over the past 10 years digital technology has presented new opportunities to reimagine the way in which public services are designed and delivered, to become faster, more convenient, more flexible and more responsive. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted where previous action in this sphere has been effective and exposed where it has not. Services which are predominantly transactional in nature have been more advanced in their roll out in recent years, but highly effective, responsive, relational digital public services have – unsurprisingly – been slower to emerge. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated that a priority for

the recovery must be an acceleration in efforts to support design, delivery and engagement with such relational digital services.

Another issue which has received much attention during the current crisis is the question of data and how this is used, stored and shared for public good. While a key focus has obviously been on the role that data might play in helping to tackle COVID-19, much of the discussion that underpins this debate is our common understanding of how data is captured and processed. If data is to become even more important in the years to come, it is essential that improved understanding is built into the recovery<sup>26</sup>.

Finally, in considering our future relationship with technology we must be cognisant of the fact that change in the digital sphere is rapid and constant. The issues where we need to take action to maximise benefit and mitigate risk can emerge quickly and we must ensure that policy and practice are geared appropriately to pivot as required.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/harm-reduction-in-social-media/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/blog/regulation-misinformation-and-covid19/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/data-for-public-benefit/>

## Recommendations

**12. Invest in digital inclusion.** Learn from the immediate response. Recognise and celebrate the immediate efforts to tackle digital exclusion during the crisis – and use this as a platform for a committed medium-term ambition to solve the digital exclusion issues that the crisis has exposed. Take a holistic approach to addressing digital inclusion in the medium term, taking into account affordability, skills, connectivity, provision of devices and more.

**13. Commit to digital public services of the highest quality.** Put in place an ambitious new plan to support statutory and voluntary services to deliver the highest quality digital services, which work on a relational as well as transactional basis, addressing critical issues such as infrastructure and staff development.

**14. Regulate to tackle online harm.** Introduce a new statutory regulation system, underpinned by a duty of care and backed by an independent regulator to tackle online harm, shifting the balance of responsibility towards providers of online public spaces.

# Closing remarks

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every part of our society – our economy; the social connections in our communities; our environment; and the relationship we hold with our governments. As we collectively embark on the process of recovery, the equal importance of our society, economy, environment and democracy must not be lost. We must seek to improve all of these parts of our society, reflecting on the structures and policies that are no longer fit for purpose, and the ways of working and experiences we wish to hold on to, post-pandemic.

This paper is best seen as a contribution to that much broader debate. We are all going through this storm (albeit in different boats) and we must all be part of the next phase of recovery and renewal.

There is a need to bring together people with different perspectives to contribute to the process of collective sense making. To this end, we are working with organisations across all our networks – including local government, communities, third sector organisations and leaders networks, youth services, credit providers, libraries, good work stakeholders and many others - to understand the impact of the pandemic on the people they work for. We have also joined with more than 350 organisations to sign the Build Back Better statement<sup>27</sup>. Where there are gaps in the space for collective sense making we are exploring what we may be able to do to stimulate these discussions.

As ever, but particularly in these fast-moving times, the best way to keep up to date with our work is through our twitter feed (@carnegieuktrust).

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.compassonline.org.uk/campaigns/buildbackbetter/>



The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

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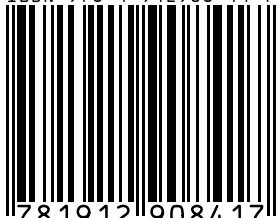
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